

But what was astonishing was the crazy glee with which the writer hailed such a collapse. He was reminded of a quotation from Carlyle in which that author described the laugh of the hyena on being assured that after all the world was only carrion.

NOT BY ARMAMENTS ALONE

He looked upon the League as a great addition to the strength and to the safety of this country. Since when could we afford to ignore the moral forces involved in the public opinion of the world? Moral force was, unhappily, not a substitute for armed force, but it was a very great reinforcement; and it was just that kind of reinforcement which might avoid the use of armed force altogether. For five years he had been asking the Government to make armaments—guns, aeroplanes, and munitions—but he was quite sure that British armaments alone would never protect us themselves in the times through which we might have to pass. By adhering to the Covenant of the League we secured the good will of all the nations of the world who did not seek to profit by acts of wrongful and violent aggression; we also secured a measure of unity at home among all classes and parties which was indispensable to the efficiency of our foreign policy as well as to the progress of our defensive preparations; and we consecrated and legitimized every alliance and regional pact which might be formed for mutual protection.

And he believed that the spirit of adherence to the Covenant of the League and to the Pact which bore the name of a venerable American statesman, Mr. Kellogg, who was now in their thoughts, would win for us a very great measure of sympathy in the United States. This sympathy might have an effect on the interpretation put upon the laws of neutrality which in certain circumstances might be of enormous practical consequence to us. Could we be sure that even in the dictator countries these principles did not find an echo in many hearts? Could we be sure that even the dictators themselves might not from one reason or another respond to them to some extent? Nothing could be more imprudent or more imprudent than for the Western democracies to strip themselves of this great addition to their means of self-preservation or to blot out from the eyes of their peoples ideals which embodied the larger hopes of mankind. (Loud cheers.)

RE LABOUR QUESTIONS

Mr. A. HENDERSON (Kingswinford, Lab.) said that the present generation of public opinion was not prepared to allow this or any Government to carry on the foreign affairs of this country without being subjected to the spotlight of public criticism by those whose duty it was under the constitution to form the Opposition.

What was taking place behind the scenes with regard to the proposed economic conference? Had the Government considered the proposal which emanated from the King of the Belgians with regard to the establishment of an independent world economic organization? Had the Foreign Secretary any information as to the existence of a military understanding between the three Powers who were associated together in the anti-Comintern pact? If such an understanding existed the democratic countries, including even America, would be compelled to combine together in defence of the rule of law.

Italy's irresponsible conduct was full of dangerous possibilities. Signor Mussolini was carrying on a subtle diplomatic campaign. He was determined, if he could, to compel the British Government to recognize his conquest of Abyssinia. More than 70,000 Italian troops had been concentrated on the Egyptian border. Was there any truth in the statement that a number of German technicians were included in that force? He hoped the Government would give some indication that they regarded the present attitude of Italy very seriously and that they were determined to take some kind of action to bring it to an end if possible. While not believing that war was imminent, he believed that the international situation was steadily deteriorating.

"buy us off" with colonial territories. We could not complain that Germany to-day should find ample justification for her cherished belief that we as a nation were weak and becoming decadent.

GERMANY AND BLACK TROOPS

Mr. PARKER (Romford, Lab.) said that Germany's remaining grievances under the Treaty of Versailles could be settled peaceably if Germany so wished. But Germany did not wish to settle these difficulties in a peaceful way. The political reason behind her demand for Colonies was to obtain areas from which to raise black troops for future wars.

There were a number of important people, aptly described by Low in a cartoon as shuttlecocks, including the Editor of *The Times*, Lord Lothian, and Viscountess Astor, who were anxious to persuade this country to yield to the claims of Germany. It was a great pity that what used to be considered the leading organ in this country—*The Times*—should become the organ on behalf of the British Government. That was the present position of that paper.

Mr. A. ALEXANDER (Sheffield, Hillsborough, Lab.) said that there was a suggestion in the Prime Minister's speech that the Opposition were raising the question of foreign affairs in a spirit of complete irresponsibility. That was unfair and insulting. They were meeting three days before Christmas and would not be called together again before February 1. While he prayed God that it might not be so, events in the Far East, in the meantime, might call for strong action and actual operations. Yet the Opposition were criticized for asking for a debate on such a situation, the policy that had led to it, and the policy to deal with it. That was contrary to what was due to a democratic electorate. (Hear, hear.)

