

"That authority cannot be shared"

On the other hand, supreme control over those matters — war, foreign affairs, imperial budget, great dependencies — cannot be divided between several parliaments. This practical truth MR. CURTIS clearly demonstrates with the same power of logic which permeates the whole of his study.

"The handling of foreign affairs must rest in the hands of a "single ministry, which cannot hope to shift the blame of mis-
"carriage from themselves, and that ministry must be answerable
"for all the communities involved by its action in peace or war.
"One authority must be subject to blame and also to dismissal.
"On the same principle, the power to dismiss the cabinet must rest
"with a single parliament, and therefore with a single electorate,
"and any body of voters which elects one parliament is one elec-
"torate." (p. 102).

To which is added, in a footnote, this most sensible reflexion:
"Since these words were printed it has become apparent that
"the miscarriage of Allied diplomacy in the Balkans was largely due
"to the fact that the cabinets in London, Paris, Petrograd, and Rome
"were unable to make definite proposals to Balkan Powers until the
"terms had been settled and accepted by all four. What would the
"position have been if London could have agreed to nothing without
"the concurrence of Ottawa, Melbourne, Wellington and Pretoria?"
(p. 102).

From that inexorable condition of things MR. CURTIS draws the most plausible explanation so far given of the famous declaration made by MR. ASQUITH at the Imperial Conference of 1911: "*That authority cannot be shared.*" Imperial authority cannot be "*shared*", in the sense that it cannot be *divided*. But the body through which it is exercised could and should be truly and directly responsible to *all* the self-governing nations of the Empire.

The Imperial Conference is a sham

Can the principle of self-government be reconciled with the necessity of having *one* supreme control over the general interests of the Commonwealth?

In some people's minds, this is precisely the object and the outcome of the Imperial Conference. This delusion MR. CURTIS