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PEACE SETTLEMENT.

HC Deb [12 February 1920](#) vol 125 cc265-377

Mr. G. THORNE I beg to move, at the end of the Question, to add the words “but humbly regret that Your Majesty's Ministers have not recognised the impracticability of the fulfilment by our late enemies of many of the terms of the Peace Treaties nor shown an adequate appreciation of the grave dangers to our economic position at Home and abroad by the continuance of the delay in the restoration of settled conditions in many parts of Europe and the Near East.”

Colonel PENRY WILLIAMS I beg to second the Amendment.

Sir DONALD MACLEAN In supporting the Amendment so the Gracious Speech which has been moved and seconded by my two hon. Friends behind me, I think it will be agreed that the subject which we are going to discuss this afternoon probably is the most important matter which has yet come before the House this session, because the conditions of Europe and of the world's affairs must cause the greatest anxiety and should call for the careful consideration of all those who take an interest in the betterment of their own countries, wherever they may be situated. I am very glad that this question of the treaties and of the economic position of Europe is being discussed this week, because of the historical event which is in course of happening at [St. James's Palace, where the first meeting of the Council of the League of Nations](#) is being held. After the Armistice there arose a condition of affairs which was calculated to try the nerve and the courage in a degree almost equal to some of the most trying periods of the war, and it was quite inevitable that there should be great confusion, lack of leading, and a divided sense of responsibility on the part of those immediately concerned. I am glad, however, to think, and indeed to have confidence in the hope, that this first meeting of the League of Nations means that all the nations concerned are prepared to look at these vast problems from a different standpoint than that of the war position. If not, it is a sorry outlook for the world. In the signatures to the Peace there were none which attracted my attention, and indeed carried greater weight with me, than those of General Botha and General Smuts. I would like to remind the House of, and indeed very largely found what I have to say this afternoon upon, a sentence in a message which General Smuts issued after he had left Paris. This is what he said with regard to his part in the Treaty:— “I look upon the Peace Treaty as the close of the two chapters of War and Armistice, and only on that ground do I agree to it. I say this, not in criticism, but in faith, not because I wish to find fault with the work done, but rather because I feel that in the Treaty we have not yet achieved the real peace to which our peoples were looking, and because I feel that the real work of making peace will only begin after this Treaty has been signed and a definite halt has been thereby called to the destructive passions which have been decimating Europe for nearly five years. The Treaty is simply the liquidation of the war situation in the world.” On the whole, I think the experience of the past two months has shown that the estimate of General Smuts of the situation was substantially accurate, and it can be fairly said that the Peace Treaty did not much further advance than the liquidation of the war situation. A great deal has been said on platforms and in the press, and very many informative and reasoned speeches have been delivered by Members of this House, which all go to show that there is in men's minds the world over, a common belief that something must be done, and must be speedily done, to adjust those conditions which were signed in Paris not so many months ago, to the condition of affairs as we find the world today, and I am glad indeed to read that Lord Curzon, speaking in another place for the Government, with all the responsibility of his high position, said that he agreed with Lord Crewe that a good deal of the Peace Treaty would have to be revised. The agreements concluded with our Allies early in the war also caused difficulty. Therefore, I think I am right in assuming that there is a large measure of agreement between the Government and those Members of this House who take the view which I am endeavouring to put forward, that something must be done. On what lines are we going to move in that readjustment to present conditions? This is the question that I would press upon my right

hon. Friend who is going to reply for the Government. Is the attitude to be taken up by this Government—because, after all, obviously we must take the lead—to be one of day to day shifting adjustments to the varied conditions, or is it to be the long statesmanlike view?

4.0 P.M.

If it is to be merely a solution of today's difficulty, I do not see much hope of a real improvement. It is the statesman's view, taking big risks and, in taking those risks, if I may use the word, playing for a change, or rather working for a change in the psychology of the whole situation, from which alone real improvement can take place. I hope that the action which will be taken by our Government, in conjunction with their Allies, helpers and colleagues, will be taken on the long view.

May I just for a moment look at the situation as it is in Germany to-day? I do not think that anybody, so far as he has taken any notice of what I may have said here or elsewhere, will accuse me of sentimental tenderness towards Germany. But what is her position to-day? It was admirably described the other day by the First Lord of the Admiralty, who said that the German Fleet is lying at the bottom of a British harbour, her Army is substantially reduced to the police force which the Prime Minister anticipated some months ago, her mercantile marine is at the disposal of the Allies, and a large amount of tonnage has been taken from her, her Colonies have gone and her coal supplies are already either in the hands of those to whom they have been allocated by the Peace Treaty or arrangements are being made in that direction. What I have detailed and other things which I have not brought within the few words I have used on the point are the just punishment for her foul crimes. These and other things have fallen upon her, and I say fairly and justly fallen upon her. I want to make my own position in the matter perfectly clear. I understand to some extent and can very fully sympathise with the attitude which France and Belgium must take and do take with regard to any relaxation of the terms of the Peace Treaty in so far as they are relaxed towards their enemies. Many hon. Members, like myself, have seen the northern part of France and Belgium. What struck me more than the devastation in the actual heat of the combat was the malignant, cool destruction of the towns from which the enemy retired when they knew they were beaten and took what time they had to smash, so far as they could, the industrial resources of the country. I shall never forget a personal experience I had in the town of Douai. Roubaix itself, although intact, was stripped industrially. I want to say that I carry all these things in my mind in what I have to say on this point. After all, coming back to the position I took a few moments ago, it is the long view which we must take if we are, to lay down any solution which will last and develop into good conditions in the future.

The first point I would make on this question of the German Treaty is a point I made when I addressed the House last July on the occasion of the Bill being laid before us for the ratification of the peace by the High Court of Parliament, and if I remember rightly it was endorsed by my noble Friend the Member for Hitchin (Lord R. Cecil) namely, the folly of not fixing a sum—the ruinous method of the indeterminate position. There is talk about a general sum, say of £25,000,000,000. We all know that now, whatever might have been in the minds of those who wished to extract the uttermost farthing, it is sheer stupidity to talk about sums of that kind. There is only one thing to be done if we want to get payment, and we all do—so far as I am concerned, I would lend every effort I could to secure payment—that is to give your debtor a chance of paying. I look around me here and I recognise many hon. Members who are competent business men. They have attended meetings of creditors and have dealt with the unfortunate debtors.

Major HILLS In which capacity?

Sir D. MACLEAN What I mean is obvious. There is only one deduction to be drawn from what I said. Did anybody ever hear of a body of business men desiring to get their debtor on his legs again in order to pay a composition to them, who left the whole thing open, stripped him of his means, not only of creating a flourishing business but of getting his business on its legs again, and left him in a hopeless, ghastly position of complete uncertainty as to what would happen when he began even to make his own livelihood? The whole position is simply ridiculous. That was

one of the fundamental mistakes of the Treaty. There is now very general agreement that it must be remedied. With regard to the sum, it is quite beyond my competence to express an opinion which would be worth serious consideration. I only repeat what I have read and what I have heard. It has been competently suggested that a sum of £2,000,000,000 should be fixed. It is not so much the matter of the amount, which ought to be substantial. It is the fixing of it and the settlement of it, taking the long view about it, which is the essential part of the whole position. I have heard the suggestion made—I do not make it with any degree of confidence myself—and perhaps I may commend it to the Leader of the House, who has been Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as to the right hon. Gentleman the Lord President of the Council, who is to reply. I understand the Leader of the House reckons himself as a devoted student of the great question of exchanges and matters of that kind.

Mr. BONAR LAW (Leader of the House). You know as much about it as I do.

Sir D. MACLEAN I will put this point to the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer: It is suggested to me that it is a possible and an alternative way of dealing with the matter, that you should fix the rate of exchange at which the indemnity would be paid off. We know how the exchange has been rocketing about ever since the Armistice. I think it went as low as 120 at that time and has reached 360, and is now about 320 marks to the golden sovereign. [HON. MEMBERS: "The Bradbury!"] Yes, the Bradbury, although I do not know how that itself stands. The suggestion which has been made is—I just throw it out in passing—that it might be an inducement and tend to stabilise the rate of exchange if, when the amount of the indemnity is fixed, at the same time it should be stated that we will accept repayment at a fixed rate of exchange. I do not know what the rate should be. It might be 200 or 250 or any figure of that kind. I put that suggestion forward as a possible alternative, at any rate, for discussion. I quite agree that it is a problem, that you might get the actual rate of exchange going very much the wrong way and that we might have to deal with what was tendered to us by way of repayment and translate it into the actual terms which exist in the financial world at the moment. That may be so; still, I put it forward as a suggestion which has been made to me as being not unworthy of consideration by the financial authorities who happen to be concerned.

There is another point, a very difficult one, with which I should like to deal, that is the question of bringing to justice what are termed the "war criminals." I endorse the term. That, of course, I agree, is a matter of very great difficulty, but I will say at once that I was astonished and alarmed at the long list of names which was published the other day. It seemed to me to take the whole question out of the region of practicability. What was in the minds of Members of this House, and certainly was in the minds, so far as I could judge from what they said, of both Mr. Asquith and the Prime Minister when they spoke on this question—Mr. Asquith's declarations on the point were made both as Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition—was that these men should be brought to the bar of world opinion and made to answer for their crimes. I hope the House does me the honour of recollecting that, so far as I am concerned, I made my position on that point perfectly clear from time to time. There is nobody who will disagree with this proposition that, after all, these things must be fairly done, and no legal process will carry any sort of sanction with it permanently unless it complies with three conditions. First there should be a competent tribunal; secondly, it should act with reasonable speed; and, thirdly, it should be fair. Just apply those three indispensable conditions to the list which we have seen. I do not hesitate to say that the whole position resolves itself into this, that there would be years of international litigation on points which should as speedily as possible be closed. When you bring people to justice let it be done as swiftly as possible. But as far as my observation of the list goes I should say the defence that could be put in with regard to a considerable number of the cases in any court which bore the least claim to fairness and competency would involve a condition of things in which the profession to which I have the honour to belong would revel not merely for many months but for years. I hope myself that common sense will prevail with regard to this, and that the whole question will be dealt with on some such lines as I have suggested. I do not desire to detain the House long, as I am aware that a large number of Members desire to speak. I will therefore pass to the question of Austria.

The position with regard to the old Austro-Hungarian Empire is one of the greatest difficulty. That country has been split up, as far as I can recollect, into old Austria, with Vienna as its centre, into the Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slavia,

bringing in old Hungary and other parts under the Treaty with which Members are familiar. One of the main troubles there is the fact that these new-States have been set up and are all at the present moment, as far as their Governments can operate, working independently, so that their customs, arrangements and the barriers which apparently are going to be set up will undoubtedly lead, and indeed are at the present moment leading, to the greatest confusion and even chaos. I venture to urge this upon the Government, that there is only one sound way of treating these new entities which have been created under the Peace Treaty, and that is, that, from an economic point of view at any rate, they ought to have free trade amongst themselves. In the old Austro-Hungarian Empire there was complete free trade, if I remember rightly, in all parts of it, but now we are doing nothing but creating new centres of irritation—we are causing dissension, and bring about an economically chaotic condition. The only method I can see of avoiding that is for the signatories to the Treaty to provide that there shall be within these new areas a complete free interchange of goods—that there shall in fact be what we call Free Trade.

I go rather further in throwing this out, because I believe myself there is no real hope of a sound economic future for the whole Continent of Europe apart from freedom of trade all round. That, no doubt, is an ideal, but we ought at any rate, if we have the power, to make a start in this disturbed part of Europe, for the conditions there call aloud for it. I will press another point on my right hon. Friend with regard to the Treaty for Hungary, which is still under discussion. It is a small point, but still not important. It is reported that it is proposed to give Roumania and Serbia territories to which they are not entitled on the principle of nationality. I have heard that Roumania claims the whole of Transylvania, whereas they have no right to more than three-fifths of that population. I understand that they also claim a considerable amount of Bulgarian territory. Claims are likewise advanced to South-West Hungary as well as in the North-West. It is quite impossible for anyone who is not an expert with first-hand knowledge to know where the exact frontier line should be drawn, but the whole matter should be at once investigated by an impartial commission of experts, and the Treaty finally settled after considering the report of such Commission. Where there is any doubt there ought to be a referendum, for which we have a precedent in the case of Schleswig.

There is another point and it is in reference to a matter which has from time to time been pressed upon the Government by the hon. and gallant Member for the Canterbury Division (Mr. R. McNeill), who has, to his very great credit shown much large-hearted enthusiasm for a small nation and has stuck persistently to his guns. I refer to Montenegro. This country came into the war with us in the first month of it, and rendered very great service to Serbia in the days of her greatest trial. As I understand it, the claim which the Montenegrins have been making, and which has been so eloquently supported by my hon. and gallant Friend, is just this: That those who are responsible in this matter should take every care that the choice of the Montenegrins should be a free one. That is all that is demanded. There has been an inquiry held and a Report has been issued. We should like to know what is in that Report. I would urge, recollecting her services, and the long and glorious history of that small people, in whom Mr. Gladstone himself took such great interest, that they should not be defrauded, by any device from any quarter, of their free and unfettered decision as to what their future shall be. At present, their country is largely occupied by the Serbians. I speak without any knowledge of a first-hand kind, but I am given to understand that the Montenegrins do not appreciate the conduct of the Serbians. Still I pass from that subject feeling that my right hon. Friend will give such consideration as he thinks fit to the points I have endeavoured to make.

The position of Austria now calls for notice. Nobody can read the official account issued by the Government—the despatch from Sir Wm. Goode to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—without a considerable amount of emotion. I must say it moved me very deeply, but I will only read to the House one or two sentences from it. Describing some of the conditions which prevail in Vienna and in Austria generally, he says:

“It is a horizon of so much suffering en masse that even those engaged in the work of relief may only be called to the individuality of it by a tug at one's overcoat in the snow-covered streets of Vienna from some numb child begging for the food which is not there or by a glimpse into the typhus-stricken villages behind the lines where the Poles are still fighting Bolshevik Russia.... Towards the end of 1919 I visited Vienna on two occasions.... Contact in the abstract

with such condition must tend to accustom anyone to human suffering, but I confess that the conditions in Austria stung familiarity into realisation. For the first time in my life I found a whole nation, or what was left of it, in utter hopeless despair." That is a picture which no one can contemplate with any satisfaction. We have no quarrel with children or with women; our quarrel is with organised Government and those who were participators in the crimes for which we have suffered and for which they have suffered also. But if humanity is to go on you must get rid of the idea that we can re-shuffle the world through the sufferings of women and children. These things cannot be. But the conditions being what are described there, what are we to think of a Peace Treaty which includes in it the condition that Austria should give up to her conquerors so many thousand cows? It may be a rather extreme point that I am taking, but it is not really an unfair point to make. The whole burden of many of the most important provisions of the Peace Treaty is quite unfit for the present condition of affairs. They are frankly against humanity and they are definitely opposed to economic teaching. I would urge upon the Government that we should all recognise these awful facts and as speedily as possible get to work on them and without delay give hope that these matters shall be readjusted. I feel that the burden is falling upon shoulders which are already overburdened and that the situation would become, I will not say, immediately practicable, but full of reasonable hope if we had the United States with us. No one can do other than deplore the fact that they are not there to garner the fruits of their efforts in the war, but unhappily there is a vacant chair in the Council of Nations. My right hon. Friend who so worthily presides there, and whose deep belief and devotion to the ideal of the League of Nations is one of the greatest assets which that League possesses, has, I understand, determined with his colleagues that the proceedings should be held in private. I quite agree that the initial stages no doubt are wisely held in private, but after that stage has passed, and I hope it will be soon passed, I urge upon him and his colleagues there with all the earnestness of which I am capable the vital importance of publicity.

The LORD PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. Balfour) I think the right hon. Gentleman is mistaken. We determined, and I believe our determination was published in the Press, that the initial stage should be absolutely private—of course, very little business was done there—and that then we should, as he suggests, carry on a detailed discussion in private—it is only in private that it can be carried on—and that then we should have a public Session stating what we have done. We are carrying out the very policy he desires.

Sir D. MACLEAN I can only say that the public generally will be very glad indeed to know that, because it is one of the ways of getting America in. We have to realise, in dealing with America, that we are dealing with a vast concourse of human beings drawn from all parts of the earth, very largely out of touch with European problems, and they have an instinctive dislike of secret diplomacy. We have suffered a great deal from secret diplomacy in the past, and I hope in this new Federation of the world which is being set up they will show a glorious example of what can be done by publicity in discussing international affairs.

The question of Russia has been so often discussed that one hesitates to open it again, but I do not think it can be over-discussed if it is competently discussed. Freedom of discussion and what light can be brought upon that dark problem must ever be welcome. I was glad to hear what the Prime Minister said on Tuesday, marking, as I hope and believe, a further step forward to the policy of leaving Russia to manage her own affairs without any interference or intervention from us.

One word in conclusion in regard to our position in relation to France. I will say what I have to say on that point with full regard to the glorious part which France has played in the world combat, and the terrible sufferings through which she has gone. But I do not think I should be doing my duty if I did not make clear, at any rate, my own impression on the matter which is that France must realise that the only hope of her future and ours is to grasp fully the fact that there is no hope of development along sound lines of progress unless we realise that Europe and the world are essentially one, and that we have ourselves borne our full share of the heat and burden of the day and that there is a drawing back—I am only expressing my own opinion—on the part of the public opinion of this country from complete identification with many of the aims, as far as we can understand, of France in relation to Germany and Austria. I do

not think the people of this country are really prepared to pledge themselves to be moral or material supporters of a mere policy of revenge. It is wrong for France in her own best interests, as it is profoundly wrong for us. We are at the parting of the ways as to the lines of policy on which the world should go. A small adjustment to get over a passing difficulty is no cure at all. Are we going to set our course, come fair weather or foul, according to what we think right in the best sense of the term irrespective of immediate, material advantage, or are we going to wait for a favourable breeze? Human achievement for the highest good never was obtained in that way and never will be. I hope and trust that the Government, bearing as they do burdens which no one can envy them or desire to share with them, will be animated, as I believe they are, and strengthened by the knowledge that if they take the lofty line they will have not only the support of their own fellow-countrymen but of all high-minded citizens in every country.

Lord ROBERT CECIL The right hon. Gentleman made an observation very near the close of his speech on which I should like to make a short comment. He said he thought there was a drawing back in public opinion in the country and in France.

Sir D. MACLEAN My point was that as far as the policy of France was one of aggression or revenge, there was a drawing back on the part of public opinion in this country from identification with it.

Lord R. CECIL What I think the right hon. Gentleman might have said, and perhaps that is all he meant to say, was that there; have undoubtedly been in certain quarters in, France—not responsible quarters, but in certain newspapers—certain statements of policy which undoubtedly if they represented the real policy of France would find many critics in this country But I hope very much that we are not going to judge the policy of France and the French people or the French Government by what appears in the papers in that country. I have the most absolute conviction that we ought to walk hand in hand with France. I entirely share my right hon. Friend's view, since he has raised the point, that it is not in the interests of the French people or the French Government to pursue a policy of blind revenge That would be madness. But I am satisfied on such information as reaches me that that is not at all the desire of the French people. The only thing that is really required in order to cement friendship between two countries is to get the peoples of the two countries more closely into connection with one another

The Amendment which has been moved has two parts. The first part proposes a revision of the Peace Treaty. I do not disagree with a good deal that the right hon. Gentleman has said about the defects of the Treaty. I have said very much the same thing in this House already and I may have to make some observations later, but I do not think it will be practical policy to ask for the revision of the Treaty at this moment. The worst and dangerous parts of the Treaty undoubtedly are the economic powers, but there are powers, if they are used, to mitigate the worst part of that worst Part of the reparation clauses, and I think at the present time we should be rash in this House to accept a motion which would appear to indicate that we desire to ask our Allies for an immediate revision of the Treaty. I feel strongly that sooner or later some of the terms of the Treaty will have to be revised, and I cordially welcome what was said in another place by Lord Curzon, who seems to have said in the plainest and most positive language that that also was his opinion.

In approaching a debate on foreign affairs there is very little that is cheerful to consider at the present time. The condition of foreign affairs is profoundly serious wherever you look. I am not going to discuss Egypt, which is still under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Office, but we know that the situation there is exceedingly anxious and serious. When you come to the Middle East, there is scarcely a country where there is not grave cause for anxiety. I observe that Lord Curzon spoke in the strongest terms of the danger of the situation in the Middle East. We have not received, in fact we have not been allowed, much information of what is happening in Syria, and I hope that my right hon. Friends will consider whether it is not possible to give rather more information to the House on that and on a great many other points connected with foreign affairs. Such information as does reach us from unofficial channels is disquieting as to the conditions of Syria. I am not sure that Mesopotamia is very encouraging. Armenia is referred to in the report of Sir Wm. Goode as in a condition of terrible distress. I think it was said by the Prime Minister that the

Government have found it necessary to withdraw troops from Batoum. I am sure they have arrived at that conclusion with profound regret. I do not know all the reasons that have induced them to arrive at that conclusion, but I look with grave anxiety on our leaving that part of the world without the restraining and fortifying influence of the best type of British officer, which has been given with immense success during the past few months.

It appears to me that these dangers in the Middle East—and they are very serious—are largely attributable to the prolonged delays in dealing with the Turkish Treaty. There are several hon. Members who are anxious to discuss that question and I do not propose to deal with it at length; but I cannot accept and do not accept the excuse made that we could not get on with the Turkish Treaty because we did not know exactly the attitude of the American Government. That is an utterly insufficient ground for the delay. The United States is not at war with Turkey and never has been, and it would have been perfectly possible, and anyone who has gone into the matter will agree with me, to have made a treaty with Turkey, defining broadly what parts of her Empire she had proved herself unfitted to govern, and what parts would be taken away from her. Then it would have been a matter of much less urgency for the Powers to have settled among themselves which of them should undertake the duty of administering those parts. That could have been done, and it would have been of immense advantage to have had this question settled once for all. I urge that every possible effort should be made to arrive at a conclusion on this matter. In the speech of Lord Curzon I regretted to observe the pessimistic tone which he adopted in regard to the possibility of a rapid conclusion of negotiations in regard to Turkey. The Government and their Allies will incur very grave responsibility if they postpone one hour longer than is absolutely necessary the conclusion of this matter.

Passing from these topics to the position in Europe, I am afraid that the situation is at least as grave as it is in the other countries. My right hon. Friend read certain passages from Sir William Goode's report about Central Europe. I propose to read one or two other extracts from that report. Most of this information dates back to October or late in the autumn. So far as my information goes the situation has grown steadily worse, and bad as Sir William Goode's account of things is, the existing state of things is probably even worse.

This is what he says on page 6: "In October, 1919, I visited most of the countries in receipt of relief. The impression left on my mind as a result of this journey round Europe and of the Conferences I had with the Presidents and Ministers of the respective Governments is akin to despair. Everywhere I found never-ending vicious circles of political paradox and economic complication, with consequent paralysis of national life and industry. The new States of repartitioned Europe seem not only incapable of maintaining their own economic life, but also either unable or unwilling to help their neighbours." On page 9, there is not only the passage which my right hon. Friend read, but the report goes on to say: "For the first time in my life I found a whole nation, or what was left of it, in utter, hopeless despair. Inability to obtain a ration, in itself insufficient to support human life, and the misery of hundreds and thousands who, in an early winter's snow, shivered without heat or hope of getting it, were bad enough, but it was nothing compared with the apathy, the helplessness, and the loss of all hope that pervaded every class, from the highest to the lowest. The report and recommendations which I signed as British representative on the Vienna Reparations Sub-Commission will be familiar to your Lordship and to the Government to which it was transmitted. The relief measures which are being taken in the hope of palliating the present conditions are described in the report on Austria. Yet actual starvation in Vienna, or deaths which can be directly attributed to it, present no such harrowing records as the official British reports, in December, 1919, of the vilayats in Anatolia and Armenia, where want of food has reduced the inhabitants to almost inconceivable conditions. Vienna has no monopoly of suffering, and there is reason to fear, at the date of this report, that the conditions in the Austrian capital may soon find their counterpart in Budapest, while in Poland and some other parts of Europe there are grave emergencies for lack of food, coal and transport." That is a terrifically serious state of things, and I believe there are many Members of the House who have personal knowledge of it. All the information that reaches me, and I have seen a good many people who have come back from these places, confirm and more than confirm every word that is in the report. The root of the whole thing, of course, is the total breakdown of the economic system, and here let me say that this has been before the

Government for months. I do not want to quote myself, but I came over from Paris on the 16th April last year for the purpose of telling my fellow countrymen as much as I was able to tell them of the state of things that I had found existing as Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council. They were not quite as bad then as they are now. If hon. Members are sufficiently heroic to read what I then said they will find it was perfectly well known to the Government at that time and before that time, that the economic system of Europe was threatening almost beyond belief. It was far more important than all these territorial questions, and it was really urgently necessary to take whatever steps could be taken to deal with the situation. Quite recently, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House this afternoon, a movement of a purely unofficial kind has been made by purely unofficial people to get together an important expert conference to see what is the possible economic remedy for the existing state of things, and the Government, I am glad to say, has given, I cannot say exactly a favourable reply, but a not altogether unfavourable reply to the proposals of that memorandum. If it is right now, it was surely a matter which the Government themselves might have taken up many months ago.

