

is the final court of appeal in all political matters. A cabinet government operating on this basis, and in which is concentrated at once efficient administration and definite responsibility, is the central and essential organ of British democracy, whether in its domestic affairs or external relations, be the latter imperial or foreign. Whether as practical politicians merely, or as statesmen also, whose political lives and national measures alike depend upon popular support, cabinet ministers must analyze and estimate and, as far as possible, create and guide public opinion as a condition of maintaining themselves in power.

When the responsible ministry of a self-governing portion of the Empire is called upon to consider propositions, such as may be presented at the Colonial Conference, which might commit them to a series of actions, or a line of policy which would limit their freedom within their own government, they will naturally be as cautious as they are wise. Their opinions, promises, and policy, as expressed at the Conference, must be passed upon and justified or condemned, not by the Empire at large, but by the parliament and people of the country which they represent. When, therefore, the late Government of the Mother Country, doubtless relying upon its continued predominance in the councils of the Empire, proposed to enlarge the sphere and develop the functions of the Colonial Conference, and suggested also a change of name which implied a more binding obligation for opinions expressed or proposals approved, the Canadian Ministry, with a wise appreciation of experience and an equally sagacious foresight, declined to acquiesce in the suggestions made. It is true that the innovations proposed were very modest in extent, but it was the change of direction which naturally gave pause. "A Conference," they say, "is a more or less unconventional gathering for informal discussion of public questions, continued, it may be, from time to time, as circumstances external to itself may render expedient, but possessing no faculty or power of binding action. * * * * * The term 'Council,' on the other hand, indicates a more formal assemblage possessing an advisory and deliberative character, and, in conjunction with the word 'Imperial,' suggests a permanent institution which, endowed with a continuous life, might eventually come to be regarded as an encroachment upon the full measure of autonomous legislative and administrative power now enjoyed by all the self-governing colonies." As announced by the Premier in the House, this is still the attitude of the Canadian Ministry towards the Colonial Conference. That it is an eminently