

BOOK IV—THE COMING OF PEACE.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PEACE CONFERENCE

ON Tuesday, 12th November, 1918, the news that Germany had applied to the Allied powers for an armistice, which had been granted, was officially communicated to Australia. Four days previously a premature announcement to the same effect was made in the United States and cabled all over the world. Coming events were casting their shadows before. Signs of the German collapse were apparent. On October 20th the State Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Solf, had informed the President of the United States that an "offer of peace and an armistice" had been made to the Allies by the Government of which he was a member, and that it was "supported by the approval of an overwhelming majority of the German people." Two days later Field-Marshal von Hindenburg issued to the army a general order stating that he approved of the peace move. On November 5th the President of the United States informed the German Government that Marshal Foch had been "authorised by the Government of the United States and the allied Governments to receive properly accredited representatives of the German Government, and communicate to them the terms of an armistice." The German Government accordingly despatched peace plenipotentiaries to learn the conditions from Marshal Foch. On November 9th the German Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, published the official announcement that the Kaiser, Wilhelm II, had "decided to renounce the throne," and a few days later the most boastful of the Hohenzollerns was a fugitive refugee craving permission to cross the frontier into Holland. Within a week the Kings of Bavaria, Württemberg, and Saxony, and a galaxy of grand dukes and princes, had shed the panoply of royalty. News of these dramatic happenings, flashed to the uttermost corners of the earth, indicated clearly enough that the end of the war was at hand. The premature announcement of November 8th did but liberate the feelings of intense relief and joy which the agonies and anxieties of four years had made strangers to the hearts of men

In Australia the dawn of peace broke over the threshold of summer. In the mangled fields of Flanders the dread of yet another winter, with its storms and its quagmires, was lifted like a chill cloud from the armies; and the Australian troops, who had gained immortal fame by their part in launching the offensive which finally broke the German line, began to think longingly of the November blue of their native skies, the wash of the foam on the long beaches, the leaping trout in the mountain pools, the sheen of scarlet and green of the parrots in the forest trees, the ripening fruits in the orchards, and the midnight blaze of the stars above the great plains. In Australia the warm, bright weather of the last days of spring gave cheerful atmosphere to the gladness which burst forth from the bells in the steeples and the songs of the crowds in the streets of the cities. All business seemed to stop; one great sigh of relief went up; flags fluttered from every flagstaff; bonfires flamed on the hills; bands of music, processions, fireworks, any kind of rhythm or any point of light that could punctuate the unrestrained burst of delight, was welcome. In the cathedrals stately services and anthems set to solemn music expressed the fervour of thankfulness, and there was not a religious building from end to end of the continent that did not add to the volume of gratitude and praise.

II

Mr. Hughes was in England when the end of the war came. Mr. Lloyd George had in the meantime supplanted Mr. Asquith as Prime Minister of Great Britain, and had summoned an Imperial Conference, to attend which Mr. Hughes left Australia in April, 1918, taking the route *viâ* the Pacific, through the United States, and across the Atlantic. The Minister for the Navy, Mr. Joseph Cook, also went to England at this time to share with the Prime Minister the work to be done at the conference. Both ministers remained till the peace negotiations were completed, and both signed the treaty of Versailles.

The ministers on reaching England during the later stages of the German offensive of 1918 found the British Government deeply troubled with two anxieties of which little

evidence had leaked through to the dominion governments oversea. The first concerned the efficiency of British military leadership, especially in France and Flanders; the second the sufficiency of British man-power to last till the end of the war. As to the first of these, Mr. Lloyd George immediately took Mr. Hughes into his confidence.¹ The Passchendaele offensive, he said, had been a tragic and bloody disaster which he and the War Cabinet had been powerless to prevent, in spite of their efforts to do so, in face of the determination of their military advisers. The British Army, he said, unlike those of the dominions, was not a field for the promotion of the best talent the nation contained; almost all commands in it, above the rank of brigadier-general, were preserved for members of the old regular army, most of whom—especially the cavalry branch, from which most of the army commanders had been chosen—belonged to a limited and powerful class. "I do not belong to that class," said the British Prime Minister. If he had stepped in and stopped their offensive, they would have carried the country with the cry that he had held them up on the brink of a great military success. If the protest against their conduct of the war had come from the dominions, however, it would have carried results which it could not have achieved if he had made it, and he deplored the fact that the dominion ministers had not been there in the autumn, when their action might have brought about a change in the command.

Both Mr. Hughes and Sir Robert Borden, the Prime Minister of Canada, although strongly impressed by these representations, were loth to become catspaws for the removal of Sir Douglas Haig, the British Commander-in-Chief in France, without direct evidence that their own national forces were detrimentally affected by defective leadership on his part. They and other oversea ministers were, however, deeply concerned with the probability that their troops might have to continue fighting—for possibly two more years, as was then expected—under what was alleged to be a dull and blundering command. Mr. Lloyd George welcomed the view of the

¹ As regards occurrences prior to the Peace Conference, the narrative from this point is based largely on the private diary and notes of the Australian Official War Correspondent Mr. Lloyd George's view of British leadership at Passchendaele is contained in *Vol. IV* of his *War Memoirs*, chapter *lxiii*.

dominion ministers that they must share in the consultations before operations involving immense casualties were initiated. As a sequel to the critical situation that followed Ludendorff's offensive of 21st March, 1918, when the British Army came near to being separated from the French, the Imperial War Cabinet referred to a committee of prime ministers the question of investigating the causes which led up to that disaster, with a view to determining the proper relationships between those in control of the fighting forces and the several governments of the Empire. Sir Robert Borden laid before this committee a strongly-adverse report from Lieutenant-General Currie,² commanding the Canadian forces in France, himself formerly a civilian, upon some aspects of the conduct of the campaign there. The committee, which was largely advised by Sir Henry Wilson,³ then chief of the Imperial General Staff, was informed that victory could probably not be assured until the Americans had in the field a total force of a hundred divisions, which would not be before 1920. It ascertained that Great Britain in 1918 found great difficulty in providing even half the reinforcement that had been available in 1917, and that any continuance of casualties equal to those of Passchendaele would leave the British armies depleted and exhausted. The committee arrived at a number of decisions as to principles intended to govern the future conduct of the war so far as the British and dominion forces were concerned. One was that in the army "every post should be held by the best man available, irrespective of whether he is a professional or civilian soldier."⁴ Another was that it was the right and duty of the Government to assure itself that operations which might involve heavy casualties were not undertaken unless there was a fair chance that they would produce commensurate effects on the final issue of the war.⁵ It followed that the general lines of major operations likely

² General Sir Arthur Currie, G.C.M.G., K.C.B. Commanded 2nd Can. Inf. Bde., 1914/15; 1st Can. Div., 1915/17; Can. Corps, 1917/19; Inspector-General, Canadian Militia, 1919/20; Principal of McGill University, Montreal, 1920/33. B. Napperton, Ontario, 5 Dec., 1875. Died 29 Nov.

³ Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Bt., G.C.B., D.S.O., p.s.c. Asst. C.G.S. B.E.F., 1914. Commanded IV Army Corps, 1915/16, Liaison Officer with French Army, 1917; British Military Representative, Supreme War Council, Versailles, 1917/18; Chief of Imperial General Staff, 1918/22. Of Currygrane, Edgeworthstown, Ireland; b. 5 May, 1864. Assassinated, 22 June, 1922.

⁴ Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure*, p. 66.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

to involve a heavy casualty-list should be submitted to the Government for its approval.

These decisions had little effect upon the conduct of the war, inasmuch as the final offensive which led to its early and favourable termination began shortly after they were made. But, had the struggle lasted until 1919 or 1920, as every military adviser of the Allied Governments—Haig, Wilson, and Foch—even then believed it would, and had dissatisfaction with the command become again as acute as it was at the end of 1917, there is no doubt that the support of the dominions would have assisted the War Cabinet in imposing its will on the commanders or in selecting others to replace them.

The second anxiety which beset the Imperial War Cabinet concerned the question of man-power. It was apparent that Great Britain had reached the stage at which the possible exhaustion of her reserves was in sight, and her Prime Minister foresaw the danger that the end of the war would find her forces so depleted that she would count for little in the settlement of the terms of peace. Ever since the Battles of Passchendaele, the British War Cabinet had been following the policy, adopted six months before by the Government of France, of deliberately conserving the national strength for the final decisive stroke to be delivered in conjunction with the Americans. Actually, the number of fit recruits originally allotted by the British War Cabinet for the whole of the British Army during 1918 was only 100,000 fit men—little more than were being asked from Australia for the maintenance of the A.I.F. during the same year.

The Prime Ministers of the dominions—especially the Australian—could not be oblivious of the danger of exhaustion of their own forces.⁶ While the committee of the Imperial War Cabinet was conducting the inquiry just described, it so happened that the most prominent rôle on the Western Front was being filled by the Australian Corps. It had not been involved in the heavy fighting and immense losses in the German offensive, but it had played a most active part in the

⁶ The quota of reinforcements expected from Australia was 5,500 per month, to secure which it was estimated that (allowing for sickness, subsequent rejections, etc.) 7,000 would have to be enlisted—that is 84,000 for the year. The actual numbers forthcoming from Australia at that time were, however, less than half this quantity.

final stopping of that offensive and in the months that followed. It was recognised as being, along with some others, a "shock" force, and there was no doubt that the British command would employ it in heavy tasks as soon as fighting on a great scale recommenced. With less than half the required reinforcement coming from Australia, and fighting of the heaviest nature probably ahead, Mr. Hughes put to himself the same question as was troubling his colleagues of Great Britain and France. If the war lasted for two years, and Australia took no special steps to conserve the Australian army, how much of it would be left at the end of the struggle? With only a memory of long-past actions to support her claims, what figure would Australia cut in the peace negotiations?

Throughout most of the war the Australian military forces overseas were administered by General Birdwood as G.O.C., A.I.F., through an Australian administrative headquarters at first in Egypt and later in London. This was staffed by Brigadier-General Griffiths and other Australian military administrators, through whom Birdwood retained close touch with the Defence Department in Australia. The system worked with a minimum of political interference and most efficiently, except perhaps as regards the troops in Palestine, whose needs were not adequately represented in London. The Canadian Government, on the other hand, had throughout maintained in London a branch of its Ministry of Militia, with its High Commissioner, Sir George Perley,⁸ at first in charge as Minister for Militia Overseas. In November, 1917, Canada's control of her oversea forces had been strengthened by transferring the Minister of Militia, Sir Edward Kemp,⁹ from Ottawa to London to relieve Sir George Perley of this part of his task; and in April, 1918, Kemp's hands had been much strengthened by the establishment in

⁷ As late as September, 1918, Mr. Hughes, lunching with Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Northcliffe at the Marlborough Club, found both of them convinced that the war would last until 1919. The first leader from whom he had any other opinion was Foch, who, when asked by M. Clemenceau in Mr. Hughes's presence *early in October*, said that victory might be achieved in six weeks—at all events, before the end of the year. But until lately Foch had held a different opinion.

⁸ Rt. Hon. Sir George Perley, G.C.M.G. Minister of Overseas Military Forces of Canada, 1916/17; High Commissioner for Canada, in London, 1917/22. Lumber manufacturer; of Ottawa; b. Lebanon, New Hampshire, U.S.A., 12 Sept., 1857. Died 4 Jan., 1938.

⁹ Hon. Sir Edward Kemp, K.C.M.G. Minister of Militia and Defence, 1916/17; Minister of Overseas Military Forces of Canada, 1917/20. *Industrialist*; of Toronto; b. Clarenceville, Quebec, 11 Aug., 1858. Died 12 Aug., 1929.

England of a Canadian Military Council, consisting, as did the British Army Council, of the heads of the military departments with the minister presiding. On August 24th Sir Robert Borden stated in Canada that the Canadian army in France would now be independent, except so far as concerned the command by Sir Douglas Haig and Marshal Foch. This method of control was entirely different from that adopted by Australia. But in the circumstances of 1918 Mr. Hughes used his influence, both directly and indirectly, to determine to some extent the treatment—including even the employment in the field—of the Australian troops.

It will be remembered that in 1916 his request to Sir Douglas Haig, that the Australian divisions should be combined in a single army, had been refused on the reasonable ground that it involved practical difficulties in organisation which would prejudice the cause for which all were fighting. The request had been raised again in the middle of 1917, but it was not until the end of that year that a sudden change of circumstances enabled Haig to accede to it to the extent of combining all the Australian infantry in a single corps.¹⁰ Now that Mr. Hughes was in close touch with the troops and with the events at the front, and was impressed with the need of conserving the Australian force, he pressed with all his energy for three further concessions which were longed for, almost beyond hope, by the troops: first, leave for the original "Anzacs" to return on two months' furlough to Australia; second, a rest for the corps, to commence in October; and, third, an arrangement by which the Australian infantry should winter in the south of France or in Italy.

The first of these concessions was granted, and, though approval was easier to secure than ships, the latter were eventually found and 6,000 of the troops with longest service left France for Australia in September. For the second concession Mr. Hughes pressed directly on General Monash, the Australian commander in France; and, whether by chance or design, on the date which the Australian Prime Minister specified, October 3rd, the last of the Australian infantry was being taken out of the line, after two months of tremendous fighting, for a month's clear rest—a rest which, it is stated.

¹⁰ See *Vol. V, ch. i.*

was recognised throughout the British Army as being thoroughly well-deserved. In accordance with the principles enunciated by the committee of the Imperial War Cabinet, the Australian Prime Minister stipulated that he must be consulted before it was used again in major operations. At the end of the month it was marched again towards the front; it was understood that the Australian Prime Minister would have no objection to its employment in the fighting then contemplated with a view to forcing an early decision. When, however, it was just reaching the front, hostilities ended with the signing of the Armistice. The sudden end of the war rendered unnecessary the project of conserving the force by transferring it to winter quarters in the south. Such a request could only be justified on the doubtful basis that Australians were less fit than the British for withstanding a European winter, or, on the better one, that, if required as shock troops, they must be given ampler rest.

If, as was expected, the war had continued during another year, the dominion governments would undoubtedly have exerted an ever-increasing influence in the control of their own forces in the field. The Canadian Minister for Oversea Forces, Sir Edward Kemp, claimed that in 1918 he had declined to reduce the number of battalions in Canadian divisions at a time when the reduction was being enforced in the British Army, and that his representations induced Haig and Foch to avoid a contemplated distribution of the Canadian divisions in accordance with the needs of the moment.¹¹ How far such special control would have proved compatible with the maintenance throughout the British forces of the good feeling and unity of purpose that differentiated the association of British and dominion troops from a mere alliance is a problem which, perhaps fortunately, remained unsolved.

The Australian Prime Minister, on the invitation of Mr. Lloyd George, was present at more than one meeting of the Supreme War Council of the Allies, notably at that held on July 4th at which there arrived word of the Australian success in the small action at Hamel, news which, in that time of depression, had an effect out of all proportion to the extent of the forces involved.

¹¹ *War Government of the British Dominions* by Dr. A. Berriedale Keith (Carnegie Endowment series), p. 109.

III

Mr. Hughes regularly attended meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet, where his special business was, naturally, to keep a watchful eye on such questions as might be of interest to his own dominion. But it is a noteworthy fact that he and other representatives of the dominions exercised influence occasionally on questions with which they were not directly concerned. One dominion minister indeed, General Smuts, occupied an extraordinary position in the inner councils of the British Government, being leant upon not only as an adviser in its most intimate concerns, but as an intermediary in more than one delicate and difficult mission. But other oversea ministers also were consulted on British affairs.

For example on November 20th the Cabinet was occupied with a great press of business, among which arose the question of one John Maclean, a Labour candidate for Parliament who was at the moment imprisoned for an offence against the Defence of the Realm Act ("Dora"). "The workers on the Clyde," Mr. Hughes records, "had threatened to take very drastic steps if he were not released. . . . When the Dominion representatives had declared themselves favourable to his release, the Cabinet decided to notify the Home Secretary that the majority had so agreed."¹² The case is interesting as an illustration of that "elasticity" which has been extolled as one of the peculiar virtues of the British system of government.

But, though the system had proved sufficiently elastic to enable dominion statesmen at a Cabinet meeting to exert influence in a purely internal British case, it was not taken for granted that they would be direct participants in the Peace Conference. Yet the British Government had pledged itself to the dominions that they should be consulted as to the terms of peace. On the 21st of January, 1915, the Secretary of State for the Colonies informed the Australian Government that its Prime Minister would be consulted "most fully and, if possible, personally" when the time came, and on April 4th following he told the House of Commons that this pledge would be observed in "the spirit as well as the letter." Now, on the

¹² Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure*, p. 94.

29th of October, 1918, when the terms of the Armistice were still under discussion, the Prime Minister of Canada asked that his dominion should be represented in the peace negotiations. But the Germans, by seeking an armistice on the basis of an agreement to President Wilson's "fourteen points,"¹³ had in fact already initiated negotiations on the peace terms, since they were asking that these general principles of the peace treaty should be incorporated in the armistice conditions. On the very day of Sir Robert Borden's request the Supreme War Council, including the representatives of Japan, met to discuss agreement on this basis; and this conference continued until November 4th. Yet the Dominions were not consulted or even informed that the matter was under discussion.

Mr. Hughes had for some time felt bitterly that Wilson's points limiting reparations and annexations were proposed by a leader whose people had not borne the main suffering of the war, and that they were grossly unfair to those who had, and he seethed with a rebellious indignation. Why should this "schoolmaster" determine the demands of those who had borne the burden of the struggle? Yet, when this question had previously been raised, Mr. Lloyd George said that he could not see what could be done except to stand by Woodrow Wilson.

Fearing that the British Government might be stampeded into assent, Mr. Hughes had visited Paris and established an understanding on this point with members of the French Government and particularly with M. Clemenceau. Not Wilson, he urged, but France was the proper interpreter of the Allies' needs.¹⁴ Needless to say, Mr. Hughes found the French Government whole-heartedly of that opinion. In Hughes's presence Clemenceau asked Marshal Foch when he could promise a victorious end of the war. "Within six weeks," was the answer, "at all events before the end of the year."

