

In reply to this, the Prime Minister pointed out that at a meeting on December 2, 1918, at which Mr. Clemenceau and Signor Orlando were present (Paper I.C.—98 A), it had been agreed by the representatives of the British, French, and Italian Governments—

That there should be five delegates at the Inter-Allied Conference of each of the great Allied and Associated Powers, namely:

France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, United States of America.

Representatives of the British Dominions and India should attend as additional members of the British delegation when questions directly affecting them are under consideration.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the Dominions and India would be in the same position as, if not better than, the smaller Allied Powers, because it had been agreed at the same meeting—

That the smaller Allied Powers should have no right of representation at all the meetings of the Inter-Allied Conference, but that any of the smaller Allied Powers should have the right to be represented whenever questions concerning them were being discussed.

The Prime Minister added that in all discussions on the subject, it had been intended to include in the five delegates representing Great Britain, one representative of the Dominions and India.

Sir Robert Borden strongly urged that the question of representation had a very serious aspect for the Dominions, and a peculiar significance for Canada, which had no special material interest in the war, and no claims to additional territory. It would be regarded as intolerable in Canada that Portugal should have a representation in the Peace Conference which was denied to that Dominion. Canada had lost more men killed in France than Portugal had put into the field. If the French proposals were adopted as put forward in Lord Derby's telegram, the result upon public opinion in Canada would be such as he did not care to suggest, or even contemplate. The status of the Dominions was not well understood by foreign Powers, and it would be not only proper, but necessary, for the British Government to set it forth fully. The British Empire had the right to define the powers and functions of the nations which compose it, and foreign Powers had no right to question that definition. He alluded to the unanimous resolution passed in the Imperial War Conference in 1917, which was accepted by the British Government, and which declared that the constitution of the Empire was based on the principle of equal nationhood and adequate voice in foreign relations. Each Dominion should have as ample a representation as Belgium or Portugal. There was no question on which the people of Canada were more insistent than their claim to representation at the Peace Conference which would settle the issues of a war in which they had taken so notable a part. He hoped that the Cabinet would appreciate, although it was almost impossible for them fully to appreciate, the strong feeling in Canada on this subject. To provide that Canada should be called in only when her special interests were in question would be regarded as little better than a mockery. It would be most unfortunate from the point of view of the Dominions that the British delega-