

Mr. Davidson was assisted in this work by Mr. D. Caird, C.B.E., Director of Information, Dominions Office, and by Sir Arthur Willert, K.B.E., Head of the News Department, Foreign Office. It was thus possible for touch to be kept with the current work of the various committees and sub-committees of the Conference, so that adequate publicity could be given to their work as it progressed.

The arrangements made were again found to be most satisfactory, and at the conclusion of the meetings the Conference thanked Mr. Davidson and those who had assisted him for the valuable help they had given.

VI. INTER-IMPERIAL RELATIONS.

All the questions on the agenda affecting inter-Imperial relations were referred by the Conference to a committee of Prime Ministers and heads of delegations, of which Lord Balfour was asked to be Chairman. The members of the committee included the Prime Ministers of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and Newfoundland, the Vice-President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, the Secretary of State for India, as head of the Indian Delegation, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. Other Ministers and members of the Conference attended particular meetings.

The report of this committee is printed *in extenso* below. It was unanimously adopted by the Conference on the 19th November, and was published on the following day. In approving it, the Conference placed on record the great debt of gratitude which it owed to Lord Balfour for the services which he had rendered by presiding over the work of this committee, and its hope that the report would prove of permanent value and help to all parts of the British Empire.

REPORT OF INTER-IMPERIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

I. INTRODUCTION.

We were appointed at the meeting of the Imperial Conference on the 25th October, 1926, to investigate all the questions on the agenda affecting inter-Imperial relations. Our discussions on these questions have been long and intricate. We found, on examination, that they involved consideration of fundamental principles affecting the relations of the various parts of the British Empire *inter se*, as well as the relations of each part to foreign countries. For such examination the time at our disposal has been all too short. Yet we hope that we may have laid a foundation on which subsequent Conferences may build.

II. STATUS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE DOMINIONS.

The Committee are of opinion that nothing would be gained by attempting to lay down a Constitution for the British Empire. Its widely scattered parts have very different characteristics, very different histories, and are at very different stages of evolution; while, considered as a whole, it defies classification and bears no real resemblance to any other political organization which now exists or has ever yet been tried.

There is, however, one most important element in it which, from a strictly constitutional point of view, has now, as regards all vital matters, reached its full development—we refer to the group of self-governing communities composed of Great Britain and the Dominions. Their position and mutual relation may be readily defined. *They are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.*

A foreigner endeavouring to understand the true character of the British Empire by the aid of this formula alone would be tempted to think that it was devised rather to make mutual interference impossible than to make mutual co-operation easy.