5.0 P.M.

What has, in fact, been done by the Government and their Allies to meet the situation? They have sent food, and I wish to give every credit to everybody concerned in that matter. The chief part of it was due, undoubtedly, to Mr. Hoover and his organisation in the early part of the Armistice period. As chairman of the Relief Commission he has done very important and valuable work. But I cannot too often repeat that merely sending food into these countries is no remedy. It is just a palliation, just as giving charity to an individual is a palliation. It is no use doing that unless you do something permanent to set them on their legs again. What else have the Government done? I am afraid I must say that they have done worse. There have been these long delays in establishing peace. There was the maintenance of the blockade much longer than was necessary for sound reasons, and the maintenance of the censorship was quite as serious from the point of view of interference with the re-establishment of trade. There is no question as to the terms of reparation being unjust to Germany. I do not think that it is possible to be unjust to Germany. That is not the point. The point is that the provisions as to reparation were in my judgment founded on an entirely false basis. It is essential to Europe, essential even for the purpose of getting an indemnity, essential to everyone, that you should get the populations of these countries to work, and to work hard, as soon as possible. The principle of the reparation clauses is this—"the more you work the more we shall take from you. Everything you make shall be taken from you—a perfectly indefinite sum." That is perfectly fantastic and utterly unsound as applied to Germany. As applied to Austria it is not only unsound but farcical. As we know Austria is crying out for food for men whose bones have been absolutely rotted for want of sufficient nourishment. I saw a British officer who had been in one of the hospitals in Vienna. His description is perfectly appalling. When you go to these people and put upon them this unlimited burden of work you destroy whatever fragment of hope they may have of inducing their population to work, and not only that, but you make it almost impossible for them to raise money outside.

Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY Why not revise?

Lord R. CECIL I do not think that that is practicable, but I am quite sure that the Reparation Commissioners will exercise their power to postpone the whole of these burdens. If I could see my way to revise, I would do so. I am bound to say a word about the other parts of the Government policy. I do not think that the necessity for restoring peaceful conditions has been appreciated sufficiently. Take the Russian problem. The essential thing, the vital matter, was to get peace—that was the thing in which Europe was most interested—in Russia. That was recognised by the Prime Minister in the speech which has been so often quoted, which was made in April last year, and it was recognised in what was known as the Prinkipo proposal. I was never a great admirer of the Prinkipo proposal, but, still, it did recognise the great principle that the real interest of Europe, the real thing that caused us to intervene in Russian affairs, was the fact that it was essential to the life of the world, certainly to the life of Europe, that we should have peace restored as soon as possible. From that day it is a mere common-place now to say that there has been no settled policy with regard to Russia. I am not quite sure now what the policy was. In April last year the Prime Minister

declared that he was very much against intervention, but he did think that the anti-Bolshevists ought to be helped to fight for their own protection and freedom in a land where the Bolsheviks are antipathetic to the feelings of the population. Then I was very much surprised the other evening when the Prime Minister came to deal with this matter again to find that he described his policy as one by which we were bound to give the anti-Bolshevists the chance to recover Russia. That is an entirely different policy from the other. It is a policy which I always understood was associated with the Secretary of State for War—to assist the Whites to overrun and recapture Bolshevik Russia. That policy has been entirely condemned by the Prime Minister, in the rather strange way in which Ministers of the Crown deal with one another, and now we understand from the Prime Minister that in point of fact that was his policy all along.

I do not agree with it myself, but it was a principle. It might have succeeded. What has not succeeded was the oscillation between the two policies. That is what in effect was done. Whenever the anti-Bolshevists were successful then there was a considerable reversion to what I may call the Churchillian policy. As soon as they were driven back there was a great movement towards non-intervention. After Prinkipo things went very badly with the anti-Bolshevists for a time. In March they had to evacuate Odessa and then there was the nonintervention speech in April last year. Then at the end of April Kolchak began his great advance. The House will remember the sensational advance in North Russia across Siberia to the extreme west of Siberia and into Russia itself, and on May 26th there was the recognition of Denikin and Kolchak, and about that time General Denikin was given the K.O.B. Then again in July there was Kolchak's first defeat and about that time there was the curious incident of the blockade of the Baltic. Next came Denikin's capture of Odessa and the beginning of his advance, and then we began to have rather more war-like speeches by the Secretary of State for War; because I know that when I went down to my constituents at the end of August, I found most of them in a disturbed state of mind thinking that we were going to have another war in Russia. Then there were the great victories of Denikin in September and October, and Yudenitch's daring raids on Petrograd were helped by us—a proceeding for which I never saw any defence. Then came the most astonishing incident, the request to Germany to assist in the blockade, and at the end of October there was a speech by the Secretary of State for War, practically identifying himself with Denikin. Then in November, Yudenitch was driven back, Kolchak had to evacuate Omsk, Denikin began his retreat and we had the speech by the Prime Minister in the Guildhall against any further intervention, and then came the decision not to help the anti-Bolshevists any more, and the statement that there was no blockade, and with the final retreat of General Denikin there was the definite abandonment of any policy of intervention.

I thought it the right thing merely to mention the facts without comment because I do think that the House and the country will agree that this is not the way in which to carry on the foreign policy of this country, and I earnestly hope that this kind of vacillation is finally at an end. I should be very glad if my right hon. Friend (Mr. Balfour) when he comes to reply could give us some definite assurance as to how we really stand with regard to the blockade. What exactly are we blockading, or are we or are we not blockading? Then I do very anxiously want to know what exactly is going on in Poland and what has been the attitude of the British Government in regard to Polish movements? I am sure that my right hon. Friend will be entirely at one with me in recognising that the idea of Poland going into Russia to restore order is one of the most insane ideas that ever were conceived. There is the most bitter historic enmity between the Poles and the Russians, and the mere fact that the Poles support any cause would be sufficient to arouse the strongest Russian national feelings against it. I do hope that there is no idea that we are to support any movement of that kind. I understand that there is not. I hope further that we shall use all the influence of which we may be capable to present aggressive action by Poland. This is one of the most tragically important parts of the whole of our policy. I have not the least idea as to what the Bolshevik policy may be. It may be that they are going to make an aggressive war, but I agree very much with what the Prime Minister said the other day—that it is an unlikely thing in itself and that it is very unlikely to be successful. But I am quite sure that if the Poles made an advance on the Bolsheviks they would run the gravest risk of disaster. All the reports which reach us agree that Bolshevism has grown enormously in strength and efficiency, and if there were such an advance it would be impossible to exaggerate

the risk of disaster to the Polish Government at the hands of the Bolshevists and the danger that that would be to the whole of the rest of Europe, and I appeal very earnestly to the Government to do everything they can to get rid of the possibility of any such action being taken which would bring about or provoke such danger as I have indicated.

I am not quite sure about the new policy which has been laid down by the Prime Minister. So far as I understand it, I agree entirely, but it is a little obscure. I do not quite understand how far it goes or what it implies. We are going to rely on trade with Russia, and that trade is to be carried on through the co-operative societies. I daresay that that is the right plan. I do not know. But I do not quite understand why, if we are to trade with Russia at all, we should be confined to the co-operative societies, and it does not strike me as being in itself a sufficient policy to deal with this very dangerous situation. Merely to open partial trading with Russia in order to settle this very dangerous situation does not seem to me to be an adequate way to deal with it. The Government have laid it down that no one is entitled to criticise them in this House unless he is prepared with an alternative policy. I believe that to be a wholly pernicious doctrine. I am going to make a suggestion as to a possible line of policy which might be explored. One of the results of the Allied policy has been that the Peace Conference has greatly lost prestige in Europe. It has not got, as it had a year ago, the same absolute obedience which it would have had to almost any decree it made. To my mind that is a very serious thing and I regret it very much. I think it is essential, if you are to get out of this Russian tangle and out of many other difficulties, that you should try to get an international authority with the same kind of prestige that the Conference had at its start.

It is an important opportunity for utilising the League of Nations. I should like the Council of the League of Nations to hold a solemn meeting. The House is aware that the membership of that Council is not confined to any particular representative of a country. There is nothing to prevent a meeting of the Council being held which would be attended by the principal Ministers of all the countries concerned. I should like to see a great meeting of that kind in public, and a great debate on the Russian situation. It would have to be most carefully thought out; everybody would be very careful what he said. I should like to see them come to a conclusion to give directions to the waning sections and parties of Eastern Europe that they must cease their fighting, that they must draw back well within the provisional lines of their own countries, that they must absolutely stop lighting on pain of being cut off from all kind of connection with every country in the world; and at the same time I would like to see an International Commission nominated by the Council of the League of Nations sent into Russia with two objects—first, to find out definitely what really is going on there, because one of our difficulties is that no two people who come back from Russia give the same account of what is happening. I know there are some hon. Members who are very confident that they know what is going on. I do not think they know, I think it is essential that we should have really authentic information such as could be obtained in that way. There ought to be at the same time another Commission to define provisionally the boundaries between Russia and the Border States. At present no one knows where Poland begins and Russia ends. That seems to me to be a thing which could be done coincidentally with the resumption of trade relations.

I say quite definitely that I am in favour of the resumption of trade relations, and for two reasons. I have never been able to see that you are going to put effective pressure on the Soviet Government in Moscow by starving the peasantry population of the towns and villages elsewhere in Russia. It is not the kind of unified Government that can be coerced in that way, but if you are to do it you must give them something which you can afterwards take away, if necessary. You have now no influence on Russia or any part of it because they cannot be worse off than they are, so far as trade with us is concerned. If you once begin trade you will be able to say, "There is something you will lose if you venture still to make war on your neighbours." There is no doubt that the fact that we have given food to Austria, miserably wretched as the result is, has enabled us to exercise a very important influence in pacifying that country, because there is something at any rate that they would lose, they know, if the country relapsed into revolution. A similar influence could be obtained if we once began to open trade with Russia. The matter is so important that I hope the country will insist that the present methods of carrying on foreign policy shall really be abandoned. Until this is done we merely go from bad to worse, with no limit to the disaster that may occur. It may be said that all that is past history. I am not sure

whether even now there is a sufficient certainty that the Government realise the enormous importance of the economic question and how it ought to rule every other question.

I am not going to discuss the details of the punishment of war criminals. I was one of those who in 1915 urged, as I still urge, that those Germans who were guilty of brutality and cruelty ought to be punished. I was always in favour of punishing the Kaiser, if you can get him. I do not withdraw anything I have said on that. I am quite sure it would be desirable to do so. I share the grave doubts of others whether, after waiting for eighteen months after the Armistice, you should demand nine hundred Germans to be delivered—statesmen, generals, I do not know who, men whose direct responsibility is, at any rate, some what dubious, and a demand for whose delivery must arouse every spark of national feeling that is left in Germany. I am afraid that if you succeed in your demand you will run the risk of producing revolution in Germany, and if you fail you will have presented a quite unnecessary piece of victory and prestige to the military party in that country. To my mind those two great dangers are in this policy, and I hope that all those concerned in it will very seriously consider whether they are proceeding rightly in this matter. The thing I want to impress upon the House is that, whatever policy is pursued, whatever course the Government decide to take, let them decide it in view not only of political considerations but of economic considerations. That is the thing they have really to grasp, if I may respectfully say so. The economic condition of Europe is really the vital matter now.

What is the cause of all these difficulties? There is one thing I press very strongly. They must have unity of direction in their foreign policy. They cannot allow the Lord Chancellor to settle what prisoners are to be demanded, and the Secretary for War to decide what the policy is to be in Russia, and the Foreign Office to direct the general foreign policy of the Government, with occasional incursions by the Prime Minister. There has been too much of that, as I read the history of the last few months. A Government in a democratic country is always in a very difficult position with regard to foreign politics. After all, we know that in the last resort its power depends upon carrying with it the feeling of the country. It is therefore bound to consider to some extent the feeling of the country behind it, but it is quite certain that that very necessary precaution, if carried beyond a certain point, if there is too much of an eye to passing by-elections or passing events, will have the result that the policy will become infirm, halting, hesitating and even vacillating. I beseech the Government to deal with foreign questions, as I am sure my right hon. Friend will deal with them, absolutely apart from all local and transitory considerations of party politics in this country. I make that appeal, I hope as inoffensively as I can. I am sure it is vital. I am sure we cannot afford to run risks. The importance of this question is really vast. Unless some improvement takes place you will have vast areas in Europe actually in a condition of starvation. You may ward it off by doles of food here and there. If it once begins who can tell where it can stop? Starving people are the very soil in which revolution grows. If you once have revolution in Central Europe who knows how far west it will come? I would not venture to prophesy. I doubt very much whether the Government would be ready to guarantee that they could keep it out of any part of the Continent of Europe.

We had last night an interesting discussion on coal. I ask hon. Gentlemen on the Labour Benches to realise, as I think they do realise, the constitutional responsibility of their position. A coal strike on a large scale here would mean the death of hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people in Europe. That is true. They must weigh that among other considerations when they come, to lay down their policy, whatever it may be. Do not let them threaten lightly a strike here or there. There was rather too much of a threatening attitude on some of the Labour Benches last night. I feel terribly the difficulty of bringing home to my fellow countrymen the real importance of these matters. We speak of the insularity and the isolation of America. We sometimes think of her as not appreciating the renditions in Europe. I am not sure that we appreciate them ourselves. I do not want to try to pile up the agony, but I ask hon. Members to consider what the present situation really is, to use their intelligence and their imagination in trying to picture what this kind of thing would be in their own country. If a catastrophe occurs in Europe, for my part I do not think we are by any means safe from a great and appalling catastrophe. In all these questions—questions of high prices, questions of housing, the reorganisation of the industry—there will not be the least hope of doing anything. We shall be struggling for our lives again after the terrific struggle from which we have just emerged. I venture earnestly to hope

that these questions will be carefully considered not only by the Government but by everyone who is in authority, and that all classes in this country will endeavour to insist that we should carry on a policy of peace and also of non-intervention with full and adequate employment of that great new weapon we have forged, namely, the League of Nations, and that we shall all joint in the effort to ward off this terrible catastrophe which, in my judgment, menaces the world.

Sir W. MITCHELL-THOMSON I am in entire agreement with the Noble Lord who has just spoken in emphasising the importance, the supreme importance, of the economic question in Europe at the present time, and I agree with a good deal of what he said about that economic position. As to what he says with regard to Russia I think it is very interesting, and as to his suggestion as to a commission from the League of Nations, I do not know that I entirely agree, but the question might be considered privately and then they could announce the decision publicly. I do not want to pursue these questions now but to deal with what I believe was the first topic in the speech of the right hon. Member for Peebles (Sir I. Maclean), that is to say, the question of the immediate revision of the reparation clauses in the German Treaty. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Peebles, spoke of immediate revision, and I should like to ask in the first place, and I hope some answer may be forthcoming, this question, and it is a very important question, revision by whom? Who is to do the revision? Are you to have another Peace Conference? There has been already quite sufficient delay over that. If you have another Peace Conference, is America to be a member of it, and to take part in the revision? America has not yet agreed to the Treaty. I have seen it suggested that the revision might be undertaken by the League of Nations, but may I say, with all respect, that is a perfectly hopeless proposal. This country certainly would not and I do not believe any of the other belligerent countries would, tolerate such a revision by a body upon which there was a large number of neutral countries which had not suffered in the war, but which, on the contrary, had largely increased in wealth during the war, and who, with a few rare exceptions, have as yet done little towards the work of reconstructing Europe. I think it would be a very bad turn for the League of Nations itself if any such suggestion were put forward.

But I do think we ought very seriously to consider this question of the revision of the reparation Clauses of the German Treaty, because it has within the last few days acquired an entirely new importance. Mr. Asquith speaking at Paisley, and, if I understood him aright, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Peebles, to-day certainly agreed has definitely committed his party to the view that there ought to be an immediate revision of the reparation Clauses of the German Peace Treaty, and that Germany ought not to be asked to pay a sum of more than two thousand millions at all. I noted to-day that the right hon Gentleman, in introducing his Amendment, dealt with two different aspects of the question. He spoke first of all of the amount of the Bill, and then of the method of payment. With regard to what he said as to the amount of the Bill and as to the difficulty which arises from the fact that you have not stated the total amount of your reparation claim, I say frankly I think there is a very great deal of force in that contention. But do let the House remember that it is a very difficult thing. I personally agree that it would have been better to have stated quite boldly in the Peace Treaty a round sum, and that has always been my view. But in practice it was not possible, because when you came actually to try and ascertain what the damages were it was difficult enough to do so in Belgium and in Northern France, but to ascertain the damage in Serbia and Roumania turned out to be extraordinarily difficult. Let us remember this, that the Bill has got to be framed, and has got to be presented before the 1st May, 1921, at the very latest. I sincerely hope it will be possible to present it much earlier. Let us also remember in the second place, and this is of some importance, that the Germans had the right, though I do not think they have exercised it, to come forward at any time within four months of the signing of the Treaty, and possibly that date may have been extended, and offer a lump sum, and that German offer would then be considered by the Allies. I do not think any advantage has been taken by Germany of that opportunity, but that opportunity does exist. That is so much with regard to the ascertainment on the amount.

With regard to the question of payment, Mr. Asquith, as I say, boldly committed himself to two thousand millions as the total to be expected from Germany, and I am bound to say I have a strong suspicion that, although the voice was

the voice of Paisley, the inspiration really comes from somewhere very close to King's College, Cambridge, and that Mr. Keynes and his book are responsible for rendering vocal this sentiment which hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench have hitherto successfully subdued. I am bound to say something with regard to Mr. Keynes' book. I should like to say I recognise the sincerity of Mr. Keynes. I was a colleague of his with the Noble Lord for months in the Supreme Economic Council in Paris, but I would like the House to realise this, that the views which are put forward by Mr. Keynes, and which are now accepted as the new revelation by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Peebles and by Mr. Asquith, are not new views. They were held by Mr. Keynes months ago, and they were expressed by him months ago, and they were considered, weighed, judged, and rejected in Paris. I confess I am rather sorry that at this moment Mr. Keynes should have produced the book which he has issued. I think it is calculated to render the position of the Allies much more difficult than it was, and to embroil us in party strife in America, and I think it is a departure, and, in my judgment, I am bound to say quite frankly, a regret-able departure from the traditions which have hitherto governed the public service. Having said that, I should like to say a few words about the substance of the book. There are three articles put forward. Mr. Keynes says, and I do not know how far this is supported by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen here, that it is morally wrong to demand the cost of the War from Germany. Secondly, he says that in doing so we are guilty of a breach of faith; and, thirdly, he says that in any case Germany cannot pay. In regard to the first question, the suggestion that we are morally wrong in demanding from Germany not an indemnity, and do let us remember it is not an indemnity we have asked for, but reparation, and there is all the difference in the world between indemnity and reparation, I confess, not that I am astonished at Mr. Keynes' point of view, nor indeed that he should have published it, but I am astonished that holding those views he should ever have gone to Paris at all, because, as he points out perfectly clearly in other portions of his book, if there is one thing which was made more clear than another at the General Election, and which was endorsed by the people of this country at the General Election, it was that the Prime Minister was going to Paris to take part in a conference, and, as he said quite frankly: "We propose to demand the whole cost of the War." That is his speech at Bristol on the 11th December. He issued a manifesto on the 6th December, 1918, in which he said: "All the European Allies have accepted the principle that the Central Powers must pay the cost of the War up to the limit of their capacity." Mr. Keynes knew all that when he went to Paris as the representative of His Majesty's Treasury. He stayed there for six months, and almost, up to the moment when the final Treaty was sent down for signature. I am bound to say I think it was unwise, to say the least of it, that, he should have put himself in a position in which it was difficult for him to avoid violating either his own convictions or what had been declared to be the policy of his country.

I come to the second suggestion, that in asking for reparation to the full extent we are guilty of a breach of faith. The suggestion is that we are guilty of a breach of faith because such a demand is inconsistent with the Armistice terms, with the fourteen points, with the Note of President Wilson of the 5th November, 1918, and with the addresses by President Wilson before that date, and, more particularly, the address of the 27th September. Mr. Keynes is very emphatic on this point when reciting the Bristol speech and the manifesto to which I have alluded and discussing the General Election, and he goes on to say: "This was the atmosphere in which the Prime Minister left for Paris. He had pledged himself and his Government to make demands of a helpless enemy inconsistent with solemn engagements on our part on the faith of which this enemy had laid down his arms. There are few episodes in history which posterity will have less reason to condone a war ostensibly waged in defence of the sanctity of international engagements ending in a definite breach of one of the most sacred possible of such engagements on the part of the victorious champions of these ideals." Those are very grave words and a grave indictment, and I say again if they were Mr. Keynes' views of the demands the Prime Minister was pledged to make in Paris, why did he go to Paris with the Prime Minister to represent His Majesty's Treasury? Having gone there, I do not think he is entitled to employ this language. But let me say this further. The Allies have repudiated expressly in their reply to the first draft of the Treaty this contention which is put forward here. They have stated explicitly in their Note that they repudiate altogether the suggestion that anything contained in the reparation demands is inconsistent with the addresses of President Wilson, and I would remind the House and my hon. Friends that the British reservation to the Note of the 5th November expressly stated that we reserved the right to demand compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of

the Allies and to their property by the aggression of Germany, by land, sea or from the air, and Para. 19 of the Armistice terms actually says that the Allies make their demands for reparation with reservation that any future claims and demands of the Allies are to be reserved. But after all, it is not worth splitting dialectical hairs about this. The real question which Mr. Keynes has put is, "Are the demands which are made in the Peace Treaty inconsistent with President Wilson's views of what was just and right," and of that surely there can be but one pre-eminent and one supreme judge, namely, President Wilson himself, and President Wilson set his hand to a Note to the German Government to say that there was nothing in the Peace Treaty which was in the slightest degree inconsistent with his views or with his addresses. Surely that is a complete answer to the charge which is put forward. Mr. Keynes is quite astute enough to see that that is an answer which is bound to be given by someone, and he is therefore reduced to the necessity of arguing either that President Wilson is a knave or that he is a fool. He elects to contend that President Wilson is a fool, and he draws a very amusing picture of the President sitting like a sort of hypnotised rabbit mesmerised by the glance of the Prime Minister. It is really farcical and lamentable that on a foundation so meagre and so jejune as this so grave a charge as that indictment which I have read to the House just now should have been based by a responsible person.

I have dealt with the first two contentions, and I should like to say a word now with regard to the last part of the question, namely, the Germans' capacity to pay. This is of importance, because Mr. Asquith has committed himself to a definite statement on the point. I do not quite understand whether he agrees that the total amount to be claimed is actually £2,000,000,000 or £1,500,000,000. Mr. Keynes' suggestion is £1,500,000,000, giving credit for another £500,000,000 for Colonial possessions, ships, and various other things—£1,500,000,000, paid in thirty annual instalments, without interest, of £50,000,000 each. Mr. Asquith thinks, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Peebles thinks, and Mr. Keynes thinks that that is all that Germany can pay. All I can say is this. I have no particular pretension to speak with any authority on the subject, although it was my business during part of the war to make some study at all events of German resources, but I say that there are other economists in the country of at least equal authority to Mr. Keynes, Mr. Asquith, or the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Peebles, who do not agree with their views. One of the very first acts of the Government at the Armistice was to appoint a Cabinet Committee to examine this very question of the estimated capacity of Germany to afford reparation. That Committee sat, and they had the advantage of extraordinarily able officials and economists to assist them. They heard Mr. Keynes' evidence. He appeared before them and expressed the views which he has expressed in his book. They rejected those views, and they unanimously reported that the German capacity to pay was—and I will put it low—vastly in excess of the £2,000,000,000 referred to by Mr. Keynes and Mr. Asquith.

