1919

7 January
Henley

Round the town in the morning and a walk with Daff and Bud in Mr. Mackenzie's deer park after lunch. Arrived home I find a telegram from Em saying that Harold considers it imperative I should be 'on hand' in London while Ll.G. is reconstructing his Ministry. Much to the disgust of the happy little Henley party I resolve to catch the 6.40. Gol says: 'Why didn't you let Willet Ball win?'

8 January

To breakfast with Harold (Rothermere) at Savoy Court. He is sure that Ll.-G. is going to offer me 'something good' in his Ministry. He is to see Ll.-G. at Downing Street this evening and will press the point.

I spend most of the day in the Garden Suburb writing letters. Ll.-G. does *not* send downstairs for me and I am not going to besiege him the Cabinet room.

9 January

A letter from the P.M. offering me the post of Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his new Ministry. I write immediately accepting the offer.

14 January

Foreign Office. If I wanted responsibility surely I have found it here! With Mr. Balfour and half the F.O. staff away at the Peace Conference in Paris and Lord (Curzon (Ld. President of the Council)

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coming in only 1 or 2 hours a day I have all I can do to keep going.

17 January

Meeting at Board of Trade to consider the whole question of the Blockade. Board of Trade want to smash the Blockade: we insist on its maintenance as an effective weapon during the Armistice period.

22 January

With red boxes full of F.O. telegrams and other papers following me to Montagu Sq. every evening I have little or no chance of writing up my Diary.

28 January

Allied Blockade Committee. The chief question this morning is whether we shall recommend the Paris Committee – it being not clear whether we have the power or they – to lift the Blockade as far as it affects Serbia and Roumania. We agree unanimously to make this recommendation and to press it urgently on Paris.

31 January

A message today from the P.M. saying that he wants me in Paris and that I am to bring with me such advisers on the Blockade as I think necessary.

1 February

We arrive in Paris about 10.30 and proceed direct to the Hotel Majestic where most of the British and Colonial peace-makers are installed. The great lounge of the Hotel is full of people I know the first to greet me being Lord Robert Cecil (my predecessor in office) and Edwin Montagu, the S. of S. for India.

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2 February

About noon I call round at the Villa (the late Lord Michelham's)[1] which the P.M. occupies. I find him and Mrs. Ll.-G. and Megan in J.T. Davies' room, they having just returned from church. Ll.-G. greets me warmly and invites me to join his party for a drive and walk in the Bois. He is exceedingly fond of his pretty little Megan whose hand he clasps as we drive along. We alight in one of the quieter drives in the Bois which are looking delightful with three or four inches of snow on the ground. The paths are very slippery and the P.M. narrowly misses several croppers as we walk gingerly along. He is lively and interested in everything – except the Blockade which I vainly endeavour to press on his attention. I know him too well to pester him. When his mind is not on a subject there is no use talking to him about it. My difficulty is that he summoned me to Paris to consult with him about the Blockade, and this may be my one chance of broaching the subject! But there it is. He talks about Asquith, the present condition of the Liberal Party, Northcliffe, his love for France, the astonishing quantity of mistletoe in the trees of France ('But France is a Druidical country, you see', he explains), Free Trade ('I don't care a d–n for Free Trade'), and much else. I like the little man more and more and am pleased when English Tommies in the Bois salute him and French bourgeois take off their hats. He seems to be universally known.

At lunch today I join Mr. Balfour's party at the Majestic. He, Sir Wm. Tyrrell,[2] Eric Drummond[3] and Lord Eustace Percy[4] have been playing tennis and A.J.B. has the glow of health and exercise about him. It is my first meeting with him since I became his junior at the FO. He tells me he doesn't know and never did know anything about the Blockade. His conversation is light and discursive – gossip mainly about the celebrities at the Peace Conference – his manner exquisitely graceful and refined. He is treated with a sort of filial affectionate deference by the younger men with him.

[1]Herbert Stern (1851–1919): merchant banker; cr. Baron Michelham 1905; knighted 1912.

[2]William George Tyrell (1866–1947): civil servant; attached to the British delegation to the Paris Peace Conference with the rank of Minister-Plenipotentiary; Ambassador to France 1928–1934; knighted 1913; cr. Baron Tyrrell 1929.

[3]James Eric Drummond (1876–1951): civil servant; Secretary-General of the League of Nations 1919–1933; Ambassador to Italy 1933–1939; succ. as 7th Earl of Perth 1937.

