

Parliament

BRITISH POWER FOR WORLD PEACE

MR. EDEN ON AIMS OF REARMAMENT POLICY

OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENTS REAFFIRMED

STEPS TO FINAL SETTLEMENT IN SPAIN

HOUSE OF LORDS

TUESDAY, MARCH 2

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the Woolsack at a quarter past 4 o'clock.

The British Shipping (Continuance of Subsidy) and the Merchant Shipping Bills were brought from the Commons and read a first time.

The Margate, Broadstairs and District Electricity and the Reckmansworth and Uxbridge Valley Water Bills were read the third time and passed.

The Reserve Forces and the National Health Insurance Act (Amendment) Bills passed through Committee without amendment.

REALITIES AND POLICY

ECONOMIC DANGERS TO PEACE

Debate was resumed on the motion of LORD ARNOLD calling for a change in British foreign policy "which will bring it more into accord with the realities of the existing situation."

The MARQUESS of LOTHIAN said that the greatest cause of international disunity was the extravagances of economic nationalism. If Europe could become normal the chances of world peace would be extremely small. It was Europe which was the main centre from which the threat of war sprang. The fundamental reason was not the ambition of any people or race, but the fact that there were now 26 sovereign States in Europe, compared with 17 in 1914, and that none of them with the exception of Russia could live on the resources within their own boundaries. Economic boundaries were far more dangerous than geographical.

The real problem which confronted statesmanship to-day was not so much the prevention of all war, as the means whereby if war did break out it could be prevented from spreading into a world war. Collective security under the League of Nations ideal was a peace system, under which in the last resort universal economic pressure could be used against an offending nation. But the form of collective security now advocated was that it should be an armed alliance to resist an armed aggressor. Its essence was militarist, and the aspects that were concerned with removing the causes of war were largely in abeyance.

ANTI-GERMAN FEAR "BOGY"

There was no such thing as collective security in a world of Sovereign States. The policy produced counter-alliances and the world stag-

attention that they had yet done to the possibility of more intimate association with the United States, and he greatly hoped that Mr. Runciman's recent visit would lead to more active cooperation.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY

LORD PONSONBY ON VAGUE PHRASES

LORD PONSONBY said he should like to make a plea for plain English, which would be of great advantage. Lord Strabolgh had said that 75 per cent. of the Labour Party were in favour of collective security. He (Lord Ponsonby) wondered how many of the 75 per cent. knew what collective security meant. (Laughter.) It was one of those vague phrases which had caught hold of popular imagination. The use of phrase and metaphor was really very misleading. The most reverend Primate used one of these the other day when he said "Christians are entitled to draw the sword in a righteous cause." One saw a man in armour, brandishing a sword, standing on a moor. (Laughter.)

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY.—It may be true, but I am not aware of having said it.

LORD PONSONBY.—I think I am right in saying that the most reverend Primate used the expression "sword."

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY.—I quoted St. Paul. (Laughter.)

LORD PONSONBY said that the most reverend Primate ought to have brought St. Paul up to date and instead of saying "a sword" he should have said "chlorine, phosgene, mustard gas, lewisite, and thermitite" and he ought to have asked his fellow-Christians whether they were justified in using these in any case at all.

What was amazing was that the Labour Party should think that the Government believed in collective security. Another phrase, "regional pacts." Those pacts would be nothing more than a return to the exclusive alliances which were so disastrous in former times.

only vital interest was peace. That was essential to any sound League policy. It should be made clear that we would not fight for any particular country but for a new international system of order, the destruction of that anarchy which Lord Lothian so justly deplored. It referred to the world that there were some interests which were vital apart from peace was to say something which was not true. It meant that we should fight for some things and not for others. It meant that we should not give a real guarantee to any of the countries and therefore could not expect them to disarm. It meant the end of all hope of international disarmament.

We had to secure peace if we could. We could not secure it by pacifism or by armaments, but he believed there was a possibility of securing it by international cooperation and that that was the only way. He was bound to support rearmament, coupled with international cooperation. He agreed that the great evil in Europe was anarchy, and there would not be permanent peace unless Europe got rid of anarchy. To aim at the federalization of Europe, even if we could only take a small step in that direction at the present time, was the only hope for the future.

LORD CREWE'S ATTITUDE

The MARQUESS of CREWE said that the attitude of standing aside was very often a most attractive one. But conditions were required to justify isolation which were not applicable to this country. There was no case of the country of which the United States was the great example, geographically far removed from the possibility of attack and in the highest degree able to supply itself with all the necessities of life. There was no case of a country such as Holland, which held its colonies by the acquiescence of the Great Powers.

But for Great Britain it was almost impossible to shake off a great measure of responsibility for what was happening in Europe. If this country had stood aside in August, 1914, the whole course of history would have been different. It was altogether impossible to foresee, if war should unhappily break out, whether we should be able to turn away.