It is no use, it is quite futile, to embark, as Mr. Keynes does in his book—Mr. Asquith is careful not to do it—on a whole series of elaborate arithmetical prophecies about the future which is perfectly incalculable. You cannot calculate what is going to be the economic position of Germany in the future. Nobody can, and I only venture to say this, as far as regards any question of figures. Reference is made to a very interesting paper which was given before the Royal Statistical Society in July of last year by Dr. Stamp. He was the original begetter of the Excess Profits Tax, and he is certainly a statistician in the very first rank, and Dr. Stamp, in an estimate of the German national income in 1913, a year before the war, puts it at £1,085,000,000. It may well be—no man can foresee what is going to happen—that within a comparatively few years the national income of Germany will again reach that figure. It may pass it. Supposing it does, what a miserable pittance would be £50,000,000 a year on an income of £1,985,000,000. It would be less than sixpence in the £ that we should be asking that Germany should pay as a measure of reparation. It is laid down in the Treaty, and it has been accepted by Germany, that Germans accept the principle that the German taxation system must impose in general on the taxpayer in Germany at least as great a burden as that prevailing in the most heavily burdened of the States represented on the Reparation Commission. Nobody can say that that is an excessive demand.

It is very difficult, and I do not believe the Treasury have got the figures, to compare the tax revenue in this country with that in Germany. I do not believe they exist. The Reparation Commission are, no doubt, trying to get them, but I will say this, that the last figures which I have seen estimated the total amount required this year for German Imperial expenditure at £850,000,000. That is for Imperial German expenditure, and we have to add something for expenditure of Federal States. That is the unknown factor, but I think I am making a more than adequate allowance if I add £150,000,000. That gives a total of £1,000,000,000 for the expenditure this year for Imperial and Federal purposes in Germany. If that is met from revenue, tax and non-tax revenue put together, over a population of 60,000,000, it works out at £16 13s. 4d. per head. Now turn to this country. How do we stand to-day? We are raising from tax revenue alone in the country £963,500,000 in this year, or from a population of 44,000,000 £21 17s. 8d. a head, against the figure which I gave just now. Things like that make one say that we must stop and think once, twice, and many times before we, commit ourselves, as Mr. Asquith has done, to the definite statement that the utmost amount which Germany is going to be able to pay in a generation is £50,000,000 a year, without any interest. Economic prophecies are always dangerous. Economists told us there could not be a European war because it would not pay, and then when it broke out some other economists said it could not last six months because everybody would run out of money. No man can forecast now what is going to be the economic position of Germany in 1940, or 1945, or 1950. It may be better or worse. There are some Germans at least who think it will be better. I came across the other day a work by Mr. Steinmann Bucher, the editor of "Information of the German War Industry," and this is his view: "Germany was rich before the war, is still more so during the war, and will be richer after the war." Who can say? He may be right, he may be wrong, but who can say? The point I want to make is that it is folly for us now to pass, as we are invited to do, to a hasty and immediate revision of the Treaty, and commit ourselves for all time to fixing the figure of the annual payment by Germany at £50,000,000 a year. We have set up a Reparation Commission, which is a just body certainly, and it is an expert body. I am quite sure the reputation of Sir John Bradbury needs no defence at the hands of anybody. What I complain of is, that Mr. Keynes' book, and Mr. Asquith's speech, and the motion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Peebles, are all designed to queer the pitch of the Reparation Commission, to suggest that the German case when it is represented to them is not going to be fairly heard and assessed by them on its merits. I protest strongly, and I will continue to protest in this House and out of it, against any suggestions of that kind. Remember, the Reparation Commission has expressly, by Article 2.34 of the Treaty, got instructions and authority to vary in its judgment the terms and conditions of payment: "The Reparation Commission shall after the 1st May, 1921, from time to time, consider the resources and capacity of Germany, and, after giving her representatives a just opportunity to be heard, shall have discretion to extend the date and to modify the form of payments, such as are to be provided for in accordance with Article 233; but not to cancel any part, except with the specific authority of the several Governments represented upon the Commission." 6.0 P.M.

I suggest that that is the right way. If it proves to be necessary, revision of your reparation clauses should take place after full and proper enquiry by the experts who are competent to judge. Nobody pretends—nobody would be so foolish as to pretend—that the wisdom of all the East is concentrated in the Treaty, that it is immune from error or exempt from amendment. Nothing of the kind. As I showed just now in the Article which I have read in regard to these particular clauses, it expressly contemplated that provisions may be varied according to the varying circumstances of Germany. No doubt the execution of the reparation clauses will mean grave sacrifices to Germany. No reparation can ever be made for the injury done. My Noble Friend the Member for Hitchin said just now he thought it would be foolish to embark on an immediate revision. I say it would be worse than foolish. It would be a crime if, without knowing how the Germans are going to tread the path of the future, we were to rush in with a definite undertaking that we would make the path smooth for them. To act with partial knowledge is always dangerous, but to act with partial knowledge prompted by partial affection is to invite, and deserve, disaster. We in this country will have to bear all our lives a very heavy burden, but we owe it to ourselves and to our children not to pronounce any hasty judgment, but by the best experts we can get—and I know of no better experts than the Reparation Commission—to balance, to assess, and, let us remember, that, as is admirably stated in the Note of the Allies to which I have referred, the whole conclusion is summed up really in a nut-shell: "The burdens of Germany

undeniably are heavy, but they are imposed under conditions of justice by peoples whose social well-being and economic prosperity have been gravely impaired by wrongs which it is beyond the utmost power of Germany to repair.”

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR My hon. Friend who has just sat down made a most powerful appeal to the House, but he made it, in one sense, under a misapprehension as to the kind of attack, apparently, to which he and other supporters of the Government are going to be subjected on the present occasion. I, like him, heard the rumour yesterday—I presume in consequence of the speech of Mr. Asquith made in the country—that the Opposition was going officially to support Mr. Keynes' book. The rumour came to me on what seemed to be good authority, and I was unwilling to distrust it, but I frankly admit I never could see how hon. Gentlemen opposite who are not fighting a contested election could, by any possibility, forget the last contested election they did fight, and so far commit themselves to Mr. Keynes' proposition as to stultify everything they said when they were last addressing their constituents. I, therefore, from the first had some doubt as to whether this was to be a debate on Mr. Keynes' attack on the Conference and his apology for Germany, or rather his plea in favour of it, and I was quite right. My right hon. Friend opposite who moved the Amendment to the Address practically never referred to Mr. Keynes' contention.

Sir W. MITCHELL-THOMSON I think he admitted £2,000,000,000.

Mr. BALFOUR Oh: yes, he mentioned the £2,000,000,000, but I think he took care—he will correct me if I am wrong—to clear himself of the suspicion that he was a Keynesite through and through, and indeed he was not. I am not quite certain what my right hon. Friend's object was in putting down the Amendment to the Address. According to the old Parliamentary practice, it was the business of the Leader of the Opposition, or somebody representing the Leader of the Opposition, if he desired it, if he thought it expedient in the public interest and in the party interest, to put down an Amendment to the Address embodying a criticism of the Government of the day, and attack them in what was conceived to be their most vulnerable spot. I gather from the terms of the Amendment that the most vulnerable part of the policy of His Majesty's Government was supposed to be the Treaty, in the framing of which, no doubt they took their fair share. But, really, the Treaty was not attacked at all. He made two criticisms on it—criticisms to which I shall refer directly. He did not make any attack on the Treaty, and did not make any attack on His Majesty's Government in connection with the Treaty. In fact, judging merely by the charming tones and the anodyne temper of my right hon. Friend's speech, I should never have conceived that the Leader of the Opposition was moving an Amendment. There was a slight improvement when it got to my noble Friend's speech, and in the earlier part of that—I do not refer to the impressive lamentation he made at the end of his speech—I thought I detected that note of war to which we are accustomed on these occasions: and then my noble Friend, having sounded the trumpet, declared he could not support the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and that he was not in favour of the Amendment which the right hon. Gentleman had just moved. I, therefore, rise under quite unexpected circumstances to deal with the very proper and interest-ins observations—some of them I thought, if I may say so without offence, rather commonplace, and familiar, but all of them interestingly put, and all of them worthy of the consideration of the House.

I shall endeavour, in the same gentle spirit, to make such answer as I can to the criticisms which he has offered, and to the challenge—if X may call it a challenge—which he has thrown down. I will begin with two criticisms which he made, and, I think, the only two which he made, upon the provisions of the Treaty. The first relates to what he describes as the folly of not fixing a sum which Germany had to pay. He dwelt, not for the first time, upon the embarrassments of German finance, of German industry, of German enterprise, in leaving hanging over the heads of the German people some vast, indefinite obligation with which there was no power to deal or to relax, which could never be fulfilled, and which, therefore, would destroy the industry of every German worker, by giving him the feeling that whatever he might do in adding to the wealth of his country would be immediately taken from his country by his country's former enemies. That was the charge. Really, there is no basis for that accusation. My hon. Friend who has just sat down has pointed out the extreme difficulty of fixing a sum. He has pointed out with unanswerable truth that the economic future of Germany is a thing which acute and well-informed economists cannot foresee; that even about

the present conditions of Germany, the most expert economists differ from each other, and that with regard to the amount of money which Germany can pay, Germany herself differs from Mr. Keynes, I think, by placing her maximum possible contribution at two and a half times, or more, I think, above that which Mr. Keynes fixed, and the German calculation, as might naturally be supposed, is far lower than the calculation made by our own experts. It is still lower, no doubt, than the calculations made by French experts. If the present experts, with all their knowledge, are not able to agree as to the sort of sum Germany can pay, how can anybody in the year 1919 or 1920 foresee what Germany may be able to pay 10 or 20 years hence? Therefore, my hon. Friend who has just sat down is perfectly right in saying there would have been a great danger in the Council of Versailles fixing the amount then and there which their late enemy was expected to pay by way of reparation. But it is quite inaccurate to suggest that in the Treaty of Versailles no provision was made for dealing with the financial difficulties of Germany which have been so eloquently referred to by writers and speakers on this subject. May I just read a sentence or two from the Annex' to the Peace Treaty: "At any time within four months of the signature of the Treaty, Germany shall be at liberty to submit, and the Allied and Associated Powers will receive and consider, such proposals as Germany may chose to make. Particular proposals will be made on the following subjects for the following purposes. Germany may offer a lump sum"—" It is put in more vigorous vernacular than that used by the right hon. Gentleman— "in settlement or our whole liability as defined in Article 232, or any statement of her liability under any of the particular categories which have been decided upon and laid down. Germany may offer to carry out, either by her own means, the reparation for reconstruction ";—" and so on. From that it is perfectly clear that we have not only a machine for equitable adjustment in the Reparation Commission of whose virtues my hon. Friend who has just sat down did not speak too highly, but we have offered to Germany that she should put before us her pro positions with regard to a lump sum which may be exacted from her, and we have promised to consider that proposal from Germany. I really cannot conceive what more you could put into a Treaty, or ought to put into a Treaty It is amazing that my right hon Friend, who puts down an Amendment attacking a Treaty, and by whom the criticisms I have just described is the main attack upon that Treaty, should not have read the sentences to which I have just called his attention and the attention of the House.

There were three criticisms. I will deal with them all. The second criticism was as to the boundaries of Hungary. My right hon. Friend suggested that the boundaries of Hungary, as laid down by the, Peace, Treaty, excluded from Hungary, and included in Rumania, a large Hungarian population which might have been and ought to have been left in Hungary. He suggested that the proper remedy for that was that this boundary should be re-submitted to an impartial commission for careful examination and inquiry. I think my right hon. Friend is wholly wrong in his facts. I believe the boundary is the, best boundary that can probably be found. These questions are very difficult, because, while undoubtedly the main governing consideration is that of population, you cannot in your adjustment entirely miss out questions of railway communication, of economic questions, and possibly even of the military frontiers.

These are subsidiary considerations which always have to be taken into account, and always were when the Conference at Paris dealt with these difficult problems. So that when my right hon. Friend opposite talks of re-submitting this frontier to the, consideration of an impartial commission, I do not think he can be aware of how careful and how elaborate were the inquiries into these frontier questions. On them the experts of many States were represented. During those long months in Paris they worked with a perseverance and an energy for which no praise is too high. That they never made a mistake is probably more than we can ask for. They were human. They had to deal with very difficult problems. That they made decisions on which two opinions might reasonably be hold by reasonable and fair men is also probably true. But that these frontiers were settled with prejudice, and not with a sincere desire to make the frontier one fair to all parties, is quite untrue. It would do no good to say: "Here is a frontier which might be better; we will re-submit it to the decision of an impartial commission." Still less is it any good to make that criticism at the very moment when one of the charges against the Government is that they have not succeeded in carrying through the Peace Treaty quite so quickly as they might have done.

I now come to the third and last of the criticisms which, as far as I remember, were made by my right hon. Friend upon the actual terms of the Treaty of Versailles. It referred to the war criminals. My noble Friend, I think on this point, and on this point alone, went to the full extreme length that anybody could go in the direction of desiring the punishment of everybody who could properly be regarded as concerned from the Kaiser downwards in any illegal or brutal acts. I am not going to deal with the whole question, because it is still in consideration between the Governments concerned. May I be allowed to say this much: We, the British Government, have always been most anxious to keep down, as far as possible, the number of those charged—anxious for every reason—anxious because we were perfectly well aware, as the speeches of the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentlemen sufficiently show, that an enormous list produces a kind of shock to public opinion in Germany, in other countries, and among neutrals the kind of shock you would gladly avoid if you could.

We, the British Government, had no opportunity of examining the lists of other people. We examined our own. I can assure the House of this, that our list, which is between 90 and 100, includes nobody who did an illegal act because he was ordered to do it, and did not go beyond his orders. The captain of submarines who were given orders, as we think of monstrous cruelty in themselves, as we think quite contrary to the Law of Nations, but who carried out their orders simply, without excess, without any brutality going beyond the orders, we have not attacked. We have said: "After all, you cannot well punish a man for doing that which, if he had not done, he would have been shot by his own superiors." The people in our list—take the submarine commanders—are those whom we believe, on the evidence which has been examined, not by me, but by those competent to form an opinion are those who have gone beyond orders in respect to the sinking of merchantmen, and have behaved with quite gratuitous brutality on their own account to the unhappy victims of outrages which they did in obedience to superior command. Do you want to cut down that list? It is very difficult. May I say that the lists of other countries are much larger than our own, and the total mentioned by my noble Friend, I think was 900. Of course this is chiefly made up by the lists of our allies.

I have had an opportunity of talking with M. Clemenceau upon this very subject. He felt as we feel, and as everybody I am addressing feels, that we would much rather have had a shorter list from every point of view. But he said to us: "What can I do? A woman comes to me from a village in France, she tells me that her daughter was carried off, gives me an account of crimes which make one's blood run cold, and says that the author of those crimes is known. She gives all the particulars and says: 'Is that man going to be unpunished?' What," says M. Clemenceau, "am I to reply to anyone who comes to me from one of these villages in France and makes that sort of appeal?" I confess I was dumb. I could not say to him, "It is very unfortunate to have 900 people in the list. Cannot you tell the poor woman that the scoundrel to whom her daughter was a victim must be let off in the general interests of peace?" I could not say that to M. Clemenceau. If I had said that, what answer would he have given me? I only mention this to show the kind of difficulty there is in dealing with these cases. I am entirely in accord with my noble Friend whose view is that men in the highest place, clearly and personally guilty—not in a merely ministerial or, so to speak, mechanical capacity, but personally guilty of any of these crimes—ought not to be allowed to escape. I am sure he agrees with me. He did not mention it in his speech. I am sure the House agrees with me that these minor instruments of crime who, in their brutality go beyond even the brutality of their orders, ought not to be allowed to escape. Very well, if that be the principle, as I think it is, on which the general list is framed—it certainly is the principle on which our list is framed—much as I regret the number of criminals, as at present advised, it seems to me very difficult to find any principle on which it can be reduced. The whole subject is still under discussion, but I think the House will allow me quite frankly to put before hon. Members the kind of difficulty with which we are met in these discussions, and, having put it before the House, I am perfectly sure hon. Members will feel full sympathy with the difficulties of the problems with which we are faced.

I believe I now come, strange as it may seem, to the end of the criticisms made upon the Treaty. The rest of the speech of my right hon. Friend opposite and of the speech of my Noble Friend behind me were not attacks upon the Treaty, but either attacks upon the Government for not having finished the Treaty more quickly, or else lamentations for the

present state of the world in general and Europe in particular. I do not believe that any accounts are too dark in which to paint the position of a large part of Europe at the present time. My right hon. Friend opposite drew a lamentable picture, supported by extracts from the report of "Sir William Goode, of the condition of things in Vienna, and my Noble Friend quoted from the same report, and drew a similar picture of the same tragic circumstances. What is going on in Vienna is going on, I hope with less intensity, over great areas that five years ago we regarded as civilised, prosperous, secure, well-to-do. That is not the fault of the Treaty. It is the fault of the war, and no paper provisions in any treaty, carry them out how you like, would put that right. Take even a class of evil which may at first sight seem to arise directly out of the provisions of the Treaty—I mean the fact that some of these now States show at present little desire for co-operation with their neighbours and little capacity for it, and the result is that the Zollverein system, which was one of the merits of the Austrian Empire and linked economically together the populations of that part of the world, has been replaced by a commercial and fiscal policy which I have not the slightest doubt is extremely injurious to the parties concerned. Even that, although it is, of course, unfortunately linked with the specific provisions of the Treaty, is not the result of the Treaty, but the result of the War.

When the result of that war was to smash up the Austrian Empire before it was re-constituted by the Treaty into different new States, all these evils began. They began before the Treaty. They would have gone on had there been no Treaty in a much more aggravated form than now. They are the result of the War, and, if you like to add it, they are the result of the application of the principle of self-determination to this part of Europe. My right hon. Friend opposite, although he dwelt upon these evils, and he must have known they were directly due to the application of the principle of self-determination, forebore to say what seemed the logical conclusion of his criticisms, that we ought to have pursued political economy and abandon the rights of populations, and left the Austrian Empire in its original form. But he did not say that, and I imagine he does not think it. Then what is the use of criticism? If we are at the same time to establish these new States with their populations, which, if not homogeneous, are as homogeneous as we can make them, are we going to try and compel them to make their foreign policy, their foreign fiscal policy, the mere subservient tool of the Great Powers?

We do all we can. We do not encourage one State to refuse coal to another, but precisely the reverse. We do our very best, but after all there are limits to what your best may do with regard to States which are independent, which we desire to be independent, and which my right hon. Friend desires to be independent. Then what is the use of that criticism? It is very lamentable that these States should not know their own interest and should be indifferent to the interests of their neighbours, but it is not the fault of the treaties. It is not the fault of the Great Powers, but it is the fault of the War, and it is the fault of the condition of things before the War which deprived these people of that training, that necessity for the citizens of each nation to consider themselves something more than citizens of that nation which comes of long practice, and which even nations which have had the longest practice do not always succeed in efficiently carrying out.

My right hon. Friend says that the condition of Vienna is so horrible that something must be done to put it right, but he made no suggestion as to what should be done, and he seemed to think that the Government were indifferent on this subject. I believe that I am accurate in saying that we have already spent £12,500,000 sterling in relief of a population which is starving at this moment because it joined in an unjust war against us and our Allies. We have not only spent £12,500,000 sterling upon this population, but we have offered to spend another £10,000,000 sterling provided that others come forward and adequately share the burden. I do not think we can do more, and I do not think we ought to do more. I do not believe that any man in this House feels more acutely than I do the horror of what is going on outside our boundaries.

My right hon. Friend said we were all of us apt to lack imagination in this matter, that we could not bring up before our minds in detail such a condition as that which is now prevailing in Vienna. It may be true that we are all perhaps, when the sufferings of other people are concerned, persons of sluggish imaginations, but I think I can truly say that as far as I am concerned and as far as my powers of representation are concerned with such powers as Heaven has given

me, I have done my best, and it is a horrible task to realise what is going on in those cases. I think we ought to make every effort, every reasonable effort we can, to help, whether they are our ex-enemies or our Allies. I wish, like the light hon. Gentleman, to wage no war against women and children, but the burden which this country has borne, is bearing, and will be called upon to bear is, I think, as much as we can carry. It is impossible that all the charity in the world should be thrown on our shoulders. It is impossible that we of our own strength, undermined as that strength has been, thank God not destroyed, but diminished by five years of unexampled effort—it is impossible that our actions should go as far as our desires in this matter, and it cannot be done. Mark you, if you attempt to do it, and if in attempting to do it you fundamentally weaken the credit, resources, and productive power of this country, you do far more harm, not to us merely, but to the whole community of civilised nations than you could possibly do good by any of your charitable doles, however generously they may be given, or however carefully they may be administered.

I now come by a natural transition to the subject of my noble Friend (Lord R. Cecil) who spoke second in the Debate. My noble Friend, I do not think, so far as I remember, attacked the Treaty in any of its special provisions at all. At all events the main brunt of his criticism was upon the delay that has occurred in settling the Middle East, in completing the treaties required to give a complete settlement to the Middle East, and he said he would not accept as an excuse for that delay the fact that the policy of America, as we had conceived their policy, has undergone a radical change since the middle of last year. May I ask why my noble Friend will not accept that as the excuse?

Lord R. CECIL I explained it.

Mr. BALFOUR My right hon. Friend has wholly failed to explain it to me. The idea which the Council of the Great Powers had in Paris was that this question of the Middle East could not be settled except by the use of the mandatory principle which was part of the League of Nations, and which I hope and believe may turn out to be one of the most valuable inventions which this Conference has produced. We hoped that this mandatory principle might be applied, and indeed it seems almost inevitable that it should be applied in a very large measure to the Middle Eastern problems. We hoped, and we had every reason to hope, that in the mandatory burden America would bear her full share. That hope has been shattered by events and that, is one cause, but of course not the only cause, of the lamentable delay that has occurred. I am not going for one instant to say to this House that the results of that delay have not hurt us, because I think they have. It is impossible for me at all events to watch these things as I have done during the last twelve months, and much more than that for it is ever since the Armistice as closely as I can, to doubt that the delay has been most harmful, but it is really neither common-sense nor common justice to throw the blame of that delay on His Majesty's Government, I do not believe that we are responsible.

I do not say we are omniscient, I do not say that our delegates in Paris, the Prime Minister and I and those who worked with us, have not made mistakes. Very likely we have, but I say that the delay is not ours, and that we felt the evils of that delay acutely throughout, but we are most desirous to see it brought to an end, and as the King's Speech says in so many words, we have every hope that it will soon be brought to an end. I do not know that it is either desirable or possible for me to say anything more on that subject.

My noble Friend proceeded to deal with something which seemed to me to be entirely outside the Amendment, or very nearly outside an Amendment dealing with the Treaty, because he did not deal with the Treaty at all, but with the perennial problem of Russia. He talked with great force and power about Russia, and he accused us of having no policy and wavering from one side to another with changing circumstances. I should have thought that a Government which never altered its policy when circumstances alter was not a Government which deserved the unrestrained confidence of this House. We are not the masters, we never have been the masters, we never could be the masters, and we have never desired to be the masters of the internal fortunes of Russia. That colossal country with its countless millions must ultimately manage its own affairs.

