

such a way as to assist one another, and help forward the cause of peace. Its function is not to formulate or declare policy. The value of this, as of other imperial conferences, lies mainly in the free exchange of information and opinion; in furnishing the representatives of the several governments with more adequate knowledge of the problems, the difficulties, the aspirations, the attitudes of other members of the British commonwealth of nations; and in giving that direct and immediate understanding of the national and personal factors in the situation which cannot well be obtained by correspondence or indirect communication. With this further knowledge in their possession, the representatives of each government, in consultation with their colleagues and their respective parliaments, are in the best of positions to formulate policies on questions where cooperation is required.

It will be seen that at all the conferences I have mentioned, it was clearly stated that the governments and parliaments of the different countries represented would formulate and decide their own policies, that the conferences were for purposes of consultation to help to make cooperation more effective in the co-ordinating of policies. It was not for the conferences to formulate policies.

I wonder very much whether those who are speaking about more effective consultation, cooperation and coordination, begin to appreciate how much has been achieved in that direction, how completely there are existing throughout the British commonwealth of nations to-day most effective means of consultation and of cooperation in everything that affects policy, whether it is foreign policy or defence, or communications, or any other particular matter. Let me very quickly mention just what some of those means are.

In the first place there is the communication which takes place between the governments of the different countries. This government receives every day several communications from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs bringing to our attention matters that are of concern to the different nations of the commonwealth. Our government communicates every day more or less, I think I can say every day, and sometimes sends several messages in a day, to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs giving our views in these matters. There is direct communication between the prime ministers of the different nations of the commonwealth. The Prime Minister of Great Britain communicates direct with the Prime Minister of Canada, as he does with the Prime Minister of Australia and other nations of the commonwealth, and I communicate direct with him or with them when the situation is important enough to have these direct communications in addition to the messages which

are sent through the Department of External Affairs to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

Then there is present in Ottawa a representative of the British government in the person of the high commissioner, formerly a very distinguished member of British cabinets. The high commissioner of the United Kingdom is in a position to communicate direct with the members of the government, with myself personally, as he does very frequently, or with officials of the Department of External Affairs, on matters on which it is desirable to have fuller information than that which is likely to come in formal dispatches. But more than that we have also our high commissioner in Great Britain, and our high commissioner is in a position to bring to the attention of the Prime Minister and other ministers of Britain matters on which we feel we should like to give fuller information than is contained in more formal communications. The practice has grown up during the present war of having the high commissioners of all parts of the British empire resident in London meet daily with the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. He has present with him on most occasions a representative of the foreign office, and at these interviews which take place between the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, who has been sitting in the cabinet at Downing street, there is communicated to the high commissioners what is important in reference to inter-imperial relations and matters of common concern with respect to the war.

A complete system of representation by high commissioners in different parts of the empire has grown up since the beginning of this war. Canada has had her high commissioner in Britain for many years, and we received the high commissioner from Great Britain for the first time in 1928. Since the outbreak of war, Canada has appointed high commissioners to all the self-governing dominions. We have our high commissioners in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland and Newfoundland. These countries (except Newfoundland) have their high commissioners here in Ottawa.

In addition to that we have ministers or ambassadors in a number of the leading capitals. Our ministers are in touch with the ministers or the ambassadors there from other parts of the commonwealth and are in a position to gather a great deal of information which is communicated to the government at Ottawa, matters of common interest and concern; therefore, in all of these particulars there is from day to day the fullest and most complete kind of consultation.