Another complaint against the Prime Minister, and it might apply also to the leader in *The Times*, was the repetition of the foul misrepresentation that the policy of the Labour Party in these matters was always such as to lead to war. That was unjust to the Labour Opposition. In fact, we had come to the present dangerous position in world affairs through the continued rejection of Labour advice by Tory Governments since the War. (Opposition cheers and Ministerial laughter.)

"FOUL MISREPRESENTATION"

To charge the Opposition with asking for war because they supported the League and wished that the Government supported it better was a foul misrepresentation. The Government had not adequately used the machinery of collective security to meet Japanese aggression in the Far East. Japan, finding that the boundaries of Manchuria did not suit her, had indulged in a series of aggressions which had led up to the present situation, and the amazing thing was the complete patience of the Chinese under the treatment to which they had been subjected. Virtually nothing was done after the attack on the British Ambassador, nor after the attacks on the British warships on the Yangtze, and although the British Government had sent a strong Note on the subject, yet the Japanese, thinking that nothing was going to happen, were completing their operations by entering Southern China.

It looked as if Japan would soon have control of all the maritime provinces of China and complete control of the Customs—unless something was done about it—and there would be much injury to British interests as well as to the interests of the Chinese themselves. In these circumstances the Opposition were entitled to ask the Government what they were doing. We were at a parting of the ways when we must decide either that the League was never to be used again in major disputes or that we were going to use the Covenant of the League now to prevent the greater dangers to world peace that would arise if Japan was not checked in her aggression.

The best way to appeal to the American nation was on the wide basis of collective security, and that the soundest method of approach to the problem was through the

those actual members of the League at this time. Neither the Leader of the Opposition nor Mr. Alexander had given the House any indication of the action which they would have the Government take. (Ministerial cheers.)

Mr. ALEXANDER said he thought he had made his position quite clear, that he was in favour of preventing supplies from going to Japan. He would say that if that involved an attack upon us because we were withholding supplies to Japan, we must certainly stand up to it. He did not agree, on the strategical case, from a naval point of view at any rate, that that was impossible in the present circumstances.

Mr. EDEN said that when it came to a definite statement, speakers opposite did not say what they would do. They had to follow the procedure right through to the end. (Ministerial cheers.)

Replying to an interruption about Abyssinia, Mr. Eden said that if the Government or a collection of governments had made a mistake, was that a reason for advocating that they should repeat it in exactly the same form?

Concerning the League of Nations, when they had, as they had to-day, Japan, who clearly by their action did not accept the rule of law, and Germany, who would not join in the League to cooperate in enforcing that law, and the United States, though sympathetic to the rule of law, not prepared to undertake commitments—all those factors must have their effect upon the authority of the League. But that was not a reason for abandoning the instrument, and he agreed with what Mr. Churchill had said on that subject.

IDEOLOGY OF PEACE

There would be no assurance of lasting peace in the world until international order was generally accepted by the nations and until some limitation of armaments formed part of that settlement. Meanwhile they had to live through a period of acute unsettlement, and it was right to say that the League had no ideology but that of peace. If they could maintain that principle and give it all the support they could they would be doing what was possible to contribute to the solution of that world problem.

With regard to the situation in Spain, certain hon. members maintained that the policy of non-intervention was operating harshly to the Government in Spain and that this country's action had, at times, had a similar effect. Frankly, the Opposition were such ardent partisans that he did not believe they were good judges of other people's impartiality. (Hear, hear.)

He was convinced that so far as the country as a whole was concerned it endorsed the non-intervention policy—(cheers)—simply because it knew that policy was conceived in the interests of European peace. From the first he had been convinced that no one who intervened in the strife in Spain would benefit by that intervention, and he had seen no reason in the last 18 months to modify that view. If other nations insisted on burning their fingers in the Spanish furnace, that was no reason why we should do so. (Hear, hear.)

