

wise attitude and ultimately in the interest of every section of the Empire, Britain itself included, is evident from what we have seen to be the essential character of a responsible ministry of the British type.

It will be observed that the Canadian reply to Lord Lytton's proposals makes no objection whatever to the free and informal discussion of any public questions that may be of interest either to the Empire as a whole, or to any groups of powers within it. And, indeed, where there is no "binding action" implied, the discussion of such questions may take a far wider range, may clear up many difficulties, may reveal and clarify common interests, and suggest the expediency of common action; may even lead to the suggestion of terms capable of being agreed upon between the parties, when sanctioned in their respective parliaments. But such a Conference is no place for the giving or exchanging of definite pledges, or for the formal sanctioning of any proposals or binding agreements. Nothing can be regarded as more than a tentative proposal until brought before the respective parliaments of the sections of the Empire which are interested, and whose sanction or adherence is required. If accepted by these free governments, and thus made a feature of their own policy, the proposals will become effective under the conditions recorded. Under these conditions each party to the agreement is responsible for it and retains control over its operation and amendment. Thus no majority made up from other portions of the Empire has the power to impose distasteful terms or conditions upon any distinct section of it.

In a Colonial Conference having neither legislative nor executive powers, there is this further advantage, that not only may the greatest freedom and range of discussion take place as to matters of mutual interest to all or any portion of the Empire, but all forms of government within the Empire may send representatives to the Conference. Tentative proposals may be discussed which on one subject may appeal to all portions of the Empire, while on another they may interest only those having responsible self-government, or only the crown colonies. On still other matters it would permit of discussing interests as between a self-governing country, a crown colony and even a protectorate. All this is rendered possible because in no case is any resulting agreement to be determined, ratified, or executed by any superior central power, which indeed would be impossible as combining such diverse forms of government, but is ratified