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OTTAWA
J. O. PATENAUDE, I.S.O.
PRINTER TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY
1938

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PREFATORY NOTE

In this White Paper, His Majesty's Government in Canada make available, for the information of the Canadian people, certain documents and communications dealing with the European crisis which they have received from His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and which are being made public in London to-day.

OTTAWA, September 28, 1938.

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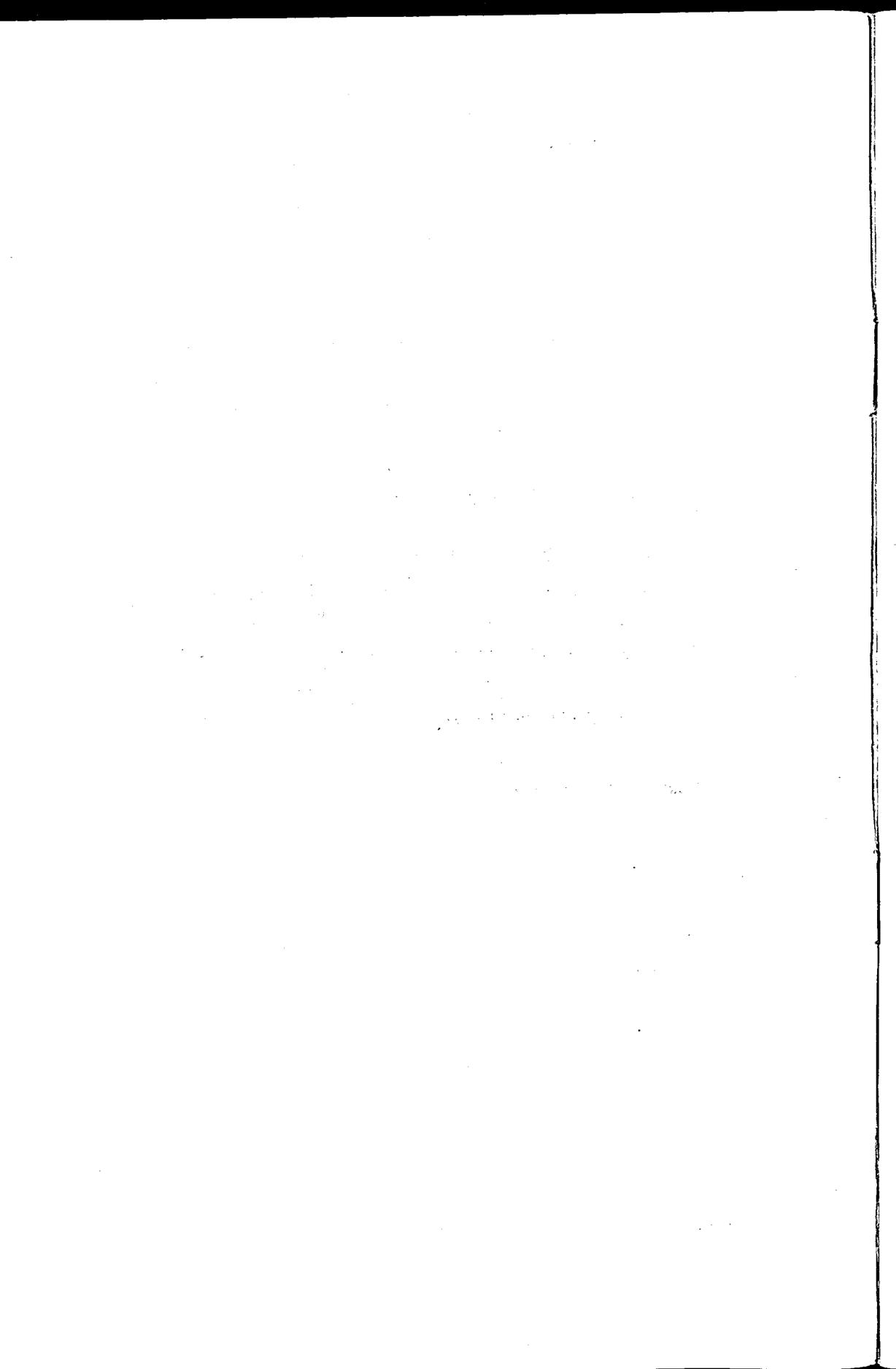
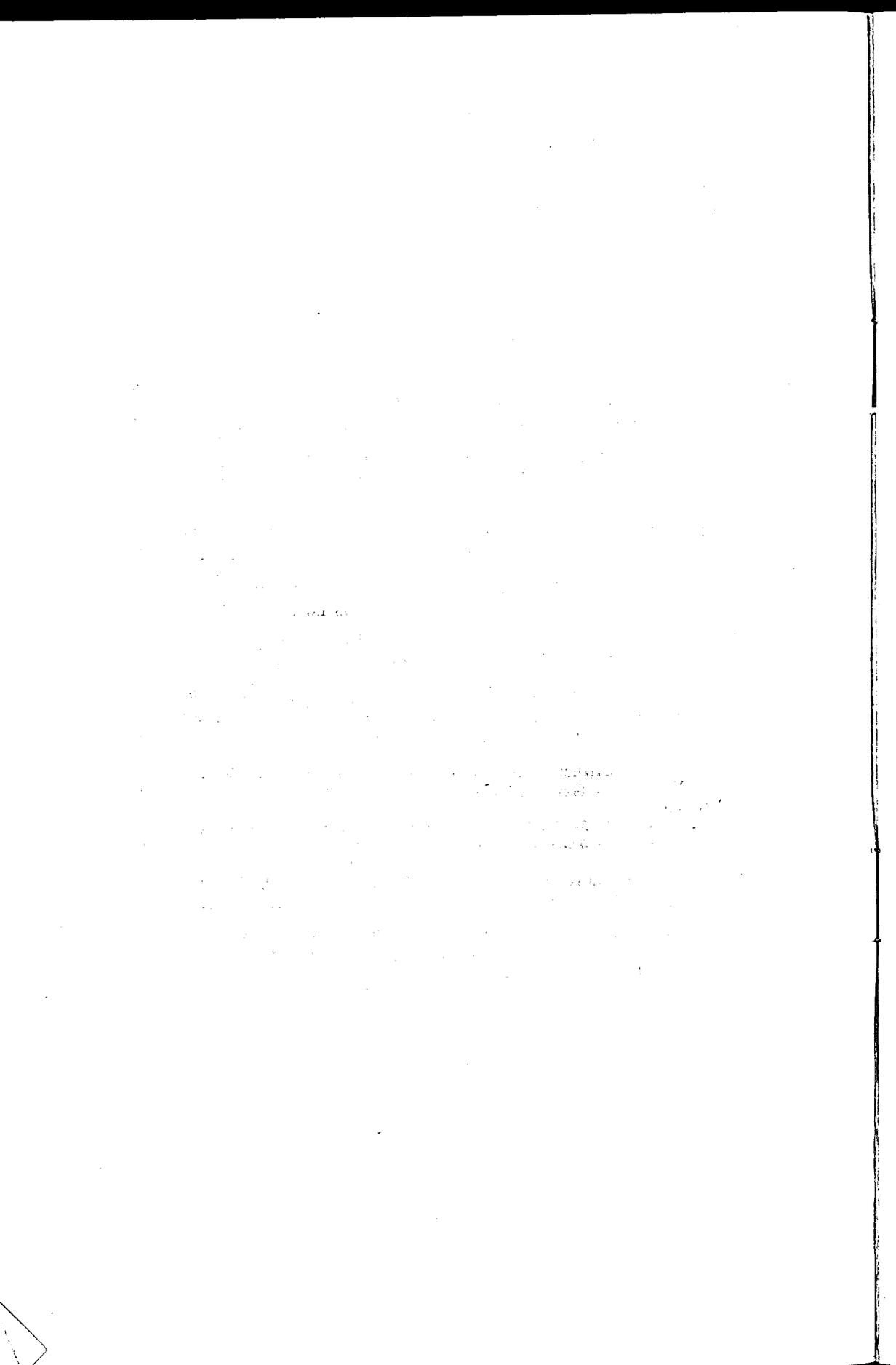


