

Government as to their views upon Protocol and also as to necessity for personal consultation in order to arrive at single Empire policy. As they see position at present they believe that consultation by cable should enable such a policy to be evolved. In the event of its being demonstrated that it is impossible to deal adequately with matter by cable it will be necessary for personal consultation to take place, but Bruce feels that it is practically impossible for him personally to attend, and grave difficulties are in the way of another Minister being sent in his place. In view of this fact Commonwealth Government urge very strongly that every effort should be made to deal with matter by cable communications.

Massey telegraphed 23rd December that he was in communication with other Prime Ministers and would endeavour to arrange to attend in March if they were able to do so. He has now telegraphed that communications from Prime Ministers of Canada, Commonwealth of Australia, and Union of South Africa indicate that each has grave difficulty in personally attending proposed Conference, and that each considers consultation by cable preferable. He presumes that Conference will therefore not take place. Though his personal attendance not a certainty, New Zealand Government would attend by a Minister if Conference still desired and can take place.

General Hertzog telegraphed 3rd January that it was not possible for him or any of his colleagues in Union Government to attend Conference before middle of August next.

Monroe telegraphed 24th December that he was unlikely to be able to attend himself owing to sitting of Parliament but would try to arrange to send representatives from Newfoundland.

No reply received from Irish Free State. In the circumstances it is clear that we must endeavour by correspondence to arrive at some common conclusion with regard to the Protocol itself, and the large issues of policy which arise out of its consideration.

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

—AMERY.

NOTE.—Copy sent to Irish Free State by despatch, 16th January, 1925.

#### No. 5.

*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 :* My message of to-day.\* Following is summary of views so far expressed by Dominion Prime Ministers with regard to provisions of Geneva Protocol.

Prime Minister of Canada states that Canadian Government has given question some preliminary consideration; it is now being examined by Departmental Committee, and will in immediate future be gone into in detail by Cabinet.

Prime Minister of Commonwealth of Australia entirely concurs in view that it would be most unwise to reject Protocol except for some cogent reasons or without endeavouring to formulate some positive alternative policy, but Australia will not allow any abrogation of her rights with regard to immigration and is anxious that policy pursued shall if possible be acceptable to United States. He regards as most essential preliminary to any discussion as to British Empire's policy ascertaining of United States Government's real opinion on subject.

Prime Minister of New Zealand stated in his message of 23rd December that he considered whole proposal mischievous and only possible of effect in minor issues between small nations, but recognized difficulty in the way of Great Britain's refusal to concur in some form of general international obligation to refer to arbitration. He stated that New Zealand Government must be largely guided by British Government in final decision, but it was then his opinion that whatever is done now will be rendered nugatory under Article 21 of Protocol by inevitable failure of agreement concerning details of disarmament.

In his further message now received he states that one principal objection is to provisions in Protocol accepting Hague Council as a conclusive authority to determine any questions of international law and also to determine what is a matter of domestic jurisdiction. Reference to reservations in Article 3 Protocol is so drafted as to be without effect. Another principal objection is that though defence against aggression is permitted to nation attacked Protocol prevents friendly nation coming to the aid of nation attacked without the authority of Council after tedious procedure. Article 8 Covenant of League thus reduced in practical effect. He asks to be informed as to attitude of France, Italy, and Japan.

Prime Minister of Union of South Africa has no views to offer as yet as he feels that matter ought to be more fully considered after seeing what Committee of Imperial Defence have to say.

I have included in above summary and summary contained in my message of to-day\* all replies so far received including your own in order that each Prime Minister may see form in which his views have been communicated to other Prime Ministers.

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

—AMERY.

NOTE.—Copy sent to Irish Free State by despatch, 16th January, 1925.