

*Imperial War Cabinet*

tion on an imperial war cabinet. It will be recalled that yesterday Prime Minister Curtin is reported to have stated over the radio:

We claim representation in an imperial war cabinet so that Australia's voice and counsel may be heard directly.

The bulletin to which I have already referred quotes Mr. Churchill as having said:

We have, of course, agreed that the same facilities will be accorded to New Zealand, Canada and South Africa.

I now ask the Prime Minister if Mr. Churchill has communicated with Canada offering facilities to Canada for representation in an imperial war cabinet; and if so, will Canada be represented in an imperial war cabinet. I further ask the Prime Minister to inform the house and the country what is the government's position in relation to this important question. Perhaps I may be pardoned for recalling that I have repeatedly urged in this house the formation of an imperial war cabinet.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Is my hon. friend asking a question, or is he seeking—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): No, I am making just a brief statement.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Might I ask my hon. friend if he is asking a question on the orders of the day? If so, perhaps he would allow me to reply to it.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am not quite through. If the Prime Minister will be good enough to be patient I shall be through in a moment, and then he will have all the time he requires. Before the Prime Minister answers these questions I would ask him another question. Would he indicate the position which he took in consultations which occurred at Washington with reference to the formation of a supreme allied war council? Press reports at that time indicated that the Prime Minister was insisting upon separate representation for Canada rather than representation through a united British commonwealth delegation. I suggest to him and to the house that we are entitled to clear and specific information about the attitude which the Prime Minister took on that occasion, and I invite him to give it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend has asked me two questions—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Three, I think.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Three, possibly; and they are fairly long ones, so that perhaps I may be excused if I do not answer them categorically. However, the first question

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

had reference to a statement which appears in the press, to the effect that Mr. Churchill had stated this morning that an imperial war cabinet was to be formed on which Australia would be represented. He asked me if I had had any communication from the Prime Minister of Great Britain in reference to the matter.

I have had a communication, which I happen to have before me. It was received this morning. The substance of it is that the government of the United Kingdom has been thinking over machinery for consultation between themselves and other members of the British commonwealth on matters of urgency connected with the war in the light of the new position resulting from United States entry into the war, and recent developments in the Pacific; that they had received communications from Australia making certain requests, and that these also were being considered. There is an indication of the form in which the request was made and a reference to the fact that, in the form indicated, it would be acceded to; but I have not seen as yet precisely what the Prime Minister has said in the British House of Commons, nor do I know exactly what the position is that has been reached by the British government. I am not therefore in a position to discuss at the moment what action Canada may be expected to take or will be invited to take. However, I promise my hon. friend that as soon as it is possible to do so, I will give the house particulars as to the exact nature of the proposed representation to be accorded dominion governments in the cabinet of Britain, and will certainly be very happy to indicate Canada's position in reference thereto. That, I think, goes as far in answering my hon. friend's question at the moment as I can go. I have asked to be advised of the exact statement made by the Prime Minister so that I may have it before me in answering any question officially.

The other question related to the attitude I had taken at Washington in consultation with reference to a supreme allied war council and to a statement in the press to the effect that I had pressed for separate representation of Canada at that time rather than adopting the position that Canada would be prepared to cooperate with Britain and the United States in whatever arrangements might be thought most advisable. May I say to my hon. friend at once that I made no representation at Washington with respect to separate representation of Canada in the matter of allied direction of war effort, and that my whole aim at Washington, as it has been in the past in Britain and in the United States,