

of proceeding gone that there has grown up in this country, within the last few years, a sort of extra-governmental service which rivals in authority and importance many branches of the permanent Civil Service. Supplementing this extra-governmental tendency has been a perfect mania for conferences on all kinds of subjects, and all at the public expense. The country, in one way or another, is being directly or indirectly committed to obligations and policies of which Parliament knows nothing till it is too late for any discussion. All this is destructive of the function of Parliament as a deliberative assembly, and is indicative of a drift away from parliamentary control, and in the direction of extra-parliamentary intrigue. Whatever operates against Parliament being maintained as the centre and focus of our national life, tends to weaken representative government, and to give an impetus to direct action and irresponsible direction of public affairs.