

TIGHT BINDING.

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Particularly significant was the new form of the Oath by which the King solemnly declared the sense in which he has accepted the Crown. For the first time South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Canada are expressly named. His Majesty thus records that sovereignty is to be exercised in the interest of the peoples of Canada, and the other countries set forth, according to their own laws and customs. For the first time in this great ceremony it was recognized that the relationship between the King and his people of Canada is direct and immediate. The Oath has long embodied the principles upon which our system of democratic governance is built. It now recognizes that the relationships of the several peoples under the Crown, one with another, as well as with foreign states, have become interpenetrated by the ancient principles of freedom and the rule of law. Thus it may be said that the new Oath, preserving the old and finding place for the new, embodies in simple fashion our political faith, and mirrors the structure of this group of free, equal and autonomous states known as the British Commonwealth of Nations."

III.—MESSAGE TO THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN AND HIS MAJESTY'S REPLY.

At the first Plenary Meeting, and as the first official act of the Conference, a message of greeting to Their Majesties the King and Queen was moved by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, seconded by the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, and passed unanimously by the Conference.

In moving the message Mr. Baldwin referred to the fact that it was the first occasion on which an Imperial Conference had met in a Royal Palace, and expressed the gratitude of the Conference to His Majesty for permitting the use of St. James's Palace for the purpose.

The terms of the message were:—

"The Prime Ministers and other Representatives of the Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations, assembled in Conference in London, at their first meeting, and as their first official act, desire to present their respectful duty to the King, and to offer to Your Majesty and Her Majesty the Queen their tribute of loyal devotion.

They pray that Your Majesties' Reign, which has been inaugurated so auspiciously by the Coronation ceremony celebrated two days ago, may be happy and prosperous, and that under Divine Providence Your Majesties may long be spared to strengthen the ties of affection and loyalty

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which unite all the peoples of the British Commonwealth under the Crown."

The following gracious reply, signed by His Majesty, was received during the meeting and was read to the Conference by the Chairman:—

"I sincerely thank the Prime Ministers and other Representatives of the British Commonwealth of Nations for the message of loyalty and devotion which they have addressed to The Queen and myself on the opening of the first Imperial Conference of my Reign.

It is very fitting that the solemn ceremony of Wednesday last should be succeeded immediately by your deliberations. I shall follow them with the greatest interest, in the confident hope that they will advance the happiness and prosperity of all my Peoples.

(Signed) GEORGE R.I."

IV.—OPENING STATEMENTS.

At the opening Plenary Meeting on the 14th May, statements were made by the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa and by His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda on behalf of the Indian Delegation.

In the course of these statements tributes were paid to the memory of His late Majesty King George V.

Short statements were also made by the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia and by the Chief Minister of Burma.

The statements were published in full immediately after the conclusion of the meeting and are reproduced in Appendix II hereto.

V.—ARRANGEMENT OF THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE.

At the opening Plenary Meeting of the Conference it was agreed that the following subjects should be discussed, at any rate in the first instance, at meetings of Principal Delegates:—

- (1) Foreign Affairs.
- (2) Defence.
- (3) General Review of the Progress of Empire Trade.
- (4) Colonial Affairs.

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