

on economic questions, on the International Control of Ports, Waterways and Railways and on Submarine Cables. During the last month of my stay in Paris I acted regularly as Chairman of the British Empire delegations in the absence of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, whose duties as a member of the Council of Four constantly prevented his attendance.

It is desirable to note an important development in constitutional practice respecting the signature of the various Treaties concluded at the Conference. Hitherto it has been the practice to insert an article or reservation providing for the adhesion of the Dominions. In view of the new position that had been secured and of the part played by Dominion representatives at the peace table we thought this method inappropriate and undesirable in connection with the Peace Treaty. Accordingly I proposed that the assent of the King as High Contracting Party to the various Treaties should in respect of the Dominions be signified by the signature of the Dominion plenipotentiaries, and that the preamble and other formal parts of the Treaties should be drafted accordingly. This proposal was adopted in the form of a memorandum by all the Dominion Prime Ministers at a meeting which I summoned, and was put forward by me on their behalf to the British Empire delegation, by whom it was accepted. The proposal was subsequently adopted by the Conference and the various Treaties have been drawn up accordingly so that the Dominions appear therein as signatories, and their concurrence in the Treaties is thus given in the same manner as that of other nations.

This important constitutional development involved the issuance by the King, as High Contracting Party, of Full Powers to the various Dominion Plenipotentiary Delegates. In order that such powers issued to the Canadian Plenipotentiaries might be based upon formal action of the Canadian Government, an Order in Council was passed on April 10, 1919, granting the necessary authority. Accordingly I addressed a communication to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom requesting that necessary and appropriate steps should be taken to establish the connection between this Order in Council and the issuance of the Full Powers by His Majesty so that it might formally appear of record that they were issued on the responsibility of the Government of Canada.

The new and definite status of the Dominions at the Peace Conference is further

manifested in the constitution of the League of Nations. Since they had enjoyed the same status at the Peace Conference as that of minor powers, we took the ground that the Dominions should be similarly accepted in the future international relationship contemplated by the League. The League of Nations' Commission, while inclined to accept this in principle, did not at the outset accept all its implications as was apparent in the first draft of the Covenant. This document, however, was professedly tentative. The Dominions' case was pressed, and in the final form as amended and incorporated in the Treaty of Peace with Germany, the status of the Dominions as to membership and representation in the Assembly and Council was fully recognized. They are to become members as signatories of the Treaty, and the terms of the document make no distinction between them and other signatory members. An official statement as to the true intent and meaning of the provisions of the Covenant in that regard was secured by me and is of record in the Archives of the Peace Conference.

A similar question arose in respect of the constitution of the International Labour Organization. Corresponding to the Council of the League there is a Labour Governing Body consisting of delegates nominated by a limited number of governments. The original form of the Labour Convention did not adequately recognize the status of the Dominions and at the Plenary Session of April 11, 1919, when a resolution was proposed that the Peace Conference approve of the Draft Convention, I moved that the resolution be amended by adding a provision which authorized the Drafting Committee to make such amendments as were necessary to have the Convention conform to the League of Nations in the character of its membership and in the method of adherence. As a result the Labour Convention was finally amended so that the Dominions were placed on the same footing as other members of the International Labour organization, becoming eligible like others for selection to nominate their Government Delegates to the Governing Body.

I hope the House will realize that the recognition and status accorded to the British Dominions at the Peace Conference were not won without constant effort and firm insistence. In all these efforts the Dominions had the strong and unwavering support of the British Prime Minister and his colleagues. The constitutional structure of the British Empire is imperfectly