

COMMONWEALTH COLLABORATION IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1939-1947:

THE BRITISH PERSPECTIVE

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The British Empire "gives an impression of unsystematic genius in the Englishman, who has no sense of structural beauty or orderly creation. To him nothing is wrong, however illogical, so long as the machine works."

(Berliner Tageblatt, 20th August 1938.)

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Abstract

This thesis studies the modes of collaboration between the members of the British Commonwealth in foreign affairs, with particular emphasis on the United Kingdom's methods of keeping the other members informed and ascertaining their views. It is not an attempt at a comprehensive survey of the foreign relations of the U.K. or the individual Dominions, but is designed as a study of the attitudes towards collaboration over the span of nearly a decade, using specific examples of successful or deficient collaboration to illustrate the policy of the U.K. and its response to the attitudes of its partners.

The first chapter takes the form of a survey of Commonwealth relations in the late 1930s. The second chapter considers Commonwealth collaboration during the first five years of the war, with special attention to two aspects; the transmission of information to the Dominions and their participation in the higher direction of the war. The next chapter concentrates on the U.K.'s plans for the post-war period, specifically the representation of the association internationally and the F.O.'s consideration of methods by which the U.K. could increase contacts between the member countries. In the fourth chapter attention is given to the policies of the Dominion Governments and their plans for the Commonwealth after the war, both in terms of the international position of the Commonwealth and their individual association with it. Chapter five studies the only war-time Prime Ministers' Meeting, in 1944, at which the member states discussed the establishment of the proposed world organisation and the Commonwealth's association with it, and measures to improve collaboration within the Commonwealth.

Chapter six considers the degree of harmony in the policies of the member countries on some important aspects of international policy, such as the Great Power veto or the position of 'middle' ranking states

within the U.N. The dual role of the U.K. as a member of the Commonwealth and of the Great Power elite is also studied with a view to assessing the compatibility of these two. The next chapter considers the U.K.'s attempts to promote close collaboration at the various international conferences between 1944 and 1946 and the efforts made to produce a consensus on policy. The 1945 San Francisco Conference is looked at in particular detail to demonstrate the contact which took place between Commonwealth Ministers and officials. In chapter eight three examples of collaboration on aspects of U.K. policy - the 1946 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and the re-negotiation of the treaties with France and the U.S.S.R. in the same year - are studied as examples of problems which remained in Commonwealth collaboration in the post-war. The latter two illustrate the importance of the U.K.'s attitude with regard to transmitting information in advance of policy decisions, and the difficulties entailed by the divergence in Dominion attitudes. Consideration is also given to the role of the Dominion High Commissioners in London, in terms of the information provided for them and their status within the diplomatic community. Finally, chapter nine looks ahead to the expansion of the Commonwealth and the key position of India. This does not involve a study of Anglo-Indian relations, or the U.K.'s policy in granting India independence. It considers three issues raised by the independence of India and the question of its future association with the Commonwealth: first, the effect on the U.K.'s policy of transmitting information to fellow members; secondly, the stimulus which India's new status provided for the F.O. to reconsider its position in relation to Commonwealth liaison; thirdly, the discussions which were prompted about the fundamental basis of the Commonwealth relationship and the feasibility of permitting a republican state to be a member.

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My chief debt is to Professor David N. Dilks for his supervision of the preparation of this thesis; his guidance was invaluable and his patience unlimited. I owe a particular debt of thanks to Professor John Holmes for his encouragement and assistance both during his time at Leeds University and after his return to Canada, and to Mr. Graham Ross for his advice on particular archives and for his comments on sections of the thesis. I am also indebted to the staff of the Public Records Office, London, the Canadian Public Archives, Ottawa, and the Library of the Royal Commonwealth Society, for their assistance.

Finally I would like to dedicate this piece of work to the memory of my father who always gave me so much encouragement, and to thank my family and friends who have supported me during the last four years.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations refer to material in the Public Record Office, London:

DO	Dominions Office Records
FO	Foreign Office Records
CAB	Cabinet Office Records
Prem	Prime Minister's Office Records
CP	Cabinet Paper
WP	War Cabinet Paper
CM	Cabinet Minutes
WM	War Cabinet Minutes

The following abbreviation refers to material in the Public Archives, Ottawa:

MG26, J1 & J4 King Papers

Various Printed Sources have been abbreviated in the footnotes, although the references are contained in full in the Bibliography. Thus the Selections from the Smuts Papers, edited by J. Van der Poel, are referred to as the Smuts Papers, with appropriate volume and number assigned. The printed edition of King's diary, edited by J. W. Pickersgill in the Mackenzie King Record, is referred to by title, volume and page number. Where the original manuscript has been used, the date of the entry has been given. The printed Documents on Canadian External Relations are footnoted as Canadian Documents; similarly the published Documents on Australian Foreign Policy are footnoted as Australian Documents and the Documents Relating to New Zealand's participation in the Second World War are noted as N.Z. Documents. Elsewhere, secondary sources are noted in full the first time they are drawn upon in each chapter.

Introduction

The machinery created to further Commonwealth collaboration in foreign affairs was not constructed all at once from a blue-print. Rather, it grew gradually over a span of years in response to the constitutional advance of the Dominions and their increasing interest in world affairs. The first half of the twentieth-century saw periodic additions to the system employed by the members to keep in contact with each other, rather than any major revisions of that system, and not all channels of communication used were adopted by every member.¹ Generally new methods of collaboration were added without abandoning previous ones. One of the earliest practices - of direct Prime Ministerial contact - was permanently retained, although some Dominions wanted to use their High Commissioners as the principal means of communication, as foreign states used their ambassadors.² The U.K. was particularly keen to keep this direct link between the leaders, especially when the Dominions became more independently minded.

The establishment of the D.O. in 1925 had marked an explicit recognition of the difference between the Dominions and the colonies. The office had a fairly modest early history as a junior Whitehall department and the facts that its first Secretary of State, Mr. Leo Amery, (who had played a major role in the establishment of the D.O.) was also Colonial Secretary, and that the D.O. was housed in the same building as the C.O. sharing many administrative facilities, made it difficult for the D.O. to be regarded as wholly independent of the

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1. For example Australia appointed a Political Liaison Officer to the Cabinet Offices of the U.K. in 1925, but New Zealand was the only Dominion to follow this example and it did so only in 1937.
 2. See chapter 9, p.436.

C.O.³ After the 1926 Imperial Conference and the clarification of the Dominions' autonomous status in the Balfour Report, plans were begun to establish a network of U.K. representatives in the Dominions, charged to represent British interests. The traditional link between the Governors-General in the Dominions and the U.K. was inappropriate because the Governor-General was the personal representative of the King, not of the U.K. Government. The first High Commissioner to be appointed was to the senior Dominion, Canada, and Sir William Clark took up office there in April 1928. Thereafter appointments were made during the next decade to the other Dominions.⁴

On Amery's insistence, the High Commissioners were not narrow diplomatic representatives and the title of 'Minister' or 'Ambassador' was rejected to preserve a distinction between the close 'family' relationship within the Commonwealth. The High Commissioners represented the full spectrum of British interests in the Dominions, but the D.O. secured its authority to act as the office responsible for these representatives and the sole channel of communication with them. Accordingly, Prime Ministerial correspondence passed through D.O. channels. The first High Commissioners chosen were men with varied Whitehall experience, although none was from the Foreign Service. Gradually the D.O. furnished the High Commissions with more men from its own ranks, as it built up a body of experienced officials, and by 1936 this extended to the senior post of High Commissioner, with Sir Geoffrey Whiskard's

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3. For further details on the establishment of the D.O. see: P. G. Wigley, Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: British-Canadian Relations 1917-1926 (C.U.P. 1977) pp.256-257; G. N. Hillmer, Anglo-Canadian Relations 1926-1937: A study of Canada's role in the shaping of commonwealth policies (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1974) pp.3-4; Rt. Hon Lord Garner, The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968 (London 1978) pp.10-32.
 4. For further details on the appointment of High Commissioners see Garner, op.cit., pp.33-47; Hillmer, op.cit., chapter 2; L. H. Wilmot, The Functions and Activities of the British High Commissioner from 1928-39, with particular emphasis on the British High Commission at Ottawa (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Birkbeck College, London, 1977).

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appointment to Australia.⁵ However, there was in practice a balance between the appointment of D.O. and non-D.O. officials as High Commissioners and later some politicians were also appointed. The fact that the D.O. became an overseas service was of considerable advantage to it. Officials were able to consider Commonwealth relations in light of their own experience of one or more Dominions and the personal contacts they had established with Dominion Ministers and officials. When these officials were posted in the overseas Commonwealth, they were able to begin with the benefit of a knowledge and understanding of Commonwealth relations. Perhaps the full advantage of this did not come to fruition until the 1950s and 1960s, as the senior officials of the D.O. before that time, Sir Edward Harding, Sir Eric Machtig, and Sir John Stephenson, had not served abroad. Later when men such as Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, Ben Cockram, Lord Garner, Sir Walter Hankinson, Stephen Holmes and Sir Percivale Liesching had reached the top posts, the full benefits of this dual experience could be called upon. However, by the 1940s the D.O. did contain many men with wide experience and understanding of service in London and elsewhere in the Commonwealth.⁶

Commonwealth relations have always been characterised by two seemingly irreconcilable trends. On the one hand stand the close historical and racial ties, stimulating association; on the other, the attraction of independent action. To a large extent the study of the Commonwealth in any period reflects these twin forces, but perhaps none especially so than the period 1939-1947. The Dominions' participation in the war and their increased international status at its conclusion strengthened both trends, but particularly the inclination to act independently in international affairs. By 1945 the Dominions

5. See chapter 2, p. 112.

6. For details of the careers of these men, see Appendix I.

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had three courses open to them: to act as individual states with no close alignment with any other Power; to be part of a close-knit Commonwealth group, pursuing a common policy; or to combine their independent identities with co-operative action within the Commonwealth. The U.K. had meanwhile been weakened by its massive war effort and this plus the full participation of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. in international affairs, relegated the U.K. in the hierarchy of states. This prompted a greater awareness by the U.K. of the value of its Commonwealth partners as a support to its power and influence, and resulted in attempts to promote greater collaboration with the Dominions. The reconciliation of this desire with the Dominions' tendencies to act independently posed a problem which required sensitive handling and an even greater degree of flexibility in the treatment of the individual Dominions than before. There had always been variations in the pattern of U.K.-Dominions relations, but the post-war period demanded an even clearer acceptance of the principle that Commonwealth relations had to combine a system of bi-lateral collaboration, with group collaboration. There could be no question of forcing a minority of members to join a co-operative scheme when they did not wish to.

There were many disagreements about policy and the methods of collaboration in the 1940s, but perhaps the most important aspect of Commonwealth relations in this decade lay in the continued efforts made to find a mutually acceptable basis for collaboration which would permit the twin forces of association and independence to co-exist and not force members to choose between subservience to a rigid common policy, or opt for secession from the Commonwealth. The period 1939-1947 was chosen for this study in order to contrast the modes of collaboration existing before the war with those of the late 1940s, and to show how attitudes had changed.

The decision to study this period has meant restrictions on the areas of Commonwealth collaboration which it has been possible to study. One aspect omitted, despite its close affinity with foreign affairs, is defence or military collaboration. Apart from the limits of time and space, this aspect has been left out because it had already been covered fairly thoroughly in published documents and books. In the Australian official histories of the war there are volumes covering the actions of all three Australian Services and the published Australian Documents also contain some valuable material. The New Zealand Documents are primarily concerned with the military aspect of New Zealand's war effort and these are well supplemented by F. L. Wood's book The New Zealand People at War: Political and External Affairs. For Canada, there are official histories on the Canadian Navy and Army during the war, while Colonel C. P. Stacey's Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada gives an excellent coverage of Canada's military policies and defence co-operation with the U.K. There are also several official volumes on South Africa's military contribution to the war. In addition there are a number of secondary sources which give accounts of the actual collaboration of the Commonwealth in terms of the military commitment of each to the fighting and the co-ordination of those defence policies. While making some reference to defence policies, this thesis therefore offers no extended treatment of that aspect of collaboration.

The Pacific war and relations with the U.S.A. were of special concern to Australia and New Zealand and I have tried to indicate these two Dominions' preoccupation with the Pacific and the impact of closer relations with the U.S.A. on their relations with the Commonwealth. However, there is a considerable body of literature which specifically studies the policies of the U.S.A., the U.K. and the two antipodean

Dominions and in many instances I have made references to these for further consideration. Some of the best sources are by Roger J. Bell, Unequal Allies: Australia-American Relations and the Pacific War; Paul Haggie, Britannia at Bay: The Defence of the British Empire against Japan, 1931-1941; W. R. Louis, Imperialism at Bay, 1941-1945; The United States and the decolonisation of the British Empire; Trevor Reese, Australia, New Zealand and the United States; A survey of International Relations, 1941-1968; Christopher Thorne, Allies of a Kind: United States, Britain and the War against Japan, 1941-1945, and Ian Hamill, The Strategic Illusion: The Singapore Strategy and the defence of Australia and New Zealand, 1919-42.

The other Dominion to have particularly close relations with the U.S.A. was Canada, due to its close geographical proximity. American-Canadian relations have a longer history and a larger store of literature than Australia or New Zealand's relations with the U.S., and this is really a subject in its own right. I have attempted to inform the reader of the occasions when American policy had a particular bearing on Canadian policies, but it is important to keep Canada's preoccupation with the U.S.A. constantly in mind when considering almost any aspect of Canadian attitudes towards the Commonwealth, or international affairs in general. Widening the horizon, Canada was also concerned during this period with the Pan American Union, although it never joined the body. This facet has been omitted from the thesis as also requiring consideration in its own right, but again the reader would be wise to remember that in-as-much as South Africa was concerned with the events in the rest of its continent, and the Antipodean Dominions with the actions in the Pacific area, Canada was constantly keeping a watch on the policies and actions throughout the American continent. This area was one of the first to which it sent accredited representatives.⁷

7. See especially R. D. Cuff and J. L. Granatstein, Ties That Bind: Canadian American Relations in Wartime From the Great War to the Cold War (Toronto, 1977).

The thesis studies the Commonwealth members who fought in the Second World War, and deliberately excludes any detailed consideration of Eire. Eire remained a member of the Commonwealth until 1948, but in many respects as a non-participating member. As a non-belligerent it could not join in discussion of war strategy and although it retained diplomatic relations with the other members, it was a Dominion with special status and cannot easily be considered on a par with the others. For studies on Eire, see D. W. Harkness, The Restless Dominion: The Irish Free State and the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1921-31 (London 1969); J. T. Carroll, Ireland in the War Years, 1939-45 (Newton Abbot 1975); and P. N. S. Mansergh, The Prelude to Partition: Concepts and Aims in Ireland and India (C.U.P. 1978).

The issues chosen in this study to illustrate the attitudes towards collaboration, and the machinery implemented to further it, have been selected to demonstrate the attitudes of all members and the reaction of the U.K. to each. The concentration on the policies of Canada and Australia stems from three factors. First, they were the most active Dominions internationally; secondly, they often held divergent views about collaboration, representing either end of the spectrum of Commonwealth opinion; and thirdly, because the foreign policies of Canada and Australia are better documented than those of the other two Dominions. I have also tried to balance Commonwealth collaboration within an international context with collaboration on narrower, inter-Commonwealth or specifically U.K. issues. Thus the thesis considers the association within the context of the U.N., the reaction of the Dominions to the U.K.'s consultation procedures during the re-negotiation of the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1946, the status of High Commissioners in London and the actions of the F.O. in promoting communications with Commonwealth officials. The network of Commonwealth collaboration

extended from the Prime Ministers down to junior officials, and I have tried to indicate this range.

The principal sources used in this study were the records of the Dominions Office, (later the Commonwealth Relations Office) the Foreign Office and the Cabinet Office. From the papers of the Dominions Office I have chiefly used two sets of files; the General Correspondence, D.O.35, and the Private Office Files, D.O.121. The General Correspondence files which contain the principal despatches to and from the Dominions, plus the internal office minuting, are only available up until the year 1946. (Production of the C.R.O.'s papers in this category has been delayed by some problems over the arrangement of the papers.) However, many of the Private Office papers are open for the years up to 1950. As a result of this situation for the latter part of the thesis, especially the chapter on India's entry, I have had to rely upon some Private Office papers, supplemented by those from the Foreign Office and the Cabinet Office.

Two officials of the Dominions Office who reached senior positions have written some account of their time at the Office. Sir Charles Dixon, Assistant Under-Secretary and later constitutional adviser wrote his memoirs in 1969. These were not published, but a copy was given to the Library of the Royal Commonwealth Society and I was kindly given access to them. Lord Garner, who was a Principal in the Dominions Office in 1945, and later reached the position of Permanent Under-Secretary of the Commonwealth Relations Office, has published a book entitled The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968 which contains many interesting insights into the working of the Dominions Office, especially about many of the individuals involved in Commonwealth Relations.

The Foreign Office was increasingly involved in the U.K.'s relations with the Dominions from the late 1930s and some valuable information

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can be gained from this Office's papers. In addition I have also used these papers to give some indication of occasions in which the attitudes of the Foreign Office, or certain individuals within it, did not correspond with the view of the Dominions Office. In the main I have drawn upon the files of the Dominions Intelligence Department (later called the Commonwealth Liaison Department), which was the department in the Foreign Office established to provide information on foreign affairs to the Dominion Governments, via the Dominions Office. Later this department also actively promoted more direct consultations with Dominion officials and by the late 1940s the U.K. had to re-consider its apportioning of responsibility for foreign affairs collaboration between the Foreign Office and the Dominions Office.

In addition to the minutes and memoranda of the U.K. Cabinet, various Cabinet Office files contain minutes and memoranda of Cabinet committees established to discuss some aspects of Commonwealth Relations. There are also full records of the major Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meetings in Cabinet papers, as well as in those of the Dominions Office.

Some material from Premier Files, containing minutes by the Prime Minister of the day, have been used, especially those by Churchill during the war. However, Premier' 8, which contains Attlee's Minutes, I found to be of very limited value for this particular subject.

Another body of primary source upon which I was able to draw was that of the Canadian Public Archives; I have the Canadian Government and the University of Leeds to thank for helping to finance the visit. The opportunities for travelling abroad were limited by considerations of time and expense and I decided that because the Canadian External Affairs Department was the most fully developed of all the Dominions for this period, a visit to Canada would be the most productive. As a result, I have been able to include some material from Canadian

sources to supplement the main U.K. documents.

In addition to these archival sources I have used the published documents of the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian Governments. These do not yet provide a full coverage for these Dominions, as the Australian and Canadian documents are not yet published for the whole period, while the New Zealand documents, produced much earlier, are primarily concerned with the military/political policy of the New Zealand Government vis-a-vis the deployment of New Zealand troops. There is some information about the Government's views on collaboration, particularly on the subject of New Zealand representation in the high direction of the war, but whether the lack of information on New Zealand's policies towards collaboration is due to the absence of documents or due to its nascent Department of External Affairs, or merely the choice of the editor, is uncertain. There are no published documents covering the policies of the South African Government.

Two of the four Dominion Prime Ministers have left semi-documentary sources. Smuts' personal correspondence, a selection of which has been published by Jean Van der Peet, contains some valuable material on Smuts' views and the internal situation in South Africa. The Canadian Prime Minister, W. L. M. King, kept a full diary for most of his political life, published in an abridged form in The Mackenzie King Record. Since I also had access to the original manuscript of this Diary, the reader will find references to both the unpublished and the published Diary. The other diary which I was able to study was that of the Canadian High Commissioner to the U.K. from 1935-1946, Mr. Vincent Massey. This is held in Massey College, University of Toronto. My thanks are extended to Mr. Claude Bissell for facilitating access to Massey's diary.

The copious files in the U.K. archives, and the plentiful minutes contained therein, have enabled me to form an impression of the opinions

of individuals and departments on many of the crucial issues and acquire some sense of the framework in which Ministers and officials approached questions of Commonwealth collaboration. Sir Charles Dixon's Memoirs and Lord Garner's book have assisted this process and I was able to have one conversation with the late Malcolm MacDonald. One other figure involved in this period of Commonwealth relations, to whom I posed a number of questions, was Professor John W. Holmes, lately of the Canadian External Affairs Department. Professor Holmes had just finished reviewing the archival sources for the purpose of writing a two-volume work on Canadian foreign policy and was thus well re-acquainted with the events of the 1940s, and made many interesting comments. I have supplemented these materials by references to a variety of secondary sources, books and articles, the most useful of which I have listed in the bibliography.

As well as studying the policies of the various Governments towards Commonwealth collaboration, I have tried to shed light on the actions, opinions and abilities of some of the people at the centre of events. For this purpose I have had to rely on the comments of other people involved as well as upon the conclusions drawn from reading the letters and minutes in the archives. Where there exist differing opinions and judgments I have tried to include them and it has not been my intention to make definitive judgments about the careers of these men. However, I do feel that knowledge of the personal side of Commonwealth relations, the attitudes of individuals to each other, assists an understanding of the way in which the several Governments collaborated together. Because of the unique historical roots of the Commonwealth, it was, at least until 1949, an extremely close 'family' group and within it, the interaction of individuals was possibly more relevant to the success or failure of co-operation than would be the case in the relations between two foreign countries. Finally, due to the large

number of people involved in some capacity in Commonwealth collaboration, I have included in the appendices short bibliographical sketches of the principal characters to aid the reader in the problem of identification and listed the holders of the main offices.

Chapter One

Commonwealth Relations before the Second World War

During the 1930s the British Commonwealth was in the process of adapting its relations to the constitutional framework defined ^{at} by the 1926 ^{Imperial Conference} ~~Statute of Westminster~~ and endorsed ^{by} at the 1931 ^{Statute of Westminster} ~~Imperial Conference~~.¹

The Commonwealth was not an alliance established for specific purposes; rather it was an association of like-minded, independent countries, equal with one another and committed to collaboration in matters of mutual interest. It was an evolving association which had emerged from earlier British expansion overseas. Its ties were a mixture of practicality and sentiment. On the one hand stood the important links of race, culture, religion and similar institutions, which were for many so importantly symbolised by the British monarchy, to which all paid allegiance. On the other hand, political, economic and defence agreements bound the members together. Commonwealth collaboration embraced almost all spheres of human activity, governmental and non-governmental; politics, trade, culture, sport and family relationships. The Commonwealth was frequently referred to as a 'family of nations' and the members tried to retain their mutual links because of feelings of race and friendship and, not least, self-interest, however ill-defined. In the sphere of foreign affairs the latter was particularly strong as the Dominions viewed a world without a powerful U.K. as likely to be a more dangerous place for them, and the U.K. valued the prestige and potential strength which its leadership of the Commonwealth was felt to provide. During the 1930s the Commonwealth countries tried to develop ways of harmonising their foreign policies without prejudice to the new basis of their relationship.

1. P. N. S. Mansergh, Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs, 1931-1952 (London 1953), Vol. 1, pp. 1-3.

The Commonwealth countries had fought together in the First World War, participated as independent powers in the Peace Conference and became founding members of the League of Nations. The U.K. assumed after the First World War that the Dominions wished to participate in its foreign policy, but the Chanak crisis of 1922 showed Canada's desire to control its own foreign policy and not to be committed to the U.K.'s, or participate in a common Commonwealth policy. The lessons to be drawn from this were evident in the 1925 Locarno Treaty which provided for Dominion accession, but did not require it.² The Balfour Declaration of 1926 and the 1931 Statute of Westminster firmly established the right of all members to form their own foreign policies and in the 1930s the association began to put the twin concepts of independence and co-operation into practice. As the decade progressed the Dominions increased their activity in foreign affairs in terms of their actions at Geneva, their interest in the deteriorating international situation, and increasing the number of people appointed to formulate and carry out their foreign policies. The greatest stimulus for this development was undoubtedly the crisis in European and Far Eastern relations, but the most striking feature of the Commonwealth's approach to foreign affairs in the 1930s was the different attitude of each towards the international situation and towards the issue of inter-Commonwealth collaboration. The pre-requisite for a common Commonwealth foreign policy was a substantial identity of views on both these issues; the Commonwealth of the 1930s did not possess it.

2. For detailed studies of the Commonwealth in the 1920s and 1930s see P. N. S. Mansergh, The Commonwealth Experience (London 1969); P. N. S. Mansergh, Survey of Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of External Policy 1931-1939 (O.U.P. 1952); G. Carter, The British Commonwealth and International Security: The Role of the Dominions 1919-1939 (Toronto 1947); R. Ovendale, Appeasement and the English-Speaking World: Britain, the United States, the Dominions and the policy of appeasement 1937-1939 (Cardiff 1975); R. F. Holland, Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance, 1918-1939 (Macmillan, London 1981).

The senior Dominion, Canada, which had welcomed the recognition of the Dominions' independence from the U.K., solidly took the position that Canada could not be expected to make any prior commitments to the U.K.; it was an independent country, responsible for its own policies and would decide upon its actions in light of the situation. Its Prime Minister from 1935, W. L. M. King, believed very strongly that to frame common policies in an association of free and equal countries would weaken, not strengthen, the unity of the association and eventually divide it. He stood by the thesis that they were like-minded countries and would tend to stand together in a crisis because their attitudes and interests were similar, not because they were committed to do so. This opinion was certainly reinforced by Canada's domestic situation, especially the substantial French Canadian population and its close proximity to the U.S.A. Canadian Governments picked a careful way between their powerful neighbour and their trans-Atlantic partner, while at the same time anticipating accusations from French Canadians that they were the "puppets of the U.K. Government." This was especially relevant for a Liberal government, such as King's, which tended to rely on a large French-Canadian vote.³

King welcomed the information sent from London about foreign affairs, but not requests for formal consultation or expressions of opinion on, or support for, U.K. policy. By so doing he hoped to avoid charges that his Government was automatically supporting U.K. policy, while being able to harmonise Canada's policy with the U.K.'s. There was a considerable difference between King's public and private statements. In February 1938, at the time of Mr. Anthony Eden's resignation as Foreign Secretary, the U.K. High Commissioner in Ottawa, Sir Francis Floud, reported that when questioned in Parliament about

3. L. B. Pearson, 'Forty Years on: Reflections on our Foreign Policy', International Journal, 1967, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 357-363.

the U.K.'s determination to reach an agreement with Italy and Eden's resignation, King had replied that he had not been consulted, nor expressed any opinion about U.K. policy. At the same time King had privately informed Floud that he was in full agreement with the U.K.'s policy and thought that the necessary agreement with Italy could not be achieved while Eden remained at the F.O.⁴

King strongly objected to the Canadian High Commissioner's attending the meetings held in London between the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the Dominion High Commissioners. He forbade Mr. Vincent Massey to attend these until the Czechoslovakian crisis and thereafter stressed that such meetings did not constitute 'consultations' between the two governments and that Massey was not entitled to express the views of the Canadian Government.⁵ In 1939 King also had some worries about the channel of communication between Canada and the U.K. In July he complained to a member of the U.K. High Commission that too many messages were being sent to him via that office, rather than directly between the Prime Minister or Foreign Secretary and himself. He assumed this to be an innovation by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Sir T. Inskip, and remarked that he had managed to explain to Mr. MacDonald, the previous Secretary of State, Canada's standpoint in inter-Commonwealth relations, whereas Inskip did not seem to comprehend it. Mr. Stephen Holmes, an official in the U.K. High Commission, reported that King was clearly associating the U.K.'s use of the High Commission to transmit messages to him with his own objections to Massey's attending meetings at the D.O.⁶ The new High Commissioner,

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4. Floud to D.O. 27th February 1938, D035/552¹, F43/63; Floud to D.O. 28th February 1938, D035/552², F43/64.
5. V. Massey, What's Past is Prologue (Toronto 1963), pp. 240-242; Campbell to D.O. 21st March 1939, D035/576, F706/10; Campbell to D.O. 24th March 1939, D0114/98, F706/117, No. 10.
6. Holmes to Harding 15th July 1939 and 21st July 1939, D035/541, C97/42.