We were only brought into the business originally because the War was going on, because the Eastern frontier, the frontier between Germany and her Eastern neighbours, was at that time, I will not say as important to us as the Western frontier, because it was not, but of great importance to us, and we had to help to the best of our ability every element in Russia which showed itself favourable to the Allies and hostile to the Germans. It was for that reason and that reason alone that we originally intervened. Having intervened, having with our Allies sent troops to the North of Russia, and having also co-operated with our Allies in Siberia, we were of course inevitably involved in the complications of that unhappy and disordered country. Never at any time have we wished to dictate to Russia what form of government the Russians might choose for themselves. If we objected, as we did, to a Bolshevik Government it was because a Bolshevik Government, unfortunately, is not simply an internal affair of Russia, but also very greatly concerns the external policy of that country, and we have never had relations with it. We have never had formal relations with it. We have never recognised it in any sense as yet, and perhaps never shall—I hope myself we never shall—as the Government of Russia. At all events, standing outside this vast confused seething cauldron, whose contents we could not control and did not desire to control, how was it possible but that our policy should vary from time to time as we had to deal with varying circumstances? What policy would you have pursued? My noble Friend had a remedy for some other ills from which this unhappy world is now suffering, and to which I shall refer, but I do not think that he had any remedy for this one, except the remedy which is always in fashion in a debate on the King's Speech, namely, a change in His Majesty's advisers. There are so very few points on which I can give comfort to my noble Friend that I gladly do so on one which both he and I would regard as of great importance, and that is Poland. He seems to have heard or to believe that his Majesty's Government are urging upon Poland the policy of adventure.

Lord R. CECIL No, I expressly said that I understood that they were not. I want to make it quite clear. I expressly said that I understood that was not so, and that I was glad to hear it, but that statements had been made elsewhere.

Mr. BALFOUR It is most ungrateful of me not to see, that, for the moment my noble Friend was praising and not attacking the Government. I offer him my sincerest apology. I need hardly tell him that I did not mean to misrepresent him. He is quite right. He justly appreciates the fact that the Government are not contemplating any such folly as that which is suggested, and perhaps naturally suggested, in some quarters with which my noble Friend is acquainted. If the House will allow me, I will go on and say a few words about the larger issues raised by my noble Friend at the end of his speech. In that part of his speech my noble Friend spoke with intense conviction, with great earnestness, and, I think, with great force, about the lamentable condition of Europe at the present time. He drew a picture in which there was not one ray of sunlight, not one gleam of colour, to relieve the universal gloom. I wish that I could contribute that ray of sunshine or illuminating colour. I do think that the situation is very bad, and it is very bad for the very reason that my noble Friend gave to the House. It is very bad because it depends upon economic conditions. Economic conditions—he will believe me, and I think the House will believe me—do not depend, or depend only in a small degree, upon what you can do in conferences, upon what you can do by peace treaties, and upon what you can do by adjustments or re-adjustments. Why is Europe at this moment in want of so many of the fundamental necessities? Why is it not a question of giving from your superfluity to somebody else's necessity, but of trying to think who is least violently in need, in the least extreme need, of these necessities of life? There does not appear to be coal enough to go round. There does not appear to be sugar enough to go round. There does not appear to be wheat enough to go round. The world has not a sufficiency of these primary necessities. Another thing. It has not got the means of conveying them from the place where they are least necessary to the place where they are most necessary.

What then lies at the root of it all? Fundamentally, I suppose there are two things. Labour produces much less than it did, and credit has been shattered. How is His Majesty's Government going either to restore the credit of the world or to make the labourers of all classes, brain workers, hand workers, or whoever they may be—the workers of the world—return to their pre-War rate of production? Evidently, the second of those two things is quite beyond the power of any single Ally. It is quite beyond the power of all the Allies put together. It must depend upon a large variety of causes. I shall not enumerate them. I shall not attempt even to describe the most important of them. The fact is that

workmen of all types and all classes and all degrees of skill, education, and culture are not doing now what they did before the War. That perhaps is the most fundamental thing of all. And yet how can they do it unless you have credit? Unless you have credit the industrial machinery of the world does not work. You do not get the things from the place where they are produced to the place where they are required. The raw material is not in the locality where it can be manufactured, and the food is not in the place where it can be eaten. Credit is required as well as trucks and engines.

How is that going to be dealt with by His Majesty's Government? We are struggling ourselves, struggling I am glad to say successfully, but not struggling easily or lightly, with tremendous financial and productive problems of our own. How can we induce all these peoples in Eastern Europe who have ceased to produce, who are starving largely because they do not produce—not because we do not give them things, but because they do not produce—to produce? How are we going to put all that right? We are doing our best to help them by our example. How can we help them further without taking upon ourselves a burden which it is impossible for us to bear? Even if we did take upon ourselves that burden and sup-posing we were ready to produce unlimited financial resources or such resources as the most reckless Chancellor of the Exchequer would consent to provide, how are we to put that state of things right? Anything that we can do we will do. My noble Friend came forward and suggested a remedy. He suggested it with very great courage and with a preface which I confess raised my hopes to the highest possible limits. They were soon dashed, however, because what was my noble Friend's suggestion, as I understand it? He is there to correct me if I am wrong? He said, "You have got now a great instrument at your hands called the League of Nations. Call that together first. The League of Nations can be represented, and I believe will be and ought to be represented on great occasions, not by any inferior member of the Government or any statesman outside the Government, but by the Head of the Government itself. Let the heads of the Governments, acting in the League of Nations, meet together in Paris and see if they cannot find a remedy for these things." That was the panacea of my noble Friend.

Lord R. CECIL That bears very little relation to what I said about the economic condition of Europe.

Mr. BALFOUR Can my noble Friend then just give me a reminder:

Lord R. CECIL I do not want to repeat my speech. The part to which my right hon. Friend is now referring was entirely in reference to Russia and not to the economic position of Europe. With regard to the economic condition of Europe, my argument was that the Government, or rather the Allies, had not done what they could to diminish the stringency of the conditions.

7.0 P.M.

Mr. BALFOUR I beg my noble Friend's pardon. I did not mistake thy nature of the prescription, but I did mistake the particular disease for which it was intended. If the House will allow me, then, to refer back for one instant to the question of Russia, which was the disease, may I say that it does seem to me, I do not say wholly useless, but surely not very likely to produce a new heaven and a new earth in that part of the world, because, after all, what use is this particular assembly of the League of Nations referred to by my noble Friend? It is exactly the same gentlemen who sat together in Paris from January till November in the year 1919—exactly the same gentlemen called by a different name—the Prime Ministers and Presidents of the leading countries who were in Paris. There were no sneers sufficiently effective to say what you thought of the Prime Ministers when they were collected in Paris. I hope that the League of Nations will be equal even to the task of helping in a Russian solution, but I cannot conceive why they should be at any rate more effective than the live great Powers assembled at the Quai d'Orsay, in Paris. They represent the same people; they have the same objects, they mean to do the same things; but according to the critics of the Peace Conference on this side and on that, they totally faded during 1919, and why they are going to succeed during 1920 for the life of me I cannot see. I venture to think that in that direction at all events no great change can be expected. Something may be done, but I cannot believe it is going to have the effect to which my noble Friend has pinned his faith.

On the economic position of Europe which is, after all, I agree with my able Friend, the vital point we have to consider, he suggested no remedy. He described the disease, and I followed him and also described it to the best of my ability. But he has not suggested a remedy, nor do I believe that it is possible for Europe to find, rapidly or completely, any remedy whatever. Whether if the whole world were to join, if the countries which the War has left richer than it found them, were to throw their whole weight into assisting us in this problem, some great amelioration could not be effected, is another question, but it is not one, as the House naturally understands, on which I care to dwell. For us it seems to me that our first duty and certainly not our only duty is to see that our great industrial society, round which the whole security of Europe really revolves, remains with its existing strength intact, and its strength built up from day to day by industry, by economy, and by the enterprise of its inhabitants. That is the greatest contribution we can make to restoration. I hope we shall make it. I will not suggest for a moment, however, that we in doing this are merely to consider or even chiefly to consider our own special and solitary interests. We know quite well that we do not stand alone in the world. We know quite well now as ever before the nations of Europe and of the world are bound together by common interests, and, I think, ought to be bound together by common ideals. If any course be suggested for ameliorating this disease, this almost universal economic disease, which is eating at the very heart of Europe, and if we can with reasonable safety to ourselves aid in the restoration from which we as well as everybody else will benefit, I am quite sure that my right hon. Friends near me, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and all my colleagues, will gladly embrace any opportunity for carrying out this beneficent policy.

I hope it will not be thought mere barren parliamentary repartee—I do not use it as such—I hope it will not be thought a barren observation to say that in this Assembly are contained men of every variety of training and occupation, and every variety of outlook, but yet no one has suggested a practical scheme by which the Government of this country can, without self-destruction, do anything on a great scale to alleviate the burden which Europe has brought upon itself. If I thought that any words of mine would carry into distant regions the lesson I should like to preach to all the nationalities, and of these new nationalities some are not at all small, which war has created in the East of Europe, it would be that they also shall consider, not their mutual antagonisms, not their small ambitions, but that they should each in their own borders set to work by rigid economy, by pure administration, and by energetic labour, to render their own economic position sound, safe, honourable, and secure. Could there be any greater contribution to the restoration of that credit the absence of which is one of the great causes of the disease from which we are all suffering? In that direction lies their true interests, in that direction should be exerted all the powers of persuasion, all the powers of propaganda of which we are masters. We can only influence, we can only advise, we cannot command. Although we, like all the rest of the world, suffer from the faults of our neighbours, it is impossible that for that regime we should substitute one under which we were the only controllers of their destinies, in the hope that their affairs would be better managed if they were taken out of their hands, incompetent as in some cases they have proved to be, and placed in our hands. But that is impossible and therefore—and these are my last words—I ask this House to support the Government in what I conceive to be the only sound policy to pursue. It is one of stabilising and strengthening our own economic system at home, using every accretion of strength as it comes to us, in order to help those who most need our help, and not in attempting a task which is utterly beyond our power, or any man's power, and wasting not only our own substance but our own powers of useful working and useful influence in the impossible task of managing for other people the affairs which they seem incapable of managing for themselves.

Colonel WEDGWOOD Apparently the sham fight between the Free Liberals and the Coalition has missed fire. There had been arranged a great debate and a fight over Keynes' book. On this side Keynes was to be defended. On the other side he was to be hounded out. But although Keynes' book was not mentioned, the speeches prepared on the other side had to be delivered. We may be thankful if this has induced some of the Members of the Coalition to read that valuable book. I am not quite certain it has been read by the Lord President of the Council. Is it not about time that the real battle began over this Amendment? The Labour party naturally support it. They were prepared to put an Amendment such as this down, but preferred to see it moved by the Free Liberals, because, after all, it is always pleasant to see a death-bed conversion. Six months ago bouquets would have been passed over to the Front Bench

opposite by my right hon. Friend (Sir D. Maclean), and he would have been praising the Peace Treaty up to the skies as the work of Heaven-born statesmen. But how swift has been the fall. Now we find within six months an attempt is made in a full dress debate to get that Treaty modified. They are quite right, and we are glad to have it so, because, unless the Treaty is modified, the economic state of Europe is bound to go from worse to worse. We all know perfectly well that the alteration in the Treaty that is more urgently required than anything else is that the sum that is to be paid by Germany shall be fixed; unless that is done there is no possible means of restarting trade on the Continent.

I would ask hon. Members who are business men what has happened since the Armistice. When the Armistice was agreed to the mark exchanged at 50 to the £1. By July the figure had risen to 90 to the £1, and everybody was being advised to buy marks as a speculation. In September the exchange had risen to 120, and by December it had gone up to 200, while now it stands at 340 to the £1. That is to say, there has been a continual descent in the value of the mark since the Armistice. If it had been possible at the time of the Armistice to make Germany pay the full cost of reparation, plus the value and cost of the pensions for widows and orphans of the soldiers of the Allied countries, the amount would not have been trifling, and every sensible person knows even that could not have been paid. Obviously now it has automatically become six times as great, owing to the depreciation of the mark, it is totally impossible for Germany to pay it. Yet it is surprising to find there are hon. Members who have been in Paris for a year, and who have now come back like Kip Van Winkle, and make speeches saying that Germany can pay the cost of reparation, plus pensions and so on, of all the Allied nations? It is sheer, stark, staring lunacy. No business man with any sense thinks it possible, yet still we allow it to be said that Germany has to pay this absolutely indefinite sum, which it is supposed this Commission of Reparation will fix within 15 months from now and collect within five years.

I ask hon. Members to observe what is the effect of having an indefinite sum hanging round the neck of trade in Germany and Austria and the other Continental countries, because till you realise that this financial collapse is being caused by the indefiniteness of the burden we shall never get any further. They are being urged by the right hon. Gentleman to produce more in Germany and Hungary and all these other countries. How can they be induced to produce more when they do not know that what they produce will not be taken over as a debt to the Allies? No one can possibly start industry going or employ men so long as he does not know whether he will be allowed a penny piece of profit out of the business? There have been any number of offers made by capitalists in Germany and in Austria, who have almost gone down on their knees and begged English and foreign capitalists to take over their concerns for them, to purchase, control, anything, in order that they might get sufficient credit to buy raw materials to start their industries. What is the natural result? A capitalist in this country looks at it and says, "It is a very good proposition. I could buy up your business in depreciated marks, or still more depreciated crowns, and I could start industry going here again." But he cannot possibly do it till he knows that his whole property that he has bought will not have to be taken in order to pay the debt to the Allies. The other day the Allgemeine Electricitäts Gesellschaft, which is the biggest electrical undertaking, I suppose, in the world, offered itself, I understand, to Vickers, Son and Maxim. But how could a firm like Vickers venture to invest millions of their capital in buying up that concern, when it was quite possible that the whole of their capital might immediately be taken by the Reparations Commission? Industry cannot be restarted on these lines. Industry must get credit in order to start. The hope of the people in Europe is that they can get capital and credit from us or America. If there is no possible security for capital no one will invest money. Therefore we see this constant falling in the value of the mark and the crown, and the constantly increasing impossibility of getting anything out of those countries. The whole of the middle and upper classes in Germany and Austria are absolutely beggared and ruined. If the £ in this country sank to the value of 3½d. you would get a fair comparison with the fall in the value of money in Austria. There are no longer any upper classes. You have your Bolshevik Revolution. Property has ceased to exist, and the only way in which you can re-establish industry in that country is to say, "So much you have to pay. Make arrangements for paying that sum," I do not care if it is large or small, but let us have a definite sum so that they can make their arrangements, by a capital levy or in some other way, to get the money to pay the debt and start afresh with a clean slate, building up their industries again. It is all very well for the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Balfour) to joke through his speech and claim as a perfectly new invention that the

real difficulty in Europe in starting again is because of the self-determination of peoples. I cannot help thinking that he might have done with fewer inimitable jests and more serious dealing with the problem. The right hon. Gentleman said the difficulty was that we had allowed self-determination to go to such lengths that it was impossible in those countries to settle down and start production. He knows perfectly well that self-determination has nothing whatever to do with it. It is true, these people are no longer the Austrian Empire. It is true they are split up, but in all cases the uncertainty as to what payments have to be made prevents industry starting again. The noble Lord (Lord R. Cecil) dealt with this point, because he, at least, treats the problem seriously and knows what is required to be done. He, at least, knows that it is absolutely essential that the Peace Treaty should be modified. I only do not understand why, when he devotes the whole of his speech towards proving the necessity of modifying the Peace Treaty, he tells us that, in spite of this necessity, he is not going to vote for the Amendment. It would be more consistent if, when he has proved conclusively that the Treaty, must be modified, he should then vote for the Amendment of which he approves. No doubt, party interests have come in. But his position was quite clear. He said, "We have to have this Treaty modified," and that is exactly the position taken up by Lord Curzon in another place. After all, we ought to have the whole of the Front Bench opposite voting with us. Lord Curzon, on Tuesday, referring to Lord Crewe, said: "When the noble Marquis says that a good deal of this Treaty which is being concluded will have to be re-written and revised, I have no doubt he speaks with absolute truth." Quite so. That is what we are urging. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should be in the Lobby with us to-night supporting the Amendment of the Treaty. They all know it is necessary. The noble Lord (Lord R. Cecil) suggests that a new League of Nations should be invoked in order to deal with the Russian position, and there are even better reasons for suggesting that the League of Nations should deal with this question of the fixing of the reparation, because in the Treaty itself there appears this clause: "The Assembly may from time to time advise the re-consideration by members of the League of Treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world." So that they have already taken precautions to provide in the League of Nations for exactly such a case as this where the economic position of Europe has shown that a revision of the Treaty is required. I urge the right hon. Gentleman to consider whether it might not be possible, even though this Amendment is officially rejected, to get something done to pass this particular part of the Peace Treaty on to the League of Nations where it could be looked at even by the same people in a more calm and collected atmosphere than could be expected when dictating a Treaty to a fallen foe. That is the modification which is required in this Treaty.

I do not think I need go into the question of the punishment of the criminals. We all know they ought to be punished. Militarist criminals in Germany are certainly as bad criminals as there are in the world, but we might remember that the militarist criminals are not all to be found in Germany, and if there is going to be a proper punishment of these people, all fair-minded men would like to see a court which would inspire more confidence trying them than a court of their two adversaries. The whole matter is one which we really need not concern ourselves about. It is almost inconceivable that the Allies should have the power to force Germany to give up these people. To go and hunt for them in Germany would be equally impossible. All we can do is to tabulate their crimes and pillory them in the eyes of the world. We can say, if they ever leave the protection of Germany they shall be punished for their crimes, but the impossibility of getting hold of them makes the whole question of that clause in the Peace Treaty ridiculous as far as we can see.

The Labour party are anxious for a revision of this Peace Treaty because they knew it was impracticable and because the clauses were manifestly impracticable and unjust. The whole question of the re-organisation of Europe depends upon the revision of the Treaty. It depends on more than that. We have not only to revise the Treaty, but we have also definitely to make peace with Russia, whatever Government may be ruling in Russia. We have taken the first step and it is rather humorous to see the Prime Minister taking credit to himself for having known what was right to be done a year ago and for doing it now. We knew what was wanted to be done a year ago, and we were howled down by all the other people in this House. The Prime Minister knew what was right to be done and he had not the courage to get up and differ from his majority. There is something in moral courage after all. It might not only have saved us

£100,000,000 of wasted money and many valuable lives, but it might have saved us a serious blot upon our traditions. But now he has started over-persuading the Secretary of State for War, and he has induced his Cabinet and induced even the French Cabinet, which is something more to his credit, to start trading with the co-operative societies in Russia. I wonder if hon. Members see the real humour of that situation. The co-operative societies in Russia are the Soviet Government. The Soviet Government does all the distribution work and all its collection of produce through the co-operative societies of Russia. The British Government says, "We will only allow you to deal with these co-operative societies," who really are the socialist body of Russia. Trading is only to be done with the "Socialist Government. Trading with private Russians is barred. All trading must be with the Russian Government in effect. It is rather humorous to see this development. It seems to be recognition not only of Bolshevik rule, but of that which is collective trading, and I cannot help thinking that it may give us a very good example, or a very useful experience, as to the possibilities of such collective trading in this country. But so long as you have all this trading under the rose, so long as you have a state of war perpetuated in those countries, you cannot really get any social reconstruction either in Russia or in the border lands round Russia.

We know we are not encouraging the Poles to fight the Bolsheviks. The Prime Minister managed to enforce that point of view about three weeks ago in Paris. But are we allowing the French to urge the Poles to fight the Bolsheviks? In the "Times," which gives us such valuable and sometimes veracious news from Russia, we read that the Poles have had a most successful venture. They had reached 50 miles behind the Bolshevik lines—not that they were attacking the Bolsheviks, but they had made an offensive defensive behind the Russian lines, 50 miles, and taken a town. I know the Bolsheviks are a long-suffering people. But, of course, if the Poles, a little weak nation, go on putting pin pricks into Russia like that, at any moment the Bolsheviks might take charge and say, "We have had enough of this; we will fight you": and if they bring up all their forces to fight Poland, the position will be an extremely difficult one, not only for France, but for this country, because, if they deal with Poland as they have dealt with Denikin, Kolchak, and Yudenitch, our position in regard to our Ally, Poland, will be extremely difficult. Every time we allow them to go on making these attacks on Bolshevik Russia we are bringing nearer the risk of having to send our armies to a new war, far from their base, in a country which is already starved and stripped to the bone, to fight a new-war against Bolshevik Russia. I know it is hopeless to expect any attention to these matters from right hon. Gentlemen opposite; but I ask the Labour Members to think what it means if we are to be plunged into afresh war against an enemy we have never desired to fight in order to support a nation who, actuated by 18th century nationalistic ideas, carries on an aggressive campaign which they have not the means to carry through and not the backbone to prosecute properly. That has been brought about by these Polish adventures. It is true that we have not officially encouraged them, though nobody knows what our un-official representatives there are persuading the people, privately, to do. Military Missions under the direction of the War Office carry on often an entirely different form of policy from that inspired by the Foreign Office. You have this action and re-action between the Prime Minister and the Secretary for War going on in every mission and in every Embassy throughout the world. There is no community of policy here and there can be no common policy among these missions, but we ought to take steps at once to warn the Polish Government that if they attack Russia again, if they make any more of these offensive defensive raids into Russian territory, as they have done at Vinsk and elsewhere, we will not support them if they are attacked, that their blood will be on their own heads, that we shall be absolved from having to send our troops to help them. I believe the Labour party as a whole will resolutely oppose any cooperation with the Polish army if by their conduct they are attacked by Bolshevik Russia. We were willing to help them so long as they were not committing an offensive upon Russia, but that our money should be used to protect them when they have brought the attack upon themselves would be insanity, and if we supported it we should be betraying our trust to our constituents in this country.

The Peace Treaty needs to be revised in order to fix the indemnity. Beyond that we want peace to be declared with Russia and the regularisation of all the Border States. If we take the opportunity now we can get that peace. Prosecute this war with Russia, or allow the Bolshevik Government to continue its wonderfully successful military expeditions, and you may at any moment have the Bolshevik movement an Imperialistic, movement, led, not by Nicholas Lenin,

but by some of the old imperialistic generals. You may get this just as you see in France an entire inversion of the whole Russian revolution. Every day brings its dangers in that respect. Any day Lenin may be murdered. Any day you may see one of these Imperialist adventurers rise to the top and, as a successful general, with an army which has tasted blood, proceed to invade Georgia, Finland, the Ukraine and Bessarabia, plunging about as Napoleon did after the French revolution. That is the danger. It is no use letting things slide and trusting that something may happen in Russia that will enable us to save our face in making peace with that Government. There is no dishonour in making peace with a Government even if you think it has been a brutal Government in the past and that it is still not a good Government. There is no dishonour in making peace at any time, and I urge the Prime Minister, who knows as well as we of this party know what is the right policy to pursue, that even at the eleventh hour he should have the courage to stand up and say that we will make peace in order to allow the world to be re-established on sane lines.

Sir S. HOARE The hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just spoken will not expect me to agree with him in what he has said about Russia, but he will find in my remarks that on many other points on which he touched we find ourselves in general agreement. The Lord President of the Council (Mr. Balfour) made so brilliant a speech that it would be impertinent, even if I could do it, for anyone in my position to make any criticism of it; but I cannot help saying that it seemed to me he made out too strong a case for the Peace Treaty. Judging from what he said, one would imagine that none of the ills with which Europe is faced at the present moment is due to the mistakes that were made in Paris. I quite agree that the great bulk of the sufferings that have been inflicted upon Europe are due to greater causes than the actual terms of the Treaty. As he rightly said, they are the direct result of the terrible calamity of War, but I hope to show that in many directions certain articles of the Peace Treaty and certain actions of the delegates in Paris are responsible for some of the ills from which Europe is now suffering. The Lord President made out a very strong case against a definite sum being included in the Treaty as the German indemnity. I am not going to follow him into the application of his contention so far as the German Treaty is concerned. I will only ask him whether he thinks that his argument is equally applicable to the Austrian Treaty. Does he really think that to impose upon Austria—a country now reduced to the size of Ireland, so far as population is concerned—an unlimited indemnity for the whole sufferings of the War, including pensions and separation allowances, is likely to encourage that enterprise and industry without which, as he rightly says, Europe cannot hope to recover?