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No. 1

*Letter from Lord Runciman to the Prime Minister of the
United Kingdom.*

September 21, 1938.

My dear PRIME MINISTER,

When I undertook the task of mediation in the controversy between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten German Party I was, of course, left perfectly free to obtain my own information and to draw my own conclusions. I was under no obligation to issue any kind of report. In the present circumstances, however, it may be of assistance to you to have the final views which I have formed as a result of my mission and certain suggestions which I believe should be taken into consideration if anything like a permanent solution is to be found.

The problem of political, social and economic relations between the Teuton and Slav races in the area which is now called Czechoslovakia is one which has existed for many centuries with periods of acute struggle and periods of comparative peace. It is no new problem and in its present stage there are at the present time new factors and also old factors which would have to be considered in any detailed review. When I arrived in Prague at the beginning of August the questions which immediately confronted me were:

- (1) Constitutional,
- (2) Political, and
- (3) Economic.

The constitutional question was that with which I was immediately and directly concerned. At that time it implied provision of some degree of home rule for Sudeten Germans within the Czechoslovak Republic; the question of self determination had not yet arisen in an acute form. My task was to make myself acquainted with the history of the question, with the principal persons concerned and with suggestions for a solution proposed by the two sides, viz, by the Sudeten German party in the "sketch" submitted to the Czechoslovak Government on June 7 (which was by way of embodying the eight points of Herr Henlein's speech at Karlsbad) and by the Czechoslovak Government in their draft Nationality Statutes Language Bill and Administrative Reform Bill.

It became clear that neither of these sets of proposals was sufficiently acceptable to the other side to permit further negotiations on this basis, and the negotiations were suspended on August 17th. After a series of private discussions between Sudeten leaders and Czech authorities, a new basis for negotiation was adopted by the Czechoslovak

Government and was communicated to me on September 5th and to the Sudeten leaders on September 6th. This was the so-called fourth plan. In my opinion—and I believe in the opinion of the more responsible Sudeten leaders—this plan embodied almost all the requirements of the Karlsbad eight points and with a little clarification and extension could have been made to cover them in their entirety. Negotiations should have at once been resumed on this favourable and hopeful basis; but little doubt remains in my mind that the very fact that they were so favourable operated against their chances with the more extreme members of the Sudeten German party. It is my belief that the incident arising out of the visit of certain Sudeten German Deputies to investigate into cases of persons arrested for arms smuggling at Mährisch-Ostrau was used in order to provide an excuse for the suspension, if not for the breaking off, of negotiations. The Czech Government, however, at once gave way to the demands of the Sudeten German party in this matter and preliminary discussions of the fourth plan were resumed on September 10th. Again I am convinced that this did not suit the policy of the Sudeten extremists and that incidents were provoked and instigated on September 11th and, with greater effect after Herr Hitler's speech, on September 12th. As a result of the bloodshed and disturbance thus caused, the Sudeten delegation refused to meet the Czech authorities as had been arranged on September 13th. Herr Henlein and Herr Frank presented a new series of demands—withdrawal of state police, limitation of troops to their military duties, etc., which the Czechoslovak Government were again prepared to accept on the sole condition that a representative of the Party came to Prague to discuss how order should be maintained. On the night of September 13th this condition was refused by Herr Henlein and all negotiations were completely broken off.

It is quite clear that we cannot now go back to the point where we stood two weeks ago; and we have to consider the situation as it now faces us.

With the rejection of the Czechoslovak Government's offer on September 13th and with the breaking off of negotiations by Herr Henlein my functions as a mediator were in fact at an end. Directly and indirectly the connection between the chief Sudeten leaders and the Government of the Reich had become the dominant factor in the situation; the dispute was no longer an internal one. It was not part of my functions to attempt mediation between Czechoslovakia and Germany.

