

D. Comment by Mr. Mackenzie King on F/M Smuts' remarks:

- 1) Question whether it would not be best to have a Commonwealth defence policy with allocation of specific liabilities was a recurrent one;

suggestions on this subject had been made as early as 1923 and again in 1926;

opposition from Dominions arose from political considerations which no government among them could overlook, even if there were military and financial advantages in such a Commonwealth system as was suggested.

- 2) The surest way to win the support of the Commonwealth Governments was to trust them to accept the obligations which they believed to be natural and right;

experience of the war had proved this point; a highly-centralized policy might have had a very different response from the Dominions;

if ever liberty were at stake, they could be trusted to respond wholeheartedly.

- 3) He believed in the closest co-ordination and closest understanding which would be achieved; but he was not in favour of reversing the tendencies of the last 20 years.