Assuming that it was impossible for us to maintain complete isolation, only two courses were possible. One was to revert to the old system of maintaining the balance of power in Europe, how we might become involved or whether we should be able to turn away. The other was to endeavour to assist in reorganizing and strengthening the League of Nations. He agreed that Lord Cecil had said that what happened was not so much the failure of the League as the failure of disarmament. It was in the approach to further attempts at the gradual diminution of armaments that safety was most likely to be found. He did not differ greatly from Lord Cecil in feeling that the measure of rearmament in which the country was engaging need not be an obstacle to that course.

A CALL FOR GOOD WILL

SHARED PROSPERITY OR GENERAL CHAOS

LORD ADDINGTON said that no one could look round the world to-day without being convinced that there was more fear, more national selfishness and self-sufficiency, and less cooperation than a year ago. For this we were largely responsible. Could we not admit our mistakes in having had a policy that followed on events instead of foreseeing them?

Many of the difficulties of the Government in framing their policy had been due to local conditions in the country as a whole, to local dry-rot, and a decay of standards of which many of the leaders seemed to be insufficiently aware. This had led to a moral revolt. There had been, on the other hand, the hectoring schoolmaster tone that we always used to certain Powers was not likely to result in an agreement or the amelioration of any tension. Let the statesmen of Europe quarrel privately. He did not want to interfere with the internal affairs of any country, but he had sympathy with dissenters. If he were living under the Nazi régime in Germany he would be in a concentration camp as a pacifist and a Socialist; if he were living under the Soviet régime he would not have been shot long ago, although he would not have made any concessions. (Laughter.)

County of Arima and to give it with the responsibility of raising and administering certain units of Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers. The re-organizing of Coast Defences at Fort, together with an Auxiliary Air Force Squadron which will be formed by conversion of the Ulster Special Reserve Squadron. I am glad to announce that Viscount Masefield and Ferrard, Lord Lieutenant of the County, has consented to be president.

I hope that the association will be formed in the near future and that recruiting for the units in question will start immediately.

ADDITIONAL INFANTRY BATTALIONS

Replying to Sir D. R. B. (Down, U.), Mr. DUFF COOPER said:—In 1922 it was reluctantly decided as part of the post-war economy measures, to disband the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Irish Fusiliers and to amalgamate the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Royal Irish Fusiliers (Princess Victoria's). I am glad to announce that the two additional infantry battalions whose formation has been approved by the War Office, and which these historic regiments to their former two-battalion basis, and provision is being made accordingly in the Estimates for 1937.

WHITEHAVEN COLLIERIES

WORK TO BEGIN AT ONCE

Mr. E. BROWN (Leith, N. Lat.), in reply to Mr. Cope (Workington, Lab.), said:—Negotiations between the Nuffield Trustees, Special Areas Reconstruction Association, Limited, Guinness Iron Company, Limited, Whitehaven Collieries, Limited, and the Lowther Estates, Limited, have resulted in an agreement being reached whereby a new colliery will be formed immediately to work the Whitehaven Collieries. This is a large colliery undertaking in West Cumberland which ceased operations in October, 1925, but which employed nearly 2,500 people who were then working at the mines.

The Guinness Iron Company, Limited, which had white colliery and other interests in Scotland, in Warwickshire, and in South Staffordshire, has agreed to become responsible for the management of the Whitehaven Collieries and the new company will be under his control. The effect of the arrangement will, I anticipate, be that in a large measure the problem of unemployment in Whitehaven will have been solved and the hope of prosperity revived to the town and district.

Mr. ANDERSON (Whitehaven, Lab.) asked whether a definite agreement had been arrived at, and, if so, how many men were likely to be immediately employed.

Mr. BROWN.—Yes, I understand that the repair work will commence at once, and the company will employ 400 men, rising to 1,000 by the end of the year, and then to get back to full production.

Mr. T. WILLIAMS (Don Valley, Lab.) asked whether this would mean the closing down of other collieries.

Mr. BROWN.—The hon. gentleman knows that that is no means happens.

FEATURE BUSINESS

Mr. BARDWIN, Prime Minister (Bedford, U.), in reply to Mr. ATTLEE (Limehouse, Lab.), said that the second reading of the Public Records (Scotland) Bill would be taken on Thursday. If the third reading of the Defence Loans Bill was finished before the end of the week, the Statutory (Tenure of Office), Bill, and the Statutory Salaries Bill would be taken.

ROAD TRAFFIC LICENCES

LIEUT. COL. J. SANDEMAN ALLEN (Birkenhead, W. U.) asked leave to bring in a Bill to amend the law with respect to the granting of licences to use goods vehicles and public service vehicles on roads. He said the method of applying for licences would be simplified and the onus of proof would rest as at present on the applicant. The renewals of A, B, and C licences would be automatic unless it was

country would not back out once our interests were involved. He was appalled at the spectacle of Europe proceeding on these lines and asked in the words of the old Book:—"What shall it be said of thee, O Jerusalem, that thou hadst said of imminent war. Who was in charge of the time-table? (Cheers.) What the people of this country wanted to know was what the Government could do to prevent war. (Cheers.) Government was compelled to recognize that there were certain definite dangers in Europe. They had had all kinds of efforts to evade the issue as regards Spain. What was happening there was not a civil war; it was an international war. Three foreign Governments had invaded Spain with trained troops and modern equipment. The clash had been produced and the weight of impact had been added to very largely by the appearance of enormous numbers of German and Italian troops.

