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Parliament

THE GOAL IN INDIA

SIR S. HOARE ON BRITISH POLICY

APPEAL FOR UNITY

HOUSE OF LORDS

THURSDAY, OCT. 26

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

The Local Elections and Register of Electors (Temporary Provisions) Bill and the Cotton Industry (Reorganization) (Postponement) Bill passed their remaining stages.

A motion approving draft India and Burma Orders was agreed to.

THE TREATY WITH TURKEY

In reply to LORD SNELL,

EARL STANHOPE, Lord President of the Council, made a statement in similar terms to that made by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons.

LORD SNELL, referring to the Turkish Treaty, said that they had seldom heard any declaration of that kind with greater satisfaction. (Hear, hear.) After a series of disturbing diplomatic incidents that seemed to be to our disadvantage, they welcomed something of real substance and fine promise. He congratulated the Foreign Secretary on the agreement he had succeeded in making—(cheers)—especially as it was not a treaty of offence against other nations but was a treaty of defence. Properly nurtured it might have wonderful future effects, and be a turning point in modern European history.

That the recent speech of von Ribbentrop would be bad-mannered was expected. It also proved to be bad-tempered. Germany seemed to have stopped breeding statesmen who had command over themselves. The Danzig oration was German statesmanship in the new style. It suggested not certainty but doubt, not serenity but anxiety. It might have some success in Germany, because the people who would accept the leaders that Germany had would accept even the statements in that speech. Timid, innocent, lamb-like Germany was forced to act because a strong and wicked Poland had invaded her. We could not compete with malicious statements of that kind. For us there was only the consolation that our cause was just and that what we sought was neither selfish nor mean. (Hear, hear.)

RUSSIA AND THE ALLIES

“THE ACHILLES’ HEEL”

The EARL of LISTOWEL said the Agreement reached with Turkey was the biggest success we had so far scored in the course of the war. There was, however, one weak spot in the Treaty. The second protocol freed Turkey from all her obligations to the Allies if Russia should threaten to attack her. That might be called the Achilles’ heel of the Treaty, and his plea was that we should make a determined and immediate effort to remove this source of danger by securing the goodwill of that country, on which in the long run the effectiveness of this historic Agreement depended. There was no serious obstacle in the way of a better understanding.

We ought to make it abundantly clear that we accepted Russian neutrality as unreservedly as we accepted American neutrality, and that we had no more desire to embroil Russia than

of the recent agreement for the exchange of timber against rubber and tin, and they were now examining the possibility of doing further trade with advantage to this country on the same basis of barter, which was the only basis possible in present circumstances.

On the question of the relations of the Soviet with Turkey, it was true that the visit of the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs to Moscow had apparently produced no definite result. But after those conversations were concluded both Governments were at pains to show that their traditional friendship and their general relations remained unaffected by their failure to achieve final agreement at that stage. That was a matter of great satisfaction to his Majesty’s Government, who welcomed and wished to see maintained good relations between those two great neighbours, Turkey and Russia. His Majesty’s Government wished that all the more now that they had concluded the Anglo-Franco-Turkish Agreement, which had put us in special relationship with the Turkish Government.

PACT AGAINST AGGRESSION

Though that agreement did little more than commit to paper the pre-existing will to collaboration between Great Britain and Turkey which had existed for a number of years, it constituted a pretty firm guarantee against aggression in that part of the world. It was purely defensive. It was aimed against no Power, it threatened the legitimate interests of no Power, and it could only be called into operation by aggression.

In connexion with this Treaty, arrangements had been under discussion for the granting of certain financial and economic assistance to Turkey, particularly with regard to the supply of war material. His Majesty’s Government could never have made this agreement with Turkey unless, throughout all their conversations, they had felt assured at all points of Turkey’s loyal cooperation in the common service of interests that they, with us, felt to be exactly common between them. The conclusion of that Treaty had been very warmly welcomed in this country and very far outside it. (Hear, hear.) That was one evidence of the place that Turkey held in the opinion of the people of this country and a convincing proof of the great value which this country attached to the friendship of Turkey. The foundations of that friendship were laid by a master hand—that of Kemal Atatürk, and they had been constantly developed under the distinguished guidance of his successor. It gave them all the greatest satisfaction that the relations between the two countries were now once more set on a footing of lasting friendship. (Hear, hear.) The Treaty was directed against no other Power and implied no change in our desire to continue to collaborate on all possible occasions with other Governments which had interests in the areas which came within the scope of the Treaty.

Their lordships rose at 15 minutes past 5 o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

THURSDAY, OCT. 26

The SPEAKER took the Chair at a quarter to 3 o'clock.

COMPENSATION FOR SCHOOLS

Mr. LINDSAY, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Kilmarnock, Nat. Lab.), replying to SIR A. SOMERVILLE (Windsor, U.), said that although it was not primarily the concern of his Department, he had ascertained that compensation in respect of schools requisitioned under the Defence Regulations would be paid in accordance with the terms of the Compensation (Defence) Act, 1939. The prescribed forms on which claims under that Act might be made had been sent to the school authorities, and it was hoped that interim payments might be made as soon as the claims had been received and examined. His Majesty’s Government were anxious that compensation to the full extent authorized by the Act should be paid as soon as possible.

SIR A. SOMERVILLE asked whether in each case the Board of Education had been consulted, and did not the Parliamentary Secretary think that in many cases there had been an astonishing lack of consideration.

war and then leave her to fight single-handed against Germany. What would do more than anything else to persuade the Russian Government of our sincerity and gain their good will would be some sort of official intimation that we had no intention now or in the future to challenge or interfere with their new position in Eastern and North-Eastern Europe. Since it was made clear in the House of Commons that our pledge to Poland was only operative in the event of German aggression, we had no obligation of honour to resist Russian expansion in Eastern Europe, and we had no conceivable national or Imperial interest to protect in that part of the world.