Responsibility for the final break must in my opinion rest on Herr Henlein and Herr Frank and upon those of their supporters inside and outside the country who were urging them to extreme and unconstitutional action.

I have much sympathy however with the Sudeten case. It is a hard thing to be ruled by an alien race; and I have been left with the

impression that Czechoslovakian rule in the Sudeten areas for the last 20 years though not actively oppressive and certainly not "terroristic" has been marked by tactless lack of understanding, petty intolerance and discrimination to the point where resentment of the German population was inevitably moving in the direction of revolt. The Sudeten Germans felt too that in the past they had been given many promises by the Czechoslovak Government but that little or no action had followed these promises. This experience had induced an attitude of unveiled mistrust of leading Czech statesmen. I cannot say how far this mistrust is merited or unmerited; but it certainly exists with the result that however conciliatory their statements, they inspire no confidence in the minds of the Sudeten population. Moreover in the last elections of 1935 the Sudeten German party polled more votes than any other single party; and they actually formed the second largest party in the State Parliament. They then commanded some 44 votes in a total Parliament of 300. With subsequent accessions they are now the largest party. But they can always be out-voted; and consequently some of them feel that constitutional action is useless for them.

Local irritations were added to these major grievances. Czech officials and Czech police speaking little or no German were appointed in large numbers to purely German districts; Czech agricultural colonists were encouraged to settle on lands transferred under land reform in the middle of German populations; for the children of these Czech invaders schools were built on a large scale; there is a very general belief that Czech firms were favoured as against German firms in allocation of State contracts and that the State provided work and relief for Czechs more readily than for Germans. I believe these complaints to be in the main justified. Even as late as the time of my mission I could find no readiness on the part of the Czechoslovak Government to remedy them on anything like an adequate scale.

All these and the other grievances were intensified by the reaction of the economic crisis on Sudeten industries which form so important a part of the life of the people. Not unnaturally the Government were blamed for the resulting impoverishment.

For many reasons therefore including the above, the feeling among Sudeten Germans until about three or four years ago was one of hopelessness. But the rise of Nazi Germany gave them new hope. I regard their turning for help towards their kinsmen and their eventual desire to join the Reich as a natural development in the circumstances.

At the time of my arrival the more moderate Sudeten leaders still desired a settlement within the frontiers of the Czechoslovak State. They realized what war would mean in the Sudeten area which would itself be the main battlefield. Both nationally and internationally such a settlement would have been an easier solution than territorial transfer. I did my best to promote it and up to a point with some success, but even

so, not without misgivings as to whether, when agreement was reached, it could ever be carried out without giving rise to a new crop of suspicions, controversies, accusations and counter accusations. I felt that any such arrangement would have been temporary, not lasting.

This solution in the form of what is known as the "fourth plan" broke down in the circumstances narrated above; the whole situation internally and externally had changed; and I felt that with this change my mission had come to an end.

When I left Prague on September 16th the riot and disturbance in the Sudeten area which had never been more than sporadic had died down. A considerable number of districts had been placed under a regime called Standrecht (amounting to martial law). The Sudeten leaders, at any rate the more extreme amongst them, had fled to Germany and were issuing proclamations defying the Czechoslovak Government. I have been credibly informed at the time of my leaving the number of killed on both sides was not more than 70.

Unless therefore Herr Henlein's Freikorps are deliberately encouraged to cross the frontier I have no reason to expect any notable renewal of incidents and disturbances. In these circumstances the necessity for the presence of State police in these districts should no longer exist. As the State police are extremely unpopular among the German inhabitants and have constituted one of their chief grievances for the last three years, I consider that they should be withdrawn as soon as possible. I believe that their withdrawal would reduce the causes of wranglings and riots.

Further it has become self-evident to me that those frontier districts between Czechoslovakia and Germany where the Sudeten population is in an important majority should be given full right of self-determination at once. If some cession is inevitable, as I believe it to be, it is as well that it should be done promptly and without procrastination. There is real danger, even a danger of civil war, in the continuance of a state of uncertainty. Consequently there are very real reasons for a policy of immediate and drastic action. Any kind of plebiscite or referendum would, I believe, be a sheer formality in respect of these predominantly German areas. A very large majority of their inhabitants desire amalgamation with Germany. The inevitable delay involved in taking a plebiscite vote would only serve to excite popular feeling with perhaps most dangerous results. I consider therefore that these frontier districts should at once be transferred from Czechoslovakia to Germany, and further that measures for their peaceful transfer including provision of safeguards for the population during the transfer period should be arranged forthwith by agreement between the two Governments.

The transfer of these frontier districts does not, however, dispose finally of the question of how the Germans and Czechs are to live together peacefully in the future. Even if all the areas where the Germans have a majority were transferred to Germany there would still remain in Czechoslovakia a large number of Germans and in the areas transferred

to Germany there would still be a certain number of Czechs. Economic connections are so close that an absolute separation is not only undesirable but inconceivable; and I repeat my conviction that history has proved that in times of peace the two peoples can live together on friendly terms. I believe that it is in the interest of all Czechs and of all Germans alike that these friendly relations should be encouraged to re-establish themselves; and I am convinced that this is the real desire of the average Czech and German. They are alike in being honest, peaceable, hard working and frugal folk. When political friction has been removed on both sides I believe they can settle down quietly.

For those portions of the territory therefore where the German majority is not so important, I recommend that an effort be made to find a basis for local autonomy within the frontiers of the Czechoslovak Republic on the lines of the "fourth plan," modified so as to meet the new circumstances created by the transfer of preponderantly German areas. As I have already said there is always a danger that agreement reached in principle may lead to further divergence in practice. But I think that in a more peaceful future this risk can be minimized.

