

The main idea of that theory is the united action of the group, - i.e. of all the Dominions together with Great Britain - in treating with foreign Powers. No conference with a foreign Power, in which the group may be interested, may therefore take place unless all the members of the group, at least if they so desire, are represented thereon,

But it has happened more than once that the most important international Conferences have been held without proper representations thereat being granted to the Dominions.

I do not wish here to examine the reasons for this. My intention is only to state that in actual practice the two main objects of the idea of the Unity of the Group have proved to be failures.

The most convincing proof thereof we find in the Treaty of Locarno, which was recently concluded. This Treaty has been entered into by the British Government in such direct conflict with the principles on which the group-unity idea is based, that it has been found necessary to exempt the Dominions from any responsibility resulting therefrom, and also to give each of the Dominions separately the option of ratifying the Treaty or not.

This Treaty is, for the reasons I have already stated, of such uncommon interest that nobody will be surprised that General Smuts, as an enthusiastic supporter of the "group unity" idea, found it necessary to utter the protest of which I have made mention in the beginning of my speech.

General Smuts is one of those with whom the idea of the Unity of the Group originated, and according to him this idea must serve the purpose of maintaining the unity

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