

holding an Imperial War Cabinet had been launched, it became obvious that there were certain matters more or less connected with the war which might, with advantage, be thus discussed in conference between the representatives of the United Kingdom and representatives of the oversea Dominions and of India.

The genesis of the Imperial War Cabinet is to be found in the events of this war. Every one has realized the somewhat anomalous position of the self-governing nations of the Empire in respect of questions which concern foreign policy and foreign relations. It is abundantly clear that the self-governing Dominions are vitally interested in those questions which involve the issues of peace and war. In the event of a great war, threatening in any way the existence of our Empire or its status, the self-governing Dominions being at war when the Mother Country is at war must inevitably take their part; and thus they are directly concerned with the causes out of which war may arise. If we take an example from the events which have been transpiring during the past three years, we observe that some at least of the causes out of which this war sprang arose before this Dominion had an existence. We observe further that some of the causes for which our Empire took up arms were concerned with treaties and understandings in which the oversea Dominions of this Empire had no voice and no part; but Canada and the other Dominions engaged in this conflict, because they realized that the issues involved transcend all others within our experience, and concern the future of every Dominion, the future of the United Kingdom, and of the Empire as a whole, and, indeed, the future of the world.

And so, without any hesitation whatever, every self-governing Dominion took up arms, and India as well, and their participation has been whole hearted. Two years ago, in London, I said that the oversea Dominions of the Empire had sent to fight for the cause of justice and liberty in this war not less than 250,000 men. I said with equal truth in London not more than a month ago that those Dominions had called to arms in the present struggle not less than 1,000,000 men. So, under those conditions, and having regard to the part which the oversea Dominions of the Empire have taken, it was obviously necessary that the pledge given by the British Government in the early months of the war to consult the Dominions as to the terms of peace must be fulfilled in substantial measure. And as that question was to come under consideration, so also it was desirable and necessary that