In pursuing this course, Mr. Hughes was not merely endeavouring to prevent the conclusion of the Armistice on

¹³ See Vol. V, ch. iii.

¹⁴ President Poincaré, when decorating him on Oct. 12, said: "We must not have peace!" He meant that an armistice must not be arranged on lenient terms which, it was thought, President Wilson might favour; but Wilson left this matter to Foch.

terms which he considered unfair to the Allies, and to Australia among them; he was also fighting for a seat at the Peace Conference. The Australian ministers, by their influence inside the Imperial War Cabinet and the delegation for the Peace Conference, would be able materially to assist the French; and French support would probably enable the dominion delegates to secure their place in that delegation. Mr. Hughes was presented by President Poincaré with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour. He was received on October 14th by the French War Cabinet, and made them a vigorous speech of which the intention was partly to strengthen their attitude, partly to secure their support. He was thanked by them for the part that Australia had played and for his own determined leadership in the struggle.

Yet, as a result of the Conference of which the Dominions were not informed, the Allies told President Wilson that they would negotiate peace on the basis of his fourteen points, with two provisos: first, that they reserved liberty of action on the question of freedom of the seas; second, that the provision for restoration of invaded territory must be extended to cover "compensation by Germany for all damage done to the civil population of the Allies, and to their property, by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air." The British Government held that its promise to consult the Dominions had been met by the general preliminary discussion of peace terms in the War Cabinet. But President Wilson's points had never been seriously considered there; and Mr. Hughes had received from the Australian Government a message raising specific objection to several of them, particularly point 3, which might be read to restrict the right of imposing discriminatory customs duties, and point 5, which might mean that occupied German colonies in the Pacific were to be given up. In a speech in London on November 7th he complained bitterly that both these points had been accepted by the British Government without consultation with the dominions, and stated that Australia would not be bound by adverse interpretations of them. He again protested against any restriction upon the right of the Allies to recoup from Germany their war costs.

It has been argued that Mr. Hughes could have made less aggressive use of the Australian Government's views; his method of quarrelling in public with friends and allies was criticised in Australia, both then and later. But a vital pledge had apparently been broken, and he was now fighting for something which the British Government was reluctant to give, and which undoubtedly resulted in advantage not only to the dominions but to the British Empire as a whole. For Australia at any rate, as an Australian at the front noted in his diary, there was definitely danger lest having helped to win the war she would find that she had lost it in the peace treaty. If those proposals which later, at Versailles, Mr. Hughes effectively resisted had been accepted by the British peace delegation, the results for Australia might have been grave, and the bitterness of her people would have been extreme.

Mr. Hughes strengthened his case for Australia's representation by taking steps to impress on British publicists the preponderating influence of the Australian and Canadian Corps in the victorious battle on the 8th of August, 1918. He himself, on being shown over the ground by the Official War Correspondent shortly after the action, had been immensely impressed by what had been accomplished there. Reports of the activity of dominion troops were at the time discounted in England as due to their being favoured by the publicity arrangements. Realising that their true part in this offensive was not known, he arranged for a number of newspaper proprietors and writers to be shown over the same ground and visit the Australian front as guests of the Australian Government. Seven successive parties were thus arranged, two of them, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,¹⁸ Sir Gilbert Parker,¹⁹ and Major J. H. Beith ("Ian Hay"),¹⁷ being present when the Fourth Army broke through the Hindenburg Line—a struggle which the begetter of *Sherlock*

¹⁸ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Author; of Windlesham, Crowborough, Sussex; b. Edinburgh, 22 May, 1859. Died 7 July, 1930.

¹⁹ Rt. Hon Sir Gilbert Parker, Bt. Author; of London; b. Canada, 23 Nov. 1862. Died 6 Sept., 1932.

¹⁷ Maj.-Gen. J. H. Beith, C.B.E., M.C., 10th Bn, Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, commanded 27th Bde. M.G. Coy. Director of Public Relations, War Office, 1938. Novelist and playwright; of Alt-na-Craig, Oban, Scotland; b. Platt Abbey, Manchester, Eng., 17 April, 1876.

Holmes, together with Sir Joseph Cook, watched from the top of a derelict tank.¹⁸

But, while Mr. Hughes was strengthening the foundations for Australia's claims to direct participation in the peace negotiations, it is possible to understand the British Government's reluctance to extend too widely the new methods of peace negotiation. European diplomacy had its traditional methods, and it may frankly be admitted that it is not by any means clear that the world as a whole gained from departing from them in 1918-19. When previous wars ended, the soldiers gave place to the trained diplomatists, who understood each other's language and manners, and constructed their treaties in an atmosphere of dignified calm. There were no camera-men to "shoot" the scenes, and special correspondents, kept at a respectful distance, were officially fed on the crumbs gathered up from the mahogany tables and handed to them on silver salvers. But the ways of Castlereagh and Metternich, Clarendon and Stratford de Redcliffe, Salisbury and Dufferin, were not in fashion after the Great War; and whether the modes which were *de règle* were an improvement on those of earlier generations is a question which the post-war world has had time and occasion for pondering. The British Foreign Office was fluttered when the proposition emerged that the dominions should be represented at the Peace Conference. A distinguished witness has left on record an incident reflecting the pained surprise. "I well remember," writes Dr. A. E. Zimmermann,¹⁹ "a certain day in December 1918, when, as I was working in my room in the British Foreign Office, somebody entered in a condition of much excitement and told us that Canada wished to be represented at the Peace Conference, and was even taking an interest in the League of Nations. It was very inconvenient. What was the Foreign

¹⁸ Among the other principal visitors were: Messrs. H. C. Bailey, Canning Baily, and E. Price Bell, Sir William Berry, Messrs J. H. Blackwood and Robert Blatchford, Lord Burnham, Messrs. Boyd Cable and L. Cope Cornford, Col. Arthur Lynch, Messrs. Patrick MacGill, Thomas Marlowe, Neil Munro, E. R. Phillips, and Arnold White. At the invitation of the British Government, representatives of the dominion press also visited the front. The party from Australia comprised Messrs. Frank Anstey, H. Campbell-Jones, A. Carson, J. O. Fairfax, T. W. Heney, J. J. Knight, J. C. Mackintosh, S. H. Prior, W. H. Simmonds, Sir William Sowden, Mr. Geoffrey Syme, and Major W. A. Whitehead.

¹⁹ Sir Alfred Zimmermann. Staff Inspector, British Board of Education, 1912/15, Member of Political Intelligence Dept., Foreign Office, 1918/19, Deputy-Director, League of Nations Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, Paris 1926/30, Professor of International Relations, Oxford University, since 1930. B Surbiton, Eng., 1879.

Office to do? Well, what could it do? Canada's losses were as heavy as Belgium's. Canada had morally and materially as much right to share in those deliberations as the smaller allies."²⁰ Dr. Zimmern, being a man of great knowledge, with a large understanding of the dominions' point of view, was able at once to say the only satisfactory thing: the dominions must be represented, because of the extent of their sacrifice and their vital interest in the terms of settlement.

More surprising, however, than the shock to the nerves of the Foreign Office, was a certain official inclination in Australia to disapprove of the claim for direct representation. Mr. Watt, the Acting Prime Minister and Treasurer of the Commonwealth, cabled to Mr. Hughes:

Claim for representation of Dominions as Dominions, either at Versailles or Peace Conference, is not reasonable, and cannot be supported by the Cabinet. It is not proposed to ask Parliament to carry any resolutions claiming representation of Dominions as Dominions. We feel that it would be impossible to pass such a motion.²¹

An examination of the evidence affecting Australian public opinion at the time does not disclose that there was any opposition to direct representation. There was, on the contrary, an expectation that Australian interests would be watched by the Prime Minister from a position of advantage. The circumstance that the question was first raised by Canada is not in itself important. Mr. Hughes was not the man to permit his own claims to be ignored without emphatic objection. His strong and independent protests both in London and Paris against the acceptance of President Wilson's fourteen points, were not unrelated to his determination that Australia must be directly represented. If Canada made the first formal move, the precedence in time was insignificant. But the fact that Canada had raised the issue was not known in Australia, or perhaps Mr. Watt's cablegram would not have been sent.

Another piece of interesting evidence comes from South Africa. Dr. Engelenburg,²² the intimate friend and bio-

²⁰ A. E. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire* (1926), p. 30.

²¹ This cablegram was quoted textually by Mr. Hughes in a debate in the House of Representatives. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. XCIV, p. 5817.

²² Dr. F. V. Engelenburg. Editor, *Die Volkstem*, from 1889. Of Pretoria; b Holland, 1863.

grapher of General Louis Botha, in a well-informed page, writes that Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill were "not enthusiastic" over the prospect of seeing the dominions figure as separate powers at the Peace Conference table. Lord Milner, on the other hand, "had abandoned his old 'proconsular' ideas about Empire structure," and strongly supported the ideas of Sir Robert Borden, Botha, and Smuts,²³ who were in favour of a frank recognition of the "autonomous international status, which the military prowess of the Dominions during the war had justified."²⁴

Dr. Zimmern does not give the date in December when the Foreign Office official's excitement occurred, but Mr. Hughes is precise as to when he raised the question. On December 3rd he attended a conference of the Allies which was held in the Cabinet room at 10 Downing-street. The French Prime Minister, M. Clemenceau, was there, together with Marshal Foch, General Weygand, Signor Orlando, Baron Sonnino, and the whole of the Imperial War Cabinet, including all the dominions representatives except General Botha. Mr. Lloyd George presided. Mr. Hughes had already established most cordial relations with the French.

We considered many urgently important matters, and the representatives of the Dominions spoke freely in the discussions. When the decision, made previously, upon the representation of small nations at the Peace Conference came up for review, I asked what share in the work the Dominions and India would have. The paragraph governing this seemed somewhat vague, and I requested an authoritative interpretation. After a short debate the Conference agreed that upon all matters in which they were directly interested—for example, the supply of raw material and the ex-German colonies—the Dominions' own representatives would be entitled to present their case. On the motion of Mr. Lloyd George, the Conference added India to the other Dominions, and she became entitled to the same representation as other small nations, *e.g.*, Belgium. We considered, too, Russia's representation, but as no representative of the United States was present, the Conference agreed that it could reach no useful conclusion.²⁵

If Mr. Lloyd George was not "enthusiastic," he accepted the idea of direct dominion representation, when it was raised, with a good grace, and fought hard for it against the opposition of the other Powers, whose reluctance can be

²³ General Rt. Hon. J. C. Smuts, C.H., Minister of Defence, South Africa, 1910/20; Prime Minister, 1919/24; commanded British force in East Africa, 1916/17. Of Doornkloof, Irene, Pretoria, b. 24 May, 1870.

²⁴ Engelenburg, *General Louis Botha*, pp. 317-8.

²⁵ Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure*, p. 95.

understood. "France, Italy and the United States were to have only five representatives each on the Conference. The admission of the claims of the Dominions and India to separate representation meant that the British Empire had in all fourteen representatives. That Mr. Lloyd George succeeded in gaining his point is an illustration of that remarkable skill in negotiation for which the future will assuredly give him full credit."²⁸ President Woodrow Wilson was not so much opposed as it was expected that he would be, and, after a discussion by the Council of Ten, it was in fact on his suggestion, supported by Mr. Lloyd George, that it was agreed, on the 13th of January, 1919, that the British dominions should have the right to be represented by delegates in the following numbers: Canada 2, Australia 2, South Africa 2, New Zealand 1, and India (including native states) 2. They thus ranked equal with the small powers except in two respects: if it came to a vote, they had no vote separate from that of the British Empire Delegation; but they possessed the great advantage of being within the delegation of one of the Great Powers.

The nature of the Imperial War Cabinet—which sat from June to December, 1918—needs to be explained, because it was unlike any other body which has ever met to deal with Empire business. It was not like the ordinary Cabinet of the United Kingdom, though it included all the members of that Cabinet, in addition to representatives of the dominions. It was not like an Imperial conference, which never included British ministers whose departments were not directly concerned with colonial or dominion business. It had no executive power. It could not determine that anything should or should not be done, though in practice its resolutions were carried out. It could not bind either the Government of Great Britain or the government of any dominion. Mr. Hughes explains the procedure in these terms:

Its members were made up of the first and other Ministers of Britain and of the Dominions, of representatives of many Governments. Although they followed the same procedure as ordinary Cabinets, deliberating and registering their decisions, these decisions were not, as is usually so, sufficient authority for whatever action might be necessary to effect them. There remained yet the approval or consent

²⁸ J. G. Latham, *The Significance of the Peace Conference from an Australian Point of View*, p. 6



A FAMILY COUNCIL.

THE IMPERIAL WAR CABINET IS NOW IN SESSION

55 CARTOON FROM *LONDON Punch*, 19TH JUNE, 1918

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of another Cabinet or of other Cabinets to be obtained. Where, for example, the thing proposed to be done fell wholly within the ambit or power of the British Parliament, the British Cabinet had to authorise the necessary action; and where these decisions fell within the powers of the Dominions, the same principle applied, although its application was much more difficult. What happened then was this: the decision having been arrived at, the Prime Minister of the Dominion affected and his colleagues assenting, the position was telegraphed to the Acting Prime Minister of the Dominion, who summoned his fellow Ministers, laid the matter before them, and communicated the result of their deliberations to his Prime Minister. He, in turn, informed the Imperial Cabinet. If the Government of the Dominion—which, it is very necessary to note, always remained in the Dominion—authorised the proposed step, action was taken by virtue of that authority. Always the decision of the Imperial Cabinet, *qua* Imperial Cabinet, was only a recommendation requiring the assent of the Government or Governments which had authority over the subject-matter covered by the decision before it could be translated into action.²⁷

The Imperial War Cabinet, then, was a war expedient for taking the dominions into consultation. The Prime Minister of Great Britain presided over it, and from time to time the situation was explained from the points of view of various ministers who had special knowledge—the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Foreign Secretary, the Minister of War, the Colonial Secretary, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The purpose was that the members should have “a comprehensive and accurate grasp” of the current position. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff frequently attended and explained the military situation on all fronts; and Sir Henry Wilson, who then occupied that supremely-important post, in his published diaries, bore testimony to the acuteness of Mr. Hughes’s comments, to his outstanding persistence in the struggle, and to his clear appreciation of the strategic principle, to which most soldiers adhered, that victory could only be won on the Western Front. Mr. Hughes frequently attended, and Sir Joseph Cook was likewise present on many occasions; as were also Sir Robert Garran, the Commonwealth Solicitor-General, and Mr. Latham—to become, years later, Chief Justice of Australia, but then Mr. Cook’s principal official adviser, and holding the rank of lieutenant-commander, R.A.N.R.

Another important respect in which the Imperial War Cabinet differed from an ordinary cabinet was that it had a

²⁷ Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure*, p. 50.

secretariat, and that shorthand notes were taken of its discussions, copies of the transcripts being afterwards distributed among the members. Sir Maurice Hankey²⁸ was the secretary, and he had three assistant secretaries, namely, Lieutenant-Colonel Storr,²⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel Amery,³⁰ and Captain Clement Jones.³¹ It was a well-established tradition of Cabinet government in the United Kingdom that notes should not be taken, even by Cabinet ministers, a point upon which Mr. Gladstone, for example, was very strict. But the proceedings of the War Cabinet were recorded in transcripts of shorthand notes running to hundreds of folio pages.

IV

The Australian Prime Minister came in contact with many public men, British and foreign, on his two visits to Europe, and some of them have left impressions of him. These are not always complimentary, for public men are habitually unsparing and sometimes ungenerous critics of each other. Mr. Hughes himself was not profuse in compliments when he had occasion to judge his distinguished colleagues. The Italian Prime Minister, Signor Nitti, though crediting him with sincerity, dismissed him as "a small-minded, insensitive, violent man"; but that statesman lived to come under the displeasure of one much more violent, in Signor Mussolini.³² The American ambassador to London, Walter Hines Page, in a letter to President Wilson, wrote:

I made a pretty close study of Hughes. He is not a big man. In many ways he is an ignorant man. But he is an earnest fellow, and, I think, quite honest. His economic grasp is not wide—a somewhat narrow but very earnest and surely very convincing man, a free-and-easy and ready campaigner with a colonial breeziness which "takes."³³

²⁸ Col Lord Hankey, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O. Asst. Secretary, Committee of Imperial Defence, 1908/12; Secretary, 1912/38; Secretary, War Cabinet, 1916/19, Imperial War Cabinet, 1917/18; Secretary to British Cabinet, 1919/38; Clerk to Privy Council, 1923/38. Of Limpsfield, Surrey; b. Biarritz, France, 1 April, 1877.

²⁹ Lieut.-Col. C. L. Storr, C.B., p.s.c. Asst. Secretary, Committee of Imperial Defence, 1916/21; Asst. Secretary, War Cabinet, 1916/18. Officer of Indian Regular Army; of London; b. Brenchley, Kent, 18 Jan., 1874.

³⁰ Lieut.-Col. Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery. Served in Flanders and the Near East, 1914/16; Asst. Secretary, War Cabinet, and Imperial War Cabinet, 1917; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1922/24; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1924/29, for Dominion Affairs, 1925/29. Of Lustleigh, Devon and London, b. Gorakhpur, India, 22 Nov., 1873.

³¹ Capt. C. W. Jones, C.B.; 4th Bn., Royal Welch Fusiliers. Of Crick, Rugby Eng; b. 26 June, 1880.

³² Francesco Nitti, *Peaceless Europe*, p. 198.

³³ Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page*, Vol III, p. 305

M. Clemenceau, describing those whom he met at the Peace Conference, says:

In the first rank I ought to have placed Mr. Hughes, the noble delegate from Australia, with whom we had to talk through an electrophone, getting in return symphonies of good sense.³⁴

Major-General J. E. B. Seely,³⁵ who attended the Peace Conference in behalf of the British Air Ministry, says:

Among the many misadventures that befell President Wilson, not the least disconcerting was the presence of Mr. Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia, at the Conference. This strange man had the knack, possessed by none other, of knocking the President completely off his balance. As a natural consequence the President tended more and more to view any proposal from Australia with a somewhat unfriendly eye.