[4]Eustace Sutherland Campbell Percy (1887–1958): civil servant, politician and educationalist; Con. candidate Kingston upon Hull 1919; MP for Hastings 1921–1937; Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education 1923; Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Health 1923–1924; President of the Board of Education 1924–1929; Minister without Portfolio 1935–1936; Rector of King's College, Newcastle 1937–1952; cr. Baron Percy of Newcastle 1953.

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Dancing this evening in the ballroom. It is a bright scene – the pretty girl secretaries and the many young naval and military officers enjoying themselves to the utmost. This is a regular and attractive feature of our evenings here. I asked the P.M. this morning if he ever joined in these revels. He said no but that he was more than adequately represented by Megan who is indeed having the time of her life.

[Later: It is incredible but a fact that I don't know to this day what Ll.-G. fetched me over to Paris for! I had one or two chances of brief conversation with him before I returned to London but not a word would he say about the Blockade. I knew what I wanted in this connection and this was that somebody of high political rank should be appointed to represent our Blockade interests in Paris, and before I returned I left a note for Ll.-G. suggesting that he should invite Lord Robert Cecil to act for us. He did so and Lord Robert consented. C.H. 19th Jany. 1934.]

20 February
[London]

These last days there has been a fine crop of Foreign Office questions in the H. of C. One of my difficulties has been that as Minister of Blockade I have had since my appointment to the F.O. but little time to devote to 'foreign affairs'. All goes well nevertheless.

17 March
Paris. Hotel Majestic.

This morning a meeting of the Supreme Economic Council, on which I am one of the Allied delegates as representing our Blockade interests. M. Clementel[5] in the chair and present also Lord R. Cecil, Mr. Hoover (U.S.A.), M. Seydoux[6] (France), Mr. Vance McCormick[7] (U.S.A.), Mr. Crespi[8] (Italian Food Controller), Mr. Baruch[9] (U.S.A.),

[5]Étienne Clémentel (1864–1936): French Minister of Commerce 1915–1919.
[6]Jacques Seydoux (1870–1929): diplomat.
[7]Vance Criswell McCormick (1872–1946): chairman of the Democratic National Committee, 1916–1819; chairman of the American delegation to the Paris Peace Conference.
[8]Silvio Benigno Crespi (1868–1944): Italian industrialist and politician; Minister of Food 1918–1919.
[9]Bernard Mannes Baruch (1870–1965): financier and presidential adviser.

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Signor Attolico[10] (Italy), Sir H. Llewellyn Smith[11] (Board of Trade), Mr. Keynes[12] (Treasury), Sir Wm. Mitchell-Thomson, M.P. (my deputy at ordinary times), Admiral Hope,[13] Capt. Hardy, R.N.,[14] and a dozen or two more. We decide formally to raise the Blockade on the late Austro-Hungarian Empire, subject to the approval of the Supreme War Council. Coal for Italy and raw materials for Germany are among the other subjects raised. In regard to Austro-Hungary the Americans are in favour of allowing all imports to leak through into Germany. I resist this and the Council upholds me. I urge the shortness of the time before the Blockade is likely to be raised and the foolishness of scrapping our most powerful weapon against the Germans just before the conclusion of the treaty of Peace. Bob Cecil patters French briskly with Clementel and is a strange figure as he sits low down on his shoulders in one of the beautiful tapestried chairs of the Conference room. He is an admirable spokesman – taking a strong lead when necessary and exercising remarkable influence over the mixed and somewhat refractory gathering.

16 April

Ll.-G.'s speech in the House on Peace Conference matters. He makes a furious attack on Northcliffe. I in some doubt whether I should not resign from his Ministry. I discuss the matter with Ll.-G.'s private Parliamentary Secy., Sir Wm. Sutherland,[15] who strongly dissuades me from taking such a step.

I speak on some F.O. points that have arisen during the debate.

[Later: I was sitting on the Treasury bench at the time. My first impulse was to protest there and then – a second thought was to do so when later in the day I had to speak myself. But why should I sacrifice my career in the midst of a Donnybrook row between N. and Ll.-G?

[10]Bernardo Attolico (1880–1942): diplomat.

[11]Hubert Llewellyn Smith (1864–1945): civil servant; Permanent Secretary of the Board of Trade (1907–1919); Chief Economic Adviser to the Government 1919–1927; knighted 1908.