This brings me to the political side of the problem which is concerned with the question of the integrity and security of the Czechoslovak Republic, especially in relation to her immediate neighbours. I believe that here the problem is one of removing a centre of intense political friction from the middle of Europe. For this purpose it is necessary permanently to provide that the Czechoslovak state should live in peace with all her neighbours and that her policy internally and externally should be directed to that end. Just as it is essential for the international position of Switzerland that her policy should be entirely neutral, so an analogous policy is necessary to Czechoslovakia—not only for her own future existence but for the peace of Europe.

In order to achieve this I recommend:

(1) That those parties and persons in Czechoslovakia who have been deliberately encouraging a policy of antagonism to Czechoslovakia's neighbours should be forbidden by the Czechoslovak Government to continue their agitation, and that if necessary legal measures should be taken to bring such agitation to an end.

(2) That the Czechoslovak Government should so remodel her foreign relations as to give assurances to her neighbours that she will in no circumstances attack them or enter into any aggressive action against them arising from obligations to other states.

(3) That the principal Powers acting in the interests of the peace of Europe should give to Czechoslovakia a guarantee of assistance in case of unprovoked aggression against her.

(4) That a Commercial Treaty on preferential terms should be negotiated between Germany and Czechoslovakia if this seems advantageous to the economic interests of the two countries.

This leads me to the third question which lies within the scope of my enquiry viz the economic problem. This problem centres on the distress and unemployment in Sudeten areas, a distress which has persisted since 1930 and is due to various causes. It constitutes a suitable background for political discontent. It is a problem which exists; but to say that the Sudeten German question is entirely or even in the main an economic one is misleading. If a transfer of territory takes place it is a problem which will for the most part fall to the German Government to solve.

If the policy which I have outlined above recommends itself to those who are immediately concerned in the present situation, I would further suggest:

(a) That a representative of the Sudeten German people should have a permanent seat in the Czechoslovak Cabinet;

(b) That a Commission under a neutral chairman should be appointed to deal with the question of the delimitation of the areas to be transferred to Germany and also with the controversial points immediately arising out of the carrying out of any agreement which may be reached;

(c) That an international force be organized to keep order in the districts which are to be transferred pending actual transfer so that Czechoslovak State police, as I have said above, and also Czechoslovak troops, may be withdrawn from this area.

I wish to close this letter by recording my appreciation of the personal courtesies, hospitality and assistance which I and my staff received from Government authorities, especially Doctor Benes and Doctor Hodza, from representatives of the Sudeten German party with whom we came into contact and from a very large number of other people in all ranks of life whom we met during our stay in Czechoslovakia.

Yours very sincerely

RUNCIMAN OF DOXFORD.

No. 2

Joint Message to President Benes of Czechoslovakia from the Ministers of the United Kingdom and France at Prague.

September 19, 1938.

The representatives of the French and British Governments have been in consultation to-day on the general situation and have considered the British Prime Minister's report of his conversation with Herr Hitler. The British Ministers also placed before their French colleagues their

conclusions derived from the account furnished to them of the work of his mission by Lord Runciman. We are both convinced after recent events that the point has now been reached where the further maintenance within the boundaries of the Czechoslovak State of the districts inhabited by the Sudeten Deutsch cannot in fact continue any longer without imperilling the interests of Czechoslovakia herself and of European peace. In the light of these considerations both Governments have been compelled to the conclusion that the maintenance of peace and the safety of Czechoslovakia's vital interests can not effectively be assured unless these areas are now transferred to the Reich.

This could be done either by direct transfer or as the result of a plebiscite. We realize the difficulties involved in a plebiscite and we are aware of your objections already expressed to this course, particularly the possibility of far-reaching repercussions if matters were treated on the basis of so wide a principle. For this reason we anticipate, in the absence of indications to the contrary, that you may prefer to deal with the Sudeten Deutsch problem by the method of direct transfer, and as a case by itself.

The area for transfer would probably have to include areas with over 50 per cent German inhabitants, but we should hope to arrange by negotiations provisions for adjustment of frontiers, where circumstances render it necessary, by some international body including a Czech representative. We are satisfied that the transfer of smaller areas based on a higher percentage would not meet the case.

The international body referred to might also be charged with the question of the possible exchange of populations on the basis of the right to opt within some specified time-limit.

We recognize that if the Czechoslovak Government is prepared to concur in the measures proposed, involving extensive changes in the conditions of the State, they are entitled to ask for some assurance of their future security.

Accordingly, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would be prepared, as a contribution to the pacification of Europe, to join in an international guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State against unprovoked aggression. One of the principal conditions of such a guarantee would be the safeguarding of the independence of Czechoslovakia by the substitution of a general guarantee against unprovoked aggression in the place of existing treaties which involve reciprocal obligations of a military character.

Both the French and British Governments recognize how great is the sacrifice thus required of the Czechoslovak Government in the cause of peace. But because that cause is common both to Europe in general and in particular to Czechoslovakia herself they have felt it their duty jointly to set forth frankly the conditions essential to the security of it.

No. 3

First letter of the 23rd September from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Chancellor of the German Reich.

September 23, 1938.

I think it may clarify the situation and accelerate our conversation if I send you this note before we meet this morning.

I am ready to put to the Czechoslovak Government your proposal as to areas so that they may examine the suggested provisional boundary. So far as I can see there is no need to hold a plebiscite for the bulk of the areas i.e. for those areas which (according to statistics upon which both sides seem to agree) are predominantly Sudeten German areas. I have no doubt, however, that the Czech Government would be willing to accept your proposal for a plebiscite to determine how far, if at all, the proposed new frontier need be adjusted.

The difficulty which I see about the proposal you put to me yesterday afternoon arises from the suggestion that the areas should in the immediate future be occupied by German troops. I recognize the difficulty of conducting a lengthy investigation under existing conditions and doubtless the plan you propose would if it were acceptable provide an immediate easing of tension. But I do not think that you have realized the impossibility of my agreeing to put forward any plan unless I have reason to suppose that it will be considered by public opinion in my country, in France and indeed in the world generally as carrying out the principle agreed upon in an orderly fashion and free from threats of force. I am sure that an attempt to occupy forthwith by German troops the areas which will become part of the Reich at once in principle and very shortly afterwards by formal delimitation would be condemned as an unnecessary display of force.