Mr. G. Campbell, saw King the following month, armed with a letter from the D.O. commenting on King's statements to Holmes. During the conversation it became apparent to the High Commissioner that King felt a violent antipathy towards Massey, as he informed him that

he was not going to have him strutting about like a foreign diplomat and committing Canada to all sorts of things which he would be only too likely to do if he were constantly visiting Secretaries of State.

The Canadian Prime Minister said he did not like discussions with the U.K. High Commissioner on important issues as he felt he had no control over the use to which what he or I say may be put and that, at a later date, he may be accused of committing Canada to do this or that with nothing in writing to show that this is actually groundless.

Campbell informed King that Inskip had not changed the U.K.'s policy on communications with Canada and that if more questions were being transmitted through the High Commission, this reflected the delicate and swift developments in world affairs. Yet it seemed that it was precisely because issues were so important that King wanted more direct communication with U.K. Ministers. He specifically said that he would like more correspondence with Lord Halifax on foreign affairs, before definite decisions were made, and that

the Dominions must . . . have a louder voice in affairs which concerned their welfare

if the Commonwealth were to continue.⁷ This was a remarkable statement for King to make (if this discussion was reported correctly) but it seems to reflect the desperate international situation and possibly

7. Harding to Campbell 3rd August 1939 and Campbell to Harding 25th August 1939, D035/541, C96/46. There was no direct communication between the U.K. Foreign Secretary and the Dominion Governments - all correspondence was sent via the D.O. This issue became a controversial one in the late 1940s when the F.O. asserted its claim to deal directly with Dominion Governments. (For a study of the British High Commission in Ottawa before the war, see Lloyd H. Wilmot, The Functions and Activities of the British High Commissions from 1928-1939, with particular emphasis on the British High Commission at Ottawa. (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Birkbeck College, London, 1977)).

King's concern at the U.K.'s guarantee to Poland and other Eastern European countries which it was unable to aid directly. War broke out within weeks of this conversation. Communication with all the Dominions was changed as a consequence and by 1941 many new men were posted to the Dominions. The choice of MacDonald for the Ottawa post (in March 1941) was particularly pleasing for King.

Canada supported the main aspects of U.K. foreign policy in the 1930s but made very few foreign policy statements itself; those that King did make were vague and characterised by his assertion that Canada would wait and see.⁸ During 1938 he began to speak rather more positively of the U.K.'s efforts to keep the peace, but still refused to be drawn into a discussion of hypothetical possibilities. He fully supported the Munich agreement, not least because he was worried that a serious split would have arisen in Canada if war had broken out then.⁹ By December 1938 King was more confident that he would have a large majority in Parliament in favour of fighting with the U.K.¹⁰ The Canadian Government responded to Chamberlain's statement in March 1939 that he would consult with the other democracies, after Germany's seizure of Czechoslovakia, with the pledge that it was ready for consultations with the U.K.¹¹ King was not happy about the guarantees to East European and Balkan states, and told the U.K. High Commissioner that the Canadian people did not want to fight a war involving a Balkan or African dispute.¹² Nevertheless, in March and April King and other senior Ministers made significant statements on Canada's foreign policy. In particular, Mr. Lapointe, the Justice Minister and senior French

8. Floud to D.O. 17th May 1938, D0114/85, D155/46, No. 90. (For King's actions at the 1937 Imperial Conference, see G. N. Hillmer, 'The Pursuit of Peace; Mackenzie King and the 1937 Imperial Conference' in J. English and J. O. Stubbs, eds., Mackenzie King: Widening the Debate (Toronto 1978).

9. Acting High Commissioner to D.O. 18th September 1938, D0114/94, F82/206, App. II, No. 10 and 24th September 1938, D0114/94, F82/195, App. II, No. 1

10. Campbell to Harding 8th December 1938, D035/540, C87/31.

11. Report from The Times 21st March 1939, D035/540, F706/106.

12. Campbell to D.O. 24th March 1939, D0114/98, F706/108, No. 11.

Canadian in the Cabinet, was referring to the impossibility of Canada's remaining neutral; this marked a clear effort by King to win over French Canadian opinion by not making the speech himself. By August 1939 the High Commissioner was reporting "a remarkable desire to cooperate" on the part of Canada.¹³

The U.K. High Commissioner in 1938, Sir F. Floud, criticised King in February of that year for not educating his country politically and for avoiding foreign policy statements.¹⁴ However, the main concern of King was to preserve Canada's unity, not to risk divisions prematurely by making categorical statements on future policy. He was content to bide his time and stick to his pledge to place the question before Parliament. King was anxious to ensure that if and when war occurred the unity he had tried to build up would be sufficient, not merely to secure a positive vote in Parliament, but to achieve this without dividing British and French Canadian opinion.¹⁵ The Governor-General, Lord Tweedsmuir, understood King's position better. He told his wife in May 1938

The people who clamour for a bolder statement do not realise the delicacy of the ground here. Canada, as a sovereign nation, must leave any question of participation in war to her Parliament when the crisis arises. She is very jealous about avoiding prior commitments.

He noted that some people in the U.K. did not seem to understand the "real delicacy" of the position of the Dominions, especially Canada "who is so much out of the possible war area". The latter point is pertinent, for Europe was and seemed a long way from Canada, shielded as Canada was by the U.S.A. Even the prospect of war in the Pacific was not as worrying to Canadians as it was to Australians or New

13. Campbell to Stephenson 2nd April 1939, D0114/98, F706/123, No. 15; 19th April 1939 D035/540, C87/44; and 25th August 1939, D0114/98, F706/263, No. 52.

14. Floud to Harding, 28th February 1938, D035/552², F43/64.

15. Acting High Commissioner to D.O. 28th September 1938, D0114/94, F82/228, App. II, No. 17; Campbell to D.O. 27th April 1939, D0114/98, F706/155, No. 21.

Zealanders.¹⁶ On 25th August 1939 King informed the U.K. High Commissioner confidentially that his Cabinet was unanimous in its determination to fight, but that this could not be put into effect until Parliament had agreed to it. He stressed that this decision should be kept secret as Canada had to be allowed to make its choice as a nation.¹⁷

Some similarities existed between the attitudes of South Africa and Canada but they were by no means identical. Like Canada, South Africa had a substantial non-British population but of Dutch extraction, and approximately equal in number to the British South Africans and in general more positively hostile to maintaining the British connection through the Commonwealth. As with Canada, South Africa therefore faced problems of national unity. Unlike King, the South African Prime Minister, J. B. Hertzog, was prepared to make foreign policy statements both publicly and in correspondence with the U.K.

Hertzog shared King's attitude to inter-Commonwealth collaboration, disliking any U.K. announcements that the Dominions had been 'consulted', but being generally satisfied with the information transmitted by the D.O. In June 1938 the South African High Commissioner, Mr. Te Water, told the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs that the "information system" was just about complete.¹⁸ South Africa had been one of the strongest proponents of the Dominions' independence and the basis for Commonwealth relations enunciated by the Balfour Declaration, and it consistently defended its right to formulate its own policies. This was especially stressed by Hertzog who had an ambivalent attitude towards South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth.¹⁹ In March 1939,

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16. Lord Tweedsmuir to Lady Tweedsmuir, 25th August 1938, Buchan Papers, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario.
 17. Campbell to D.O. 25th August 1939, D0114/98, F706/277, No. 50.
 18. Minute by Harding 24th June 1938, D035/576, F706/106.
 19. C. M. Van Der Heever, General J. B. M. Hertzog (Johannesburg, 1946), p. 184.

in answer to a question in Parliament on U.K. policy, Hertzog said that while his Government had been fully informed of the U.K.'s actions, it had not been consulted or asked for its approval. The Permanent Under-Secretary at the D.O., Sir Edward Harding, commented to the Secretary of State that Hertzog was probably very pleased to have been able to give that reply.²⁰ In the following month the U.K. High Commissioner in Pretoria, Sir W. Clark, noted that in recent months the U.K. had not been asking for Dominion views at all, simply informing them of its actions. He added that in South Africa's case he thought this was a wise course and a "relief" to Hertzog.²¹

Hertzog was not silent about his views on the international situation, and held very firm positions on the problems and their remedies. He was critical of the 1919 peace settlement, especially in Eastern Europe, opposed to what he saw as France's attempts to gain hegemony over Europe at Germany's expense. In a letter to Smuts from the 1937 Imperial Conference he criticised the U.K.'s attitude towards Germany; hostility, which was not based upon any evidence that Germany was to blame for causing the deterioration of the world situation. He ascribed the U.K.'s attitude

to men in government circles - like Chamberlain in my opinion - who see nothing else in Germany than an enemy of Britain.²²

In March 1938 he was urging the U.K. to continue on its course of appeasing Germany and ensuring that there was no encirclement which would lead to war, not because the latter wanted it, but because it would inevitably interpret such actions as a declaration of hostilities differing little from a formal declaration of war. Hertzog also gave frequent warnings that South Africa would not participate in a war which arose from East

20. Minute by Harding, 21st March 1939, D035/576, F706/106.

21. Clark to Harding, 4th April 1939, D035/576, F706/49.

22. Hertzog to Smuts, 24th May 1937. Smuts Papers, Vol. VI, No. 416; Van Der Heever, op.cit., pp 266-267.

European issues.²³ In late March 1938 Hertzog pressed Chamberlain to continue to try and reach an understanding with Germany, although he appreciated that the Anschluss had stopped approaches for a time.²⁴ On 27th September 1938, during the talks on the Sudetenland, Hertzog reiterated that his government could not be expected to take part in a war over Czechoslovakia, particularly as he considered the issue outstanding to be of no material substance, merely one of procedure; it had been agreed that Germany was entitled to the area.²⁵

The South African Government was not only urging the U.K. to stay out of war, and threatening to do likewise, but was drawing up definite plans for its neutrality. Before the Munich agreement an inner circle of Ministers, including Smuts, had met and agreed that it would not intervene if war broke out. This decision was confirmed by a full meeting of the Cabinet on 28th September.²⁶ The neutrality proposed by Hertzog contained one important qualification, that the Simonstown agreement, allowing the U.K. the use of that naval port, would be honoured. Otherwise the Union would not sever diplomatic relations with any belligerent state and would continue to conduct its relations as if no war were occurring, while prohibiting any hostile action on its territory.²⁷ In November 1938 a U.K. newspaper, The Daily Mail, announced that South Africa had decided during the Munich crisis to stay neutral, but this was officially denied by the South African High Commission in London,²⁸ possibly indicating that it did not want to make unnecessary difficulties for the U.K.

The right of a Dominion to remain neutral was an uncharted aspect of Commonwealth constitutional relations. The U.K. had always considered

23. Aide memoire by Hertzog, 23rd August 1938, D035/576, F706/113; memorandum by MacDonald to Halifax, 23rd March 1938, D0114/94, F82/11, App. I, No. 1.

24. Clark to MacDonald, March 1938, D035/551, F33/59.

25. Aide memoire by Hertzog, 27th September 1938, D035/540, C87/21.

26. W. K. Hancock, Smuts: The Fields of Force, 1919-1950 (Cambridge 1968), Vol. II, p. 285.

27. Van Der Heever, op.cit., p. 275.

28. The Daily Mail, 4th November 1938, See D035/540, C87/21.

it an impossibility, basing this belief on the indivisibility of the Crown; whereas South Africa had already declared its belief in the divisibility of the Crown. In 1936, after the abdication of Edward VIII, the South African Government had passed the Act of the Union, recognising the succession of George VI from the date of the abdication and him specifically as King of South Africa. Hertzog's biographer notes that for Hertzog, this provided the final affirmation of the divisibility of the Crown, and his proposals in 1938 indicate that he did not see Commonwealth membership as precluding the policy of neutrality.²⁹

By the Spring of 1939 there were indications that South Africa's attitude might be changing. In March the Prime Minister told Parliament that when the actions of a European nation threatened the safety and interests of South Africa, then would be the time for the Union to be involved in Europe's affairs. He added that the time had not yet arrived "however much it might sometimes appear to knock at the door."³⁰ In April 1939 Hertzog was asked by the ardent Nationalist, Dr. Malan, to declare neutrality for any war. He refused, saying that he was the last person to do anything to break the friendship with the U.K.³¹ In February 1939 the U.K. High Commissioner had spoken to Smuts who was very gloomy about the prospects for a general war but told Clark that he thought the South African Parliament would join with the U.K., especially if there were likely to be hostilities in North Africa. Yet in September, when the crisis came he was much less optimistic.³² In the Spring of 1939 Clark was telling the D.O. that Hertzog seemed to have no intention of educating South African opinion about the dangers

29. Van Der Heever, op.cit., pp. 265-266.

30. Clark to D.O. received 24th March 1939, D0114/98, F706/115, No. 8.

31. Clark to D.O., received 13th April 1939, D0114/98, F706/137, No. 16.

32. Clark to D.O. 13th September 1939, D035/530, C6/49.

with which it was threatened.³³ He was not doing so because he had not approved of the policy of pressurising Germany in 1939 and did not think that the European war which seemed imminent was of any direct concern of South Africa. What he did fear for was his country's unity. Nor was he alone in fearing domestic repercussions, Smuts anticipating in May 1939 some kind of rising in South Africa in the event of its joining a 'British' war.³⁴

When the crisis occurred in August and September 1939, Hertzog decided to advise Parliament to adopt a position of neutrality under the terms prepared the previous year. When he met with Smuts on 2nd September, the two failed to agree. Smuts determined that South Africa ought to declare war alongside the U.K. Two motions were put to the South African Parliament on 4th September. Hertzog emphasised South Africa's independence from the U.K. and suggested that if it agreed to fight this war it was accepting the thesis that it had to fight whenever the U.K. did. According to the High Commissioner's report, he denied Germany's ambitions for world domination and vigorously defended Germany's policies. He stated that the U.K. had declared war on account of Poland, and it must realise that it was a war in which South Africa's interests were not involved, and predicted that if it were dragged in,

it would be the end of our membership of the British Commonwealth.³⁵

By contrast Smuts advocated the severance of relations with Germany, co-operation with the rest of the Commonwealth and its allies, and steps

33. Clark to D.O. 20th February 1939, D035/543¹, D28/23; Clark to D.O. 5th September 1939, D035/543¹, D28/32.
34. Van Der Heever, *op.cit.*, p. 275; Clark to Harding, 5th September 1939, D035/543¹, D28/32.
35. Clark to D.O. 13th September 1939, D035/530, C6/49. (Mr. G. Heaton Nicholls, South African M.P. and later High Commissioner to the U.K., wrote in his memoirs that he was very surprised at Hertzog's proposal for neutrality. G. H. Nicholls, South Africa in My Time (London, 1961), pp. 337-344.)

to secure South Africa's defence, adding the proviso that forces would not be sent overseas. He refuted Hertzog's view that Germany was not seeking world domination and maintained that it was in South Africa's interests to oppose the use of force as an instrument of national policy. At the end of the debate, Smuts won by 13 votes. The Governor-General refused Hertzog's request for a dissolution of Parliament, and invited Smuts to form a government.³⁶ Thus South Africa entered the Second World War - with a different leader and a population divided on its policy, as the close vote in Parliament indicated.

The Australian Government took a very different attitude towards Commonwealth consultations in the 1930s from that of Canada or South Africa. It wished to maximise its contacts and the instances of consultation with the U.K., and favoured a common policy for the Commonwealth, provided it was one which was agreed by all the independent members of the Commonwealth. In 1935 the Australian High Commissioner, Mr. Bruce, complained to Eden that although the Dominions were supposed to be consulted on all major foreign policy issues, "that rule was more often broken than observed."³⁷ A comment of some verisimilitude. The Dominions were almost always informed of policy but not always consulted. In preparation for the 1937 Imperial Conference a memorandum on foreign affairs was prepared which defined as a prime objective of Australian foreign policy close co-operation with the U.K. and other Commonwealth members.³⁸ At the conference Lyons, the Prime Minister, stressed the need to stand solidly behind the U.K., saying

it would enormously strengthen Britain if it was made clear beyond misunderstanding that there was no division of any sort within the Empire ranks.³⁹

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36. Clark to D.O. 13th September 1939, D035/530, C6/49; Hancock, op.cit., pp. 321-323; Smuts Papers Vol. VI, Nos 476 and 487.
37. C. Edwards, Bruce of Melbourne: Man of Two Worlds (London, 1965), pp. 232-233.
38. External Affairs Department memorandum 'The Foreign Situation', March 1937, Australian Documents Vol. 1, No. 17.
39. Australian minutes of 10th meeting of principal delegates at the 1937 Imperial Conference, 1st June 1937, Australian Documents Vol. 1,

The Australian Government was not immune to accusations of being too ready to acquiesce to the U.K.'s lead in foreign policy. In August 1938 Lyons told the U.K.'s Secretary at the High Commission, Mr. P. Liesching, that his Cabinet was due to discuss the Czech situation and agreed on policy suggestions to send to the U.K. in order to avoid such attacks and be able to give the U.K. its considered views.⁴⁰ In October 1938 Australia expressed its agreement with the policy of implementing the Anglo-Italian agreement and was willing to synchronise its announcement with the U.K.'s.⁴¹ By 1939, the new Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, was giving a more definite commitment to the U.K., stating in April that Britain's peace meant Australia's peace:

If she is at war, we are at war, even though that war finds us not in European battlefields, but defending our own shores.

This was a reference to the Japanese threat in the Pacific. He added that Australia's defence and trade depended on British sea power, which meant it could not refuse the U.K. in its hour of danger; "the British countries of the world must stand or fall together."⁴²

Australia was also keen to build up its staff of men experienced in foreign affairs, and at the same time increase its contacts with other countries. The U.S.A. was seen as the most important and in January 1937 Australia's first representation there was approved, not for a separate mission to be established, but for a Counsellor to join the staff of the U.K. Embassy. This arrangement seems to have worked well, but by August 1938 separate representation was proposed because as it increased its international contacts Australia thought it imperative to have direct representation in countries of first-rate importance to

40. Liesching to D.O. 31st August 1938, DO114/94, F82/95, App. II, No. 3 and Australian Documents Vol. I, No. 242.

41. Lyons to MacDonalld, 26th October 1938, and Lyons to Chamberlain, 28th October, 1938, Australian Documents Vol. 1, Nos. 307 & 309.

42. Speech by Menzies, 26th April 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, No. 73.

it. This was approved in August 1939.⁴³ A representative to Japan was also suggested, although Menzies had reservations about this.⁴⁴ The U.K. was also uneasy, fearing that Japan would use the appointment to weaken Commonwealth unity, but the proposal was agreed in principle by the Australian Government in August 1939.⁴⁵ One of Australia's existing representatives, Mr. Keith Officer, wanted to strengthen links with Canada and establish a strong Department of External Affairs in Canberra which could pursue a positive foreign policy with missions advising on action required, as well as passing on information. He criticised Canada's External Affairs Department, which was much larger with more foreign missions,

they get very little if any more information in spite of their Missions than we get depending as we do on the Foreign Office, and . . . they have no policy on any subject except to do nothing or say nothing for fear that they may do or say the wrong thing.⁴⁶

The Canadian External Affairs department had been established longer and did include men of the highest calibre, although at this time they were in very junior positions. Officer's statement does reflect the tight rein which King, doubling as Minister for External Affairs, kept on foreign policy and his reluctance for Canada to make foreign policy statements, a feature he seems to have transmitted to his officials.

One aspect of the Dominions' development of individual foreign

43. For documents on Australian representation in Washington, see Australian Documents Vol. I, Nos. 10, 328 & 333 and Vol. II, Nos. 11, 63, 76, 105 & 148.

44. Menzies to Lyons, 5th January 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, No. 2.

45. Australian Documents Vol. II, Nos. 63, 76, 84 & 148.

46. Officer to Casey, 25th January 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, No. 11; see also Nos. 196, 197 & 204. Canada and Australia exchanged High Commissioners in September 1939. (For descriptions of Australia's External Affairs Department see, A. Watt, Australian Diplomat (London, 1972) pp. 18-22; R. G. Casey, Friends and Neighbours: Australia and the World (Melbourne, 1954) pp. 29-33; H. Wolfson, 'The Evolution of Australia in World Affairs', Australian Outlook March 1953, pp. 5-21. For an impression King's handling of foreign affairs and the Canadian External Affairs Department by one of his officials, see J. A. Gibson, 'Mr. Mackenzie King and Canadian Autonomy, 1921-1946', Canadian Historical Association Annual Report 1951, pp. 20-21.)

policies was the establishment of missions abroad, frequently before ones in member countries. By the late 1930s Canada was represented in the U.S.A., France and Japan, and after 1939 established many more foreign missions. South Africa had representatives in Germany, Italy, Sweden, The Netherlands, the U.S., France, Portugal and Belgium, and Australia was about to extend its representation after war broke out. New Zealand was the only Dominion yet to start this process, apart from its representatives in London. An important result of this limited contact with other countries was the reliance of the Dominions on British information and the inevitably prejudiced versions they received from the U.K. It is perhaps not coincidental that the Dominion most favourable in its attitude to Germany was the only one to have a representative there.

The Australian Government supported the U.K.'s policy for most of the 1930s, frequently expressing its views and occasionally taking issue with the U.K. February 1938 was one such occasion when the Australian Government assumed that Eden's resignation ushered in a new foreign policy, which led it to complain that it had not been consulted about any change to the policy laid down at the 1937 conference.⁴⁷ During the Czechoslovakian crisis Australia showed the first signs of an unwillingness to fight. In March 1938 Lyons said that Australia did not want any commitments to be given to Czechoslovakia, and on 31st August he warned the Acting High Commissioner of the lack of support for the Czech cause. Lyons did not think it was a question which justified involving the Commonwealth in war and urged caution on the U.K.⁴⁸ On 2nd September he was expressing his alarm at Benes'

47. Whiskard to D.O. 2nd March 1938 pt. 2, D035/562, F355/3; 2nd March 1938, D035/552¹, F43/71 and 17th March 1938, D035/576, F706/49; Australian Government to D.O. 6th March 1938, Australian Documents Vol. I, No. 129.

48. Lyons to Chamberlain, 23rd March 1938, Australian Documents Vol. I, No. 151; Acting High Commissioner (Canberra) to D.O. 31st August 1938, pts. 1 & 2, D0114/94, F82/95 & F82/96, Nos. 3 & 4.

hesitancy in making concessions and urged a solution to the problem, while two weeks later Lyons and Menzies were saying that

"almost any alternative is preferable to involvement in war with Germany in the event of the latter forcibly intervening in Czechoslovakia."⁴⁹

Australia's final plea for the U.K. to avoid war came on 26th September.

Lyons told Chamberlain that as the cession of the Sudetenland had been agreed in principle, the method of its transfer was not worth a war.

He added that the plebiscite ought to be settled before Germany occupied the area and said public opinion would require adequate assurances about the future of Czechoslovakia. Liesching was appalled at the dictatorial tone of the telegram, commenting that "he could hardly believe it".

He admitted that the first point did represent Australian opinion, but said that the rest would be thought "an insulting under-estimate of their appreciation of immediate and ultimate issues involved".⁵⁰

However, it is clear that, like Canada and South Africa, Australia did not support a policy of armed resistance to Germany in September 1938, although it is certain that Australia, unlike the other two, would have joined with the U.K. had war been declared.

The Pacific was a constant pre-occupation of the Australian Government, due to the threat of Japanese aggression. Throughout the decade it sought details of the U.K.'s Far Eastern policy, especially its plans for sending the fleet to Singapore and reinforcing the base there.

In March 1937 it considered it "impossible to conceive of a situation" in which the U.K. would not be able to despatch a large proportion of

49. Liesching to Lord Stanley, 14th September 1938, Australian Documents Vol. I, No. 253.

50. Lyons to Chamberlain, 26th September 1938, and Liesching to Lord Stanley, 27th September 1938, Australian Documents Vol. I, Nos. 278 & 280. (For a discussion of the Australian Government's support of Britain's appeasement policy, see E. M. Andrews, 'The Australian Government and Appeasement', Australian Journal of Politics 1967, Vol. 13, No. 1. Andrews emphasises that Menzies was the strongest supporter of appeasement, not believing until September 1939 that the time had come to resist Germany.)

its fleet to Eastern waters.⁵¹ During 1938 there were many enquiries to, and reassurances from the U.K. about the security of the Pacific and the U.K.'s plans.⁵² In March 1939 the Australians discovered that the U.K. was no longer confident about being able to send an "adequate" force East when a C.I.D. document was wrongly sent to its Liaison Officer, due to "complete misunderstanding and gross stupidity".⁵³ After this, the Australian Government pressed harder for firm assurances about Pacific strategy.⁵⁴

Despite its worries about the Pacific theatre, the Australian Government continued to support the U.K. in 1939. In May it urged the U.K. to secure the maximum co-operation from the U.S.S.R. and the Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Hughes, made a speech in that month supporting the U.K.'s policy of seeking co-operation from other democracies and stressing that Germany had revealed that it was no longer just interested in its own minorities. He pledged Australia's willingness to consult and co-operate.⁵⁵ Although in July 1939 Menzies was suggesting that Danzig was an instance for negotiation, by 27th August he advised Chamberlain that Hitler's latest proposals should be regarded with suspicion and while not excluding a negotiated settlement, thought the Commonwealth should not connive at one which left Poland in a position resembling that of Czechoslovakia a year before. Four days later he told Chamberlain that although Australia did not consider Danzig intrinsically worth a war, Poland had to be protected, adding that Australia had confidence in the U.K. and supported

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51. Memorandum in preparation for the 1937 Imperial Conference, March 1937, Australian Documents Vol. I, No. 12.
52. Australian Documents Vol. I, Nos. 134, 196 & 315; Menzies to Chamberlain 24th June 1939, Prem I/309.
53. Australian Documents Vol. II, No. 42; I. Hamill, Strategic Illusion: the Singapore Strategy and the Defence of Australia and New Zealand, 1919-1942 (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1975) p. 469ff, and J. M. McCarthy, 'Singapore and Australian Defence, 1921-1942', Australian Outlook, 1971, Vol. 25, pp. 165-180.
54. Australian Documents, Vol. II, Nos. 60, 70, 74, 112, 113 & 118.
55. Menzies to Bruce, 19th May 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, No. 90; U.K. High Commission Canberra to D.O. 10th May 1939, D035/576, F706/162.

it fully.⁵⁶ On 3rd September Menzies broadcast to the Australian people, informing them that as a result of Germany's action in Poland the U.K. had declared war and that "as a result, Australia is also at war."⁵⁷ This decision was approved by Parliament, but unlike Canada and South Africa, Australia considered itself committed by the U.K.'s actions.

New Zealand possessed more similarities with Australia than with the other two Dominions, although it did not take an identical view to Australia's and it was not an obedient satellite of the U.K. as many have assumed. It was the Dominion least enthusiastic about declarations of independent status and did not adopt the Statute of Westminster until 1947. (Australia was also late in adopting the Statute, in its case in 1942, but Australian relations with the U.K. in the later 1930s were constitutionally more approximate to those of Canada and South Africa, despite its more positive attitude towards co-operation.) The New Zealand Government favoured close consultation and co-operation with the U.K. In 1935 the then Prime Minister, Mr. Forbes, declared that if the U.K. was at war so would New Zealand. A "catastrophe" which affected the U.K. would also affect New Zealand. But his conclusion that this meant there was no need to consult with the U.K. on foreign and defence matters, because of the automatic commitment, caused an outcry in New Zealand. His successor, the Labour leader, Mr. Savage, took a slightly different attitude. He affirmed his intention to strengthening the ties with the Commonwealth, but stressed that this had to be done by discussions, with the New Zealand Parliament possessing the determining voice of New Zealand policy.⁵⁸

56. Menzies to Chamberlain, 27th August 1939 and 1st September 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, Nos. 156 & 174.

