

## REPORT OF THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

To The Right Honourable  
Sir ROBERT BORDEN, G.C.M.G.,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs,  
Ottawa.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit my customary report in regard to the business of this department for the annual period 1916–17.

The numerous and complex questions arising from the Great European War continue to provide the subject-matter of the bulk of the correspondence of the year.

Germany's adoption of the policy of unrestricted destruction of merchant vessels, within zones defined by her, brought about a severance of diplomatic relations on the part of the United States, and a state of war was formally proclaimed by the President on the 6th April, 1917. This action of the United States was promptly followed by a severance of relations with Germany by Cuba, Brazil, and Bolivia.

The Dominions Royal Commission resumed its sittings in Canada in August, 1916, starting at Montreal, proceeding westward to Prince Rupert, and returning via Victoria and Vancouver eastward across the continent to Quebec. Sessions were held at all important centres. A fifth interim report, summarizing the information obtained on this tour, was published in February, 1917. The full and final report covering all the commission's operations was issued in March, 1917.

From March to May, 1917, marking a fresh development in the constitutional history of the British Empire, there sat at 10 Downing street, London, for the first time, the Imperial War Cabinet. This new body, over which the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom presided, consisted of the members of the War Cabinet of the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister of each Dominion or in his place a Minister deputed for the purpose, the Secretary of State for India, representing India, and other members of the Government of the United Kingdom specially concerned with Imperial affairs. The Imperial War Cabinet dealt with problems concerned with the effective prosecution of the war, and the terms on which peace might be made. In the end it was decided and announced that an Imperial Cabinet should be held annually to discuss foreign affairs and other aspects of Imperial policy (see Debates, House of Commons, Canada, Session 1917, vol. ii, pp. 1525–40; vol. iii, pp. 2354–5). At the same time, though sitting on alternate days, the Imperial War Conference, which is to be regarded as a special war meeting of the Imperial Conference of previous years enlarged by the inclusion in its membership, for the first time, of representatives from India, met at the Colonial Office under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Imperial War Conference dealt with questions of common concern relating more especially to post-war conditions of an economic and constitutional nature. Canada's representatives at the Imperial War Conference were Sir Robert Borden, Sir George Perley, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Hazen. Unfortunately, owing to unavoidable causes, Australia was unable to send representatives to the Imperial War Cabinet and Imperial War Conference of 1917.

Turning to matters concerning relations with the United States, it might be mentioned that the ratifications of the Migratory Birds Convention, con-