COST OF FAR EASTERN CONFLICT

IMPOVERISHMENT TO EVERY NATION

The right hon. gentleman continued:—Our chief preoccupation at this juncture is the situation in the Far East, where we are faced with manifold problems of great complexity and great gravity. The very gravity of them makes it difficult for me to speak as freely as I would to-night. We have in the Far East great interests, which are certainly not incompatible with those of other nations there, and which we shall do our utmost to defend. (Hear, hear.)

In our view the present conflict is going to bring inevitably great impoverishment to the Far East, to every nation there whatever their immediate military gains may be. That is

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FREE (Harborough, U.) said that he went to war it would be to protect the interests and not for the sake of the flag. There was no country where the opinion was controlled more by the flag. The problem of the debt was arising between England and the United States, and at some time or another it would be faced. He quite realized there were grave difficulties on both sides, but if they could be overcome it would be a tremendous step forward and would give the last source of possible outbreak between the two countries.

SH WAR LOCALIZED

SALET (Islington, E., U.) said the policy of the Government in regard to the war had been to do their utmost to prevent the war from extending. In that connection the Government had succeeded in that was entirely due to the policy of non-intervention. She wondered if the real good was accomplished by the use of the League of Nations. She thought that the war was over the people would govern themselves and would brook any outside interference. The policy of non-intervention was the one that this tragic conflict that was understood and appreciated by the majority of the British people.

ALTER (Oxford University, Ind.) said that Japan was aiming at the domination of the East and the complete exclusion of the West. He believed themselves if they thought that the situation on recent incidents they were a repetition of them and that by a attitude they could buy anything a short-lived immunity for the Japanese succeeded in the realization of their objective. He did not know whether it was possible to secure cooperation to effective measures of restraint into the League of Nations. He did not recommend that the Government should undertake the risks of unilateral action. If, as time proceeded, an opportunity of combined action presented for some time and even with it to give results and enable the League of Nations to give collective international law, he asserted, it was important that the Government should get cooperation to enable them to do so.

ATTACK ON "THE TIMES"

RETRYING BREAKING CONDONED

McEWEN (Berwick and Hadfield) said he welcomed the recent Government policy to improve relations with Germany, but it was a Government could not be allowed to do its own policy without the aid of *The Times*. The attitude of the newspaper, especially in the return of colonies to Germany, had done a great deal to create a feeling that they had only to press their demands—(hear, hear, hear.)—and their demands would be granted. (Hear, hear, hear.)

tal method of approach to any problem with Germany was that in the concession was implicit in the Vhat was the use of *The Times* and Lord Haldane's visit to Berlin in 1919 and Halifax's visit, and mentioning the German Naval Agreement without the fact that the air was now between us—which Lord Haldane consider? What could be less than the leading article in *The Times* 25, which stated:— "There was something no doubt to the method the main which Germany, not wholly has practised several times within the last century, every breach of treaties on Germany since the signing of the Versailles was condoned. (Hear, hear, hear.) not conceivable that, were the Government to find the Germans pursuing us with offers to

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MR. EDEN'S REPLY A "DEAL" ON COLONIES DENIED

Mr. EDEN, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Warwick and Leamington, U.), said that at the present stage of international affairs he was unable to indulge in that "appalling frankness" which not long ago he ventured to employ. The right hon. gentleman who had wound up for the Opposition (Mr. Alexander) was unfair to the Prime Minister in his accusations about responsibility and irresponsibility. What the Prime Minister clearly meant was that there must be for a Government spokesman on such an occasion a different role of conduct from what was possible for others who had not the same responsibility.

He would be sorry if Mr. Lansbury got the impression that his Majesty's Government were disinterested in the Van Zeeland mission. They attached very great importance to it. Their difficulty was that they had not yet seen his conclusions and did not know what he proposed. It was certainly true that his Majesty's Government would do their utmost to see that practical results followed from the work which Mr. Van Zeeland was doing.

He would say a word on one aspect of the colonial question. It had been suggested in certain quarters that the Government of this country had some intention of trying to reach some settlement with Germany in the colonial field on the basis of a deal at the expense of other colonial Powers. He wished to state publicly and categorically that nothing could be farther from the intention of his Majesty's Government than to advance or countenance any such proposal. (Ministerial cheers.)