It was said by Mr. Hughes's political enemies in Australia that his popularity had waned when he visited Great Britain in 1918, that few people were still interested in him, and that, in effect, he was then regarded as of little account. There is no warrant for that disparaging estimate. It is true that the novelty had worn off, and there could not be a repetition of the curiosity and the enthusiasm which had marked his reception wherever he went in 1916. The atmosphere was different. In 1916 the British people were not daunted, certainly, but a little depressed, and the rousing eloquence of Mr. Hughes inspired them with fresh confidence and conviction. In the second half of 1918, the confidence in approaching victory needed no tonic. Moreover, the importance of a man's work—even, sometimes, of a politician's—is not accurately measured by the number of inches devoted to him in the newspapers. Mr. Hughes never lacked a "good press" in Great Britain; and if the "hang-the-Kaiser" brand of patriotism seemed to mark him as its favourite champion at the end of 1918, rather than the more sober variety of journalism, that was only because the elation of victory caught his impressionable nature as it caught so many others. But Mr. Hughes was a very busy man at this time. The typed reports of the discussions of the Imperial War Cabinet show that he was prompt to take up any question of particular interest to Australia; his chairmanship of the committee to

³⁴ *Grandeur and Misery of Victory*, by Georges Clemenceau, p. 141.

³⁵ Major-Gen. Rt. Hon. Lord Mottistone, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. Secretary of State for War, 1912/14; commanded Canadian Cavalry Bde., France, 1915/18; Deputy Minister of Munitions, 1918; Under-Secretary of State for Air, 1919. Of Mottistone Manor, Isle of Wight; b. Brookhill Hall, Derbyshire, 31 May, 1868.

consider the extent of the damage done by the German armies and the amount of reparations that might be claimed—an episode to be discussed later—and his work at the Peace Conference, occupied him fully. If he was not then the “man of the hour,” in the popular newspaper sense, he was in inner political circles a very considerable person.

V

After a preliminary meeting on December 2nd in London of representatives of the four great victorious powers—France, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States—to arrange procedure, the Peace Conference met in Paris in the new year. It began on January 12th with a session of the old Supreme War Council, which now met at the French Foreign Office (at Quai d'Orsay) and became known—so far as its treaty making activities went—as the Council of Ten. Some of the national delegations had arrived long before—President Wilson reached Europe on December 13th. They were installed in their various hotels, but the leaders lived privately, President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George being almost opposite each other in the rue Nitôt. Each of the great nations had its separate guards and means of communication. The Americans, for example, had their own telephone and telegraph system extending not only through France but to their own establishments in England, France, and Belgium, and operated by American girls at the central exchanges. The British Empire delegation occupied five hotels.

The Australian members of it were Mr. Hughes and Sir Joseph Cook. The secretaries to the Australian representatives were Sir Robert Garran and Lieutenant-Commander Latham, who were also assistant secretaries to the British Empire Delegation. For the purpose of distributing the work of the assistant secretaries accompanying the delegation to Paris, a panel was arranged, according to which a particular dominion undertook to provide the assistant secretary for a particular day of the week. The original panel allotted to Canada the duty of providing the assistant secretary on Mondays, Australia was responsible for the Tuesdays, South Africa for the Wednesdays, New Zealand for the Thursdays, and India for the Fridays. But this panel was not adhered to rigidly in

practice. Sir Maurice Hankey was the secretary to the British Empire Delegation throughout. Most of the meetings took place at the Hotel Majestic, in the Avenue Kléber, but some were held at Lloyd George's house, No. 23 rue Nitôt.

The British Empire Delegation was of very great value to the dominions, as, in matters affecting their respective countries, it enabled their spokesmen to clarify the views of the British statesmen who were responsible for shaping the decisions which were ultimately embodied in the Treaty of Versailles. Mr. Hughes was quick to perceive the advantage which these conversations gave, and expressed his opinion of the status which the dominions thereby acquired:

Although technically the status of the Dominions and India was no higher than the status of the score of smaller nations which waited about with little information and even less influence while the four or five great Powers decided, in actual fact they were included in the deciding Powers, for, by virtue of their membership of the British delegation, they formulated the policy which their spokesman, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, advocated in the Council of Four. They were kept in touch with all that went on; they were able to express their views at every stage. On many of the important commissions on which the Great Powers were represented, the representative of the British Empire was a Dominion Minister, and no important step was taken except after discussion and agreement at the British Empire Delegation. Thus the right of the self-governing parts of the Empire to an effective voice in foreign affairs, recognised by Britain during the war, was fully exercised at the Peace Conference.³⁰

An additional reason for the importance of the British Empire Delegation arose from the manner in which the peace conference worked. An agitation had been commenced in some newspapers in Great Britain and the United States for the admission of representatives of the press to the proceedings. It was clear to the European statesmen—though President Wilson came less quickly to this view—that the affairs of nations could not be settled in the full blaze of publicity. Delicate adjustments could not be made if free and candid talk around a table was to be trumpeted to the whole planet through the megaphone of a sensation-loving and sensation-manufacturing press. But at the same time, it was not desired to give offence. At the highly formal plenary sessions of the conference the special correspondents could

³⁰ Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure*, p. 237.

obtain material for their brilliant pictures, while the real business was done behind closed doors.

For the great conference had a triple constitution. First came its primary division into the national delegations, each holding its own meetings, which of course were confidential, each supported by an army of experts,³⁷ advising upon every point submitted to them, and feeding their respective delegations with facts and arguments. The British Empire Delegation held regular meetings and was also frequently called together suddenly at odd moments to discuss some new developments. Second came the combination of the most important of the powers in the Council of Ten—which was a continuation (with the Japanese added) of the Supreme War Council, and comprised the heads of the five Great Powers together with their foreign ministers. It really appointed itself, and its proceedings were known as the “Informal Conversations.” Nevertheless it—with the even more exclusive councils that sprang from it—was necessarily paramount; it decided what matters should be submitted to the plenary conference, and how those matters should be prepared, and, in the end, determined the whole shape of the treaty. Indeed, without both centralisation and secrecy the task of securing decisions on all the vast subject-matter for the treaty was quite beyond hope. The Councils of “Four,” “Three,” and “Five” were later developments from the Council of Ten.³⁸ Third was the Plenary Conference on which the smaller as

³⁷ Messrs. H. S. Gullett, F. W. Eggleston, W. S. Robinson, and K. A. Murdoch were among those regularly accompanying the Australian delegates.

³⁸ The Council of Ten itself could not secure secrecy. It was assisted by numerous secretaries and by a host of experts, and, although the only publicity authorised was that of the bare official *communiqués*, accurate reports of many of the most secret proceedings got through to the press, the actual words used by members of the council being sometimes quoted. To avoid these leakages, and to make possible frank discussion between the heads of the chief powers, among whom there was often dangerous disagreement, and so expedite at least the treaty with Germany, a Council of Four—M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, President Wilson, and Signor Orlando—was instituted. Later the foreign ministers (including the Japanese), who had formed part of the Council of Ten but were excluded from the Council of Four, were formed into a Council of Five, to which many important matters were delegated—the British delegates nicknamed it the “second eleven.” Later still the Italian plenipotentiary, Signor Orlando, being dissatisfied with the attitude of his three colleagues, especially Wilson, concerning Fiume, withdrew for a time from the Council of Four, and the reduced council was often referred to as the Council of Three. Sir Maurice Hankey was one of the five “general secretaries” of the Council of Ten, and the sole (unofficial) secretary of the Council of Four. (For the organisation of the conference, see Temperley’s *History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, Vol I, pp 236-71 and Ray Stannard Baker’s *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, Vol I, pp. 174 et seq., Vol II, p. 4).

well as the greater powers were represented; but this had only six sessions before the signing of the treaty, and the small powers had practically to be satisfied with the pledge that they should be heard when their interests were concerned.

The method of the conference in grappling with the immense task of drafting the treaty was to divide the delegates into various commissions (committees would be the ordinary English term), each responsible for framing a section of the treaty—Reparations, League of Nations, Responsibility for War Offences, International Labour Legislation, and so forth—the Great Powers safeguarding themselves by the rule that they should be represented on all these bodies, the smaller powers being represented only where they themselves were concerned. The Council of Ten—or, later, of Four, or Three—sat up aloft, deciding problems submitted by the commissions and issuing instructions to them. Connection of each delegate with the work of all the commissions was maintained by the circulation of daily bulletins, and reports of the commissions' proceedings. Then came the final piecing together of the treaty by the draftsmen and its consideration as a whole by the Council of Four and by the separate delegations.

The proceedings at the plenary sessions, which fed the appetite of the world for news, "were invariably and necessarily pre-arranged and formal, except on one occasion, when the interests of the Dominions were not specially affected."³⁹ This method of procedure made it necessary that the dominions whose interests were at stake should have information as to what was happening at the councils and commissions whereat the real work of the Peace Conference was done. They secured this advantage through the British Empire Delegation. "If the Dominions had not been put into this position they would not have had access to the documents of the British Delegation, they would not have had the benefit of consultation with British Ministers, and they would not have enjoyed the services of the British staff. They would have been as separate and distinct as Uruguay or Siam, though they might have been more influential than Uruguay or Siam."⁴⁰

³⁹ Latham, *The Significance of The Peace Conference from an Australian Point of View*, p. 6

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

VI

The question that most intimately affected Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa was that of the German colonies. In the early days of the war Australia was asked by the British Government to

seize German wireless stations at Yap in Marshall Islands, Nauru or Pleasant Island and New Guinea. . . . You will however realise that any territory now occupied must be at the disposal of the Imperial Government for purposes of an ultimate settlement at conclusion of the war. . . . Suggestion is being made to New Zealand in regard to Samoa.

In consequence of this suggestion New Guinea, and the neighbouring islands, were quickly occupied, and the German wireless stations at Angaur and Nauru demolished by Australian cruisers in September. The German wireless station at Yap was destroyed in August by a British squadron, but in October the Japanese, during their search for German cruisers, found that it had been repaired. They therefore placed a garrison on the island, but informed the British Government that the occupation was only temporary. "They are ready," said the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, in a telegram to the Australian Government, "to hand it over to an Australian force." The British Government suggested that Australia should forthwith occupy it, as originally intended.

The story of the Australian expedition which was immediately prepared for that purpose has been fully told in the volumes of this work dealing with naval operations and with the Pacific islands.⁴¹ The abrupt stoppage of this expedition by the British Government and the subsequent intimation (24th November, 1914): "We think it desirable for the present that the expedition to occupy German islands should not proceed to any islands north of equator," came as a complete surprise. For two years the reason remained obscure, but the request was scrupulously complied with, and thenceforth the islands north of the equator were dealt with by the Japanese, and those south of it by Australia and New Zealand.⁴² The reason for the change is now clear. The

⁴¹ Vols. IX (pp. 130-37) and X (pp. 148-173).

⁴² It would have been well if a public announcement could have been made as to the arrangement between Great Britain, Japan, and Australia. The sudden stoppage of the North-West Pacific expedition let loose a flood of rumours, all more or less disquieting and some absurd, which would have been prevented by a frank explanation of the position. The tongue of "the lying jade" wagged the more loosely because there seemed to be some foundation for her gossip. The absence of authentic

assurances from the Japanese Government in the first instance with regard to the Pacific islands were given at a time (August, 1914) when that Government, in common with the British, believed that Japan's active participation in the war would be confined to the siege and capture of Kiaochao. But later the British Admiralty found it necessary to ask the Japanese to extend their activities. British fleets were so fully engaged in the North Sea, and in convoying troops across the Indian Ocean, that they could ill be spared for the Pacific. Japanese aid was accordingly called in to assist in the convoy of the Australian forces, and to take part in the hunt for Admiral von Spee's squadron after it destroyed Admiral Cradock's squadron off Coronel on November 1st. The action of the Japanese at Yap has been referred to. The British Admiralty likewise asked them to call at Jaluit and destroy a German coal reserve there, which they did.

These cumulative events made a substantial difference to the attitude of the Japanese Government concerning the islands, and also, necessarily, affected the disposition of the British Government towards Japan. The services which the Japanese were requested to render were most efficiently and promptly discharged. Under stress of war conditions, they were occupying the islands more or less at the invitation of the Admiralty, and it would have been impossible to request them, even in the most diplomatic manner, to remove their troops unless they wished to do so.

The Foreign Office had no doubt that at the close of the war Japan would claim the islands north of the equator; but when first faced with this demand the British Government insisted that all territorial questions must be settled by the peace treaties. As the war continued, however, and the strain on British shipping was increased by the transport services entailed in the campaigns in the Near East and by the attacks

information likewise conduced to misleading in such a case as the following — On 2 Sept., 1915, the schooner *Takubar* called at Greenwich Island. Her master, A. D. Fendick, found that a Japanese man-of-war had visited the island some time before and hoisted the national flag, which was left flying. Mr. Fendick thought this curious, because he knew that a lease of the island was held by a British subject, Mr. Monton, who in fact was the owner of the *Takubar*. The master did not disturb the Japanese flag, but fastened the British union flag to another tree, and left both flying when he sailed away. He reported what he had done on his arrival at Sydney, and the Commonwealth Government informed the British Government, who pointed out that, Greenwich Island lying just to the north of the equator it was one of the islands which the Japanese might occupy temporarily under the arrangement which had now been approved, the matter of Mr. Monton's rights as lessee being left for future adjustment.

of submarines, the help of Japanese ships was desired in the Mediterranean—and, later, when the Australian warships had been called to Europe, in Australian waters also. When Mr. Hughes visited Great Britain in the first half of 1916, he had several interviews with Sir Edward Grey, and with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Japanese ambassador, and Foreign Office officials with regard to the position in the Pacific. Grey told him of the difficulty of securing the Japanese help for which the Allies were seeking, and said that it was clear that the Japanese would deeply resent any request to hand over the islands north of the equator; it would certainly affect the measure of their assistance, and possibly even their whole attitude towards their allies. Grey then asked Hughes if he would object to the islands being handed over to them. Mr. Hughes's reply was: "What is the use of my objecting? The thing has been done, and now you tell me what would follow if such an objection were sustained. I am confronted with a *fait accompli* and can do nothing."

Actually—though Mr. Hughes was certainly unaware of the fact—the British Government had long before taken pains to ascertain the probable attitude of Australia. Shortly after its telegram stopping the expedition to the islands, it had cautiously enquired through the Governor-General whether the Australian Government would object to the continued occupation of the islands by the Japanese if this arrangement was found expedient in the peace settlement. Mr. Fisher was then Prime Minister, and apparently he was consulted. The assurance was given (February, 1915) that Australian ministers were, at any rate, unlikely to raise serious protest.

At the beginning of 1917 the final renewal of the unrestricted submarine campaign brought Great Britain to the most dangerous crisis of the war. Every warship that could be obtained for patrolling was urgently required. In this extreme pass, the British and French Governments agreed that at the peace negotiations they would support the Japanese claim not merely to the German islands north of the equator—a demand which in fairness was completely justifiable—but also to the former German concession on the Shantung peninsula in China, which, in truth, did not belong to any of these allies but to China. In the course of these negotiations Mr. Hughes,

then back in Australia, was formally asked by the British Government (1st February, 1917) whether he had any objection to their giving a pledge to Japan to support her in respect to her continued occupation of the islands north of the equator. Mr. Hughes replied (February 7th):

Broadly, the attitude of Australia is that she would not object to Japan's occupation of the islands in the Pacific north of the equator except one or two small ones on or near the border line, of which Nauru and Ocean Island are typical. The Commonwealth Government will carefully abstain from doing or saying anything likely to strain or make difficult the relations between His Majesty's Government and Japan, either in regard to future partition of the Pacific or in regard to trade or in any other matter.

The sentiment and the political wisdom of this undertaking were admirable, but the geography was weak, because Ocean Island had all along been British, while Nauru lies south of the equator. The Colonial Secretary, who looked at the map before telegraphing—a precaution which the Prime Minister of Australia had neglected to take—politely intimated (February 8th) that he would “be glad to know what islands north of the equator you refer to as exceptions from general rule?” The Prime Minister replied (February 9th): “No objection giving some such pledge to Japan. Find that islands mentioned, Nauru and Ocean Island, are as matter of fact slightly south of the equator. Do not know names of any slightly north of line.”

Both a useful geography lesson and an important diplomatic settlement emanated from the exchange of telegrams, for the Secretary of State (March 2nd) wrote to the Governor-General the following letter, which for the time being closed the incident, and left the Pacific islands in *status quo*, subject to a final settlement at the Peace Conference:

With reference to your Excellency's telegram regarding the position of Japan in the Pacific Ocean, I have the honour to state for the confidential information of your ministers that the Japanese Government have been informed that His Majesty's Government accede with pleasure to the request of the Japanese Government for an assurance that on the occasion of the Peace Conference they will support Japan's claim in regard to the disposal of Germany's rights in Shantung and her possessions in the islands north of the equator; it being understood that in the eventual peace settlement the Japanese Government will treat Great Britain's claims to the German islands south of the equator in the same spirit. In acknowledging this communication the Japanese Government have expressed their high gratification at this fresh proof

of the solidarity of the relations of amity between the two nations, and further declare that they will not hesitate to support as requested the claims of His Majesty's Government.

A formal agreement between Britain, France, and Japan had been concluded by an exchange of notes on 17th February, 1917. The propriety of giving to one ally Germany's rights in the territory of another ally was questioned at the Peace Conference, but Mr. Lloyd George said:⁴³

At the time the submarine campaign was very formidable. There was a shortage of torpedo-boat-destroyers in the Mediterranean. Japanese help was urgently required and Japanese had asked for this arrangement to be made. We had been hard pressed and had agreed.

At the end of 1918 liberal opinion in England was seriously disturbed upon learning the contents of the secret agreements between the Allies for the carving up of the Turkish Empire and of the Balkan and Adriatic territories. The treaties were published by the new rulers of Russia, and were republished in England by *The Manchester Guardian* and the Labour press, but were ignored as embarrassing by most newspapers in Allied countries. Most of the treaties had, like the arrangement with Japan, been made under extreme pressure of circumstances, but their publication rendered it advisable that the Allies' war aims should be definitely stated.