57. Broadcast message by Menzies, 3rd September 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, No. 189.

58. F. L. Wood, The New Zealand People at War: Political and External Affairs (New Zealand, 1971), pp. 32-34. For a general study of N.Z. in the inter-war years, see Angus Ross, 'Reluctant Dominion or Dutiful Daughter? New Zealand and the Commonwealth in the inter-war years', Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, 1972, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 28-44.

New Zealand's communications with the U.K. differed from those of the other Dominions. It had the Governor-General as the main channel and no U.K. High Commissioner was appointed until 1939. The Dominions had had representatives in London for a considerable time, but it was only between 1928 and 1931 that U. K. High Commissioners supplanted the Governors-General as the main link between the Governments in the other three. When the proposal was under consideration in 1926, the U.K. Government questioned all the Governors-General about it. Sir Charles Fergusson in New Zealand opposed such a move, maintaining that it would weaken the position of the Crown and the unity of the Empire. The U.K., once it had accepted the principle of appointing U. K. High Commissioners, responded to the wishes of the individual Dominions. New Zealand was content with the prevailing position, although it did ask for a Liaison Officer who was appointed to Wellington in the late 1920s, but the post was not continued. The official channel between the U.K. and New Zealand remained the Governor-General until 1941, although with the appointment of Sir H. Batterbee in 1939, with his own staff and separate cipher, an extra dimension was added. In London New Zealand had sent its own Liaison Officer in 1937 in addition to the High Commission staff, to liaise on foreign affairs, following Australia's example of 1926.⁵⁹

At the 1937 Imperial conference Savage supported Australia's call for a resolution proclaiming the Commonwealth's support for U.K. policy and its determination to stand together, but only on the conditions that such a declaration dealt with realities; the problems and their remedies; was not full of empty sentiments, and that each returned home to implement the policies.⁶⁰ (Such advocacy of a common policy was rejected by

59. Rt. Hon. Lord Garner, The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968 (London, 1978), pp. 33-43; Wood, op.cit., p. 53. Appointment of N.Z. liaison officer see S. Roskill, Hankey: Man of Secrets Vol. 3, p. 276.

60. Australian minutes of 10th meeting of principal delegates at the 1937 Imperial Conference, 1st June 1937, Australian Documents Vol. I, No. 34.

King, who could not agree to such a commitment.) At the conference Savage called for a common Commonwealth policy based on the principles of "kindliness", "decency" and "economic welfare". He was critical of some inconsistencies in U.K. policy and called for more genuine consultation. In some respects New Zealand's foreign policy was more adventurous than the U.K.'s, and in many, more naive, reflecting its lack of international experience. However, it continued its basic support for the U.K. even while disagreeing with some aspects of the policy, and was never shaken from its thesis that the countries shared a common fate and that New Zealand would stand by the U.K. in a crisis.⁶¹ In March 1938 Savage offered to send a message of support to the U.K. in order to assist it during the Anschluss crisis and also to refute rumours that the Dominions had not been adequately consulted.⁶²

The major differences between the U.K. and New Zealand lay in their respective attitudes to the League of Nations and collective security. New Zealand had always been a staunch supporter of the League and the theory of collective security, it had urged strong action towards the aggressors, and when the League had been discredited it still supported the organisation and pressed for its rejuvenation as the only way to secure peace. This attitude sometimes placed it in opposition to U.K. policy, but it was not afraid to state its view, and on occasions oppose U.K. policy openly. From 1936 New Zealand held a temporary seat on the League Council and over Spain and Abyssinia voiced its differences with the U.K. It deplored the one-sided intervention in Spain and urged the League to take steps to aid the misery of the Spanish people and the legitimate Government, opposing the Fascist states.⁶³ With regard to Abyssinia, it refused to sanction

61. Wood, op.cit., p. 50 & pp. 54-55.

62. Galway to MacDonald, 14th March 1938, D035/576, F705/26.

63. Wood, op.cit., pp. 46-47.

Italy's invasion, pressed for greater League action and opposed the recognition of Italy's occupation.⁶⁴ In April 1938 it told the U.K. Government that it thought the recognition of Italy's conquest of Abyssinia would encourage other Powers who preferred might to right. Although it did compromise in-as-much as it promised not to vote against the U.K.'s policy of recognition and its implementation of the Anglo-Italian Agreement, but to abstain if the issue came to a vote.⁶⁵

As with Australia, the Pacific was of particular concern to New Zealand and in the later 1930s it was increasingly worried about Japanese policy and the capacity of the U.K. to defend the Far East. At the 1937 conference Savage had proposed a conference of Pacific Powers to discuss the situation and then to reach some kind of non-aggression pact. In December 1938 New Zealand was still pressing for a conference and telling the Australian Government, which also was in favour, that it wanted to discuss the whole strategic situation. The Australian Government raised difficulties about the timing, but Savage urged the need for a conference as soon as possible.⁶⁶ New Zealand also wanted reassurances from the U.K. on its policy of reinforcing Singapore, and the official New Zealand historian, Mr. Wood, notes that the New Zealand Government was sceptical that the base could hold indefinitely. New Zealand anxieties cannot have been aided by the news that the U.K. was questioning its capacity to send an "adequate" force East, for the New Zealand High Commissioner was informed by his Australian colleague

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64. Australian minutes of 1st meeting of principal delegates at the 1937 Imperial Conference, 19th May 1937, Australian Documents Vol. I, No. 26; Garner, op.cit., p. 85.
65. New Zealand Government to D.O., 5th April 1938, D035/552¹, F48/25; Galway to MacDonald, 14th March 1938, D035/576, F705/27.
66. Savage to Lyons, 22nd December 1938, 17th February 1939 and 31st March 1939, Australian Documents, Vol. I, No. 335, and Vol. II, Nos. 26 & 65.

of the secret C.I.D. Paper.⁶⁷

With Chamberlain's announcement in March 1939 that the U.K. intended to consult with others and take steps to try and halt German aggression, New Zealand responded by reaffirming its conviction that an international conference with a wide membership should be held to redress the legitimate grievances of countries and thought there was a chance of including the U.S.A., which would be so vital. Meanwhile it declared its full support for the U.K. and its efforts to prevent a further deterioration of the situation.⁶⁸ At the end of April the New Zealand Government was telling the U.K. that it still favoured an international conference, but that whatever happened, it would back the U.K. if it came to war.⁶⁹ By the end of August New Zealand was facing the future united in its determination to support the U.K., with the Opposition pledging its support for the Government's policy. Meanwhile the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, continued to try and urge the co-operation of the U.S.A.⁷⁰ The New Zealand Government sent a telegram to London backing its attempts to secure co-operation from the U.S.S.R. and it approved the U.K.'s reaffirmation of the guarantee to Poland after the Russo-German pact. On 1st September the New Zealand Government took measures to place the country on a war footing, and it declared war with the U.K. on 3rd September, upholding its attitude that the fate of New Zealand was inextricably tied to the U.K. Thus, when the U.K. was at war, so was New Zealand. As in the case of Australia, Parliament was only consulted, and approved, after the declaration had

67. Wood, op.cit., pp. 73-77; Ismay to Chatfield, 18th March 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, No. 42. (At the 1937 Conference N.Z. had pressed the U.K. on the policy of sending a fleet to Singapore. See J. M. McCarthy, 'Singapore and Australian Defence', Australian Outlook 1971, Vol. 25, p. 178.)

68. New Zealand Government to D.O., 21st March 1939, D0114/98, F706/106, No. 2.

69. Batterbee to D.O., 29th April 1939, D0114/98, F706/158, No. 23.

70. Batterbee to D.O., 23rd August 1939, D035/576, F706/220.

been made.⁷¹

The 'rogue' Dominion of the inter-war years was Ireland (variously referred to as the Irish Free State and Eire). Ireland tended to combine the more extreme attitudes at times demonstrated by Canada and South Africa and with these two pressed for constitutional reform and the recognition of the Dominions' independence from the U.K. But its opposition to the Commonwealth connection, especially joint allegiance to the Crown, went deeper than in either of the other two. MacDonald's tenure at the D.O. saw an improvement of Anglo-Irish relations, and provided the stimulus for the U.K. to reconsider its attitude to Ireland and attempt to retain it within the Commonwealth. In 1936, with the need for legislation to recognise the abdication of Edward VIII and the succession of George VI, Ireland decided to enact the External Relations Act, which de Valera had been considering for some time. This effectively rejected the sovereignty of the Crown in all Irish affairs except external relations. The U.K. accepted this new arrangement and Ireland was still considered to be a member of the Commonwealth, but de Valera did not attend the 1937 conference and relations were more distant. Ireland rejected the idea that a U.K. war would also be an Irish war and made it very clear that Ireland was not prepared to fight, but would maintain a friendly neutrality. In 1938 the U.K. concluded an agreement with Ireland in which the U.K. gave up its rights to the Irish bases. Many criticised this agreement for depriving the U.K. of vital bases it would need if war broke out, and Churchill harked back to it during the war. MacDonald and Chamberlain, who were its principal architects, defended it by arguing that not to have agreed to handing the bases back would have left the U.K. in a position of trying to operate them against the wishes of a

71. Wood, op.cit., pp. 96-100; Sir Robert Menzies, Afternoon Light (London, 1967), pp. 15-16.

hostile population with the likelihood of the enemy landing in Ireland.

Their hope was that if the bases were voluntarily returned, Irish friendship might be won and the ports might be offered to the U.K.

in time of war.⁷² From 1937 onwards the D.O. expected Ireland to declare

its neutrality. (There was very little hope that it would fight with the rest of the Commonwealth.)⁷³ Nor was there any real attempt to

tackle the consequences of Ireland's (or South Africa's) neutrality for the Commonwealth relationship. Batterbee raised the issue in

December 1937, and questioned whether a way could be found not to insist

that neutrality necessitated a state's departure from the Commonwealth, without reducing the substance of membership too much.⁷⁴ But the

question was never faced squarely and no decision was taken about continued membership. This was possibly because the position was

uncertain until the last minute, and even if a Dominion did not immediately

declare war, it might do so at a later stage, possibly as the result

of the enemy's actions. Moreover, as Garner points out, to have

pressurised Ireland would probably only have resulted in a hostile, not

benevolent, neutrality.⁷⁵ With South Africa's own neutrality proposals

and Canada's acceptance of the divisible Crown (in-as-much as it

considered the King to be King of each country and capable of being

separately represented abroad), it is unlikely that these Dominions

would have welcomed any action by the U.K. to expel Ireland from the

Commonwealth. Irish-Commonwealth relations lay in abeyance during

72. Garner, op.cit., pp. 95-96 & 111-120; Mansergh, Commonwealth Experience (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 321-322. (After the outbreak of war Churchill said the U.K. should have seized the Irish Ports. Eden told Oliver Harvey that he thought this would drive Eire out of the Commonwealth; that de Valera was doing all he could and it would be madness to take such action because it would drive de Valera and start up all the trouble again, not least with the U.S.A., The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey, 1937-1940, ed. J. Harvey (London, 1970), 30th October 1937, p. 326.

73. Memorandum by Dixon, 'Probable attitudes and preparedness of the Dominions in event of war', 14th December 1937, D035/543², D28/5.

74. Minute of Batterbee, 'Position of the Dominions in the event of war', December 1937, ibid.

75. Garner, op.cit., p. 98.

the war and contact was reduced as it could not be told of many developments on security grounds. Its future as a member of the Commonwealth was only clarified after the war.

In the 1930s the U.K. was faced with Commonwealth partners in different stages of constitutional development, possessing varying attitudes towards Commonwealth collaboration and, on some issues, holding different foreign policies. The problem for the U.K. was how to cope with these divergencies while keeping the members in the association. It was not a matter of accommodating the 'Dominion viewpoint'. That term was, and is, frequently misused to represent a stereotype attitude common to all the 'junior' members of the Commonwealth, whereas this rarely existed. There were the views of the four Dominions which were often not identical, and the diversity was not likely to diminish. As the Dominions increased their knowledge of, and experience in, foreign affairs, relied less on information from the U.K., and became more aware of their geo-political positions in the world, the diversity of viewpoint was if anything likely to increase. The community of interest, and the essential like-mindedness of all the members to the basic principles of international affairs, had to be reconciled with these other differences.

At a meeting between F.O. and D.O. Ministers and officials to prepare for the 1937 Imperial Conference, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, MacDonald, outlined his approach to inter-Commonwealth co-operation in foreign affairs.

The object, he felt, must be to get 'harmony' on foreign policy and - in effect, therefore - a common foreign policy, but not to attempt to get a common foreign policy in name. He thought it would be possible to go this far, though it must be realised that the Dominions could not be expected to accept any definite commitments as regards assistance to this country in the event of war. What was necessary was to state the foreign policy of the United Kingdom, to ask the Dominions Delegates to indicate the foreign policies of their Governments and then to hope that these policies might so harmonize that, in effect, they would be one.⁷⁶

In a Cabinet memorandum two weeks later, MacDonald recalled the constitutional changes of the previous decade and the emphasis which had been placed on equality and independence of the component parts of the association. He expressed the belief that the Commonwealth could not survive if it continued to place such emphasis on individual sovereignty, that the balance of community needed to be re-asserted. He proposed that the U.K. should try to do this at the conference while making it clear to the Dominions that the U.K. recognised their equality and freedom to decide their own policies, and that the U.K. had no desire to "put the clock back and limit their freedom"

Our conception is of a partnership between nations who freely, naturally and prudently co-operate on account of their association under the Crown and their common traditions, beliefs and interests.⁷⁷

MacDonald was confident that the individual policies of each members would possess sufficient similarity to make co-operation and virtual unanimity possible. He thought that all the Dominions respected the U.K., particularly in its judgment of foreign affairs, and would be greatly influenced by it provided "they are permitted to agree with us in their own way and their own time".

MacDonald understood better than most U.K. Ministers, and some Dominions Secretaries, the attitudes of the Dominions and the best methods of gaining their co-operation. Despite the fact that the D.O. was his first Cabinet post and at thirty-three he was the youngest member of the Cabinet, MacDonald was not overawed or hesitant about putting forth his views. In May 1936 he presented to the Cabinet a memorandum on Ireland which was long, detailed and extremely forthright, and has been described as a "monster mouthful" to swallow "from so young and new a Cabinet member".⁷⁸ He managed to convince King that

77. Cabinet memorandum by Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 2nd April 1937, D035/537, C41/105.

78. Garner, op.cit., p. 19 & pp. 116-117.

he understood Canada's attitude to inter-Commonwealth collaboration, which was not an easy task, and later as High Commissioner in Ottawa became a close confidant of King, who had welcomed the appointment.⁷⁹

MacDonald's youthfulness was a positive asset to his position, for he seemed less imbued with old attitudes towards the Empire and more in tune with the aspirations of the Dominions. The D.O. under his authority certainly seemed to function more successfully, reflecting his ability to bring the best out of his staff and set the right tone in communication with the Dominions.⁸⁰

MacDonald's statements quoted above epitomised the D.O.'s attitude towards U.K. collaboration in the late 1930s. In practical terms this tended to amount to finding the lowest common denominator acceptable to all members, supplemented by individual treatment on subjects or attitudes beyond the scope of other members. For instance the Secretary of State was willing to accommodate W. L. M. King's opposition to the Canadian High Commissioner's attending meetings held between the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the other High Commissioners, by seeing Massey separately to repeat the information he had imparted to the others.⁸¹ On another occasion, in order to ease the position of Canada and South Africa, the D.O. asked the Australian Government not to use the phrase "foreign policy of the Empire" in public speeches, or refer to the meetings between the Secretary of State and the High Commissioners as 'consultations', or suggest that the Dominions were merely consultants to a principal (i.e. the U.K.) in foreign affairs.⁸²

Despite instances when some Dominions complained that the U.K. had wrongly stated that they had been consulted or had approved of U.K. policy, the D.O. tried to stop any statements for the U.K. which

79. S. Holmes to Harding, 15th July 1939, D035/541, C97/42; Mackenzie King Record Vol. I, p. 178.

80. Garner, op.cit., p. 19.

81. V. Massey, What's Past is Prologue (Toronto, 1963), pp. 240-242; Garner, op.cit., pp. 77-78.

82. Harding to Whiskard, 2nd March 1938, D035/562, F355/3; D.O. to Whiskard, May 1939, D0114/98, No. 27.

inferred that the Commonwealth was pursuing a common policy, or that the Dominions were acquiescing to all U.K. initiatives. As the D.O.'s own introduction to a Confidential Print containing documents on Commonwealth relations prior to the outbreak of war explained,

The Dominions were not expressly consulted as to the policy which should be adopted in the sense of being asked formally to signify their approval of it or associate themselves with it; in some cases indeed such formal consultations would, on political grounds, have been distasteful to the Dominions.

Instead they were kept informed of the U.K.'s actions and, in the absence of adverse comment, the U.K. felt entitled to assume that there were no objections to its policies.⁸³ To ensure that this was U.K. policy, as opposed to just the D.O.'s, that Office reminded other Government departments of the need to use the correct terminology when it was speaking about the Commonwealth. In a note to the F.O., which was copied to the Treasury and the Prime Minister; the D.O. reminded that office of the touchiness of one or two Dominions over references to their relationship to U.K. foreign policy. To avoid trouble, the U.K. had to confine such references within narrow limits. The D.O. referred to King's consistent denial that 'consultations' took place and it said it had to be left to the individual Dominion to interpret the U.K.'s communications as merely informative, or as seeking their own views. It also noted that the U.K. had no authority to give public expression to Dominion policies, unless expressly asked to by a Dominion, and how all would protest if unauthorised statements were made.⁸⁴ In March 1939 a further note was sent to the F.O. reminding it of King's dislike of the term 'consultation', unless the opinion of a member had been sought before any action was decided upon.⁸⁵ The D.O. did seem, then, to appreciate the attitudes of the Dominions and also the

83. Introduction to Confidential Print on 'The International Situation leading to the outbreak of war', D0114/98, Intro. No. 1.

84. D.O. notes on the position of the Dominions regarding the present international situation sent to F.O., 23rd March 1938, D035/576, F706/48.

85. Hankinson to Harvey 28th March 1939, D035/576, D706/118.

reasons for them. The first note said that Canada's domestic situation required King to maintain this rigid distinction between information and consultation, and the U.K. High Commission in Canada kept the D.O. alive to the political situation which determined Canada's position.⁸⁶

U.K. commitments towards Europe, in the form of the Locarno Agreement, the Munich Agreement, and the guarantees to Poland and other Eastern European countries, were not shared by the Dominions. The Locarno Agreement in 1925 marked the first British acceptance of unilateral commitments when an issue could mean involvement in war and this practice continued in the 1930s. The main reason for this was the unwillingness of the Dominions to have agreed to share in these obligations, and the embarrassment which negative replies would have caused to the U.K. The U.K. also thought that in light of the political positions of the Dominion Governments, to refrain from asking them to undertake such commitments seemed to be the most likely way of facilitating their co-operation at a later stage, if it should be needed.⁸⁷ This demonstrated a good appreciation of the positions of South Africa and Canada.

Closest collaboration between Commonwealth countries characterised the abdication crisis of 1936. Late in November Baldwin warned the King that he doubted whether the U.K. Parliament would agree to a morganatic marriage and that he would have to consult with the Dominions. The King agreed to Baldwin's consulting the several governments, rather than consulting His Ministers personally through the Governors-General, and the D.O. under MacDonald was responsible for drafting the messages.

86. Acting High Commissioner, Ottawa, to D.O., 28th September 1938, D0114/94, F82/206, App. II, No. 10; Campbell to D.O., 27th April 1939, D0114/98, F706/115, No. 21.

87. Harding to Clark, 19th April 1939, D035/576, F706/149.

Communication was conducted secretly through the U.K. High Commissioners and to the relief of everyone, the Commonwealth governments were unanimous in their counsels to the King. Massey notes that the High Commissioners in London were also kept fully informed of developments.⁸⁸

During the major crisis in the late 1930s there was often little time available to give the Dominions warning of events or the opportunity to comment upon them, especially during the Czech crisis. The Dominions were kept closely informed by telegram and MacDonald, who had revived the practice of meeting with the High Commissioners in London, saw them almost daily during this period. MacDonald stressed to Chamberlain on 18th September the need to inform the Dominions before committing the U.K., but accepted the latter's insistence that there could be delay.⁸⁹ It was left to the Secretary of State to apologise to the Dominion High Commissioners for the U.K.'s action of giving a guarantee without prior warning to them or any chance to express their views. He explained the situation and the necessity for swift action.⁹⁰

The burden of Commonwealth defence lay heavily on the U.K., especially on the Royal Navy. Attempts at the end of the First World War to establish a single Imperial Navy failed, and the Dominions' assertion of their independence and their pursuit of their own foreign policies limited defence collaboration. By 1932 there was in effect a permanent alliance between the Commonwealth countries' armed forces which were fairly well integrated. There was standardisation of arms and organisation, to facilitate joint action, and a common centre of advice. However, no Dominion felt compelled to follow the U.K.'s advice and Dominion defence forces remained sparse, with a low level

88. Garner, op.cit., pp. 67-71; Massey, op.cit., p. 249.

89. Conversation between MacDonald and Chamberlain, 18th September 1938, D035/554, F82/165.

90. Report of meetings between Dominions Secretary and Dominion High Commissioners, 17th and 19th September 1938, D0121/4.

of defence expenditure. The geographical spread of the Commonwealth meant that it was to a great extent a strategic liability to the U.K. as long as the Dominions contributed so little to Imperial defence, and the requirements of Commonwealth defence dissipated the U.K.'s strength elsewhere. At the 1937 Imperial Conference the U.K. asked the Dominions to increase their defence contributions, warning them of the difficulty it would face in opposing Germany, Italy and Japan simultaneously. Despite some improvement, by the outbreak of war there was no concerted strategic plan of Imperial defence and no agreement in advance as to how and where Dominion forces would be employed.⁹¹

During 1938 the U.K. Government was frequently asked in Parliament about the machinery for Commonwealth collaboration and whether Dominion approval had been gained, with M.P.'s on occasions showing a high degree of ignorance about Commonwealth relations, or an inclination to embarrass the Government. The Government was generally careful to give cautious, neutral replies to these enquiries. In April 1938 Mr. Dalton spoke of an apparent difference in policy between New Zealand and the U.K. (Savage had made a slightly critical statement after seeing an incomplete report of a U.K. policy statement.) He was told that it was a major feature of Commonwealth relations that each member was responsible to its own Parliament and people and entitled to form its own foreign policy. There was not, and need not be, identity of view on every detail of foreign policy, the important thing was to ensure that on fundamental aims and principles there was no difference in outlook. M.P.s were cautioned not to seek out every real or imaginary

91. See D. C. Watt, 'Imperial Defence Policy and Imperial Foreign Policy 1911-1939: The Substance and the Shadow', Personalities and Politics (London 1965); G. Peden, British Rearmament and the Treasury, 1932-1939 (Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1979); I. Hamill, Strategic Illusion, op.cit.; M. Howard, The Continental Commitment (London, 1972); G. N. Hillmer, 'Defence and Ideology: The Anglo-Canadian military 'alliance' in the 1930s', International Journal 1977-78, Vol. 33, pp. 588-596.

difference between members and parade it before the eyes of the world. In June 1938 the Government indicated its satisfaction with the machinery for collaboration, while adding that it was willing to consider suggestions to improve it.⁹²

After a telegram in February 1939 from the U.K. High Commissioner in New Zealand reporting that Mr. Jordan, the New Zealand High Commissioner in the U.K., was sending back optimistic reports about the prospects for peace, the F.O., which prepared the material on foreign affairs sent to the Dominions, considered showing the Dominion High Commissioners the secret documents on which it based its foreign policy appreciations. It was thought that this might make the Dominions more aware of the seriousness of the situation. However, Sir A. Cadogan, the Permanent Under-Secretary, and Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, decided that because of the secrecy of the material and because their appreciations were drawn from such a wide selection, this would be impossible. Lord Halifax told Inskip that consequently the Dominions would have to

trust us to draw a just conclusion from reports which we receive.⁹³

The F.O. did ask the D.O. if any aspect of F.O. procedure had given cause for offence recently, which led the D.O. to remind it not to make references to consultations with the Dominions, in deference to King.⁹⁴

The D.O. kept a very close eye not merely on individual Dominion attitudes towards specific issues, when these could be determined, but also on the overall position of each in relation to their readiness

92. Parliamentary question by Dalton, April 1938, D035/576, F706/26; Parliamentary question by Henderson, 27th March 1938, D025/576, F706/14; See also questions by Mr. Hannah, 21st March 1938, Mr. Mander, 21st June 1938 and Mr. Day, 1st November 1938, Hansard House of Commons Debates, Vols. 333, Col. 841; Vol. 337, Col. 805-6; Vol. 340, Col. 4.

93. Minutes by R. Hadow, 9th February 1939, Cadogan, 11th February 1939 and Halifax, 2nd March 1939, Halifax to Inskip, 2nd March 1939, F0372/3315, T2299/436/384.

94. Hankinson to Harvey, 28th March 1939, D035/576, F706/118.

and capacity to fight a war. A detailed memorandum was periodically updated to show the prevailing attitudes of Canada, South Africa and Ireland (the attitudes of Australia and New Zealand were never considered to be in any doubt.) In December 1937 Canada's attitude was thought to be in some doubt, the main determining factors were expected to be the attitude of the French Canadian population and the position of the U.S.A. It recognised that South Africa considered it legitimate to adopt a position of neutrality and that the Government there was sympathetic to Germany and hostile to France. It thought the critical factor would be the effect of a war on Africa. If a strong militant foreign power were to threaten the Union it would probably co-operate with the U.K. within the confines of Africa; otherwise its position was very doubtful. Ireland was expected to declare its neutrality (although the U.K. still expected then to be able to use the Irish ports.)⁹⁵ By February 1939 the prognosis was more optimistic. Canada was expected to declare war after a delay in which Parliament would be summoned, and South Africa was also thought willing to participate eventually, after a longer delay in which its Parliament would also have to be consulted. The D.O. did not think that it would hurry to reach a decision.⁹⁶ The change in Canada's position is consistent with Canadian statements, especially King's personal comments to the U.K. High Commissioner and U.K. Ministers. The change in the expected attitude of South Africa is perhaps less easy to understand. Smuts had told the U.K. High Commissioner that

95. Memorandum by Dixon, 'Probable attitudes and preparedness of the Dominions in the event of war', 14th December 1937, D035/543², D28/5. (Some uncertainty about Canada's attitude can be seen in a letter from Hankey to Harding, 9th May 1937. Hankey wrote "it would be disastrous if we laid our plans on the assumption that we could count upon Canada, and then when the day came we found that we had been building on false premises", CAB21/670. J. Granatstein, Canada's War: the Politics of the Mackenzie King Government 1939-1945, (Toronto, 1975), p. 3.)

96. Memorandum by Dixon, 'Probable attitudes and preparedness of the Dominions in the event of war', February 1939, D035/543², D28/21, or D035/540, C87/31.

month that he thought the Union Parliament would decide to participate, but Hertzog's statements had not yet shown much sign of any change of policy and the U.K. had been fully aware of the neutrality proposals of September 1938. The final memorandum, which was submitted to the U.K. Cabinet, of May 1939,⁹⁷ was substantially the same as the one in February, with perhaps slightly more justification for its optimism. Nevertheless, until war was declared the U.K. were not sure how many of its partners would join with it, and whether large majorities would be in favour of belligerency. For, as King had often stressed, the latter point was significant if the Dominions were to be of any real value to the U.K.; a divided country was of dubious advantage as an ally.