In particular it had been suggested that the Government had revived the pre-war negotiations with regard to Portuguese possessions. Those proposals were dead and the Government had not the least intention to revive them. They were not seeking a solution of the colonial problem at the expense of other Powers and they were not seeking a solution of European difficulties at the expense of other European Powers.

THE RULE OF LAW

The main charge made by Mr. Alexander and the Leader of the Opposition was that the Government had not cared for the rule of law, but only cared for the selfish British interests, and that as a consequence they had intentionally allowed authority to lapse. He did not accept that charge. Still less did he accept the statement imputed to the Government by the Leader of the Opposition that they only cared for selfish national interests. He called as evidence the events of the last few years. He held strongly that the rule of law and its maintenance was a British interest. (Hear, hear.)

In the Abyssinian incident it could not possibly be pretended by anybody that other countries were longing to do things which we would not do. Therefore, it was not fair to say that we in particular prevented international action being taken.

Both the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Alexander had asked what we were doing to uphold the rule of law in the Far East. He wanted to say something very frankly, in the same terms as those used by Sir A. Sinclair. If right hon. gentlemen and hon. gentlemen opposite advocated sanctions by the League—they had not said so, but supposing they meant that the League should impose sanctions in the present dispute in the Far East—he replied that there were two possible forms of sanctions: the ineffective, which was not worth putting on, and the effective, which meant the risk, if not the certainty, of war. (Ministerial cheers.) He said deliberately that no one could contemplate any action of that kind in the Far East unless they were convinced that they had overwhelming force to back their policy.

JAPAN AND SUPPLIES

Did right hon. gentlemen opposite really think that the League of Nations to-day, with only two great naval Powers in it—ourselves and France—had got that overwhelming force? It must be perfectly clear to every one that that overwhelming force did not exist. Every single nation at Geneva from the beginning of this dispute had, of course, known perfectly well that the very thought of action of any kind in the Far East must depend on the cooperation of other nations besides

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In our view the present conflict is going to bring inevitably great impoverishment to the Far East, to every nation there whatever their immediate military gains may be. That is the inevitable result of this recourse to arms. The procedure which has taken place before was already having results, and if followed would have brought a greater measure of prosperity to everybody in the Far East, including Japan.

In these conditions there are three principles which we must, I think, see in the Far East—first, that we must do all we honourably can to secure the restoration of peace; secondly, that we must do our full share, with others, in the fulfilment of our international obligations; and, thirdly, that we must protect our own interests and, of course, British territory. (Hear, hear.) There is a very important aspect of this Far Eastern situation which is perhaps the only one to-day which we can view with satisfaction. It is that we are constantly, daily, in close consultation with the Government of the United States. (Hear, hear.) Over and over again we have taken either parallel or similar action, and that in itself is an indication of the closeness of such collaboration.

BRITAIN'S FRIENDS IN THE WORLD

I cannot say more on that subject to-night, but I would say this. It would be wrong with the world as it is to-day if we were to deny our own authority or to belittle the firmness and significance of our friendships. This country is not without friends in this world to-day. (Hear, hear.) Reference has been made to France and the United States, and it would be equally easy to make reference to that large group of countries stretching from Turkey right to Czechoslovakia with a number of which we have close and intimate relations of friendship. In proof of that it is only necessary to draw attention to speeches of Turkish Ministers or the very remarkable declaration of the Rumanian Prime Minister, that the first on the list of Rumania's objectives was closer relations with Great Britain. That is the element—those friendships—which is making for stability.

Most important of all is the relation of the British Commonwealth of Nations with the United States. There is not, and cannot be, any question of treaty or any question of entanglements, but there is a true community of outlook; and it is that which can prove an invaluable asset in the maintenance of peace which is the first and greatest asset, the first and greatest desire of the British Commonwealth and the people of the United States alike. (Hear, hear.)

In conclusion, though the difficulties are great there is no cause for defeatism. (Cheers.) This nation has weathered worse anxieties than this. We hear much of our rearmament, but there is something even more important than rearmament—and that is the spirit behind the rearmament. And in that respect nobody should make the mistake of thinking that the spirit or the tenacity of the people of this country has in any way changed in recent years.

That is the policy we must seek to pursue; to be patient yet to be firm; to be conciliatory without being defeatist, and, above all, to continue to rearm because, paradoxically as it may sound, only that way can we get arms agreement. That is the policy that this country will endorse, and that is the policy we shall continue to pursue. (Ministerial cheers.)