Even if I felt it right to put this proposal to the Czechoslovak Government, I am convinced that they would not regard it as being in the spirit of the arrangement which we and the French Government urged them to accept and which they have accepted. In the event of German troops moving into the areas, as you propose it is necessary, no doubt the Czechoslovak Government would have no option but to order their forces to resist and this would mean destruction of the basis upon which you and I a week ago agreed to work together, namely, an orderly settlement of this question rather than a settlement by the use of force.

It being agreed in principle that the Sudeten German areas are to be joined to the Reich, the immediate question before us is how to maintain law and order pending final settlement of arrangements for transfer. There must surely be alternatives to your proposal which would not be open to the objections I have pointed out. For instance I could ask the Czechoslovak Government whether they think that

there could be an arrangement under which the maintenance of law and order in certain agreed Sudeten German areas would be entrusted to the Sudeten Germans themselves by the creation of a suitable force or by the use of forces already in existence, possibly acting under the supervision of neutral observers.

As you know, I did last night, in accordance with my understanding with you, urge the Czechoslovak Government to do all within their power to maintain order in the meantime.

The Czechoslovak Government cannot, of course, withdraw their forces nor can they be expected to withdraw state police so long as they are faced with the prospect of forcible invasion: but I should be ready at once to ascertain their views on the alternative suggestion I have made and if the plan proved acceptable I would urge them to withdraw their forces and state police from the areas where Sudeten Germans are in a position to maintain order.

Further steps that need to be taken to complete the transfer could be worked out quite rapidly.

No. 4

Translation of letter from the Chancellor of the German Reich to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

September 23, 1938.

Your Excellency, a thorough examination of your letter which reached me to-day as well as the necessity of clearing up the situation definitely lead me to make the following communication.

For nearly two decades the German as well as various other nationalities in Czechoslovakia have been maltreated in the most unworthy manner, brutalised, economically destroyed and above all prevented from realising for themselves also the right of a nation to self-determination. All attempts of the oppressed to change their lot failed in the face of the brutal will to destruction of the Czechs. The latter were in possession of the power of the State and did not hesitate to employ it ruthlessly and barbarically. England and France have never made an endeavour to alter this situation. In my speech before the Reichstag of February 22 I declared that the German Reich would take the initiative in putting an end to any further oppression of these Germans. I have in a further declaration during the Nazi party Congress given a clear and unmistakable expression to this decision. I recognise gratefully that at last after 20 years the British Government, represented by Your Excellency, have now decided for its part also to undertake steps to put an end to a situation which from day to day, and indeed from hour to hour, is becoming more unbearable. For if formerly the behaviour of the Czechoslovak Government was

brutal it can only be described during recent weeks and days as madness. The victims of this madness are innumerable Germans. In a few weeks the number of refugees who have been driven out has risen to over one hundred and twenty thousand. This situation as stated above is unbearable and will now be terminated by me.

Your Excellency assures me now that the principle of transfer of Sudeten territory to the Reich has in principle, already been accepted. I regret to have to reply to Your Excellency as regards this point that theoretical recognition of principles has also been formally granted to us Germans. In the year 1918 the Armistice was concluded on the basis of the 14 points of President Wilson, which in principle were recognized by all. They were, however, in practice broken in the most shameful way. What interests me, Your Excellency, is not recognition of the principle that this territory is to go to Germany, but solely the realization of this principle and the realization which puts an end in the shortest time to the sufferings of unhappy victims of Czechoslovakian tyranny and at the same time corresponds to the dignity of a great Power. I can only emphasize to Your Excellency that these Sudeten Germans are not going back to German Reich in virtue of the gracious or benevolent sympathy of other nations, but on the grounds of their own will based on the right of self determination of the nation, and of the irrevocable decision of the German Reich to give effect to this will. It is however for a nation an unworthy demand to have such a recognition made dependent on conditions which are not provided for in treaties nor are practical in view of the shortness of time. I have with the best intentions and in order to give to the Czech nation no justifiable cause for complaint, proposed—in the event of a peaceful solution—as the future frontier, that nationality frontier which I am convinced represents a fair adjustment between the two racial groups, taking also into account the continued existence of large language islands.

I am ready to allow plebiscites to be taken in the whole territory which will enable subsequent corrections to be made in order—so far as it is possible—to meet the real will of the people concerned. I have undertaken to accept these corrections in advance. I have moreover declared myself ready to allow this plebiscite to take place under the control either of an International Commission or of a mixed German-Czech Commission, simultaneously, with readjustment during the days of the plebiscite, to the withdrawal of our troops from the most disputed frontier areas, subject to the condition that the Czechs do the same. I am, however, not prepared to allow a territory which must be considered as belonging to Germany on the ground of the will of the people, and of the recognition granted even by the Czechs, to be left without the protection of the Reich. There is here no international power or agreement which would have the right to take precedence over German right.

The idea of being able to entrust to Sudeten Germans alone the maintenance of order is practically impossible in consequence of obstacles put in the way of political organizations in the course of the last decade and particularly in recent times. As much in the interests of the tortured, because defenceless, population as well as with regard to the duties and prestige of the Reich, it is impossible for us to refrain from giving immediate protection to this territory.

Your Excellency assures me that it is now impossible for you to propose such a plan to your own Government. May I assure you for my part that it is impossible for me to justify any other attitude to the German people, since for England it is a question at the most of political imponderables, whereas for Germany it is a question of the primitive right of security of more than 3 million human beings and the national honour of a great people.

I fail to understand the observations of your Excellency that it would not be possible for the Czechoslovak Government to withdraw their forces so long as they were obliged to reckon with possible invasion, since precisely by means of this solution grounds for any forcible action are to be removed.