An important question is whether the attitudes of the Dominions had any effect on U.K. foreign policy. If it is difficult to cite an example which had an exclusive influence on the U.K., this does not mean that the Dominions made no impact upon U.K. policy. It is perhaps not insignificant that before Munich the D.O. was doubtful about the participation of three of the five Dominions, or that all five urged Chamberlain to reach an agreement with Germany in September 1938, and not to declare war over Czechoslovakia. In his memoirs Sir Charles Dixon, Assistant Under-Secretary at the D.O., says during the Czech crisis "it was most striking" how all the Dominions, except perhaps New Zealand, were opposed to war with Germany "which they felt would have a disastrous effect on relations between the Members of the Commonwealth, and might even result in its break-up."⁹⁸ When Sir Eric Machtig, the Permanent Under-Secretary, was asked for documents

97. D.O. memorandum for submission to Cabinet, 'Probable attitudes of the Dominions in the event of war', D035/543², D28/32.

98. Dixon, Memoirs (Unpublished, 1969), p. 51.

for the official historian which showed the influence of the Dominions on U.K. policy, he commented

casual conversations and personal discussions with visiting Dominion Ministers or officials are probably not fully recorded, but it seems likely that it is largely through this kind of channel that such Dominion influence as has been exercised has taken its effect.⁹⁹

Without minimising the importance of such conversations referred to by Machtig, he probably exaggerated the lack of such documentary evidence as the telegrams from Dominion governments and records of discussions with the High Commissioners. Indeed Dixon recalls that when Mr. Patrick Gordon Walker was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the D.O. in 1947 he commented to Dixon that

until he had seen the Office records, he had not realised the strength of the Dominion's feeling against the war, and that in fairness to Mr. Chamberlain, this ought to be brought to the notice of the public.¹⁰⁰

Dixon minuted that he thought the Dominions' influence was not to be found so much in formal expressions of opinion on particular issues as they arose, but

in the general trend of opinion in the Dominions which was a factor necessarily present, and very prominently, in the minds of United Kingdom Ministers when formulating their conclusions on individual questions

He noted that their opposition to involvement in another European war was well known and that this "had to be taken into account". He thought the Dominions had not

dissuaded the United Kingdom Government from taking any action on which they themselves were bent or induced the U.K. Government to take action which they would not have taken of their own volition, but it may well have swayed opinion decisively in cases where U.K. views on some particular matter were divided.¹⁰¹

99. Machtig to Bridges, 30th July 1944, D035/1482, WC72/6.

100. Dixon, op.cit., p. 51.

101. Minute by Dixon, 30th January 1945, ibid. (At the height of the Munich crisis Cadogan recalls being sent for by Chamberlain and writes that P.M. and a small group of ministers were "frightened out of their wits by, amongst other things, MacDonald and Bruce "on subject of Dominions". The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, ed. D. Dilks (London, 1971), p. 107, entry for 27th September 1938. For study of Dominion's influence over U.K. policy see Reinhard Meyers, 'Britain, Europe and the Dominions in the 1930s: Some Aspects of British, European and Commonwealth policies', Australian Journal of History and Politics 1976, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp.36-50 and R. Owendale, op.cit.)

There is a strong case to be made for the decisiveness of the Dominions' influence on U.K. policy in September 1938 with regard to the Munich Agreement. Surveying this question after his retirement, Dixon suggested that the Dominions helped to strengthen Chamberlain's resolution.¹⁰²

On the whole the U.K. did not try to solve the contradictions posed by the varying attitudes of the Dominions, but attempted to minimise them and promote a sense of unity despite them. The gravity of the international situation was clearly one reason not to force difficult issues and British governments no doubt felt that time was needed after the constitutional declarations of 1926 and 1931 to settle matters. They were prepared to wait and see how things would develop and whether, having achieved the recognition of their independence, the Dominions would begin to stress the values of the association, as MacDonald had hoped before the 1937 Conference. The essentially evolutionary character of the Commonwealth and its remarkable flexibility constituted a strength and also a weakness. This continually changing association held room for ambiguities and uncertainties. The Dominions were not always sure precisely where they stood in relation to their Commonwealth commitments, and whether the twin principles of independence and allegiance were really compatible. For example, in 1938 King, while praising U.K. foreign policy, refused to commit Canada to supporting it and said the Canadian Parliament would have to decide when the time came. He added that this was not a wholly satisfactory position but was the result of the existing stage of the Commonwealth relationship:

102. Dixon, op.cit., p. 51.

It is inherent in the contradiction between the recognised independent responsibility of the several members of the Commonwealth . . . and the possibility that war proclaimed by the King as regards part of his dominions may involve other parts in conflict. In other words, we have worked out a satisfactory and enduring solution of the relations between the several members of the British Commonwealth in peace time; we have not yet worked out a completely logical solution of the position in wartime.¹⁰³

Two unquestioned aspects of the Commonwealth relationship in the 1920s and 1930s - the impossibility of a Dominion's remaining neutral in war and the common allegiance to the Crown - had been placed in doubt by the actions of Ireland in 1936 and 1939 and by the hesitations of South Africa in 1938 and 1939. The U.K. was naturally triumphant at the support it received from its partners in 1939 and felt justified. It is quite likely that all the Dominions could have survived the war unscathed, in terms of not being invaded, had they not joined in. Their entry into war sprang not from the immediate danger in which they were placed, but from their various ties with, and reliance upon, the U.K.¹⁰⁴ Their participation was probably inevitable in any general, defensive war in which the U.K. was involved, but as King had noted, this was not a completely logical or satisfactory position for these 'independent' countries to occupy. The war produced a great effect on the Dominions, not least in catapulting them through stages of development in foreign affairs which might otherwise have taken decades to achieve. However, the fact that the Commonwealth countries entered the war, despite the differences in their attitudes, did not guarantee a placid partnership during the hostilities or afterwards.

103. Statement by King to Canadian Parliament, 25th May 1938, U.K. High Commission Ottawa to D.O., 26th May 1938, D035/576, F705/33.

104. G. N. Hillmer concludes that there was an 'Anglo-Dominion alliance' in the inter-war period; one which was based on "the same allegiances, the same values, traditions and institutions and the same enlightened self-interest", G. N. Hillmer, 'The Anglo-Dominion Alliance, 1919-1939' (Unpublished).

Chapter TwoThe Commonwealth at War: U.K. policy towards war-time
collaboration with the Dominions

Before the war broke out the U.K. had begun to consider alterations which might be needed to the system of Commonwealth collaboration if hostilities occurred, and shortly after war was declared some changes were made. As in peace-time, there were two main aspects of inter-Commonwealth collaboration; the transmission of information, and consultation on policy. Throughout the war both aspects were subject to re-examination and alteration as inadequacies were perceived; some of these resulted from a change in the Dominions' association with the war. The most contentious issue concerned the establishment of a supreme Commonwealth war council to ensure a sufficient voice for the Dominions in the direction of the war. Opinions on this subject differed; it was not a case of the Dominions' desiring one system and the U.K. another. In general, the war saw an extension of inter-Commonwealth representation and an increase in the amount of information sent to each member. Despite pressure from some Dominions to participate directly in the high direction of the war, the exigencies of waging war and the close co-operation which developed between the U.K. and the U.S.A. tended to exclude the Dominions from the inner councils.

In November 1938 the Permanent Under-Secretary at the D.O., Sir Edward Harding, wrote to the Secretary to the Cabinet, Sir Edward Bridges, about war-time machinery for Commonwealth collaboration. He thought that whatever machinery was established, it had to be based on two principles; the clear and full recognition of the complete responsibility of each country's government to its own Parliament and people, and the need for the closest co-operation to secure prompt discussions and remove the possibilities of misunderstanding and disagreement and to

make the most economical use of the material available. Among other ideas he suggested the creation of an inter-Commonwealth council containing Ministers of all members, but added that it would have to be a purely advisory body unless governments were prepared to delegate full authority. Harding thought there might also be a joint secretariat for such a council.¹ Bridges assumed that there would be a small U.K. War Cabinet of about six, and thought it would be impossible to add one representative of each Dominion to this, because it would become too large and unwieldy. He considered the idea of co-opting a single Dominion representative, but doubted if there was anyone of Smuts' calibre to repeat the 1917-1918 precedent, and questioned whether the Dominions would want a representative from only one country.

Monthly meetings between Dominion and U.K. Ministers might provide an alternative, but the exact powers to be given such Ministers would be a problem and if meetings were to be held with such frequency the Dominion representatives would have to reside in London; which would mean they would have to be High Commissioners rather than Ministers. To consult with senior Ministers would, Bridges thought, mean having meetings only very rarely. He told Harding that the dominant factor in war would be the pace of events, which would inevitably place the power of decision with "those at the centre". Consequently, it was important to ensure that

Dominion representatives in London are kept very fully informed of developments, and are brought into discussions at periodic intervals with one or two members of the War Cabinet.

This would be the priority in the early stages and if the Dominions wanted more direct participation later on other plans would have to be considered, but Bridges was doubtful about the effectiveness of a supreme war council

1. Harding to Bridges, 2nd November 1938, CAB21/488.

of U.K. and Dominion representatives.²

Harding agreed with the notion that one or two members of the War Cabinet should keep in touch with the Dominion High Commissioners, but noted that he wanted to examine in advance of an emergency other proposals which would enable the Dominions to

exercise their proper share in controlling the use of the contributions made by them.

He agreed that four additions to the U.K. War Cabinet would be impossible, but did not dismiss the possibility of an intermediate body between the High Commissioners, (who only acted as a channel of information) and rare meetings between senior Ministers.³ Bridges informed the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, Lord Chatfield, of his correspondence with Harding. He advised that nothing should be done for the time being about associating the Dominion with the higher direction of the war as it was difficult to produce a scheme which would recognise their independence and be a satisfactory instrument for reaching decisions. It would be better to rely on the good sense of the Dominions to recognise when the time came that "supreme control can only be exercised by those at the centre". Chatfield concurred with this, but added that the Dominions Secretary should be co-opted when necessary to the War Cabinet with a "watching brief", so as to be able to convey information to and from the High Commissioners.⁴ That influential figure, Sir Maurice Hankey, had also been considering the position of the Dominions. In August 1939 after having discussions with Chamberlain about a War Cabinet he noted that he had forgotten to mention to the Prime Minister the importance of keeping the Dominions fully informed, which "seemed to point to the S. of S. for Dominion Affairs being in the Cabinet".⁵

Some consideration had been given to war-time collaboration in the

2. Bridges to Harding, 6th February 1939, *ibid.*

3. Harding to Bridges, 16th February 1939, *ibid.*

4. Bridges to Chatfield, 1st March 1939; Chatfield to Bridges, 3rd March, 1939, *ibid.*

5. S. Roskill, Hankey: Man of Secrets, Vol. 3, (London, 1974), p. 414.

months before war and at the first meeting of the U.K. War Cabinet the importance of keeping the Dominion High Commissioners fully informed was noted. Chamberlain proposed that the new Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Eden, should receive the agenda for all Cabinet meetings and attend for discussion of matters about which he needed to be informed. He added that this information could be supplemented with more technical material on occasions.⁶ Apart from this procedure, a Ministerial committee was established to study inter-Commonwealth co-operation and suggest any improvements to the machinery. This reported to the War Cabinet on 16th September. Its report noted the Dominions Secretary's access to the War Cabinet and the arrangements which had been made for special daily telegrams, based on the Chiefs of Staff daily situation report, to be sent to the Dominion Governments and shown to the High Commissioners. The establishment in 1917 of an Imperial War Cabinet was recalled, but the committee suggested that an early repetition of this would be difficult as all the Dominion leaders were facing pressing problems in their countries, because of the heavy pressure upon U.K. Ministers, and in view of the danger that the U.K. might be directly attacked. The committee recommended that the Dominion High Commissioners be given an opportunity of having talks with Ministers, that Dominion liaison arrangements with Service and civilian departments should be gradually extended, and that a meeting of Prime Ministers could be convened within the foreseeable future.⁷

Measures had been taken to establish a Supreme War Council of U.K.

6. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 3rd September 1939, CAB65/1, WM(39)1.

7. Report by Ministerial Committee on 'Dominion Collaboration', 14th September 1939, CAB67/1, WP(G)(39)10. (The Committee consisted of Chatfield (Minister for co-ordination of Defence), Eden and Hankey (Minister without Portfolio) and was assisted by Ismay (Secretary to the Chiefs of Staff) and Bridges. For meeting of the committee see CAB21/874.)

and French representatives, (with other allied representatives to join as appropriate) and Sir John Stephenson, Assistant Under Secretary at the D.O., had suggested that the principle should be accepted whereby as soon as Dominion forces were serving in the field, Dominion Governments should be represented on the Supreme Council. He said it would be advantageous if they could be told that their status would be equal to the U.K.'s on this body.⁸ The Cabinet Committee rejected the notion of associating the Dominions with the Supreme War Council at that time. The committee's most urgent proposal was for senior Dominion Ministers to visit the U.K. so they could appreciate the gravity of the situation and report in full to their governments.⁹ The War Cabinet accepted the committee's proposals, but the conclusions noted that

In view of heavy pressure on members of the War Cabinet the hope was also expressed that meetings between the High Commissioners and members of the War Cabinet would not take place very frequently.¹⁰

Thus, the arrangements first established to collaboration with the Dominions placed a heavy emphasis on information and much less on joint collaboration, with an inauspicious reservation being expressed by the War Cabinet that it hoped not to be bothered too often by the High Commissioners. The two main aspects of communication - telegrams to Dominion Governments and meetings with High Commissioners - did not differ much from those arrangements in operation in the last years of peace. Nevertheless the Dominions were to be sent specially prepared telegrams supplemented by other information from the F.O. and elsewhere, the High Commissioners were to see the Dominions Secretary daily, and his association with a smaller War Cabinet seemed to be safeguarded. The meeting of Dominion Ministers which took place in November 1939

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8. Minute by Stephenson, 9th September 1939, D035/998, WC1/1^A.
 9. Report by Ministerial Committee on 'Dominion Collaboration' 14th September 1939, op.cit.
 10. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 16th September 1939, CAB65/1, WM(39)17. (Telegrams were sent to the Dominion Governments informing them of the arrangements agreed to by the Cabinet, and inviting them to send Ministers to visit, 21st September 1939, CAB21/874.)

was again primarily for the purpose of informing those Ministers of the situation and what assistance the U.K. could best use. This is not to say that the U.K. had no intention of consulting the Dominions on specific areas of joint action, but, as far as the overall direction of the war was concerned, it had no immediate plans in 1939 to ensure the direct participation of the Dominions. Bridges had pointed to the difficulty of devising an effective scheme. Commenting on a suggestion by Harding that while preparing for an inter-allied council they should remember the need to accommodate the Dominions, Bridges told Ismay that he felt strongly that if inter-allied control were complicated by the Dominions "we shall get something unworkable".¹¹ However, how long it would be possible for the stress to remain on informing, rather than consulting, the Dominions, depended on the success of these arrangements and the degree to which individual Dominion Governments desired to play a more positive role in the formulation of policy.

On 8th September 1939 Eden told the first war-time meeting of Dominion High Commissioners of the decision to send daily telegrams to their governments; on account of their special secrecy these telegrams would not be distributed in London but would be available to them at the meetings with the Dominions Secretary where they would be supplemented by information on special points, or the general background.¹² These meetings tended to informality. The D.O. kept only a note of the subjects discussed and important views expressed for their own records.¹³ Garner, who then held the rank of Principal in the D.O., has described them as "small and intimate gatherings" specifically for High Commissioners,

11. Bridges to Ismay, 11th May 1939, CAB21/488.

12. Note of first war-time meeting between Dominions Secretary and Dominion High Commissioners, 8th September 1939, DO121/6.

13. Minute by Mr. W. A. W. Clark (Principal at the D.O.) in response to an enquiry from Mr. Strang (F.O.) for the minutes of a meeting, 6th October 1943, DO35/1525, W223/1. (Massey records that the High Commissioners expressly asked for no minutes to be taken. Massey, What's Past is Prologue (Toronto, 1963), pp. 297-298.)

with no substituting deputies allowed.¹⁴

The Dominion High Commissioners were representatives of their governments, appointed to facilitate co-operation and communication. The value of these men during the war as interpreters and communicators of their governments' policies depended mainly on two factors; the individual and his position and contacts in London, and his government's regard for him. The five High Commissioners posted in London during the war were men of different personal status who varied in their effectiveness. Mr. Stanley Bruce, the Australian High Commissioner, was an ex-Prime Minister with correspondingly wide experience of Commonwealth affairs and foreign policy, and a high personal status. He had been stationed in London since 1932, first as Resident Minister and from 1933 as High Commissioner. Bruce was probably the best informed of all Dominion High Commissioners because of his personal contacts with senior Ministers and officials, and also his Government's posting of a Political Liaison Officer with rooms in the Cabinet Offices to liaise with the F.O. Bruce told his Prime Minister, Mr. Robert Menzies, that he would try to supplement the information he received from his personal and private contacts, but reminded him of the necessity for secrecy as

much of what I learn is not known to ordinary members of the Cabinet.

His subsequent telegram to Menzies indicates that Sir Maurice Hankey and Lord Chatfield were among those from whom he gleaned information.¹⁵ It was Bruce's own opinion that Australia was better informed during his High Commissionership than all the rest of the Commonwealth combined,

14. Rt. Hon. Lord Garner, The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968 (London, 1978), p. 198.

15. Two cables from Bruce to Menzies, both dated 7th September 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, Nos. 211 & 212. (Both Hankey and Chatfield had been members of the committee studying Commonwealth collaboration, and Hankey in particular had considerable knowledge of the Dominions and was well acquainted with many Dominion Ministers and officials. In 1936 he had told Richard Casey (then Treasurer in the Australian Government) that Bruce was "very highly thought of (in the U.K.) and very popular", Roskill, op.cit., p. 239.)

and had a greater influence on policy.¹⁶ Bruce undoubtedly had a close relationship with Menzies and they corresponded frequently, trusting each other's judgment and using one another as sounding boards for ideas. Menzies has since described Bruce as being "unsurpassed" as High Commissioner.¹⁷ This mutual confidence meant that Bruce was very much a part of Australia's whole process of collaboration with the U.K. and used often for expressing Australia's viewpoint. Bruce's relations with Mr. J. Curtin, P.M. from October 1941, were fairly good, but not as close as with Menzies. However, there were serious tensions between Bruce and Mr. Evatt, the Labour External Affairs Minister which was due as much to a clash of personalities as differences in policy.¹⁸ The regard with which Bruce was held in the U.K. is shown by Chamberlain's reaction to Menzies' suggestion that Bruce should be sent to the U.S.A. Chamberlain told Bruce that he ought to remain in London because he had built up an unrivalled range of contact, and later told Menzies that he did not want Bruce to leave, even for a few months, as he was needed in London.¹⁹

Mr. Vincent Massey, the Canadian High Commissioner, was also a senior figure with experience of Washington, (where he was posted from 1926) who had been in London since 1935. He was originally not enthusiastic about the establishment of the D.O., anticipating that it would be an obstacle, not a facility towards informing the Dominions on foreign affairs, but the war seemed to alter his opinion.²⁰ The difficulty for Massey lay not in his position in London, but his relationship with his own Prime Minister and the Canadian Department of External Affairs, which the Prime Minister, Mr. W. L. M. King also headed. In the 1930s King had objected to Massey's attending meetings

16. C. Edwards, Bruce of Melbourne: Man of Two Worlds (London, 1965), p. 87.

17. Sir R. Menzies, Afternoon Light (London, 1967), pp. 116-117.

18. Edwards, op.cit., pp. 337-347; Minutes by Greenway, 1st July 1943 and Newton, 2nd July 1943, F0371/36604, W9595/3523/68.

19. Bruce to Menzies, 19th September 1939, Chamberlain to Menzies, 10th November 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, Nos. 233 & 344; Garner, op.cit., p. 199.

20. Massey, op.cit., p. 236.

at the D.O. with the other High Commissioners, and was never happy about the arrangement.²¹ King's attitude towards Massey was rather ambivalent; at times he addressed him or referred to him in praising, friendly tones, but on others he was highly critical. It does seem that King lacked confidence in his High Commissioner personally, and as Minister for External Affairs, often kept him badly informed. King's view seems to have been shared by Mr. Skelton, (Under-Secretary of External Affairs until his death in 1941) but Massey says that the situation improved after Mr. Norman Robertson took over that office.²² No doubt Massey contributed to this uneasy relationship by his general attitude and behaviour. He was an intellectual, stylish and aristocratic in bearing, and considered the High Commissioners, especially Bruce and himself, as "not quite Ministers but more than diplomats". He referred to the gatherings at the D.O. as the "junior War Cabinet".²³ Miss Violet Markham told Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor-General to Canada, that Massey had been bitten by an "ambassadorial bug", and that this was the real cause of the friction between King and Massey.²⁴ Massey clearly favoured the meetings between the Secretary of State and the High Commissioners and later described them as ones in which it was possible to "think as you spoke", in which he and his colleagues were encouraged to give their personal opinions, even if they could not commit their governments. This applied particularly to Massey because of the difficult relationship between him and King, and because King did not envisage any Canadian High Commissioner playing an innovating role.

21. See chapter 1 p. 4 and Massey, op.cit., pp. 238-243.

22. Massey, op.cit., pp. 294-296.

23. Massey's Diary, entry for 10th November 1939, Massey College Toronto; Massey, op.cit., pp. 303-309. (For Lord Garner's impression of Massey, see Rt. Hon Lord Garner, 'Britain and Canada in the 1940s and 1950s', in P. Lyon, ed. Britain and Canada: Survey of a changing Relationship (London, 1976), p. 92.)

24. Miss V. Markham to Tweedsmuir, 23rd October 1939, Buchan Papers. (Commenting on the Masseys, Miss Markham wrote: "they don't realise that all this talk of serving Canada boils down to a good deal of personal ambition mixed up with social aspirations which loom so large in Alice's mind.")

Mr. Waterson, South African High Commissioner from 1939 to 1943, replaced Mr. Te Water when the latter resigned after South Africa declared war. On hearing Hertzog's decision to propose a neutrality motion, te Water told Eden that he agreed with this, commenting that Hertzog understood the South African people better than Smuts did.²⁵ Garner describes Waterson as a "light-weight", and Mr. Bodenstein, Head of the South African External Affairs Department, confirmed the view of Harding that Waterson was not as good as his predecessor because he was wholly sympathetic to the English side and incapable of representing the Afrikaaner point of view.²⁶ Waterson seemed to take seriously the suggestion made by the High Commissioners at their first war-time meeting that they should not communicate supplementary information to their governments as they had in the past, (according to the D.O.'s note of the meeting.) Bruce recalls that at a later meeting Waterson asked Eden whether he should communicate a piece of information to Smuts. Bruce notes that he did not intend to follow Waterson's practice of "bringing up matters which I propose to communicate to the Prime Minister".²⁷ Waterson was replaced in 1943, possibly because he was not felt to be the ideal representative, and his successor Colonel Reitz, a man with an illustrious military reputation in the Boer War, is described by Garner as agreeable but making no impact.²⁸ Reitz died suddenly in ~~late~~ 1943 and Mr. G. Heaton Nicholls, previously an M.P., replaced him with instructions from Smuts to back up the U.K. Ministers in their task of keeping the Commonwealth together. Smuts

25. The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning (London, 1965), p. 68.

26. Harding to Sir Cosmo Parkinson (P.U.S. of the D.O. Feb.-May 1940), 6th March 1940, D035/540, C87/62^A; Garner, op.cit., p. 199.

27. Notes of first meeting between the Dominions Secretary and the Dominion High Commissioners, 8th September 1939, D0121/6; Note by Bruce, 30th January 1940, Australian Documents Vol. III, No. 36.

28. Garner, op.cit., p. 199.

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stressed to him that South Africa's future depended on a strong and united Commonwealth.²⁹ The distinctive aspect about the position of any South African High Commissioner sprang from the close relations between Smuts and most senior U.K. Ministers, especially Churchill, as a result the High Commissioner might often be by-passed.

Although the New Zealand High Commissioner, Mr. Jordan, had been in London since 1934 and was well enough liked by most people, he did not possess the outstanding personal characteristics which marked out Bruce. The D.O. referred to him in a telegram to their own High Commissioner in New Zealand, Sir H. Batterbee, as "neither interested in, nor qualified to handle, diplomatic and strategic issues".³⁰ After a meeting of High Commissioners in 1943, Massey recorded in his diary

Jordan waited to see in which direction the feeling of the meeting went and then made a revivalist speech in favour of the majority view,

and Nicholls also recalls that Jordan was "not particularly interested in foreign affairs", but more concerned with matters of trade.³¹

One slight cloud over Jordan's reputation came to light in 1943 when an official from the F.O.'s Northern Department said he had been withholding information on the U.S.S.R. from the Dominion High Commissioners because he had heard that Jordan was indiscreet. Sir Basil Newton, the F.O.'s Liaison Officer to the Dominion High Commissioners, admitted that there was some doubt about Jordan who, although generally uninterested in foreign affairs, was passionately in favour of the Soviet regime and resented any criticisms of it. Newton wrote

There can be no question of his whole-hearted loyalty & his desire to co-operate, but I have myself thought it conceivable through inexperience & lack of acumen in foreign affairs (in many ways he is very shrewd and full of mother wit) he might on occasions be indiscreet in conversation with Soviet friends. I think the D.O. share my feelings, though I have never heard of any actual instance of indiscretion.³²

29. G. H. Nicholls, South Africa In My Time (London, 1961), p. 380.
 30. D.O. to Batterbee, February 1942, Prem 4, 43A/14.
 31. Massey's Diary, entry for 3rd February 1943, Massey College, Toronto; Nicholls, op.cit., p. 383.
 32. Minutes by (C.T.A.W. ??) 1st June 1943, Newton, 4th June 1943 & 15th June 1943, and Greenway (Head of the Dominions Intelligence Department of the F.O.) 11th June 1943, F0371/36605, W8107/4184/68.

It was arranged, with the approval of Cadogan, that Newton would not discuss sensitive material with the High Commissioners when Jordan was present, a task made easier by the latter's frequent absence from the D.O. meetings. The F.O. was to speak with the D.O. about this arrangement and there seems to be no record of any dissent on the D.O.'s part. The reason for Jordan's absence is unclear unless he felt simply that his Government was receiving sufficient information on foreign and military questions from the D.O.'s telegrams.

