

We conceive it to be essential that in regard to a problem of this magnitude the Empire should have a single policy, and we are equally convinced that such a policy can only be determined as a result of personal consultation between Ministers. The first question to be considered therefore is how soon can such consultation take place.

At recent session of Council of League of Nations, which as you know was attended by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, it became evident that it would be expected that at any rate some preliminary pronouncement should be made on behalf of British Empire at next meeting of Council in middle of March. We should like, therefore, if it is at all possible, to arrange a special meeting of Imperial Conference to discuss whole problem before that time. Character of issues is, in our opinion, such as to render presence of Prime Ministers highly desirable, and we greatly hope, therefore, that you may be able to attend in person. Would this be possible if Conference began in first week of March? If not, could you depute one of your colleagues in the Government to take your place and what would be the earliest date at which he could reach London?

Similar message sent to other Dominion Prime Ministers.—BALDWIN. *Ends.*

—AMERY.

NOTE.—Copy sent, at the instance of the Prime Minister, to the Governor-General of the Irish Free State, for communication to the President of the Executive Council, by Secretary of State's despatch, 20th December, 1924.

No. 3.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governors-General of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and the Irish Free State, and the Governor of Newfoundland.

[Telegram.]

22ND DECEMBER. Please inform [*Not to Irish Free State*: your Prime Minister] [*To Irish Free State*: President of the Executive Council] that following statement will be issued to Press here on Tuesday, 23rd December, for publication on morning of 24th December:—

Begins: His Majesty's Government are in communication with the Governments of the Dominions and India with a view to ascertaining whether it will be possible to arrange a special meeting of the Imperial Conference in the early days of March, 1925, to discuss the questions arising out of the Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. *Ends.*

—AMERY.

(1925.)

No. 4.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governors-General of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, and the Governor of Newfoundland.

[Telegram.]

15TH JANUARY. Following from Prime Minister for your Prime Minister:—

Begins: I am sorry to say that replies from Dominion Prime Ministers to my message of 19th December* indicate that there are great difficulties in arranging for special meeting of Imperial Conference at beginning of March to discuss problems arising out of Geneva Protocol.

Following is summary of replies received. Mackenzie King telegraphed 29th December that Canadian Government agree that it is highly desirable that similar attitude should be adopted towards Protocol by countries of British Empire which are members of League of Nations. Suggestion, however, to hold Imperial Conference in London to be attended by Prime Ministers of Dominions as well as of Great Britain in March does not appear practicable. Canadian Parliament has been called for first week in February. It would be quite impossible for him to be absent from Canada for any length of time during the session, and pressure of legislative duties would also make it difficult for any of the Ministers particularly concerned to be similarly absent. Canadian Government suggest exchange of opinions by cable and post with understanding that, if these means found inadequate and other Dominions consider it practicable to attend Conference in London, Canadian Government will be prepared to consider proposal again.

Bruce telegraphed 23rd December that Commonwealth Government agree that it is of utmost importance that on this difficult and delicate matter Empire should have single policy and speak with single voice. Before expressing opinion with regard to suggestion that Conference should be held in March, Commonwealth Government feel that they must await return of Sir Littleton Groom, first Commonwealth delegate at 1924 Assembly, expected back 10th January. Whole position will be closely examined immediately on his return, and Commonwealth Government will then be in a position to communicate with British