1922

2 January

At the F.O. all the morning and afternoon going over the Agenda for the forthcoming Session of the League of Nations at Geneva. At 6 o'clock to 1 Carlton House Terrace to see Lord Curzon and to discuss with him any points of policy arising out of the Agenda. Lord C. is off to Cannes tomorrow to attend the Inter-Allied Conference that is to discuss the question of German reparations, trade with Russia, etc.

9 January
Geneva.

First we visit Sir Eric Drummond at the Palace of the League of Nations – formerly an hotel – seemingly well adapted to its present purpose. English type-writing girls everywhere. We talk over the Agenda and return to dejeuner at the Bellevue. [. . .]

Everybody and everything in Geneva looks prosperous. The Swiss are a wise folk who look on and make money in hatfuls while other people are fighting.

We are not to begin our L. of Nations work until tomorrow afternoon because M. Hanotaux,[1] the French delegate, has not yet arrived; The Marquis Imperiali,[2] the Italian delegate, whom we meet in a book-shop (one of several very good ones), hopes we shall get through our business quickly as he wants to be back soon in Rome.

10 January

After lunch to the Palace of the L. of Nations where we dispose very quickly of some smaller matters. Our president is M. Hymans, the Belgian representative, a delightfully vivacious personality.

[1]Albert Auguste Gabriel Hanotaux (1853–1944): politician and diplomat.

[2]Guglielmo Imperiali di Francavilla (1858–1944): politician and diplomat; Ambassador to London 1910–1920.

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M. Hanotaux looks more like a Yorkshireman than a Frenchman and the Marquis Imperiali, formerly Italian ambassador in London, with an eyeglass, is as courtly and mannered as ever. Viscount Ishii, representing Japan, is small and grizzled and self-contained while Mr. Tang Tsai-Fou, the Chinese, is unobtrusive and of clerical aspect. Senor Quinones de Leon (Spain) is short and round and Mr. da Cunha (Brazil) is smart and fancies himself as a wit. M. Hanotaux understands very little English and I as little of the spoken French so that the admirably efficient interpreters are kept briskly going. Business except on really important occasions proceeds informally and there are private conferences at which agreement is sought, and so far successfully.

12 January

A very full day. The chief questions are those relating to Danzig (administered by the L. of Nations under Genl. Haking[3] as High Commissioner) and to the serious dispute between Poland and Lithuania.

After dinner, the Saar Valley people come to see me – 4 Germans not distinguishable from a similar deputation from Luton. They have many complaints to make about the way they are governed by the Commission of which M. Rault, a Frenchman, is president. In the end I tell them that my Constituents make more serious complaints against our own govt. When they explain to me that so bad is the govt. that the Post Office is carried on at a loss I point to the fact that the same thing is happening with us at home at this moment. They retire full of good humour and with expressions of gratitude etc.

13 January

Full day's work at the Palace of Nations. The translation of every important speech into English (or French) lengthens our proceedings tediously at times but M. Hymans[4] is an admirably brisk chairman and gets things done with only such delay as is unavoidable.

After dinner tonight the Polish representative attached to the L. of Nations comes along and gives us an account of the obstructive

[3]Sir Richard Cyril Byrne Haking (1862–1945): army officer, High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig (1921–1923); CB 1910, KCB 1916, KCMG 1918, GBE 1921.

[4]Paul Louis Adrien Henri Hymans (1865–1941): Belgian politician; President of the League of Nations 1920–1921, 1932–1933.

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methods of the Free State of Danzig which is, he says, Poland's only port.

14 January

Business begins at 9.30 this morning. [. . .]

The chief subjects are the provisions for Minorities made by Esthonia, Lithuania and Latvia and 'publicity' in connection with the meetings and proceedings of the League. The Session ends about teatime. Next meeting of the Council is to be on April 25th.