At this stage the new Government of Russia, then negotiating peace with Germany, stressed the right of the population of each country to determine its own future. Mr. Lloyd George on December 24th proclaimed in general terms a similar view, and on the 5th of January, 1918, in his great speech to the Trades Union Congress in London, he declared that the consent of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement in this war. Even the African natives of the German colonies were capable, he said, of deciding what government they preferred.

This statement was made after some sort of consultation with General Smuts and Sir Edward Kemp, representing South Africa and Canada respectively; but Australia does not appear to have been consulted. On the day before it was made the Secretary of State for the Colonies telegraphed to the dominion governments concerned referring to the insistence

⁴³ See an article by E. T. Williams in *The American Journal of International Law*, July, 1933, pp. 430-31.

of the Russian leaders that the principle of self-determination should apply to German colonies taken by the Allies, and adding that in the French press there were indications of support for this attitude.

His Majesty's Government is convinced that for the security of the Empire it is necessary to retain after the war possession of German colonies, but owing to divergence of opinion amongst the Allies it has not been possible to secure acceptance of this view.

He accordingly suggested that the oversea dominions should furnish evidence of the desire of the natives in those colonies to live under British rule. Hard upon the receipt of this message came news of President Wilson's famous statement of his Fourteen Points, of which the Fifth laid down that in "all colonial claims . . . the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be considered."

In reply to the British Government's request the Australian Government forwarded to it a statement from the Administrator of German New Guinea, pointing out, most fairly, that an attempt to consult the natives as to the nature of their future government would be an absurdity. In the case of German New Guinea, the inhabitants were scattered over a number of islands distant from one another up to 900 miles; of different races and languages, they were often at war with one another on the larger islands, and even after three years of British occupation some of them barely understood the difference between British and German rule. The Acting Prime Minister subsequently informed Mr. Hughes that the Administrator possessed little evidence of German atrocities in the islands. He reported that the Germans in their punitive expeditions showed no great regard for native lives, and employers were allowed to flog native employees in the maintenance of discipline, whereas under Australian administration this punishment could be ordered only by a government official after inquiry, and its infliction was hedged with restrictions. But the Administrator found here no sign of proceedings such as those in South-West Africa which had so shocked the modern world. Though individual German planters might be harsh, the German administration had been good and the natives spoke very highly of many German officials. The natives, however, had

not the mental capacity to formulate ideas as to their government; so long as they were protected and fed they were indifferent as to who ruled them. But Australian administration had greatly improved the native labour conditions. Apart from all this, however, the Administrator pointed out that the importance of the country to Australia both strategically and commercially was obvious, and so far as security was concerned this view was strongly supported by the Council of Defence.

This frank statement indicated truly the Australian attitude, and, when the projected conditions of peace were discussed by the Imperial War Cabinet, the Australian Government expected that the promise as to islands south of the equator would be carried out. It cabled to Mr. Hughes an assurance of its firm support in this matter, and after very strongly representing his views he succeeded in convincing the British Prime Minister; with the result that at the meeting of the Cabinet on the 20th of November, 1918, Mr. Lloyd George informed his colleagues that he had told the representatives of the United States "that the British Government considered that none of the German colonies should be restored, and that those captured by Dominion troops should be held by the Dominions which had captured them."⁴⁴ It was in that frame of mind that the British Delegation approached the question when they went to Paris for the Peace Conference; and, if it had been adhered to, Australia would have held German New Guinea in sovereignty, New Zealand would have held Samoa, and the South African Union would have held German South-West Africa. There was no issue on which Mr. Hughes felt more strongly.

But different opinions were expressed. Mr. Balfour, at one of the meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet, submitted that Great Britain, as a power which entered the war with every profession of disinterested action, should be careful to avoid coming out of the war with increased territory. He admitted the difficulties. He was convinced that the colonies should not be returned to Germany, but what should become of them was a problem which he did not elucidate. "Lord

⁴⁴ Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure*, p. 93.

Curzon,"⁴⁵ he said, "has written a paper, Mr. Walter Long has written a paper, General Smuts has written a paper, and I have written a paper, none of them quite agreeing with each other as to the proper method of dealing with the German colonies." The predicament was one which appeared to appeal to the temperament of the author of *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*.

The Prime Minister of Canada, whose dominion had no interest in any of the German colonies, agreed with Mr. Balfour. He thought that a bad impression would be created in Canada if the British Empire came out of the war with a great accession of territory, "because the people of Canada are not prepared to fight, and will not fight, for any extension of the British Empire, which we regard already as unwieldy." He hoped that the United States of America would accept responsibility for the German colonies, agreeing with Mr. Balfour that they should not be restored to Germany. It was desirable, he thought, for the United States to recognise that she could not keep herself aloof from the responsibilities of the world. Therefore, he would have been willing that these colonies should pass under American protectorate or direct ownership. He admitted that the views of Australia and New Zealand concerning the Pacific islands were entitled to very careful consideration, yet, looking at the matter from a broader point of view, he thought that the transfer of the whole of the German colonial empire to the United States, if that nation could be persuaded to accept the responsibility, would make for the security and advantage of the world.

Lord Reading,⁴⁶ the British ambassador to the United States, however, who was present at the meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet at which these interesting comments were made, prepared the members for a different line of policy to be put forward by President Woodrow Wilson. "I cannot help saying from what I have seen of President Wilson, and

⁴⁵ Rt. Hon. Marquess Curzon, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E. Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1899/1905; Lord Privy Seal, 1915/16; Lord President of the Council, 1916/19; Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1919/24. Of London and Kedleston; b. Kedleston, 11 Jan., 1859. Died 20 March, 1925.

⁴⁶ Rt Hon the Marquess of Reading, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E. Lord Chief Justice of England, 1913/21; President of Anglo-French Loan Mission to U.S.A., 1915; Special Envoy to U.S.A., 1917, High Commissioner and Special Ambassador to U.S.A., 1918; Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1921/26. B London, 10 Oct., 1860. Died 30 Dec., 1935.

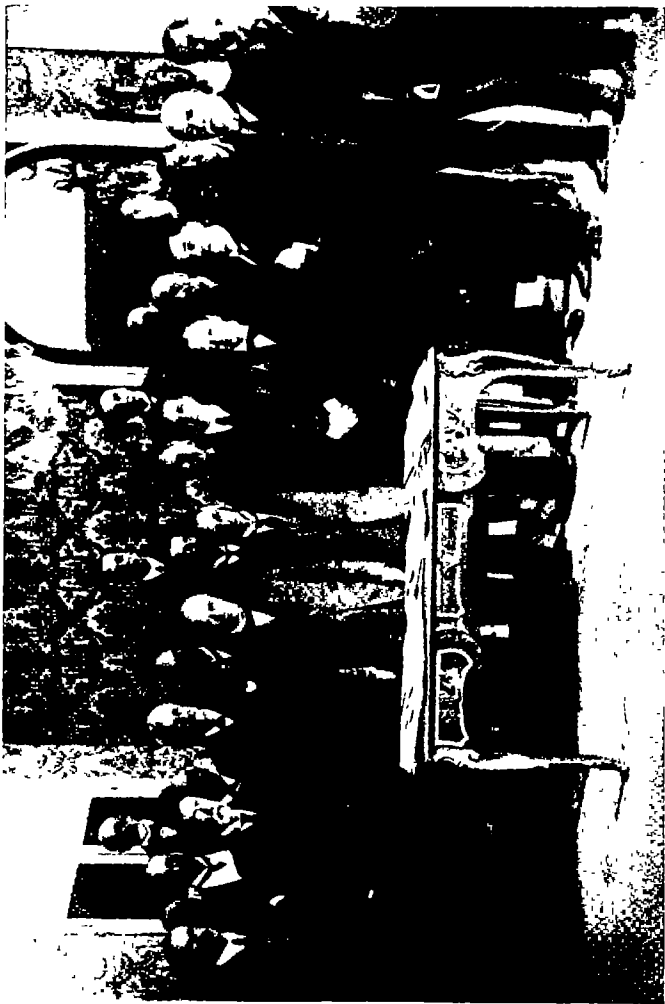


56 THE AUSTRALIAN PLENIPOTENTIARIES AND THEIR STAFF AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE IN PARIS, 1919

Back row (left to right) Lieutenant F. W. Eggleston, Miss Carter (typiste), Mr. R. Mungovan, Captain H. S. Gullett, Mr. W. E. Corrigan (messenger), Miss Wood (typiste)
Front row Lieutenant-Commander J. G. Latham, Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Cook, Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes, Sir Robert Garran, Mr. P. E. Deane

*Lent by Rt. Hon. J. G. Latham
 Austral. Memorial Collection No. A.615*

To face p. 770



57. A MEETING OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE DELEGATION AT MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S HOUSE IN THE RUE NIJOT, PARIS, ON 1ST JUNE, 1919, WHEN THE GERMAN REPLY TO THE

PEACE TERMS WAS CONSIDERED

Left to right Rt Hon Sir Joseph Ward, General J. C. Smuts, Lord Milner, Rt Hon Sir Joseph Cook, Rt Hon Sir George Foster, Rt Hon G. N. Barnes, Rt Hon A. J. Balfour, Rt Hon E. S. Montagu, Rt Hon D. Lloyd George, Lieut.-Commr J. G. Latham, Rt Hon Austen Chamberlain, Rt Hon W. M. Hughes, Rt Hon H. A. L. Fisher, Lord Bickenhead, Regt.-Admiral G. P. W. Hope, Rt Hon W. S. Churchill, Lieut.-Colonel Sir Maurice Hankey, General Sir Henry Wilson, General Rt Hon Louis Botha, Captain C. W. Jones, Captain E. F. C. Lane, Rt Hon W. F. Massey, Mr P. H. Kerr, Hon C. J. Doherty

Lent by Rt Hon J. G. Latham
Aust War Memorial Collection No. 42616

the discussions I have had with him," said Lord Reading, "that you must be prepared to find him of very strong opinion when he comes to the Peace Conference." Pressed to be more precise, Lord Reading stated that President Wilson had said: "Nobody has the right to get anything out of this war, because we are fighting for peace, and, if we mean what we say, for permanent peace."

VII

There is no doubt that President Wilson's attitude was in accordance with the public professions of British leaders and the wish of many of those who formed the finest—and possibly the wisest—element of the cultured class in Great Britain. His intention was that such transfers of territory as had to be made should accord with his Fourteen Points, regard being had to the dictates of equity and the wishes of the subject populations. He wished to keep the settlement free from the old time methods by which each power grabbed whatever territory it could lay or keep its hands on. Any direct participation in such settlements would be most uncongenial to Americans, and he therefore leapt at the notion of the League of Nations, whose machinery, when once established, might settle these territorial questions in a judicial atmosphere after careful inquiry. In particular he was attracted by the suggestion of General Smuts, that certain captured lands should be allotted to approved States to be held as a trust for the inhabitants, not in absolute sovereignty but by "mandate" from the League of Nations and subject to its supervision. This plan—of socialistic origin—President Wilson had adopted in his draft of the covenant of the League, and he had extended its proposed application to include all former German colonies.

President Wilson was determined that the first business of the Peace Conference should be the establishment of the League. He hoped to return early to America with this achievement behind him. And when, on January 22nd, the Council of Ten approved of its establishment, his plan seemed to have cleared the initial dangers and to be sailing with a fair wind. Actually, it was heading straight for rocks which within a few days threatened to wreck the conference.

The European representatives on the Ten were determined

to secure a decision as to the division of occupied territories before referring it to the League of Nations. Lloyd George and Clemenceau therefore at once proposed that the case of the German colonies should be discussed immediately. The representatives of Italy and Japan pressed the same view. The matter came before the British delegation next day. The attitude of Mr. Hughes towards President Wilson's Fourteen Points has already been described. To him it seemed that this American dreamer, for the sake of some copy-book principle, was now attempting to rob the Allies of their hard-won hopes of annexing territories deemed necessary for security against future aggression. At no time was Mr. Hughes enamoured of the proposal to set up a League of Nations, which, he said in an interview with a London newspaper, "did not strengthen the power of the Allies nor weaken that of Germany. In his protest now made he was, strangely enough, associated with General Smuts, who had devised his "mandates" plan to meet the case of the conquered portions of the Turkish and Austrian Empires but had never intended that it should be applied to the German colonies adjoining the British dominions which had captured them. The proposal of President Wilson that it should do so raised most serious questions for Australia and New Zealand. Although it might be presumed that the mandates for governing the Pacific islands south of the equator would in the first place be allotted to those dominions, there was nothing to prevent this privilege from being restored in the future to Germany or even given to Japan. And even if Australia and New Zealand received the mandates, they must apparently give free access to not only trade but immigrant labour from any country. The Australian Government under Mr. Watt's leadership recognised this danger and in answer to an appeal from Mr. Hughes for vigorous support it informed him on January 28th of its emphatic objection to the transfer of the islands to any sort of international control, and repeated its claim that they should be secured by Great Britain or Australia as insurance for Australia's safety.

The desire of Australia and New Zealand to secure the islands south of the equator was afterwards castigated, particularly in America, as arising from a spirit of "greed" and

"grab." Actually, control of the islands was sought for one reason and one only—protection against a grave external danger. Fortification of them by any great power was a menace to be avoided; but far more dangerous would be unrestricted immigration into them from the great nations of Asia, bringing the boundaries of those peoples practically to the Australian border. The riches of New Guinea and of its archipelago left Australians completely cold. Nauru, from which came manures of great value to Australian farmers, was an exception, but only to this extent—that, when it became known that its ownership was to be allotted to some mandatory power, the desire to possess or control these manures caused the Australian Government to put in a strong claim. But Australians would never have fought for the principle of annexation merely for the sake of securing that wealth. Their one vital interest in the Pacific islands was to prevent them from becoming a future danger to the White Australia policy. Comparatively unimportant in themselves, they might, if under foreign or international domination, become crowded, not with their own islanders, whom no one feared, but with immigrants from China or Japan. Without any original hostile intention, incidental quarrels arising between Australia or New Zealand and such neighbours might precipitate a struggle in the Pacific, resulting possibly in the partial or total loss of Australia and New Zealand to the British Empire and to the European race. Thus, if the result of the Great War was to throw open the former German colonies to immigration, it was more than possible that the success of the Allies, for which Australia and New Zealand had made such sacrifices, would result in sheer disaster for themselves. Every Australian was alive to these dangers, and the obvious way to avert them was to secure the right to prevent immigration to the neighbouring islands. This, Mr. Hughes believed, could be secured only by annexation. South Africa, probably desiring to avoid the terrible problems that might flow from an influx of several unassimilable races into the neighbouring territory of German South-West Africa, had similar reasons for seeking to annex it.

At the meeting of the British delegation on January 23rd the Australian Prime Minister said that he hoped the dele-

gation would oppose the system of mandates altogether. "Do you mean," enquired Mr. Balfour, "that we should oppose it throughout?" "We should oppose it," replied Mr. Hughes, "so far as the German colonies claimed by the Dominions are concerned, but we need not necessarily oppose it in places like Mesopotamia and Palestine."

The British members of the delegation generally—though with varying degrees of enthusiasm—were prepared to accept the mandates plan and to apply it to all enemy territory occupied by British troops. One strong reason for this certainly was that the territories allotted to the French and Italians would thus be kept open to British trade. But the special interests of the dominions were appreciated, and Mr. Lloyd George arranged with M. Clemenceau, who presided, that the dominion Premiers themselves should lay their views before the Council of Ten. This took place at once, on the afternoon of January 24th. To Clemenceau the Australian leader was a constant source of delight.

"Bring your savages with you," he said to Mr. Lloyd George beforehand; and to the Australian: "Mr. 'Ughes, I have 'eard that in early life you were a cannibal."⁴⁷ "Believe me, Mr. President," said the Commonwealth Prime Minister, "that has been greatly exaggerated."

According to an American author,⁴⁸

at the afternoon session of January 24th there was a great stir in the outer room of the French Foreign Office, where behind double-locked doors the Council of Ten was sitting. "At this stage," reports the Secret Minutes, "the Dominion Prime Ministers entered the room."

The Canadian Prime Minister had decided to lend his help to his Australian, New Zealand, and South African colleagues, and accordingly came with them. Mr. Lloyd George explained that they were there to present their claims for the possession of those German colonies which had been captured by their troops. He went on to say that the German Government had shown itself unfit to exercise control over backward races, instancing their deliberate policy of exterminating the natives of South-West Africa. On behalf of the British Empire as a whole, he would be very much opposed to the return to Germany of any of these colonies. President Wilson remarked

⁴⁷ The quotation is from Winston Churchill's *World Crisis. The Aftermath*, p. 152. According to other authorities, however, this particular pleasantry was the one with which M. Clemenceau habitually greeted Mr. Massey, the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

⁴⁸ Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, Vol. I, p. 254.

that he thought all were agreed on that point. Signor Orlando (Italy) and Baron Makino (Japan) concurred, and that principle was thus summarily adopted.⁴⁹

Mr. Lloyd George now put to the Council three possible methods of controlling these territories: direct control by the League of Nations (which was rejected, owing to the unhappy results of international control in the past); control through a mandatory power as trustee for the League; and outright annexation, which, he said, he favoured in the case of these dominions, since, being adjacent to New Guinea, Samoa, and South-West Africa respectively, they could best develop and finance those areas as part of their own territory.

Mr. Hughes, who followed, said that the Pacific islands encompassed Australia like fortresses; any strong power controlling New Guinea controlled Australia. That danger had been recognised fifty years before, when Queensland annexed this part of New Guinea, but the British Government had not ratified the action. It was fair to insist on the rights of the natives, but they would be secure under Australian control, which would constitute a threat to no one. Mr. Hughes closed his appeal with a reference to Australia's heavy sacrifices of men and money in the war.

General Smuts, South African Minister for Defence, said that South-West Africa, desert country fit only for pastoral pursuits, was geographically one with South Africa, which could best develop it. If it remained separate, German agitation for its return would create division between the whites in South Africa where the great need was for union.