Some time ago there was a suggestion that the Germans and the Poles and Japan had joined pact for an attack upon Russia, and that the attack would take place simultaneously without warning in order to destroy the independence of Russia. That appeared now to have faded into the background. It was apprehension rather than a definite plan to be compelled to build up an enormous system of defence. Germany and Russia could not come into conflict without crossing the territory of neutral countries, and their interests were definitely at break of war between Germany and Russia.

QUESTIONS FOR GERMANY

With regard to the position of Czechoslovakia it was not enough for our Government to report the German assurance of peace to Switzerland and Belgium. There was nothing of the sort emanating from Germany in regard to Czechoslovakia. He did not wish to appear as a violent critic of Germany, but it was true to-day that all the German neighbours were apprehensive. Germany had taken the wrong turning, he believed, had assumed a certain national superiority, and had caused great fear indeed. She should be asked by the Prime Minister definitely whether she wanted peace, what kind of peace, and whether she stood for peace all round. It was not too late to ask Germany, though it might be too late very shortly. We must ask aloud so that the people of Europe might hear. He asked the Foreign Secretary to make a declaration to-day which would give a sense of security. There were people who said that Germany was unjustly treated after the War. He would say she was unjustly treated, but they had to remember the feeling of all peoples who had stood on their own defence.

What was the reply to the German demand for the return of her colonies, and he would ask if that was all the Germans wanted? (Ministerial cheers.) If a bargain was struck and Germany was given any or all of her colonies, would she promise not to cause further disturbance to her neighbours? Would Germany give guarantees? What was the British Government prepared to do? After all they could not look forward to these "international difficulties with equanimity. What was His Majesty's Government prepared to offer? The step they should take was to invite all the nations to join in a world peace convention now, without waiting, and before war might come upon us like a thief in the night. (Cheers.)

MR. EDEN'S REVIEW

THE SPANISH WAR

Mr. EDEN, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Warwick and Leamington, U.) said they had listened to a speech from the hon. member which was characterized by sincerity and moderation. (Ministerial cheers.) He had no desire in what he had to say to attempt anything in the nature of partisan polemics on this occasion. He appreciated the difficulty of the path which one had to tread on these occasions so that one was not to be charged like the Chancellor of the Exchequer with enjoying party controversy, while on the other hand, it was just as important as attempting what he believed was known as "the Baldwin confidence trick." (Laughter.)

to work at all there must be some super-visibility of the Spanish-Portuguese frontier comparable with that to be carried out on the Franco-Spanish frontier. In those conditions we have been active in an attempt to secure a solution of this problem, with the result that the Portuguese Government have now intimated that they agree to the appointment of British officers on the Spanish-Portuguese frontier.

They have explained that their consent is due to their long-standing friendship with this country and to their confidence in His Majesty's Government. I feel sure that the Committee will appreciate the attitude of the Portuguese Government and will welcome the fact that a solution of this difficult problem has been found possible. No less will the Committee will appreciate the comments of the French Foreign Minister on this matter in a speech which he made in the Senate last week.

As soon as this control scheme is in operation, which we trust it will be next week, then the next task that awaits us is what I believe is called—in the jargon which has sprung up around this matter—indirect intervention, the most important part of which is the question of securing the withdrawal of those national troops who are at present fighting in Spain. If that can be accomplished—and I understand the Committee will start on that task very shortly—we shall have taken another step towards the final settlement of this civil strife in Spain. I maintain that the Government are justified in saying that their policy towards the Spanish conflict has proved the right policy, that after many anxious months it is beginning to bear fruit, and that they intend to persist in it.

HUMANITARIAN WORK

Meanwhile, we have continued to do what we can in respect of humanitarian work. I do not suggest, of course, that anybody in this country thinks that we are doing that work for other than wholly humanitarian purposes. At the same time I cannot help feeling that when this trouble is finally over many people in Spain will feel perhaps a special gratitude towards the country which concentrated on this work. Our Consular officers have continued their efforts to try to obtain facilities for the evacuation from various parts of Spanish territory of those who were unable to get away by successful transport has been afforded in His Majesty's ships.

At the Foreign Office we have been in close touch with various organizations in this country which have been trying to bring help to the Spanish population, and we have offered such advice and such assistance as we can. I give two examples. A cargo of provisions provided by the General Relief Fund and other organizations was recently transported from Gibraltar to Malaga in one of His Majesty's ships; a cargo of food was similarly transported from Alicante to Almeria, at the request of the Government. That for the moment is all that I wish to say on the Spanish situation.