The U.K. was generally satisfied with its meetings with the High Commissioners. Lord Cranborne, who was Dominions Secretary for the longest time during the war, described them as being of "the greatest value", assisting him to form balanced conclusions, and providing the High Commissioners with a valuable background to policies and events. He added one qualification - that the High Commissioners could seldom speak on behalf of their governments and had to give personal opinions.³³ This was a consequence of their representative status and their government's use of each of them. Nicholls, who arrived during Cranborne's second term at the D.O., had described the meetings as "very pleasant affairs though occupied with serious matters". The effect was to make the High Commissioners feel significant parts of the war machine, and he thought the Dominion Governments had no reason to feel uninformed providing the High Commissioner was doing his job properly.³⁴ More serious criticism came from Bruce and Massey. The former complained that the Dominions Secretary was not fully informed of the situation, or not in sufficient time for the Dominions to be consulted, and the latter noted that so much depended on the willingness and ability of the Dominions Secretary to provide them with information and Churchill's

33. Cranborne to Mr. McGuire, 23rd August 1945, D035/1205, WC75/47.

34. Nicholls, op.cit., p. 382.

readiness to keep them informed.³⁵

During the first phases of the war, commonly known as the 'phoney war', the situation was fairly acceptable to everyone; later, difficulties arose. The first war-time Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs was Eden, who had been brought back into the Government on the outbreak of hostilities. Eden was not wholly sympathetic to the reconstituted Government and found his anomalous association with the War Cabinet humiliating. There were those who were glad that he had been brought back to Office, but not made a central member of the War Cabinet, thus ensuring that he would not be discredited by its performance.³⁶

Eden recalls that he enjoyed his work with the Dominions and was very interested in Commonwealth affairs, but he was eager for an executive department, particularly the War Office.³⁷

Garner, who served under Eden, recalls a restlessness on his part, and an absence of any "profound interest" in Commonwealth problems, but says he excelled in his handling of the High Commissioners' meetings.³⁸

Massey recorded that Eden was "admirable" and that all the High Commissioners were disappointed to see him leave.³⁹

Bruce's opinion was rather more ambiguous. In May 1940 he told Menzies that he was disappointed with Eden's successor, Lord Caldecote, but said that despite this he thought he would be "as effective" as Eden. Considering Bruce's criticisms of Caldecote, this was not a very complimentary remark, but it might merely have referred to the fact that neither man was a member of the

35. Edwards, op.cit., pp. 322-324; Massey, op.cit., p. 296.

36. Oliver Harvey, who was Eden's private secretary at the F.O. 1936-38 & 1941-3, recorded his delight that Eden was not in the War Cabinet, but was to have access to it, and also Eden's feeling that he was "insufficiently occupied" at the D.O., Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey, 1937-1940, ed. J. Harvey, (London, 1970) see entries for 3rd September 1939, 26th March 1940 and 27th March 1940.

37. The Eden Memoirs, op.cit., pp. 63, 84 & 91. His biographer also refers to Eden's discomfort between September 1939 and May 1940. See D. Carlton, Anthony Eden: A Biography (Allen Lane, London, 1981), pp. 153 & 157-8.

38. Garner, op.cit., p. 161.

39. Massey, op.cit., p. 299.

War Cabinet.⁴⁰ Finally, it is interesting to note Menzies' opinion of Eden after the latter had returned to the F.O. Returning from a visit to the U.K. in the Spring of 1941, Menzies reported on the situation in the U.K. and on various Ministers, commenting that although Eden had considerable experience and great industry he was a "light-weight" who had not developed in recent years.⁴¹ With the end of the 'phoney war' and the increasing seriousness of the war situation, Dominion calls for more information and consultations grew and the U.K. were forced to reconsider the arrangements it had made.

The Australian Prime Minister, Menzies, combined an attitude of solid support for the U.K. and its war effort, with fairly frequent requests for information and consultations and occasional criticisms of British actions. In January 1940 Menzies cabled Chamberlain about the proposed action to interfere with Swedish supplies of iron ore to Germany and requested that no decision be taken until the Dominion Governments had been sent fuller information and had time to express their views. He added that he was concerned at the effect of such action on other neutral countries. Bruce reported that his message had arrived just in time and that the War Cabinet had decided to drop the contemplated action.⁴² In May 1940 the safety of Australian and New Zealand convoys concerned Menzies because of the uncertainty surrounding Italy's possible entry into the war, and he requested a full appreciation from the Chiefs of Staff of the prospective situation. Commenting on the appreciation, Menzies said that it should have been sent earlier, and that he had found it disappointing, compared with special reports he had received from the Committee of Imperial Defence (C.I.D.).

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40. Bruce to Menzies, 15th May 1940, Australian Documents Vol. III, No. 244.
 41. Minute to the Australian Advisory War Council, 28th May 1941, Australian Documents Vol. IV, No. 472. (After the war Menzies radically revised his opinion of Eden.)
 42. Menzies to Chamberlain, 12th January 1940, Bruce to Menzies, 12th January 1940, Australian Documents Vol. III, No. 13 & 14.

The possibility with which we are confronted in the Mediterranean has, we understand, been the subject of examination in recent years and we feel that there should be available to Dominion Governments a comprehensive appreciation along the generally accepted lines of this class of document.

Menzies said that if there was concern about the safeguarding of such information it would be sent to him, as Minister for Defence Co-ordination, and he would ensure its security, but he asked to be given information on the disposition of allied forces in the various theatres. Menzies added that he made these "observations" in the "spirit of a helpful suggestion" so Australia could judge how it could best use its own forces.⁴³ These messages reflected Menzies' opinion that the Dominion Governments should be kept very closely in touch with all political and military strategy and whenever possible, consulted about action.

As early as September 1939 Menzies had told the U.K. High Commissioner of the need for the Dominions to have an effective voice in U.K. policy and how they had not done so before the war, citing the U.K.'s guarantee to Poland as an example. He also suggested that the Dominions should be given a seat on the U.K. War Cabinet.⁴⁴ However in May 1940 Menzies did not seem too dissatisfied with the position, and told the U.K. High Commissioner, Mr. G. Whiskard, that apart from the points he had made to Eden on 8th May, "he had no complaint whatsoever as to information and opportunities for consultation afforded by the United Kingdom Government".⁴⁵ In September 1940 Menzies and Bruce both felt the situation had badly deteriorated when they were given no information about the withdrawal from Dakar in advance of press notices. The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Lord Caldecote, explained to

43. Menzies to Eden, 1st May 1940 & 8th May 1940, Australian Documents Vol. III, Nos. 191 & 215.

44. Whiskard to D.O., 20th September 1939, CAB21/874.

45. Whiskard to Eden, 10th May 1940, Australian Documents Vol. III, No. 225.

Menzies that the U.K. had to release information to the press immediately in order to counter false accounts of the operation they expected the German and Vichy agencies to broadcast, and this was why the Dominions had not been informed first.⁴⁶ Meanwhile Bruce was telling Menzies that he had protested strongly about the lack of communication and had discovered that time had been available, although no information had been given to him either. He blamed the position on Churchill's lack of appreciation of the Dominions, and the "febleness" of the Secretary of State. Menzies sent a message to Churchill criticising the military action taken and telling him

It is absolutely wrong that the Australian Government should know practically nothing of details of engagement and nothing at all of decision to abandon it until after newspaper publication.

He added that this was not the first occasion when the absence of official information had proved humiliating to his government.⁴⁷ There ensued a series of cables between Churchill and Menzies, the former expressing his disappointment at Menzies' criticisms and saying he had hoped for "a broad and generous measure of indulgence" because of the U.K.'s exertions on Australia's behalf. Bruce reported that Churchill was resentful of Menzies' cable, because he was sensitive about Dakar and knew that Menzies' criticisms were right. Menzies responded by assuring Churchill that "whatever interrogative or even critical" messages he sent

Australia knows courage when it sees it and will follow you to a finish, as to the best of my abilities I certainly shall.⁴⁸

From May 1940, when the Churchill government assumed Office, three

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46. Caldecote to Whiskard, (enclosing message for Menzies) 26th September 1940, Australian Documents Vol. IV, No. 140.
47. Bruce to Menzies, 26th September 1940; Menzies to Bruce, (enclosing message for Churchill) 4th October 1940, Australian Documents Vol. IV, Nos. 141 & 144.
48. Churchill to Menzies, 2nd October 1940; Bruce to Menzies, 2nd October 1940; Menzies to Churchill, 4th October 1940, Australian Documents Vol. IV, Nos. 152, 154 & 158.

factors affected the collaboration with the Dominions: first, the low opinion in which the High Commissioners held the new Secretary of State, Caldecote; second, Churchill's own attitude towards Commonwealth collaboration; third, the deteriorating war situation and the increased speed at which events were moving. Lord Caldecote was no stranger to the D.O., he had been Secretary of State from January to September 1939 (as Sir T. Inskip) but his appointment in May 1940 was not welcomed with much enthusiasm. Massey recalls that the High Commissioners protested to Churchill at the appointment, and that although he personally liked Caldecote, the D.O.

was not the kind of Office to be given as a consolation prize to a retiring politician

adding that as he suspected, he was never near enough the centre of the stage to cater adequately for them.⁴⁹ Bruce, who referred later to Caldecote's "feebleness" told his Prime Minister that it was an unsatisfactory appointment, and that Caldecote lacked the necessary drive and personality to put over the Dominions' view to the War Cabinet, or a receptive or constructive mind. Echoing Massey, he said the appointment of a discarded Lord Chancellor was "not complimentary" to the Dominions.⁵⁰ Whatever Caldecote's capacity for the post, it seems as if the High Commissioners made up their minds that he was a bad appointment and gave him little chance. Garner records that, led by Bruce, they showed "scant respect" for Caldecote, showing their irritation if he kept them waiting and that consequently the High Commissioners' meetings with him were at best "tepid". Although lacking Eden's flair or brilliance, Garner describes Caldecote as "high-minded" and "conscientious", with integrity and the capacity to make the best use of his staff. Perhaps more surprisingly, in view of the Dominion High Commissioners' comments, he also says that he

49. Massey, *op.cit.*, p. 299.

50. Bruce to Menzies, 15th May 1940, Australian Documents Vol. III, No. 244.

refused to be overborne by Churchill's whims.⁵¹

Caldecote clearly tried to fulfil his duties and serve the Dominions as well as he could. The records of the War Cabinet show his interventions on their behalf; as on 13th June 1940 when he urged the need to keep them fully informed and consulted, emphasising the need to treat them as full partners.⁵² However, his exclusion from the War Cabinet proper undoubtedly produced difficulties and although he tried to ensure that he was fully informed, on occasions he had to tell the High Commissioners that he was unable to provide them with information of Cabinet discussions as he had not been present at the time.⁵³ Over the Dakar incident, which caused such friction with Australia, Caldecote sent a draft telegram to Churchill, explaining that he was anxious to give the Dominions the fullest information (especially after hearing the views of the High Commissioners) but it was difficult to do this as he had not been at the Cabinet's discussions. He suggested that Churchill should amplify the draft.⁵⁴

In response to Menzies' request in May 1940 for fuller information about the war, Caldecote prepared a memorandum for the War Cabinet about Commonwealth collaboration. He informed them that a military officer had been appointed to the D.O. to act as liaison with the War Cabinet Secretary and the Service Departments (the first appointee was Colonel W. A. W. Bishop⁵⁵) to assist in preparing telegrams. The memorandum stressed the commitment of the Dominions to the war and the importance of providing them with the fullest information.

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51. Garner, op.cit., pp. 161 & 199. (Caldecote combined the position of Dominions Secretary with Leader of the House of Lords.)
 52. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 13th June 1940, CAB65/7, WM(40)165.
 53. Notes of meetings with High Commissioners, 28th & 29th June 1940, D0121/8.
 54. Minute Caldecote to Churchill, 26th September 1940, Prem4, 43B/1.
 55. Colonel W. A. W. Bishop, later Sir Alexander Bishop the U.K.'s High Commissioner to Cyprus, is described by Dixon as having been very valuable in the early part of the war. (Later he took up a military appointment overseas.) Dixon Memoirs (Unpublished, 1969), p. 55.

If the U.K. was to be able to secure the maximum co-operation from the Dominions it had to show that it was ready

to take them completely into our confidence. At present there is some sign of a feeling that we are not telling them all that we should.

Advance warning of events would facilitate their co-operation and allow them to prepare domestic opinion and lessen shocks which otherwise would take communities, far from the scene of action, by surprise. He asked the Cabinet to approve the general principle that the Dominions should be continually given the fullest possible information, and that it be left to the Dominions Secretary to judge which Cabinet material should be passed on to them.⁵⁶ The War Cabinet considered this paper on 5th June and agreed to the proposals, subject to the Service Department's approving all important texts sent to the Dominions.⁵⁷ The military liaison officer also attended some of the meetings with the High Commissioners.

It seems that in the wake of Menzies' request and the War Cabinet's authorisation for all possible information to be sent, the tempo did increase. The Dakar incident was essentially a question of timing, not a case when the Dominions were not forwarned of action. Perhaps this increase in information led Churchill to start complaining about the material which was transmitted. In November 1940 Churchill asked General Ismay and Bridges who was responsible for drawing up a telegram to the U.K. High Commissioners about troop movements involved in supporting Greece, commenting

No one is entitled to be informed of impending movements of British ships . . . It is intolerable that all these secret matters connected with operations should be scattered round the world. It may sometimes be necessary where Dominions forces are involved to give specific details, but more usually general statements should suffice. I had no idea that such information was being circularised. Not only the lives of troops and sailors, but the success of operations, are involved.⁵⁸

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56. Memorandum by Caldecote, 'Supply of Military Appreciations for Dominion Prime Ministers', 3rd June 1940, CAB66/8. WP(40)192.
 57. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 5th June 1940, CAB65/7. WM(40)155.
 58. Minute Churchill to Ismay and Bridges, 9th November 1940, Prem4, 43B/1.

Ismay tried to reassure Churchill that the heading 'Circular' on telegrams to the U.K. High Commissioners was misleading; the only people abroad who saw them were the High Commissioners, and in London, himself, the War Cabinet Office, the F.O. and the Chiefs of Staff. He explained that special action was taken at the High Commissions to ensure secrecy, and that the telegram in question was drafted by the military liaison officer at the D.O. after the War Cabinet's decision to communicate the information at the meeting on 4th November 1940.⁵⁹

Churchill instructed Ismay to send nothing relating to future operations without his permission in each case.⁶⁰ This placed further restrictions on the Dominions Secretary and undermined his authority to judge what information should be sent. In October 1940 Churchill made a change at the D.O., bringing in Lord Cranborne in place of Caldecote, when the latter was appointed Lord Chief Justice. Bruce, on hearing of Caldecote's departure, went to see Churchill

to stress the importance of Caldecote's successor being an absolutely first class man and that he should attend all Cabinet Meetings.

Churchill did not take kindly to this advice and complained to Bruce that the War Cabinet could not have private meetings without the Dominions being represented. To Menzies, Bruce said his first reaction to Cranborne's appointment was one of disappointment, as he did not seem to carry enough political weight, and because Churchill had shown a total lack of appreciation of the "importance and position" of the Dominions. But he told his Prime Minister that he had been told Cranborne possessed "ability and guts" and only needed time to prove himself, so Bruce said he would suspend judgment.⁶¹ Two months later

59. Minute Ismay to Churchill, 13th November 1940, *ibid.*

60. Minute by Churchill, 13th November 1940, *ibid.*

61. Note by Bruce of a conversation with Churchill, 2nd October 1940; Bruce to Menzies, 3rd October 1940, Australian Documents Vol. IV, Nos. 232 & 472.

Churchill asked Bruce how he thought Cranborne was getting on? Bruce replied "quite well", but reiterated his view that the Dominions Secretary ought to be the second man in the Cabinet to the Prime Minister. Menzies' summing up of Cranborne after his visit to London was terse, but not uncomplimentary; "an able Minister".⁶² Others have been much more flattering about Cranborne. Massey told King that he possessed all the qualities for the post and that his "understanding and imagination and keenness" were of great help in dealing with inter-Commonwealth problems.⁶³ Smuts wrote to Cranborne on his appointment saying

After your sacrifice in the appeasement days you have also come proudly into your own, and will, I am sure, be a great source of strength to Eden and the Government.⁶⁴

One of South Africa's High Commissioners, Nicholls, recounts that Cranborne "continually impressed me as a man of outstanding ability and knowledge of affairs" and judged that "no other man in England was more fitted for the post than he".⁶⁵ Two officials who served under him have also praised Cranborne. Sir Charles Dixon, an Assistant Under-Secretary at the D.O., said he found him "most pleasant to deal with", quick to grasp a point, and prepared to discuss things fully with his advisors, whether he agreed with them or not.⁶⁶ Garner, who was Cranborne's Private Secretary for part of his period of office, seems to have regarded Cranborne as the most successful of the war-time Secretaries of State. He notes his range of abilities, his courtesy, his humanity and his capacity to develop good relations with both the

62. Note by Bruce of a conversation with Churchill, 19th December 1940; Minute to Advisory War Council, 28th May 1941, Australian Documents: Vol. IV, Nos. 232 & 472.

63. Massey to King, 1st November 1943, M 26, J I Vol. 347, Massey Correspondence Sept.-Dec. 1943, p. 298954. (This was sent after Cranborne had begun his second term at the D.O.)

64. Smuts to Cranborne, 11th February 1941, Avon Papers F0954/4, Dom41/1. (Cranborne had resigned as Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the F.O. in February 1938 at the same time as Eden resigned as Foreign Secretary)

65. Nicholls, op.cit., p. 384.

66. Dixon, Memoirs, p. 55.

High Commissioners and his own staff.⁶⁷ One is left with the impression, from his letters and minutes, that Cranborne was extremely successful as Dominions Secretary, possessing the ability to serve, rather than dominate, Dominion Ministers and officials which was necessary in that difficult office. Mr. John Curtin, Menzies' successor, endured two years of stormy relations with the U.K. when he came to power, but he told the U.K. High Commissioner, Sir R. Cross, just before his first visit to London that while he was rather in awe of the "formidable" Churchill, he had a very good impression of Cranborne.⁶⁸

Cranborne, despite his age and comparatively junior status within the Government, was not afraid to stand up to Churchill. He defended his own staff when they came under criticism,⁶⁹ and also the Dominions' right to information at a time when Churchill was very reluctant to send very much material. In December 1940 Cranborne asked his Prime Minister whether he intended to support the policy agreed to by the War Cabinet of providing the Dominions with the fullest amount of information possible, telling him that he and his predecessors had found that sharing information with the Dominion Prime Ministers greatly contributes to gaining their confidence and ensuring practical co-operation with us

He said he wanted to be able to continue to send information to them, and that he had already had complaints from the Australian Government as well as the High Commissioners.

67. Garner, op.cit., p. 163.

68. Cross to Cranborne, 13th April 1943, Prem4, 50/15.

69. Minutes by Churchill and Cranborne September 1941, Prem4 44/1. (For example, Lord Harlech, the U.K. High Commissioner to South Africa, sent a telegram giving his personal impressions of the situation there which was circulated to the War Cabinet. Churchill took exception to it, accusing the High Commissioner of making supercilious and superficial judgments, but Cranborne defended Harlech and modified the terms of Churchill's reply.) See also Cranborne's defence of Sir. G. Campbell in October 1940 against Beaverbrook and Churchill - Garner, op.cit., pp. 176-79.)

Demands of this kind are embarrassing, as they are often framed in an inconvenient form. The provision of a steady and continuous supply of information, is, I feel, the best method of checking such a tendency.⁷⁰

Churchill replied that although there was to be no change in principle, he did not want military information to be transmitted where no Dominion troops were involved, telling Cranborne an effort ought to be made ~~out~~ to "scatter so much deadly and secret information" around, and that there was a danger of the D.O. staff getting into the habit of running a "kind of newspaper full of deadly secrets" which was circularised to the four Dominions. He said he was generally trying to restrict the distribution of secret information and so while the principle remained intact, "there should be considerable soft-pedalling in practice".⁷¹

The following month Cranborne asked if he could increase the categories of information shown to the Dominion High Commissioners because summaries had been altered and now contained less secret information. He said he recognised that the Cabinet had decided to curtail information to foreign powers, but suggested that this should not apply to the High Commissioners. They considered they should receive more, and he thought this should be complied with.⁷² Churchill refused, telling Cranborne that the operational summaries he wanted to show them were too secret, and insisting that they operated on a 'need to know' basis, although this did not "imply any want of confidence" in the High Commissioners.⁷³ The Spring of 1941 saw Menzies visiting the U.K. to discuss strategy with Churchill and to find out more information. There was also an increase in the number of telegrams from the New Zealand Government asking for information

70. Cranborne to Churchill, 23rd December 1940, Prem4, 43B/1.

71. Churchill to Cranborne, 25th December 1940, ibid. (Also printed in W. S. Churchill, The Second World War Vol. 2, App. A. (London, 1951.)

72. Cranborne to Churchill, 17th January 1941, Prem4, 7/5.

73. Churchill to Cranborne, 27th January 1941, ibid.

about replacements and the defence of the Far East.⁷⁴ Cranborne continued to try and obtain Churchill's authorisation for a variety of information to be communicated to the Dominions. By the autumn Cranborne clearly felt in an impossible position because he felt he was not invited to attend enough War Cabinet meetings, and because of the information which Churchill refused to allow him to pass on. He said that the result of these strictures was to encourage the High Commissioners to seek out other sources, "which apparently talk more freely" which made the position of Dominions Secretary "a farce". He did not ask to attend War Cabinet meetings to which he was not entitled,

But I do feel very strongly that I should be given full discretion to tell and show the High Commissioners anything I think right, with the well understood exception of operational matters. You may, I think, trust me not to pass on what they should not have. But I do want a free hand, without which it is quite impossible to carry on the work of Dominions Secretary which is of the first importance.⁷⁵

Churchill's solution to this, and similar pressure exerted upon him by the Australian High Commissioner and Sir Earle Page, (formerly Australian Prime Minister, 1939, and Australia's special representative in the U.K. 1941-1942) was to make a further, although only temporary change at the D.O. In February 1942 Churchill wrote to Lord Moyne informing him that events and opinions had forced him to make changes in the Government, and made it necessary to give Attlee the D.O. "which many have pressed should be held by a member of the War Cabinet"; consequently he said he wanted Cranborne to go to the C.O., where Moyne was Secretary of State.⁷⁶

74. Telegrams of March/April 1942, Prem4, 43B/2.

75. Cranborne to Churchill, 18th November 1941, D0121/10A.

76. Churchill to Moyne, 19th February 1942, W.S. Churchill, The Second World War, Vol. 4, The Hinge of Fate (London, 1953) p. 78. As well as Bruce and Page advising Churchill of the need for the Dominions Secretary to be in the War Cabinet, (see p. 14) The Times was also advocating this from August 1941. See The Times, 25th August 1941, p. 5 b & c. (There do seem to have been some basic disagreements between Churchill and Cranborne. In April 1944 when Cabinet changes were being discussed in Whitehall, it was mooted that Cranborne would go to the F.O., but Harvey noted that this was unlikely because both men suspected that there would be too many clashes over policy. The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey, 1941-1945, (London, 1978) entries for 7th April 1944 and 17th April 1944.)

Churchill's attitude towards the Commonwealth seems to have an important bearing on the U.K.'s relations with the Dominions. He appears not to have recognised them as mature, fully independent partners, and either failed to see the importance of keeping them informed, or in a rather paternalistic manner, did not want to bother them with information, especially if it was likely to worry them. He refused to allow a telegram outlining the dangers of an invasion of the U.K., in March 1941, because he did not want them "worried with all this questionable stuff", and in September 1941 was not keen to send an appreciation of the war situation which would "hustle and worry" the Dominions.⁷⁷ Menzies told the Advisory War Council in Australia that Churchill had no "conception of the British Dominions as separate entities" and that the more distant a problem was from the heart of the Empire (i.e. the U.K.) the less he thought about it. This demonstrates Menzies' concern that the U.K. did not pay sufficient attention to the problems of the Far East.⁷⁸ Massey comments on Churchill's neglect in utilising the knowledge and experience of the D.O. and criticised him for treating it just as a Post Office. This was precisely how Churchill described the D.O. himself, in a conversation with Bruce in December, as a counter to Bruce's insistence that the Dominions Secretary should be a member of the War Cabinet.⁷⁹ Lord Moran, Churchill's doctor and close friend, recounts that Smuts was one of the very few people for whom Churchill had any respect and to whom he listened. However, the correspondence and conversations between Smuts and Churchill show that they tended to discuss the grand issues of the day, as old friends and colleagues, and did not often

77. Minute by Churchill, March 1941; minute Churchill to Ismay 13th September 1941, Prem4, 43B/2.

78. Minute to Advisory War Council, 28th May 1941, Australian Documents Vol. IV, No. 472.

79. Massey, op.cit., p. 297; Note by Bruce of conversation with Churchill, 19th December 1940, Australian Documents Vol. IV, No. 232.

discuss Commonwealth issues. Moran also noted Churchill's coolness to King, commenting that while the two men were quite friendly, Churchill was "not really interested in Mackenzie King. He takes him for granted."⁸⁰ Churchill had numerous contacts in the Dominions and it might have been expected that these, plus his long friendship with Smuts, would have facilitated an enlightened attitude towards them. Yet, he had also been Colonial Secretary earlier in his career and according to Garner, held "quaint notions" about the Commonwealth.

His attitude was a romantic one and his mind harkened back to the Empire at its apogee as he knew it in early manhood; he took pride in the continuing Commonwealth but sometimes treated it with more rhetoric than realism.⁸¹

Churchill also tended to dominate colleagues and did not take too kindly to criticisms about his policy (see for instance his reaction to Menzies' criticism of the Dakar incident.⁸²) As Bruce told the new Australian Prime Minister, Mr. J. Chifley in 1945,

With all his great qualities he is not a co-operator and he appears quite incapable of realizing the developments that have taken place in Empire relations during recent years and the new status of the Dominions. The necessity of consulting the governments of the Dominions always irritated him.⁸³

The information transmitted to the Dominions was not wholly dependent on Churchill's whims about the extent to which they were to be consulted. As he told successive Dominion Secretaries he was very concerned that the security of war information should not be jeopardised, and this raised a genuine conflict of interests. The danger of leakages, either because too many individuals knew secret plans, or by the intercept of cables, was a very real one and a very high proportion of Allied and Axis communications were tapped during the war. Certain

80. Lord Moran, Winston Churchill: The Struggle for Survival, 1940-1965 (London, 1966), p. 53.

81. Garner, op.cit., p. 153. (In a similar vein, Amery commented "in the world of political ideas he (Churchill) has never really advanced beyond the mid-Victorian period . . . He had never really sympathised with the developments of self-government in the Empire, even in the European Dominions". See C. Thorne, Allies of a King: United States, Britain and the war against Japan, 1941-1945, (London, 1978), pp.61-2.)

82. See pages 53-54.

83. Edwards, op.cit. p. 404.

precautions were taken to reduce this possibility in Commonwealth communications. The more secret messages were sent to U.K. High Commissioners, rather than directly to Dominion Governments, and were decoded only by the head of the cipher staff and handled personally by the High Commissioner. Precautions had also been taken in London vis-a-vis the information shown to the Dominion High Commissioners; documents were not shown to them outside the confines of the D.O. The Minister of State at the F.O., Mr. Richard Law, noted in 1943 that after three and a half years of war there was no record of any leakage of information from Dominion sources.⁸⁴ Churchill obtained Cranborne's agreement that operational information should not be given to the Dominions but he also tried to withhold other diplomatic/political communications, such as the correspondence with Stalin over the declaration of war against Hungary, Rumania and Finland.⁸⁵ It was clearly difficult to draw the line and lay down what the Dominions did and did not need to see. The whole issue was a very subjective one. If as allies Canada or Australia insisted that it had the right to be informed of certain developments, could or should the U.K. deprive them of that information? Cranborne was not only keen to supply as much material as he could, but seemed to appreciate that it was to the U.K.'s advantage to retain the initiative in its transmission by providing a good continuous flow. By doing this the U.K. could monitor exactly what it was telling the Dominions and try to ensure the maximum co-operation from them by its readiness to supply them with information and perhaps also by the careful phrasing of what they were told. He had told Churchill in December 1940 that sudden requests for information could be embarrassing. The other vital consideration for the U.K.

84. F.O. Circular, drafted by Law, March 1943, FO371/36605, W8107/4984/68. For details of the extent to which telegrams were intercepted and codes broken during the war see F. H. Hinsley British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence in Strategy and Operations Vols. 1 & 2 (HMSO, London, 1979 & 1981).

