

Germany while the Dominions are technically at war with that country. Please see Prime Minister immediately as Milner's proposal is very disturbing.

BORDEN

157. *Le ministre des Douanes et du Revenu intérieur
au Premier ministre*

TELEGRAM

London, July 12, 1919

Saw Colonial Minister at his request. He said Premier had received your message to him and Foreign Minister. Advised him cable you exactly what Government here arranging, with copy their Bill which does not ratify. Gave strong personal opinion against Government here advising King ratify for British Empire. Said Governments Great Britain and each(?) Dominion should advise King separately, he concurring. Only see two alternatives to overcome serious constitutional point you mention: First, your Government advise King ratify without waiting for Parliament and submit similar Bill later; Second, Summon Parliament shortly. If this done, same difficulty will arise later with other Treaties requiring practically continuous session. They are finding now trouble of confusing terms Great Britain and British Empire, when too late, as I said.

SIFTON

158. *Le secrétaire aux Colonies au Gouverneur général*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM

London, July 23, 1919

URGENT. SECRET. Following for your Prime Minister. Begins. I have now consulted with Prime Minister and the Cabinet with reference to your most secret telegram of July 9th¹. Our view is that early ratification, especially now that Germany has ratified, is of the highest importance. In the British constitution there is nothing which makes it necessary for the King to obtain the consent of Parliament before ratifying Treaty. With perfect constitutional propriety the King can ratify on the advice of his Ministers. For a treaty of this far-reaching importance, and one embracing the whole Empire, the King certainly ought only to act at the instance of all his constitutional advisers—the Dominion [Prime] Ministers as well as that of the United Kingdom. But inasmuch as Dominion Ministers participated in peace negotiations, and side by side with Ministers of the United Kingdom signed preliminaries of Treaty, we hold that His Majesty if he now ratified the Treaty for the whole Empire would have the same constitutional justification in doing so in respect of

¹ On ne l'a pas publié séparément. Le texte est cité dans le document n° 156.