[12]John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946): economist; resigned from the Treasury and published his highly critical *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (London: Macmillan, 1919); cr. Baron Keynes 1942.

[13]George Price Webley Hope (1869–1959): naval officer; Deputy First Sea Lord 1918; knighted 1919.

[14]Charles T. Hardy: naval officer; Assistant Director of the Admiralty Trade Division during the First World War.

[15]William Sutherland (1880–1949): civil servant and politician; private secretary to Lloyd George 1915–1919; Coalition (then National) Lib. MP for Argyllshire 1918–1924; Lord of the Treasury 1920–1922; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1922; knighted 1919.

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Both were controversial bruisers, given to very rough blows on the one side and the other and exceedingly well able to look after themselves. As to the merits of their dispute, if I remember, I was out of sympathy with both of them.

N. was opposed to my resigning. C.H. 29th Jany. 1934.]

17 April

War Cabinet meeting this morning to discuss the Censorship.

I attend as acting Minister of Blockade. Bonar Law in the Chair – Ll.-G. having returned this morning to Paris.

15 May

F.O. vote in the H. of C.: chief subject Egypt. Other matters raised are the Blockade, Spitzbergen and the vacant embassy at Washington. I am on the bench all the afternoon and evening with only a few moments off for a sandwich or two and a whisky and soda.

30 May

Anniversary Dinner tonight of the Printers' Pension Corporation – Waldorf Astor presiding. The Prince of Wales[16] is the guest of the evening. He is surely the most attractive Prince we have had for centuries – small, very fair and quite boyish in spite of his twenty-five years. I see him furtively peeping at his notes during the dinner and too much absorbed for conversation. When his time comes he makes just the nervous little speech that goes down best with an English audience, without a trace of the guttural accent that his father has and that was so much more strongly marked in the case of Edward VII. To one who has been many times through the same ordeal it was pleasant to see H.R.H. nervously fingering the lapels of his coat and shifting wineglasses about on the table during his speech. Such a good-looking lad, too with pink cheeks and wide-open English eyes.

[16] 1894–1972; reigned as Edward VIII from January to December 1936; abdicated and was created Duke of Windsor.

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6 June

Adjournment of the House for the Whitsuntide recess. Two questions concerning me – Egypt and Miss Douglas-Pennant – are threatened but I wait all day and nothing happens. I suspect that the Members interested in these matters are catching early trains for long Whitsuntide week-ends.

18 June

Alfred undergoes (very successfully) today an operation to his throat.

20 June

Lunch today at the Savoy to Alcock[17] and Brown[18] the winners of the *Daily Mail* £10,000 Atlantic flying prize. Winston Churchill presents the prize and announces that the heroes have been created Knights by H.M. They make characteristically modest and inarticulate speeches.

Many friendly references at the lunch to Alfred and his illness.

21 June
Henley.

Lovely day. I work at F.O. papers and loaf enjoyably.

A messenger from the F.O. with an urgent paper about the printing of the Treaty of Peace.

27 June

Victory Loan meeting in the Town Hall, Luton. Small gathering.

28 June

Today the Germans signed the Peace at Versailles.

[17]John William Alcock (1892–1919): aviator; knighted 1919; killed in an air crash.
[18]Arthur Whitten Brown (1886–1948): aviator and engineer; knighted 1919.

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29 June

I ought to be at Church thank-offering for the Peace. Instead I spend the morning disposing of an accumulation of F.O. papers.

11 July

Harmsworth and his wife attended the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

It is a glorious hot day and the beautiful lawns of the Palace garden are bright with a fashionable throng. The King and Queen with Princess Mary[19] (a bonnie girl with a fine colour and pretty fair hair) move about amidst the throng talking to people they know and receiving the presentations of debutantes.

[. . .] Later, I am specially presented to the King who remarks on the number of questions I am asked in the House – 'very dangerous some of them are, too,' he says. H.M. disapproves strongly in his rapid guttural way of attempts to carry on the business of diplomacy in the open. 'You might as well show your cards at Bridge and expect to succeed,' he says.

H.M. is very easy and gracious in his manner and not in the least formidable.

(The lake in the Palace garden is still dried up – having been drained during the War to avoid observation by German aeroplanes.)

19 July

Peace Celebration Day.

