

I should add that in addition to all of these communications which take place over the wires there are frequent visits by ministers from different nations of the commonwealth, particularly from Great Britain to Canada and frequent visits by our ministers to Great Britain. Scarcely a month goes by that we have not the honour of meeting either here or in Washington or elsewhere a minister of the British government who is on this continent on some important mission. Take the relations between Mr. Churchill and myself. I have had several meetings with Mr. Churchill since the war began, some of them at Washington, some in England and some here in Canada. All of this is a very much changed condition from what existed prior to the war. Means of travel have been so perfected that a minister can cross from Canada to Britain or vice versa in less than a day, and when any question comes up on which we feel it is necessary to have immediate personal consultation we arrange to see that personal consultation is brought about here or overseas.

I should add in addition to that what I think is most important of all, and it is an answer to those who talk about having some imperial council that is going to decide commonwealth policies. We have to-day a continuing conference of cabinet councils of the commonwealth, a continuing conference of cabinets of the commonwealth dealing with matters of common concern. Let me explain what I mean. When any question comes up that is of common concern to the commonwealth in whole or in part, a communication comes, say from London, if that is the source at which the question arises, to our government. A similar communication is sent to the premiers of other governments of the commonwealth. Immediately I am in a position, as Prime Minister, to take that particular question before my colleagues in the cabinet; and when I give advice to the British government on any matter I am not giving advice by myself alone, in the atmosphere of London, but I am giving advice based on what judgment I am able to form after consulting with the members of the government from all parts of Canada, each of whom has his immediate responsibility to this parliament of Canada which has its responsibility to the people of Canada. I ask: how can conferences between cabinets be carried out more effectively than that?

The objection I have to going over to London to imperial conferences to try to settle policies, if that should be the object, is that I am at a complete disadvantage in those cir-

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

cumstances; and when I speak of myself it is quite impersonal; I am referring to anyone who holds the office of Prime Minister of Canada. The Prime Minister attending in London meets an entire cabinet. He may be entirely alone. He has not with him all his colleagues; he has with him very few colleagues, unless the business of his own country is to be neglected while he is away. More than that, however, he is without his expert advisers, who are much needed in dealing with great questions of peace or war. On the other hand every minister of the cabinet in London has his expert advisers, when a certain issue is up for discussion, either seated beside him or in an adjoining room, and he is in a position to command their views on any suggestion that may be made. Further, he is in a position to confer with all his colleagues and make his statement to the conference based upon opinions formed in that way. As I say, unless one is prepared to take with him colleagues and experts, and to allow the government of Canada to be carried on minus these responsible ministers and officials while an imperial conference is being conducted, one is not in a position to discuss matters as they should be discussed, and in the light of the responsibilities of the situation, as one would wish to discuss them.

But when, as to-day, we have this system under which every question brought up is discussed fully in the cabinets of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Great Britain; when views are interchanged within a very short time, what more effective means could possibly be found of obtaining a consensus of view, an approach toward common policy, and a coordination of policies? I am one hundred per cent for close consultation, close cooperation and effective coordination of policy on all matters of common concern between the different nations of the British commonwealth. By all means let us within the British commonwealth be as united as we possibly can in thought and action, but let us seek in regard to other countries also to effect a closer cooperation and coordination of policies, which will make for the sort of world organization we hope to see prevail in future in this world.

This leads me to conclude with just a reference—

Mr. BLACKMORE: Would the right hon. gentleman permit a question? Ever since Lord Halifax delivered his address I have been wondering what further elements of coordination or cooperative machinery he had in mind than those which the Prime Minister has out-