I would like to endeavour to meet the hon. member's request for more information upon the Government's policy as a whole, and more particularly in reference to the League. The hon. gentleman was extremely gloomy about the future of the League, and though I am far from belittling the setback of the Abyssinian dispute, I think it is perhaps rather a pity that it is precisely the step which we are most anxious to see taken. The League which we seem to revel in being most gloomy about it. Admittedly the League has been in difficulties, but it is very far from being embroiled yet. In that connexion I should like to draw the Committee's attention to what was done at Geneva at the last meeting of the Council.

LEAGUE AND ALEXANDRETTA DISPUTE

Among the matters which we had before us at that time was a dispute which threatened to have very grave consequences between France and Turkey about Alexandretta. That dispute is just the kind of dispute which the Council can handle with success. There had been long negotiations previous to the Council meeting, both through diplomatic channels and directly between the two parties, and they had failed to reach agreement. At Geneva, thanks in a very large measure to the services of an admirable member of the Foreign Secretariat, Mr. S. H. Sandier, whom we shall be happy to have the opportunity of welcoming to this country

the Locarno Treaty was widely participated in to the spirit of the people of the country.

One of the obligations we understood under Locarno, then if that had been the issue, it would have been no need for a Locarno Treaty at all once Germany had become a member of the League. It might be argued that Covenant obligations should be as precise as respect of military action as were those of the Locarno Treaty. It might be argued that all nations ought to undertake in advance to have recourse to military sanctions. That is arguable, but this is the point: that was not the present Covenant—(Ministerial cheers.)—such a commitment would not only go beyond the Covenant, but it would go beyond Geneva protocol of 1924, and that at a time when the League was relatively in a weak position. It might be that in the view of some gentlemen opposite a policy of universal military commitment, at any rate to Europe, might be their view, he did not know; they never told us.

AN ILLOGICAL POLICY

But to advocate that policy was to go beyond the Covenant—let us have no doubt about that—and to favour a course to which no Government should set its name unless it was fully convinced that it could carry it through. (Cheers.) It certainly could not even be approached with our commitments at their present level, and with the membership of the League what it was at the present time. (Ministerial cheers.) Nothing could be more illogical than to say that we wished to see the issue of universal military commitment to be worked for by the League to-day and not to propose the necessary armaments. If we could endorse this policy—and we did not endorse it—of universal military commitment we would, of course, bound by the Covenant, and should continue to base our foreign policy upon that instrument.

He did not believe that the League was being served by the sudden taking of some steps at Geneva, but by seeking to do it, as he did in the Franco-Turkish dispute, to settle disputes by peaceful means. He sometimes wondered whether what was in the mind of hon. members behind the gangway was that they were not pressing forward with the reform of the League. Let them be perfectly frank about that. There were at present among members of the League extremely widely divergent views on the subject of reform, and other members of the League also would be the members of the British Commonwealth. We had, at one end of the scale, those who would not be sorry to see all sanctions taken out of the Covenant together, and at the other end of the scale those who would like to make military sanctions automatic. These schools of thought were represented, and there were shades in between, like that of hon. members who said that sanctions should always be worked out in each case before it was decided what should be done, and each case judged on its merits. If they were to attempt at the moment, whatever their individual views, to force an individual view through, they would be the gravest danger to the League, bit by bit. The League was at present in a state of convalescence, and that was not the motto to offer the patient a choice between dangerous operations. It was surely wise to give him time to regain his strength.

ARMS FOR PEACE

"A MEANS TO AN END"

Referring to a speech made a few days by Major Lloyd George, Mr. Eden (continued): In that speech the right hon. gallant member spoke as one who had through the last War and who was born and amized to find us using the language and working upon the objectives which of us who were in the last War thought were the gravest danger to the League, bit by bit. The League was at present in a state of convalescence, and that was not the motto to offer the patient a choice between dangerous operations. It was surely wise to give him time to regain his strength.

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There was a state of tension in which a fool or a knave might press a button and let off a world war. Three groups of people supported collective security, including those who wanted an anti-Fascist alliance. That argument would only produce war, and also division at home. Another group of people who supported collective security were those who were obsessed by fears of Germany. It should be remembered that Germany occupied the most dangerous position in Europe, and with modern air services she was the most liable to be destroyed of any nation. The anti-German fear was to a large extent a bogyman.

If they attempted a system of collective security—their differentiation from the League of Nations—it was bound to be put to a practical and dangerous test. That was the test of a crisis between Sovereign States. They had to consider very carefully the lessons of the Abyssinian tragedy, which emerged from that in September, 1935, without having really considered the inevitable consequences of threatening to use force against a Sovereign State. They found themselves impressed with having to yield or to run grave risks of a war that might become a world war. That was inherent in any system of power politics, as between Sovereign nations.