Let me remind him of one or two articles in the Austrian Treaty. I was in Vienna the other day and I visited Hofburg, where two Allied Commissions were sitting. The Commissions sat in adjacent rooms. One of them was engaged in exacting the uttermost penny from Austria, and the other was engaged in arranging relief for the starving people. Let me give him another example from the Austrian Treaty which does not seem to harmonise entirely with the conclusion of his speech. One of the Articles of the Treaty makes Austria liable to Jugo-Slavia and Roumania for 3,000 milch cows. As soon as the Treaty is ratified these milch cows have to be handed over to these new succession States. At the present moment, whilst with one hand we are compelling Austria to hand over 3,000 milch cows to these two countries, with the other we are sending into Vienna condensed milk as relief for the nursing mothers and infants. Further than that, one of the Relief Committees, the Quakers' Committee, has actually in the last few weeks bought cows at its own expense and presented them to the Viennese Municipality. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out the grave injuries that are undoubtedly being inflicted upon Europe by what I may call the particularism run mad of all these new States, and he said that is a result of the War in so far as it broke up the Dual Monarchy. I agree with him that it was inevitable that one of the results of the War would be the break-up of the Hapsburg monarchy. I am glad to have seen that break up. I am glad to welcome the advent into the polity of Europe of all these new succession States, and I do not suggest for a moment that, even if we were in a position to do it, we ought to attempt to infringe their sovereign rights; but I do say that if a year ago we had brought greater pressure upon the new communities into which Central Europe is broken up and if we had imposed in the Treaty more reasonable articles with reference to the economic unity of Central Europe, the particularism from which the world is suffering would have been far less acute than it is at the present time.

That brings me to the third point to which I would like to draw attention in the right hon. Gentleman's speech. He turned to my noble Friend (Lord R. Cecil) and told him, in answer to his observation with regard to the Turkish Treaty, that the delay, in the nature of things, was inevitable. I do not know whether in the case of the Turkish Treaty that is so or not, but I do say that in the case of the Austrian Treaty, the delays were not necessary. The complications in Central Europe have been made far more difficult by these 10 months' delay than they would have been if six or eight months ago the right hon. Gentleman and the delegates in Paris had dealt with a part of the peace which is much less complicated than the German peace. There are certain points of the Austrian Treaty which I view with considerable apprehension. Perhaps it is inevitable—certainly it is the case—that both the German and Austrian Treaties seem at any rate to me to be founded on principles that are totally contradictory. On the one hand you have the principle of self-determination. On the other hand you have the principle of strategic frontiers. I believe that the two principles are so diametrically opposite that they must inevitably lead to the creation of innumerable danger spots in Europe.

Take the principle of self-determination. At the outset, it was decided, in my view rightly, that the principle was not to be applied to Allied countries. If that be the case, by what right did we apply in the early days of the Treaty the principle of self-determination to the border states of Russia? I do not say that it is not a good thing to recognise some of these States, but I do say that it laid us open to the charge of hypocrisy when, with one voice, we say that we will not apply this policy to Allied countries and when, with another voice, we say that we will apply it to Russia. Take it a step further. It was decided that the principle should be applied to enemy States. That being the case, what right have we to expel from their national surroundings the German inhabitants of the Saar Valley? I am not suggesting that the French have not a full right as compensation to the output of the Saar coal mines, but I do say that it is totally contrary to the principles of self-determination as applied to enemy States to force these Germans, some of the purest blooded Germans in the whole German Empire, under a foreign regime. And if hon. Members do not agree with me in that instance, I cannot help thinking that they will agree with me when I ask, if self-determination is to be applied to enemy countries, by what right do we refuse to allow a union between German-Austria and Germany if they desire to have one?

There was the other principle, the contradictory principle of strategic frontiers, and, again, that was not consistently applied. For, if so, by what right do we allow the Japanese to retain Shantung—

Mr. BALFOUR We do not.

Sir S. HOARE and refuse the Adriatic coast to Italy or Dantzic to Poland? I have given those instances to show that, at any rate in my view, many very dangerous spots are being left in Europe by the Peace Treaty. That brings me to the further point. If this be the case, and if Europe is covered by these danger spots, it seems to me that it would be the height of folly to take any action that may drive Germany either into militarism or into Bolshevism. In my opinion, the most urgent condition for the peace of Europe, more urgent even than a peaceful Russia, is a peaceful Germany. I do not mean by that that we can forget all the wrongs that Germany has committed, but I do suggest that to take any action that might push Germany into a state of revolution would be to make permanent peace in Europe totally impossible. Rightly or wrongly, I have come to the conclusion that to make a demand on Germany for 900 war criminals will be to run the very risk that we wish to avoid. The right hon. Gentleman said that our list was a comparatively small one, and that he had not seen until quite recently the lists of the other countries. I should have thought, in a matter of this kind, that the Allies would have acted together, and also that they would have taken greater pains in drawing up their lists. I am informed that the lists have been so carelessly drawn up that in more than one case the names of dead men have been included, and it is certainly clear from what has already been said about those lists that many names are included in them which the great body of public opinion in this country never had any idea would be included in those lists.

As an instance of that I may mention General Liman von Sanders, with reference to whom our own General who was commanding against him in the field felt impelled to write to the "Times" saying that, as far as German Generals could, this man had fought honestly and cleanly, if a name of that kind is included it does make one doubt the wisdom of pressing this list of nine hundred names. I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman that public opinion demands, and rightly demands, the giving up of certain notorious criminals. That is what we understood by the punishment of German criminals. The punishment of men like some of the notorious commandants of prison camps, the men who committed brutal acts of assault against individuals. Those are the men that the public had in mind when they demanded that justice should be done to them, and I believe myself that when the public made that demand they also desired that, atrocious as had been the crimes of these individuals, they yet had the right to an impartial trial; and by an impartial trial I mean not only a trial that would appear to be impartial to the citizens of this country, but that would be manifestly impartial to the whole world. If that be so, a court composed only of the Allies cannot carry the conviction for impartiality to the world that a court like the International Court of the League of Nations would carry. Therefore I hope that this list will be cut down in number and, further, that the accused will be tried before that International Court of the League of Nations. I go further and say that if it be found, as our knowledge of the War becomes greater, that there has been more criminals in any other fields of war, let them be tried also. I am glad to think that our record is a clean one and that we as a nation need fear no inquiry into the conduct of any soldier, sailor or civilian of the British Empire during the War, but I am not certain that when an inquiry comes to be made it will not be found that in some of the fields of war there have been guilty persons even among the Allies.

8.0 P.M.

I do not want to elaborate that point, but before I sit down I would like to draw the attention of the House to one of the cases that I have in mind when I say that. Fifteen months ago the Armistice was signed between the Austrians and Hungarians and the Allies for the Italian and the eastern fields of operations. After that time the Rumanian Army entered Transylvania and Eastern Hungary, and subsequently in the summer of last year advanced into Hungary as far as Buda-Pesth. Very grave charges have been made against the conduct of their troops in these districts, charges I agree made first of all by the Magyars themselves, but charges also made by British citizens who themselves have visited these districts of Europe. Let me give the House some of these charges. I preface what I have got to say by saying quite frankly that I have no affection whatever for the Magyar race. I have always regarded them as an arrogant people who to a large extent were responsible for the War. Nor again have I the least sympathy with the White terror in Hungary. I disapprove of acts that have been committed in Hungary by the Whites just as greatly as I disapprove of the acts committed by the Reds. But, after all, the Magyars are human beings, and if these charges are found to be correct, I say if justice is to be done to all the War criminals, justice must be done to some of the people who have committed the crimes charged to the account of the Rumanian Army in Eastern Hungary and Transylvania. Take, first of all, the act of looting. During the period ended September 29th the Rumanians took 1,273 locomotives, 4,763 railway cars, 7,000 wagons and a great quantity of other rolling stock and cattle from Hungary into Rumania without any right having been conferred upon them by the Allies or anyone else. Still more serious than that is the fact that charges have been made of political intimidation and persecution inflicted upon the non-Rumanian population of these districts. The Roman Catholic and Calvinistic churches have been persecuted, their services have been broken up and acts of violence actually committed in their churches and against their priests. Teachers and officials have been expelled from their appointments simply because they refused to swear allegiance to the Rumanian Crown, and in a territory that had not yet been conferred upon Rumania by the Allies in Paris. There have been pogroms of Jews. There is an appalling list of fearful atrocities charged against the army by the peoples upon whom they have actually been inflicted. I have beside me a statement giving the names and dates of innumerable acts which one can only describe as atrocious.

If these charges be true—they have not yet been contradicted; they were not contradicted by the Prime Minister to-day—an inquiry ought immediately to be held. I suggest that an international commission ought to visit these countries

and in the interests of Roumania, if in no other interests, the commission should ascertain whether the charges are true or not true. If they are true and if war criminals are to be brought to justice, then justice must be done upon some of the people who have committed them just as we hope it will be done on some of these Germans and Austrians who committed atrocities on the Allies. The state of Europe is so serious that to add to its gravity by this militarist regime and all the discontent that it must stir up in future seems to me to make a dark picture much darker. The noble Lord did not exaggerate in one detail the gloomy picture of Central Europe. I have just returned from there. Even in a few days one could not fail to realise that a picture which has been drawn in such dark colours was every bit as black as it has been painted. There is famine everywhere, a complete breakdown of communication, racial jealousy, national bitterness stirred up on all sides, and great armies which are far too great for these new countries to support. It seems to me to be a cruel paradox that after a war that was meant to end war we should see in Central Europe a state of militarism far worse than ever it was before 1914, and so I hope that the country will listen to the appeal of the noble Lord and will come to realise that the only hope of this suffering and starving Europe is not only to put faith in the League of Nations but to insist that it shall work as a practical organisation, and that it shall have behind it the full moral and political weight of the whole of the United Kingdom.

Sir J. D. REES The right hon. Gentleman made so admirable a speech that there is little left for private Members to say, but I would like, if the House will allow me, to say something upon the Turkish part of the Treaty and about the delay which has occurred. I have had a lifelong association with Mahommedans and have some knowledge of their customs and languages. I think that the Turkish Treaty should be expedited. There have been many representations and letters in the newspapers on the subject and I think it is perhaps desirable that one with some practical acquaintance of the subject should state what he believes to be the real state of feeling amongst the Mahommedans outside Turkey in regard to the Treaty and the great question of the future of Constantinople. It is true, I believe, that the Sunni Mahommedans, who are by far the most numerous and influential of the Mahommedans in India, do practically accept the Sultan as their Caliph. I do think they are very greatly moved in their minds by the fact that the Sultan runs the danger of being moved from Constantinople. I honestly believe that though they have a feeling about it, the very most has been made of that feeling for political reasons. The Mahommedans are a religion not a race, and there is a solidarity and unity of opinion amongst them which springs from that fact. I believe that all over the world the Mahommedans are anxious to keep the city of Constantinople as an outward and visible sign of the great part which their religion has played in the history of the world and the great part which they hope it may yet play. There is no doubt that their feelings are much hurt and that their apprehensions are excited, as mine are, by all we hear about the importance of self-determination of small races and about a great many other things which I believe come out of the copybooks, and which really have not the importance attached to them which sentimentalists and others do attach to them.

The Mahommedans care nothing about the Armenians. Neither should we if we were wise. They are thinking of the broad great facts of the case. They say, "Here are we seventy millions of Mahommedans under the British Crown and we see the Caliph of our religion enthroned in Constantinople, the finest site for an Imperial city in the world." They took and held it for over 500 years, and they say, "Are the British nation who govern us and whom we loyally supported in the field and in council everywhere going to move the only great independent Mahommedan sovereign left from his own great capital in order to please the Montenegrins, the Armenians and all sorts of petty small peoples who are of no account in comparison with our great religion and all the great races who follow it, that of the Mahommedans who fill so great a part in the world and in the British Empire." That is their feeling in this matter, and it is one with which I confess I most heartily agree. I cannot but regret that there has been this delay in the words of the motion "in the restoration of settled conditions in many parts of Europe and the Near East," and which leads to grave dangers in the economic and in the political situation I may add at home and abroad.

There is also the danger from the Bolsheviks. While this matter remains unsettled and while Mahommedans are in a state of apprehension they form easy material on which the Bolsheviks can work. We know how active these

criminals are in spreading their creed right through the Near East, the Middle East, and into the Far East, and we know wherever they go all they preach and all they do is hostile to ourselves, because we opposed them in their blood-stained policy. It is no answer to the Mahommedans, none whatever, to say that we have been waiting to obtain the concurrence of America, or even to get America, for instance, to be the mandatory of Armenia. The mandatory theory seems to me, personally, to be an absurd one, and to be perfectly unworkable. The Austrians were mandatories of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that resulted in annexation. Whoever is mandatory will be practically the governing power, and it would be far better that they should be in permanent occupation rather than on a sort of probation as the governors of another race and country, a position which no great nation will accept. Criticism was made to-day and excuses were made for the attitude of the United States in this matter. The attitude of the United States is one as to which there ought to be no excuse for misunderstanding, now that Lord Grey has spoken, and it is one which I heartily respect. The root objection is to internationalism, which is the ruin of nations, and which is the one black spot in the programme of the Labour party opposite. Internationalism is the ruin of nationalism, and will be the downfall of nations. The Americans are wise enough to see it, and they dread the League of Nations because they know it must make for internationalism as against nationalism, which I believe to be the fruitful mother of the greatness, economic and political, of races.

A good deal was said about Austria. Heaven knows I sympathise with Austria, and it wrings my heart to think of the condition of the once happy people of the most beautiful city in Europe, I mean Vienna. But, as the right hon. Gentleman said, the taxpayer of this country, who is now staggering under economic burdens cannot afford to feed Austria or Hungary. The noble Lord (Lord R. Cecil) made a very able speech, but the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Balfour) misunderstood him it appears. It shows that one star differs from another star, not only in glory, but in the power of expression and of comprehension. The right hon. Gentleman thought the noble Lord wanted to do one thing, and I understood him to want to do another. It is not very clear what he did want, but if he had any policy to recommend it was that the British taxpayer was to feed Europe. The right hon. Gentleman, I think, made mince-meat of that policy. I was aghast to hear that out of the empty purses of the people of this country, twenty millions were going to feed the people of Vienna. I sympathise with them with all my heart, but the real fact is that the desperate plight of Vienna is due to the very introduction of that free trade which right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench opposite wanted to make a condition of the establishment of new nations and new States in Europe. Vienna now starves, not because there is not food round about it, but because the people will not bring it in. They are afraid to bring it in. They say that if they do so it will be taken from them, and that the people cannot pay for it. In old times they would have been made to bring it in, and the conditions would have been assimilated over Austria, while now under free trade, which some hon. Gentlemen want to make one of the conditions of the League of Nations, the capital city of Austria is at the point of starvation. The Austrians never were our enemies as far as I know in their history. They were merely brought into this war by the policy of Prussia when their aged King was unable to understand or look after his people, or to stand up against the conduct of the junker class by which he was surrounded. But they did make war upon us, and if they are suffering now, it is not for us to keep the hospitals in Vienna going. I was informed by the Leader of the House that we were going to give pound for every pound subscribed. Still less is it for us, taxed as we are, out of our remaining resources to spend twenty millions to ameliorate the chaos or to bring about settled conditions in Austria.

Let me say one word upon an Amendment which I had drafted upon another subject and which I did not propose. It seems to me at this stage that owing to the insistence by some influence and the delay occasioned by inserting the Covenant of the League of Nations in the peace with Germany, and on account of the fatal delay occasioned by that unnecessary policy, when a year and three months have elapsed, to come forward now and ask for 900 of the most important men amongst our late enemies in Germany, generals and so on, and to press that is, I think, seriously to threaten the existence, if not to overthrow, the Government in Germany, which we above all the people in the world, even more than the Germans, are vitally interested in keeping in existence. If we are going to press this demand now we shall create continental chaos which will very likely throw us back into the conditions which are in existence in

Russia, and of which we have heard so much. If the German Government is overthrown we may whistle for our indemnity. In the interests of the people of this country I hope that that list, if it is persisted in at all, will be largely revised and altogether modified. An hon. Member talked of a fair trial for these men, but does any hon. Member think that any trial of any person handed over will be regarded as fair by his own nationality? Never He will be regarded as a hero sacrificed long after the War to the malignant persecution of enemies. I do not say that is the case, but that will inevitably be the view taken of it in his own country. I mentioned Russia just now, and I would only say on that, tempted as I am to dwell upon a country of which I have some knowledge, that, as one who goes up and down in this country and whose business it is to learn what the people are thinking, I believe there is an overwhelming preponderance of opinion among the British electorate against further intervention in Russia and against any prolongation of war in any direction. I might be glad, as one who loves Russia, to see the Bolsheviks expelled, but what is the use, supposing I and many others hold that opinion? How can the Government of this country pursue any policy without the electorate at their back? If they are convinced, as I believe they are rightly convinced, that the electorate will not stand it, it is much better to clear out at once, to bring out all our people, and to leave the Russians to solve their own problems, which in the long run doubtless they will do. I think we lose time in having these perpetual discussions about Russia, because unless the Government could carry the electorate with them, they would be mad to attempt further interference, and I believe no man who is at any pains in travelling about this country to find out what is public opinion can have the slightest doubt that it is overwhelmingly in favour of our absolute abstention from any interference in the affairs of the Russians.

It remains for me to refer to the general views expressed by so many speakers about our living now in a new world to which everything is to be attuned. I do not see that new world. I only see in the present world more strong manifestations of the evil passions of the worst of the old world. As to the idea that the War was made to stop war, can any man really think that, when the whole Continent is in an upheaval as the result of the War, and there is no peace anywhere? We are told about human achievements, but human achievements cannot be in advance of humanity, and instead of having our eyes all over the world, from China to Peru, instead of endeavouring to settle questions like that of Armenia—the other side of which is never placed before the British public, and the exaggerations in regard to which are mountainous and monumental—instead of endeavouring to settle these questions all over the world, at the ultimate expense of the British taxpayer, our action should be intensive. As the State is composed of an aggregate of families, to have each family well managed and living within its income makes a good State, and to have all the States in the world following their own advancement and their own interests so that there are many prosperous, rich States in the world, makes the whole world rich and prosperous. All this idea that it is our function now to inaugurate a reign of perfect peace, of improved ideals all over the world, can only result in our neglect of our own business, in our postponing the all necessary increase in production, and in the definite prolongation of the terrible state of affairs in Europe which we all now so deeply deplore. It is not extension that is needed, it is concentration on our own home interests, which, as the right hon. Gentleman said, make for the interests of the rest of the world. That is what is now the need of this country, and I deplore the fact that, except for the right hon. Gentleman, who made so admirable a speech and added to the laurels with which he is laden, that elementary fact has been absolutely absent from this debate, in which I have been privileged to make a short intervention.

Lieut.-Colonel A. MURRAY I think the House will agree, even the most pronounced opponent of the Amendment which has been moved, that at least we have had a very instructive debate tonight. I had hoped that before the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken sat down, he would have called attention to the appearance of the Front Treasury Bench and would have protested at the fact that instead of, during a debate of this immense importance to the country and to the international situation, there being present a Member of the Cabinet, the duty of presiding on the Front Treasury Bench was entrusted to a very popular Member of this House, but one who has not that knowledge and authority which he ought to have on an occasion such as this. I think it is necessary to make that protest, as there has been a tendency in this House, during the last four or five years at any rate, for Members of the Cabinet to be absent when these important debates are taking place, and I feel perfectly certain that any other hon. Gentleman fortunate

enough to catch Mr. Speaker's eye would have made the protest that I have made. I think, as I have said, the Government would have found that this debate has been most instructive, and there is one significant fact to which I hope their attention will have been drawn, namely, the absence of the hon. Member for South Hackney (Mr. Bottomley) and other friends of his, who, had this debate taken place six months ago, would certainly have been here in full force in order to oppose this Amendment to the Address. I hope the Government will take note of that fact, and also of the opinions that have been expressed from various quarters of the House in favour of a modification of the Treaty. As the Government do not see fit to nominate a Member of the Cabinet to be present, I hope the hon. Gentleman on the Front Treasury Bench (Mr. Towyn Jones) will take down a few of the questions I propose to put and bring them to the attention of the right hon. Gentleman who, I hope, will wind up this debate on behalf of the Government.

The hon. and gallant Baronet and Member for Chelsea (Lieut.-Colonel Sir S. Hoare), in speaking a few minutes ago, said, by what right do the Japanese maintain possession of Shantung, and the right hon. Gentleman the Lord President of the Council replied, sotto roce, "They do not." When the Treaty of Peace Bill was taken in this House, I made a speech thereon, and I drew particular attention, as hon. Members will recollect, to the position of Shantung under the Treaty of Peace. In fact, I think I am within the recollection of the House in saying that mine was the only speech of any length on that particular subject. What I should like to know is, what is the exact position of the Shantung question at this moment? We know that China refused to sign the Treaty of Peace, in view of the fact that the provisions of that Treaty gave her no definite assurance that Shantung would be returned to her. Will the hon. Gentleman who is sitting on the Treasury Bench kindly ask the Cabinet Minister who, I hope, is going to reappear in a short time, to explain the exact position of the Shantung question at the present moment, and whether it is intended to refer it to the League of Nations for their decision?

The noble Lord, as did another hon. Gentleman opposite, deplored the delay that there has been in the settlement of the Turkish Treaty. The Lord President of the Council, in replying to the noble Lord, observed that the delay was due to the fact that the Council of Ministers in Paris were not aware whether the United States of America would take a mandatory under the Peace Treaty. I venture to say, with all respect to the Lord President of the Council, that that is no excuse at all for the delay that has taken place. Any being of ordinary intelligence, who had any knowledge whatsoever of the situation of the United States of America, could have told the right hon. Gentleman, and I feel perfectly certain the Conference was told, that there was very little hope, indeed, of the United States accepting a mandatory. That being so, it was clearly the duty of the Allied Prime Ministers to embark at once upon a settlement of the Turkish problem, and, had they done so, it is quite clear that many of the difficulties which confront us now would certainly not have arisen.

May I refer to a remark which was made by the noble Lord the Member for Hitchin in his description of the policy of the British Government towards the Russian question, which he rightly described as vacillating, and used other appropriate terms of that description. He said this is not the way to carry on foreign policy. Of course, it is not, but it is the way that foreign policy will be carried on so long as the present tendency to defer matters of foreign policy from the Foreign Minister to the Cabinet continues to exist. That is a tendency which some of us in this House watch with the very gravest concern. There was a time in the history of this country when the direction of foreign policy was under the control of the Foreign Minister, and that, of course, meant that foreign policy was controlled on some method of principle, as clearly it ought to be. But I wish to suggest to the Government that: they should revert to the practice of allowing the Foreign Minister to control foreign policy instead of, as in the present instance, the War Minister one day, the Prime Minister another day, and the Leader of the House the next day. The sooner that is done, the better it will be for the country and the Empire as a whole.

One word more. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down suggested that the United States of America were not willing to enter the League of Nations, but that the people of the United States—and the hon. Gentleman will correct me if I am wrong—preferred nationalism to internationalism, and that they would not be willing parties to the League

of Nations. If I may say so with all respect, I do not think that is a correct interpretation of the fooling of the United States of America towards the League of Nations, and had the hon. Gentleman read some of the speeches made by Senator Lodge, who has been responsible for the reservations in that sense some seven or eight months ago, he would, I think, agree that my interpretation is correct, and not his. The country has read with the very greatest interest the letter which Lord Grey addressed to the Press a week or ten days ago on the subject of the United States and the League. It would be difficult, if not improper, for His Majesty's Government, whilst a struggle is in process of taking place between the Treaty-making sections of the United States Constitution, to say whether or not they were inclined to accept the Treaty of Peace and the Covenant of the League of Nations, with what is commonly known as the "Lodge Reservations." But I think it is not improper for a private Member of this House to say openly what is in his mind on the subject. I think it is correct to say that if the opinions of this House were taken on that particular subject, the majority of this House would agree that they would rather have America in the League with what are known as the Lodge Reservations, than that she should stay out. I think that if a referendum were taken on that subject in this House, that would go forth as the considered opinion of the British House of Commons, and although it may not be proper for the British Government to indicate their opinion, I think it is not improper, and it can only be to the good, that private Members of the House of Commons should indicate that their opinions are as I have described. The Lord President of the Council, in taking his seat at the League of Nations yesterday, described the absence of the United States representative from the League as the one dark blot on the meeting. We will hope—and I join with the hon. Gentleman who spoke a few minutes ago—that the absence of the United States representative from the League of Nations will not be unduly prolonged. As I have said, we want her in the League. Her moral support is necessary for all that the League has to undertake, and if it is a question of her coming into the League with the Lodge Reservations, or something of that nature, rather than she should stay out, I feel perfectly sure that this House of Commons would welcome her into it on those conditions.

