

rized to say this, but I have heard it said that possibly Canada will have an election next year. That I do not know, but I know this: that New Zealand must face an election next year.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: How many years have you?

MR. MASSEY: Three years.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: How many years have you?

MR. MEIGHEN: Five years.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: How many years does your Parliament last?

MR. HUGHES: Three years.

MR. MASSEY: We are in the same year, so when Australia has an election New Zealand has an election. I am suggesting that we shall probably have a number of elections next year, and therefore it may not be possible to hold an Imperial Conference for any purpose whatever.

MR. HUGHES: I am glad you mentioned that. That is one of the practical difficulties. I think I told you, sir, it would be impossible for me to come next year.

STATUS OF PRESENT CONFERENCE.

MR. MASSEY: I was referring to constitutional questions which are causing difficulties at present, and I should like to see them cleared up. I think we are in a dangerous position—a position which may bring friction in a year or two's time or in the years to come. I think it should be faced now, and we should arrive at an understanding as to exactly where we are. There is another point. The Imperial War Cabinet has been referred to on a number of occasions to-day and yesterday, and I read with a great deal of interest an article by Lord Milner in one of the papers yesterday morning—I think the *Times*. I may say I agree thoroughly with the opinion expressed by Lord Milner in regard to the Imperial War Cabinet. I believe it did magnificent work, and I hoped that it would become a permanent institution, modified, of course, as required by a period of peace. The Imperial War Cabinet was suitable for a period of war. I do not mean to say we should go on the same lines. We are here to-day, and I think I am right in saying we do not even know what to call ourselves; and there is a great deal in a name. A Conference means consultation and consultation only, but a Cabinet also carries with it the right to recommend some definite course to the Sovereign. Of course, behind it all there is the responsibility on the part of each representative of the Dominions particularly, or even of the United Kingdom, to the Parliaments behind us; we must take the responsibility of our actions; but I think most of us—all of us—here to-day are experienced politicians, and I am quite sure that we are not likely to go too far. There is another difficulty. The representatives of the Dominions and India meet the representatives of the United Kingdom in conference, but we have no right to join in any recommendation that may be made to the Sovereign in regard to any course which requires his assent and which may be thought desirable. Now, I am not anxious about this. I have absolute confidence in the good sense of British people and British statesmen, but still there is the anomaly. There is something there that wants to be put right. Using a term which is often used, it is not democratic. I do not know whether these matters can be discussed and dealt with during the present Conference, and I am calling it a Conference for want of a better name. What I object to is what the name "Conference" implies. I do not know whether we are able to deal with it during the term of the present Conference, or whether we are not, but I do think the matter should be settled, and not left over indefinitely. We sometimes talk about what we have gained in recent years, and we have gained a great deal—there is no question about that. We have gained in status and in other ways. We stand in quite a different position from that in which the Dominions and Dependencies of the Empire, including India, stood ten years ago, but we have gone back as compared with what was the case two years ago when the Imperial War Cabinet was in existence.

MR. HUGHES: I do not quite follow where we have gone back.

VALUE OF PARTNERSHIP OF NATIONS.

MR. MASSEY: We have lost the right which we had then on war matters, and even other matters, to assist in making a recommendation to the Sovereign, the Head