85. Cranborne to Churchill, 18th November 1941, DO121/10A.

was the long-term effect its actions would have on the Dominions. Law explained it very well to F.O. officials in March 1943 when he said that failure to consult did not always lead to complaints from the Dominions, but that this did not indicate that no harm had been done; the eventual result could be to discourage the spirit of co-operation and increase the tendencies of Dominion Governments to take independent action.⁸⁶ In a minute to Sir Alexander Cadogan, P.U.S. at the F.O., he expostulated

We're living in a fool's paradise: the Dominions are swallowing a great deal now (because we're at war & because the prestige of the P.M. is so tremendous) which they will not be prepared to swallow when the war is over. If we don't watch out we're liable to wake up one morning & find that we're a small island off the coast of Europe, with the influence that naturally appertains to (say) Belgium or any other small nation.⁸⁷

Dominion requests for information continued throughout the war, as did U.K. discussions about how much should be sent. However, in the closing months of 1941, with the deterioration of the Far Eastern situation and continuing problems in other theatres of the war, the main issue was no longer about information, but was increasingly centered on means of associating the Dominions more directly with the formulation of war policy.

When war broke out the immediate objective of the U.K. had been to arrange for Dominion Ministers to visit the U.K. to acquaint their Governments with the situation and begin co-ordinating their efforts.⁸⁸ Accordingly messages were sent to all the Dominion Governments on 21st September 1939. The Dominion Governments all accepted the invitations, but King urged that it must be stressed that the visit was only for the purpose of consultation and co-ordination, and that no suggestion

86. F.O. Circular drafted by Law, March 1943, op.cit.

87. Minute Law to Cadogan, March 1943, F0371/36605, W8107/4084/68.

88. See page 43.

was given that anything in the shape of an Imperial War Council was being established. He told the U.K. High Commissioner that in the previous war Canada had been forced by such councils into policies which it disapproved of, and he wanted no repetition. However, when shown the proposed announcement of the meeting, King had no complaints.⁸⁹ All the U.K. High Commissioners were warned on 4th October of the line which was to be taken with the press about the meeting, namely that there was no question of

departing from the well recognised principle that executive responsibility remains with the several Governments individually For your own information object is of course to prevent description of meetings as an Imperial War Cabinet or Council along the lines of that set up in 1917.⁹⁰

Despite these attempts by the U.K. to quash any other interpretations, the Canadian press ran a feature picked up from the London Daily Express which referred to the establishment of an Imperial War Cabinet. King was not surprisingly annoyed at the articles and worried about the possibility of an early Quebec election.⁹¹ The Australian press also raised this question and reported a statement by Menzies, which he subsequently denied, that he was to visit London early the next year to sit on a special War Council. Trouble also came from the Nationalist press in South Africa which referred to the meeting as an attempt to subordinate further the economic life of the Union to the exigencies of war, predicting that in the end the Smuts Government would send troops overseas, despite his motion to Parliament.⁹² The visit in November of Dominion Ministers was successful. A number of meetings were arranged with Service and civilian departments to co-ordinate actions and they travelled with Eden to France where they met General

89. Campbell to D.O., two telegrams of 3rd October 1939, F0371/23963, W14291/9831/68.

90. D.O. to four U.K. High Commissioners in the Dominions, 4th October 1940, ibid.

91. Campbell to D.O., 4th October 1940, F0371/23967, W14473/14472/68.

92. D.O. to Whiskard, 5th October 1940; Whiskard to D.O., 6th October 1940, ibid.

Camelin and Mr. Daladier.

In the Spring of 1940 the U.K. again considered extending the arrangements for collaboration. In February 1940 Lord Lothian, U.K. Ambassador to the U.S.A, asked Lord Halifax if the Government was contemplating setting up an Imperial War Cabinet, and telling him that such a step would be advantageous to U.K.-U.S. relations, helping to persuade the Americans that the Dominions were not simply the U.K.'s dependents, and the war one between two imperialist nations.⁹³ Halifax passed this on to Chamberlain who minuted

The difficulty is in finding representatives of the Dominions who would be a valuable addition to the Cabinet. Where is the Smuts?⁹⁴

It is not clear whether Chamberlain ever seriously intended to establish a Commonwealth body in London. From this it sounds as if he would have been willing, had he thought the right representatives were available, and in the previous September, when Menzies had suggested sending Bruce to the U.S.A., Chamberlain asked Bruce to tell Menzies not to, unless or until, Menzies could come to London as Prime Minister of Australia and sit in the "Imperial War Cabinet".⁹⁵ A month earlier, Chamberlain had questioned Hankey about inviting the ex-Prime Minister of Canada, R. B. Bennett to join a War Cabinet. Hankey had intimated that King would dislike this, and suggested Bruce. Chamberlain then expressed his annoyance with Bruce's criticisms of the U.K.'s re-affirmation of its guarantee to Poland after the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which Hankey recorded has "much reduced his confidence in Bruce - never, I gather, very high".⁹⁶ Yet, Chamberlain then requested that Bruce should not be posted to the U.S. However, whether his suggestion

93. Lothian to Halifax, 27th February 1940, D035/998, WC7/1.

94. Note by Chamberlain, 11th March 1940, *ibid.*

95. Bruce to Menzies, 19th September 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, No. 233.

96. Roskill, op.cit., p. 414.

of Bennett's inclusion in a War Cabinet, or his remark about Menzies travelling to U.K. meant he seriously considered establishing an Imperial War Cabinet, is unclear.

Sir John Stephenson, Assistant Under-Secretary at the D.O., considered in March 1940 a meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers and/or the establishment of a joint council. Reviewing the practical considerations he noted the risks involved in air travel and the dangers of air raids in the U.K. There were also the problems of the extent to which a Prime Minister could absent himself from his country in war-time and the timing of meetings. Stephenson questioned the fruitfulness of meetings to discuss general lines of policy, when for long periods there would be no fully authorised Dominion representatives in London, even if the High Commissioners were to be supplemented by Resident Ministers. Considering the constitutional position, he thought that providing each were equally represented, and it was made clear that any decisions reached by a joint Commonwealth body were, in theory at least, subject to the approval of individual governments and Parliaments, there was no objection to a joint body. However, any suggestion that the power of decision-making should be entrusted to the U.K. War Cabinet, with or without one or two Dominion representatives, would certainly give rise to constitutional difficulties. He suggested that it was inadvisable to raise the possibility of some permanent organisation in London to co-ordinate the Commonwealth's efforts except after a meeting of Prime Ministers, which ~~that~~ should be organised forthwith.⁹⁷

In March 1940 Sir Eric Machtig, Deputy Under-Secretary at the D.O., noted that Eden had seen Halifax about the machinery for Commonwealth consultation and that the latter had asked for information about the 1917 position. Machtig emphasised in a minute that in the First World

War Smuts had been invited by Lloyd George to join the U.K. War Cabinet in a personal capacity; it had not been

an attempt to associate the Union Government or the other Governments of the Empire with the British War Cabinet.

The Imperial War Cabinet had not possessed a collective responsibility for decision-making for the whole Empire; its decisions were made by individual members as representatives of their several governments - thus it was more like an Imperial Conference than a Cabinet - and had only met twice when the Prime Ministers were in London. Machtig thought it unlikely that the Dominions would welcome a joint body.

The whole trend of Dominion feeling during the last years has been to indicate that anything in the nature of a super-cabinet which would take decisions for the United Kingdom and the Dominions as a whole would be unacceptable and would, indeed, meet with strong opposition.⁹⁸

He agreed with Stephenson that the best way to approach the issue would be through a meeting of the Prime Ministers. The D.O. anticipated that Smuts and Menzies would want to attend a meeting, if their domestic situations allowed, and probably also Fraser if he won the election due in New Zealand. But it thought King would be less keen after he had shown signs of suspicion about the invitation to Dominion Ministers the previous Autumn.⁹⁹ The War Cabinet approved of the proposal, with Eden pointing out that the November discussions were already "rather out of date", and Chamberlain stressing that it should be called an Imperial Conference and not a Cabinet.¹⁰⁰

King was concerned that the impression should not be given that the U.K. was in any way dictating policy to Canada. In January 1940 he noted the announcement that Eden was planning a visit, and told Lord Tweedsmuir that the whole Cabinet was opposed to it, because they did

98. Minute by Machtig, 19th March 1940, *ibid.*

99. Memorandum for War Cabinet, drafted by Stephenson, April 1940; submitted 12th April 1940, *ibid.*

100. Memorandum by Eden, 2nd April 1940, CAB21/874; War Cabinet Conclusions, 12th April 1940, CAB65/6, WM(40)89.

and want "any appearance of colonialism" to be given.¹⁰¹ In March 1940, when Eden consulted Campbell (the U.K. High Commissioner in Ottawa) about the visit, the latter thought that it would be welcomed, but that Eden should not mention anything about an Imperial War Cabinet in connection with it, as opinion in Canada was very opposed to this.¹⁰² In April Eden's visit was still scheduled and Stephenson suggested that telegrams should be sent to the Dominion Government about the proposed meeting of Prime Ministers, so that Eden could clear up any misunderstanding of King about the U.K.'s intentions.¹⁰³ The four Governments were asked at the end of April if they could attend a meeting in the late Summer, but Eden's trip had already been postponed because of the worsening international situation, and was finally cancelled when Churchill assumed office and Eden was moved to the War Office.¹⁰⁴

The replies from the Dominion Prime Ministers were much as the D.O. had anticipated. Menzies expressed his willingness to attend providing the political situation in Australia permitted, but had doubts with an election in the offing.¹⁰⁵ Smuts was less prepared to come and mentioned a number of difficulties including the political situation in South Africa. Against D.O. expectations he did question the value of a meeting at such an early stage of the war, when war-time and post-war issues were still unclear. He also suggested that it would be difficult for Menzies to attend in light of his political problems and unnecessary for Fraser, as he had done so as a Minister

101. King Diary 1940, entry for 15th January 1940.

102. Campbell to Eden, 2nd April 1940, DO121/66.

103. Minute by Stephenson, 8th April 1940, DO35/998, WC7/1.

104. Telegrams to four Dominions' Prime Ministers, 22nd April 1940, Prem4, 43A/11; Note in file, 21st April 1940, DO121/66; The Eden Memoirs, op.cit., p. 98.

105. Menzies to D.O., 2nd May 1940, Prem4 43A/11, or Australian Documents Vol. III, No. 203.

the previous November.¹⁰⁶ King wrote a long reply in which he suggested that the advantages of a meeting would be outweighed by the disadvantages. He thought it would be a mistake for him to be away from Canada for any length of time; that in the interests of Commonwealth relations with the U.S.A. he was better placed in Ottawa than London; and that for the sake of Canadian unity it was inadvisable for him to attend. King expressed himself entirely satisfied with the direct communications he received from the U.K., supplemented as they were by the work of the two High Commissioners. In addition, the new representatives Canada had posted to the other Dominions provided him with a network unknown in the last war. These methods, plus occasional visits by Ministers, (which did not involve the same risks of a Prime Minister's absence) were satisfactory.

If at any time altered circumstances or special emergencies were to render these methods of co-ordination, co-operation and consultation inadequate for the most effective joint war effort in all its aspects, and a conference of Prime Ministers thereby became imperative, that would of course necessitate an immediate review of the respective merits of the alternative considerations herein set forth.¹⁰⁷

King was deeply concerned with Canada's relations with the U.S.A. He was always convinced of the importance of not only balancing Canada's relations with the U.S. and the U.K., but also promoting better relations between these two nations. There were close economic ties between the Canadian and American economies, with U.S. investment amounting to 60% of all foreign investment in Canada, and this link had been cemented by the trade treaties of 1935 and 1938. There were no passport or visa controls across the 49th parallel, which promoted easy personal communication between the two populations. King and

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106. Harding to D.O. 26th April 1940, Prem4, 43A/11. (In August 1942 Smuts informed a friend in England that he was still worried about leaving South Africa because although his opponents feared him while he was there, that fear might not restrain them from "unwise action in my absence. I do feel strongly that my place is here during the war and that should be the first consideration with me". He also doubted if he could stand the strain physically. Smuts to Gillett, 10th August 1942, Smuts Papers Vol. VI, No. 574.)
107. King to D.O., 10th May 1940, Prem4, 43A/11 or Canadian Documents Vol. 7, No. 558.

Roosevelt met each other frequently before and during the war and while Roosevelt dominated the proceedings, King skilfully played up to the President, as well as feeding his own vanity. In 1940/1 U.S.-Canadian relations developed still further. In August 1940 the Ogdensburg Agreement established a Permanent Joint Board of Defence between the two countries, and in April 1941 King and Roosevelt signed the Hyde Park Agreement on defence production. These two agreements created closer ties than ever before which inextricably linked the defences and economies of Canada and the U.S.A. Ironically, the U.S.'s entry into the war shortly afterwards changed the scene again by reinforcing U.K.-U.S. ties, which continued after the war; Canada tended to be squeezed out of the triangle and forfeited much of its capacity to play a lynch-pin role between the two major North Atlantic nations.¹⁰⁸

Chamberlain was undecided about the possibility of a Prime Ministers' conference when he received these replies and told Mr. Norman Rogers, Canada's minister of National Defence visiting the U.K. in April/May 1940, that such a meeting might not be advisable or necessary.¹⁰⁹ Two days later the Chamberlain Government had fallen and Churchill had been asked to form a new one. Churchill, faced with the desperate situation in France, as well as the problem of establishing his new team, wrote to the Prime Ministers the following month explaining that he did not think it possible to arrange a meeting in the near future, but he would keep

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108. For detailed studies of these two agreements, see J. L. Granatstein, Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945 (Toronto, 1975), pp. 114-118; C. P. Stacey, Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945; J. L. Granatstein and R. D. Cuff, 'The Hyde Park Declaration, 1941: Origins and Significance', Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 55, No. 1, 1974, pp. 59-80. (King was not too happy in August 1941 when Churchill, and Roosevelt met in Newfoundland with a full compliment of advisers, totally ignoring Canada. However, it was perhaps the Quebec Conference of 1943 which illustrated Canada's isolation best. See Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 1, pp. 233-234, and chapter 4, pp. 185-186.)
109. King Diary 1940 Vol. XIV, entry for 9th May 1940; Massey to King, 8th May 1940, (enclosing message from Rogers) Canadian Documents Vol. 7, No. 557.

the proposal in mind.¹¹⁰

The change of Government in the U.K. was generally welcomed by the Dominion Prime Ministers. Smuts told an old friend that Chamberlain had to go, not so much because of Norway, but because of events over a longer period which had meant "his stock was exhausted, and it never was very great". As for Churchill, he commented that although he was dynamic, wiser colleagues would have to keep him out of trouble, "he is capable of much mischief as the past has shown".¹¹¹ King felt tremendous sympathy for Chamberlain's ^{in his} rejection by the U.K. Parliament and thought he had been unfairly treated. He had had to cope with the failure of his predecessors to appreciate the German situation, while being one of the first to advocate rearmament strongly. King remained convinced during the war that if Chamberlain had not negotiated the Munich settlement, the Commonwealth would not have fought united, or the U.K. have been as well prepared.¹¹² King was undoubtedly impressed with Churchill and admired him enormously as a war leader, but there was an ambivalence in his attitude and some jealousy of Churchill and his popularity - not least in Canada, which tended to detract attention from himself.¹¹³ He recorded on May 11th that Chamberlain would have been the safer guide in the long run and although he modified this opinion later, he never revised his judgment of Chamberlain.¹¹⁴ Menzies also had respect and liking for Chamberlain and although critical of his handling of Italy in the 1930s, he

110. Churchill to Menzies, 10th June 1940, Australian Documents Vol. III, No. 353.

111. Smuts to M. C. Gillet, 12th May 1940, Smuts Papers Vol. VI, No. 495.

112. Mackenzie King Record Vol. 1, pp. 78 & 179. (King also told The Earl of Athlone, Tweedsmuir's successor as Governor-General, how he had supported the Munich Agreement but thought it could have been followed by a more positive attempt to hold an international conference. But he blamed the equivocation on the presence of a National Government. King Diary 1940, Vol. XXX, entry for 21st August 1940.)

113. C.P. Stacey, Mackenzie King and the North Atlantic Triangle (Toronto, 1976), pp. 52-55; Garner, op.cit., pp. 154-5.

114. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 1, p. 78.

always maintained the necessity for Munich, if the Commonwealth was to win the war. But he records in his memoirs that he did not think Chamberlain possessed the qualities of a war leader. This view is perhaps affected by Menzies' near adulation of Churchill. Although he could be critical of Churchill and was quite prepared to argue a point with him, as few were, he judged Churchill "the greatest man of the century".¹¹⁵ Fraser's opinion of the two men is not known in detail, but he was the only Prime Minister at the time who had no real acquaintance with either man.

The D.O.'s attitude towards improving the machinery of Commonwealth collaboration was fairly fluid, neither set on establishing an Imperial War Cabinet, nor determined to prevent a joint body from being set up. Its priority was to ensure that the Dominions were given every facility for consultations, providing these aided the joint war effort. The D.O. was aware of the differing attitudes of the Dominions towards collaboration and the basic problems involved. At a meeting with War Office representatives, Mr. Stephen Holmes, Assistant Secretary at the D.O., outlined the difficulties of increasing consultations at the highest levels and at the same time paying due regard to the Dominions' sovereign rights. He added that there was limited advantage in increasing lower-level liaison if this could not be extended to higher levels. Holmes was demonstrating the D.O.'s appreciation of the problems which, as King had warned, had not been solved before the war. Holmes proposed that unless there were a strong move by the Dominions, it would be best for the U.K. not to raise the subject, although he repeated the D.O.'s view that a Prime Ministers' meeting could be useful.¹¹⁶ The attitudes of the four Dominion Governments in many respects reflected a continuation of their pre-war policies,

115. Menzies, *op.cit.*, pp. 62-94 & 101-104.

116. Report of meeting at D.O. 13th July 1940, CAB21/488. (King's quotation see chapter 1, p. 38.)

which their domestic situations and geographical positions continued to shape. Thus Australia and New Zealand's desire for close co-operation was increasingly given extra force as the Pacific situation worsened, while Canada and South-Africa's greater concern for their sovereign rights was also perpetuated by the more divided domestic political scenes there. The principal reason for Smuts' being able to win the war debate in 1939 had been his pledge that South African troops would not serve outside abroad, and King had also promised that there would be no conscription; the conscription crises of 1942 and 1944 nearly wrecked the fragile unity of Canada as well as King's own government.¹¹⁷

Political considerations impelled the U.K. to emphasise Commonwealth unity and organise some practical demonstration of it. Spasmodic demands appeared in the press and in Parliament for an Imperial War Cabinet or Conference, and it would have eased the government's position if it had been able to convene an early meeting of Prime Ministers.¹¹⁸ The Washington Embassy said that clearer indications of the Commonwealth's solidarity of purpose and action would improve the image of the U.K. in the U.S.A.¹¹⁹ Churchill told King in April 1943 that a Commonwealth meeting would have a very beneficial effect on world opinion generally.¹²⁰ However, efforts to convene a meeting of all Commonwealth leaders failed until May 1944 partly on account of the P.M.'s unwillingness to leave the Dominions and some scepticism of the value of such a meeting. King told Churchill in 1941 that

117. For detailed studies of the Canadian conscription crisis, see C. P. Stacey, Arms, Men and Governments, op.cit., pp. 399-402 & 441-461ff; C. P. Stacey, 'Through the Second World War' in M. Careless and R. C. Brown, The Canadians 1867-1967, pp. 293-297; J. L. Granatstein, Canada's War, op.cit., pp. 201-243 & 339-374; Mackenzie King Record, Vol. I, pp. 331-407, Vol. II, pp. 111-277.

118. See speeches by Lord Elibank and Lord Davies in the House of Lords, 8th & 16th October 1940, Hansard House of Lords Debates Vol. 117 and Mr. Granville's question in the House of Commons, 10th & 24th June 1941, Hansard House of Commons Debates Vol. 372, Cols. 30 & 957.

119. Lothian to Halifax, 20th February 1940, D035/990, WC7/1; Washington Embassy to F.O., 7th May 1944, Prem4, 42/6.

120. Churchill to King, 3rd April 1943, Prem4, 42/2.

not only was he satisfied with the existing communications which had real advantages, but he thought it perilous to throw these away "for the appearance of something which might well prove to be less real and substantial." He also thought that rather than confirm the unity of the Commonwealth, a meeting would be regarded as an indication of "some want of confidence" in the Governments of either the U.K. or the Dominions, which was to be avoided.¹²¹ At one point, in April 1943, Fraser was reluctant to attend a meeting in case it was regarded by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. as antagonistic and prejudicial to completely free discussions in the future.¹²²

The main advocate of direct Dominion participation in the direction of war policy was Australia, under all three war-time Governments, and as early as September 1939 the U.K. High Commissioner in Australia reported that there was a growing feeling there that those Dominions which were playing an active role in the war should have a seat on the U.K. War Cabinet.¹²³ Bruce posed the problem when he noted that the

weak point is lack of opportunity to Dom(inion)s to initiate proposals with adequate knowledge of all factors or to be fully & continuously consulted with regard to broad policy for conduct of war.¹²⁴

It was the capacity to initiate policy, or at least change details of policy during its formulation which Australia, and to some extent New Zealand were anxious to secure. Bruce had no solution to the dilemma.

121. King to Massey (enclosing message for Churchill), 26th May 1941, Canadian Documents Vol. 7, No. 563; King to Churchill 14th June 1941, ibid., No. 567. (King asked Massey to explain a further point to Churchill, namely that if he left Canada he would have to appoint Lapointe, the French Canadian Justice Minister as acting P.M. and that if while he was away, relations between the U.K. and France worsened, there was a conscription crisis, or any other racial or religious crisis, English Canada would centre Quebec out for attack and Lapointe would be the main target. In return Quebec would change its whole attitude towards co-operating in the war effort, which up to then had been very helpful. King stressed that he could not take these risks and that it could not be avoided by appointing anyone else as acting leader, because then Quebec would take grave offence. King to Massey, 14th June 1941, ibid., No. 568.)

122. New Zealand Government to D.O., 22nd April 1943, Prem4, 42/2.

123. Whiskard to D.O., 20th September 1939, Australian Documents Vol. II, No. 237.

124. Note by Bruce (no date, filed with papers for the last week in May) Australian Documents Vol. III, No. 462.

He did not think his fellow High Commissioners in London should be used more because "having regard to their calibre (they) would be useless on questions of high policy", nor did he think it would be solved by an Imperial War Cabinet, although he gave no reasons for this. Occasional meetings of Prime Ministers would be invaluable in order to agree to the broad direction of policy, but not as a suitable instrument for the continuous direction of the war, "owing to paramount part U.K. inevitably play."

Bruce's Prime Minister, Menzies, had clearer ideas as to what should be done. He had been anxious in 1940 to have a meeting of Prime Ministers in London,¹²⁵ and when this was not possible he decided to visit on his own. Menzies' anxieties about the position in the Pacific had been greatly increased in June 1940, after the collapse of France, with the knowledge that the U.K. decided that there was no longer any hope of its despatching a fleet to Singapore should Japan take advantage of the European situation. Then, in October 1940, the Singapore Defence Committee (consisting of representative of the U.K., Australia and New Zealand) produced a very gloomy report of the position in the Pacific, stating that naval and aircraft were totally inadequate. It seems that this gave Menzies the stimulus to go to London personally.¹²⁶ In January 1941 he told Bruce that although he was anxious about the political situation in Australia he thought that the benefits of a visit would be great, providing he had the chance of prompt and sufficient consultations with Churchill and the other senior Ministers. Bruce explained Churchill's domination of war policy and the timidity of his Ministers in standing up to him, anticipating that while Churchill

125. See for example Menzies to Churchill, 17th June 1940, Prem4, 43B/1.

126. Caldecote to Whiskard (enclosing memorandum sent to U.K. Embassy Washington for Ambassador's guidance in talks with the U.S., to be shown to Menzies), 19th June 1940, Australian Documents Vol. III No. 406; J. M. McCarthy, 'Australia: A View from Whitehall, 1939-1945', Australian Outlook, December 1974, p. 321.

would welcome Menzies and invite him to meetings of the War Cabinet, he tended to be elusive and discursive about the fundamental questions of policy and Menzies would have to be prepared to have a "show down" with him.¹²⁷ Menzies left for London, arriving in February 1941, determined to participate fully in war policy, tackle Churchill on many war issues (especially the Far East) and do what he could to persuade him to agree to the establishment of an Imperial War Cabinet. While in London Menzies attended meetings of the War Cabinet, and held many others with the Chiefs of Staff, individual Ministers and the Defence Committee. He sent reports to his Prime Minister on these discussions and U.K. plans for the future.¹²⁸

It has been argued that Menzies had little effect on U.K. policy during his time in London and that the visit cannot be termed a success.¹²⁹ The one crucial decision Menzies made concerned the deployment of Australian troops in the Greek campaign. He virtually committed them before he recommended the scheme to his colleagues in Australia, and seems never to have told them that the plan was to go ahead for primarily political considerations and that their military doubts about its viability were quite valid.¹³⁰ This was an episode which surely demonstrates the fundamental problems of governments sharing strategic direction when one side is represented by only one individual. Menzies' position as Prime Minister gave him the authority to commit Australian troops, but it was a personal decision, not one made by his Cabinet.

Menzies did have some success in securing part of Australia's outstanding orders for aircraft. When he pressed for these, Cranborne

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127. Menzies to Bruce, 3rd January 1941, Bruce to Menzies, 5th January 1941, Australian Documents Vol. IV, Nos. 243 & 246.
 128. Menzies messages to Fadden, Australian Documents Vol. IV, especially Nos. 320 & 345.
 129. McCarthy, op.cit.
 130. D. F. Woodward, 'Australian Diplomacy With Regard to the Greek Campaign, February-March 1941', Australian Journal of Politics and History, 1978, Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 218-226.

argued to Churchill that it would be wise on political grounds to meet at least some of these demands, because Menzies was so obviously dissatisfied with the situation, and some orders were sent. Menzies' difficulties can be seen from the fact that the Secretary and State for Air, Sir Archibald Sinclair, was unhappy about this; Churchill commented that it was "unwise to fritter away aircraft" to Australia.¹³¹ The continuing peril of the U.K. made it difficult for British Ministers to appreciate the genuine fear of other countries for their own defence, although the question of priorities was admittedly an extremely difficult one.

When Menzies returned to Australia, he told his colleagues that in some respects the direction of war strategy in the U.K. was inadequate, especially the way in which the War Cabinet was run and the too great a burden being shouldered by Churchill. He appreciated that it was the Defence Committee which determined war policy, but criticised the acquiescence of the Service Ministers in Churchill's strategic views. He told his colleagues that the ideal solution would be a six man Cabinet with no departmental duties, to include a representative of the Dominions.¹³² While he was in London Menzies had told Churchill the same in an attempt to persuade him to inaugurate changes, but to no avail.¹³³ Menzies travelled back via Canada and the U.S.A. in May 1941 and held talks with King on his proposals. He repeated to King his criticisms of the U.K. War Cabinet being a 'one man show', with no-one taking issue with Churchill. King had no intention of altering his own views on Dominion membership of the U.K. War Cabinet and pointed

131. McCarthy, op.cit., p. 322.

132. Australian Advisory War Council Minute, 28th May 1941, Australian Documents Vol. IV, No. 472.

133. W. S. Churchill, Second World War. Vol. 3, The Grand Alliance (London, 1953), pp. 328-329.

out the practical and constitutional difficulties which would result. He recorded that his impression had been that Menzies would "rather be in the War Cabinet in London than Prime Minister of Australia." King told Menzies that he would be worried about divisions occurring in his Cabinet or country if he were absent for any long period, and later told colleagues that he thought it likely that Menzies would soon lose power - a prescient remark.¹³⁴

Others agreed with Menzies' criticisms of Churchill's running of the Cabinet and Defence Committee, sentiments no doubt aggravated by the fact that the war was going badly in the Mediterranean in the Spring of 1941. Hankey's diary for April records several references to bad reports he was hearing about Churchill's conduct of the war and he outlined his own worries in a letter to Halifax in Washington, in which he also said that he hoped Menzies would return to London and join the War Cabinet. (Menzies delivered the letter.) Halifax was not surprised by Hankey's views and said he had been disturbed to hear Menzies' accounts of meetings he had attended in London. He supported the idea of a Dominion representative such as Menzies in the War Cabinet. Hankey also voiced his views to Cranborne, and the latter said he would personally like Smuts to be in the Cabinet, but agreed that Menzies would be useful.¹³⁵ Not everyone in the U.K. agreed with the value of Dominion participation. At the beginning of the war Cadogan referred to the High Commissioners as the "most undependable busybodies. Bruce is bad! I suppose they haven't really enough work to do", and he was equally unimpressed with Menzies during his visit. After a Cabinet meeting in February 1941 he noted in his diary: "What irresponsible rubbish these Antipodeans talk!"¹³⁶

134. Mackenzie King Record Vol. I, pp. 213-215. (Menzies was forced to resign in August 1941.)

135. Roskill, op.cit., pp. 497-502, 507 & 514.

136. D. N. Dilks ed., The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945 (London, 1971) entries for 13th September 1939, p. 216 and 26th February 1941, p. 359. (Menzies' reaction to the latter entry was to say how disappointing Cadogan had been. See editing in diaries, p. 359.)

