

questions of co-operation in the prosecution of the war and problems that will arise on its conclusion should also come under consideration by the British Cabinet and the representatives of the Dominions assembled in the first Imperial Cabinet ever held. The flexibility of the British constitution permitted this to be done. That constitution is based on usage developed slowly and gradually into convention. The Cabinet is not known to the formal enactments of the law, nor is the office of Prime Minister; and yet all of us realize how important, how supreme a place the Cabinet of Great Britain or of any of the Dominions has in the government of the country. And so with the office of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. To it is attached a power and authority which, in events such as those through which we are passing, permit him to exercise that power and influence for great purposes made necessary by great events. And so the Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ireland called together the Prime Ministers of the overseas Dominions to sit in council with the five members of the British Cabinet. In taking that course he absolutely disregarded precedent. As he himself said most eloquently in his address at the Guildhall, this is not a time in which one could justify too rigid an adherence to precedent, or even to tradition. It is a remarkable fact in our history that constitutional development has seemed to depend more upon events than upon men. The events of this war made it absolutely essential that the Dominions should have the voice to which I have alluded, and, having that voice, it was natural, and more than that, necessary, that they should be assembled in an Imperial War Cabinet.

It was a remarkable body that was gathered together. First there were the members of the War Cabinet of the United Kingdom, the five men who constitute that Cabinet, but who call into counsel with them other members of the British Government whenever necessary. These five men, with representatives of India and of the Dominions, met for the purpose of dealing with matters of common concern touching the whole Empire. While we were in London and in the very early days of the sessions of the Imperial War Cabinet a further remarkable development took place. It also arose out of the necessity imposed by events, and I am thoroughly confident that it was not premeditated or designed when the Imperial War Cabinet was first summoned. The Crown acts in the United Kingdom and in all the self-governing Dominions of the Empire; it acts in the United Kingdom upon the advice of the Ministers of the United Kingdom; it acts in