Mr. MOSLEY I shall only detain the House a few moments in dealing with the subject of the League of Nations and the question of disarmament. This subject is of paramount interest to the generation to which I belong. We have heard advanced with some force the case against the League of Nations by the hon. Gentleman who spoke last but one. I need not go into those arguments. They have been dealt with on numerous occasions in other fields. It was nationalism of this type carried to an extreme degree which brought about the downfall of Germany.

It was precisely this outlook, of neglecting entirely the fact that there were other nations in the world, striving for their own advantage, that brought the German nation to the pass in which it now is. I need not pursue my hon. Friend into these arguments. They have been answered by the War through which we have just passed.

I have made it a very great interest to keep in touch with the views and opinions of discharged men. I find, next to purely domestic questions such as pensions, that this question of the League of Nations and a measure of disarmament exercises their minds more than any other question of grand policy. Hon. Members who have been in close touch with the rank and file who fought will realise, as I do, that the one burning question which interests them is as to whether it is possible to prevent future generations undergoing the ordeal through which they themselves have passed. During the recent War we were inspired by great ideals. The statesmen of all parties told us that this was a war to end war—to wipe this hideous growth of militarism from the face of the earth. On the strength of these utterances many thousands laid down their lives. Those who have returned may well view the European situation with some anxiety. We see in Europe the same vast conscript armies, the same armaments, the same dynamite ready to the hand of the first irresponsible statesman. We see even such countries as Serbia and Poland armed to the teeth. The only country which is disarmed is Germany—the former excuse for this order of things. Under such circumstances we turn naturally to the statesmen of our own country to engage in some constructive attempt to fulfil those pledges given by them. We find utterances from the Secretary of State for War to the effect that, “when he ventured earlier in the Session to talk about the organisation of our forces he was met with the reply that we have the League of Nations to stop all war.” Some of

the speeches have been made to-day which suggest a return to sanity on this question on the part of hon. Members.” That is the Secretary for War.

A generation distracted and ravaged by the horrors of war, with friends lying dead, must wonder at such utterances from a Member of the Government, and account that they are no encouragement. But it must be admitted that my right hon. Friend has some measure of reason on his side when we review the European situation. To become the one unarmed nation of the world might merely lead to a repetition of the criminal blunders of our pre-War Administrations which nearly brought us to the brink of disaster and were responsible for the sacrifice of thousands of lives. It is useless now for any Chancellor to say, as the Chancellor did say, that England "is setting a good example" in being the first nation in the world to disarm. We set an excellent example before the War. That example was not followed. The result, as I have said, was, in my opinion, the sacrifice of thousands of lives.

There are only two alternatives before this country to-day. The first is in having an army ourselves and preparing for another strife, and the second and the only possible constructive course, is to take active steps to see that the other nations of the world accompany us *pari passu* in the direction of disarmament. I cannot state this case with that clarity or brilliancy or wealth of exposition which the Prime Minister himself employed in a speech at Bristol of December 11th, 1918, just before the General Election. On that occasion the right hon. Gentleman said:— “If you want peace, if you want permanent peace, if you want to prevent the horrors of war from being repeated, you must put an end to conscript armies on the continent of Europe.” He went on to say: “Is it conceivable that in any Peace Conference you are going to have we are going to allow these countries to go on organising armies of millions against their neighbours again? If we are, then all I can tell you is that the Peace Conference is a farce and a sham. The first thing to do, believe me, is to prevent a repetition of the blunder of the past by making it impossible for these great conscript armies to exist in the future, and if anyone goes to the Peace Conference feeling that this cannot be done, then all I can say is that he is not fit to go there as a representative. The real guarantee against conscription in this country and in every other country is to put an end by the terms of the Peace Conference to these great conscript armies. Conscription is a menace to the peace of the world, and unless the Peace Conference puts an end to it, it might as well not open its doors. That is the real guarantee against conscription, to insist when you get there that you will make it a condition that these great armies shall not be permitted in the future to organise against the peace of the world.” It is impossible to put the case with greater clarity than that. What I want to ask the Government this evening is: what actual steps were taken by the Prime Minister and the Peace Conference to give effect to this pledge to abolish conscription, not only in this country, but on the Continent? I awaited with some anxiety the practical fulfilment of this pledge during the course of the Peace Conference. I saw no result. On October 27th last, I put a question to the Leader of the House. I asked him whether His Majesty's Government would shortly lay proposals before the League of Nations for a measure of universal disarmament. I was told that my suggestion was impracticable at present. If such a suggestion is so wholly outside the realm of practical politics why were we encouraged in this vain belief at the last election? Why were we told that the Prime Minister was going to Paris to make an effort to wipe out this menace, on the strength of which utterance thousands gave their votes to the Government? Why, again, during the war and at every crisis of the struggle, were we told that this was a war to end war, on the strength of which ideal thousands laid down their lives?

I do not intend for one minute to minimise the difficulties which confront the Government of this country in undertaking active steps for the attainment of this end. Repulsive as the suggestion is I think it only right to say that, in my opinion at any rate, the moment has come to exercise the power of our financial position to bring the less enlightened members of the European Continent to a state of peace. The League of Nations has been born amid the tramp of armed men in a world enfeebled by their upkeep. We have heard this evening from all sides a lurid picture of the economic situation of Europe. No one will deny that that condition of things is greatly aggravated by the necessity of keeping up these vast hordes of armed men. On this question the British Nation has a positive duty before it in the interests of humanity, and we should bring financial pressure to bear in order to force other nations to join with us in some general measure of disarmament. It is quite inconceivable that the United States will refuse to join with us in a

project of this nature in the light of the opinions of all their leading statesmen if the British Empire embarks upon a proposal for a limitation of the armaments of the world. If we do this I am convinced that we shall receive the moral and material support of the American people.

What is our alternative? If we allow all these miniature Napoleons, who exist in every country, to continue to strut across the European stage with these weapons in their hands there never will be peace. If we are to continue to be mutually suspicious of each other and armed to the teeth against our neighbours until a new catastrophe bursts over Europe, much strengthened and intensified by the development of science and the march of human progress, then I for one am prepared to say that thousands have died in vain and thousands have been cheated of the ideal for which they fought. Under these circumstances I urge the Government with all the vehemence I can command to formulate in the very near future some definite proposals to lay before the League of Nations for a general reduction of the armaments of the world to the level of an international police force, in order to preserve peace the world over. I hope the Government will support this view by all the means, moral and material, within their power.

Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY I would like to reply to a question which has been put by the hon. Member for Lanark, and I wish to help to dispel some of the gloom of the hon. Members. He wanted to know who was going to revise the Peace Treaty. The next Government will do that. The results of by-elections which the Prime Minister treats so lightly have not been so much due to high prices and the question of housing, but to a realisation that all we won in the war has been thrown away during the last six months. We wasted the first two months in a General Election and we have muddled on during the next fourteen months, and now we see Europe as it is. The Member for Hitchin (Lord R. Cecil) said we could not revise the Peace Treaty, but I do not agree with him. My hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Colonel Wedgwood) complained that Independent Liberals have just been converted to a policy of revising the Peace Treaty, and he said that they threw bouquets to the Prime Minister when he returned from Paris. When the Division took place on the Treaty only four just men were found to vote against it, two of whom were members of my hon. Friend's party. Therefore the Independent Liberals have not been alone and there are others who have repented.

A great many subjects have been ranged over, but I only wish to reinforce what has been said about the surrender of some 900 German war criminals. Whilst I agree that crimes against humanity should be punished, I think they ought to be tried in a neutral court. Since the list of criminals was published I have tried to ascertain the opinions of Naval officers on this question. It is true that I have only spoken to members of the commissioned ranks, but their opinion seems to be that the demand to surrender the four German Admirals is not one that the average officer or man in the Navy wishes to press. Of course, we all feel strongly that those responsible for firing upon open boats and sinking merchant ships should have been brought to justice long ago, but to demand the trial of the heads of the German Navy would be equal to what would happen, if we had been defeated, to demanding from us the surrender of Admiral Beatty, Admiral Jellicoe, and others of our great Naval leaders. I do not say that our own Generals have been guilty in any way, whatever of such crimes, but we have to consider the state of mind of our enemies.

9.0 P.M.

I do not know whether this is a deliberate attempt to force reaction upon Germany. I know there are people who would be well pleased to see a militarist reaction in Germany. If that is the intention it may succeed for a time, but it will be succeeded by a Communist Government as sure as night follows day, and then we may take our Treaty and throw it into the furnace. I think it is absurd, for example, that General Mac-kensen should be tried by the painted Rumanian officers who committed those atrocities which have been described by my hon. and gallant Friend opposite in the advance and occupation of Buda-Pesth, for which we are entirely to blame, as there was a Government there which we attempted to overthrow by egging on its neighbours to attack them. If it is a question of trying war criminals, if the Kaiser is to be tried for instigating the War, I think those responsible for instigating the war in Russia since the Armistice and during the last sixteen months should also be tried. I think most of us will live to see that. If I judge the

temper of the people aright I do not believe there is any question which arouses the people of this country more than the insensate war with Russia. The Lord President treated the vacillations of the Government in their policy very lightly indeed. He seemed to consider that it was a matter almost of congratulation that at last a policy had been found. The expenditure of many millions and the sacrifice of many lives on that adventure have been deplored from these benches too often for me to enlarge upon it; but might I plead for a little sanity in our present policy towards Russia. We are suggesting that we want Russian goods, not for the benefit of the Russian people, but for our own benefit. We are proposing to trade through the co-operative societies of Russia, and I do not want in any way to throw cold water upon that scheme, but the position in Russia surely must be obvious to hon. Members of this House. They have a very large army mobilised to meet expected attacks from the surrounding country. I have heard the numbers stated as 2,500,000. Transport is terribly short. I am afraid that every bit of transport in Russia is required for the supply of the army. We cannot get the merchandise and the goods—the wheat, the flax, the hides and the timber—that Europe wants from Russia and which Europe cannot afford to buy from America without transport to move them, and while these great armies are in being transport cannot be developed. If trade is to be re-opened in Russia there must be at once some understanding that Russia is not going to be attacked.

The Allied Governments jib at any recognition of the Soviet Government. Let that go. It is not a question of recognition. You can do business with a man without calling upon him or inviting him to dinner. Recognition really is of no great importance. You cannot, however, expect a man to do business with you unless he is assured that you are not going to attack him the next minute. That is quite obvious. Therefore there must be some guarantee given and received that the War is really over. The Prime Minister occasionally quotes the declaration of the Soviet leaders, but he has not quoted one of the latest declarations, which shows that they are very desirous of demobilising their armies and getting to work. They realise in Russia, as in all other countries, the great need of greater production. They want to get on with greater production, and in order to do that they want to demobilise their armies, but, unless they can be assured that they are not going to be attacked by the border States, they cannot demobilise their armies. They have offered very generous peace terms to Poland, but apparently, instead of those peace terms being received and examined, this new advance into Russia, which is called a raid, is taking place. I would like to join with my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Colonel Wedgwood)—I believe I speak for most of the Members of my party—and say that if the people of Poland go out of their way to attack Russia and bring down upon themselves the might of the Red Armies, they cannot expect us to mortgage the whole resources of our Empire and of our manhood in any promise to support them. They must understand that there must be give and take in this matter. They at present stand 100 miles inside Russian territory. They must withdraw inside their own territory. If they will do that, we can then see what are the peace terms offered.

Before I leave this matter of the Border States of Russia, I would ask the representative of the Government to take note of this request, and perhaps I may hope for an answer. The complete independence of the small Border State of Esthonia has been recognised by the Soviet Government of Russia. We have recognised it de facto. When are we going to recognise the independence of Esthonia de jure? It is of great importance to this small and gallant people that they should be recognised, because it will help their credit and restoration. If the Soviet Government of Russia are prepared to recognise it, and if the people of Esthonia have themselves declared independence, what is there within the principles for which we are supposed to have fought the War which makes us hesitate? Is it some agreement made with our Allies? M. Millerand has quoted some arrangement made with the Allies. We in this House have not had the honour of seeing that agreement. Is that one of the factors why these small States cannot be recognised as independent? An answer to that question should be forthcoming. The same question might be asked with reference to all the other Border States. When we were fighting an advance of the Russian Armies into the Isthmus of the Caucasus we recognised the small Republics of Aizerbaijan and Georgia. Are we going to recognise the independence of Aizerbaijan and Georgia? I understand that the Red Government are prepared to recognise them, and that the people themselves have demanded total independence.

I come now to the question of Albania. I believe I am correct in saying that the independence of Albania was guaranteed in 1912 by the Powers, including Great Britain. Albania was neither an ally, an enemy, nor a neutral. She was devastated by all parties indiscriminately I believe it is now proposed that Albania, inhabited, I may say in passing, by a gallant people of great natural ability, should be divided between the three Powers, Italy, Jugo-Slavia, and Greece. I understand that the Italians prefer to have a mandate—that "wonderful invention" in the words of the Lord Chancellor—over that country. If we are going to settle countries on the principle of strategy, certainly an undivided Albania under the mandate of Italy is called for. If we are going to settle the frontiers of countries on the principles of loot, then we may as well throw a portion to Jugoslavia, Italy, and Greece. If we are going to settle the frontiers of countries which have been neither neutral, enemy, nor allies on the principle of national self-determination, then Albania will retain her independence, and we are bound in honour—I suppose that word still counts—to recognise and support her independence. They are a small and a poor people. I do not think there is a single British vital material interest there. I do not think there is any British company which has any money invested anywhere in Albania. Our interest in the matter is therefore one of honour and, possibly, tenderness for the rights of small peoples.

This question has not been mentioned before, I believe, in this House except at Question Time, and I take this opportunity of bringing it up. I am sorry I have not had the opportunity of asking the Lord President of the Council some questions on this subject, because I am sure that, with his usual courtesy, he would have said something about it. I hope the Minister who will reply at the end of this not unimportant Debate will tell us something about it. Is the treatment of Albania going to be another of the blunders committed in our name, or are we going to stand firm there and not sacrifice the integrity and independence of this small people to the other blunders made in the earlier years of the War? It is not often that an opportunity is given to the House of Commons to debate these matters. The Austrian Peace Treaty has never been brought forward in the form of a Bill. Apparently the House has swallowed it with complete equanimity. Nobody has bothered about it at all, but the next generation, or the generation after that, may have to pay in blood and treasure for our complacent carelessness now. I ask hon. Members, if they get another opportunity, to press the Government for a little more confidence in the House of Commons and for a little more information I believe the healthiest corrective nowadays is publicity, and I hope we shall have it in the reply which will be given at the end of the Debate.

Mr. AUBREY HERBERT We have heard some very interesting and able speeches to-night, not the least being that which has fallen from the lips of the hon. and the gallant Member opposite. While I agree in the main with the last part of that speech, I should like to make one observation about the earlier part of it, when the hon. and gallant Member spoke of Poland. It is not a question upon which I have any expert knowledge. I am not in favour of aggression, whether it be Polish or any other kind, but it is very difficult to wash out in a day the memory of centuries of oppression. If the Poles have penetrated into Russia, it is because they have a long record of suffering behind them. There is one point in the speech of the Lord President of the Council about which I should like to make one or two observations. He dealt with the speech of my noble Friend (Lord R. Cecil). When I listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman—the kind of speech we always expect to hear from him—I was struck by the fact that he had to draw upon his long experience in this House and upon his great ability to make the speech as plausible as it was, because he seemed to me to attribute to my noble Friend a great many sentiments that my noble Friend never expressed. He argued on the line that my noble Friend desired us, by our own unaided effort, to save Europe. I never heard my noble Friend suggest that at all. I do not want to put words into my noble Friend's mouth, but the gist of his speech seemed to be and the gravamen of his charge, if charge he made, against the Government was either the utter lack of foreign policy or the inconsequence of their foreign policy. To take another point in my right hon. Friend's speech, I understood him to say, with regard to Austria and others situated as she is, that the real hope of salvation lay in getting back to work and production. No doubt that is quite true, but the great difficulty is to get back to production when the Peace Conference has taken away all the means of production.

I really think that we in this House have the right to say that very little faith has been kept with us in regard to the promise of publicity on foreign affairs. That is a promise which the Prime Minister made several times. We only know that the ship of State of our country, instead of proceeding on a triumphant, serene and stately way, is behaving in peace time like a liner behaved during war time dodging submarines and zig-zagging like a woodcock—where there are no submarines—guided by the eccentric hands of the Prime Minister. Our foreign policy, as directed by the Prime Minister, is also a nightmare. One might almost think it was directed by a man who had escaped from a mad-house. When we have to go into the country and try to support some of the things that are being done, I think that the electorate imagines that it is not one man alone who has escaped from the asylum. We are in the position that, so far as the Prime Minister and foreign policy are concerned, we still have to guess what is happening. The only way of seeing what is occurring that we have is through the distorting lens of Government propaganda. To substantiate a few of the charges I have made, may I briefly review one or two of the antics of the foreign policy of the Government? First, let me take Russia. Have you in the history of the world ever had so fantastic a situation as has been created during the last six months between ourselves and that country? On the one hand you have had war; on the other hand you have had trade. On the one hand, you have had blockade—and blockade is a military operation—and on the other hand, you have had a proposal to enter into commercial relations, but not with the Government. Let us reverse the situation. Suppose a foreign and hostile Government at war with us behaved in the same way to us. Suppose that that Government said, "We will not recognise the Government of Great Britain. We will establish a blockade against Great Britain, but we will recognise various British institutions—we will recognise the British Museum, the Army and Navy Stores and the Two-penny Tube and enter into commercial negotiations." What possible sense could there be in that?

Let me take our policy in the East, especially our policy with regard to the Turkish peace. There were two possible policies with regard to Turkey that we might have pursued. We might have followed, first, what is known as the "bag and baggage" policy. We might have said to the Turks, "You have fought us. There have been atrocities committed in your country during the war. We have won and you must go out of Constantinople." You would have had to go to India and you would say to her, "We have come to this decision because we could take no other. We are sorry it hurts your feelings, but we must hold by it, and we have sufficient men and guns to carry out our decision." I do not think that is a very alluring policy, but still it is a possible policy. On the other hand we might have said that on January 5th, 1918, the Prime Minister promised the Trade Union Congress that not only were we going to obtain freedom for the Arabs and for the Armenians, but that we were not fighting for Constantinople and for Asia Minor, which we called the homeland of the Turks, nor for Thrace. If we had done that, we should at least have adhered to our pledges, and I venture to believe that we should have then had quiet in India, less trouble in Egypt, and no trouble in Asia Minor. You would have had peace from Asia Minor to Bokhara, Turkestan and Central Asia. The Prime Minister did neither of these two things. He obtained for us, by the delay in this peace with Turkey, the maximum disadvantage of both these policies, and not the advantage of either of them; besides, a new factor was started in our Empire, or at any rate it re-appeared, not having been seen for a long time previously, and that was a feeling of Christian as against Mohammedan in India. That is serious, and it has been a good deal exaggerated by what has occurred. It has indeed become a case not of Christian against Mohammedan, but of Asiatic against European. In Asia it is being felt that we are becoming persecutors where we were the greatest Asiatic power. Asia, by coming into this war, and by standing by our side, has been utterly changed. The substructure of Asiatic life has been altered. It will never again be said "The East bowed low before the blast" "In patient deep disdain;" "She let the legions thunder past" "And plunged in thought again." She now turns to a different kind of thought from the old philosophy of years ago. I want to follow the various things that have happened in Turkey. In every case it appears to these people that our pledge has been betrayed. Asia Minor, the promised homeland of the Ottoman, had been occupied by the Greeks and we are responsible Thrace, which the Prime Minister said was an integral part of Turkey, has also been given to Greece. I come to the last question referred to by the hon. Member opposite—the question of Albania. I have spoken before on that in this House, and I will compress my remarks, therefore, in the smallest possible space. What has been the record of that country? She fought Turkey to a standstill. She broke the power of the young Turk. That was recognised by the London Conference and it was admitted by our Foreign Minister that these people were entitled to the same claim to

nationality and independence as any of the other Balkan people. It was recognised in fact by all Europe, but then came this war. We went to that country and occupied it with Allied troops. I have learned from the Press of Paris within the last few days that the Prime Minister has offered the northern part of Albania to the Jugo-Slavs, the central part to the Italians and the southern part to Greece. But it would seem that some of our Balkan Allies have a rather different sense of honour to ourselves, because it was stated that the Jugo-Slavs have refused the offer on the ground that the independence of Albania had already been pledged to it and they were prepared to remember that pledge, a thing which apparently we did not do. I believe also that Signor Tittoni has declared in favour of the independence of Albania. One can understand men doing ignoble things for the sake of their own country, but what advantage is there to us in all these various breaches of faith and betrayals of our pledges? It is cynicism on our part and it is unprofitable cynicism.

I only want to say one or two words about Austria. I venture to suggest that the great Three have tried to usurp the functions of the Deity. God made the world in one way; the great Three have tried to make it in a different way. The Almighty made rivers run from their source to the sea, the great Three are seeking to make the Danube flow back to its source. It has taken sixteen hundred years to constitute the economic unity of Austria; the great Three have destroyed it in about fourteen months. If you look at the map you will see that about one-third of Central Europe is watered by the snows of the Carpathians, and all that man has to decide is whether the water should come down in the form of inundation or irrigation. The great Three would bring it in the form of inundation. We have been engaged in many wars in the past and have sometimes been hard put to it, but we have always got through not only because of the fighting qualities of the British race, but because also of the good temper of the British people. I will not say much about the Treaty with Germany. I think it would have been difficult to have made a very different treaty with them, but in becoming involved in the Balkan trouble we have departed from our old principle which was that we would knock a man out and then help him up. Our Balkan principle has been to knock a man down, to jump upon him and to gouge his eyes out. We hear a good deal about the fall of the sovereign in New York. It is very important to reestablish it, but it is not less important to re-establish the prestige of the British word in Southern Europe.

Sir J. BUTCHER I do not intend to follow my hon. Friend into the gloomy and almost unrelieved pessimism of his speech. According to him apparently we are living in the worst of all possible bad worlds, and indeed, if I understand him aright, he gravely doubts the sanity of His Majesty's Ministers, and I presume of that very large majority in the House who agree with them [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear!"] I am glad to hear that cheer. Apparently, I am addressing in that corner of the House the only sane men who are in it if we are to believe my hon. Friend. But may I suggest in all good temper and kindly feeling that there are sane people in this world and in this House who do not look at public affairs and questions of foreign policy from exactly the same angle as my hon. Friend?

But I got up mainly for the purpose of dealing with something that fell from the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy). He spoke about the surrender of the German war criminals. As a member of the Committee which has been sitting for many months for the purpose of looking into the evidence closely, and fairly I hope, and discovering the names of those Germans and other of our former enemies who were responsible for the most atrocious crimes against humanity, against the laws of war, against every instinct common to our humanity that ever occurred in the course of history, I feel that it is necessary for us to bring those men to justice, to establish the principles which have underlain international law for centuries past and which have endeavoured to deprive war of some of its more horrible aspects. I rejoiced to discover in the course of to-day's debate that there was no real difference in principle, as far as I can judge, between those who have spoken on this topic. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir D. Maclean), my noble Friend (Lord B. Cecil), and, I think, even the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy) himself did not dispute that these men who have been guilty of infamous atrocities should be brought to justice and tried. I am glad to find that I have that general assent. So that if any people outside this House—I am sure there are none inside it—who by some incomprehensible sentimentalism are led to sympathise with Germany in this matter and expected to get any comfort from this debate and to find that the British Parliament desired that that portion of the

Treaty which demanded the surrender of the German criminals should not be carried out they certainly have not found that consumation tonight.