(Such a remark was not a reflection of Cadogan's considered opinion of Menzies, but illustrates the pressure and tension of war-time relations.)

Rebuffs from Churchill and King did not deter Menzies. In July 1941 he wrote to King and Smuts reiterating his views and expressing his conviction that a new War Cabinet should be established with one Dominion Prime Minister sitting on it.¹³⁷ Although neither agreed with Menzies' views, by August 1941 he was announcing his intention of returning to London to deal with major questions of Commonwealth strategy, a move which Cranborne interpreted as an attempt by Menzies "to escape from a somewhat unpleasant personal position" in Australia with colleagues "not unwilling" to see him leave for London.¹³⁸ Menzies was certainly hoping to be invited to join a U.K. War Cabinet, and had received his own Cabinet's approval to return; however, the majority of Labour members of the Advisory War Council were opposed to this, or what they saw as attempts by Menzies to secure their acceptance that he would not be deposed in his absence. After weeks of internal discussions, which seemed to have been as much about the internal politics as the best way to conduct Australia's war effort, Menzies' offer of an all-Party Government was rejected, and on 28th August 1941 he resigned his office.¹³⁹

The Fadden Government, which succeeded Menzies', adopted a very similar attitude towards Commonwealth consultation and although Mr. Fadden had no wish to sit in a U.K. War Cabinet he appointed a Resident Minister to the U.K. and asked Churchill to permit him to attend U.K. War Cabinet meetings when issues discussed affected Australia. Churchill

137. Menzies to King, 7th July 1941, Canadian Documents, Vol. 7, No. 586.
 138. Cranborne to Eden, August 1941. Avon Papers FO 954/4, Dom41/14.
 139. Menzies, op.cit., p. 52; P. Hasluck, The Government and Politics of the People 1939-1941 (Canberra 1952), pp. 498-505 & p. 533.
 (In November 1941 Menzies was indicating to friends in London that he wanted a seat on the War Cabinet, but he was deterred from pressing this. Prem4, 50/15.)

told the Australian Prime Minister that the U.K. would welcome their appointee, Sir Earle Page, and "confer with him freely on all matters concerning Australian interests and the common cause."¹⁴⁰ Page arrived in London in September 1941, by which time Australia had four representatives there; Page, (the Resident Minister) Bruce, (the High Commissioner) and two political liaison officers, Mr. Stirling and Mr. Oldham, as well as service officers. However, what the Australians wanted was an adequate voice in the higher direction of the war, and Page's appointment did not provide it. Page remained in London when the new Labour Government under Curtin took office in October 1941,¹⁴¹ and was preparing a memorandum on the inadequacies of Commonwealth collaboration.

Curtin came to power at a time of considerable deterioration in the Pacific situation. It necessarily became his Government's first priority. Curtin was determined to press Australian interests and requirements. He stuck by the decision to withdraw the Australian Division from Tobruk. This had originally been made by Menzies and upheld by Fadden.¹⁴² The withdrawal of these forces, which resulted in the loss of British naval forces, angered Churchill considerably and from the beginning his relations with Curtin were bad. As one historian has suggested, the N.Z. Labour Government had had two years of war in which to prove its loyalty, but the Australian Labour Government was "largely an unknown quantity in London and Churchill and other imperially minded British Ministers were deeply suspicious of its

140. Fadden to Churchill, 6th September 1941; Churchill to Fadden, 7th September 1941, Prem4, 50/5. (Page was a senior Minister who, like Bruce, had also been Prime Minister).

141. For details of the fall of the Fadden Government, see Hasluck, *op.cit.*, p. 523ff.

142. *Ibid.*, pp. 616-624; I. Hamill, 'An Expeditionary Force Mentality? The Despatch of Australian Troops to the Middle East, 1939-1940', *Australian Outlook*, 1977, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 319-329.

constancy".¹⁴³

The attack on Pearl Harbour was a manifestation of all Australia's fears about its own vulnerability and the inadequacy in the defence of the Pacific. Curtin pressed both the U.S. and the U.K. for reinforcements to be sent to the Far East and for Australia to be given representation on all Pacific war councils. On 27th December his famous article was published in the Melbourne Herald in which he asserted that the war against Japan was one in which Australia and the U.S.A. would have the fullest voice and declared that Australia

Without any inhibitions of any kind . . . looks to America free of any pangs as to our traditional links and kinship with the United Kingdom.

He wrote that he appreciated the problems of the U.K., the threatened invasion and the dangers of its dispersing its forces,

but we know, too, that Australia can go and Britain can still hold on.¹⁴⁴

This article caused a considerable impact and produced a furious reaction from Churchill. Several explanations have been put forward about Curtin's motives. Cross told the D.O. in February 1942 that Curtin had regretted his words and would never have written them had he known how they would be interpreted. He told Cross that he had merely wanted to indicate that Australia no longer regarded the U.S.A. as a mutineer against the U.K. and desired friendly relations with it.¹⁴⁵

Given the fact that since the beginning of the war Australia had vastly improved its relations and contact with the U.S. and had its own mission in Washington, this report lacks plausibility.

Some historians have suggested that Curtin had not wanted any significance to be attached to his words, that originally it had been

143. I. Hamill, The Strategic Illusion: The Singapore Strategy and the Defence of Australia and New Zealand, 1919-1942 (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Leeds University, 1975) p. 490.

144. For Extract of the speech see Edwards, op.cit., pp. 324-327.

145. Cross to D.O., 5th February 1942, Prem4, 50/7A.

written as a "platitude-laden" New Year message, and that possibly it was drafted by an aide and never seen by Curtin.¹⁴⁶ The article has also been compared with Menzies' appeals to Roosevelt in 1940, seen as a precursor to Curtin's statement.¹⁴⁷ Although there is a continuity with respect to Australia's interest in closer relations with the U.S.A., Menzies' appeals were made through diplomatic channels, and were essentially for U.S. assistance for the U.K., or the whole association, rather than for Australia. R. J. Bell in his book Unequal Allies traces an interesting connection between Curtin's telegrams to Roosevelt, Churchill and Casey, (Australian Minister in Washington) and the Herald article. On 11th and 16th December Curtin requested that the U.K. deploy additional aircraft carriers east of Suez, and on 13th December he privately asked the U.S. for closer co-operation and air reinforcements. Neither country agreed and after sending an additional telegram to both leaders on 23rd December, stressing the need for air cover, Curtin wrote to Casey on 26th December:

Please understand that the stage of gentle suggestion (by Australia) has now passed . . . This is the gravest type of emergency and everything will depend upon a Churchill-Roosevelt decision to meet it in the broadest way.

The following day Curtin made his public appeal to the U.S.¹⁴⁸

Neither Curtin nor Evatt, his External Affairs Minister, was anti-British. Nor were they attempting to re-orientate Australia's relations away from the U.K. towards the U.S.A. They did realise that close co-operation with the U.S. would be necessary in a far eastern war and welcomed this. Australia had slowly been increasing its contacts with America and particularly wanted individual recognition, instead of being treated as a satellite of the U.K. Many of Australia's

146. Hamill, The Strategic Illusion, op.cit., p. 491.

147. P. G. Edwards, 'R. G. Menzies's Appeal to the United States, May-June 1940', Australian Outlook, April 1974, pp. 64-70.

148. R. J. Bell, Unequal Allies: Australia-American Relations and the Pacific War (Melbourne, 1977), pp. 44-46.

actions with regard to the U.S. in the war were primarily aimed at altering Roosevelt's habit of using Churchill as the Commonwealth's spokesman, and disregarding the others, (except sometimes Canada). Moreover, Australia was already looking to play a larger role in international affairs, especially the direction of the Pacific war, and the telegrams, the speech and other communications to the U.S. about representation on war councils were sent with this as a prime motive.¹⁴⁹

In addition to his appeals for military assistance from the U.S., Curtin demanded full Australian representation on an allied War Council to be situated in the Pacific. This was rejected by both Churchill and Roosevelt, and eventually two councils were set up, one in London and the other in Washington. Australia's representation on the latter council never gave it a real voice in policy decisions, with Roosevelt tending to inform the allied representatives, rather than consult them.¹⁵⁰ Meanwhile Curtin had centred his attention on improving the position in London. On 21st January Curtin asked Churchill to accept an accredited representative with "the right to be heard in the War Cabinet in the formulation and direction of policy".¹⁵¹ This was followed by a further telegram concerning the abandonment of Singapore, in which Curtin said

after all assurances we have been given the evacuation of Singapore would be regarded here and elsewhere as an inexcusable betrayal.¹⁵²

In 1941-42 the U.K. was not wholly insensitive to Australia's requests and the D.O. was particularly concerned at the growing friction

149. Bell, op.cit., pp. 38-66; Thorne, op.cit., pp. 256-267.

150. Hasluck, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 44-48 & 151; Thorne, op.cit., p. 265; Bell, op.cit., pp. 60-66.

151. Cranborne to Churchill, 21st January 1942, Prem4, 43/A; Hasluck, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 53-54.

152. W. S. Churchill, The Second World War Vol. 4 The Hinge of Fate (London, 1953), pp. 61-62.

When Menzies had announced his intention of returning to London in August 1941, Cranborne wrote to Eden, (who was Foreign Secretary by then) outlining the difficulties of the situation and commenting that none of the other Dominions would agree to one statesman representing them all in the War Cabinet as Menzies was proposing. Cranborne also said that although there were advantages in having a Prime Minister who could speak with authority for his country, it was doubtful how long Menzies could remain leader if he were away from Australia. If an absentee Prime Minister was forced to resign, he could no longer represent his country in the War Cabinet. Cranborne was clearly worried and convinced that Menzies would continue to press his proposals.¹⁵³ Cranborne told the War Cabinet that there was a genuine feeling in Australia that some change in Dominion representation was necessary.¹⁵⁴ The U.K. agreed to the appointment of Page, promising to confer with him, and Churchill remarked to Cranborne

we have got to treat these people who are politically embarrassed but are sending a splendid army into the field, with the utmost consideration.¹⁵⁵

This was written before Curtin's Government came to office and stands in startling contrast to some of Churchill's later comments. Page was invited to attend a number of War Cabinet meetings, especially those discussing the Pacific.

Churchill was never in favour of an Imperial War Cabinet and did not like the idea of permanent Dominion representation in the U.K. War Cabinet. In August 1941 he told the new Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Fadden, that for reasons of constitutional propriety it was impossible

153. Cranborne to Eden, August 1941, Avon Papers F0954/4, Dom41/14. (Eden was concerned about Menzies' returning as he thought he was in league with Beaverbrook and that he wanted to get into U.K. politics via the War Cabinet. Harvey Diaries, op.cit., 15th August 1941, & footnote 139; Churchill was also expressing Cranborne's point about the danger of a P.M. residing in London for long periods. Harvey Diaries, op.cit., 20th August 1941.)
154. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 29th December 1941, CAB65/20, WM(41)137.
155. Churchill to Cranborne, 6th September 1941, Prem4, 50/5. (For details of the Page's access to the War Cabinet, see minute by Garner, 13th February 1943, D035/1465, WC59/2.)

for any Dominion Minister to join the U.K. War Cabinet. The sovereign autonomy of each Commonwealth country, with each having direct access to the Crown, meant that no-one who represented one legislature could be a member of a body representing another. Churchill said that a Prime Minister's authority to speak on behalf of his country made him a valuable and welcome visitor to U.K. war councils, as a fellow head of government. By contrast a Minister only had the authority to speak within a very limited mandate and he thought that to give Ministers wider powers could prejudice Dominion policies.¹⁵⁶ Churchill was also keen for the U.K. War Cabinet to remain precisely that - a U.K. body - as it discussed many issues which were primarily of domestic concern and some which it would not want any other country to hear. When Bruce had suggested that the Dominions Secretary should be a full member of the War Cabinet, Churchill had asked if the U.K. could never hold a private meeting without the Dominions being represented. Later, when Bruce was allowed to attend some meetings, but wished to go to more, Churchill often returned to this point.

Churchill was extremely annoyed at Curtin's article declaring that Australia looked to the U.S.A. He was visiting the United States at the time but sent a message to Attlee, who was deputising for him, and Cranborne, saying that they should take a strict line with Australia's representative, Page, and said that there should be "no weakening or pandering to them at this juncture".¹⁵⁷ Lord Moran, who was with Churchill in Washington records Churchill's annoyance at the pressure and demands of Curtin and that he sent a "stiff note" to him. Moran added that he knew he had been persuaded to tone it down before it was sent.¹⁵⁸ If Churchill's attitude to Australia was fairly hostile,

156. Churchill to Fadden, 29th August 1941, Prem4, 50/4A.

157. Churchill to Attlee and Cranborne, 29th December 1941, Prem4, 50/15.

158. Lord Moran, Winston Churchill: The Struggle for Survival, 1940-1965 (London, 1966), p. 21; W. S. Churchill, The Second World War Vol. 4, pp. 22-31 & 61-62.

and if he was personally against admitting Dominion Ministers on to the U.K. War Cabinet, it was becoming impossible to resist Australia's requests especially after the start of the Pacific War. It also seems that some domestic pressure was being exerted. Massey had reported in August that some "groups and individuals" were supporting changes in Dominion representation partly to improve the war effort and partly because they wanted to see a Cabinet less under the authority of Churchill and saw an Imperial War Cabinet as a "can-opener" to pry the way open for further changes.¹⁵⁹

The U.K. agreed to the Australian request for an accredited representative, but the next day Curtin enquired whether this meant that it had a right to nominate someone who would have all the ordinary rights attached to membership and whether this was so whether or not the other Dominions followed suit. Churchill repeated his consistently held attitude that membership of the War Cabinet would be "constitutionally impossible" for an Australian representative, but he assured Curtin that the representative would have the right to be heard in the formulation and direction of policy, as he had requested, and that this held true whatever the reactions of the other Dominions.¹⁶⁰ Curtin nominated Page as its accredited representative, a position he retained until the Spring of 1942 when Bruce took over.

Australia's claim for greater representation was not fully shared by the other Dominions. New Zealand was also pressing the U.K. for a voice in Pacific policy and closer collaboration with the U.S.A., but it disapproved of the idea of an Imperial War Cabinet. In June 1940, on hearing the U.K.'s decision that it would not be able to send

159. Massey to Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Lapointe) 26th August 1941, Canadian Documents, Vol. 7, No. 589.

160. Churchill to Curtin, 22nd January 1942; Curtin to Churchill, 28th January 1942, Prem4, 43A/14. (Churchill announced the new representation in the House of Commons on 27th January 1942, Hansard House of Commons Debates Vol. 377 Col. 614. Also on 27th January, telegrams were sent to the other Dominions. Prem4 43A/14.)

a fleet to Singapore, New Zealand reacted by sending its own representatives to the U.S. to improve its relations with Washington, and in November it sent a senior Cabinet Minister, Mr. W. Nash to the U.S. New Zealand also protested to the U.K. at the temporary closure of the Burma Road, in July 1940, both because it disagreed with the action and because it had not been consulted about it.¹⁶¹ In 1941 Fraser's main concern was to ensure U.S. involvement in the Far East, but he feared that if Japan attacked British or Dutch territories the U.S. would not commit itself. Fraser had been visiting London in August 1941 when Menzies announced his intention to return to sit in the War Cabinet. He expressed his view that no single Prime Minister could represent all the Dominions, "more especially now that each of the Dominions was a sovereign State", and that it was impossible for a Prime Minister to remain in office if he were away for long periods.¹⁶²

By January 1941 Fraser was setting out his views on the new situation to Churchill. He expressed dissatisfaction that the same priority was not being given to the Pacific theatre as to the European and requested that a supreme authority for the direction of the war against Japan be set up in either London or Washington with full Dominion participation. He stuck by his view that a Prime Minister should not remain in London for long periods but thought there could be alternatives.¹⁶³ On the 20th and 26th January Fraser pressed the U.K. for the establishment of a Pacific Council, expressing a preference for Washington, rather than London, and full membership for Australia and New Zealand.¹⁶⁴ In

161. Fraser to Churchill, 30th July 1940, N.Z. Documents Vol. III, No. 8; Wood, op.cit., pp. 194-198.

162. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 19th August 1941, CAB65/19, WM(41)84. (Fraser also told the Canadian High Commissioner in N.Z., Mr. Riddell, that he thought it would be "silly" for a leader to leave for long periods, and that he was entirely opposed to one P.M. representing the other three. Riddell to King, 21st November 1941, Canadian Documents Vol. 7, No. 590.)

163. Fraser to Churchill, 12 January 1942, N.Z. Documents Vol. III, No. 117.

164. Fraser to Cranborne, 20th & 26th January 1942, ibid., Nos. 124 & 129.

his telegram of the 26th January Fraser said that New Zealand did want representation on the U.K. War Cabinet on the same basis as Australia, and this was confirmed by him in a later telegram.¹⁶⁵ Nash, who had previously been sent to Washington, was New Zealand's appointee, but he was never a permanent representative in the same way as Page or Bruce. He was in London from July to August 1942 and again from February to April 1944, attending the same War Cabinet meetings as Bruce. He is better regarded as a visiting Minister than as a permanent representative. It would seem that Fraser decided to accept the offer of representation when the Pacific situation looked extremely dangerous as an insurance against further disasters, but never fully exercised it. A final point to note is that war-time relations between New Zealand and the U.K. were generally good, and Batterbee recalled that relations between Fraser and Churchill remained cordial.¹⁶⁶

King was the most vehement opponent of an Imperial War Cabinet and did not wish for any Canadian to sit in the U.K. Cabinet, (unless he himself was making a short visit.) In November 1940 he wrote a memorandum on the subject in which he emphasised the need for Dominion Prime Ministers to concentrate on managing their own country's affairs and have all their colleagues and advisers on hand when policy was decided; a policy which would be "an expression of view given in the atmosphere not of London but of the Dominion consulted". He concluded that although an Imperial War Cabinet would sound very imposing, it would be "sadly deficient in its most essential feature", that of improving Commonwealth collaboration.¹⁶⁷ King's intense opposition is illustrated by his unexpected reply to a routine summary from Canada House on British

165. Fraser to Cranborne, 26th January 1942 and 7th February 1942, ibid., Nos. 124 & 129.

166. Interview between Hamill and Batterbee, 1973. Hamill, Strategic Illusion, op.cit., p. 488.

167. Memorandum by King, 3rd November 1940, Canadian Documents, Vol. 7, No. 579.

press attitudes to an Imperial War Cabinet. Massey was sent a copy of the memorandum which he referred to as "obviously drafted by Mackenzie King".¹⁶⁸ King had tried to dissuade Menzies from his plans in May 1941. When the latter wrote in July, King continued to state his opposition. He agreed that Churchill was overburdened, but said this was the concern of the U.K. Parliament and people, not the Dominions. The inclusion of a Dominion Minister in a U.K. Cabinet would raise grave constitutional difficulties and King rejected the notion of one Dominion leader representing all the Dominions. There was no such thing as a "Dominion viewpoint" as opposed to a "United Kingdom viewpoint". Finally he reiterated to Menzies his satisfaction with the existing machinery.¹⁶⁹ In August 1941 King was also visiting London, and he repeated his views in conversations with Churchill and told the War Cabinet of his preference for having everything in writing, for making his decisions when his advisers were present, and using the U.K. and Canadian High Commissioners only to convey the views of the respective governments. He concluded:

the less it appeared that all matters were being settled by Cabinet sitting at Downing Street, the better it would be for the war effort of the several Dominions. That our people took their stand on the Statute of Westminster.¹⁷⁰

Massey was one of the High Commissioners who asked Cranborne if he would be eligible to act as his country's representative, but it was never likely that King would have agreed to this. King's response to the U.K.'s offer to accommodate accredited representatives was extremely

168. Pearson to King, 22nd October 1940, Canadian Documents Vol. 7, No. 578. (Massey was sent King's memorandum of 3rd November 1940 and told Mr. Loxley of the D.O. that Canada House had not expected any kind of reply and how surprised he was at receiving King's memorandum. Minute by Loxley, 1st January 1941, D035/998, WC7/11.)
169. King to Menzies, 2nd August 1941, Canadian Documents Vol. 7, No. 588. (King shared Menzies' view of Churchill's dominance. He commented to Lord Moran in September 1944 that the U.K. War Cabinet could be likened to schoolboys frightened by a Headmaster. Moran, op.cit., p. 180.)
170. Mackenzie King Record Vol. I, p. 241; King Diary 1941, Vol. XXIII, entry for 28th August 1941; Minutes of War Cabinet 28th August 1941, CAB65/19, WM(41)87.

clear. He distinguished between an Imperial War Cabinet and the arrangements concluded with Australia, and noted Churchill's own statement in Parliament that the power to make decisions and the burden of responsibility, remained with the U.K. Cabinet. In the Canadian House of Commons he reiterated this point, and declared his government to be content with the existing arrangements.¹⁷¹ The Canadian Government never appointed a representative.

Smuts saw no reason to increase South Africa's representation in London, but his own close relationship with Churchill and other senior Ministers no doubt eased his Government's position, as did South Africa's distance from a key war zone. However, he also saw dangers in grouping all the leaders in London, telling Churchill that this was unwise given the "vast dangers looming in Africa and Pacific." He added that

our Commonwealth system, by its decentralization, is well situated for waging world war, and diffuse leadership in all parts is a blessing rather than a handicap.¹⁷²

When the U.K. had announced Australia's new representation, Smuts commented that Australia's

magnificent war effort and present danger in Far East entitle her to generous treatment. Position of South Africa is fortunately different and we are satisfied with the present arrangements under which we can directly through Prime Minister and otherwise through High Commissioner state our views and urge our claims in proper quarters.¹⁷³

'Accredited representative' was not a title commonly used in the parlance of the Commonwealth. It is clear that Australia wanted its representative to be in effect a member of the U.K. War Cabinet and had

171. King to Massey, (enclosing message for Churchill) 29th January 1942, D035/999, WC7/64; Massey to Churchill, (enclosing King's statement in Parliament) 30th January 1942, Prem4, 43A/14.

172. Mackenzie King Record Vol. I, p. 247. (This telegram was shown to King by Churchill.)

173. South African Government to Waterson, (enclosing message for Churchill) 29th January 1942, D035/999, WC7/64.

asked Churchill to confirm that this would be the case, which he declined to do. It could be argued that Churchill was turning the arguments of the Dominions in the 1930s against them, or against Australia. It had been the Dominions which had constantly stressed their independence and the inability of the U.K. Government to commit them to policies; now the U.K. was saying that a U.K. Cabinet's authority only extended to the Parliament and people of the U.K. Consequently anyone who was a member of a Cabinet which was responsible to a different Parliament and people, could not sit in a U.K. Cabinet. It is unlikely that Churchill was consciously trying to turn the tables on Australia, not least because it had not been a strong proponent of the reforms of the inter-war years. But it is clear that King was continuing to use the arguments which had kept Canada uncommitted in the 1930s, out of any plans to centralise power during the war. Reducing King's argument to its essence, and ignoring the important but subsidiary reasons why he did not want to leave Canada, he was standing by the maxim that power and authority over Canadian affairs had to reside with Canada and also in Canada. One man, whether Prime Minister or of lesser standing, could not represent Canada elsewhere.¹⁷⁴

If the accredited Australian representative was not to be a member of the U.K. War Cabinet, what was his position to be vis-a-vis that Cabinet? The exact position was always unclear and caused many arguments in the ensuing years. The U.K. considered itself free to invite Page to meetings when it thought his presence would be useful, or necessary to fulfil its promises to Australia. It did not consider him to have any automatic right to attend meetings of the War Cabinet. The crux of the issue became which meetings he could attend. Page did not remain as Australia's representative for long. He had been a member of the Menzies' and Fadden's administrations and it was not

174. See also P. N. S. Mansergh, The Commonwealth Experience (London, 1969) p. 290.

to be expected that Curtin would retain his services indefinitely. But, instead of appointing a Labour Minister, Curtin asked Churchill to accept Bruce as the new accredited representative. Although the U.K. did not like the idea of an official sitting in on a political body, it agreed, possibly because of Bruce's previous political experience.

Bruce was never fully satisfied with his invitations to War Cabinet meetings and consistently asked to attend more. The position for the U.K. was difficult, because as Machtig pointed out, it could not exclude Bruce on the grounds that an issue did not directly concern Australia, as it had conceded after "much argument and wrangling" the phrase 'formulation and direction of policy' which was a point Bruce stressed in his requests to attend more meetings.¹⁷⁵ Sir E. Bridges (Secretary to the Cabinet) thought there was "considerable margin for discretion and possible misunderstanding" between Bruce's obvious right to attend the Monday meetings (the regular weekly meeting to discuss the war which many Ministers outside the War Cabinet attended) and the U.K. government's right to meet alone to consider matters of domestic policy. He asked for guidance on this and was told by Churchill that the number of meetings Bruce attended should not be increased.¹⁷⁶ The value of Bruce's attendance, (at less than half of the scheduled meetings) can perhaps be judged from a comment by Bridges in which he noted that the most effective meetings from the point of view of deciding policy were those which

175. Machtig to Attlee, 9th June 1942, D035/999, WC7/96. (Evidence of strained relations between Page and Churchill when the former was attending the War Cabinet can be seen from Cadogan's Diary, entry for 19th January 1942, where he reports that Churchill lost his temper with Page).

176. Bridges to Martin, 1 July 1942 and 6th July 1942; Martin to Bridges, 4th July 1942; Churchill to Bridges, 27th July 1942, Prem4, 50/11.

in an informal atmosphere, all sorts of ideas are put forward and tested, and some of them rejected. Yet these are precisely the meetings, as I understand it, to which objection is felt to admitting the representatives of other Governments.¹⁷⁷

In July 1942 the U.K. was expecting two representatives of India and had agreed that they should also be allowed to attend the War Cabinet on the same basis as Australia. Attlee (as Dominions Secretary) and Bridges were anticipating complaints from Bruce, (and Nash when he arrived) about this arrangement and suggested to Churchill that the Indians should only be invited to the Monday meeting, but that the Australian and New Zealand representatives should attend one more a week.¹⁷⁸ Churchill commented

This is the best we can do. The British War Cabinet must sometimes be allowed to sit together. We do not sit in on the Australian Cabinet.¹⁷⁹

When Attlee wrote to Churchill urging that he accept this two-stage treatment of the different representatives, he explained frankly to Bruce that the U.K. had to have opportunities for domestic discussion and that he should not be suspicious if he heard of a meeting to which he had not been invited. Churchill added the comment that private meetings could not always be confined to domestic topics.¹⁸⁰

By February 1943 Churchill was clearly tired of the endless complaints from Bruce, some about specific meetings to which he had not been invited, others about his general position. Churchill told Attlee that Bruce's position was "highly anomalous" now that Australian troops had departed from the general war zone, and said he saw no reason

177. Memorandum by Bridges, received D.O. 14th July 1942, D035/999, WC7/96. (Hankey referred in his diary to Bruce's troubles with Churchill in June 1941 and again in August 1942. In the latter entry he agreed that Bruce should not be restricted to matters dealing explicitly with Australia, and while being critical of Churchill, thought Bruce could make a possible Prime Minister, Roskill, op.cit., pp. 515 & 563.

