

India to explain the difficulties felt by the United Kingdom Government and to explore alternatives. Lord Reith visited the Dominions, India, and Southern Rhodesia by air in February and March, 1945, returning with a large measure of agreement on modifications to the scheme put forward by the Commonwealth Communications Council. The United Kingdom Government felt unable to express a final opinion on Lord Reith's recommendations, but accepted them as a basis for further exploration with the Commonwealth Governments. With the agreement of the Commonwealth Governments, a further conference—the Commonwealth Telecommunications Conference, 1945—was accordingly held in London in July, 1945, under Lord Reith's chairmanship, to discuss Lord Reith's proposals and to prepare a detailed plan. The Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, and Southern Rhodesia were represented at the Conference. Representatives of Cable and Wireless, Ltd., and some of the associated companies in the Dominions, although not members of the Conference, attended certain of its meetings.

9. The Commonwealth Telecommunications Conference reached the unanimous conclusion that, in order to secure the desired strengthening and better ordering of the Commonwealth telecommunication system, a fundamental change in the present organization was essential. They recommended—firstly, that the private shareholder interest in the overseas telecommunication services of the United Kingdom, the Dominions, and India should be eliminated by the acquisition by the respective Governments of the shares in the companies; secondly, that the respective Governments should acquire (with a view to subsequent transfer, with the other overseas telecommunication services of the territory, to national organizations) the interest of Cable and Wireless, Ltd., in the Dominion and Indian companies; thirdly, that the new type of organization should, if possible, be uniform as among all Commonwealth countries; fourthly, that a Commonwealth Telecommunications Board should be established in place of the Commonwealth Communications Council, with functions mainly advisory in character, but substantially wider than those of the Commonwealth Communications Council, covering all the Commonwealth telecommunication organizations, and including:—

- (i) The formulation of joint telecommunication policy, including rates;
- (ii) The co-ordination and development of the wireless and cable systems of the Commonwealth;
- (iii) The co-ordination with the appropriate authorities of telecommunication matters affecting the defence of the Commonwealth;
- (iv) The co-ordination and conduct of research;
- (v) Negotiations with foreign telecommunication interests, if requested to undertake these by the Commonwealth Governments.