The policy enunciated at Leamington was infinitely wiser and safer than the universal commitments which this country was continuously being pressed to undertake in the name of collective security. The maintenance of the anarchy of Europe was not a cause for which it was worth laying down the lives of a nation of British men. He did not reject the League but the system of collective security in the form of a military alliance which it was beginning to take. Pacifism could not solve the problem because it did nothing to create the conditions in which peace was possible, the maintenance of government.

COOPERATION WITH U.S.

It was not possible to do more to isolate wars instead of spreading them into universal wars of collective security would inevitably do. That did not mean isolation. The policy applied to Spain could be extended—non-commitment to either side and non-intervention. We ought to pay attention to the policy now being pursued by the United States. It would be impossible for us under the neutrality legislation to buy arms or any instrument of war or to raise loans in the United States, and it would be possible for the President, under the pressure of public opinion, or because he was not so friendly to this country, to present President Roosevelt with raw materials and foodstuffs. That was a serious change from the position in the last War, when, without the assistance we derived from the United States, we certainly could not have attained victory. Fundamentally the attitude of the United States was that the real trouble in Europe was anarchy—an area which was no larger than the United States trying still to live as 26 States.

There was no world war in the nineteenth century, taking the century as running from 1815 to 1914. There were two reasons: Great Britain kept out of the alliance systems of Europe and she had a paramount navy. It was only when we joined the alliance systems of Europe and Germany began to create a navy, which threatened us that once more world war reappeared. Even if it were true that neutrality on the part of the United States could not be made effective unless Great Britain also adopted that policy, it would be well to extend her Monroe doctrine to make possible cooperation between her navy and ours. If we could get that cooperation we would create a centre of stability in Europe in the world which might exorcise for ever the spectre of another world war.

It had been possible to prevent the extension of the dangerous conflict in Spain, and he did not believe that it was true, but he of the air every day, it would be a world war. For us to withdraw from Europe would be the best contribution we could make to the peace of Europe. The central factor in Europe was whether Great Britain could be drawn in on one side or the other. If we could not, we would not be drawn into a conflict between Communism and Fascism or any other conflict, that would be the greatest step we could take towards a lasting peace. He urged the Government to pay rather more

bludgeon, and he did not believe that Mr. Eden was thankful to the Government for Mr. Eden had gone into his conferences with the menace of armaments, and that did not improve the atmosphere of any conference. The Government said they had no desire to enter an armaments race, but undoubtedly Mr. Mussolini had thought it necessary to go a little further in his rearmament.

This disastrous position of an armed Europe was surprising, and he thought it should not talk about another war. But who was to blame? In every village ladies who had nothing else to do were having classes in anti-air raid precautions gas drill. The war complex was forced on every one by the Government. This policy was not defence for security, but preparation for attack and aggravation of the danger. Real national defence was in the hands of the opposite direction, against the evils at home. The Government was antagonistic to reconstruction. The Government, instead of taking the road towards real national defence, had chosen the downhill course which led to the destruction of civilization, and the crumbling of such civilization as we had reached.

FRANCE AND INVASION

LORD CECIL said that they must have some system by which armaments would be rearmament or complete pacifism. With regard to the Spanish war, he was glad that the efforts at non-intervention had reached a comparative measure of success, but what had happened at Plymouth on the results achieved in what must have been trying negotiations.

The policy of isolation, which Lord Arnold had advocated, meant the abandonment of our present alliances under the League of Nations and the Locarno arrangements and under the new Atlantic. He did not think it was a very attractive proposal. The Marquess of Lothian had suggested an Anglo-American alliance.

The **MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN** said that he had not advocated that at all. We should avoid forming part of a European alliance.

VISCOUNT CECIL said that any system that was going to be based on Anglo-American cooperation in any practical sense was really out of the question. It was a world coalition of the United States against such a siding. Some of the ideas were so overwhelming, and still more if we said we proposed to maintain one part of our European obligations—to defend France and Belgium. That was a practically impossible combination of ideas.

GERMAN DEMAND FOR COLONIES

No one could seriously doubt that when the present German Government said that they were in favour of peace what they meant was: We desire to get certain things. We would much prefer to get them peacefully, but if we cannot get them peacefully we will get them somehow. According to the terms of the German Ambassador in this country said about Germany's former colonies. He said in so many words: "We want these colonies; we think we ought to have them; and if you do not give them to us we shall have to take them down a genuine desire to cooperate with other nations, when they returned to the League and the International Labour Office, when they were prepared resolutely to enter armaments, then he (Lord Cecil) would listen with much more attention to the pacific speeches occasionally made for consumption in this country and elsewhere.

A policy based on isolation, coupled with the certainty of peaceful action by Germany and other countries, was not a policy which it would be safe to recommend to this country. By isolation you were inviting attack. It had been said by Lord Plymouth that we would only fight for our vital interests. Our

at a time when the statesmen, of the Empire were coming together the supreme issue might well be to re-examine the true foundations on which the Empire rested. When those foundations began to rot, great Empires of the past had crashed. In the light of those realities— and only in the light of those realities—could our statesmen face the practical issues of removing the causes that led to war and the questions involved in sharing with other nations the resources, raw materials, markets, and spaces for development entrusted to us. Thus would be built the world prosperity for which there was a call by many of the influential leaders of the world. A smaller share of such prosperity might well be greater than the wealth which they were faced.