We have four tickets to view the great procession from the Members of Parliament stand on the south side of the Mall. The party consists of Em, Dora, Daff and myself. It is a fine position and we see everything perfectly. A splendid reception for Pershing,[20] the American General, and positively rapturous ones for Foch, Haig, Beatty[21] – and the tanks (four growling pachyderms under surprisingly easy and skilful management). Foch is a grand little figure with his baton and his set determined features and heavy moustache. The French soldiers and

[19]Victoria Alexandra Alice Mary (1897–1965): the third child and only daughter of George V and Queen Mary; cr. Princess Royal 1932.

[20]John Joseph Pershing (1860–1948): US Army officer; led the American Expeditionary Forces during the First World War.

[21]David Beatty (1871–1936): naval officer; Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet 1916–19; First Sea Lord 1919–27; knighted 1914; cr. Earl Beatty 1919.

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sailors and our own get the biggest and most spontaneous cheers – those for the Italians and Greeks being, as is only meet, much less general.

I am most affected by the contingents from the British fighting regiments – by the plain unconquerable men from Norfolk and Kent, Devon and Bedfordshire. [. . .]

About 2.30 when I have been in bed some time Em comes to tell me they are telephoning from Luton to say that the Peace celebrations there have ended in a serious outbreak, that the police are overpowered and the Town Hall in flames! I slip down in my dressing gown and hear the tragic story in the weary tones of Mr. Smith,[22] the Town Clerk. It is a somewhat confused narrative. Of the denouement, however, there is no doubt and I am entreated to use my influence with Scotland Yard to get some hundreds of policemen sent down to Luton or with the War Office for soldiers. Scotland Yard say they can't send men down without the expressed sanction of the Secretary of State. The W.O. say that they will put the matter in the hands of the Director of Personal Services. And so after much fatiguing telephoning – with an assurance to the Town Clerk – to bed again.

20 July

At 7 a.m. on the telephone again to Luton to find that some hundreds of soldiers are immediately expected. The Town Hall is in ruins, some few shops have been looted but the situation generally is in hand.

I run to Luton in the car and see the Chief Constable and Mr. Thomas Keens.[23] They pour out their troubles to me. 700 or 800 soldiers are in the town.

It is decided that my visit to Luton had best not be made known: it might be thought that I had come to take part in the proceedings and undesirable crowds might assemble.

Cause of the riot obscure. It began apparently in fairly good humour and fast degenerated into Bolshevism.

To town more dead than alive.

[22] Unidentified.

[23] Thomas Keens (1870–1953): accountant; Luton Alderman; Lib. MP for Aylesbury 1923–1924.

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19 August

House rises for the Summer holiday.

Harold (Rothermere) lunches with Lloyd-George at the H. of Commons. I join them for coffee and cigars. Harold urges Ll.-G. to break with the reactionary members of the Coalition and much amuses him by offering him 2,000 guineas for an article in the *Sunday Pictorial*. Ll.-G. in a reckless mood today. He talks 'going for' Northcliffe again – N. having been going for him vigorously in his Press of late.

The P.M. is just now much taken with the possibilities of water-power as a substitute for the coal that the miners seem less and less inclined to deliver. My view is that he and Harold exaggerate the resources of the U.K. in this direction.

5 September

Mr. Hoover, the U.S. Food Controller, passes through London on his way back to America – and to his home in California – after his labours in relieving the distress of Europe. At shortest notice I entertain him at dinner at the Carlton Hotel and with him Rt. Hon. J.H. Thomas, the railwaymen's leader, Lord Crawford,[24] McCurdy, M.P.,[25] Parly. Secy. to the Ministry of Food, Sir John Tilley,[26] and Sir Wm. Goode.[27] It is the best I can do on the spur of the moment and we have a very interesting evening together. Hoover, who lacks altogether the volubility of the average American, thaws completely and tells us many interesting things about conditions in Poland and other places in central Europe he has recently visited.

[Late in the Season as it was Hoover was strangely neglected by the Court and the Govt. and I was given to understand that he resented this neglect. If he had been Crown Prince of Montenegro he

[24]Lindsay, David Alexander Edward, (1871–1940): Con. MP for Chorley 1895–1913; President of the Board of Agriculture 1916; Lord Privy Seal 1916–1919; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1919–1921; First Commissioner of Works in 1921–1922 (and additionally Minister of Transport in 1922); succ. as 27th Earl of Crawford and 10th Earl of Balcarres 1913.