After the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr. Massey, had urged his country's claim for annexation of Samoa, Sir Robert Borden said that all the cases rested on the plea of security. Canada made no claim for herself, having no fear for her own safety, but she recognised that the other dominions required special measures for theirs. He supported a plea of

⁴⁹ President Wilson had, however, taken pains to inform himself concerning German colonial rule. His adviser on colonial matters, Professor G. L. Beer of Columbia University, sought information from Australian sources, and a special study of events in South-West Africa and the Carolines, as well as of German trade and labour policy in New Guinea and Samoa, was made by Mr. (now Mr. Justice) H. S. Nicholas of Sydney and Professor Archibald Strong of Adelaide. They concluded that, on the whole, the criticisms of German colonial rule were justified. The paper was duly laid before the President.

General Smuts (with which President Wilson agreed) that the British Empire was in itself a smaller League of Nations.

The struggle for annexation continued for a week. All the continental powers interested desired to annex territory, but they allowed the British Dominions and Japanese—and in particular Mr. Hughes—to lead the fight in the Council with French and British support. The sessions of the Ten were interrupted on Saturday, January 25th, by a plenary meeting of the Conference, which passed the resolutions for establishing a League of Nations, but—contrary to President Wilson's desire—set up a commission to settle its covenant.⁵⁰ When the Ten met again, on Monday 27th, the Japanese presented their claim for the islands north of the equator, and for the transfer to Japan of the German rights in Shantung (which Japan promised duly to restore later to China). Baron Makino based each claim upon the part played by the Japanese forces in putting an end to German activity in the Far East. An impassioned reply to the Shantung demands was made by the Chinese Foreign Minister, Dr. Wellington Koo, next day.

On the 27th President Wilson replied to General Smuts. If South Africa became the mandatory for the adjacent territory, and administered it so well that the natives desired union with South Africa, he would be the last to object. Turning to the objections of Mr. Hughes, these, he said, were based on fundamental lack of faith in the League of Nations. If unlimited annexation was likely to continue, he, President Wilson, would be inclined to agree with the Australian case; but under the system which they were seeking to set up, if anyone tried to take away a mandated territory, such a nation would become an outlaw, and all nations, with the United States in the lead, would be pledged to take up arms on behalf of the mandatory.⁵¹ Therefore all danger of bad neighbours was past. The alternative to the League was chaos, and for that reason the League must succeed, and, if all the delegates in the room so decided, it would succeed.

⁵⁰ This action has been interpreted by some Americans as a device for delaying the establishment of the League; actually, it originated from quite other motives, and President Wilson himself was later forced to have recourse to the commission to amend his draft covenant to satisfy public opinion in the United States.

⁵¹ On January 28, in reply to Mr. Massey's fears concerning Samoa, President Wilson said that under the régime of the League of Nations there was little chance of any power playing there "the part played by Germany" (i.e., an aggressive one) without attracting the attention of the United States.

The dominion leaders, however, felt that, in this problem of life or death for their nations, they were being asked to accept a solution of which not even the fundamentals had yet been thoroughly considered. Mr. Lloyd George, too, inquired whether, inasmuch as British colonies meant Imperial expenditure—not income—the League would share that expenditure? President Wilson said that in certain circumstances he thought it should. As Mr. Lloyd George desired to consult his Colonial Office on such points, the discussion was adjourned, and that evening a meeting of the British Empire Delegation was held with officials of the Colonial Office present. The general opinion at this meeting clearly was that the difficulties in the way of the League's contributing money towards the development of mandated territories were almost insurmountable; but steps were taken towards making clear what a "mandate" meant. General Smuts said that he and Lord Robert Cecil had agreed that the territories to be dealt with fell into three categories. First, "the German colonies with a British dominion next door. In these cases there should be annexation. . . . Second, German colonies in Central Africa. These were to be distinguished from the first class by the circumstance that the world as a whole was interested in them. They were cases for a mandatory. . . . Third, other cases where the people of the territories could speak for themselves, but where they required assistance in government and in the development of the country, *e.g.*, Syria and Mesopotamia." These last, he said, should be dealt with by the League of Nations. The Secretary of State for India, Mr. E. S. Montagu, urged the advantage of applying the mandatory principle to such countries as Mesopotamia.

Next morning (January 28th) the British Prime Minister had a long conversation with President Wilson, whom he found to be still adamant against annexations but prepared to agree that the conditions of mandates might vary. From this moment Mr. Lloyd George's support of the Dominions' case seemed to weaken. He announced to the Ten that, as the result of the consultations with the Colonial Office officials, he saw no insuperable difficulty—so far as enemy territories occupied by British (as distinguished from Dominion) troops were concerned—in accepting the mandate system. He would

like to hear the French view. M. Clemenceau promised that this would be stated at a subsequent meeting. After lunch the British Delegation again met to explore the possibilities of solution and, in particular, to reduce the opposition of Mr. Hughes and Mr. Massey. The effort developed considerable heat. Mr. Hughes pointed out that the Australian Parliament had passed a resolution, after a discussion which showed strong opposition to the mandates proposal. He had just received a cablegram from the Acting Prime Minister informing him that the Commonwealth Cabinet was unanimously against tenure by mandate. He was quite certain that the Commonwealth Parliament would not provide money for the development of New Guinea if Australia was to be in that country only as a mandatory of the League of Nations and if the League (as President Wilson suggested) could be called upon to provide money.

Lord Robert Cecil⁵² thereupon took up the case for the mandatory system, by urging that the claim for absolute annexation of the former German colonies represented the spirit of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, which was opposed to the spirit upon which the hope of a new system for the world was based. Mr. Hughes asked whether Lord Robert Cecil did not make any distinction between German colonies whose position geographically was a menace to self-governing dominions, and other German colonies such as Togoland? Lord Robert's answer was that if Australia was a mandatory power she would be entitled to have, and would in fact have, absolute security. Therefore the question of the security of a dominion really did not arise. In such a case as New Guinea, he was inclined to think that the mandatory should have all the essential rights of sovereignty, and should report annually to the League of Nations.

Mr. Massey, the New Zealand Prime Minister, promptly came to the support of Mr. Hughes with the question: "What would happen if Australia became the mandatory for New Guinea, and did not give satisfaction to the League of Nations?" "That question could only arise," Lord Robert thought, "in case of gross misgovernment by Australia."

⁵² Rt. Hon Viscount Cecil. Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1915/16; Minister of Blockade, 1916/18; Asst. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1918, Lord Privy Seal, 1923/24. Of Chelwood Gate, Sussex; b London, 14 Sept., 1864.

He felt sure that no such question would arise, but, if it did, there would be a public discussion of Australia's conduct before the League of Nations, and probably a definite expression of opinion. "Well, that," said Mr. Hughes, "would be an appeal from the men who knew to those who did not know." Another important point was that at present Asiatics were not permitted to enter British New Guinea (Papua). If Australia was to administer German New Guinea as a mandatory, was it to be assumed that the principle of the open door would make it impossible to exclude them from the territory? If Asiatic immigration were allowed, it might result in the population becoming mainly Asiatic in the course of a few years.

At the end of the discussion on the subject, Mr. Lloyd George said that Great Britain was prepared to accept the general principle of the mandate system, but it was evident that the dominions did not desire it in particular instances, and Great Britain was doing her best to support them. General Botha suggested that, as the question was now "largely one of tactics," it would be wise to let France and Italy come forward and state their cases. Meanwhile it was agreed that he, Mr. Hughes, and Mr. Massey should form a committee to draw up a resolution defining the view of the British Empire Delegation with regard to the mandate system.

At the afternoon meeting of the Ten, which immediately followed, the French Minister for the Colonies urged that France should be allowed to annex Togoland and the Cameroons. The claim was supported by a secret treaty between France and Great Britain, the disclosure of which (at the morning session) had been followed by that of secret arrangements between France, Great Britain, and Japan, and the Pact of London between France, Great Britain, and Italy. President Wilson insisted, and the others agreed, that these treaty arrangements must be regarded as merely provisional. But this day's proceedings brought the President to the end of his patience. All the powers paid lip-service to the mandates plan, but the discussion, he said, had so far been in essence a negation of that whole principle in detail, "one case at a time." It had brought them "to the point where it looked as if their roads diverged." He suggested that they

should adjourn for a few hours, as he feared "a serious disagreement."

It was Arthur Balfour who saved the situation by pointing out that Great Britain had accepted the mandates principle so far as territories occupied by her own troops were concerned; he himself was strongly in favour of it—but, after all, it had not been worked out in detail. Were the mandates to be permanent? Would the League assist with money? Must the same conditions be applicable in all cases? President Wilson replied that he rejoiced in the British Government's acceptance, but it was the only one. The French Colonial Office apparently could not accept the principle. The world would say that the great powers first portioned out the helpless parts of the earth and then formed the League of Nations. He could not postpone the matter—he had to return temporarily to America at a fixed date. He did not insist on his own outline of the mandates plan, but he desired the acceptance of the genuine idea of trusteeship. All must make sacrifices if they were not to take up again the intolerable burden of competitive armaments.

This outburst had immediate results. Signor Orlando said that Italy would readily accept whatever principles were adopted, provided that she could share in the work of civilisation. M. Clemenceau said that the French Colonial Office had expressed its views, but that did not mean that he himself was not ready to make concessions if reasonable proposals were put forward. He would not dissent from the general agreement merely for the sake of the Cameroons and Togoland, but he was apprehensive of a League with powers of legislation and constant interference. Mr. Lloyd George appealed to the President to clear away doubts by agreeing that the mandatories should be appointed at once, by the Council of Ten instead of by the League, but Wilson would have none of it; the proceeding would appear to the world as a mere distribution of the spoils.

This meeting had brought the national leaders face to face with the possibility of a breakdown of the Peace Conference. If, on President Wilson's return to America, the impression spread there that he had left the Allies scrambling over the spoils, the effects everywhere might be disastrous. President

Wilson's protest had forced the British leaders to make clear their acceptance of the mandate system, whatever the dominions might do; and the British promise brought less definite ones from France and Italy. In adjourning the meeting, however, M. Clemenceau said that the principle of mandates had not yet been accepted.

But agreement was not so distant as the increasing tension in the Council of Ten seemed to portend. While the tone of the national leaders was becoming embittered, their seconds were meeting in an atmosphere of tobacco smoke and cordiality, and over their teacups some of the best work of the conference was proceeding. Lord Robert Cecil and Colonel House, Wilson's chief adviser, had been thrashing out the mandate difficulties, House urging that the dominions should accept mandates, since Wilson would agree that the mandated territories might at any time afterwards be annexed if the native inhabitants voted for it, Cecil pointing out that, although this was his view, the dominions would not concur. Next day House wrote to Wilson that all the British delegation were opposed to Hughes of Australia in his stand for annexation, and suggested that Wilson should bring matters to a head by making a public statement of the position.

That suggestion, however, was not acted upon; for within the British Delegation a means of solving the problem had been evolved. The mandates principle had adherents even among the very able staff which accompanied the Australian delegation. Lieutenant-Commander Latham, for example, privately held that its adoption was in the highest interest not only of the Empire generally but of Australia. After the meeting of the delegation that generated such heat he pointed out to his British and Canadian fellow-secretaries that much of the discussion was based on the assumption that a mandate necessarily meant an open door for immigration and trade, but that, after all, the term was still undefined and could be made to mean whatever the Conference said it meant. For example, in the case of the territories that were so important to South Africa and Australia, it could be given a connotation which, so far as their interest was concerned, was equivalent to ownership. Latham then drafted a paragraph explaining what he meant. Sir Maurice Hankey added

one or two words to it and Latham some others,⁵³ and it finally read:

There are territories such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands which, owing to the sparseness of their population or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the mandatory State, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the mandatory State as integral portions thereof, subject to the safeguards above-mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.

This provision, while still making the mandatory responsible to the League of Nations for the humane treatment of the natives, as Wilson desired, would enable the dominions, if given the mandates, to apply their own immigration laws to these territories, and so safeguard them against the foreign influx which was so keenly feared.

The actual drafting of the resolution setting forth the delegation's view appears to have fallen largely on Colonel Hankey. To meet the opinions of President Wilson, the draft began with a statement of the principle that advantage should be taken of the opportunity afforded by the necessity of disposing of the colonies and territories formerly belonging to Germany and Turkey, which were inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves in the strenuous conditions of the modern world, to apply to those territories the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples formed a sacred trust of civilisation, and that securities for the performance of that trust should be embodied in the constitution of the League of Nations. The opinion was expressed that the character of the mandate issued by the League of Nations for the government of such territories should differ according to the stage of development of the people, the geographical position of the territories, and their economic conditions. The resolution then defined the two classes of the proposed mandates hitherto envisaged by General Smuts and Lord Cecil:

(1) Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory Power until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory Power.

⁵³ Hankey added the word "integral" and Latham the phrase "subject to the safeguards above-mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population."

(2) Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic, and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League of Nations.

Colonel Hankey now added the clause suggested by Latham providing for a third class of mandate. He showed the draft to Mr. Lloyd George, who approved and showed it to several of his colleagues including General Smuts. As the committee charged with finding a solution had apparently been unable to find one, the Prime Minister adopted the draft as his own solution. President Wilson's chief adviser, Colonel House, records that at 10.30 a.m. on the 29th General Smuts brought to him this paper, which, he said, Lloyd George and some others approved of, but

which they had not offered Hughes and Massey. They did not want to present the paper unless they knew it was satisfactory to the President. When I read it I saw they had made great concessions. . . .⁸⁴

House wrote on the margin a memorandum of his own approval, and sent it to President Wilson, then at the Council of Ten.

Mr. Lloyd George, as House records, "cut" that session of the Ten in order to preside at the urgent meeting of the British Delegation called at his own house for 11.30 in order to push the resolution through. He opened this meeting by saying that he feared a deadlock, and that President Wilson would leave the country before an agreement had been reached. He hoped the opportunity would now be seized of pushing on with a satisfactory settlement. He then placed the draft before the meeting. Mr. Hughes at once protested that this resolution would give Australia no certainty that she would secure the mandate for New Guinea, or that the mandate would include the archipelago. If it did, could the Australian immigration laws be made to apply throughout the whole territory? Mr. Lloyd George replied that they could be enforced in New Guinea (this being adjacent to Australia), but he would consult with President Wilson as to whether

⁸⁴ *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, Vol. IV, p. 309.*

that principle could be accepted for the more distant islands. On his suggestion, Latham's clause was amended so as to confine its application to "certain of the South Pacific Islands." Mr. Hughes was warned against pressing the Australian case too far—it might give the Japanese a right to secure military bases in their islands.

The Australian Prime Minister was deeply dissatisfied; he felt that Australia's safety was imperilled. But it was decided that—subject to discussion to be held forthwith by him with Mr. Massey and General Botha—the British Prime Minister should present the draft resolution to the Ten that afternoon. Mr. Lloyd George told them that if they persisted in asking for more than this compromise gave them they must go on without the help of the British Government and all that this implied. At this stage Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Hughes had a heart-to-heart talk. "For the first time we gave up English," said Mr. Hughes afterwards, "and went into Welsh." Finally Colonel Hankey was left with him to thrash out the points of the resolution. At the end Mr. Hughes asked: "Is this the equivalent of a 999 years' lease as compared with a freehold?" Hankey assured him that it was. The Australian Prime Minister notified Mr. Lloyd George in writing that he accepted it, subject to the approval of his Government, and asked that this be made clear to the Council of Ten.

When the Ten met on the following day (January 30th) Mr. Lloyd George circulated the resolution to his colleagues. The dominions would accept it, he said, in order to avoid the catastrophe of a deadlock. He adroitly described the third class of mandate as applying to territories "which formed almost a part of the organisation of an adjoining Power, which would have to be appointed the mandatory." Mr. Hughes, speaking next, said that, recognising the immense interests at stake, he did not feel justified in continuing his opposition beyond the point which would reasonably safeguard Australia; but his Government had asked for full details and he must withhold his assent until he heard from it.

President Wilson was at this time smarting under attacks in the Press, which had culminated that morning in an article in the *Paris Daily Mail* portraying him as an unpractical

idealist standing out against the dominions' claim. Obviously the writer knew of the proceedings in the Council of Ten. These were supposed to be secret, but confidential reports were circulated and had apparently leaked through one of the delegations. He intimated that, if these attacks continued, he would be compelled "to make a full public explanation of his views."⁸⁵ The tension resulting from this incident was evident throughout that day's sessions. President Wilson said that no one could tell the Australian Government what the mandate system involved. He had entertained certain views, but they had not been adopted—there were apparently other views. He had been accused of being a hopeless idealist, but he never accepted an ideal until he could see its practical application. Mr. Lloyd George's scheme of mandates certainly cleared away the difficulties, but there must be a preliminary peace establishing the League of Nations, which should then issue mandates to "fit the case as the glove fits the hand." Mr. Lloyd George replied that the President's statement filled him with despair. It was with great difficulty that the dominion leaders had been prevailed on to compromise; yet the President now declared that the acceptance of this compromise must depend on agreement on a number of other matters.

The President having eventually been induced to give his approval subject to reconsideration when the full League of Nations scheme was drawn up, it was the turn of Mr. Hughes to protest that it would not satisfy Australians to be told that the mandates "would fit like a glove to the hand." They could not decide until they knew what it all meant. Later, a stubborn speech from Mr. Massey caused President Wilson to inquire whether he was to understand that Australia and New Zealand were presenting an ultimatum to the conference. Was this proposal the maximum of their concession, and, failing its acceptance, did they mean to do what they could to stop the whole agreement? Mr. Massey said "No." Mr. Hughes, who heard with great difficulty, had the question repeated to him by the President and replied that "President Wilson had put it fairly well. That was their attitude."

⁸⁵ Mr. Lloyd George described the article as "monstrous," and General Botha said that he flung the paper away on seeing it.

The shocked amusement which followed this apparently defiant answer tended to heighten the President's indignation.⁶⁶ It was M. Clemenceau who, sensing a misunderstanding, kindly interposed that "ultimatum" was not the right term for what Mr. Hughes intended.⁶⁷ Mr. Hughes himself went on to say that if the Australian Government was prepared to go further he would offer no objection; but, speaking for himself, he could not go beyond that compromise.

