

MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP WITHIN EMPIRE.

I will give you my general conception of the mutual relationship in which we meet. The British Dominions and the Indian Empire, one and all, played a great part in the war for freedom, and probably a greater part than any nation except the very greatest Powers. When the history of that struggle comes to be written, your exertions side by side with ours will constitute a testimony to British institutions such as no other Empire in history can approach or emulate. In recognition of their services and achievements in the war the British Dominions have now been accepted fully into the comity of nations by the whole world. They are signatories to the Treaty of Versailles and of all the other treaties of peace; they are members of the Assembly of the League of Nations, and their representatives have already attended meetings of the League; in other words, they have achieved full national status, and they now stand beside the United Kingdom as equal partners in the dignities and the responsibilities of the British Commonwealth. If there are any means by which that status can be rendered even clearer to their own communities and to the world at large we shall be glad to have them put forward at this Conference.

INDIA'S STATUS.

India's achievements were also very great. Her soldiers lie with ours in all the theatres of war, and no Britisher can ever forget the gallantry and promptitude with which she sprang forward to the King-Emperor's service when war was declared. That is no small tribute both to India and to the Empire of which India is a part. The causes of the war were unknown to India; its theatre in Europe was remote. Yet India stood by her allegiance heart and soul from the first call to arms, and some of her soldiers are still serving far from their homes and families in the common cause. India's loyalty in that great crisis is eloquent to me of the Empire's success in bridging the civilizations of East and West, in reconciling wide differences of history, of tradition, and of race, and in bringing the spirit and the genius of a great Asiatic people into willing co-operation with our own. Important changes have been effected in India this year, and India is making rapid strides towards the control of her own affairs. She has also proved her right to a new status in our councils; that status she gained during the war, and she has maintained it during the peace, and I welcome the representatives of India to our great Council of the Empire to-day. We shall, I feel sure, gain much by the fact that her sentiments and her interests will be interpreted to us here by her own representatives.

RESULT OF THE EMPIRE'S UNITY.

I have given you my view of our relationship. May I just remind the Conference of what our unity has meant. The war demonstrated—I might say, revealed—to the world, including ourselves, that the British Empire was not an abstraction but a living force to be reckoned with. Who would have believed before the war that the Empire outside Great Britain would, in an hour of emergency, have raised two millions and more soldiers and sent them to the battlefield to serve the common cause side by side with the United Kingdom? Even the ardent soul of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, in his most glowing moments, never predicted so impressive a rally to the flag. The opportune revelation of the reality of the British Empire has, in my judgment, altered the history of the world. Those of us who know—and many, if not most, of us sitting at this table were here during the most critical hours of the war and sat at this same table—those of us who know how narrow the margin was between victory and defeat can proclaim without hesitation that without these two million men that came from outside the United Kingdom Prussianism would probably have triumphed in the West and the East before American troops arrived on the stage, and Lord Curzon, who is at this moment discussing with M. Briand, the Prime Minister of France, the execution of a victorious treaty, would have been discussing how best to carry out the humiliating conditions dictated by the triumphant war-lords of Germany. The reign of unbridled force would have been supreme, and this generation would have had to spend its days in interpreting and enduring that calamitous fact in all