The motion for the adjournment was by leave withdrawn.

The Unemployment Insurance Bill passed through Committee.

The House resumed and the Bill was read the third time.

The Money resolution in connexion with the Population (Statistics) Bill was agreed to on Report.

The House stood adjourned at 25 minutes to 10 o'clock.

PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

HOUSE OF LORDS
At 4.15
Royal Commission.
HOUSE OF COMMONS
At 2.45
Private members' motions: Conditions of employment in the distributive trades; cost of living; supply of British news abroad; and public water supplies.

MEASLES IN FULHAM

In the last three weeks more than 200 cases of measles have been notified in Fulham, and extra health visitors are being engaged. Dr. J. A. Scott, the Borough Medical Officer of Health, told a Press representative that the outbreak was following a normal course. They could not hope for it to abate before April or May, and they must expect many more cases before then. There was no need for any alarm, because an epidemic regularly appeared every two years.

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LAI-D-UP TONNAGE

Mr. LAW (Hull, S.W., U.) said that the trawler owners of Hull and Grimsby had recently decided to lay up 20 per cent. of their long-distance tonnage so as to control landings of fish. The first fruits of this voluntary regulation were that whereas importations of German fish into Aberdeen in 1935-36 amounted to 50,000cwt., he understood that a contract had been signed to ensure importations next year of well over 450,000cwt.

Sir DOUGLAS THOMSON (Aberdeen, S., U.) said that most of the foreign fish landed competed particularly with Aberdeen, and unless there was some further regulation of foreign quotas and landings the position of the industry would certainly not be improved by this Bill.

Mr. ALEXANDER (Sheffield, Hillsborough, Lab.) said that the powers being conferred in the Bill would have to be handled very carefully or there might be a diversion of the public demand for fish which would do the industry an injury which it would take long to repair.

Mr. MORRISON said he thought supporters of the Government entirely agreed with his view that the future of the industry depended on its being able to purvey fish in good condition at attractive prices to the consumer. He found himself largely in agreement with what had been said, but he could not admit that because his Bill did not contain machinery for regulating importations of foreign-caught fish it was no good doing anything for the home industry.

ONLY 10 PER CENT.

The position to-day was that at least 90 per cent. of the fish landed was from British vessels, whereas only 10 per cent. was landed from foreign vessels or imported. Under the Sea Fishing Industry Act, 1933, the Government already possessed power to regulate the amount of foreign-caught fish that might be landed. It would surely be folly to refuse to give powers to the industry to regulate 90 per cent. of the fish landed merely because, as was generally admitted, regulation of the remaining 10 per cent. was very desirable.

It was not the Government's intention to permit the efforts of this industry to reorganize itself to be defeated or thwarted by foreign landings of fish. There were general trade questions to be considered and these were matters for international negotiation. But the Government would certainly not allow this great effort at reorganization that was being made in the white fish industry to be defeated in the way which members appeared to fear. He would consider whether there was need for greater flexibility in the Board of Trade Orders which regulated foreign landings.

The clause was agreed to.

On Clause 9, which dealt with the licensing provisions of producers' marketing schemes, Mr. LAW moved an amendment to permit a marketing board to give directions as to the number of the crew to be carried in a fishing vessel. Labour members opposed the amendment on the ground that the manning of vessels was not a subject that should be dealt with by a producers' marketing board.

The amendment was negatived and the Committee adjourned till after the Christmas recess.

PROTECTING ROTTINGDEAN

Lady Baldwin has applied for associate membership of the Rottingdean Ratepayers Association, which was recently formed to guard against the spoliation of this Sussex village. Lady Baldwin's application was received by Mr. J. E. C. Jukes, chairman of the Rottingdean Ratepayers Association, in response to a letter by him published in *The Times* on December 15 inviting all who were interested in the movement, but who were not ratepayers, to become associate members. Lady Baldwin's letter was the first he opened.

Mr. W. J. Foss, who has retired after more than 30 years of Parliamentary journalism, has been presented by his friends and colleagues at the House of Commons with a silver salver and a clock. For 20 years Mr. Foss was Lobby correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*.