The principal delegates dine with the Drummonds at their villa. Lady D. tells me of the exceedingly high prices prevailing in Switzerland. When she first came here she paid 95 (gold) francs for a leg of mutton and £15 a ton for coal. Members of the Secretariat trip over the frontier into France to make purchases. They have there the advantage of the low exchange and enjoy diplomatic privileges, avoid Customs duties.

Harmsworth returned to London on 16 January.

20 January

Coalition Liberal reception at Devonshire House. A dreadful crush – everybody outside trying to get in and everybody inside trying to get out. Ll.-G. supposed to be somewhere receiving the company but we don't see him.

The last function, I suppose, that will take place in this grand old house. All the furniture has gone and little of its former splendour remains but the gilded ceilings.

21 January

Great Co-Lib. meeting at the Central Hall, Westminster. Ll.-G. in a long speech not quite at his best but still very good.

22 January

After tea I read to the family the latest installments of Northcliffe's Round the World Diary in which he deals with his adventures in Japan.

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31 January

In the evening we all to a meeting at the Queen's Hall where Dr. Nansen lectures on the dreadful famine in Russia.

1 February

I call on Dr. Nansen at the Hyde Park Hotel and tell him quite plainly that I think he is striking a jarring note in his addresses on the Russian famine. He seemed last night to contrast the activities of the Soviet Govt. with ours and those of the other Allies – to our disadvantage. We were blamed indeed for the so-called Blockade (long since removed), for our assistance to the counter-revolutionaries and for the small measure of our actual contributions to the relief of the famine. The main causes of the famine were in my opinion (1) the drought, (2) the breakdown, due to Soviet interference, in all the machinery of marketing, distribution and transport and (3) the requisitions by the Soviet Govt. on the producers of food in Russia. The Russian cultivator, restrained on by the Soviet authorities for food for Moscow, Petrograd and for their Red Armies, had restricted cultivation to his own immediate needs.

I advised Dr. Nansen, moreover, that the Soviet Govt. was desperately unpopular in this country, on account partly of its subversive policy and because it was regarded as having let us down badly in the War.

Nansen takes all this in the best part and we part the best of friends.

[All of which now reads presumptuously, but I was then U.S. of S. for Foreign Affairs, and had been *pressed* to give Nansen's appeals some sort of official sanction by attending them and Nansen said many things that I could not lend my ears to, officially. A very splendid person he was. (C.H. 2nd Febry. 1934.)]

6 February

This evening the Prime Minister's Ministerial dinner at 10 Downing Street. The little man in excellent health and spirits. He is hugely amused when Hamar Greenwood turns up in his full dress coat with his levee trousers. Hamar takes the shine out of us all.

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Afterwards with Em to a reception given by Lord and Lady Farquhar[5] in Grosvenor Square. A gay Coalition gathering.

17 February

Mr. Speaker's Ministerial dinner – the first since before the War. A very splendid affair. We are all in our 'glad rags' and are a gay crowd.

I have a long talk with Mr. Balfour and Mr. Speaker Whitley. Mr. Balfour, fresh from his triumphs at Washington, is in the uniform of an Elder Brother of Trinity House, his epaulettes and big sword sorting oddly with his slender philosophic figure. The conversation turns on the means of exercise adopted by the two eminent men. Mr. B. plays tennis and golf. The Speaker plays racquets with somebody in Westminster who has a court. He does everything he can in his spare moments to shake off the lethal atmosphere of the H. of Commons and is making a sort of roof garden where he can get, the western breezes and the western sun. [. . .]

The Prime Minister is in high spirits and is full of fun about a portrait of Trevor[6] whom he describes as the only Welsh (? Cornish) Speaker – a deuced ugly fellow with a cock eye. 'How difficult it must have been,' says Ll.-G. 'for Members to "catch the Speaker's eye" in Trevor's time.'

26 February

Em, Daff, Bud and I to Victoria to greet Northcliffe on his return from his journey round the World.

