

National Councils would find the most useful informants.

In foreign questions no less than in domestic affairs the action of governments is in the end determined by public opinion and the quality of the public opinion will determine the quality of the policy pursued. But the quantity of the public opinion to be educated differs according to the subject matter of the question at issue. In a question like naval disarmament the quantity is high, because it obviously touches the issues of peace and war, and also the pockets of every taxpayer. On matters like this government conferences are all important. In a question such as the future of China the quantity of opinion in Europe and America is at its lowest, and is relatively low even in Australia and New Zealand. In Japan and China it is in all probability high. To speak in less general terms, in the United States and Canada (especially in the East) and in England the public opinion which governs official policy in the Far East is that of exceedingly small groups - corporations which do business in the Far East, missionary societies, and the still smaller academic groups interested in education. And this will always be so unless things are so mismanaged in the Far East as to threaten war. The result is that international conferences between small unofficial groups, which make them see eye to eye by the simple process of making them see the truth are of vital importance. Such conferences harmonise not only the views of the different national groups which meet, but also in each national group, the different sections devoted to business and philanthropy.

Such increased harmony, based on a study of facts, is rapidly reflected in the tone of the Press and in the policy of governments. Hence the importance of such unofficial conferences as took place at Honolulu in 1925 and 1927.