Certain comments were no doubt made, and I think one of the chief comments was upon the numbers of the war criminals whom we demanded of Germany to surrender. Let me take first the number of which Great Britain demands the surrender—something under a hundred in all. If anyone had read one-tenth of the evidence which was placed before our committee which dealt with offences on land and on the sea—for myself I dealt chiefly with offences on land—his surprise would have been like my own, not that there were so many criminals whose surrender was demanded, but so extraordinarily few, and I say unhesitatingly, as a member of that committee, that if we had desired to make cases of offence against the laws of war and against humanity, against not a hundred but many hundreds, or possibly a thousand of these Germans, we should have had no difficulty whatever in doing it. We set out the men of whom we demanded the surrender on two broad principles, first of all cases of outstanding wickedness and inhumanity, and, secondly, the cases not of the smaller men who had to obey the orders of their superiors, but of the superiors who were responsible for those orders, and upon whom the greatest guilt necessarily lay. It is not my desire to bring before the House the nature of the crimes that we have discovered, by the evidence of re-patriated prisoners, to have been committed. It was impossible for us to examine all this evidence and send up the names of these men until our own prisoners had been repatriated and had their evidence tested and examined and given before competent persons. Speaking generally, dealing with the subjects which came before the sub-committee of the treatment of our prisoners of war by the Germans on the Western Front, this is the only conclusion at which any tribunal which read the evidence carefully could arrive. It will be found that the Germans disregarded not only their own engagements as to the treatment of prisoners but every instinct of humanity. The men were not provided with proper shelter. In the working camps they were starved because the parcels never reached them which were sent from home. They were set to work prohibited by international law, carrying shells up to guns under the shell fire of our own men. They were frequently killed in carrying out this forced labour which was contrary to all the laws of war. They were starved and worked until they could not do another hour's work and then and not till then, if they were not already dead from starvation and brutality, they were sent into hospital, and will anyone tell me that when we send up 100 names of German criminals who were responsible for these brutalities we are exceeding any just demand which the Treaty of Peace gives us?

But then I am told the French sent up more names than we did, but the French population and the population of Belgium suffered more atrocities directly from the occupying armies of the Germans than we did, thank God, in this country. We had not before our eyes non-combatants murdered, women ravished and children brutally ill-used and murdered. We had not in this country large cities from which every inhabitant, male and female, within certain ages was deported, the men sent into forced labour, as was done from Lille and other big cities, and the women sent to work in the factories or to some more terrible fate. I myself went into Douai a week after the Germans had evacuated that great, historic town. It was as a city of the dead. We walked about there for three hours and the only population we could find there were two old French women, the sole survivors who had not been either deported or sent off to service by the Germans the week before. The only persons left of the inhabitants of Douai were some two thousand old women or poor worn-out old men who were left by the Germans to starve, and who would have starved had we not come into the town in time. The French and the Belgians had to suffer in their country from the unwarrantable and unjustifiable destruction of their mines and factories, their great historic buildings, their old cathedrals, and other non-combatant places that the Germans could get into. Can you wonder then that the list of war criminals they have sent in, and whose surrender they demand, is greater than our own, when you remember that they have suffered from atrocities which, under Providence, we escaped? Now the hon. Member for Central Hull comes and says: "You must attack the small men. You must not go for the great German commanders. That would excite indignation among the Germans," and, apparently, in the breast of the hon Member for Central Hull. Does the hon. Member know the nature of the order that was given by the Chief of the German Naval Staff in regard to the sinking of ships by the German U-boats? I have the best reason for knowing that an order was issued in January, 1917, ordering the commanders of

German U-boats to sink at sight, without warning, not merely the trading ships and merchant ships of the enemies and the neutrals, but direct orders were given to sink our hospital ships and the hospital ships of our allies, also the Belgian relief ships carrying relief to the starving population of Belgium, provided only that the hospital ships and the relief ships were outside a certain zone laid down by the German authorities. Excuses were given at the time for the sinking of these hospital ships on the ground that they were carrying arms and troops, and that the Germans were justified in sinking them. We now know that they had no justification. It was done under the direct order of the then Chief of the German Naval Staff, and that order was issued by the order of the Kaiser himself. Let those who suggest that the Kaiser should be exempt from punishment and that he should be allowed to spend the remainder of his life in Dutch or other exile remember what his responsibility was in regard to the U-boat campaign. In the face of that, am I to understand from the hon. Member for Central Hull, or from anyone else, that it would be wrong to bring the head of the German Naval Staff to book?

Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY I do not think the hon. and learned Gentleman wants to misrepresent me. I did not make that suggestion. My suggestion was that they should be brought before a neutral court.

Sir J. BUTCHER I am much obliged for that explanation. Then the difference between us is not so wide as I thought. If my hon. and gallant Friend agrees that these unspeakable scoundrels should be brought to justice, however high their position, whether the head of the German naval staff or the head of the German army, the only question between us is whether the trial should take place before a neutral court or some other tribunal. The hon. and gallant Member will find a little difficulty in discovering a competent and sufficiently courageous neutral court to try these Germans, knowing that the moment the Germans get the power they would see that their revenge was vented in due course on the neutrals who ventured to condemn their criminals. I heard with some regret the speech of my hon. and gallant Friend (Sir S. Hoare). I understand that he, like the rest of us, wishes to bring the German criminals to trial, but he absolutely, gratuitously, unnecessarily, and, if I may say so, most mischievously suggested that there was a case for bringing to trial officers and others belonging to our allies, and that was followed by the hon. and gallant Member for Central Hull. I do not know on what evidence he founds that charge. If it is founded upon the loose tittle-tattle of the Balkan Peninsular, that is a very inadequate reason upon which to found such a charge.

Sir S. HOARE The Prime Minister did not deny the truth of the charges that I made this afternoon at Question time.

An HON. MEMBER You did not establish them.

Sir J. BUTCHER I should be very greatly surprised to hear that the Prime Minister had admitted such a thing, and I do not think that he made such a suggestion. On a totally irrelevant issue, the hon. Member for Chelsea brings these charges against officers and men of our allies. I do not for a moment believe there is any ground for these charges. If there were, it is not for us to deal with them now. We are here to-night to demand the surrender of the German war criminals who have committed atrocities upon our men and our allies, and it seems a totally irrelevant and mischievous suggestion to say, without any evidence whatever being produced, that some of our allies have committed atrocities against I do not know whom. Even if it were true, and I do not for a moment believe it is true, I see no ground for bringing it into this Debate and suggesting it as an excuse or palliation for the crimes of which these Germans, great officers of State, have been guilty. This question of the surrender of the war criminals is a testing question as to the carrying out of the Treaty by the Germans. We know from the moment they signed their names to the Treaty that at the earliest opportunity if they could sow dissension between the allies, and if they saw any possibility of getting out of the Treaty, they would in accordance with a practice of theirs which is now so well established in history tear up the Treaty to which they have signed their names and refuse to carry out their obligations. If we by weakness, by sentimentality, by some supposed hardship as regards the Germans and this Treaty, allowed the German criminals to escape, depend upon it it would put new heart into them for the purpose of avoiding the rest of their obligations under the Treaty. There would be excuses forthcoming why no reparation should be made to us or to France or to any one of our allies, and their success in one respect would be used as an excuse for not

carrying out the rest of their obligations under the Treaty. For myself, I rejoice that in this matter of surrendering the war criminals there has not been to-night one dissenting voice opposing the principle that these men should be surrendered, though there maybe differences of opinion as to the tribunal and as to the numbers, and that this House of Commons stands solidly beside our allies, France and Belgium, in insisting upon one of the most just, necessary, and humane provisions of the Treaty being carried out.

Mr. RONALD McNEILL The greater part of the speech of my hon. and learned Friend was devoted to the subject of war criminals, a subject which no doubt has excited an immense amount of interest not only in this House but in the country, and so far as that part of the speech was concerned I find myself in agreement. But in his opening remarks I think that my hon. and learned Friend swept aside a little too hastily the speech of my hon. Friend who preceded him, who made out I think a case of considerable strength Against the proceedings of the allies in relation to Balkan policy. I speak with some feeling on that point because what the hon. Gentleman said with regard to Albania, I myself have often said in this House with regard to the neighbouring State of Montenegro My right hon. Friend the Member for Peebles (Sir D. MacLean) made a kindly allusion to the interest which I have taken in this question. I rejoice very much to find from his speech that at last a more important personage in this House and a more powerful voice than mine is devoted to that cause in this country. Because though it is quite true that the Montenegrin question from several points of view may be regarded as a small and unimportant question, yet from the point of view of the good faith of this country, it is not unimportant, and it was a great disappointment to me that my right hon. Friend the President of the Council (Mr. Balfour) in his powerful speech which appeared to be a complete defence of the Government so far as the greater part of their policy is concerned, omitted either deliberately or by forgetfulness to make any reply whatever to the observations made on that subject by my right hon. Friend.

I do not think that in the circumstances I need apologise to the House for what may appear to be my importunity in saying something more on this question. When I spoke on it at the end of last session, the Prime Minister in his most engaging manner said, "Is anyone likely to be more sympathetic than myself towards a small mountainous country?" Well, that did not carry us very far. It did not mean very much, and unfortunately the general sympathy of the right hon. Gentleman is of very little assistance to oppressed people in the south-east of Europe; and I hope I am not making an undue claim when I say that I really did think that the case which I made on that occasion merited a little more attention from the Government than it has got. And in the same way I think that the short but very pregnant observation of my right hon. Friend opposite deserved some mention from the Lord President of the Council to-day. I do not know whether my hon. Friend (Lieut.-Colonel Wilson), who now represents the Government, is in a position to-night to give an answer on this question. But I should like to know when and in what circumstances the Government are ever going to commence to deal with this matter which has been put before them deliberately and temperately and with a certain amount of force?

The whole story of this Montenegrin question is a characteristic chapter of Balkan intrigue which has been from first to last a conspiracy against the independence and rights of a small, gallant and independent people. It has all arisen out of an aspiration with which I have the fullest possible sympathy. I mean the aspiration of forming the Slav communities of south-eastern Europe into a strong united State. I have always looked upon that as one of the results which I hoped would follow from this war. But unfortunately the Serbian people have exploited that idea in such a way as to promote for themselves an aggressive and imperialistic policy for the purpose of making themselves the dominant power in that part of the world. And in connection with Montenegro, it is not sufficiently remembered that the first advocate of local Slav unity in the Balkans was the present King of Montenegro who has always been a stout defender of that idea many years before the war. But when the war came' the Serbian politicians intriguers, conspirators, seized upon this idea which they knew created a great amount of support among the Slav community, in order by force or by fraud—and they have used both—to absorb the Kingdom of Montenegro into the Kingdom of Serbia, and wipe out its independence, and to make the whole of the Montenegrin people swear allegiance to a King whom they did not acknowledge.

10.0 P.M.

They have carried forward that scheme from the very beginning of the War until now and owing to the strange neglect as it seems to me of our own Government and of the Allied representatives in Paris, they have carried on that conspiracy with only too much success. They are very astute these Balkan intriguers. At the beginning they saw the value of the catch-word "self-determination" and they saw that if they were successfully to carry out the policy of aggressive annexation of Montenegro they could only do it by representing to Europe that it was the desire of the Montenegrin people themselves. From the first they have set out to create that impression. They knew they must represent the people of Montenegro to be on their side, and as they had almost a monopoly of the means of communication from that part of the world, as they had seized the sources of information, they found it pretty easy to create this impression. In the first place it was very unlikely to be true, having regard to the history of these people, because the House must remember that the Montenegrin people, with the possible exception of the Albanians who have hardly ever been an organised State, have been the only part of the Balkans that from first to last successfully defended its independence from the Turks. For 600 years, while the rest of the Balkan States were in a state of slavery to the Turks, they have defended their independence. Of that they are extremely proud, and naturally so.

Consequently, in order to carry out their scheme, the Serbian intriguers set about, as their modus operandi, to discredit, so far as they could, the King of Montenegro, who was an old patriarch, poet and patriot, and who was, I believe, very much respected and beloved by his people. They set about the task of discrediting him, first of all in the eyes of Europe, in the eyes of the Allied councils at Paris; and, secondly, if they could succeed in doing so, in the eyes of his own people. It began at the very beginning of the war. This little state threw itself into the war in the very first week. It declared war on the 6th of August, 1914, in order to come to the rescue of the Serbian people, whom it recognised as a kindred race. Notwithstanding the fact that she lost in fighting actually 50 per cent. of her small effective strength, the report was spread diligently that Montenegro had been guilty of treachery to the Allies during the early stages of the war. I do not know whether hon. Members will recollect the circumstances connected with the surrender of a well-known mountain, a very important strategical position. It was stated that the position was given up by treachery. I do not believe there is a shadow of foundation for any such statement. The true facts were that the garrison of that position were overwhelmed by superior numbers and superior artillery, and if there were even discredit, much less treachery, in the surrender of the position, it was only the same sort of discredit which attached to the surrender of Spion Kop by the British Army in South Africa. Supposing it was given up by treachery, the army that occupied that position was under the command of a Serbian officer. Consequently, if there was treachery at all, it was treachery for which not Montenegro but Serbia was responsible; but the fact was seized upon by the Serbian politicians and represented all over Western Europe as proof of the untrustworthiness of the Montenegrin Government. They were enabled to do that because, as I have stated, they possessed all the sources of information. I gave an example of that upon a former occasion in this House. Some of us will remember the report of a very fine exploit said to have been performed by Serbian troops when they advanced into Austrian territory, as far as Serajevo, driving the Austrians before them. The true facts, as I have ascertained, were that there was not a single Serbian in that army. That was an exploit, for what it was worth, entirely performed by Montenegrin troops, and the credit was due to them. But they, being a very simple-minded people, not thinking of propaganda or of how important it might be subsequently to have the exact facts known in London, Paris and elsewhere, took no particular pains to make those facts known. Meanwhile the astute Serbians had reported the affair with a small and significant alteration, attributing to the Serbians, instead of the Montenegrins, all the credit of the exploit.

The next important step in this campaign of conspiracy is what is known as the Pact of Corfu. As the House knows, when the Austrian advance became irresistible, the King and Government of Serbia had to go into exile, just as the King and Government of Belgium went into exile, and the King and Government of Montenegro went into exile. One went to Corfu and the other went to Paris. Here, again, although it was obviously unavoidable, the fact of the Montenegrin King and Government going to Paris was represented to the people whom they had left as a base and

treacherous desertion by the King of his own people. When the Serbian Government had become established at Corfu in 1917, an assembly was held there at which some representatives, I believe, of different Slav communities were present. It was, spoken of as a Treaty to which all the sections of the Slav races were parties, although no Montenegrin representative was there at all. At that assembly a so-called Treaty or Pact was come to, the result of which was that Montenegro was declared to be part of Serbian territory, and the whole Montenegrin people to be the subjects of Serbia. This Pact, which was imposed upon the Montenegrin people in the way I have described, has, so far as I know, never been protested against by our Government, who must have known the facts. I am sorry I had not an opportunity of asking my right hon. Friend, who was I think at the Foreign Office at the time, how it came about that such an outrage could have been allowed to be committed against an independent Ally of our own, without the smallest protest being made on behalf of this Ally, unable to defend itself, by the great Powers who were in honour bound to defend it. All those who have protested since, either against that proceeding or any other, and there have been numerous similar proceedings, have been always told, whether in private conversation or otherwise, by anyone who professed to be in the councils of the Allied Governments, "Do not attach too much importance to what comes from the King and his Government of Montenegro, that is only a Court party." That is the idea which has been so sedulously spread by the Serbians, that the King and Court party are merely a small faction, and that the real desire of the bulk of the Montenegrin race is to be subjects of another State, and to get rid of their own Government and their own King.

But the Allied Governments cannot take that attitude, because to this moment the King of Montenegro and his Government in Paris are officially recognised by the French Government, by His Majesty's Government, and by all the Allies. We are ourselves in diplomatic relations with him through an official in our own Embassy in Paris, and it is utterly inconsistent for any spokesman of the Allies to say in one and the same breath: "It is quite true we recognise the King of Montenegro, we recognise His Ministers and his Government as the official and constitutional mouthpiece of that State, but at the same time they only represent a small faction, and we are looking behind their backs to the people in the country." A number of Montenegrin refugees at the time when the country was overrun had to take refuge in France, Corfu, and other places, and of course, as soon as it was possible, they asked to be organised into a force to be sent to Salonica and to take their part in fighting for the Allies. They were most anxious to do so, but how were they met? They were all prevented from going to take their part in the force at Salonica unless they would consent to fight under the Serbian flag, in Serbian uniforms, and first of all to swear allegiance to the Serbian King. Very large numbers of them quite rightly refused to do anything of the sort, and for that refusal they were prohibited from taking any further part in the war. In the meantime, of course, in the course of the events of the war, happily the Austrians had to retire. They were driven back to the Danube at the time of the Bulgarian collapse. What happened then? The country was free of the enemy, and the natural thing to expect would be that the refugees would return and that the Government would be restored, as the Belgian and Serbian Governments were restored, but nothing of the sort was done. The country was overrun by Serbian troops, who occupied it, not in a friendly way, but as a conquered country, and do so to this day. Again, I should like to ask the Government—and I am never able to get an answer to any of these questions—why, when other Allied Kings and Governments, in Belgium and Serbia, were restored to their countries at the first possible opportunity, the same opportunity was not taken to allow the King and Government of Montenegro also to return. The King was most anxious to go and was prevented going by us, by the French Government and by ourselves. I have here a letter which was written by M. Pichon in reply to a letter from the King, dated November 2nd, 1918, and he says, addressing the King of Montenegro: "Your Majesty added that the French envoy to your Government had informed you in regard to the opinion of the French Government, shared by the other Allied Governments, regarding the untimeliness of such a move under the present circumstances." The untimeliness, that is, of a move to return to his own country, from which the enemy had been driven. He goes on to give assurances that there will be no prejudice to him and his Government and the future of his country. He says: "The troops that will go there will guarantee the maintenance of order in your kingdom, and they will respect the constitutional authorities, as well as the liberties of the Montenegrin people." Then, in an interview which took place between the King and the French diplomatic chargé d'affaires, he was assured that every administrative order in the country would be given and

carried out in his name. That was what took place at the time of the Armistice, and it is relevant to remind the House that in his message of January 8th, 1917, which played so large a part in the preliminaries of peace, President Wilson stated that among the conditions of peace were the restoration of Montenegro, and the same conditions as applied to Belgium and Serbia, so that there we have a distinct pledge—we have often had it from our own Government in this House—from the President of the United States in the early stage that one of the essential conditions of peace was to be the complete restoration of that country. At the same time a letter was written by the President of the French Republic to the King of Montenegro, in which this passage occurred: “The presence of the Allied troops, and the help they will give to the inhabitants, no doubt will contribute to hastening the time for which Your Majesty is longing.” What are these Allied troops which M. Poincaré said would help the inhabitants? The House will remember a very significant circumstance at the time of the collapse of Bulgaria. When the Allies advanced into Bulgaria, an absolute prohibition upon the use of Serbian troops in Bulgaria was insisted upon for reasons we can all very well imagine. It was a very wise provision not to allow the troops of a neighbouring Balkan State to find their way into Bulgaria. But why was not the same wise provision made upon the other side with regard to Montenegro? There, on the contrary, the only troops which were in that country, for no reason whatever, were Serbians. They went there, and now, 15 months after the Armistice, they are still there. What did they do while they were there? First of all they set up a completely Serbian administration. They declared the country to be part of Serbia. They issued passports, from which it was made to appear that the capital of Montenegro was a town in Serbia. They did everything from an administrative point of view to obliterate the distinction between the two States, and they compelled all the officials, civil as well as military, to swear allegiance to King Peter, King of Serbia. I want to give one example of the methods by which it was brought about. There were two Montenegrins of Antivari, named Stamatovitch and Bachetina, who were called upon to take the oath of allegiance to the King of Serbia, the purpose being that their names might be added to a list that was being made for the purpose of giving the impression in other parts of Europe that the Montenegrin people's wish was to get rid of their own Sovereign and to be absorbed in Serbia. These two men refused to do it, and they were arrested. Their eyes were gouged out, their ears cut off, and their tongues were drawn through openings cut in the jaw. After being left for a considerable time, suffering agonies, they were finally disembowelled by Serbian bayonets. That is not by any means an exceptional case. That was the method by which these Allied troops, referred to by the President of the French Republic were giving help to the inhabitants of Montenegro.

That is the way in which the pledges given by America, France, and Great Britain that they should have complete and free self-determination have been carried out. Those pledges have been given over and over and over again in this House and elsewhere. I am compelled to say that I bitterly regret the number of times, both in the last Parliament and in this, that I have trusted the Government in this matter. Time after time when I have put questions to the representatives of the Foreign Office I have been requested, for one reason or another, to withdraw my question—it was inconvenient and so forth. Time and again, for years past, I have always shown that consideration to the representatives of the Foreign Office in this House. I am sorry I did it, because advantage has been taken of it. I have got to that point now when, in view of the evasive and disingenuous answers from the representatives of the Foreign Office, it is incredible to me that they ever really intended to keep their promises. In any case, the wrong which has been done by 15 months' of this neglect by this country cannot possibly be wiped out. Every day that passes makes things worse.

There are concession hunters in the place. Vested interests are going up. Foreigners are taking root in the country. Numbers of the chief citizens—and they are a primitive and simple-minded people—have been driven out of the country. Many have been assassinated. Many others have been imprisoned. Whatever happens now, however much the Allied Governments try now to redeem their pledges, they cannot wipe out the evil already done through their neglect. One of the saddest aspects of the whole case is that there have been very considerable numbers of Montenegrins from overseas who joined the American and Canadian armies, coming over with them in the whole confidence and belief that after fighting in the cause they would be allowed, when the war was over, to go back to their country, where, in many cases, they had left their wives and families. The House can imagine the bitterness of these men who, having

fought with the Allies, found they had to go back to America or Canada, while their country has been overrun by their Allies, turned enemy, and that the Great Powers in whose ranks they had been fighting would not raise a finger to protect their country and enable them to return to their families. On the top of this, our Government and the French Government—I am only concerned with ourselves—our Government has been guilty of the unspeakable meanness of withdrawing from the Montenegrin Government the small subsidy upon which that Government was able to carry on. Let me contrast what has been done to these two Allies. Serbia throughout the war has been receiving a subsidy of nine million francs per month. The total amount received from first to last by the Government of Montenegro was not as much as one monthly instalment given to their neighbour. To complete the Story, on September 17th last, actually, a formal request was made to the Allied Council in Paris by the Serbian delegate that no further financial assistance should be given to Montenegro.

I asked the House to consider what would have been thought supposing that France or ourselves had actually made a formal request to the Peace Conference that no further financial assistance should have been given to Belgium. Could anything more unthinkable be done by one Ally to another than that this Serbian State in its anxiety to crush out its weaker neighbour actually went to the Peace Conference and in the absence of a representative of Montenegro asked the Conference to withdraw the subsidy from the Montenegrin State. I need hardly say that that request was immediately granted, and the consequence has been that this little State with its government still kept in exile, unlike all the other Allies, has been deprived of the last penny it had in order that it may be represented by the people at home as being bankrupt, I am well aware that anyone who stands up here and appeals to the Government for a subsidy for any of our Allies, or for any cause of that sort, is not likely to receive much sympathy, and I do not make any such appeal, but I would like to point out that at the very same time that we were withdrawing this tiny subsidy from Montenegro, we granted a large and important loan to Serbia, and out of the proceeds of that loan Serbia employed no less than seven million francs strengthening her military equipment in Montenegro, in corrupting the people, and in paying the agents of her reign of terror there, and actually she has been drawing from us the resources to carry all this through, while Montenegro has been deprived of this small subsidy.