[5]Horace Brand Farquhar (1844–1923): financier and royal official; Lib. Unionist MP for Marylebone 1895–1898; sacked as Conservative Party Treasurer 1923 after a financial dispute; cr. baronet 1892; cr. Baron Farquhar 1898; cr. Viscount Farquhar 1917; cr. Earl Farquhar 1922; m. 1895 Emilie Scott, née Packe (d. 1922): the widow of Sir Edward H. Scott.

[6]John Trevor (*c.*1637–1717): served as Speaker of the House of Commons 1685–1687, 1690–1695, but was expelled for corruption; knighted 1671. Lloyd George was correct to describe him as Welsh rather than Cornish.

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28 February

Princess Mary's marriage to Lord Lascelles.[7] Em and I have splendid seats in the nave of Westminster Abbey. A gracious and beautiful ceremony – the Princess very sweet in a wonderful dress of silver and white.

There are gleams of sunshine all the morning and enthusiastic crowds of sightseers throng the streets. (The children have places at Henry Maurice's office in Parliament Street.)

17 March

I [. . .] take Em and Daff to the Lord Chancellor's reception at the House of Lords. F.E. is resplendent in full-bottomed wig, lace ruffles, and his gown of state. He greets us cordially, saying to me: 'Thank God, my dear Cecil, we have still one member of your family with us!' A brilliant crowd, including the Duke of York.

26 May

Earl of Balfour comes to the F.O. to take the place temporarily of Lord Curzon who has been and is seriously ill.

Lord Balfour was S. of S. when I was appointed Under S. of S. He greets me warmly and we discuss one or two of the outstanding problems in foreign affairs. He explains that he had formerly bargained with the Govt. that he was never again to occupy a Cabinet place with heavy departmental duties and describes himself as extremely rusty in the affairs of the F.O. He has seen no F.O. telegrams, except those relating to Washington and Geneva for many months.

Everybody talks about Lord Balfour's 'charm' and popular opinion is right. No more perfect gentleman has been seen in our time – I observe during our conversation his frequent recourse to the little gold-topped vinaigrette that he always carries with him and uses like Cardinal Wolsey's orange.

[7]Henry George Charles Lascelles (1882–1947): Con. candidate for Keighley 1913; served in the army during the First World War; knighted 1922; succ. as 6th Earl of Harewood 1929.

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1 June

Winston makes today the eagerly anticipated statement about Ireland where latterly things have been going from bad to worse. There are many murders in Belfast and in the South the irregulars who follow de Valera have been defying the Free State Govt.

Michael Collins[8] and Arthur Griffith[9] occupy places in the Distinguished Strangers Gallery. Collins, a strongly-built young man with rough black hair, is greatly amused by our proceedings and laughs much at some preliminary talk about the order of business. Griffith is a quiet sedate elderly man with gold-rimmed glasses.

10 June

News of Alfred's serious illness.

18 June

Alfred and party, with Leicester, return from Evian les Bains. His illness causing us all intense anxiety.

22 June

At question time today the rumour runs along the Treasury Bench that F.M. Sir Henry Wilson[10] has been foully murdered. The bad news spreads to the rest of the House and all is tension and excitement until the ordinary questions are over.

Sir Henry Wilson had been a member for only a few months hut he had already made his mark in the House, and a very high mark too. I thought his maiden speech among the first two or three I have heard perfectly expressed in a beautiful voice that was easily heard in

[8]Michael Collins (1890–1922): Irish revolutionary and political-military mastermind who took a leading role in the negotiation of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

[9]Arthur Griffith (1871–1922): Irish nationalist and journalist; founder of Sinn Féin; led the Irish side in the 1921 treaty negotiations.

[10]Henry Hughes Wilson, Bt (1864–1922): army officer; Chief of the Imperial General Staff 1918–1922; Field Marshal 1919; MP for North Down 1922; cr. baronet 1919; an uncompromising opponent of negotiations with the Irish, he was murdered by republican gunmen, who were caught and hanged.

