

and war. The thing cannot be done by a stroke of the pen. It involves a legislative Act which must be authorized by the British as well as by the Dominion electorate. The Dominion electorate must know what it is doing, and so also the British electorate must know what it is asked to do. Neither can have that knowledge until the proposal has been formulated with all the necessary detail in a document capable of ratification by both. It is only when that is done that both alternatives are before the Dominion electorate, and not till it is done has the electorate been put by its ministers in a position to make a free choice for themselves. If they reject such a scheme, whether by a general election or by a referendum, it is open to them to return members pledged to charge their government to assume a separate control of foreign affairs. But until such a scheme has been laid before them and they have been given the opportunity of accepting or rejecting it, they are in the position of men who are allowed to vote in favour of one alternative only but prevented from recording their decision on the other.

It will thus be seen that the question of preparing a scheme is one which goes to the root of popular institutions and raises the whole principle of government by public opinion. Those who condemn the framing of a plan are, in effect, opposing the right of the electorates to choose for themselves. The Convention, by meeting, by framing a plan of government, and by submitting it to the electorates, is deciding nothing. It is simply making it possible for the people at large to decide the question for themselves if they

The principle of government by public opinion at stake.