

Mr. IRVINE: That was a very wise and satisfactory arrangement.

My first point is to show that it is undesirable to accept the policy of consultation. At the best the policy of consultation brings to Canada such information as she may get in a second-hand way. It comes from the nation concerned through a foreign office and thence to Canada, when it does come. In passing through that channel it will be necessarily coloured with certain sentiment. It will be coloured with a certain British viewpoint, and when it reaches us it will not be just exactly what it was when it started from its main source. I do not think it is fair to Canada and I do not think it is dignified for us to be satisfied with receiving second-hand information through the admirable channel of the Foreign Office of Great Britain. If we are worth consulting at all, if we are of any value either to the nation with whom Great Britain may be in consultation, or to Great Britain, or if they are of any value to us then let us have that consultation direct with the nation concerned. Let us come to our conclusion upon whatever matters may be of mutual interest between us and other nations, and then co-operate with Great Britain afterwards, instead of having a second-hand round-about way of bringing information to Canada. It is misleading to suggest that, simply because we are called into consultation, we have acquired a status of equality. This is the chief reason why I think the policy of consultation is undesirable. It is misleading. It is not the case that consultation means equality, but here is another reason why it is undesirable to pursue this policy of consultation. I do not think that Canada wishes to be inoculated with the inbred and chronic political diseases of Europe. True they tell us the world is a unit, that as such we must recognize it, and as a nation we must be prepared to take our part in it, but the answer to that is obviously this; that it is just because the world is not a unit that treaties of the character of the Lausanne treaty have to be made.

Another reason why this is an undesirable policy is that it takes our ministers out of Canada sometimes for three months, and during that time they are not in a position to attend to their own governmental affairs. If it is imperative that Canada should have a foreign policy, then by all means let us have that foreign policy on our own behalf, as we see fit to have it, and have direct communication with the nations concerned. There are two means of performing this policy of

consultation in practice. One is by cable and the other is by conference. I wish to deal with these separately and to show that both are impracticable. With regard to the impracticability of this method, let me quote from the proceedings of the conference of prime ministers held in June, July and August of 1921, from the opening speech of the Right Hon. David Lloyd George, and here I think he lays down the basis of the policy. He says:

The direct communication between Prime Ministers, established during the war, has, I think, worked well, and we have endeavoured to keep you thoroughly abreast of all important developments in foreign affairs by special messages sent out weekly, or even more frequently when circumstances require. Indeed, at every important conference either here or on the continent, one of the first duties I felt I ought to discharge was to send as full and as complete and as accurate an account as I possibly could, not merely of the decisions taken, but of the atmosphere, which counts for so very much. I have invariably, to the best of my ability, sent accounts, some of them of the most confidential character, which would give to the dominions even the impressions which we formed, and which gave you information beyond what we could possibly communicate to the press.

It is rather a strange fact that at this very conference the prime ministers who had been so well informed according to the statements of Mr. Lloyd George, expressed surprise, almost to the state of consternation, at the information which Mr. Lloyd George was able to give them as to what had taken place in the two previous years. Let me quote our own Prime Minister at that time, the present leader of the opposition. who, I notice, is not in his seat. He says:

The information that the Prime Minister has given as to the progress of peace negotiations, or rather the re-establishment of actual peace upon the basis of the peace treaties, is indeed encouraging. I feared myself that he would not be able to make quite so gratifying a report.

Seemingly Mr. Lloyd George brought some information that the leader of the opposition was unaware existed and that made the report very much better than he thought it could possibly be. Let me quote briefly from Mr. Hughes. He said:

I desire to congratulate you on the admirable view of the position that you presented to us yesterday. I am sure it was most valuable as well as most interesting. We were all very glad to learn from you, Sir, that though the adjustment of those matters which arose out of the war is not yet complete, all our obligations, and our ex-enemies' obligations under the treaty, were in a fair way of being fulfilled.

He goes on:

We are now asked to deal with foreign policy, and in order that we may do this, you have said that Lord Curzon would review the present situation of foreign affairs. We shall await that statement with great interest. The whole Empire is concerned in foreign policy, though this was for many years re-