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every part of the House. It was altogether unlike the rugged staccato speech of the usual bluff soldier-man.

23 June

To Poynters to see Mother. She very anxious about Alfred.

1 August

[The many blank days this Diary were days of extreme anxiety for the family and for me days of exceptional strain, I had my Foreign Office and H. of C. work all the time, with very frequent attendance at night and in other spare intervals at Carlton Gardens, Leicester taking turn and turn about and Georgie during the last phase of Alfred's illness. C.H.]

3 August

A conference at 10 Downing Street (the P.M., Lord Balfour, Lindley,[11] Sir E. Grigg,[12] R.G. Vansittart[13] and myself) to discuss what the P.M. is to say in his Speech today on the Turko-Greek situation. Lord Balfour leaves today his temporary post as S. of S. for Foreign Affairs and I tell him how sorry I am he is going. He dwells very kindly on our happy relations at the F.O.

Lord Curzon is returning from his cure in France.

[Following my established (and perhaps unfortunate) practice I kept no further record at the time of this important occasion. Ll.-G. ran over with us the notes of his speech which was all anti-Turk and pro-Greek. I asked whether it was right and wise of us to encourage the Greeks in their ambitious policy in respect of Smyrna and Asia Minor

[11]Francis Oswald Lindley (1872–1950): diplomat; Ambassador to Portugal 1929–1931; Ambassador to Japan 1931–1934; knighted 1926.

[12]Edward William Macleay Grigg (1879–1955): journalist prior to 1914; served in the army during the First World War; private secretary to Lloyd George 1920–1922; Nat Lib. MP for Oldham 1922–1925; Nat Con. MP for Altrincham 1933–1935; Governor of Kenya 1925–1930; Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Information 1939–1940; Financial Secretary at the War Office 1940; Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the War Office 1940–1942; Minister Resident in the Middle East 1944–1945; knighted 1928; cr. Baron Altrincham 1945.

[13]Robert Gilbert Vansittart (1881–1957): diplomat and Foreign Office official, later notorious for his anti-German views; knighted 1929; cr. Baron Vansittart 1941.

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generally unless we were ready to assist them with men and arms. Ll.-G. had the bit between his teeth and nothing would stop him. The speech was fatal to him and to his Government. (C.H. Oct. 1936)]

5 August

Alfred very, very ill today after his eight weeks dreadful illness. I stay the night at Carlton Gardens.

14 August

My dear brother Alfred died today at 12 minutes past 10 o'clock in the morning at 1 Carlton Gardens. Vyvyan and I with him at the end.

17 August

Alfred's funeral at Finchley. [After the Service in Westminster Abbey.]

8 September

After lunch I drive in Harold's car from Hemsted to Clayton – a pleasant drive indeed through hop-fields and orchards and snug old villages wholly unknown to me. At Southdown Lodge I find dear Mother in the best of health, bearing her great bereavement with sweet fortitude. 'It is the Lord's will,' she says again and again, and marvels that she should be so well in health and so resigned. She has the confident faith – a reasoned faith, too – that is so rare in these days and nourishes her wonderful mind on religious food that weaker spirits have rejected, to their own immeasurable loss.

19 September

I see by this morning's papers that my Chief, Lord Curzon, is going today to Paris to discuss the Turko-Greek crisis with the French Prime Minister, M. Poincaré. Needs must therefore that I go back to town instead of proceeding to Totland Bay.

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5 October
Totland.

The last few days have been uneventful. [. . .] One day we went trout fishing and caught some three dozen. Our pursuit on other occasions of the nobler bass has been unavailing. When it has rained I have busied myself with F.O. pouches.

Today I write to Frank Parsons telling him it is not my intention to stand for Parliament at the next Election. This is a big decision but I have given much thought to it and Em agrees. The children are even delighted.