He was convinced that men of good will in many countries would give a firm and loyal support for such a policy. What was needed to bring British foreign policy into accord with the realities of the existing situation was not the steering of a middle course between the opposing forces of revolutionary activity existing in the world to-day, but what might well be even more revolutionary, a policy founded on the will and the policy of God, which had never been fully tried—seeking to apply His answer to the problems which had not been solved by the wisdom of man.

THE DEBATE ADJOURNED

The **EARL OF MANSFIELD** said that the Government were absolutely right in pushing on with the policy of non-intervention as far as possible. A strong virile Britain was the greatest factor for peace that could exist in the world to-day. The League of Nations had never had a fair chance from the start owing to its lack of universality. Until its membership was increased we must depend on our own resources. Our foreign policy should keep the country more free from foreign entanglements than it did at present. He did not believe that war was inevitable.

On the motion of **LORD ALLEN OF HURWOOD** the debate was adjourned until tomorrow.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Lord Privy Seal, stated that the House would meet at 3 p.m. Their lordships rose at 15 minutes to 7 o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TUESDAY, MARCH 2

The **SPEAKER** took the Chair at a quarter to 3 o'clock. The Newquay and District Water Bill was read a second time.

SHIPPING CONSTRUCTION

MR. RUNCIMAN, President of the Board of Trade (S. Ives, L.Nat.) informed **SIR C. BARAGAN** (Southampton, L.Nat.) that the result of Part II of the British Shipping (Assistance) Act, 1935, was that 55 vessels of approximately 186,000 tons gross had been or were being constructed. The total estimated cost of the vessels was £3,686,923, while the total amount advanced to the shipowners concerned was £3,548,124. Ninety-seven vessels of 386,000 tons gross, including 49 British vessels of 238,000 tons gross, had been or would be demolished.

STEEL PRICES

In reply to **SIR P. HARRIS** (Bethnal Green, S.W., L.)

MR. RUNCIMAN said:—So far as I am aware, there has been no increase in the price of the main steel products during last year. I am assured by the British Iron and Steel Federation that they are endeavouring to control prices at a reasonable level. In the future we are acting in consultation with the Duties Advisory Committee, who are in a close watch on the position.

TERRITORIAL ASSOCIATION FOR ANTRIM

SIR H. O'NEILL (Antrim, U.) asked the Secretary of State for War whether he considered the possibility of raising a Territorial Army for Antrim. **MR. DUFF COOPER** (Westminster, St. George's, U.)—The Territorial Association

observed the conditions of the licence that was granted to him.

The system of licensing should not be used to force holders of the licence. They were carrying out vital and necessary work for the community and the trade of the country. In that connexion he would draw attention to the articles which appeared in *The Times* last week, regarding the necessary work for the transport on the coast of this country which involved in war. The Bill provided that there should be no disclosure of the business of an applicant for a licence by the Traffic Commissioners to a third party. (Hear, hear.) It was proposed that passenger licences should be granted for three years instead of coming up for renewal every 12 months.

SIR G. COURTHOPE (Rye, U.) said that it appeared to him that the Bill proposed to deprive railway companies of some of the powers they now possessed. (Cries of "No.") He would not put the House to the trouble of a division, but felt it necessary as a railway director—because it is necessary for the transport of the House of Commons, and if they were not necessarily assenting to the Bill. (Hear, hear.) Leave having been given, the Bill was brought in.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

LABOUR CALL FOR PEACE CONVENTION

The House went into Committee, **SIR D. HERBERT**, Chairman of Committees (Watford, U.), in the chair. On the Vote for £175,600,000 for Civil estimates and estimates for Revenue Departments, including pensions, education, insurance, and other grants, and Estimates for the Home Department, the **MR. CHENEVELL** (Gower, L.) moved to reduce the Vote by £100. He said that he did so to call attention to the Government's policy in connexion with the international situation. Every Government in Europe was deeply involved in secret money—propaganda, and blundering methods of all kinds were in daily use.

He did not think that anyone had the right to spend the amount of money which was being spent on the international propaganda or the number of persons who were engaged in this very dangerous business of moving internal confidence and international opinion. He hoped that the Government would say something in defence of the world heard the views of opinion concerning this dangerous and vicious method of attack. (Cheers.) It was brought in by infiltration and internal corruption.

The **Great Powers** which were formerly the backbone of the League system in Europe, and which had always assumed the greater responsibility because of their greater influence and military strength, had fallen apart and were now attempting to collaborate. It was highly important that the position of Germany, Austria, France, Italy, and Great Britain should be made clear in regard to the outstanding dangers which best Europe. This year Europe could probably spend more than three times as much on armaments as was spent five or six years ago. No one knew the exact figures of the expenditure on armaments, but it was estimated that the total of £2,200,000,000 or £2,300,000,000 which had been spent this year on armaments Germany and Russia alone would account two-thirds—an enormous sum of money.

