

dealt with during the war, and that it should form the subject of a special Imperial Conference to be summoned as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities. They deem it their duty, however, to place on record their view that any such readjustment, while thoroughly preserving all existing powers of self-government and complete control of domestic affairs, should be based on a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial commonwealth and of India as an important portion of the same, should recognize the right of the Dominions and of India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations, should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern, and for such necessary concerted action founded on consultation as the several governments may determine.

There has been no departure from the position defined in that resolution. You ask what of the action which was taken last year, and to which my hon. friend referred? Under our constitution, under the constitution of all the Dominions, the Governor General occupies a dual position, which has grown out of the old colonial status. The Governor General, under our constitution, is the representative of His Majesty in Canada. He acts upon the advice of his constitutional advisers, and in that respect occupies exactly the same position as does His Majesty the King to his constitutional advisers in Great Britain. But the Governor General has another function in Canada; so has the Governor General in each of the Dominions, a function that is a survival of the old colonial days. The Governor General was the representative in Canada of the Colonial Office, the high official in Canada of the Colonial Office to receive communications from the Government of Canada. Therefore, if the Prime Minister of Canada wished to communicate with the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the message went to the Governor General of Canada; he communicated it to the Colonial Office, and the Colonial Office communicated it to the Prime Minister of Great Britain. When the Imperial Conference met this year, it was the view of the statesmen, not only of one Dominion but of all the Dominions and of India as well, that the time for that process of circumlocution had passed. It was a relic of the old colonial days. If the Prime Minister of Canada could discuss matters with the Prime Minister of Great Britain around the Council table face to face, when they separated and the Prime Minister of Canada came back home, why should he not communicate directly with the Prime Minister of Great Britain instead of through the Governor General and the Colonial Office as in the old colonial days.

That was the view at the Imperial Conference, and a resolution was passed that there should be a change in such channels of communication. Let me read to the House the resolution, moved by Mr. Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia, seconded by the Prime Minister of Canada, and unanimously adopted:

1. That this Conference is of the opinion that the development which has taken place in the relations between the United Kingdom and the Dominions necessitates such a change in administrative arrangements and in the channels of communication between their Governments as will bring them more directly in touch with each other.

2. That the Imperial War Cabinet be invited to give immediate consideration to the creation of suitable machinery for this purpose.

This was not the first Imperial Conference at which this question had come up. It had been raised by the Prime Minister of Australia in 1907. It had been raised by General Botha, Prime Minister of South Africa, at the Conference of 1911. They suggested at both of those conferences that the communications in reference to Dominion affairs should be direct to the Prime Minister of Great Britain himself. The Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1907 and in 1911 took the ground that the burdens and responsibilities of his office were so great that he could not undertake the additional work involved in receiving communications from the Dominions. Therefore the change was not made, but a permanent secretarial was established in connection with the Imperial Conference. The resolution I have read of July last was passed on to the Imperial War Cabinet. The Prime Minister of Great Britain at the present time felt very much as the prime ministers did in 1907 and 1911. He did not wish to be burdened with the additional administrative duties that would be involved in his receiving all these communications but he recognized the justice of the contentions of the dominions and this resolution was agreed upon at the Imperial War Cabinet on the 30th of July last:

1. The Prime Ministers of the Dominions, as members of the Imperial War Cabinet, have the right of direct communication with the Prime Minister of Great Britain and vice versa.

That was the establishment of the principle for which the dominions were contending.

2. Such communication should be confined to questions of Cabinet importance. The Prime Ministers themselves are the judges of such questions.

3. Telegraphic communications between the Prime Minister should, as a rule, be conducted through the Colonial Office machinery, but this