17 October

To Luton (with Em and Daff) to see some members of my Executive Committee to whom I re-affirm my intention not to stand at the forthcoming Election.

Then to a Bazaar at the Assembly rooms in aid of the Welfare of the Blind Committee. I stay only a few minutes and, leaving Em and Daff behind, hasten back to town to Downing Street to the P.M.'s meeting of Liberal Ministers. We gather in the Cabinet room and Ll.-G. discusses fully and frankly with us all the ins and outs of the tangled political situation. I tell him I hope that the Tories will break with the Coalition and set him at liberty to rally and lead the Liberal and progressive elements in the country.

18 October

The papers are full today of chat about the crisis. The situation is briefly like this: Austen Chamberlain, Lord Balfour, Lord Birkenhead and other Tory leaders are all for continuing the Coalition under Ll.-G.'s leadership, partly out of loyalty to him and partly because they dread the return to party warfare.

They think, moreover, as I understand their views, that there is still urgent need for what may be called a national govt. and that a split between Tories and Liberals will involve the risk of a Labour Govt. Meanwhile the general sense of their own party and of the country is against them. The majority of Tories believe that they can win the forthcoming Election off their own bats and are anyhow tired to death of coalition with all its compromises. (Liberals too are generally weary of coalition.)

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There is to be a meeting of the Tory M.P.s at the Carlton Club tomorrow. What will happen, and what will Austen and his friends do if they are voted down?

19 October

At the Carlton Club this afternoon Austen Chamberlain and his group are defeated by 186 votes to 87.

As I am sitting in my room at the F.O. this afternoon a message comes from No. 10 saying that the P.M. will meet his Liberal colleagues there at 5 o'clock. He comes to us directly from audience with the King to whom he has handed his resignation, advising H.M. to send for Bonar Law. Ll.-G. is quiet but remarkably cheerful and he breaks into merry laughter more than once during the long discussion that ensues. What is to be done now? What is he to say at the meeting, already arranged, at Leeds on Saturday? Is he to survey the new situation only and to defend the past policy of the Coalition or is he to go further and sketch the outlines of a programme? He invited suggestions. What, again, are to be his relations to A. Chamberlain and the other Tory chiefs who remain loyal to him and to the Coalition idea? After his opening statement Ll.-G. listens while we others do most of the talking. [My own contribution was that after the un-avoidable Leeds meeting he should go into retirement for a long spell & only emerge as a national statesman on a national occasion.] It is the Leeds speech that bothers him more, he says, than the crisis itself and his own resignation. Somebody suggests that the Leeds meeting should be cancelled but this is generally scouted. It is obviously a great advantage for Ll.-G. to open the political campaign.

He reads us a long letter written by him in February last (I think) offering to resign and to assist a Tory Govt. provided that the Irish treaty is maintained, that a policy of peace is pursued and that there is no reactionary legislation. He was begged at the time by all his colleagues to carry on.

At the end of the Conference he thanks us all warmly for our assistance during the last 4 years.

One of Ll.-G.'s bright sallies today was about Winston who is in bed after an operation for appendicitis – but 'busily drafting political programmes,' said Ll.-G. Much laughter.

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20 October

A formal letter from Ll.-G. today:

My dear Parliamentary Under Secretary

I write to inform you that I have tendered my resignation and that of the Government to the King this afternoon. I understand that His Majesty will he graciously pleased to accept these resignations as soon as he is assured that an alternative government can be formed.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your valuable services during your tenure of office under my premiership.

Ever sincerely

D. Lloyd George.

The signature affects to be Ll.-G.'s but it is pretty certainly the work of his principal secretary J.T. Davies who *almost invariably* performs this function for Ll.-G. I have often seen him doing it when I was at No. 10 and very good he was at it too. I wonder in how many collections of autographs the handiwork of 'J.T.' is treasured! Ll.-G.'s own autograph signature I have rarely seen – not more than two or three times for certain [one of them in Em's Birthday Book]. He writes a slow difficult crabbed fist and never, so far as I have observed, at any length. A few words arranged in rough columns on a couple of long envelopes suffice him for his biggest speeches in the H. of Commons.

