

objecting that "any change in the title or status of the conference should rather originate with and emanate from that body itself." It may be remarked incidentally that this criticism did not prevent the Canadian Government from itself proposing, a few months afterwards, to alter the constitution of the conference by including, in addition to the prime minister, any other ministers who might be accredited by any of the governments concerned. They dislike the proposal to adopt the title of "Imperial Council" on the ground that this "would be interpreted as *marking a step distinctly in advance* of the position hitherto attained in the discussion of the relations between the mother country and the colonies." A malicious critic of the words printed in italics might suggest that the Dominion Cabinet's conception of progress in this matter was to stand still. While obviously preferring that the meeting should be, not a formal assemblage, but "a more or less unconventional gathering for informal discussion of public questions", Canadian ministers would accept "Imperial Conference" as a compromise title. The term "Council" suggested to them "a permanent institution which, endowed with a continuous life, might eventually come to be regarded as an encroachment upon the full measure of autonomous legislative and administrative power now enjoyed by all the self-governing colonies." As to the permanent commission of inquiry, the ministers of the Dominion could not "divest themselves wholly of the idea that such a commission might conceivably interfere with the working of responsible government."

It will be seen at a glance that this attitude of reluctance and mistrust is far removed from the enthusiasm of "Imperial Federation" days, when the Premier of the Dominion himself was not averse to contemplating "even if but as a vision of a far-distant future, the rise of a stronger union and the development of a true Imperial Government and Council, directly responsible to the Empire, occupied in its common affairs, and free from the internal business of the United Kingdom, or any other State." It may be partly