[25]Charles Albert McCurdy (1870–1941): Lib. (then Coalition/Nat Lib) MP for Northampton 1906–1923; Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food Control 1919–1920; Minister of Food Control 1920–1921; Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Chief Whip): 1921–1922.

[26]John Anthony Cecil Tilley (1869–1952): civil servant; ambassador to Japan 1926–1931; knighted 1919.

[27]William Athelstane Meredith Goode (1877–1944): journalist and civil servant; British Director of Relief in Europe 1919–1920; knighted 1918.

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would have been made much of. My little dinner-party was the only recognition he received and I had this grateful note from him: –

Ritz Hotel
Sept. 6.

Dear Mr. Harmsworth

Just a line to thank you again for a delightful and profitable dinner.

Please call on me if I can be of any help on our side.

Yours faithfully,

HERBERT HOOVER

(C.H. July 1936)]

18 September

To town, alas, to make ready for my visit with the Supreme Economic Council to Brussels.

20 September
Brussels.

At 10 o'clock we meet at the Palace des Academies. M. Jaspar,[28] Belgian Minister is in the Chair. The principal French delegates are M. Clementel (Minister of Commerce) and M. Loucheur[29] (M. of Reconstitution). The Italians are unknown to me and the Americans are absent.

The chief questions discussed are (1) the German demands for food and raw materials (2) the differential rates for coal charged by us to our own people and to our Allies respectively. J. Loucheur raises the latter question in a speech of much moderation but with obviously serious intent. (1) is referred back to the Consultative Food Committee and the Raw Materials Committee for reconsideration and (2) is to be brought to the notice of H.M.G. at home. [. . .]

There are no signs of the War at Brussels but rather of bustle and even of prosperity!

We end the day by dining at the Palace with the King. A brilliant affair.

[28]Henri Jaspar (1870–1939): Belgian lawyer and politician; Minister of Economic Affairs 1918–1920; Prime Minister 1926–1931.

[29]Louis Loucheur (1872–1931): French industrialist and politician; Minister of Industrial Reconstruction 1918–1920.

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8 October

We entertain the Emir Feisal[30] at Montagu Square with Haddad Pasha,[31] his interpreter. [. . .] Feisal (of middle height with a close black beard and moustache and no darker in colour than an Italian) comes in his flowing Arab robes, white and gold, and corded headdress. He speaks only Arabic and a little broken French. Haddad Pasha is in a khaki uniform of some sort and likes to be described as His Excellency. I leave Feisal to cultivate Wickham Steed,[32] all-powerful editor of *The Times* and avoid (easily) too much conversation with him. My position at the F.O. renders it very undesirable for me to come into too close touch with the Emir. Indeed I tremble to think what would be thought and said at the Quai D'Orsay if it were known that I was entertaining Feisal at my private house.

11 November

Armistice Day. On this day last year the Armistice was signed. H.M. the King issued two or – three days ago an order enjoining on all, his faithful subjects the duty of celebrating the great event by abstaining from all work for two minutes at 11 o'clock – this morning. In London, maroons were fired and I, walking to the Foreign Office, had nearly reached at that moment the Horse Guards Parade entrance to the office. As I stood with my hat off during the two minutes I saw that every man woman and child within sight had come to a standstill and so with vehicles of all kinds. An impressive and affecting sight.

19 November
Meeting of the Supreme Economic Council in ROME.

Accompanied by Mr. Howe[33] of the F.O. (attached to me for this trip on account of his knowledge of Italian) I leave Charing X at 8 o'clock this morning for Paris and Rome.

[30]Faisal bin Hussein bin Ali al-Hashimi (1885–1933): a key figure in the wartime Arab Revolt against Ottoman rule; reigned as Feisal I of Iraq from 1921.

[31]Gabriel Haddad Pasha (d. 1923): a Syrian who served in the British administration in Cairo and Jerusalem during the First World War and who later became Faisal's representative in London.

[32]Henry Wickham Steed (1871–1956): editor of *The Times* 1919–1922.

[33]Possibly Robert George Howe (d. 1981 at age 87): diplomat; Governor-General of the Sudan 1947–1955; knighted 1947.