Moreover I cannot conceal from Your Excellency that the great mistrust with which I am inspired leads me to believe that the acceptance of the principle of transfer of Sudeten Germany to the Reich by the Czech Government is only given in hopes thereby to win time so as by one means or another to bring about a change in contradiction to this principle. For if the proposal that these territories are to belong to Germany is sincerely accepted there is no ground to postpone the practical resolution of this principle. My knowledge of Czech practice in such matters over a period of long years compels me to assume the insincerity of the Czech assurances so long as they are not implemented by practical proof. The German Reich is however determined by one means or another to terminate these attempts which have lasted for a decade to deny by dilatory methods the legal claim of the oppressed people.

Moreover the same attitude applies to other nationalities in this state. They also are victims of long oppression and violence. In their case also every assurance given hitherto has been broken. In their case also attempts have been made by dilatory dealings with their complaints or wishes to win time in order to be able to oppress them still more subsequently.

These nations also, if they are to achieve their rights, will sooner or later have no alternative but to secure them for themselves. In any event, Germany, if, as it now appears the case, should find it impossible to have potential rights of Germany in Czechoslovakia accepted by way of negotiations, is determined to exhaust the other possibilities which then alone remain open to her.

No. 5

Second Letter of the 23rd September from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Chancellor of the German Reich.

I have received Your Excellency's communication in reply to my letter of this morning, and have taken note of its contents.

In my capacity as intermediary, it is evidently now my duty—since Your Excellency maintains entirely the position you took last night—to put your proposals before the Czechoslovak Government.

Accordingly, I request Your Excellency to be good enough to let me have a memorandum which sets out these proposals, together with a map showing the area proposed to be transferred, subject to the result of the proposed plebiscite.

On receiving this memorandum I will at once forward it to Prague and request the reply of the Czechoslovak Government at the earliest possible moment.

In the meantime, until I can receive their reply, I should be glad to have Your Excellency's assurance that you will continue to abide by the understanding, which we reached at our meeting on September 14th and again last night, that no action should be taken, particularly in Sudeten territories, by the forces of the Reich to prejudice any further mediation which may be found possible.

Since acceptance or refusal of Your Excellency's proposals is now a matter for the Czechoslovak Government to decide, I do not see that I can perform any further service here, while on the other hand it has become necessary that I should at once report the present situation to my colleagues and to the French Government. I propose therefore to return to England.

No. 6

Translation of memorandum delivered by the Chancellor of the German Reich to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

September 23, 1938.

Reports which are increasing in number from hour to hour regarding incidents in Sudetenland show that the situation has become completely intolerable for the Sudeten German people and, in consequence, a danger to the peace of Europe. It is therefore essential that the separation of Sudetenland agreed to by Czechoslovakia should be effected without any further delay. On the attached map* the Sudeten German area

*Map not yet available.

which is to be ceded is shaded red. The areas in which, over and above the areas which are to be occupied, a plebiscite is also to be held, are drawn in and shaded green.

The final delimitation of the frontier must correspond to the wishes of those concerned. In order to determine these wishes a certain period is necessary for the preparation of the plebiscite during which disturbances must in all circumstances be prevented. A situation of parity must be created. The area designated on the attached map as a German area is to be occupied by German troops without taking account as to whether in a plebiscite there may prove to be in this or that part of the area a Czech majority. Czech territory is occupied by Czech troops without taking account as to whether within this area there lie large German language islands in which in the plebiscite a majority will, without doubt, give expression to its German national feelings.

With a view to bringing about an immediate and final solution of the Sudeten German problem the following proposals are now made by the German Government.

1. Withdrawal of the whole of the Czech armed forces, the police, the gendarmerie, the customs officials, and the frontier guards, from the areas to be evacuated as designated on the attached map, this area to be handed over to Germany on October 1st.

2. The evacuated territory is to be handed over in its present condition (see further details in appendix). The German Government agree that a plenipotentiary representative of the Czechoslovak Government or of the Czech army should be attached to the headquarters of the German military forces to deal with details of the modalities for the evacuation.

3. The Czechoslovak Government discharge at once all Sudeten Germans serving in the military forces or police anywhere in Czech State territory and permit them to return home.

4. The Czechoslovak Government liberate all political prisoners of German race.

5. The German Government agree to permit a plebiscite to take place in those areas which will be more definitely defined before, at the latest, the 25th November. Alterations to the new frontiers arising out of the plebiscite will be settled by a German-Czech or an international commission.

The plebiscite itself will be carried out under the control of an international commission. All persons who were residing in the areas in question on October 28, 1918, or who were born in those areas prior to this date will be eligible to vote. A simple majority of all eligible male and female voters will determine the desire of the population to belong to either the German Reich or to the Czech state. During the plebiscite both parties will withdraw their military forces out of the area which will be defined more precisely. The date and duration will be settled mutually by German and Czech governments.

The German Government proposes that an authoritative German-Czech Commission should be set up to settle all further details.

Appendix

The evacuated Sudeten German area is to be handed over without destroying or rendering unusable in any way the military, economic or traffic establishments (plants). These include ground organizations of air services and all wireless stations.

All economic and traffic material especially the rolling stock of the railway system in the designated area are to be handed over undamaged. The same applies to all utility services (gas works, power stations, et cetera).

Finally no foodstuffs, goods, cattle, raw materials, et cetera, are to be removed.

No. 7

Letter from Minister for Czechoslovakia in London to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

September 25, 1938

My Government has instructed me just now, in view of the fact that the French statesmen are arriving in London to-day, to bring to His Majesty's Government's notice the following message without any delay:

The Czechoslovak people have shown a unique discipline and self-restraint in the last few weeks regardless of the unbelievably coarse and vulgar campaign of the controlled German press and radio against Czechoslovakia and its leaders, especially Mr. Benes.

His Majesty's and the French Governments are very well aware that we agreed under the most severe pressure to the so-called Anglo-French plan for ceding parts of Czechoslovakia. We accepted this plan under extreme duress. We had not even time to make any representations about its many unworkable features. Nevertheless we accepted it because we understood that it was the end of the demands to be made upon us and because it followed from the Anglo-French pressure that these two Powers would accept responsibility for our reduced frontiers and would guarantee us their support in the event of our being feloniously attacked. The vulgar German campaign continued.