PLEA FOR GUIDANCE

In this case, in which this country had found itself involved, not one word of guidance had been given by the Foreign Office with regard to the extent to which we were committed, or the extent to which we might be committed in the further prosecution of this dangerous race. A tremendous amount of money had been put forward by our Government, and there were some breaking-point some time or other. He would like to know whether the Government were really compelled, in the interests of national peace, to proceed with the present policy of rearmament, or whether it was really the diplomat's duty to be being played. The scale of expenditure was making person in the House of Commons. He would like to know whether the Government could guarantee that the £2,200,000,000 was the last word that might easily be doubled, because this

connected with which the hon. gentleman commented which I thought just a little surprising. He complained that in these days there was too much secret diplomacy. There may be some secret diplomacy, but I confess that from time to time in recent weeks I have had cause to wonder whether there was not too much open diplomacy. (Ministerial cheers.) I would like to give to the hon. gentleman some information on the point which he raised, and let me take first the situation in Spain. The hon. gentleman complained that we had diplomatically closed our eyes to realities in this dispute. I do not accept that charge. From the first we have deliberately supported the policy of non-intervention. We have taken initiative after initiative on his behalf.

That policy, admittedly, has had a chequered career, but I submit that it has proved the right one. We have never wavered in our own allegiance to it and in our attempts to make it operative. It is no exaggeration to say that for the patience and perseverance of Lord Plymouth, who has shown notably the influence of the hon. gentleman, it is to associate with our race, we should never possibly have reached this agreement. It is all very well to complain, as hon. members can do, that it has taken months to get this agreement operative. But we have never had any intervention. That is perfectly true. The very existence of this non-intervention agreement and the work which has been done have reduced the international significance of this dispute to a minimum before the international danger arising from it.

RISKS OF EXTENSION REDUCED

The Committee will recall that I reminded it once before that Mr. Blum last August told us that in his view Europe was on the brink of war and that the Non-Intervention Committee saved it. He would be a bold man who would contradict that judgment, for the French Prime Minister was in a good position to judge. But to-day, certainly, if that was the case last August, and the matter has been definitely reduced, it has been our chief concern, as we thought it our chief duty, to seek to reduce the risks of the conflict spreading beyond Spain. The agreement reached a few days ago should go far completely to remove that danger. To that extent it has contributed to the peace of Europe; and beside that achievement, I submit, the minor matters of criticism, important though they may be, sink into comparative insignificance. Hon. members may still be opposed to the policy of non-intervention—it is perfectly possible attitude to take up—but those who do take it up must produce an alternative, and they have never done so. I think the reason why they have never done so is a very simple one. There is only one alternative to non-intervention, and that is intervention; and intervention by this country obviously would largely increase the dangers of a European conflict. I want to deal with just one other point in that connexion. I have often heard it said that France, for instance, would have taken a much more active policy in respect of the Spanish dispute had it not been for the fact that his Majesty's Government were always pulling at their coats. There is not a word of truth in that.

There has been a single approach from the French Government at any time during this dispute, either direct or indirect, except in support of the policy of non-intervention. I think that deserves to be said in fairness to all concerned. Equally, it would be foolish to think that the work which has been done by this Non-Intervention Committee. The organizing of a system of international control of this kind is no small work, and when one considers the partisan passions which have been aroused then I think we do owe a special debt of gratitude to those who have worked for it.

POSITION OF PORTUGAL

I want to say a word about the position of one particular country, Portugal. Those who know the recent history of Portugal will be aware of the very strong feeling which there is in that country against any form of international supervision. That feeling has nothing to do with the present dispute, but dates back to certain events some 10 years ago which had important repercussions on internal Portuguese politics. I need not go into that matter now, but even making every allowance for that, it was clear that if this control scheme

very nature of an official visit—those things in his efforts this question was resolved. It is particularly gratifying to his Majesty's Government that that dispute between two countries, with whom we have very friendly relations, should have been placed in a fair way to settlement. The British delegation was glad to be able to play some small part in this settlement. I am glad to be able to tell the Committee from that information which we have had, the local feeling at Alexandria—in the Sanjak, which is itself most intimately concerned—is also very well satisfied with the settlement. From these events we can surely draw some encouragement for the League's work in the future. It is quite true that the solution of this dispute created very little stir in the world. It is almost unperceived. But such is, and must always be, the essence of the world perhaps gives us a half-smile of gratitude, and passes on, because the moment the crisis is resolved it ceases to have any other value at all. (Laughter.) If, on the one hand, we fail and that failure has important consequences, then, accumulatively, we hear more and more our own undertakings under the Covenant.