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Paris about 6 o'clock. We have 3 hours to wait before our special train leaves the P.L.M. station. Howe and I make for the Hotel Majestic where we dine. The Majestic is no longer exclusively in British Govt. hands and is shorn of much of the glory of the early Peace Conference days: the lounge is no longer thronged with the statesmen of all Allied Countries and I miss the Colonial Premiers and turbaned Indian magnificoes. There are still a few 'peace girls' (young ladies engaged in the Secretariat work of the British Peace Delegation) and a handful of F.O. and other officials. The only Minister I see is Sir E. Pollock,[34] Solr. Genl., who is over here in connection with the arrangements for the trial of the Kaiser.

We telephone to Sir Eyre Crowe[35] at the Astoria and learn that the Bulgarian Treaty is certainly to be signed on the 27th.

21 November

At the station in Rome we have a fine reception. We are met at the entrance of what is, I suppose, the royal waiting-room by a group of Ministers and officers. [. . .]

Our first engagement is at the Prime Minister's official house, the Palazzo Braschi. Signor Nitti[36] is a stout little fellow with a big round head, a crop of short white hair and a humorous eye. He receives us in the Cabinet room – an apartment with red brocade on the walls, indifferent portraits of the King and Queen and cane-bottomed chairs round a table. Signor Nitti speaks no English but my old Brussels friend Senator Maggiorino Ferraris[37] helps me out with him. It is clear that the conversation with me is intended to make a certain impression: to persuade me, and through me, H.M. Govt. that if the Entente Powers and particularly H.M.G. will exercise their influence they can induce the Jugo-Slavs to recognize Italy's claim to Fiume and so rescue them from the awkward fix in which D'Annunzio's[38] raid has put them. The

[34]Ernest Murray Pollock (1861–1936): called to the Bar 1885; KC 1905; Con. candidate for Spalding 1900 and 1906; MP for Warwick and Leamington 1910–1923; Solicitor General 1919–1922; Attorney General 1922; Master of the Rolls 1923–1935; knighted 1917; cr. baronet 1922; cr. Baron Hanbury 1926.

[35]Eyre Alexander Barby Wichart Crowe (1864–1925): civil servant; Permanent Secretary to the Foreign Office 1920–1925; knighted 1911.

[36]Francesco Saverio Vincenzo de Paola Nitti (1868–1953): Prime Minister of Italy 1919–1920.

[37]Maggiorino Ferraris (1856–1929): Italian journalist and politician.

[38]Gabriele d'Annunzio (1863–1938): Italian writer and military adventurer; in 1919–1920 he headed a short-lived independent state in the Italian-majority city of Fiume (today known as Rijeka, in Croatia).

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point is developed at some length, I listening with polite attention and making a mental note for Lord Curzon. Senator Ferraris who is with us a good deal during our visit returns again and again to the question.

The afternoon is spent in conference at the Academia dei Lincei, a fine palace with an indifferent collection of pictures and some Roman busts. Our deliberations are prolonged and at the end of this our first session in Rome there is not much more than enough time to get back to the Hotel to dress for the banquet to be given to the Council at the Chigi Palace by Signor D. Ferraris.[39]

22 November

Early this morning to the A. dei Lincei to resume our deliberations. These inter-Allied gatherings are useful and even necessary but their proceedings are infinitely tedious. French is the language generally spoken but every speech must be interpreted and the ear is at a stretch all the time to understand what is being said amidst the murmurs of a numerous assembly and the rustling of papers. Every now and then the secretarial staff shower down on us typewritten slips with new points for discussion or revised forms of resolutions. Our interpreter is very good but his voice is weak and it is only those French speakers who enunciate clearly that I am able to follow with any comfort. So the hours go by and we are not to be blamed if sometimes we gaze wistfully out of the windows of the Conference room towards the Borghese Palace bathed in glorious sunshine.

26 November

It is a wet smeary day and Paris looks anything but her best when we arrive there about 2.30 o'clock.

27 November

Up early and dressed in my best for the signing of the Treaty of Neuilly – I having been appointed a plenipotentiary for the purpose. Now am I rewarded for lugging my tall hat all across Europe. I find that the High Commissioners are all similarly equipped. At 10 precisely we set

[39]Dante Ferraris (1868–1931), industrialist and politician.

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off from the Majestic in Peace Conference cars – Sir G. Perley,[40] Howe and I together.