These shots, though screened by much of the usual blank cartridge of diplomatic converse, were sufficiently evident to justify their description by Colonel House as "a first-class row," and the meeting closed with the President and his Australian opponent still both recalcitrant. Mr. Hughes advised the Australian Government only to accept on condition that it was assured in writing that it would be appointed as mandatory and that the terms would be as suggested. Mr. Hughes next day said in the columns of the *Matin* that he would still fight for direct possession of the Pacific islands.

There is no question of . . . conquests or Imperialism or aggrandisement. The question is whether your territory is secure, as solid as the roof sheltering you.

Nevertheless everyone concerned knew that the crisis was passed. While the storm was raging in the council chamber, Colonel House and Lord Robert Cecil were quietly agreeing upon the covenant of which the mandate resolutions (now

⁶⁶ This incident has been described by several writers, some of whom evidently heard it from onlookers who, like the President, received the impression that Hughes was aggressively defiant. Major-General J. E. B. Seely writes (in *Fear and be Slain, Adventures by Land, Sea, and Air*, pp. 247-8): "Matters came to a climax one morning when Mr. Hughes appeared with the proposal that the Australian Mandate for outlying and adjacent islands should be extended. To everybody's surprise President Wilson opposed the suggestion with extreme vigour. Clemenceau said, acidly, that he could not see any reason for excitement. He believed these aborigines could settle their own affairs. Lloyd George while giving general support to Mr. Hughes, suggested a compromise. President Wilson would have none of it, and burst forth as one speaking *ex cathedra* 'Mr. Prime Minister of Australia, do I understand your attitude aright? If I do, it is this, that the opinion of the whole civilised world is to be set at naught. This Conference, fraught with such infinite consequence to mankind for good or evil, is to break up with results which may well be disastrous to the future happiness or unhappiness of eighteen hundred millions of the human race, in order to satisfy the whim of five million people in the remote Southern continent whom you claim to represent.' Mr. Hughes, who was almost stone deaf, had moved his speaking and hearing apparatus quite close to the President and listened intently to every word. He then replied: 'Very well put, Mr. President, you have guessed it. That's just so.' The words were said with such detached serenity that the Conference burst out laughing, all except President Wilson, who was desperately offended. The strange thing is that in the end Hughes got his way." Mr. Winston Churchill (in *The World Crisis, the Aftermath*, p. 152) gives a somewhat similar version. Both narratives are inaccurate in detail. Actually, any "score" that Mr. Hughes made off the President in this passage appears to have been wholly unintentional.

⁶⁷ M. Clemenceau's intervention is not mentioned in the official record

including that providing for the "C" mandates) became Article XXII.⁵⁸ Mr. Hughes confessed that he was not satisfied with the settlement. Speaking to the Australian Corps in Belgium shortly after it had been determined, he said that

with regard to German New Guinea and the other neighbouring islands . . . he had fought with all his might that they should be given outright to Australia. But he had fought against overwhelming opposition, and he had been defeated. The Peace Conference had decided upon the mandatory system. He would have had no objection to the islands being given to Great Britain, but if there was to be a mandate, that mandate must be held by Australia. . . . It had been proposed that an open-door policy should be maintained in regard to those islands. He could not agree to that. There could be no open door in regard to the islands near Australia. There should be a barred and closed door—with Australia as the guardian of the door.⁵⁹

The Australian Government telegraphed that it shared Mr. Hughes's "bitter disappointment." It added that he was the best judge as to whether the compromise was inevitable but hoped he would press for reconsideration. Control of immigration was vital. The Government appreciated the "splendid fight" that he was putting up and trusted to him not to endanger Australia's fundamental interests by antagonising Great Britain or America. It is clear that on second thoughts Mr. Hughes recognised that the securing of the terms arranged was a result more satisfactory than at first he had estimated; for on January 31st he informed the Australian Government that the mandate, if obtained, would "give us all the power we want and all the safety too." Indeed, he added, in some respects it would be better than outright control, since no other power would be allowed to fortify mandated islands—a circumstance which he and Sir Joseph Cook considered to be of great importance

⁵⁸ This is given in *Appendix No. 9*. It will be seen that several changes were made in the wording of the clauses relating to mandates. The addition permitting natives to be trained for the defence of the territory was proposed on January 30th by Sir Robert Borden in order to avoid an ambiguity, but it incidentally met the desire of the French to raise volunteers in the countries under French administration—a right, which M. Pichon said, they could not renounce. The provision concerning freedom of religious opinion was subsequently added at the request of President Wilson who asked Mr. Hughes whether he agreed that the natives should be allowed free access to missionaries of any denomination—a point on which the American people laid much stress. "By all means Mr. President," was the reply "I understand these poor people sometimes go for months together without half enough to eat." Everyone laughed except the President.

⁵⁹ *The Times*, 28 Feb., 1919.

Public opinion in Australia was not clearly expressed while the question was under discussion in Paris. The principal newspapers were not encouraging either as to Australia obtaining sovereignty over the islands, which entailed responsibility and expense, or as to accepting a mandate from the League of Nations. The *Melbourne Age* thought that the British Empire rather than Australia should be the mandatory, and that it would be a calamity if the islands were handed over to Australia as a gift. The *Argus* considered that a mistake had been made in deciding upon the mandatory system before the League of Nations was constituted. The *Sydney Morning Herald* held that, now that the mandate system was accepted, Mr. Hughes's influence ought to be exerted to provide the League of Nations with the power to make the mandates safe. It is not, however, clear from the newspapers of the period that the people of the Commonwealth held any strong views on the method by which control should be exercised; that the acting Prime Minister, Mr. Watt, did, was made manifest at the time, and even more emphatically later.

The mandate method having been adopted, Mr. Hughes, with the warm support of his Government, still pressed that the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference should itself declare that the mandate was entrusted to Australia, instead of having to wait till the League of Nations was constituted. He therefore approached President Wilson through Colonel House in a long memorandum, urging that "whilst there is no reason for postponing the settlement, there are overwhelming reasons for not doing so." The Australian delegation should, he maintained, be in a position to tell their people, and their people should be in a position to know, exactly what the Peace meant to them. In some instances, the assignment of a mandate would not be vital to the country accepting it, but the assignment to Australia of a mandate for the Pacific Islands and New Guinea was of vital concern from the point of view of security.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ The memorandum, with the covering letter to Colonel House, are printed in *Vol. IX, p. 289, of My Diary at the Conference of Paris*, by David Hunter Miller, one of the United States officials at the Peace Conference. This enormous work, in 21 large volumes, contains a great quantity of documentary material, not accessible elsewhere. Only 40 copies were printed, for private circulation. The author was enabled to consult, by the courtesy of the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, the copy in its library in East 65th Street.

Actually the German territories were surrendered under the treaty, not to the League of Nations but to the Allied and Associated⁶¹ Powers, and it was therefore the Supreme Council and not the League which first chose the mandatories, on the 7th of May, 1919. The Covenant had already been passed by a vote of the plenary session of April 28th, but the "C" mandates were not actually issued by the League until the 17th of December, 1920. The mandate for New Guinea and the adjacent islands had been allotted to Australia, that for Samoa to New Zealand, and that for the North Pacific islands formerly in German possession to Japan.⁶²

VIII

The Japanese and Australian delegates, who in the first stages of the conference had striven for the same policy—annexation—were later divided by an important rift. This was due to a strong effort by the Japanese to have embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations a clause which, in the opinion of Mr. Hughes, would have endangered the White Australia policy. The battle was fought out in the commission to which had been entrusted the task of finally shaping the Covenant.

President Wilson himself was chairman of this commission. On February 13th the Japanese statesman, Baron Makino, moved the insertion of the following words in the Article—No. 21 of the draft—dealing with religious toleration:

The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Powers agree to accord, as soon as possible, to all alien nationals of States members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction either in law or in fact on account of their race or nationality.

Baron Makino stated that his object was to eliminate a fruitful cause of racial animosity by preventing race discrimination. But it was immediately pointed out that the proposed amendment went much further than the prevention of discrimination. It would prevent any state from regulating the inflow of immigration in accordance with the wishes, ideals, and economic interests of its people. It would throw Australia

⁶¹ This form had been adopted because the United States were not formally "Allied."

⁶² For the text of the New Guinea mandate see *Appendix No 10*.

open to indiscriminate immigration, and would thereby revive a vexed question which in former years had occasioned serious disturbances.

The Japanese representatives, with much diplomatic aplomb, had, before bringing the amendment before the commission, interviewed the representatives of other nations, endeavouring to enlist support and remove objections.⁶³ To the foreign representatives whom they approached, the question seemed a very simple one, with no "catch" in it. "Equal and just treatment in every respect," "no distinction either in law or in fact"—why not? And, if there had been no ulterior intent behind those generous phrases, there could have been no reasonable objection to them. But the British delegations read them in their full implication. It was clear to them that the amendment affected, and was definitely intended to affect, the immigration policies of Australia, Canada, and South Africa, and that it also clashed with the policy of the United States. The head of the Japanese delegation approached Mr. Hughes, who said that Australia would have no objection to a declaration of racial equality, "provided that it stated in clear and unambiguous terms that this did not confer any right to enter Australia—or any other country—except as and to the extent that its Government might determine." The Japanese statesman replied that they sought "no more than a recognition of a technical right of free entrance, and that there was no intention to act upon it."⁶⁴ The answer was too plain to need emphasis: if the Covenant of the League of Nations contained the words proposed by Baron Makino, any subject of a nation which was a member of the League would have the right to demand the privileges conferred, and his government would be bound to support his claim.

Lord Robert Cecil pointed out that the amendment involved controversial matters of great difficulty and importance affecting problems within the British Empire, and suggested the postponement of the "religious equality" article, which entailed the postponement of Baron Makino's amendment.

⁶³ Latham, *The Significance of the Peace Conference*, p. 8

⁶⁴ Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure*, p. 359.

As the commission determined to omit article 21, the question was dropped for the time being.⁶⁵

Early in April the issue was raised again, when Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda called on Mr. Hughes, and asked him whether he would agree to the insertion in the Covenant of an article in the following form: "The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to endorse the principle of equal and just treatment to be accorded to all aliens, nationals of States members of the League." They explained that they had raised the issue again in consequence of pressure from Japan, and showed him a telegram from Tokyo, dated March 16th. It read:

The executive committee of the League for the abolition of racial discrimination assembled at the Japanese House of Representatives on March 14th. Some of the Members maintained that, if it were to become apparent that the object of the League would be unattainable, they would form another League with a view to impeaching the Government, and, by arousing public opinion, would try to overthrow the Cabinet. They also insisted that, in such eventuality, Japan should secede from the League of Nations. They adjourned with a decision that a general meeting would be held on the 23rd March.

Baron Makino added that President Wilson, Lord Robert Cecil, General Smuts, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Robert Borden and others approved of the proposed article.

Mr. Hughes informed the two Japanese statesmen that he could not agree to the new formula; which, indeed, meant the same thing, and left the same loop-hole, as did the previous one, inasmuch as it conferred a right to "equal treatment" to all nationals of States which were members of the League.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Colonel House, the confidential friend of President Wilson, makes the statement (*The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. IV, p. 325, under date 13 Feb., 1919): "Makino agreed upon a form the other day which the President accepted and which was as mild and inoffensive as possible, but even that the British refused. I understand that all the British Delegation were willing to accept the form the President, Makino and Chinda agreed on, excepting Hughes of Australia. He has been the stumbling-block."

⁶⁶ Colonel House noted in his diary (*The Intimate Papers*, Vol. IV, p. 429) on March 27: "A great many visitors this afternoon, among them Viscount Chinda and Baron Makino. They are having no end of trouble with Hughes of Australia. He will not consent to anything in the way of satisfying Japan's desires. He threatens if anything is passed by our Committee, he will bring it up at the Plenary Conference." Mr. Hughes's own account of the incident, given later to the House of Representatives, was as follows: "Baron Makino said that the Japanese were a proud people, and had fought by our side in this war. They regarded it as intolerable that they should not be treated as the equals of us and other races. . . . I hoped—and I hope so still—that they would always remain our friends and Allies. . . . 'But,' I added, 'the history of your people has its roots in far different soil. . . . Your ideals, your institutions, your standards, are not ours. We do not say that ours are greater or better than yours; we only say they are different.'" (*Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, LXXXIX, p. 12175.)

On April 10th General Smuts informed Mr. Hughes, through Sir Robert Garran, that the Japanese intended to bring forward another formula, namely, to insert in the preamble to the Covenant of the League of Nations the words: "by the indorsement of the principle of equality of all nationals of States members of the League." This proposed amendment, if adopted, would have made the preamble read as follows:

In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, by the prescription of open, just, and honourable relations between nations, *by the indorsement of the principle of equality of all nationals of States members of the League*, by the firm establishment of the understandings of international laws as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another.

In the three formulae which the Japanese delegation had produced, the same essential words appeared; it was not merely a formal declaration of equality of status that was desired, but a specific recognition of a right to be possessed by "the nationals," *i.e.*, the subjects, of any State which was a member of the League. The wrapping was slightly different in each case, but the material thing within the package was unchanged.

General Smuts said that he appreciated Mr. Hughes's objections, but thought it desirable that some formula should be arrived at which would satisfy Japan while not committing Australia to anything definite. He made the suggestion to substitute, in the Japanese proposal, the words "equitable treatment" for "equal and just treatment". He also mentioned a suggestion by Lord Robert Cecil that a clause should be framed expressly limited to discrimination between nationals of foreign states actually resident in the State—thus excluding any interpretation which would apply to immigration.

On April 11th Baron Makino had an interview with General Smuts and Mr. Hughes. Mr. Hughes asked that immigration should be excluded by express words, but to this Baron Makino would not agree. His refusal made plain what had been inferred throughout, that his real intention was to

secure, not a statement that the western nations regarded the Japanese as fully their equals in culture and civilisation—to which most Australians, like most of the other peoples concerned, would heartily agree—but *a right to immigration*.

At a meeting of the League of Nations Commission on April 11th, Baron Makino brought forward yet another amendment to the preamble to the Covenant in the form of a proposal to add after "between nations" the words: "by the indorsement of the principle of the equality of nations and the just treatment of their nationals." In this form clever diplomatic vagueness veiled the intention without concealing it. Lord Robert Cecil, in the politest way, expressed his complete sympathy with the idea, but regretted that he could not vote for the amendment. The solution of the racial question, he thought, could not be attempted by the commission without encroaching on the sovereignty of the nations which were members of the League. The proposed words were either vague and ineffective, or they were very significant. In the latter case they were controversial, and interfered with the domestic affairs of nations. To this objection Viscount Chinda replied that the Japanese delegates had deliberately not broached the question of immigration. He only asked for recognition of the principle of equality and just treatment. Japanese public opinion, he insisted, was much concerned about the question.

That the Japanese diplomatists had done some persuasive work among the representatives of nations who were not directly concerned with the question was then made apparent. The Italian Signor Orlando and the Frenchman M. Bourgeois, both supported the amendment. The Greek M. Venizelos thought it would be difficult to reject the amendment, which, he observed, referred to the equality of nations, not of races. He was impressed by the Japanese assurance that the amendment did not involve any obligation as to immigration. The Czechoslovakian, Dr. Kramar, said that he could see no danger in the amendment. The Pole, M. Dmowsky, sympathised with the Japanese desire, but doubted whether there was any advantage in inserting a general declaration in the preamble without any provisions for enforcing it in the

body of the covenant. The Chinese, Mr. Koo, said he would be glad to see the principle of equality recognised in the covenant.

Then President Wilson intervened. He said that no one wished to deny the principle of the equality of nations, or the principle of the just treatment of the nationals of any country. The League was obviously based on the principle of the equality of nations. He thought that, in order to avoid controversy outside the commission, it would be unwise to press the amendment. The Japanese, however, had counted heads, and, being certain of the result, Baron Makino insisted upon a vote. The result was that 11 votes were recorded for the amendment and 6 against it. Thereupon President Wilson took the responsibility of ruling that, inasmuch as the amendment had not been agreed to unanimously, it had not been carried, because any amendment of the draft of the covenant then before the commission could only be made by a unanimous vote. Mr. Hughes, who had been privately endeavouring to force Wilson's hand by appealing to the representatives of the American press—particularly those from the Western States—recorded that "President Wilson's ruling amazed and angered the Committee appointed to draft the Covenant;"⁶⁷ and Mr. Latham, who was also present, commented:⁶⁸

This was, however, a bold step to take. Our view . . . had gained but little support. I cannot say what efforts were made to enlist support for it, or to prevent the question being raised, but whatever was done had proved to be ineffectual. The vote of the Commission may be taken as an indication of the probable vote at a full meeting of the Conference. It was fortunate for Australia that President Wilson adopted a procedure, remarkable as it may appear, which resulted in the Japanese amendment not being included in the Covenant as submitted to the Peace Conference.

Colonel House wrote:⁶⁹

The President was for accepting it, but Cecil, under instructions from his Government could not; and since I knew that Hughes would fight it and make an inflammatory speech in the Plenary Session, I urged the President to stay with the British, which he did.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Hughes, *The Splendid Adventure*, p. 359.

⁶⁸ Latham, *The Significance of the Peace Conference*, p. 9.

⁶⁹ *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. IV, p. 444.

⁷⁰ House also noted on March 29 (*Ibid.*, p. 430): "Hughes insists that nothing shall go in, no matter how mild and inoffensive. If anything is attempted, his purpose is to make a speech at the Plenary Conference and to raise a storm of protest not only in the Dominions but in the western part of the United States. I suggested to Smuts that we talk it out with Makino, who is one of the committee

When the French delegates called Wilson's attention to the fact that a majority had voted in favour of the Japanese amendment, the President replied that

decisions of the Commission were not valid unless unanimous. . . . There was only one case where a decision of the majority had prevailed, and that was in the case of determining the Seat of the League. In that case it had been necessary to accept the opinion of the majority inasmuch as no other procedure was possible if the question was to be decided at all

President Wilson's decision, which turned much of the Japanese resentment upon him, settled the main issue, but repercussions continued. On April 25th, when the question under debate by the Council of Three was the request of Japan for the mandate of Shantung, Mr. Balfour, according to the minutes, said that :

Baron Makino had come again to see him on Sunday evening. With great delicacy, but perfect clearness, he had indicated that Japan . . . was asked to agree to the League of Nations although she could not obtain recognition of her claims for equality of treatment. He had said that public opinion in Japan was much concerned on this question, that if Japan was to receive one check as regards Shantung and another check as regards the League of Nations the position would be very serious. . . . He⁷¹ understood that if Japan received what she wanted in regard to Shantung, her representatives at the plenary meeting would content themselves with a survey of the inequality of races and move some abstract resolution which would probably be rejected. Japan would then merely make a protest. If, however, she regarded herself as ill-treated over Shantung, he was unable to say what line the Japanese delegates might take.

