

Conference. As the change is a very important one, may I draw the attention of the House to the Constitution of the Conference as laid down in 1907 and point out the change which has been made.

The resolution adopted at the Conference in 1907 reads:

That it will be to the advantage of the Empire if a conference, to be called the Imperial Conference, is held every four years, at which questions of common interest may be discussed and considered as between His Majesty's Government and His Governments of the Self-Governing Dominions beyond the seas. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom will be ex-officio President, and the Prime Ministers of the Self-Governing Dominions ex-officio members of the Conference. The Secretary of State for the Colonies will be an ex-officio member of the Conference and will take the chair in the absence of the President. He will arrange for such Imperial Conferences after communication with the Prime Ministers of the respective Dominions.

Then provision is made for a permanent secretariat, and also for the calling of the Conference from time to time.

Mr. McMASTER: May I interject a question? Was what the hon. minister calls "the constitution" prepared by the Conference itself or by the British Government?

Mr. ROWELL: It was prepared by the Conference itself and adopted by the Conference after protracted discussion. If my hon. friend will turn to the minutes of the Imperial Conference of 1911 he will see a most interesting discussion which preceded the unanimous adoption of this resolution. As originally submitted it differed in some material respects from the form which it finally took when it was unanimously accepted by the Conference.

This resolution provided that the Conference was to meet every four years. Normally the meeting of the Conference would have been in the year 1915, but owing to war conditions the Conference was not then called. In the year 1915 the Government of India, acting through the Imperial Legislative Council, passed this resolution:

This council recommends to the Governor General in Council that a representation be sent through the Right Honourable the Secretary of State to His Majesty's Government urging that India should, in future, be officially represented in the Imperial Conference.

That resolution was accepted on behalf of the Government by Lord Hardinge, and was approved by the Council without a division. It was subsequently approved by the Government of the United Kingdom, and at the meeting of the Imperial War

Conference which was summoned to meet in 1917 representatives from India were present by courtesy, and this resolution was unanimously adopted:

That the Imperial War Conference desires to place on record its view that the resolution of the Imperial Conference of the 20th of April, 1907—

That is the resolution, the important part of which I have just read.

—should be modified to permit of India being fully represented at all future Imperial Conferences, and that the necessary steps should be taken to secure the assent of the various governments in order that the next Imperial Conference may be summoned and constituted accordingly.

That resolution was unanimously adopted by the Imperial War Conference of 1917, and its substance was communicated to the Governments of all the self-governing dominions. They approved of the resolution, and the amendment to the constitution thereupon went into effect. When the Imperial Conference of 1918 was called India was summoned as one of the constituent members of the conference, and her representative appeared there for the first time, speaking for India's three hundred millions of people.

Mr. McKENZIE: We are represented by our Prime Minister; is there anybody who by virtue of his office is the representative of India?

Hon. Mr. ROWELL: India was represented at this conference by the Secretary of State for India, Hon. Mr. Montagu, who was there in his official capacity, and by two other representatives named by the Government of India. One was the Maharaja of Patiala and the other was a distinguished member of the Legislative Council of India, Sir S. P. Sinha, who has since, as Lord Sinha, with a seat in the House of Lords, become Under-Secretary for India—the first native Indian to be a member of the British Government.

I was about to remark that Australia was not represented at the conference of 1917, but she was represented at the conference of 1918. So the conference of 1918 was unique and historic in this respect: That for the first time in the history of the Empire all its self-governing dominions were represented by the Prime Ministers of those dominions with some of their colleagues, India, which is gradually becoming self-governing, was represented by her own representatives as well as by the Under-Secretary for India, and the other outlying portions of the Empire were represented by the