

responsible public opinion, which in registering its decision knows what it does and why it does it.

CHAP.
XXI

A conjunction of parties as well as of governments needed to give effect to that principle.

To know and fulfil their duty to their state men must first be sure what is the state to which that duty is owed. But they cannot define their own status as citizens of the Commonwealth to which they belong except by taking on their shoulders the burden of its government from first to last. If Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa are the communities to which their final allegiance is due, then their peoples must severally determine the issues of peace and war for themselves. But if the state for which they desire to live and to die is that greater Commonwealth for which so many are now devoting their lives, then also must they join with each other to control its foreign affairs. Thus only can they signify their final choice, and it is in truth the most momentous that any people can be called upon to make. But it cannot be taken merely through the normal machinery of responsible government. Parliaments are necessary means to self-government, and so also are the parties without which popular assemblies lapse into chaos. They provide the mechanism through which a state can be governed by citizens who are clear in their own minds as to what that state is, and what the duty which it lays upon them. But where such questions have been left in doubt they cannot be settled by the free choice of the peoples concerned without transcending the machinery of parliaments and parties. Some expedient of the nature of a Convention is necessary to frame a scheme upon which the electorates can register a decision; and to bring into existence a