

There followed a series of important discussions, which were largely conversational in form, each representative intervening in turn as occasion prompted, without formality of any kind. The objects in view were threefold: first, that the members of the Conference should all put their ideas into the common stock and thus gain a thorough understanding of each other's point of view; second, that the principal questions of foreign policy should be examined by this means from every point of view; and, third, that there should be a free and full discussion of the general aims and methods to be pursued. The discussions, which covered the whole area of foreign policy, and extended over many days, proved most fruitful in all these respects. They revealed a unanimous opinion as to the main lines to be followed by British policy, and a deep conviction that the whole weight of the Empire should be concentrated behind a united understanding and common action in foreign affairs. In this context, very careful consideration was given to the means of circulating information to the Dominion Governments and keeping them in continuous touch with the conduct of foreign relations by the British Government. It was unanimously felt that the policy of the British Empire could not be adequately representative of democratic opinion throughout its peoples unless representatives of the Dominions and of India were frequently associated with those of the United Kingdom in considering and determining the course to be pursued. All members of the Conference expressed a vivid sense of the value of this year's meeting in that respect, and a desire that similar meetings should be held as frequently as possible.

A precedent created by the Imperial War Cabinet was also revived, with valuable results. From 1916 till the Armistice the Prime Ministers of the Dominions and the representatives of India frequently sat with members of the British Cabinet to determine the measures necessary for the prosecution of the war. This method of procedure was also adopted by the British Empire Delegation during the Peace Conference in Paris, when all cardinal decisions were taken by the delegation as a whole. In accordance with this precedent, the Prime Ministers of the Dominions and the representatives of India present in London this year were invited to meetings with members of the British Cabinet called to deal with Imperial and foreign questions of immediate urgency which arose in the course of the sittings.

One of the most important of these was the Upper Silesian question, which during the session of the Conference assumed an acute form, and was debated at each stage by the members of the Conference, whose interests in a matter so closely affecting the relations of Great Britain and France was incontestable. The main lines of British policy in connection with the solution of this problem received the unanimous approval of the Conference, and it was with satisfaction that they heard, before the termination of their sitting, that, the preliminary difficulties having been resolved, the final settlement of the question of the Silesian frontier was remitted, under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, to an immediate meeting of the Supreme Council at Paris.

The problems of the Western Pacific and the Far East, together with the Anglo-Japanese agreement, were also fully discussed; and President Harding's invitation to a conference on disarmament was warmly welcomed by all the members of the Conference. The following statement, made by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on 11th July, represents the general view of all members of the Conference on the main issues of the Pacific, as also on the question of disarmament:—

“The broad lines of Imperial policy in the Pacific and the Far East were the very first subjects to which we addressed ourselves at the meeting of the Imperial Cabinet, having a special regard to the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, the future of China, and the bearing of both those questions on the relations of the British Empire with the United States. We were guided in our deliberations by three main considerations. In Japan we have an old and proved ally. The agreement of twenty years' standing between us has been of very great benefit not only to ourselves and her, but to the peace of the Far East. In China there is a very numerous people, with great potentialities, who esteem our friendship highly, and whose interests we, on our side, desire to assist and advance. In the United States we see to-day, as we have always seen, the people closest to our aims and ideals, with whom it is for us not merely a desire and an interest but a deeply-rooted instinct to consult and co-operate. Those were the main considerations in our