

negotiated and signed solely by the United Kingdom representatives, and ratification was effected with the concurrence of all Dominions (except Canada¹) by His Majesty as High Contracting Party on behalf of the British Empire. As a result of the discussions at the Conference agreement was reached on the principles which should govern Imperial treaty-making. These principles, supplemented by the understandings of the Imperial Conferences of 1926 and 1937, still hold; they (especially the principles regarding negotiation) are the formal base from which stems the comprehensive system of intra-Commonwealth consultation and exchange of information. The three sets of principles which follow illustrate again the ability of the Commonwealth to reconcile independence and interdependence. First, as to *negotiation*, the 1923 Imperial Conference agreed:

“(a) It is desirable that no treaty should be negotiated by any of the Governments of the Empire without due consideration of its possible effect on other parts of the Empire, or, if circumstances so demand, on the Empire as a whole.

(b) Before negotiations are opened with the intention of concluding a treaty, steps should be taken to ensure that any of the other governments of the Empire likely to be interested are informed, so that, if any such government considers that its interests would be affected, it may have an opportunity of expressing its views, or, when its interests are intimately involved, of participating in the negotiations.

(c) In all cases where more than one of the governments of the Empire participates in the negotiations, there should be the fullest possible exchange of views between those governments before and during the negotiations. In the case of treaties negotiated at International Conferences, where there is a British Empire Delegation, on which, in accordance with the now established practice, the Dominions and India are separately represented, such representation should also be utilized to attain this object.

(d) Steps should be taken to ensure that those governments of the Empire whose representatives are not participating in the negotiations should, during their progress, be kept informed in regard to any points arising in which they may be interested.”

Secondly, as to the *signature* of treaties, the Imperial Conference agreed that:

(a) Bilateral treaties imposing obligations on one part of the Empire only should be signed by a representative of the Government of that part. The Full Power issued to such representative should indicate

¹ Although the Canadian Government did not approve the ratification of the Lausanne Treaties, 1923, it was nevertheless understood that ratification by His Majesty on behalf of the British Empire would in that case also bind Canada.