

will not exclude the adoption of more direct means of communication in exceptional circumstances.

The principle is now firmly established that in all matters of Imperial Cabinet concern the prime ministers of the dominions may communicate direct with
4 p.m. the Prime Minister of Great Britain and vice versa. This new procedure was put into effect when the Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) returned. Communications passed directly between Mr. Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain, and Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada in reference to the terms of the Armistice and the terms of peace and also in reference to attending the Peace Conference. This is another evidence of the equal status of Canada with the Mother Country and the other nations of the Empire. This further clause was passed and formed part of the resolution:

In order to secure continuity in the work of the Imperial War Cabinet, and a permanent means of consultation during the War on the more important questions of common interest, the Prime Minister of each Dominion has the right to nominate a Cabinet Minister, either as a resident or visitor in London, to represent him at meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet to be held regularly between the plenary sessions.

The Prime Minister of Canada did not avail himself of the power of nominating a cabinet minister, as he returned to England shortly after to attend the Peace Conference. I should think it would be a matter of pride and satisfaction to every Canadian that Canada, not only in theory, but in fact, has reached the status of a nation, one of the free nations of the British Commonwealth; that on these vital matters affecting foreign policy and peace and war we have a right to be heard, and the means is provided whereby our voice can be heard in determining these questions so vital to our future. This result has been brought about during the war.

Our constitutional position has puzzled some of the statesmen at the Peace Conference. They could not understand an empire made up of autonomous nations, each having a parliament of its own largely determining its own policy. As a matter of fact, in all history there is no political organization like the British Empire. There is no state with which you can compare it. Never before has there been an empire composed of autonomous nations owing allegiance to a common Sovereign, and each exercising control of its own affairs. It is the greatest experiment in free democratic government which this world has ever seen.

[Mr. Rowell.]

I venture to think that just as the Anglo-Saxon people have been pioneers in the development of constitutional, democratic government in the world and their example has been followed by other nations—and they have been not only pioneers, but successful pioneers—so in this new and greatest experiment in democratic government, involving more than 400,000,000 human beings, more than one-fourth of the whole human race, living on all the continents and many of the islands of the seas, they will be successful; that this League of Nations which we call the British Commonwealth may prove to be the crowning triumph of the Anglo-Saxon genius for government.

Mr. H. A. MACKIE: In connection with Canada's status as a nation, may I ask whether Sir Robert Borden will be at liberty to affix his signature to any treaty drawn up in Europe at the Conference?

Mr. ROWELL: I have been dealing with Canada's status as one of the nations within the Empire, and I now come to discuss the question of Canada's status among the nations of the world. My hon. friend's question—

Mr. E. LAPOINTE: My hon. friend has said that another conference will be called for the purpose of discussing the changes in the constitutional relations of the Empire. Will the Parliament of Canada be consulted as to the stand our delegates should take at that conference?

Mr. ROWELL: While I have no authority to speak for more than one member of the present Government, I would unhesitatingly say, Yes. That is my own view, because I believe it is a matter of the deepest concern to the whole people of Canada and the Parliament of Canada is entitled to express its views on the matter. Coming now to the question of the Peace Conference my hon. friend referred the other day to the fact that Sir Robert Borden and his colleagues left Canada before the armistice was actually signed, and he offered some criticism, or at all events comment by way of criticism, as I understood him, upon that fact. He thought the Prime Minister and his colleagues had been over there a very long time, probably an unnecessarily long time. Why did Sir Robert Borden leave Canada with his colleagues at the time he did? I will tell my hon. friend. The moment it appeared reasonably clear that a Peace Conference would be held in the not distant future, the Government of Canada through its Prime Minister took the position that in view of the part Canada