LORD MOTTISTONE said that he could not sit still to hear the extraordinary doctrine preached that, after we had given a solemn pledge to 30,000,000 Polish men, women, and children that we would protect them from aggression, we should now say that we only meant aggression from a particular side. He could not, as an Englishman, allow himself to be accused of such a dreadful breach of faith. Every Englishman felt the same.

LORD HALIFAX'S REVIEW

VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, said that the reflection he made on the speech of Herr von Ribbentrop was that he had never seen an attempt more clumsy to divide England and France, for that seemed to him the plain purpose of the speech. It left on his mind, knowing as he did that never had confidence between France and ourselves been more complete and more intimate than it was to-day, the reflection that however unsuccessful von Ribbentrop might have been in understanding the British people in peace, he was no less unsuccessful in understanding the joint mind of Britain and France. (Hear, hear.) For the rest, Lord Snell's picture of Germany threatened by a dangerous attack by Poland, a short time ago threatened by a dangerous attack by Czecho-Slovakia, the victim of sinister plotting by this country—if the whole matter was not serious it would bring smiles to the lips of gods and men.

In regard to what Lord Listowel had said about relations with the Soviet, while he did not underrate the importance of the considerations that the noble lord had urged, to have a balanced picture of the whole situation it was necessary to remember that the recent Soviet action in regard to the Baltic States had caused anxiety, not only in quarters immediately concerned, and that the situation was by no means clear. It was certainly not clear at present what was the precise position of the negotiations in progress between the Soviet Government and Finland. He would say no word to make those negotiations more difficult, but it was not clear what the reaction in certain circumstances would be in the Scandinavian countries and outside if deadlock should be reached. There should be, as far as was known, no conflict of interest between the Soviet and Finland that was not capable of adjustment, and his Majesty's Government hoped that the discussions might be brought to a reasonable conclusion.

SOVIET BOUNDARY

He understood Lord Listowel to say that in our discussions with Poland it had always been understood that the sole purpose was to provide against a case of aggression by Germany. In making that statement he was not saying anything that would not carry the wholehearted assent of the Polish Government past and present. The last thing he (Lord Halifax) would wish to do would be to defend the action of the Soviet Government at the particular time at which they took it. But it was right to remember two things. They would never have taken that action if the German Government had not started it—(hear, hear)—and set the example for it when they invaded Poland without any declaration of war. Secondly, it was worth recalling that the action of the Soviet Government had been to advance the Russian boundary to what was substantially the boundary recommended at the Versailles conference by Lord Curzon, who was then Foreign Secretary.

It was true that the Soviet Government, though their previous declaration of economic solidarity with Germany might have seemed to render it doubtful, now appeared willing to trade impartially with all belligerents, and his Majesty's Government had already taken advantage of this attitude by the conclusion

EVACUATION CAMPS

20 Mr. ELLIOT, Minister of Health (Glasgow, Kelvingrove, U.), in reply to Mr. GRAHAM WHITE (Birkenhead, E., Opp.L.), said that one camp under the Camps Act, 1939, was completed, and three others were on the point of completion. The camps when completed would normally be used for the accommodation of evacuated persons. Arrangements had already been made for one of the camps to be occupied by L.C.C. handicapped children. As a special arrangement one camp was at present being temporarily occupied by evacuated female staff of the Bank of England engaged on work of national importance.

In reply to supplementary questions, Mr. ELLIOT said that the Bank of England were making full payment. They were under notice, and intended to move as soon as they could find billeting accommodation in neighbouring towns.

MR. CHURCHILL AND RUSSIA

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, Prime Minister (Birmingham, Edgbaston, U.), replying to Mr. MANDER (Wolverhampton, E., Opp.L.), said that the First Lord of the Admiralty, in his broadcast statement on October 1, gave his own personal interpretation of events in his reference to Russian action in Poland. There was nothing in that interpretation which was at variance with the view of his Majesty's Government.

POINTS FROM OTHER REPLIES

The following are points from replies to other questions:—

The average weekly expenditure in September on the pay of whole-time volunteers enrolled in the Air Raid Precautions and Emergency Fire Services was approximately £720,000.

The police keep a careful watch on bottle-parties which purport to be private gatherings with a view to taking action whenever evidence is available of a breach of the law.

The question of war pensions and dependents' allowances is under active consideration, and a statement will be made as soon as possible.

Arrangements have been made to enable the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to devote his whole time to the work of the Ministry of Food.

The Minister of Health will give the memorandum from the British Spas Federation, drawing attention to the present position of British spas, careful consideration, in conjunction with the other Departments concerned.

The provision of education in evacuation areas is under immediate consideration.

Men employed in agriculture who were required to register under the Military Training Act last June have been held back until November and will be called up shortly; those who became liable under the Proclamation made on October 1 will be held back until next January.

It is hoped that the Royal College of Art will reopen in January.

Arrangements have now been made for the payments from parents towards the expenses of their evacuated children to begin as from Saturday.

Mr. Chamberlain's statement on the progress of the war will be found on page 9.

BUSINESS NEXT WEEK

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN informed Mr. ATTLEE (Limehouse, Lab.) that the business of the House next week would be:—

TUESDAY.—All stages of the Cotton Industry (Reorganization) (Postponement) Bill. Report and third reading of the Prices of Goods Bill. Motion with regard to the Defence Regulations.

WEDNESDAY.—Consideration of the Opposition motion in regard to Old Age Pensions.

THURSDAY.—Statement on the motion for the adjournment of the House and Debate on Civil Defence and Evacuation.

The House would not sit on Friday. A motion approving India and Burma draft orders was agreed to.