

camouflage. You cannot put the representation of His Britannic Majesty into commission, and as a matter of fact you know that the envoys of the Dominions would not act jointly as a committee with the British High Commissioner. What would happen would be that the envoy of any Dominion would claim the right to go to the Government to which he was accredited and to urge upon that Government the views of his Dominion with the whole force of his status as a representative of the British Empire as a whole, and you would have the British Empire as a whole urging possibly quite different views, if not actually different policies, upon the Government concerned. I do not think that in practice that would happen in the case of Canada. I know and you know that it would inevitably happen in the case of Australia. Either the Dominions must be content that their envoys should have the status of H.B.M. *Assistant High Commissioner* and Minister Plenipotentiary, or they must face the issue and go to foreign capitals as the representatives of separate Dominions carrying just as much influence and no more as the separate status of that Dominion entitles them to. What your proposal means is that the Dominions are trying to get their status as *independent* Powers recognized by foreign Governments while trying to prevent themselves from being classified as small Powers. There is no good confusing the situation more than it is confused already, and I would not go one inch beyond the word 'assistant'. Would you accept an Australian Joint-High Commissioner if a Canadian were appointed H.B.M. Ambassador and High Commissioner at Washington?

"A rather smaller point, I do not think the words 'and Minister Plenipotentiary' are right. The words should be 'with the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary'. That is a personal rank in such a case. Babington Smith and Crawford at Washington were not H.B.M.'s Ministers Plenipotentiary at Washington, they were Assistant High Commissioner and Commercial Commissioner respectively with the *personal* rank of Ministers Plenipotentiary. If you have altered that title designedly then the remarks that I have made above with regard to the word 'joint' apply to this expression too, and I should be wholly opposed to it.

"For these reasons, if this memorandum were presented in its present form to the Imperial War Cabinet, I should strongly advise that the reply should be a direct negative and an invitation to the Dominions to assume the status of small Powers if they wish, but not to claim the right to carry out their own foreign policy under the cover of the power of the British Commonwealth as a whole."

#### **Memorandum Redrafted**

Christie tried to overcome these objections by redrafting the memorandum on February 18. Only the third and fourth paragraphs of the original document were altered. They then read :

"3. At any foreign capital where a Dominion wishes to send a diplomatic envoy, the envoy of the British Commonwealth shall be given the permanent