While Mr. Chamberlain was at Godesberg the following message was received by my Government from His Majesty's and the French representatives at Prague:

"We have agreed with the French Government that the Czechoslovak Government be informed that the French and British Governments cannot continue to take the responsibility of advising them not to mobilize. My new Government, headed by General Syrový, declared that they accept full responsibility for their predecessor's decision to accept the stern terms of the so-called Anglo-French plan.

Yesterday after the return of Mr. Chamberlain from Godesberg a new proposition was handed by His Majesty's Minister in Prague to my Government with the additional information that His Majesty's Government is acting solely as an intermediary and is neither advising nor pressing my Government in any way. Mr. Krofta, in receiving the plan from the hands of His Majesty's Minister in Prague, assured him that the Czechoslovak Government will study it in the same spirit in which they have co-operated with Great Britain and France hitherto.

My Government has now studied the document and the map. It is a *de facto* ultimatum of the sort usually presented to a vanquished nation and not a proposition to a sovereign State which has shown the greatest possible readiness to make sacrifices for the appeasement of Europe. Not the smallest trace of such readiness for sacrifices has as yet been manifested by Mr. Hitler's Government.

My Government is amazed at the contents of the memorandum. The proposals go far beyond what we agreed to in the so-called Anglo-French plan. They deprive us of every safeguard for our national existence. We are to yield up large proportions of our carefully prepared defences and admit the German armies deep into our country before we have been able to organize it on the new basis or make any preparations for its defence. Our national and economic independence would automatically disappear with the acceptance of Herr Hitler's plan. The whole process of moving the population is to be reduced to panic flight on the part of those who will not accept the German Nazi regime. They have to leave their homes without even the right to take their personal belongings or, even in the case of peasants, their cows.

My Government wish me to declare in all solemnity that Herr Hitler's demands in their present form are absolutely and unconditionally unacceptable to my Government. Against these new and cruel demands my Government feel bound to make their utmost resistance and we shall do so, God helping. The nation of St. Wenceslas, John Hus and Thomas Masaryk will not be a nation of slaves. We rely upon the two great western democracies whose wishes we have followed much against our own judgment to stand by us in our hour of trial.

No. 8

Letter from Minister for Czechoslovakia in London to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

September 26, 1938.

I have communicated to my Government the Prime Minister's question which he put to me yesterday afternoon and for which he wished an answer. This question of the Prime Minister's, as I understood it, I transmitted to Prague as follows:

"Although Herr Hitler did say that the memorandum handed to the Czechoslovak Government by His Majesty's Government was his last word, and although Mr. Chamberlain doubts very much that he could induce Herr Hitler to change his mind at this late hour, the Prime Minister may, under the circumstances, make a last effort to persuade Herr Hitler to consider another method of settling peacefully the Sudeten German question, namely, by means of an International Conference attended by Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the other Powers, which would consider the Anglo-French plan and the best method of bringing it into operation. He asked whether the Czechoslovak Government would be prepared to take part in this new effort of saving the peace."

To this question I have now received the following answer of my Government:

"The Czechoslovak Government would be ready to take part in an International Conference where Germany and Czechoslovakia, among other nations, would be represented, to find a different method of settling the Sudeten-German question from that expounded in Herr Hitler's proposals, keeping in mind the possible reverting to the so-called Anglo-French plan. In the note which Mr. Masaryk delivered to Mr. Chamberlain yesterday afternoon, mention was made of the fact that the Czechoslovak Government, having accepted the Anglo-French note under the most severe pressure and extreme duress, had no time to make any representations about its many unworkable features. The Czechoslovak Government presume that, if a Conference were to take place, this fact would not be overlooked by those taking part in it."

My Government, after the experience of the last few weeks, would consider it more than fully justifiable to ask for definite and binding guarantees to the effect that no unexpected action of an aggressive nature would take place during negotiation and that the Czechoslovak defence system would remain intact during that period.

No. 9

*Letter from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Chancellor
of the German Reich.*

September 26, 1938.

My dear REICHSKANZLER,—

In my capacity as intermediary I have transmitted to the Czechoslovak Government the memorandum which Your Excellency gave me on the occasion of our last conversation.

The Czechoslovak Government inform me that while they adhere to their acceptance of proposals for the transfer of Sudeten German areas on the lines discussed by my Government and the French Government, and explained by me to you on Thursday last, they regard as wholly unacceptable the proposals in your memorandum for immediate evacuation of the areas and their immediate occupation by German troops, these processes to take place before the terms of cession have been negotiated or even discussed.

Your Excellency will remember that in my letter to you of Friday last I said that an attempt to occupy forthwith by German troops areas which will become part of the Reich at once in principle, and shortly afterwards by formal delimitation, would be condemned as an unnecessary display of force, and that in my opinion if the German troops moved into the areas that you had proposed, I felt sure that the Czechoslovak Government would resist and that this would mean destruction of the basis upon which you and I a week ago agreed to work together, namely, an orderly settlement of this question rather than a settlement by the use of force. I referred also to the effect likely to be produced upon public opinion in my country, in France, and indeed, in the world generally.

The development of opinion since my return confirms the incompatibility in the views expressed to you in my letter and in our subsequent conversation.

In communicating with me about your proposals, the Government of Czechoslovakia pointed out that they go far beyond what was agreed to in the so-called Anglo-French plan. Czechoslovakia would be deprived of every safeguard for her national existence. She has to yield up large proportions of her carefully prepared defences and admit German armies deep into her country before it had been organized on the new basis or any preparations had been made for its defence. Her national and economic independence would automatically disappear with the acceptance of the German plan. The whole process of moving the population is to be reduced to a panic flight.