24 October

My last official engagement today when I take the Chair at Lancaster House at the Govt. Dinner to the International Commission for Air Navigation in place of Freddie Guest, S. of S. for the Air. He, as I explain to the distinguished gathering, has been swept away in the political gales.

26 October

Em and I to the Wesleyan East Ham Mission where I take the Chair at a great meeting (or service). In addition to my eloquent friend, the Rev. Moffat Gautrey, two or three other remarkably able ministers take part in the proceedings.

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27 October

I have been busy these last two or three days bidding farewell to my friends at the F.O. – to Lord Curzon who is positively warm in his appreciation of my services; to Crowe, Tyrell, Lindsay,[14] Montgomery,[15] Murray[16] and many others. I think they are all sorry to part with me.

1 November

Very busy these days correcting the final proofs of 'Holiday Verses and Others' and preparing for publication Alfred's Diary of the World Tour.[17] I am becoming quite a literary character!

3 November

At this Election Leicester has against him another Liberal, Sir Archibald Sinclair,[18] a great friend of Winston Churchill. Leicester wires to me (from Wick) begging me to see Winston and to get him to secure the withdrawal of Sinclair, on the understanding that if he does so L. will leave the field open to him at the next Election.

Winston, who is recovering from a severe operation for appendicitis, readily consents to see me and I find him in bed at 2, Sussex Square. He greets me in very friendly fashion, but regrets that he cannot intervene. He has sent Sinclair a letter of recommendation, which has already been widely circulated in the Constituency (Caithness & Sutherland).

Winston congratulates me warmly on my work for the F.O. in the H. of Commons and says that I never once let the Govt. down in all

[14]Ronald Charles Lindsay (1877–1945): Foreign Office official and diplomat; Ambassador to Turkey 1925–1926; Ambassador to Germany 1926–1930; Ambassador to the USA 1930–1939; knighted 1925.

[15]Charles Hubert Montgomery (1876–1942): Foreign Office official and diplomat; Minister to the Netherlands 1933–1938; knighted 1927.

[16]John Murray (d. 1937 at age 53): Foreign Office official and diplomat; Minister to Mexico 1935–1937.

[17]Cecil Harmsworth and Desmond Harmsworth, *Holiday Verses and Others* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1922); Lord Northcliffe, *My Journey Round the World*.

[18]Archibald Henry Macdonald Sinclair (1890–1970): served in the army during the First World War; Nat. Lib./Lib. MP for Caithness and Sutherland 1922–1945 and Lib. candidate in 1950; Leader of the Liberal Party 1935–1945; Secretary of State for Air 1940–1945; cr. Viscount Thurso 1952.

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my four years as Under-Secretary. He is sorry I am giving up active political life.

For himself, he is determined to take part in his own election at Dundee before the fight is over. I urge him to be prudent and not to take any risks.

On 13 November Harmsworth set off with his brother St. John for a holiday in Vergèze, France.

17 November

A telegram from Earle to say that the Conservative candidate for Luton, Sir J.P. Hewett, has won by over 3,000 votes in the triangular contest. It is what I always expected in such circumstances. Luton has never been anything but Liberal before:

Sir J.P. Hewett[19] (C.) 13,501
Mr. H. Arnold (L.) 10,137
Mr. P Alden[20] (Lab.) 7,107

[19]John Prescott Hewett (1854–1941): Indian administrator; Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces 1907–1912; Unionist MP for Luton 1922–1923; knighted 1907.

[20]Percy Alden (1865–1944): expert on social, economic and labour questions; Lib. MP for Tottenham 1906–1918; Lab. MP for Tottenham South 1923–1924; knighted 1933; killed by a bomb during the German V-weapons campaign.

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