

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

27th June, 1924.

Dear Noel

Many thanks for your letter of the 25th, regarding the Inter-Allied Commission at Sofia. The position as it has been put to you constitutes a curious instance of the constant manner in which our action in Bulgaria is misrepresented, and of how French and Italian influences at Sofia always endeavour to throw discredit on us where no discredit is due. The facts of the case are as follows:-

(1) As you are doubtless aware it was the British delegate who took the lead in securing a reduction of the reparation burden on Bulgaria, and he is almost solely responsible for the satisfactory agreement that was reached under this heading.

(2) Sir Elliot Colvin, in striking contrast with his French and Italian colleagues, has always been very careful not to abuse his position in Bulgaria, and has as a matter


of.....

The Right Honourable

Noel Buxton, M.P.,

Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries.





of fact on his personal initiative and without saying anything about it refused to accept a very large proportion of the salary that was due to him. The French and Italians have, however, behaved in a very different manner at Sofia, and you are doubtless aware of their exactions in the early stages in connection with the requisitioning of accommodation.

(3) Sir Elliot Colvin has of late been urging upon us the necessity of reducing the Commission, and has himself offered to resign. He is of opinion that the work of the Commission should now be carried on by the Assistant Commissioners and that there is no need for the Commissioners themselves to continue either their functions or their emoluments.

(4) This attitude on his part was bitterly resented by his French and Italian colleagues, who did not in the least wish to resign or to lose their present salaries. They realised, however, that if they merely opposed Colvin's suggestion that the three Commissioners should be withdrawn they might be accused of exploiting Bulgaria for the purpose of their own pocket. They therefore endeavoured.....



endeavoured to spike Sir Elliot Colvin's guns by saying that, although they considered that the Commission must remain on as at present constituted for an indefinite period, yet they were of opinion that once the Commission was dissolved the emoluments of the Assistant Commissioners who would then carry on should be reduced far below the figure which Sir Elliot Colvin himself suggested.

(5) Sir Elliot Colvin pointed out that considerable work remained to be done which was not of an entirely technical character, and that it would be impossible to secure the services of any reliable officials to take on the work unless an adequate salary were provided. The French and Italian representatives, being perfectly determined to postpone as long as possible their own resignation, opposed this contention and argued that by the time that they themselves resigned there would only remain purely technical business to be transacted, and that such technical business could be carried out by officials drawing a very small salary. It is in this way

that.....





that we have the difference between the £9,000 proposed by France and Italy and the £12,500 proposed by Sir E. Colvin.

We are now examining, in consultation with the Treasury, the question whether the salaries proposed by Sir Elliot Colvin for the Assistant Commissioners can in any way be reduced. Our Minister at Sofia agrees with Colvin that it will be impossible to obtain the services of any decent official on the small salary suggested by the French and Italians. What we should like to do, of course, would be to accept the French and Italian figures, and at the same time to insist that the French and Italian Commissioners should immediately offer to retire even as Colvin has offered. I am not sure, however, whether this will be feasible, but I am certain that Colvin's attitude throughout this business has been all that could be desired and that the behaviour of the French and Italians is completely cynical and unscrupulous.

Yours ever  
Arthur Ponsonby

I should be interested to know if  
Stancoff was your informant!

60/1130  
TELEGRAMS,  
SHULBREDE, FERNHURST.

18 XII. 39

SHULBREDE PRIORY,  
LYNCHMERE,  
HASLEMERE.

Dear Charlie,

I remember you & I  
sitting on a seat in St James's  
Park wondering how we could  
stop the last war. We did not  
think we should be doing precisely  
the same thing 25 years later.

You are wonderful in your  
activities. These memoranda  
are most interesting. I understand  
the possible mediators being  
reluctant to intervene again unless  
they are pretty sure of ~~not~~ succeeding.  
I think there is some hope because  
this time it is different. There is  
an obvious reluctance to go at it  
hammer & tongs & as one of them  
says there is practically an armistice



on the Western front.

I still feel the initial step should be simply & solely - will his or their offer be accepted. Then he would draw up his agenda & not ask for proposals from either side. The matter put down as a first item. What guarantees will either side give that if agreement is reached it will be faithfully observed.

I believe Buedeck has some influence with the King of the Belgians. But no one I suspect knows more about this. I do not know the Duke but I understand he is deeply concerned.

I hear that Mussolini is watching for an opportunity. Have you seen, (I expect you have) the Italian Ambassador?

Yours  
Arthur

TELEGRAMS.  
SHULBREDE, FERNHURST.

2.11.410

SHULBREDE PRIORY,  
LYNCHMERE,  
HASLEMERE.

Dear Noel,

You do not enclose  
the proposed motion. But  
after an hour's talk with  
Halifax I am pretty sure  
that any motion mentioning,  
or supported by, arguments  
against negotiation would  
be a mistake. Nor that  
the Government is fundamentally  
opposed to anything of the  
kind. on the contrary I came  
away less depressed from Halifax  
than I went in. But I am  
convinced that just at this  
moment they feel they have

got to show an uncompromising  
stiffness and therefore their  
reply would do our move  
harm.

I have taken my motion off  
his paper.

I liked most of your  
document. I was only a little  
doubtful here & there.

Tavistock has made a  
fatal mistake. He is a bungler.

Yours ever

Arthur



Shulbrede. 15.VI.41

Dear Noel

Yes. it is quite true  
the Kaiser was the target for  
more abuse than Hitler is.

~~See Chap VII in my "Falschwood  
in Wartime" "The Criminal Kaiser"~~

~~You might put Liddell Hart on  
to it.~~

Have you heard the rumour  
from a good source that the  
Govt knew Hess was coming?  
& that his peace proposals  
have not been mentioned because  
they were so reasonable that it  
was feared they might split  
public opinion. I rather  
doubt this.

A war for another 3 years

is a gloomy prospect. Everyone  
is waiting for Winston's first  
victory. Although he got  
away with it in the Commons  
I think it has given him a  
shakeup.

Syria is a trap - like  
Abyssinia. I am sure he is  
studying future effective plans.

Yours ever  
Arthur P.



Please forward

POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



The Lord Noel-Buxton  
Crosslee Hotel.  
Woking  
Surrey.

I have never thanked you for sending me a  
copy of yr article. It is an excellent statement of  
the case. But how quickly things change. I  
cant keep up with events.

I wonder if you wrote a good article on Boris  
in the Times. Perhaps it was Sidney Waterlow -  
He admired him.

The house we heard of in Woking turned out  
to be neither available nor suitable.

Yrs Arthur P.