I learn that the German Ambassador in Paris has issued a communique which begins by stating that as a result of our conversations at Godesberg Your Excellency and I are in complete agreement as to

collaboration in the necessity to maintain the peace of Europe. In this spirit I address my present communication to you.

In the first place I would remind Your Excellency that as the Czechoslovak Government adhered to their acceptance of the proposals for the transfer of Sudeten-German areas there can be no question of Germany "finding it impossible to have the clear rights of Germans in Czechoslovakia accepted by way of negotiations." I am quoting the words at the end of Your Excellency's letter to me of Friday last.

On the contrary a settlement by negotiation remains possible and, with a clear recollection of the conversations which you and I have had and with an equally clear appreciation of the consequences which must follow the abandonment of negotiations and the substitution of force, I ask Your Excellency to agree that representatives of Germany shall meet representatives of the Czechoslovak Government to discuss immediately the situation by which we are confronted with a view to settling by agreement the way in which the territory is to be handed over. I am convinced that these discussions can be completed in a very short time and if you and the Czechoslovak Government desire it, I am willing to arrange for representation of the British Government at the discussions.

In our conversations, as in the official communique issued in Germany, you said that the only differences between us lay in the method of carrying out an agreed principle. If this is so, then surely the tragic consequences of a conflict ought not to be incurred over a difference in method.

A conference such as I suggest would give confidence that the cession of territory would be carried into effect but that it would be done in an orderly manner with suitable safeguards.

Convinced that your passionate wish to see the Sudeten German question promptly and satisfactorily settled can be fulfilled without incurring the human misery and suffering that would inevitably follow on a conflict, I most earnestly urge you to accept my proposal.

I am, yours faithfully,

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

No. 10

Translation of Letter from the Chancellor of the German Reich to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

September 27, 1938.

Dear Mr. CHAMBERLAIN,

I have in the course of the conversations once more informed Sir Horace Wilson who brought me your letter of September 26th of my final attitude. I should like, however, to make the following written

reply to certain details in your letter. The Government in Prague feels justified in maintaining that the proposals in my memorandum of September 23rd went far beyond the concession which it made to the British and French Governments and that the acceptance of the memorandum would rob Czechoslovakia of every guarantee for its national existence. This statement is based on the argument that Czechoslovakia is to give up a great part of her prepared defensive system before she can take steps elsewhere for her military protection. Thereby the political and economic independence of the country is automatically abolished. Moreover the exchange of population proposed by me would turn out in practice to be a panic stricken flight. I must openly declare that I cannot bring myself to understand these arguments or even admit that they can be regarded as seriously put forward. The Government in Prague simply passes over the fact that the actual arrangements for the final settlement of the Sudeten German problem in accordance with my proposals will be made dependent not on a unilateral German decision or on German measures of force but rather, on the one hand on a free vote under no outside influence, and on the other hand to a very wide degree on German-Czech agreement on matters of detail to be reached subsequently. Not only the exact definition of the territories in which the plebiscite is to take place but the execution of the plebiscite and the delimitation of the frontier to be made on the basis of its result are in accordance with my proposals to be met independently of any unilateral decision by Germany. Moreover all other details are to be reserved for agreement on the part of a German-Czech Commission. In the light of this interpretation of my proposals and in the light of the cession of the Sudeten population areas in fact agreed to by Czechoslovakia, the immediate occupation by German contingents demanded by me represents no more than a security measure which is intended to guarantee a quick and smooth achievement of the final settlement. This security measure is indispensable. If the German Government renounced it and left the whole further treatment of the problem simply to normal negotiations with Czechoslovakia, the present unbearable circumstances in the Sudeten German territories, which I described in my speech yesterday, would continue to exist for a period the length of which cannot be foreseen. The Czechoslovak Government would be completely in a position to drag out the negotiations on any point they liked and thus to delay the final settlement. You will understand, after everything that has passed, that I cannot place much confidence in the assurances received from the Prague Government. The British Government also would surely not be in a position to dispose of this danger by any use of diplomatic pressure. That Czechoslovakia should lose a part of her fortifications is naturally an unavoidable consequence of the cession of the Sudeten German territory agreed to by the Prague Government itself. If one were to wait for the entry into force of the final settlement in which Czechoslovakia had completed

new fortifications in the territory which remained to her, it would doubtless last months and years. But this is the only object of all the Czech objections. Above all it is completely incorrect to maintain that Czechoslovakia in this manner would be crippled in her natural existence or in her political and economic independence. It is clear from my memorandum that the German occupation would only extend to the given line and that the final delimitation of the frontier would take place in accordance with the procedure which I have already described. The Prague Government has no right to doubt that the German military measures would stop within these limits. If nevertheless it desires such a doubt to be taken into account the British and if necessary also the French Government can guarantee the quick fulfilment of my proposals. I can moreover only refer to my speech yesterday in which I clearly declared that I regret the idea of any attack on Czechoslovak territory and that under the condition which I laid down I am even ready to give a formal guarantee for the remainder of Czechoslovakia. There can therefore be not the slightest question whatsoever of a check to the independence of Czechoslovakia. It is equally erroneous to talk of an economic rift. It is on the contrary a well known fact that Czechoslovakia, after the cession of the Sudeten German territory, would constitute a healthier and more unified economic organism than before. If the Government in Prague finally evinces anxiety also in regard to the state of the Czech population in the territories to be occupied I can only regard this with surprise. It can be sure that on the German side nothing whatever will occur which will preserve for these Czechs a similar fate to that which has befallen the Sudeten Germans consequent on the Czech measures. In these circumstances I must assume that the Government in Prague is only using a proposal for the occupation by German troops in order, by distorting the meaning and object of my proposal, to mobilize those forces in other countries, in particular in England and France, from which they hope to receive unreserved support for their aim and thus to achieve the possibility of a general warlike conflagration. I must leave it to your judgment whether in view of these facts you consider that you should continue your effort, for which I should like to take this opportunity of once more sincerely thanking you, to spoil such manoeuvres and bring the Government in Prague to reason at the very last hour.

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