

It was evident that Ireland was determined to sever the remaining link with the Commonwealth though the Irish Ministers wished to maintain some form of association with Commonwealth nations. The Prime Minister of India had made it clear that his country would have to take a somewhat similar line.

The Canadian position had been that Canada would take no initiative to change the present position. The link through the Crown was satisfactory for our purposes. The Canadian government would not, however, raise any barrier to any other form of association which might be worked out by others. Any new arrangements proposed would be considered on their merits.

It had been agreed that as a matter of practice, though without formal action, the word "British" would be dropped from "British Commonwealth of Nations".

With respect to defence policy, it had been requested that the Canadian view be circulated to those participating in the meetings, viz., that it would be unrealistic to enter into exclusively Commonwealth arrangements on a regional basis; further, that defence arrangements between Canada and the United States had to remain the exclusive concern of the governments of those two countries.

It was hoped that Commonwealth governments would be able to reach decisions upon the recommendations resulting from the conference within a comparatively short time.

3. Mr. St. Laurent added that, with respect to the status of High Commissioners, it had been agreed that these officials would take precedence with Ambassadors according to their dates of appointment. No change in their titles was being recommended for the present.

4. The Cabinet, after discussion, noted with approval the Acting Prime Minister's report.

Western Union; Chiefs of Staff Committee;
Canadian representation

5. The Acting Prime Minister reported that an invitation had been received from the Brussels powers for Canada to send representatives, as non-members, to the Western Union Chiefs of Staff Committee.

This was identical to the invitation to the United States. It was pretty certain that the U.S. government would accept both for military

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