To ensure Japan's adherence to the League of Nations, President Wilson agreed to her receiving the German rights in Shantung;⁷² and at the plenary session of the Peace Conference on April 28th, when the Covenant of the League was submitted and adopted, Baron Makino made the protest foreshadowed. He said frankly that his modified amendment had been in the nature of a compromise, and, as it had not been accepted, he felt constrained to revert to the original

who came this morning to select a site for the League of Nations. . . . I told Makino frankly that while we would agree to the pallid formula they desired, yet unless Hughes promised not to make trouble we would be against putting it in. Smuts took the same position. I urged Makino to let the matter drop for the moment. I took this occasion to call his attention to the virulent abuse of the United States in which the Japanese Press were now indulging. The reason for this, he told me, was that they thought we were objecting to the clause in the Covenant which they, the Japanese delegates, had proposed. He promised to let their people know just where the trouble lay."

There was nevertheless some justice in Mr. Hughes's plea that the American delegates endeavoured to run with both sides in this matter. In the crucial division in the League of Nations Commission they refrained from voting.

⁷¹ Presumably Mr. Balfour.

⁷² See *The American Journal of International Law*, July, 1933, pp 435-6.

Japanese proposal, though he would not press for its adoption at present. "I feel it my duty to declare on this occasion," he said, "that the Japanese Government and people feel poignant regret at the failure of the Commission to approve of their just demand for laying down a principle aiming at the adjustment of this long-standing grievance, a demand that is based upon a deep-rooted national conviction. They will continue in their insistence for the adoption of this principle by the League in future."

Later, when the mandates affecting the Pacific islands were issued by the League of Nations (17th December, 1920), Japan officially deposited at the office of the League the following declaration:

From the fundamental spirit of the League of Nations and as the question of interpretation of the Covenant, His Imperial Japanese Majesty's Government have a firm conviction in the justice of the claim they have hitherto made for the inclusion of a clause concerning the assurance of equal opportunities for trade and commerce in "C" mandates. But from the spirit of conciliation and co-operation, and their reluctance to see the question unsettled any longer, they have decided to agree to the issue of the mandate in its present form. That decision, however, should not be considered as an acquiescence on the part of His Imperial Japanese Majesty's Government in the submission of Japanese subjects to a discriminatory and disadvantageous treatment in the mandated territories; nor have they thereby discarded their claim that the rights and interests enjoyed by Japanese subjects in these territories in the past should be fully respected.

Mr. David Hunter Miller records⁷³ that, while the controversy on the question raised by the Japanese was proceeding, Colonel House showed a pencilled memorandum to Mr. Balfour, commencing with the proposition taken from the Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal". "Balfour said that this was an 18th century proposition which he did not believe was true. He believed that it was true in a certain sense that all men of a particular nation were created equal, but not that a man in Central Africa was created equal to a European. Colonel House said he did not see how the policy towards the Japanese could be continued. The world said they could not go to Africa, they could not go to any white country, they could not go to China, and they could not go to Siberia; and yet they were a growing nation, having a country where all the land was tilled. But they had to go

⁷³ In *My Diary at the Conference of Paris*, Vol. I, p. 116.

somewhere. Balfour said that he had a great deal of sympathy with this view."

On the Australian side in this controversy the sole aim was to refuse to give a right of immigration to any foreign nationals whose influx would endanger the possession of Australia by people of British or cognate race. There was no opposition to a plain statement of equality which would merely set forth an obvious truth—indeed it was the high qualities of the Japanese that made them formidable—*provided that it was quite clear that it would not be used as a lever to open Australia to immigration.* Australians were convinced that such an opening would mean the end of their nation; and they took the steps, which the Japanese would have taken in similar conditions, to avert this.

IX

Concerning mandates, a question which evoked much strong feeling, and nearly developed into a quarrel, arose within the British Empire circle as to the mandate for a small island in the Pacific. Nauru, or Pleasant Island, is a small speck of rock—a mere pin-point on an ordinary atlas map—situated in longitude 166 E., twenty-six miles south of the equator. As a German possession it was administered with the Marshalls, though it lies some hundreds of miles from that group. The one important feature of Nauru was that it consisted of an immense deposit of rock phosphate, which, when treated with sulphuric acid, produced high-grade super-phosphate, a fertiliser in great demand throughout the world, but especially in Australia. A German estimate made in 1917 showed that, of the 2,271 hectares forming the total extent of the island, 1,806 hectares contained phosphate deposits to the calculated quantity of 300,000,000 tons.⁷⁴

The Nauru question was complicated by the facts that certain influences in Australia desired that the Commonwealth should obtain the sole mandate; that the British Government desired to protect the interests of a powerful British company which had been working the phosphate deposits while the island was under German government; and that New Zealand,

⁷⁴ Inter-State Commission's *Report on British and Australian Trade in the South Pacific* (Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers, 1917-19, Vol. V. p. 521).

when her interest was awakened, desired a share in the control inasmuch as her agriculturists also obtained their supplies of fertiliser from Nauru. The British company—the Pacific Phosphate Company Limited, of which Lord Balfour of Burleigh⁷⁵ was chairman—had acquired its interests before the war. It had previously been working phosphate deposits in Ocean Island, which was British; but the German Jaluit Gesellschaft—which held a trading concession from the German Government—being less well equipped for this enterprise than the British company was, had entered into negotiations by which, with the consent of the German Government, the Pacific Phosphate Company undertook the sole business of developing Nauru's phosphate resources. Two German representatives were elected to the board of directors, but the capital and management were entirely British. Inasmuch as Nauru possessed no other industry than this, "the practical ownership was British."⁷⁶

Upon the outbreak of the war, the German administration at the Marshalls (September, 1914) expelled the British members of the company's staff from Nauru, sending them on board one of the company's steamers to Ocean Island. But the tables were turned in November when a detachment of the Commonwealth's military forces, by this time established in Rabaul, steamed over to Nauru, and hoisted the British flag. The British employees were thereupon brought back from Ocean Island, and the Germans, twenty-three in all, were sent to Australia to be interned.

Inasmuch as an Australian garrison remained in Nauru till the end of the war, if the general rule had been applied, that mandates should be issued by the League of Nations to the dominions whose troops had taken possession of the various German colonies, then a mandate for Nauru would have been granted to Australia. But Great Britain pointed out that, though the island had been German as a political possession, it was in actual fact in occupation of the British Pacific Phosphate Company. The rights of New Zealand also were cited.

⁷⁵ Rt. Hon. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, K.T., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O. Of Kennet, Alloa, Scotland, b. Kennet, 13 Jan., 1849. Died 6 July, 1921.

⁷⁶ Inter-State Commission's *Report* (*Parl Papers, 1917-19, Vol V, p. 520.*)

Mr. Hughes was pressed by the Acting Prime Minister of the Commonwealth to make a special effort to secure the absolute control of Nauru by Australia.⁷⁷ On the 1st of May, 1919, Mr. Watt cabled for definite information. In the course of a very long message concerning the destination of the German colonies, he said:

British authorities are apparently treating it (Nauru) as if it were to pass to British Commissioner for Pacific. Your colleagues hope you will vigorously resist such proposal. Our troops took it, and have garrisoned it for over four years. . . . If cost of war is not to be included in reparation bill, Australia's hope of getting anything substantial in relief of its crushing war debt is slender. Nauru is the one island whose receipts exceed its expenditure. Its phosphate deposit marks it of considerable value, not only as a purely commercial proposition, but because the future productivity of our continent absolutely depends on such a fertiliser.

Mr. Hughes, who before these messages reached him was trying to secure Nauru, fought out the question both with the British ministers concerned, and with Lord Balfour of Burleigh, to whom they referred him. From first to last he was convinced that the claim of the company for compensation for rights of exploitation obtained from a government which had ceased to exist, was, to say the least, exaggerated; but he was forced to the conclusion that there was no possibility of "Australia getting anything substantial" in face of the opposition of the company, unless he proceeded to extremes. He cabled to Australia on May 7th, informing the Cabinet that he could not get a mandate for Nauru, and that apparently there was to be a British partnership for the control of the island. If the Cabinet considered that such a decision was inadvisable, he said: "I will not sign the Treaty and will not accept mandate for other islands; do you agree?" Mr. Watt's reply to that abrupt challenge was (May 9th):

I think it would be improper not to sign treaty because our reasonable aspirations regarding Nauru have been frustrated. If Australia says she will not accept mandate for islands because Nauru not

⁷⁷ In 1914 an effort to impress on the Government the value of Nauru to Australia was made by Mr. A. E. Stephen (of Sydney), who had business associations there, and Dr. J. F. Elliott (of Sydney), whose firm was a large buyer of phosphates. Their representations were made to Mr. W. H. Kelly, who passed them on to Senator Millen, but they had no effect. The Australian naval authorities did not want to garrison the island. The Pacific Phosphate Company, however, wished to go on working, and pressed both the British and Australian Governments for leave. The British Government insisted that the island must first be occupied, and Australia arranged to send a garrison. The British Government sent an administrator from Fiji. In political matters he was under the British Government, in military under the Australian. The British Government charged the company with the costs of administration.

included, the natural reply will be we are grabbing at valuable asset. I suggest that you put up best fight you can, and, if defeated, sign, relying on subsequent negotiations and representations to compel Britain to accede to our view or make suitable equivalent arrangements of financial kind.

To this Mr. Hughes replied (June 4th):

In face of your telegram, I could, of course, not follow the only course that would have given us full control of Nauru and its phosphates. I am quite sure I should have succeeded had Cabinet supported me. As it did not, I have been perforce compelled to make best of a bad job.

At a later date Mr. Watt strongly blamed Mr. Hughes for his management of the Nauru incident, and resented the imputation that Australia failed to secure a mandate for the island because of lack of support from the Government. He said that Mr. Hughes was "in the full sense a plenipotentiary, subject to no interference or control in that capacity." The mutual recriminations, however, ignored the facts that control of Nauru could not have been obtained without giving offence to New Zealand, where there were emphatic protests against the Australian claim, and that the profits which it was assumed could have been derived by the Australian Government from phosphates were not available without the creation of extreme tension or unless the rights of the Pacific Phosphate Company were purchased—which was finally done at colossal cost by the governments that received the mandate.⁷⁸

The Nauru question was eventually settled by the League of Nations conferring a mandate "upon His Britannic Majesty" to administer the island; but the mandate did not specify that the King's Government in Great Britain should be responsible for it. The way was left open for the agreement afterwards made between "His Majesty's Government in London, His Majesty's Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, and His Majesty's Government of the Dominion of New Zealand," for their joint administration. The three governments arranged that during the first five years the administrator should be appointed by Australia. The phosphate deposits purchased from the company⁷⁹ were to be

⁷⁸ The cablegrams quoted were read in the House of Representatives; *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. XCIV, pp. 5799-5802.

⁷⁹ The sum paid for the deposits at Nauru and Ocean Island (a British possession) was £3,500,000. Of this amount, Great Britain and Australia each paid 42 per cent. and New Zealand 16 per cent.

administered through a board of three commissioners, appointed by the three governments. This agreement was confirmed by acts passed by the British, Australian, and New Zealand Parliaments.⁸⁰

X

One of the most important commissions set up in January, 1919, by decision of the Council of Ten was that which examined and eventually reported on the amount which the enemy countries ought to pay by way of reparation, what they were capable of paying, and by what method, in what form, and within what time payment ought to be made. M. Klotz, the finance minister of France, was appointed president of the commission, and Mr. Hughes was one of two vice-presidents and, according to Temperley, its "leading spirit." It commenced its work on February 3rd.

But this was not Mr. Hughes's first concern with enquiry into the vexed and protracted post-war question of reparations and indemnities. In 1918 he was chosen by the British Government to be chairman of a committee formed to investigate the matter of Germany's capacity to pay, and the extent of the damage done by the German armies in Belgium and France. His work with this committee caused him to form some very strong opinions, which later affected his work on the Reparations Commission. Mr. Lloyd George recorded that he caused the English committee to be appointed not merely to provide the Government with some guidance as to the demands which could reasonably be made at the Peace Conference, but also "with a view of obtaining an authoritative report that would damp down the too fierce ardour of an expectant public."⁸¹ Some public men and newspapers had spoken and written wildly about extracting the last farthing of the cost of the war from Germany. Mr. Lloyd George was afterwards accused of pandering to this feeling, but in his published book he vigorously denied the imputation, and cited Mr. Hughes's committee as proof of his own moderate views. The members, in addition to the chairman, were Mr.

⁸⁰ Quincy Wright, *Mandates Under the League of Nations*, p. 421. For the text of the Nauru mandate see *Appendix No. 11*. The Australian Act is the Nauru Island Agreement Act, 1919.

⁸¹ Lloyd George, *The Truth about Reparations and War Debts*, p. 11.

Walter Long, a member of the British Government; Sir George Foster, the Canadian Finance Minister; Mr. W. A. S. Hewins,⁸² an eminent economist; Lord Cunliffe,⁸³ the Governor of the Bank of England; and the Hon. Herbert Gibbs,⁸⁴ a member of an eminent firm in the City of London. "It will be seen," wrote Mr. Lloyd George, "that this Committee was very far from being dominated by the fire-eating type of politician." In its report the committee recommended that the Central Powers should be required to make an annual reparation payment of £1,200,000,000, which figure, it was calculated, represented interest charges on the whole direct cost of the war to the Allies. The total cost, it was estimated, was £24,000,000,000; "and," it was reported, "the committee have certainly no reason to suppose that the enemy Powers could not provide £1,200,000,000 per annum as interest when normal conditions are restored."⁸⁵ Post-war history makes an ironical comment on the phrase "when normal conditions are restored."

Mr. Lloyd George, while quoting the findings of the committee, adds: "To the credit of the British Treasury, I must state that in their view, expressed at that moment of triumphant exaltation, £2,000,000,000 was the full measure of the repayments we could possibly expect Germany to make."⁸⁶

It does not appear, however, that Mr. Lloyd George at the time paid more attention to the Treasury estimate than to that of Mr. Hughes's committee; and a work of high authority comments:

In England, instead of attempting to moderate the public demand, the Government took advantage of popular feeling for the immediate purpose of the elections of December, 1918, and Mr. Lloyd George was returned to power largely on the cry of "Make Germany pay for the

⁸² Professor W. A. S. Hewins First Director of London School of Economics (1895/1903); Secretary, Tariff Commission, 1903/17; Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, 1918/19 B. Wednesfield Heath, near Wolverhampton, 11 May, 1865. Died 17 Nov., 1931.

⁸³ Lord Cunliffe, GBE Director of Bank of England, 1895, Deputy Governor, 1911, Governor, 1913/18 B London, 4 Dec., 1855. Died 6 Jan., 1920.

⁸⁴ Lord Hunsdon Of Briggens, Ware, Herts., and London, b. 14 May, 1854 Died 22 May, 1935.

⁸⁵ Lloyd George, p. 12

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 13 Mr. J. M. Keynes, in his *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, p. 186, estimated that £2,000,000,000 was a "safe maximum figure of Germany's capacity to pay" and was thereupon denounced by M. Tardieu as a "pro German scribe from Cambridge," whose estimate "oversteps the limits of permissible tomfoolery."