That is one of the most dishonourable transactions which has arisen out of this War, and I want the House to know that all this has been done screened entirely from the public view. Talk about secret diplomacy. From first to last we have not been able to get an answer to a question on the subject in this House, and I am not at all confident to-day that the independence of this country which has been pledged by every one of the Allies, is not being bartered away in London. One of the cleverest devices of these Serbian conspirators has been to represent the Montenegrin case as being entangled in the whole of the Adriatic question, but it has nothing whatever to do with it. Unless my information is inaccurate, and I do not think it is, I am informed that a memorandum has been presented by the Prime Minister himself in the name of the British and French Governments, proposing a solution with regard to Adriatic problems, the result of which would be the abrogation of Montenegrin independence. But for my experience in this matter I should have thought that would have been absolutely impossible, and I am sorry to have to refer to it. There is no one in this House who is more fully aware than I am of the incomparable services the Prime Minister has rendered to this country and to Europe, and he has no greater admirer in this House or the country than myself. But that is no reason why if this nefarious transaction is being carried through one of the most ardent admirers should not stand up and protest. The only excuse that is ever offered is that we are told that Montenegrin opinion is divided, and that we cannot find out exactly which way the opinion of the majority goes. That is no business of ours. Montenegro has a proper constitutional machinery of its own, just as distinct and well-established as the constitution of this House. If we brought pressure to bear on our Serbian Allies to clear out of a place they never had any business to be in, the only way of ascertaining the true wishes of the Montenegrin people is through their properly constituted machinery, and that is the only way in which a proper vote can be taken. To suppose that there is no method by which the great Allies can rid Montenegro of the incubus from which they are suffering is idle talk. We read every day of the pressure that is being brought to bear upon the Jugoslavs and Italy with regard to Fiume and other questions. Does anybody believe, if the British and French Governments were to present an ultimatum to Serbia and say that they would not consider

further any of her claims in the Adriatic until they had withdrawn from Montenegro, that they would not withdraw? Until recently this matter has been one, the responsibility for which has rested entirely upon the Allied Governments, and, so far as this country is concerned, upon His Majesty's Government. Fortunately, no responsibility rests upon the House of Commons or upon the British people, for the simple reason that they have been kept in the dark and have not been allowed to know anything that has been happening. If now the Government are allowed to go on as they have been acting hitherto and if in the long run the pledges which have been given are violated and we are presented with a *fait accompli* in the destruction of the independence of Montenegro, then I do not see how the House of Commons itself, knowing to some extent what is being done, can escape responsibility for a transaction which I feel perfectly confident will fill Englishmen with a sense of shame when all the facts come to light.

Mr. BONAR LAW I had not intended, after the statement on behalf of the Government made by my right hon. Friend (Mr. Balfour) this afternoon, to take any part in the discussion, but I feel that my hon. Friend (Mr. B. McNeill) has a right to expect that the Government should say something in reply to the speech which he has just made. The House will feel that this is one of those occasions where a statement seems unanswerable until one hears the other side. In spite of what my hon. Friend has said about the request that the Government have made to him, not at particular times to press for information on subjects which are being dealt with in connection with the Peace Treaty, and which we are grateful to him for having acted upon. I am afraid that it is not possible for me to speak on this subject with the same frankness with which he has addressed the House, but may I say to him and to the House—I am sure he will not disagree—that the point of view which he has put before the House is entirely the point of view of the King of Montenegro.

Mr. R. McNEILL No.

Mr. BONAR LAW Well, I think so. I happen to know something about this matter. I have not had an opportunity of speaking to the King of Montenegro, but I have discussed it with the other side, with the Crown Prince of Serbia, and with our own representative in Paris, and I think I am right in saying that he has put the case from the point of view of the King of Montenegro. There is another side to the case. The real point at issue is not whether the King of Montenegro feels that he is being ill-used, but whether what is being done, or what will be done, is in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the Montenegrin people.

Mr. R. McNEILL Hear, hear.

Mr. BONAR LAW That is the whole point, and it is in that spirit that the Allies have approached the matter throughout. I am sure that neither my hon. Friend nor any other Member of the House would imagine for a moment that any of the Allies, and least of all His Majesty's Government, starts with any prejudice against this small State, which, as he has told us, has in the past had such a glorious record in maintaining its independence. That, of course, is true, but the war has made all the difference. Here is a very small people closely allied, as I am sure my hon. Friend will admit, with Serbia. Is there not ground a priori to assume when the world is being reestablished that these people may prefer to form part of a larger nationality which is kindred with themselves rather than to continue their independence? We have not let the matter rest without trying to find out what the facts are in that respect. My hon. Friend has asked over and over again that the report of our representative should be published. I have to say to the House what we have said many times before, that in a case of this kind or in the case of any part of a Treaty it is not the nation as a whole, and it is not even the House of Commons which can by any possibility frame that Treaty. You have to leave it in the hands of the representatives of the nation and of the House of Commons. I do not say that it is not quite right—it is right—that Members of the House, on occasions like this, should express their views on the matter, but, in the main, there is no way of getting a Treaty, or any part of it, settled except by leaving it in the hands of those who are appointed by this Nation to represent the Nation in these matters. My information, for what it is worth, is entirely different from that of my hon. Friend. I do not wish to say anything, and I could not say anything, against the King of Montenegro or the Montenegrin Government. Our information is not to the effect that there is on the part of the majority or anything like

the majority of the Montenegrin people any desire to have the King restored as King of Montenegro. That is our information. I quite admit that there is among the Montenegrins a strong desire to preserve in some form their identity, and our information is that the wish of the majority is that there should be some form of autonomy within the Serbian State, I cannot say more on this subject to-day except that this is precisely one of the points which are now being considered by the Conference which is sitting in London. The House cannot expect me in these circumstances to give the views of His Majesty's Government on a point in regard to which we are not the sole spokesmen and in which we have to act with our Allies and hear their views. All I can say is that we are not unmindful of the considerations which my hon. Friend has put before us. As to the charge that we have absolutely neglected the wishes of this people and allowed them to be overridden by another body which is also a new State, I am perfectly certain that, when the Treaty is finally concluded, it will be found that that is not a charge which can be made justly against the Treaty made by the Allies. I am sorry I cannot say anything further on the subject.

Since I have risen I should like to say a word or two upon some other subjects which have been considered to-day. An hon. Friend behind me dealt with force on the delay in concluding peace with the Middle East from the point of view that it would be unwise, not to say unjust of the British Government, beyond all others, in their dealing with Turkey to treat that nation otherwise than justly in all the circumstances of the case. But that is not a novel procedure for the British Government. We are by far the most important Mahommedan Power in the world and it certainly is not to our interest to impose any terms on Turkey which by any possibility would arouse feeling among our Mahommedan subjects. The House may rest assured that in coming to the terms of Peace we shall be guided mainly by what has been throughout the whole war the prime factor in our desire for a satisfactory peace—the determination that if possible such evils as we have suffered from during the past 5 years shall not happen again and we propose to take the steps which seem to us most wise to prevent that evil occurring. There has been a good deal said about the delay in getting this Treaty. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to it already and I listened with some surprise to the statement of my noble Friend behind me (Lord E. Cecil) that he cannot regard even as an excuse for the delay the fact that America is not taking her part in the Conferences. He gave as a reason that America was not even at war with America. But for seven or eight months the head of the Government of the United States, along with the other heads of Governments, worked at a Treaty the aim of which was as far as possible to restore reasonable conditions throughout the whole world. Can anyone suggest—anyone who feels as my noble Friend does—that the future of the world does depend very largely on common aims, common ideals, and common working with the Government of the United States? Can I ask anyone, say, that because America did not make war against Turkey we should not allow her view to have full weight in the settlement? We have felt keenly in France the position in which we have been reduced to by the absence of the United States, but I ask the House of Commons to consider, not merely the necessity of procuring a peace which will, as far as possible, take us back to normal conditions, but to remember the part which the United States must have in those normal conditions. At this moment at the Conference in London we are dealing with the Adriatic question. That was a question in which President Wilson took a very active part. From the circumstances of the case the chair which was occupied by him is not filled by anyone else, but we have to go on. It must be settled. But in settling it, the one consideration which weighs with us as strongly as any other is that above all we should not give, to a great associated country the impression that we do not wish, as far as possible, to let their wishes come into the scale in any arrangement we make. I think all that has happened in the War has given us reason to feel that of all the constitutions in the world ours is probably the best. The last thing I should dream of doing would be to criticise the action of the President of the United States or of any statesman of the United States, but the advantage of our constitution—and it is an advantage which is not enjoyed by many others—is that at any moment, if there is uncertainty as to what the country wants, that difficulty can be solved by appeal to the country. That is not possible with the United States. I have said all this to try to make the House of Commons see this as we have seen it. We know that to make peace now with Turkey is going to be infinitely more difficult than it would have been some months ago. The conditions in every direction are much worse. It would be just as wise, in my opinion, to blame the Government for that as it is to do what is being done very largely, to blame the Government for every conceivable evil which is the result of the condition of the world, and which no Government could prevent.

I should like to say a word in regard to the claim for indemnities from the German Government. I can speak on this subject so far as I am personally concerned without any difficulty. I have never been one of those who believed that the cost of the War or anything like it could by any possibility be expected from the German Government or the German people. But on the other hand I have believed from the first, and I believe as strongly now as ever, that we were right in saying that Germany was responsible for this War, and that all the horrors which have followed have been due to the action of the German Government, supported by the German people; and I say again that it is not only reasonable but it is just and right that Germany should pay whatever she can possibly pay to repair the damage. My right hon. Friend referred by name to the author of a book which I cannot say a good many members have read, though it was a famous book. He was, as it happened, serving in the Treasury during all the time I was there. He was a very valuable public servant, it is only fair for me to say, not only in the special department which he was conducting, but that in all the complicated problems with which I had to deal I found his services of great value. But he is not infallible. But there is this to be said about him, that at the very time of the election when my right hon. Friend and his leader were talking quite as strongly as any man on this side of the House about making Germany pay the full cost, Mr. Keynes had the same view which he holds now. There is a great difference. The House will have seen the remarkable transformation which has been produced by an able book. Mr. Keynes has put their views before us as he was bound to do. We considered them. But what, does it all come to? The claim is made that it is not so much the amount we are asking from Germany, but the fact that it is indeterminate. That is true. But I would like to ask the House what human being could have put down at the time this Treaty was given to the Germans to sign, any figure which by any possibility could have been regarded as one that under all the circumstances would be fair and reasonable. It was not possible. More than that—the maximum amount even as it stands in the Treaty is fixed and the objects for which they can be called upon to pay are detailed. The amount is large, perhaps larger than they can pay. But as my right hon. Friend the President of the Council pointed out—and those who make that charge have evidently not read the Treaty—under the terms of the Treaty it is open to the Germans to propose a fixed sum which the Allies have promised to consider and if it is reasonable to arrange to accept it. My noble Friend (Lord E. Cecil) knows as well as any Member of the House that on a matter of that kind reasonableness can be expected from all the great Powers. There is no reason to suppose that in a matter of that kind the Allies, who will be influenced by the Great Powers, will not take a reasonable view. It has become the fashion now to speak of that Treaty as if it were an unjust Treaty. That is wrong. It is a stern Treaty. If it had not been a stern Treaty it would not have been a just Treaty. What has actually happened? The arrangements which have already been made by the Reparation Commission show that they are being reasonably dealt with; that they are prepared to look at the facts of the case, that they realise, as every sensible man in this House or out of it must realise, that we cannot go on in a spirit of War for ever; that peace has come, that there are sixty millions of Germans in Germany, and a large number of Germans in Austria: that they have to live in the world, and it is not to the interests of anyone, and nobody thinks it is to the interests of anyone, to prevent these people from having a fair chance of recovering from the terrible devastations of War. But that does not mean that they should not pay to whatever extent they can pay for the evil they have caused. Mr. Keynes put the same views to us at the time we were framing the Treaty. Anyone who has read his book or listened to his argument would feel that judging by the experience; of the world in the past it is very difficult to see how the Germans can pay outside their own country even the sum which I think they ought to be made to pay. That is true, but things do not turn out in this world precisely as you expect them to turn out. Our experience in relation to money in every direction has shown that you cannot judge this matter entirely by our experience of the fact. The question of exchange is very intricate, but at bottom the problem of exchange like every other problem into which human psychology enters depends largely on credit, on what people think is going to happen, and whatever the amount, if the world believes that ultimately the money demanded by the Allies can be paid, then it will be found that credit in some form or another will be available to make it possible to make these extensions. That is my belief. In the meantime I am convinced, and the very slight amount of criticism which this Treaty has received confirms my belief, that, taking all the difficulties into account, difficulties of which those who were present were fully aware—I was not constantly in Paris but I was there when most of these difficult subjects were discussed—the verdict of history will be the verdict which was given by the House of Commons when the Prime Minister returned, that we had accomplished a great work for this country.

Question put, "That those words be there added."

The House divided: Ayes, 60; Noes, 254.

Division No. 2.]	AYES.	[10.57 p.m.
Acland, Rt. Hon. F. D.	Hall, F. (York, W. R., Normanton)	Rose, Frank H.
Adamson, Rt. Hon. William	Hartshorn, Vernon	Royce, William Stapleton
Barnes, Major H. (Newcastle, E.)	Hayday, Arthur	Sexton, James
Benn, Captain Wedgwood (Leith)	Hayward, Major Evan	Short, Alfred (Wednesbury)
Brace, Rt. Hon. William	Hirst, G. H.	Sitch, Charles H.
Briant, Frank	Holmes, J. Stanley	Smith, W. R. (Wellingborough)
Bromfield, William	Kelly, Edward J. (Donegal, East)	Spencer, George A.
Brown, James (Ayr and Bute)	Kenworthy, Lieut.-Commander J. M.	Spoor, B. C.
Cairns, John	Kenyon, Barnet	Swan, J. E. C.
Cape, Thomas	Lawson, John J.	Wedgwood, Colonel J. C.
Carter, W. (Nottingham, Mansfield)	Maclean, Rt. Hn. Sir D. (Midlothian)	White, Charles F. (Derby, Western)
Davies, A. (Lancaster, Clitheroe)	Morgan, Major D. Watts	Wignall, James
Davison, J. E. (Smethwick)	Murray, Dr. D. (Inverness & Ross)	Williams, Aneurin (Durham, Consett)
Edwards, C. (Monmouth, Bedwellty)	Myers, Thomas	Williams, John (Glamorgan, Gower)
Entwistle, Major C. F.	Newbould, Alfred Ernest	Williams, Col. P. (Middlesbrough, E.)
Finney, Samuel	Onions, Alfred	Wilson, Rt. Hon. J. W. (Stourbridge)
Galbraith, Samuel	Parkinson, John Allen (Wigan)	Wilson, W. Tyson (Westhoughton)
Glanville, Harold James	Raffan, Peter Wilson	Wood, Major M. M. (Aberdeen, C.)
Griffiths, T. (Monmouth, Pontypool)	Richardson, R. (Houghton-le-Spring)	
Grundy, T. W.	Roberts, Frederick O. (W. Bromwich)	TELLERS FOR THE AYES.—
Guest, J. (York, W. R., Hemsworth)	Robertson, John	Mr. Hogge and Mr. G. Thorne.
NOES.		
Adair, Rear-Admiral Thomas B. S.	Davies, Sir Joseph (Chester, Crewe)	Jones, Sir Edgar R. (Merthyr Tydvil)
Agg-Gardner, Sir James Tynte	Davies, Thomas (Cirencester)	Jones, G. W. H. (Stoke Newington)
Allen, Lieut.-Colonel William James	Dawes, James Arthur	Jones, J. T. (Carmarthen, Llanelly)
Archdale, Edward Mervyn	Denison-Pender, John C.	James, Hon. Cuthbert
Archer-Shee, Lieut.-Colonel Martin	Denniss, Edmund R. B. (Oldham)	Kerr-Smiley, Major Peter Kerr
Atkey, A. R.	Dockrell, Sir Maurice	Kinloch-Cooke, Sir Clement
Baird, John Lawrence	Edgar, Clifford B.	Lane-Fox, G. R.
Baldwin, Stanley	Edge, Captain William	Law, Alfred J. (Rochdale)
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (City of Lon.)	Edwards, John H. (Glam., Neath)	Law, Rt. Hon. A. B. (Glasgow, C.)
Balfour, George (Hampstead)	Elliott, Lt.-Col. Sir G. (Islington, W.)	Lewis, Rt. Hon. J. H. (Univ., Wales)
Barlow, Sir Montague	Elveden, viscount	Lewis, T. A. (Glam., Pontypridd)
Barnett, Major R. W.	Eyres-Monsell, Commander B. M.	Lindsay, William Arthur
Barnston, Major Harry	Fisher, Rt. Hon. Herbert A. L.	Lloyd, George Butler
Beauchamp, Sir Edward	Flannery, Sir James Fortescue	Lloyd-Greame, Major P.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase	Foreman, Henry	Lorden, John William
Bellairs, Commander Carlyon W.	Forestier-Walker, L.	Loseby, Captain C. E.
Benn, Sir A. S. (Plymouth, Drake)	Foxcroft, Captain Charles Talbot	Lowther, Major C. (Cumberland, N.)
Benn, Com. Ian H. (Greenwich)	France, Gerald Ashburner	Lowther, Lt.-Col. Claude (Lancaster)
Bennett, Thomas Jewell	Fraser, Major Sir Keith	Lyle, C. E. Leonard
Blake, Sir Francis Douglas	Fremantle, Lieut.-Colonel Francis E.	Lyle-Samuel, Alexander
Borwick, Major G. O.	Geddes, Rt. Hon. Sir A. (Bas'gst'ke)	Lynn, R. J.
Boscawen, Rt. Hon. Sir A. Griffith.	Gibbs, Colonel George Abraham	Lyon, Laurance
Bowles, Colonel H. F.	Gilbert, James Daniel	Mackinder, Sir H. J. (Camlachie)
Bowyer, Captain G. W. E.	Gilmour, Lieut.-Colonel John	McLaren, Robert (Lanark, Northern)
Brassey, Major H. L. C.	Glyn, Major Ralph	M'Lean, Lieut.-Colonel W. W.
Breese, Major Charles E.	Goff, Sir R. Park	Macmaster, Donald
Bridgeman, William Clive	Grant, James A.	M'Neill, Ronald (Kent, Canterbury)
Brittain, Sir Harry	Gray, Major Ernest (Accrington)	Maddocks, Henry

Broad, Thomas Tucker	Green, Joseph F. (Leicester, W.)	Magnus, Sir Philip
Brown, T. W. (Down, North)	Greene, Lieut.-Col. W. (Hackney, N.)	Mallalieu, F. W.
Bruton, Sir James	Gregory, Holman	Malone, Major P. B. (Tottenham, S.)
Buckley, Lieut.-Colonel A.	Greig, Colonel James William	Marriott, John Arthur Ransome
Burn, Col. C. R. (Devon, Torquay)	Gretton, Colonel John	Matthews, David
Burn, T. H. (Belfast, St. Anne's)	Griggs, Sir Peter	Meysey-Thompson, Lieut.-Col. E. C.
Butcher, Sir John George	Gritten, W. G. Howard	Mitchell, William Lane
Carr, W. Theodore	Guest, Major O. (Leic, Loughboro')	Moles, Thomas
Casey, T. W.	Hall, Lieut.-Col. Sir F. (Dulwich)	Molson, Major John Elsdale
Cayzer, Major Herbert Robin	Hallas, Eldred	Moreing, Captain Algernon H.
Cecil, Rt. Hon. Evelyn (Birm., Aston)	Hambro, Captain Angus Valdemar	Morison, Thomas Brash
Chadwick, R. Burton	Hanna, George Boyle	Morris, Richard
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. A. (Birm. W.)	Henderson, Major V. L. (Tradeston)	Morrison, Hugh
Chamberlain, N. (Birm., Ladywood)	Henry, Denis S. (Londonderry, S.)	Morrison-Bell, Major A. C.
Chilcot, Lieut.-Com. Harry W.	Herbert, Dennis (Hertford, Watford)	Munro, Rt. Hon. Robert
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.	Hilder, Lieut.-Colonel Frank	Murray, Hon. Gideon (St. Rollox)
Clay, Lieut.-Colonel H. H. Spender	Hinds, John	Murray, Major William (Dumfries)
Clough, Robert	Hohler, Gerald Fitzroy	Neal, Arthur
Coates, Major Sir Edward F.	Hood, Joseph	Newman, Colonel J. R. P. (Finchley)
Cobb, Sir Cyril	Hope, James F. (Sheffield, Central)	Newman, Sir R. H. S. D. L. (Exeter)
Colvin, Brig.-General Richard Beale	Hopkins, John W. W.	Nicholson, Reginald (Doncaster)
Conway, Sir W. Martin	Hopkinson, A. (Lancaster, Mossley)	Nicholson, William G. (Petersfield)
Cooper, Sir Richard Ashmole	Hunter, General Sir A. (Lancaster)	Norris, Colonel Sir Henry G.
Cory, Sir C. J. (Cornwall, St. Ives)	Hurd, Percy A.	Norton-Griffiths, Lieut.-Col. Sir John
Cory, Sir J. H. (Cardiff, South)	Inskip, Thomas Walker H.	Oman, C. W. C.
Craig, Captain C. C. (Antrim, South)	Jameson, J. Gordon	O'Neill, Major Hon. Robert W. H.
Craik, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry	Jephcott, A. R.	Palmer, Brigadier-General G. L.
Curzon, Commander Viscount	Jellett, William Morgan	Parker, James
Dalziel, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H. (Kirk'dy)	Jodrell, Neville Paul	Parkinson, Albert L. (Blackpool)
Davidson, Major-General Sir J. H.	Johnson, L. S.	Parry, Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Henry
Davies, Sir David Sanders (Denbigh)	Johnstone, Joseph	Peel, Col. Hn. S. (Uxbridge, Mddx.)
Perkins, Walter Frank	Sanders, Colonel Sir Robert A.	Turton, E. R.
Purring, William George	Sassoon, Sir Philip Albert Gustave D.	Wallace, J.
Phillipps, Sir Owen C. (Chester, City)	Scott, Leslie (Liverpool, Exchange)	Walters, Sir John Tudor
Pinkham, Lieut.-Colonel Charles	Seager, Sir William	Walton, J. (York, W. R., Don Valley)
Pollock, Sir Ernest M.	Seddon, J. A.	Waring, Major Walter
Pownall, Lieut.-Colonel Assheton	Seely, Major-General Rt. Hon. John	Watson, Captain John Bertrand
Pratt, John William	Shaw, William T. (Forfar)	Weston, Colonel John W.
Preston, W. R.	Shortt, Rt. Hon. E. (N'castle-on-T.)	White, Lieut.-Col. G. D. (Southport)
Prescott, Major W. H.	Simm, M. T.	Whitla, Sir William
Pulley, Charles Thornton	Smith, Sir Allan M. (Croydon, South)	Wild, Sir Ernest Edward
Purchase, H. G.	Smith, Harold (Warrington)	Williams, Lt.-Com. C. (Tavistock)
Raeburn, Sir William H.	Sprot, Colonel Sir Alexander	Williams, Lt.-Col. Sir R. (Banbury)
Rankin, Captain James S.	Stanier, Captain Sir Beville	Williams, Col. Sir R. (Dorset, W.)
Raper, A. Baldwin	Stanley, Lieut.-Colonel Hon. G. F.	Wilson, Daniel M. (Down, West)
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel	Stanton, Charles B.	Wilson, Colonel Leslie O. (Reading)
Rees, Sir John D. (Nottingham, East)	Stephenson, Colonel H. K.	Wilson-Fox, Henry
Reid, O. D.	Stevens, Marshall	Wood, Sir H. K. (Woolwich, West)
Remer, J. R.	Stewart, Gershom	Wood, Sir J. (Stalybrldge & Hyde).
Remnant, Colonel Sir James F.	Strauss, Edward Anthony	Woolcock, William James U.
Renwick, George	Sutherland, Sir William	Worsfold, Dr. T. Cato
Richardson, Sir Albion (Camberwell)	Sykes, Sir Charles (Huddersfield)	Yeo, Sir Altred William
Richardson, Alexander (Gravesend)	Talbot, G. A. (Hemel Hempstead)	Younger, Sir George
Roberts, Sir S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)	Taylor, J.	
Robinson, S. (Brecon and Radnor)	Thomas, Sir Robert J. (Wrexham)	TELLERS FOR THE NOES.—

Rothschild, Lionel de	Thomson, F. C. (Aberdeen, South)	Lord E. Talbot and Capt. Guest.
Roundell, Colonel R. F.	Thomson, Sir W. Mitchell-(Maryhill)	
Samuel, A. M. (Surrey, Farnham)	Tryon, Major George Clement	

Main Question again proposed.

It being after Eleven of the Clock, and objection being taken to further Proceeding, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.