

"The functions of the British Commonwealth and its members are not finally or irrevocably prescribed. The genius of the British race lies in its capacity to adapt itself to the changing circumstances of each generation. That is the condition of progress, indeed the condition of survival. There is much exchange of information and consultation between the United Kingdom and the Dominions. At the same time, I have come to the conclusion that there may be ways in which the machinery of consultation and common action can be improved. The objective is day by day co-operation in a brotherly partnership which not only can exist with the United Nations to which we all belong, but which can and will actively assist the United Nations in carrying out its supreme objectives of peace and economic advancement of all the peoples of the world. For our own part, we shall make every effort to devise and develop ways and means for the development and improvement of the present machinery for British Commonwealth consultation and co-operation."

44. A further indication of Australian thinking on this question can be found in the informal discussions which took place in London early this year at the High Commissioner level when the association of the lesser allies in the German settlement was under consideration. Mr. Beasley the Australian representative indicated Dr. Evatt's view that there was little to be gained by associating the other allies with the work of the various committees and sub-committees of the Council of Foreign Ministers in the way proposed by the United Kingdom and United States. He let it be known that Dr. Evatt was considering something like a reversion to the panel system of the Paris procedure in 1919, with the innovation that the Commonwealth and Empire would take over the United Kingdom's position as one of the Big Four. A further suggestion was for a system whereby one member of the Commonwealth particularly interested in any aspect of the German settlement would act for the whole Commonwealth in any Committees which might be set up. The procedure hinted at by Beasley in London was never formally advanced by Australian authorities but in a telegram of April 3rd from Dr. Evatt to the Dominions Office severely criticizing the United Kingdom for failure to achieve adequate Commonwealth participation in the German settlement, mention was made of the advantages of a single Commonwealth Delegation to the Council of Foreign Ministers.

45. The issue of inadequate consideration of Australian views has arisen in a slightly different way on two recent occasions. In connection with the degree of participation to be accorded "interested governments" (Australian and to a lesser extent New Zealand) in the Council of Foreign Ministers procedure for the disposal of the Italian colonies, Dr. Evatt in a message to the United Kingdom demanding adequate association for Australia said

"Step by step through exclusive and undemocratic procedures, Dominions which were active belligerents in Africa are being deprived of their just rights and in our opinion all this could easily be prevented if the Foreign Office would insist upon regarding our right as a condition precedent to all consultations and not as a matter of bargaining with or concessions from nations which contributed little or nothing to the victory over Italy."