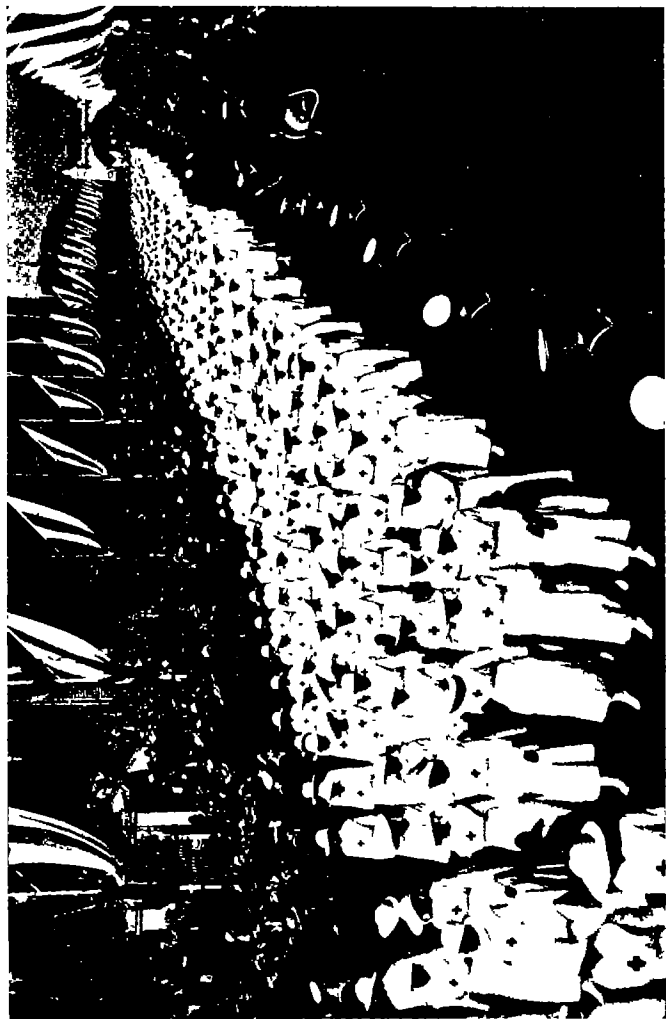


58 THE SIGNING OF THE PEACE TREATY IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS,
VERSAILLES, 28TH JUNE, 1919

Front Dr. Johannes Bell (Germany) signing, with Herr Hermann Muller leaning over him. *Middle row (left to right)* General Tasker H. Bliss, Colonel E. M. House, Mr Henry White, Mr Robert Lansing, President Woodrow Wilson (United States), M. Georges Clemenceau (France), Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George, Rt. Hon. A. Bonar Law, Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, Lord Milner, Rt. Hon. G. N. Barnes (Great Britain); the Marquis Saionji (Japan). *Back row* M. Eleutherios Venizelos (Greece), Dr. A. Costa (Portugal), Lord Riddell (British press); Rt. Hon. Sir George Foster (Canada); M. Nikola Pachitch (Serbia); M. Stephen Pichon (France), Lieut.-Colonel Sir Maurice Hankey, Rt. Hon. E. S. Montagu (Great Britain); the Maharajah of Bikaner (India); Signor V. E. Orlando (Italy); M. Paul Hymans (Belgium); General Rt. Hon. Louis Botha (South Africa), Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes

*From a painting by Sir William Orpen, R.A.
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To face p. 802



59 THE PEACE CELEBRATIONS IN SYDNEY, JULY 1919

V.A.D.'s marching along Macquarie-street

Photo by "The Sydney Mail"

To face p 803

war!" It is true that Mr. Lloyd George was cautious enough in most of his public speeches to qualify this by explaining that Germany would be made to pay up to the limit of her capacity. His followers, however, were not, and there was no doubt in the public mind that the Government was pledged to the recovery of the whole war costs.⁸⁷

The general attitude of Mr. Hughes towards the Germans left no room for doubt as to what his views in this matter would be; indeed, they closely resembled those of the French delegates. He throughout laid stress on the point that, whatever indemnity was demanded, it should be based not only upon an estimate of the actual damage done by the German armies, but should also include compensation for the immense expenditure which the victorious Allies were compelled to incur. He recognised a distinction between "indemnity" and "reparation," but insisted that the former should, with justice, be demanded as well as the latter. At the Imperial War Cabinet he strongly protested against the interpretation of the principle that "compensation will be paid by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany, by land, by sea, and from the air," as a limitation of the demands which might legitimately be made. The suggestion made in a famous book, that "his indignation may have been partly due to the fact that Australia, not having been ravaged, would have no claims at all under the more limited interpretation of our rights,"⁸⁸ is correct, and the point of view of the Australian Prime Minister was by no means invalid.

The same point is stressed by Mr. Temperley in his *History of the Peace Conference of Paris*:

United on the score of mandates and immigration, the Dominions were sharply divided on the issue of reparations. Differences of material conditions accounted no less than theoretical considerations for the strong divergence of opinion between Mr Hughes and General Smuts. Australia had suffered severely in the war through the dislocation of her trade and shipping; her generous terms to her soldiers made warfare especially costly, and, unlike Canada, her distance from the scene of operations precluded her drawing large revenues from the manufacture of munitions. South Africa, on the other hand, had spent comparatively little on the war; her trade had been less severely hampered; and, while Australia was only to obtain a number of not very valuable island possessions, South Africa was assured of the

⁸⁷ Temperley (editor), *History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, Vol. II, p. 57.

⁸⁸ Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, p. 127.

important addition of South-West Africa. It is not, then, surprising that Mr. Hughes demanded that the whole of Australia's war costs, estimated at £364,000,000, should be refunded, as well as £100,000,000 representing the capitalised value of pensions, repatriation, loss to civilians and civilians' property, &c., and urged that, as a practical measure to this end, power should be given forthwith to appropriate in reparation all German private property in the mandated territories.⁸⁰

As to the policy and attitude of Mr. Hughes at the Peace Conference ample evidence exists. Full shorthand notes were taken of the proceedings of the British Delegation, and these records show that he made his influence felt at nearly all its meetings in his customary emphatic manner. Apart from his treatment of questions especially affecting Australia, he insisted upon certain general principles. There was among his colleagues too much talk, for his liking, about doing justice to Germany. Justice must be done to our own people likewise. The Germans were entirely untrustworthy, and had shown it throughout. The Allies must be careful not to agree to any terms or concessions which would be calculated to produce estrangement from France. So far as concerned the general provisions of the treaty, ample reparations from the defeated Central Powers, and the maintenance of a good understanding between the British Empire and France, were the main pillars of his temple.

As vice-chairman of the Reparations Commission—where his British colleagues were Lord Sumner,⁸⁰ a leading jurist, and Lord Cunliffe—Mr. Hughes expressed the same view as he had formulated on Mr. Lloyd George's English committee. Perhaps the extreme statement of it was his contention that "every Australian who had placed a mortgage on his house to buy a war bond was as definitely entitled to reparation as was every Frenchman whose house had been burned by the Germans."⁸¹ From the strictly legal point of view he was supported by Lord Sumner, who maintained that by

⁸⁰ Temperley, *Vol. VI*, p. 353. The particulars here given as a "demand" of Mr. Hughes are those of the Australian claim for reparation, laid, as were the equally extensive claims of other allies, before a sub-committee of the Reparations Commission.

⁸⁰ Rt. Hon. Viscount Sumner, G.C.B. Judge of High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division, 1909/12; a Lord Justice of Appeal, 1912/13; a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 1913/30. Of Ibstone, Bucks.; b. 3 Feb., 1859. Died 24 May, 1934.

⁸¹ B. M. Baruch, *The Making of the Reparation and Economic Sections of the Treaty*, p. 6. Mr. Baruch was a representative of the United States on the Reparations Commission.

the soundest principles of international law the case submitted, for extracting from Germany an indemnity to cover indirect damage as well as reparation for direct injury, was sound. Lord Sumner embodied his view in a memorandum wherein he submitted that, for example, whatever rights Belgium possessed in international law by reason of her neutralisation were clearly shared by those Powers which had guaranteed her neutrality and had incurred fearful losses in enforcing it. Mr. Hughes urged his principles in several strong speeches in which, on behalf of the British Empire, he submitted, "We are entitled to reparation for the full costs of the war."

The Commission's inquiries were mainly carried out by two sub-committees, the first receiving the claims of the Allied countries in an attempt to assess the damage suffered, the second endeavouring to estimate Germany's capacity to pay. Although the reports of these sub-committees were forwarded to the Council of Four, the work of the Commission was inconclusive. From the first it was completely split on the question of the interpretation of President Wilson's Fourteen Points and of the note of the Allies (5 November, 1918) reserving their right to "compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air." The American delegates throughout held that this condition limited the justifiable demands to one for repair of material damage; but all the other delegates took the view of Mr. Hughes. On February 19th a request was accordingly addressed to the Supreme War Council to decide on which basis the Commission should proceed. President Wilson had then temporarily returned to America, and the Council side-stepped the issue, asking the Reparations Commission to ascertain the damage upon both bases. Mr. Hughes writhed at these delays; in the early months after the Armistice the Allies could have enforced on the Germans any terms they wished—now they must find it more difficult.

In the end the Council of Four seized on a solution advocated in a memorandum by General Smuts, whose temperate attitude and wide grasp and sympathy had led President

Wilson to rely with confidence upon his advice. This well-reasoned paper,⁹² however, urged the conclusion that, in the damage caused to the civilian population of the Allies by Germany's aggression, there must be included the capitalised amount of the war pensions. This view being accepted, the way was opened for the enormous demands actually made on the score of reparation. Not that the Allied leaders expected full payment; but in the inflamed state of popular opinion (for which, in England, the recent election campaign was partly responsible) the leaders did not dare to demand less.

When the pieced-together draft of the treaty was perused, it became evident that each commission, by itself, had done its best to deal thoroughly with Germany, and the accumulated result came as rather a shock to some members of the British Delegation. It happened that the German reply to the peace terms came under discussion by the delegation at Mr. Lloyd George's house in the rue Nitôt on the 1st of June, 1919,⁹³ the day after the seventeenth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging, which ended the South African War. This meeting of the delegation was possibly the most representative gathering of the leaders of the British Empire that had ever taken place. All the prime ministers had read the German reply, and Mr. Lloyd George opened the meeting by asking each one of them whether the British delegation should "stand pat" (as he put it) on the original terms of peace, or whether there should be some discussion. Discussion being agreed to, the prime ministers spoke in turn according to their views.

General Botha was sitting between General Smuts and Lord Milner, and when called upon he spoke, obviously with deep feeling, to the following effect.⁹⁴ "I am not very familiar with your language, and you will, I hope, excuse me if I do not speak very well, but I do feel that I know more about the difficult task of making peace than anybody else who is here. Seventeen years ago, almost to this very day,

⁹² Baruch prints at p. 29 the text of the Smuts memorandum, and at p. 298 the full text of Mr. Hughes's speech to the Reparations Commission.

⁹³ See plate at p. 771.

⁹⁴ Recorded, from memory, by Rt. Hon. Sir John Latham who happened on that day to be acting as secretary to the delegation. The incident is not mentioned in the official record.

Lord Milner, who was then my enemy, but who"—and Botha here placed his hand on Milner's arm—"I am now proud to say is my friend, made the peace of Vereeniging. I was then a conquered enemy, and I know what it means to make peace when you have been beaten.⁹⁵ In those days, and afterwards, Great Britain treated us not only with justice, but with generosity. She carried out her promises, and my friend, General Smuts, and myself are proud to be here to-day wearing the uniform of British generals. It was the generosity, as well as the justice, of England that brought us within the Empire and that led us to fight on your side. I ask you to remember that to-day, when you are dealing with another beaten enemy." General Smuts said that the treaty as drafted would plunge Europe into chaos for a generation.

This incident, so characteristic of the British Empire—with the enemy commander-in-chief of seventeen years earlier sitting as a trusted colleague in the secret councils of the Empire—inevitably suggests a speculation as to what might have been the difference in post-war history had the drafting of the treaty and its administration been in the hands of men steeped in the old British tradition. Botha's plea was not without effect in helping to secure alteration of certain provisions in the draft.

How much did Mr. Hughes expect that Australia would obtain under the reparation clauses? On his return to Australia in 1919, he delivered an address to the soldiers on board the ship on "The Peace Terms; How They Affect Australia." He put the question, "How much, then, are we likely to get from Germany?", and answered it with "I do not know."

I stood (he continued) for an indemnity of £25,000,000,000, and no one could beat me down a penny. . . . But the treaty as adopted makes provision for an uncertain sum. Nobody knows how much it will be. I do not think we will get very much. . . . We may get £20,000,000 or £50,000,000. We must hope and pray.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Shortly before midnight on 31 May, 1902, General Botha and his colleagues had presented their last protest against the terms of peace.

⁹⁶ *The Argus*, 25 Aug., 1919. On May 4 Mr Hughes informed his Government that reparations would amount to about £11,000,000,000, the first £1,000,000,000 to be paid within two years or so. The subsequent yearly payments to be fixed by a Commission might be "anything from £200,000,000 to £600,000,000, more or less France gets 55 per cent., say £7,000,000,000, the British Empire gets some where about £2,000,000,000, or about one-fifth of the whole. Australia's share of this will be (as the cost of the war is not included) about one twenty-fifth of the £2,000,000,000, spread over 20, or 50, or a million years more or less."

Later, in the House of Representatives, he gave more figures but not more hope.⁹⁷

Our claim was for £464,000,000. That is made up of £364,000,000 actual war expenditure, and £100,000,000, being the capitalised value of pensions, repatriation, and loss to civilians and civilian property, and so on, incidental to the war. At one stroke £364,000,000 of that amount was struck out. . . . The position of Australia, then, is that our claim is cut down from £464,000,000 to £100,000,000 or thereabouts. . . . Probably—or possibly—we may receive between now and the end of April, 1921, anything from £5,000,000 to £8,000,000. I say, we may. How much we shall get afterwards, I do not know.

Anticipations, however, far exceeded realisations, for by 1931 the total amount received as Australia's share was but £5,571,720, and, the operation of the Young Plan having been suspended in 1932, no further payment has been made.

Other questions which Mr. Hughes brought before the Peace Conference related to the transfer of German private property in New Guinea, the punishment of German officials who had been guilty of inhumane treatment of British-Australasian soldiers and civilians, the appropriation, as compensation for damage done by Germany during the war, of money derived from the sale of goods formerly owned by Germany, and the transfer to the Royal Australian Navy and the Commonwealth mercantile marine of ships captured from the enemy.⁹⁸ The Australian Government asked Mr. Hughes to submit to the conference a suggestion (coming from an Australian financier, Mr. W. L. Baillieu) "for a democratic programme to secure better conditions for working men." It was urged that higher pay and shorter hours were conducive to efficiency, but shorter hours were only feasible by agreement between all countries trading with each other. Mr. Hughes, however, found the Labour Convention "a hopeless document drawn up by Gompers, Barnes and Company" and a menace to the White Australia policy. The fear that Australia's control over her own tariff might be restricted was not, however, realised.

During the conference suggestions were made to the French Government for terminating the awkward condominium

⁹⁷ *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. LXXXIX, p. 12177.

⁹⁸ On the question of the expropriation of German property, see Vol. X, pp 349-60.

system for the control of the New Hebrides, but Mr. Hughes did not find M. Clemenceau, whose attitude was generally so cordial towards him, responsive on this thorny question.

There is ample evidence that throughout the Peace Conference the Australian Prime Minister was bitterly disappointed by the progress of the negotiations. He would return to Australia without bringing her the sovereignty of the islands or sure relief from her war debt. But in retrospect both he and his countrymen found satisfaction with his achievements. By characteristic methods he had gained single-handed at least the points that were vital to his nation's existence.

XI

In the National Gallery at Melbourne hangs a striking painting representing the famous "Defenestration of Prague," the signal event which opened the Thirty Years' War. It depicts the scene in the castle of the Hradschin on the 23rd of May, 1618, when Count Thurn and the instigators of the revolt against the Hapsburg King of Bohemia, hurled out of the window the two Regents, Martinitz and Slawata, and their secretary Fabricius. The war which ensued grew from being a mere suppression of a local tumult into a great continental conflict which involved every country in western Europe. It became a struggle between the forces of imperialism and nationalism in Germany; in another of its several aspects, a duel between Catholicism and Protestantism; a war which entailed the loss of his dominions by the Prince Palatine Frederick, the son-in-law of James I. of England, and the submerging of the independence of the ancient kingdom of Bohemia. Three hundred years after the Defenestration of Prague the Peace Conference at Paris appointed a commission, the effect of whose report was to restore Bohemia to independence under the name of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. Sir Joseph Cook had no special interest in the Bohemians and the Slovaks, but he was appointed a member of the commission in the same way as General Smuts, who had no special interest in the restoration of the independence of Poland, was appointed a member of the commission which effected that act of justice.

Scarcely anything would be known about Sir Joseph Cook's association with a commission of whose particular task he neither professed nor possessed much knowledge, but for the fact that the officer whom the Foreign Office allotted to guide him was the Hon. Harold Nicolson.⁹⁹ In 1933 that wielder of a sprightly pen published his Peace Conference diary, with a valuable introduction, under the title *Peace-making 1919*. Apart from the errors where Sir Joseph Cook is described as "Premier of New South Wales," which he never was, and Mr. Latham as "Secretary to Mr. Hughes," a fate which he escaped, Mr. Nicolson's diary sheds a welcome light on the work of the commission. He spent a morning "coaching Sir Joseph Cook as to his functions," and summed up his pupil's attitude as "one of benevolent boredom." But from time to time Sir Joseph gave "a smile of contempt, indicative of the fact that although he may be ignorant of geography, as of the French language, yet he represents a young and progressive country, whereas we others are effete. But he is a nice, sensible man and an angel of obedience." What better chief could an alert and well-informed young diplomatist have desired to direct? Once Sir Joseph was startled by being suddenly asked by M. Cambon to record the official view of the British delegation. "Well," he replied, "all I can say is, we *are* a happy family, aren't we?" The remark, which was scarcely an informative reply to M. Cambon's question, brought an expression of "acute agony" to the face of the official interpreter. He wrestled gallantly with his problem, and at length emitted the version: "Le premier Délégué britannique constate que nous sommes une famille très heureuse." But, comments Mr. Nicolson, although the answer produced a painful silence, "Cook is all right. He has sense." A little later the French started an argument about the Delbrück nationality laws, and again Sir Joseph was asked to express the official British view. "'Damn Delbrück' was what he said," records Mr. Nicolson, "and how right! how true!" But he adds that to the interpreter Sir Joseph Cook was again a thorn in the flesh. Indeed,

⁹⁹ Hon. H. Nicolson, C.M.G. Foreign Office official, 1909/29; Counsellor of British Embassy, Berlin, 1928/29. Author and critic, of Sissinghurst, Kent, Eng., b. Teheran, Persia, 1886.

his method of handling awkward questions displayed a noncommittal adroitness acquired from experience in Australian parliamentary life, where dexterity under interrogation is an accomplishment without which a ministerial career would be fraught with calamities. Lieutenant-Commander Latham, one of the secretaries of this commission, wrote afterwards that Sir Joseph Cook "took his general instructions from Harold Nicolson, and . . . used his own practical common sense."

Sir Joseph Cook might have remembered that according to a familiar legend it was the plume of three ostrich feathers of the blind King John of Bohemia, slain at the Battle of Crécy, that the English King Edward III. took from his helmet and handed to his son the Black Prince, who adopted the motto, "Ich dien," which has ever since been borne by Princes of Wales. "I serve" signified the spirit in which the Australian delegate accepted a place on the commission; and it was a strange historical accident that made a statesman from a country, which was scarcely known even to expert geographers and cartographers when Bohemia lost her independence, one of the instruments for its restoration after three centuries. But thus, very often, does "the whirligig of time bring in his revenges."

The Germans had, of course, no representation on the Peace Conference; the extreme difficulty of securing agreement between the five great and the twenty-two smaller allies, as well as the extreme tension of the Great War, put any such procedure out of question. But, when the treaty had been finally drafted, a German delegation was summoned to Versailles to receive the peace terms. There, on the 7th of May, 1919, M. Clemenceau presented them with the draft. There followed memoranda of protest and various representations from the German Government as a result of which, as has already been indicated, certain alterations were made in the terms.