DISPUTES SETTLED BY THE LEAGUE

TEN SINCE 1931

An hon. gentleman opposite a few days ago asked me a question about the number of disputes which had been settled by the League of Nations since 1931. We found that there were 10, and on looking through the list we found that several of them were definitely of major international importance. The Saar, for instance, and the trouble between Hungary and Yugoslavia after King Alexander was murdered, and a number of other disputes of considerable political significance. Of course, the two failures—must be admitted as failures—Manchuria and Abyssinia, completely dominated in the public mind the success which we achieved in other spheres. That is inevitable. I am not complaining, but we may surely hope that we may yet be able to achieve some more results like the recent one between France and Turkey.

I am sorry that I can give no similar happy account of the progress of our negotiations for a new Geneva agreement. Many matters, including no doubt the complication created by the Spanish civil conflict, have militated against our progress; and now that this conflict seems less likely to spread beyond the borders of the new Geneva agreement, we may yet be able to make progress. I appreciate that we can do that we shall only have made the first step towards a general settlement which is our aim and our resolve. Yet a start must be made somewhere. While admitting the difficulties, I am prepared to say that the possibility of getting the nations concerned round the table on this issue, and achieving some result.

The hon. gentleman put to me just now a very fair question on the subject of colonies. I had not intended to mention this subject, but since the question has been asked I think it is desirable that I should answer it, lest there should be any misunderstanding anywhere. A few days ago a question was put by the hon. member for Leeds, Mr. (Mr. V. Adams) on this effect: Whether, to dispel ill-founded German expectancy, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will state in unmistakable terms that his Majesty's Government could not contemplate a cessation of Germany's policy of military whatsoever under British control. My noble friend (Viscount Cranborne) answered: "As has been previously stated, his Majesty's Government have not considered, and are not considering, such a transfer." That statement of my noble friend remains the policy of his Majesty's Government, and I have nothing whatever to add to that reply.

GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY

Referring to general foreign policy, Mr. Eden said that he sought in his speech at Leamington to make our position clear. (Ministerial cheers.) He said that our arms might, and if the occasion arose would be used in defence of the British Empire, but that provoked aggression in accordance with our treaty obligations. He would repeat, that if a new treaty could be negotiated we should be ready and willing to extend a similar understanding towards Germany. The mutuality of

Sinclair and his friends below the gangway.

SIR A. SINCLAIR (Cathness and Sutherland, L.)—Does the right hon. gentleman realize that we supported all the rearmament Estimates?

MR. EDEN—I was not here, but I was under the impression from the speeches which I read in the debate that the right hon. gentleman and his friends took a different view.

SIR A. SINCLAIR—I said that it was an inescapable necessity.

MR. EDEN—I apologize to the right hon. gentleman, but I was under the impression that he had voted against it.

SIR A. SINCLAIR—Not against the Estimates, did not vote against rearmament, but against the policy of raising the money by loan.

HOPES OF LIMITATION

The right hon. gentleman the member for Hillsborough (Mr. Alexander) said the other day that he would not vote for armaments for what he called a national capitalist policy. I am not sure that I understand what that means. (Laughter.) A national policy could be quite a good policy if it is a policy of peace, and a capitalist policy could be a good one. I think, provided no doubt that all the capitalists are co-operators. (Laughter.) But if by that statement the right hon. gentleman meant, as I think he did, that he was not prepared to vote for arms to allow this nation to indulge in a war of imperial aggrandisement for selfish ends, we absolutely agree with him. Nobody has ever asked for arms for that purpose, and nobody in Europe or in the world imagines that this country would employ her arms in that way.

I conclude by saying that we must all regret the necessity for this arms programme, but it is our conviction, and I believe in the conviction of nearly every member of the House, that with Europe and the world as they are to-day, for this country to have greater power will aid the forces of peace—peace, peace, and peace. I am sure that this rearmament is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

That being agreed I submit that there will be fresh opportunities to reach agreement on limitations to the policy of non-intervention—it is those opportunities must not be missed. It is even possible that by this route, which none of us wish to take, we shall reach the goal which we all desire to attain, and this at least I claim, that his Majesty's Government are pursuing, in their commitments and in their rearmament, are making the best contribution in their power to the preservation of world peace. (Loud Ministerial cheers.)

A LIBERAL MEMBER AND GERMANY

MR. MANDER (Wolverhampton, E. L.) said that it was not the League itself but the representatives of the different States who attended it who required reform. That was not wholly inapplicable to the representatives of Great Britain. If they displayed more vigour and determination and more evidence that these great arguments were for League purposes, that would be better than any mechanical changes in the constitution of the League.

GERMANY

Nobody knew what would happen in Germany made an attack on Czechoslovakia. Should we be there or not? It depended on that question depended whether the attack would ever be made. If it were known that we should be there the attack would never be made. If there were one country in the world which we ought to support it was Czechoslovakia, one of the few remaining democratic States in Europe. At present nobody knew what we should do in the East of Europe. The German menace was developing from day to day, and no one knew where it might go. It might go to the East, there was long list of countries which might come under the lash, and that British Colonies were on the list. It was interesting to read that day that the German Ambassador to this country