

the part of the Empire in respect of which the obligations are to be undertaken, and the preamble and text of the treaty should be so worded as to make its scope clear.

(b) Where a bilateral treaty imposes obligations on more than one part of the Empire, the treaty should be signed by one or more plenipotentiaries on behalf of all the Governments concerned.

(c) As regards treaties negotiated at International Conferences, the existing practice of signature by plenipotentiaries on behalf of all the Governments of the Empire represented at the Conference should be continued, and the Full Powers should be in the form employed at Paris and Washington.

Thirdly, as to *ratification*, it was agreed that the existing practice should be maintained. The existing practice was stated to be as follows :

(a) The ratification of treaties imposing obligations on one part of the Empire is effected at the instance of the Government of that part.

(b) The ratification of treaties imposing obligations on more than one part of the Empire is effected after consultation between the Governments of those parts of the Empire concerned. It is for each Government to decide whether Parliamentary approval or legislation is required before desire for, or concurrence in, ratification is intimated by that Government.

At the London Reparations Conference in 1924 the procedure agreed upon at the Imperial Conference of 1923 was varied on the ground that separate representation by the Dominions would result in Commonwealth representation outnumbering that of all other foreign Governments present. As a compromise Dominion representatives were associated in a single Empire Delegation on the panel system. But this practice was not repeated.

As the Dominions were not represented at the negotiation of the Locarno Treaty in 1925 it was desired that they be excluded from the obligations under the treaty. To this end the following Article (Article 9) was included in the treaty :

The present Treaty shall impose no obligation on any of the British Dominions or upon India unless the Government of such Dominion or of India signifies its acceptance thereof.

The principle embodied in that Article came, however, to be regarded as so obvious that this practice fell into disuse.

The Imperial Conference of 1926 adopted the following rule as to the negotiation of treaties. (The very wide sense in which the word "negotiation" is used will be noted.):

This rule should be understood as applying to any negotiations which any Government intends to conduct so as to leave it to the other Governments to say whether they are likely to be interested.