

Dominions as Members of League of Nations.

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.

Dominions as Members of International Labour Organization

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 to nominate their Government Delegates to the Governing Body.

Equality of Nationhood in Britannic Commonwealth

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 understood by other nations, even by a nation so closely allied in kinship, in language, and in the character of its institutions as the United States of America. Such lack of comprehension need excite no surprise, because the association between the Mother Country and the great self-governing Dominions has been for years in a condition of development, and that development is not yet complete. The future relationship of the nations of the Empire must be determined in accordance with the will of the Mother Country and of each Dominion in a constitutional Conference to be summoned in the not distant future. Undoubtedly it will be based upon equality of nationhood. Each nation must preserve unimpaired its absolute autonomy, but it must likewise have its voice as to those external relations which involve