

Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting;  
recommendations on consultation

6. The Acting Prime Minister, referring to discussion at the meeting of October 27th, submitted and read the text of the proposals on Commonwealth consultation resulting from the recent meeting of Prime Ministers in London.

(Annex to Minutes of meeting of Prime Ministers, Oct. 21, 1948, attached hereto).

7. Mr. St. Laurent explained the circumstances in which these proposals had been formulated and gave some account of the discussions on certain of the recommendations submitted.

It had been made clear that the Canadian government were satisfied with existing arrangements for consultation; these were working well so far as Canada was concerned. We felt no need for these arrangements being formalized.

In particular, with respect to proposal 6 (defence co-operation), the Canadian position had been reserved. A minute had been circulated to the representatives of all Commonwealth governments with the minutes of the meeting to the effect that the Canadian government regarded as unrealistic joint defence planning exclusively between Commonwealth nations.

The representative of South Africa had also demurred to certain of the proposals. On the understanding, however, that they were going forward merely for consideration by governments, Mr. Louw had agreed to the draft document.

8. The Minister of National Defence and Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs submitted a memorandum for the Acting Prime Minister and a draft commentary upon each of the proposals from the Prime Ministers' meeting. It was suggested that an interim message be sent to other Commonwealth governments to the effect that proposals 2 and 6 were not acceptable to the Canadian government in their present form; the other proposals did not appear to offer objection from the Canadian point of view since they merely described existing practice.

(Minister's memorandum for the Acting Prime Minister, Nov. 4, 1948, and attached draft telegram and commentary on proposals for Commonwealth consultation).

9. Mr. Claxton drew particular attention to proposal 2 recommending meetings on foreign affairs at the Ministerial level at least once a

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