At the Hotel de Ville at Neuilly there is a crowd and a guard of honour of poilus in their grey blue uniforms and blue war helmets. There is upstairs a large salon with brightly-coloured frescoes on the walls and great crystal chandeliers. Here is set a horseshoe table with a named place for each plenipotentiary, a blotting-pad, inkpot, paper-knife and a brand new pen. On a smaller table between the ends of the horseshoe are the Treaty with red seals and ribbons and the Protocols. M. Clemenceau presides in grey suede gloves and has Mr. Polk[41] the principal American delegate on his right and me on his left with Sir E. Crowe next me and then the High Commissioners in order of precedence. We sign in alphabetical order of States – America first, Great Britain next and so on.

I have an opportunity of a little talk with the 'Tiger' as Clemenceau is affectionately called. He is easily recognised by the many photographs and caricatures of him that one has seen. His round head with its fringe of white hair, his great white moustache and plain humorous features must be known all over the world. His manner is astonishingly vigorous for his years (78, I think) and he is full of lively talk in excellent idiomatic English. I asked him what they would do with the original Treaty documents. 'Burn them I should think' he replies with a laugh. 'Probably the best thing they could do with them – seeing that so many of the signatories are breaking them already.' In answer to a further enquiry why the several treaties are being signed in different places – Versailles, St. Germain-en-Laye, Neuilly – he says it is in order they may be conveniently known in history by different names: The Treaty of Versailles, the Treaty of Neuilly etc. He refers with some admiration to M. Stambulinski,[42] the burly Bulgarian plenipotentiary. He says that Stambulinski was always strongly pro-Ally, that he was kept in prison for 3 years by Ferdinand and that he took the precaution before leaving Bulgaria for Paris of shutting up his opponents who might otherwise have been troublesome during his absence.

M. Clemenceau's method of conducting the proceedings is almost too businesslike. When all the delegates are seated in their places, 'Messieurs,' he says with a rap on the table of his paper-knife, 'La séance est ouverte.' When all have signed he shouts 'Messieurs, la

[40] George Halsey Perley (1857–1938): Canadian politician; High Commissioner in London 1917–1822; knighted 1915.

[41] Frank Lyon Polk (1871–1943): lawyer and State Department official.

[42] Aleksandar Stamboliyski (1879–1923): Prime Minister of Bulgaria 1919–1923, then ousted in a coup and killed.

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séance est terminée' and when the general body of spectators has filed out we go out too. I ask him if I may keep my paper-knife as a souvenir and he readily assents explaining that it is not ivory but a composition and perishes if it is wetted. During the session he is a good deal teased by people bringing up their agenda papers for him to autograph.

There is a great cheer front the crowd outside when the Tiger emerges from the Hotel de Ville. [. . .]

Conversation this evening with General Mance[43] and Haddad Pasha, Feisal's interpreter and confidant. Feisal is still in Paris. Haddad says he has patched up a fairly satisfactory arrangement with the French.

1 December

The Viscountess Astor, M.P.,[44] introduced in the H. of C. by the P.M. and Mr. Balfour. House packed and flushed with excitement and curiosity. The new Member in her neat dark frock and toque (is it?) carries it off very well but her sponsors, as somebody says, are as nervous as boys at their first dance. One controversy is settled right off – 'Our Nancy' bows and does not curtsey to the Chair.

2 December

Esmond comes in today. His introducers are Macquisten[45] and Colonel Wheler.[46] I am not clear why neither Leicester nor I have been asked to accompany him. He makes the best of impressions with his great height, good looks and splendid youth. He is the youngest M.P. by two or three years.

[43]Harry Osborne Mance (1875–1966): soldier and transport expert; transportation adviser to the British delegation at the Paris peace conference 1919; knighted 1929.

[44]Nancy Witcher Astor, née Langhorne (1879–1964): m. Robert Gould Shaw (1871–1930), 1897 and divorced 1901; m. Waldorf Astor 1906. When he succeeded to his father's viscountcy in 1919; she succeeded him as Con. MP for Plymouth Sutton in 1919 and served until 1945.

[45]Frederick Alexander Macquisten (1870–1940): solicitor; called to the Bar 1919; Scottish KC 1919; English KC 1932; Unionist candidate for Leith Burghs Dec. 1910, Leith Burghs 1912; MP Glasgow Springburn 1918–1922, Argyllshire 1924–1940.

[46]Granville Charles Hastings Wheler (1872–1927): called to the Bar 1898; Unionist candidate Osgoldcross 1906, Colne Valley 1907; MP for Faversham 1910–1927; cr. baronet 1925.

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9 December

With Lewis Haslam,[47] the 'worthy member', to Newport to speak at a mass meeting in support of the Coalition Govt. A large gathering in the Central Hall including a number of extreme Labourists who, skilfully disposed at strategic points in the galleries and on the floor of the building, proceed to exhibit their devotion to free institutions by denying to Haslam and myself the right to make ourselves heard. Such a babel of voices I have never heard at a public meeting: voices, some of them, as powerful as those of the big Bobbies who shout for members' motors in Palace Yard. It is only in the rarest intervals that we are able to get in an audible word edgewise. I keep going for about ¾ of an hour. One remark of mine – overheard above the storm – that my opponents seemed to possess greater lung power than reasoning power arouses intense indignation. A lady in the gallery asks me to withdraw in the interests of peace and I immediately comply but the hurricane rages to the end.

The meeting concludes with the singing of the 'Red Flag' by the dissentients.

10 December

To town and direct to the F.O. to look over my Questions for the day.

Housing Bill in Committee and after that the Report stage of Miscellaneous F.O. Votes.

But unhappily the Housing Bill takes up the whole day and all the night I must be on hand to speak on our Vote if any point is raised. Supper – eggs and bacon and Guinness in a tankard at about 3 a.m. – Six o'clock the Housing Bill ends and the F.O. Vote, with others, goes through without challenge in the twinkling of an eye. All my devotion for nothing!

11 December

To the F.O. a good deal jaded. Afterwards the H. of C. where Auckland Geddes[48] introduces the Coal Bill. Labour people say they don't want

[47] Lewis Haslam (1856–1922): businessman and politician; Lib. MP Monmouth 1906–1918; Co. Lib. MP Newport (Monmouth) 1918–1922.

[48] Auckland Campbell Geddes (1879–1954): businessman and politician; Unionist MP for Basingstoke 1917–1920; Minister of National Service 1917–1918; President of the Local

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it and, as it is obvious that nobody else does, B. Law moves the adjournment of the debate.

26 December

Busy most of the day at the F.O. in connection with the question of our prisoners in Soviet Russia. A long Conference with Mr. O'Grady[49] just home for a few days from Copenhagen.

[This was one of my most anxious and difficult jobs at the F.O. After the Counter-revolutionary movement in Russia, in which we assisted the White Armies with men, munitions and stores, there was a number of British officers and men in the hands of the Bolshevist Govt., with a larger number of British civilians of both sexes. The question was how to get them out of Russia. The stories of Bolshevist atrocities had filled the public and the Rouse with alarm and there was no knowing what might happen to these People at any time. Incidentally, we were on the worst of diplomatic terms with the Soviet Govt.

Negociations were begun and after prolonged talk on both sides the Soviet Govt. agreed to a meeting at Copenhagen. They appointed M. Litvinoff as their representative and we chose Mr. James O'Grady, Labour M.P. for S.E. Leeds – a Labour man rather than a trained diplomat as being likely to have more of 'a way with him' in the peculiar circumstances than a Foreign Office young gentleman with the prejudices of Eton and Oxford.

The discussions at Copenhagen went on for months. At some moments we seemed on the very point of success, at others the prospect clouded over, and once at least negociations were suspended. In the end O'Grady pulled it off. A thousand or so British subjects returned happily to these shores – some of them, strangely enough, unable to speak their native English, many of them without money or friends. They cost us a pretty penny before eventually they were absorbed in our population.

What made our job at the F.O. all the more difficult was the intense dislike of the S. of S. to the whole transaction. Lord Curzon could not bring himself to have anything to do with the Bolshies. He left the whole of this business in my hands and those of the

Government Board 1918–1919; President of the Board of Trade 1919–1920; Ambassador to the USA 1920–1923; knighted 1917; cr. Baron Geddes 1942.

[49]James O'Grady (1866–1934): trades unionist and politician; Lab. MP Leeds East 1906–1918, Leeds South-East 1918–1924; Governor of Tasmania 1924–1930; Governor of the Falkland Islands 1931–1933; knighted 1924.

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permanent officials, and when O'Grady had completed his job would not hear of his being recommended for an Honour of any kind.

O'Grady was subsequently Governor of Tasmania and, as I have heard, the most popular they ever had there.

C.H. 29.1.1934.]

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