178. Minute by Bridges to Churchill, 16th July 1942, Prem4, 43A/14.

179. Note by Churchill on Bridges' minute of 16th July 1942, ibid.

180. Minute by Attlee to Churchill, 22nd July 1942 and Churchill's marginalia, ibid.

why he should continue to attend War Cabinet meetings when no other Dominion representative did.¹⁸¹ Attlee said his position had always been anomalous, but reminded Churchill that the reason for Australia's representation was not its military contribution, but its exposure to attack from the Japanese, which still remained. To rescind the offer would create friction with Australia as well as laying the U.K. open to charges of disinterest in the Pacific theatre.¹⁸² A decision was postponed because an invitation had just been sent to Curtin to pay a visit. Before it occurred, another event caused further arguments. Bruce asked to attend a Cabinet meeting to discuss U.K. policy at the forthcoming Foreign Ministers' Conference in Moscow. Churchill's draft reply, which was submitted to the Dominions Secretary first, stated that the meeting

will be one of His Majesty's servants in the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Should the question of a meeting of the representatives of the Dominions with the aforesaid Government be necessary, you will certainly be invited, together with the representatives of Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.¹⁸³

This was not sent to Bruce. Cranborne, by then back at the D.O., saw Bruce and in a "frosty conversation" explained the position. When Bruce asked for a formal written answer, Cranborne's draft was sent which explained that the U.K. War Cabinet meeting was designed to enable U.K. Ministers to clear their own minds in the first instance, but that he was hoping to arrange a meeting of all High Commissioners with the Foreign Secretary.¹⁸⁴ This episode demonstrates Cranborne's greater tact in handling the Dominions.

Curtin did not visit London until May 1944, when all the Commonwealth leaders met to discuss the post-war. During this conference it was

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181. Churchill to Attlee, 12th February 1943, Prem⁴, 50/11.
 182. Attlee to Churchill, 12th February 1943, ibid.
 183. Bruce to Churchill, 5th October 1943; draft reply Churchill to Bruce, 5th October 1943, ibid.
 184. Cranborne to Churchill reporting on a meeting with Bruce and enclosing draft reply which was sent, 5th October 1943, ibid.

suggested that the U.K. Prime Minister should meet the Dominion High Commissioners monthly to review the current situation. Curtin agreed and intimated that it would remove Australia's need for an accredited representative in the U.K. Cabinet. Churchill, who was not at the meeting which discussed this, wrote to Curtin agreeing with the idea of monthly meetings and that it would no longer be necessary for Bruce to attend the Cabinet regularly.¹⁸⁵ Bruce continued to receive some Cabinet papers, which the other High Commissioners did not, but the May 1944 Prime Ministers' meeting saw the end of his special representation. Bridges commented to Machtig that he had never expected "this particular trouble would end so easily" adding that he was "very grateful to Bruce for the attitude which he has adopted about this business".¹⁸⁶ Whether this remark referred to his attitude over the previous two years, or to the conclusion of his representation, is unclear. At all events, despite the arguments between Churchill and Bruce, relations with Australia improved from 1942 onwards rather than deteriorating as they might have done. Bruce was not always satisfied with his position, and as prepared as Menzies had been to take issue with Churchill, but he quickly appreciated that although there still were occasions when Australia was not consulted, this was not the result of deliberate intention, but a reflection on Churchill's personality and the defects of his great qualities.¹⁸⁷ He and Massey both knew that many U.K. Ministers were equally in the dark as to U.K. policy.¹⁸⁸

The second alteration to the U.K.'s machinery for Commonwealth collaboration was made at the official level and was due in part to a

185. Churchill to Cranborne, 20th May 1944, D035/1490, WC75/37.

186. Bridges to Machtig, 2nd June 1944, *ibid.*

187. Bruce to Curtin, 4th June 1942, D035/999, WC7/96.

188. Massey Diary, 5th April 1943; Edwards, *op.cit.*, p. 348. (For further details on Bruce's association with the War Cabinet, see CAB104/180 & 181.)

memorandum written by Page in December 1941. In addition to suggesting that Australia ought to have an accredited representative in the War Cabinet, Page proposed more consultation at the early stages of policy formulation. One idea was for Dominions' representatives to be posted to the F.O. to see papers and have a chance to express their views before policy was decided. He also proposed closer liaison on defence, including the suggestion that the Dominions had a Minister each on the Defence Committee.¹⁸⁹ Cranborne sent a note of his conversation with Page to Attlee and passed Page's memorandum to Eden, with a minute stressing the need to achieve some satisfactory arrangement. He disagreed with Page's ideas, considering it impossible for Dominion officials to work in the F.O. because there were many papers, including some about the Dominions, which the U.K. would not want them to see. To strengthen the F.O.'s liaison with the Dominions, Cranborne suggested that a fairly senior F.O. official, (of Under-Secretary or Head of Department rank) should be appointed as Liaison Officer to the High Commissioners, who would be available for consultations, take the initiative in approaching the Dominions, and keep in close touch with the D.O. He did not think that such an appointment would duplicate the work of the D.O. too much, as it was often not involved in the early stages of policy making. Moreover, the main purpose was not so much to improve the existing practice, as to satisfy the Dominions.¹⁹⁰

Cranborne's recognition that the D.O. was often unaware of policy until after it had been decided, is important, because this was a major defect in its capacity to keep the Dominions fully informed of the direction in which U.K. thinking was moving, as opposed to only telling them of

189. Memorandum by Page, 31st December 1941. Avon Papers, F0954/4, Dom42/2.

190. Note by Cranborne to Eden, 7th January 1942; Cranborne minute on Page's memorandum, 2nd January 1942, *ibid*; note of conversation between Page and Cranborne, 3rd January 1942, CAB104/180.

policy already authorised by Cabinet. This was a gap in Commonwealth collaboration which the D.O. and F.O. took up in their planning for the post-war period. More significant for the war is Cranborne's statement that the crucial factor was to placate Australia, rather than materially to improve the machinery, and it is a measure of his appreciation of Australia's genuine fears that he stressed it.

There was a slightly varied reaction from the F.O. to his suggestion. The Head of the Dominions Intelligence Department, Mr. Cavendish-Bentinck, disagreed with Page's and Cranborne's proposals and thought the latter's would mean duplicating the work of the D.O. too much.¹⁹¹ The Minister of State, Mr. R. Law, favoured a Liaison Officer. He pointed to Cranborne's explanation that the D.O.'s principal task was to communicate finished policy, which the Dominions could accept or reject, and that they had little opportunity to suggest alterations to policy before it was finalised. He noted that Cavendish-Bentinck thought it was a suggestion which would only console Page for "a few weeks" and that it would mean that any mistakes made in collaboration would henceforth be the responsibility of the F.O. Nevertheless, Law said the whole question of consultation was "too big" politically not to adopt this proposal and that Eden wanted to assist the Dominions in this. Cadogan, Cranborne and Law met to discuss the proposals on 21st January and Cranborne also spoke to Bruce who favoured the idea of a liaison officer. Cadogan minuted that the U.K.'s prime objective was "to give satisfaction to Australia" so it should have regard to their preference. He spoke with Eden on 22nd January and the Foreign Secretary approved the appointment, authorising Cadogan to approach Sir Basil Newton to take up the position.¹⁹²

Newton was subsequently appointed as the F.O.'s Liaison Officer to the High Commissioners. His duties included the supervising of the

191. Minute by Cavendish-Bentinck, 12th January 1942, Avon Papers, F0954/4, Dom42/4.

192. Minute by Law, 13th January 1942, and Cadogan, 23rd January 1942, ibid.

drafting of telegrams on foreign affairs and attending almost all meetings between the Dominions Secretary and the High Commissioners at the D.O. Newton also arranged weekly meetings at the F.O. with representatives of the Political Intelligence Department and other political departments in order to acquaint himself with policy and them with the needs of the Dominions.¹⁹³ There is not a great deal of evidence of the High Commissioners' reaction to this appointment, but Mr. A. Stirling, (Australia's Political Liaison Officer) recalls that Bruce "never derived much comfort from this palliative" and that Newton fretted that the High Commissioners did not respond to his presence or availability as much as he had hoped. Stirling also says that after considerable delay Newton organised meetings with High Commission officials, which were "irreverently christened by junior F.O. officers as 'Newton's Imperial Conference' or 'The Children's Hour'".¹⁹⁴ Massey implies in his diary that Newton tended to take a rather superior attitude with the High Commissioners. At a meeting in October 1942 Massey records that after he had made a suggestion concerning prisoners of war, Newton

thought it was his duty to give us a little primary education on diplomatic machinery to show why my suggestion was impracticable.

He adds

as Waterson said going away, the presence of both Attlee and Newton at the same time is sometimes more than one can bear.¹⁹⁵

If Newton did not manage to establish close personal relations with the High Commissioners, he did make great efforts to improve the information they received on foreign affairs and, possibly unknown to them, he consistently supported the rights of the Dominions and the D.O.

193. Note by Mr. Sloan on the Dominions work of the D.I.D., 13th January 1943, FO371/36605, W4373/4084/68.

194. A. Stirling, Lord Bruce: The London Years (Melbourne, 1974), pp. 242 & 310.

195. Massey Diary, 27th October 1942.

within the F.O.¹⁹⁶

Attlee's transference to the D.O. in February 1942 was the third change inaugurated by the U.K.; but his appointment did not solve the High Commissioners' complaints about lack of information.

Attlee's time at the D.O. indicates that membership of the War Cabinet was not the crucial criterion in improving the information sent to the Dominions and importance to the High Commissioners, which many had supposed. He was not only a member of the War Cabinet, he was Churchill's deputy, and there can be no doubt that he was as well informed as anyone, apart from Churchill himself, of all developments. Yet the High Commissioners continued to complain about lack of information. The principal reason seems to be that Churchill's policy about the transmission of information to the Dominions did not alter. This was the most important consideration, not the position of the Dominions Secretary. Two other factors affected the position, Attlee's character and his other duties. As well as deputising for Churchill, Attlee was also leader of the Labour Party and to head a Party which was sharing power during war-time must have added considerably to his burdens. Perhaps it was as well he had a spell at the D.O., for in his memoirs in the short space he devotes to that Office he notes that he "had plenty of time for my other duties".¹⁹⁷ Attlee was not voluble or vivacious, and Massey notes that his natural reticence was a positive detriment to his position as Dominions Secretary.¹⁹⁸ Sir Charles Dixon, Assistant Under-Secretary at the D.O., also recalls Attlee's period of Office and his additional burden as Churchill's deputy. He comments

196. See chapter 3, pp

197. C. R. Attlee, As It Happened (London, 1954), p. 125.

198. Massey, op.cit., p. 301.

inevitably these major duties took up much of his time and thought. He gave the impression of being somewhat aloof, but his was perhaps not a fair comment, as it was largely due to his quiet manner, and, although he said very little at any of the meetings which I attended, he was always ready to hear and appreciate all that the experts advised and to consider it fully before coming to a decision.¹⁹⁹

But there are indications that Attlee's reluctance to pass on information did not stem simply from reticence. He seemed to share Churchill's worries about the secrecy of information to perhaps a greater extent than others,²⁰⁰ and was less inclined to tackle Churchill on the High Commissioners' behalf. Bruce recalls an occasion when he thought he should have been invited to a War Cabinet meeting and his conversation with Attlee to try and secure admission. Attlee apparently agreed with Bruce, but said it was most unlikely he would be invited and suggested that he put his views to Ministers later. But as Bruce noted, by then the policy would have been decided.²⁰¹ Massey does note occasions when Attlee agreed to speak to Churchill, but in April 1943, after the High Commissioners had not been informed about the results of the Teheran Conference, he made an interesting comment about Attlee. Massey and Bruce had resolved to speak to Cranborne about this omission, and Massey was optimistic that something would be done, for:

-This sort of thing happened often enough in Attlee's regime when the position was well-nigh hopeless, but Cranborne will be only too glad to put things right as far as it is in his power to do so.

This comment reveals as much about Cranborne as about Attlee.²⁰²

Bruce and Massey had means to circumvent the absence of official information. Bruce had assured Menzies at the beginning of the war that he was able to supplement D.O.'s information from private contacts

199. Dixon, Memoirs, p. 55.

200. Attlee to Churchill, 28th July 1942, DO121/10B.

201. Edwards, op.cit., p. 370.

202. Massey Diary, 2nd December 1943. (On Cranborne's return to the D.O. Oliver Harvey commented that Attlee had been "a failure". Harvey Diaries, 23rd September 1942.)

and Massey notes that he heard all about the Teheran conference from Mr. R. Barrington Ward, editor of The Times, not from the D.O.²⁰³

Contact between D.O. officials and those of the Dominion High Commissioners was also part of the process and apart from the official meetings there was regular informal contact which aided the Dominions. Massey clearly had many conversations with Machtig, the P.U.S., which were of value, although he recognised that the prohibitions placed on the circulation of documents made it difficult for Machtig. Massey described Machtig as being "in full sympathy with our grievance" (lack of consultation over the shackling of prisoners in January 1943) and doing "as he always does, all he can to help".²⁰⁴ Three months later Massey described Machtig as understanding the Commonwealth as few people did.²⁰⁵

One further alteration to the U.K.'s machinery for collaboration with the Dominions occurred at the beginning of 1943, during Attlee's tenure at the D.O., and concerned the F.O.'s supply of information to the Dominions and its liaison with the High Commissioners. Between 1929 and 1933 there had been a Dominions Information Department of the F.O. set up to supply information on foreign policy to the Dominions, deal with inter-Imperial relations in so far as they affected the F.O. and cope with matters of protocol affecting the foreign relations of the Dominions. The changed status of the Dominions under the Statute of Westminster made the department unnecessary and it was wound up in 1933 with its remaining function, supplying information on foreign affairs, being transferred to the Treaty Department where a Dominions Intelligence division handled them. From 1939 a separate Dominions Intelligence Department (D.I.D.) was established in the F.O. for providing

203. Massey Diary, 29th November 1943.

204. Massey Diary, 27th January 1943.

205. Massey Diary, 29th March 1943. (Nicholls described Machtig as a "brilliant Permanent Head". Nicholls, op.cit., p. 384.)

information to the Dominions (via the D.O.).²⁰⁶ During the early years of the war the staff in the D.I.D. were increasingly used as the F.O.'s representatives on the Joint Intelligence Committee, spending less time on their Dominion responsibilities. The appointment of Sir Basil Newton, in February 1942 had increased the F.O.'s activity towards the Dominions, but in November 1942 Sir John Stephenson, Under-Secretary at the D.O., wrote to Newton expressing the D.O.'s concern that the Dominions were not receiving enough material on foreign affairs. He acknowledged the other work which was occupying the department, but urged that measures should be taken to ensure that information reached the D.O. more quickly and that the D.O. had better warning of proposed press announcements.²⁰⁷

Newton recorded his own opinion that the Dominions work of the D.I.D. had been unsatisfactory for some time, and that both he and the one junior official working on Dominion needs agreed with the D.O.'s criticisms and thought that a genuine D.I.D. should be re-established. He stressed that this was particularly important because

in the future the question of securing co-operation with the Dominions in foreign affairs will in the long run prove even more important.

Newton thought there was a danger of the Dominions' own foreign services developing apart from the U.K.'s if it did not respond to the existing receptiveness of the Dominions and provide them with the guidance and information they needed.²⁰⁸ The F.O. agreed with Stephenson's and Newton's arguments and Mr. Ashton Gwatkin, Assistant Under-Secretary at the F.O., told the Treasury that the Foreign Secretary had decided to separate the Dominions and intelligence functions of the department

206. See P.R.O. Handlist 31/19.

207. Stephenson to Newton, November 1942, D035/1002, WF52/10.

208. Minute by Newton, 25th November 1942, ibid.

and asked for authority to appoint a new First Secretary.²⁰⁹ The Treasury was not keen to authorise this expansion, "in these days of manpower shortage" and suggested that the geographical Departments could jointly handle the problem in co-operation with the Political Intelligence Department. However, at the beginning of March 1943, Newton and Stephenson held a meeting with the Treasury representative and persuaded him of the necessity of these proposals.²¹⁰ Mr. Greenway was appointed as Head of the new D.I.D. Immediately the work of that department expanded rapidly. By the 16th March Greenway was asking for additional staff. Newton supported his request, but Mr. Gwatkin decided that it was too soon to approach the Treasury again.²¹¹

Though the F.O. staff on the whole had virtually no experience of the Dominions and little of Dominion personnel,²¹² the staff of the D.I.D. quickly appreciated some of the problems involved in Dominion collaboration. Greenway encouraged the D.O. staff to contact him directly in an attempt to speed up communications

with the result that by personal intervention I am often able to get a decision taken or a reply sent much more expeditiously than by the normal channel of written communications.

With its expansion the D.I.D. began to play a more innovatory role, not just bringing items to the attention of the Dominions or the D.O.

209. Gwatkin to Wilcox (Treasury), 26th January 1943, *ibid.*
 210. Wilcox to Gwatkin, no date, and 2nd March 1943, *ibid.*
 211. Minutes by Greenway, 16th March 1943, Newton, 17th March 1943 and Gwatkin, 2nd April 1943, FO371/36605, W4373/4084/68.
 212. Cavendish-Bentinck of the D.I.D. noted in January 1942, during the discussions on Newton's appointment, that it would not be appropriate to transfer all liaison on foreign affairs from the D.O. to the F.O. "as without intimate knowledge of the conditions in the various Dominions and of the mentality of their respective Governments we should be likely to make mistakes". Avon Papers, FO954/4, Dom42/4. (For later F.O. discussion about liaison on foreign affairs, see chapter 3, pp.157-160).

but increasing their own direct liaison with Dominion personnel and contemplating ways in which the general machinery of Commonwealth co-operation could be improved.²¹³ There were problems in the F.O.'s Dominions work. There was a significant diversity of opinion within the Office about the Dominions and how they should be treated, and the very size and preoccupation of the Office with world events meant that Dominion requirements were not always fulfilled. It was the burden of the D.I.D. to try and ensure that items of interest to the Dominions were brought to their attention.²¹⁴ The increased activity of the F.O. did not completely quench the appetite of the High Commissioners for information. In November 1944 they requested more F.O. telegrams and Cranborne contacted Eden about this, reminding him of Churchill's previous restrictions on telegram circulation. He said that this resulted in his having to read aloud extracts from telegrams which the High Commissioners were not allowed to see. This he thought unsatisfactory as it meant reading a mass of information each day which was difficult for them to assimilate. With the increase in the different categories of F.O. telegrams Cranborne thought that the High Commissioners could be given more, and asked for Eden's assistance in this.²¹⁵ Eden supported the Dominions Secretary, perhaps because of the F.O.'s increased involvement in Dominion collaboration, or because he remembered similar difficulties when he was Dominions Secretary. Bridges and Ismay were also consulted, and although they both thought that the position was adequate and should not be altered, they felt their arguments could not override the strongly expressed wishes of the Foreign and Dominion Secretaries. Churchill finally decided not to alter the position at that time.²¹⁶ Such incidents

213. See chapter 3.

214. Minute by Cadogan, 29th May 1943, FO371/36605, W8107/4084/68.

215. Cranborne to Eden, 16th November 1944, FO371/42684, W16621/15409/68.

216. Eden to Churchill, 28th November 1944, minute by Churchill, 3rd December 1944 & 21st January 1945, and minute by Bridges, 18th January 1945, Prem4, 7/5.

suggest that if the D.O. was able to mobilise the F.O.'s support for its policies, the chances of acceptance increased. This was the positive side of closer collaboration between the two Offices on Commonwealth relations but, as the D.O. was to discover in the next five years, there were disadvantages too.

The direct correspondence between Churchill and the four Dominion Prime Ministers offered no uniform system. There was considerable divergence of subject and detail in messages sent to each P.M., but they did supplement the official communications. The Commonwealth had a strong tradition of direct contact between the Prime Ministers and even the more routine business generally passed between the Dominions Secretary and the External Affairs Ministers (or Prime Ministers when those Offices were not separated.) This was in deliberate contrast to communications with foreign powers, usually conducted through ambassadors. The U.K. made strenuous efforts to retain this method of direct communication when South Africa and Eire were making attempts to place communications in the hands of official representatives,²¹⁷ and King had expressed his concern in 1939 that the practice was developing for the U.K. to use its High Commissioner in Ottawa to deliver communications.²¹⁸

Churchill corresponded most frequently and fully with Smuts, seemingly because he knew him better than the other leaders and had a great respect for his opinions. Churchill and Smuts exchanged information on future plans, military and political; and Churchill sent him a considerable amount of information about impending operations which he did not allow to be sent to the others. Smuts was also told of many of the conversations between Roosevelt and Churchill and on occasions sent the actual correspondence. He also received full information about

217. Minute by Mr. Joy (Commonwealth Relations Office), 5th September 1947, F0371/65574, W6365/7/68.

218. See chapter 1.

the 1944 Quebec conference and the plans concerning Greece.²¹⁹ After his trip to Moscow in 1942, Churchill told Attlee to send Smuts full details of the discussions, but added that there was no need to go into similar detail to the other Dominions as they had not been told about 'Torch' (the Anglo-American operation against French North Africa).²²⁰ As this operation concerned South Africa more directly than the other Dominions, it might be reasonable for Smuts to have advance notice of the planning; but it does seem that generally he received far more information about military operations than his counterparts. This is perhaps not so surprising in view of the friendship between the two, Smuts' vast experience and the fact he was a military man himself, which the other leaders were not.

Menzies corresponded often with Churchill and never hesitated to give him opinions on policy, or the lack of it; but as he told Churchill in October 1940, this did not detract from Australia's or his own wholehearted support for the U.K.²²¹ Despite the sometimes stiff words exchanged between the two there was mutual admiration and respect between Churchill and Menzies. The former did not mind receiving Menzies' criticisms and suggestions, but asked him to send personal messages directly to him, adding

there are some things I must say to you in Australia that I should not care to mention to a single soul here beyond our limited circle. I think it important that we should preserve a direct channel for exceptional messages.²²²

Churchill continued to correspond directly with Fadden and Curtin although his relations with the latter went through a very bad period in late 1941 and for much of 1942. Churchill reacted violently to Curtin's demand to withdraw the Australian Division from Tobruk, his article about

219. Churchill to Smuts, 10th August 1941 and 22nd December 1944, D0121/109.

220. Churchill to Attlee, 16th August 1942, D035/1002, WF48/12.

221. Menzies to Churchill, 4th October 1940, Australian Documents Vol. IV, No. 158.

222. Churchill to Menzies, 7th June 1940, Australian Documents Vol. IV, No. 491.

Australia looking towards the U.S.A. and his telegram which said that to abandon Singapore would be an "inexcusable betrayal". The telegrams which passed between them in these two months were sharp and uncompromising and Churchill decided at the end of January to suspend his personal correspondence with Curtin, in view of the "tone" of his telegrams. However, this series was later restored.²²³ In February the two governments argued over the diversion of Australian troops to Rangoon. Churchill began diversion procedures without receiving the Australian government's authorisation, but when Curtin insisted that the troops should go direct to Australia, the original order was rescinded.²²⁴ At this point Australia had not been informed of the decision by the U.K. and the U.S. in December 1941 that priority was to be given to the European theatre over the Pacific. Had it known this, Australian protests to both the U.K. and the U.S. would no doubt have been even more vehement. It seems that Page was told of the decision in January, but that he told neither Bruce nor Curtin.²²⁵ Official notification came from London in May 1942, and Bruce commented how that decision had affected all Australia's requests about the Far East and was a principle we might have fought successfully if we had known of it at the time. Now it is almost hopeless to get it reversed.²²⁶

Differences between the two countries were not confined to the Pacific or to military policy. Churchill made a very bad impression on Curtin over the way in which he appointed Casey, Australia's Minister in the Middle East. Although Churchill asked Curtin in March 1942

223. Churchill Minute 30th January 1942, Prem4, 50/7.

224. Hasluck, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 73-87; Edwards, op.cit., pp. 333-336; Avon Papers, FO954/4, Dom42/12-13.

225. C. Thorne, 'MacArthur, Australia and the British, 1942-43', in Australian Outlook, April 1975, Vol. 29, No. 1, p. 61.

226. Edwards, op.cit., pp. 362-363. (Casey, Australian Minister in Washington was in close contact with the British Embassy but, according to A. Watt the Australian Head of Chancery, he knew nothing about the priority being given to the European war. A. Watt, Australian Diplomat: Memoirs of Sir Alan Watt, (London, 1972), p. 39.

about the proposed appointment, Curtin clearly did not want Casey to leave the U.S.A. and was not pleased when Churchill persisted in his requests and contacted Casey himself, to offer the post. However on this occasion, Curtin was as annoyed with Casey, for accepting the appointment and choosing to serve the U.K. rather than Australia, as with Churchill.²²⁷ Relations between the two Prime Ministers and the two countries did begin to improve, a fact which Cranborne remarked when he returned to the D.O. in October 1943.²²⁸ Churchill records in his history of the war that when "the pressures from all sides were so fierce" he was conscious of the "depth and number of differences" dividing him and Curtin, but regretted any "traces of impatience" that his messages bore.

Later in the war, in easier times, when he came over to England and we all got to know him well, there was general respect and liking for this eminent and striking Australian personality.²²⁹

Churchill's relations with Fraser and King were much easier and although he corresponded directly with both men, it was a more routine correspondence for the purpose of sending particularly secret messages for their information only, such as advance notices of operations or meetings which later received a general press release. Fraser was naturally concerned with the position in the Far East and was not afraid to offer Churchill advice, or ask for changes in policy; as he had over the Burma Road and in connection with the establishment of a Far Eastern Council. On occasions Fraser, like Curtin, felt the sharp end of Churchill's pen, but their relations were never as tense as those between the other two.²³⁰ Not only had Fraser's government been in

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227. Avon Papers, F0954/4, Dom42/19-21; Dom42/34; Dom42/38-44. Full correspondence between Churchill, Curtin and Casey. (Apparently Menzies' name was also put forward for the post of U.K. Resident Minister in the Middle East. See C. Hazlehurst, Menzies Observed (London/Sydney, 1979), p. 256.)
228. Cranborne to Churchill, 27th October 1943, Prem4, 50/11.
229. W. S. Churchill, The Second World War Vol. 4, p. 20.
230. Fraser to Churchill, 24th May 1941 and Churchill to Fraser, 24th May 1941, Avon Papers, F0954/4, Dom41/5A & B.

power longer, but Fraser had visited England twice before the start of the Pacific war. This personal contact possibly facilitated relations. King was the least concerned of all the Prime Ministers with gaining a voice in the direction of strategy. He expected to be kept informed of all major developments, and his chief complaint was the lack of recognition accorded to the Commonwealth's war effort, as opposed to the U.K.'s, and especially Canada's.²³¹ Massey denied a statement by Attlee that Canada had not been concerned with the direction of the war and gave examples of its interest. Without detracting from these or Massey's own personal interest, Attlee's comment is a fair one, especially as he contrasted Canada's attitude with Australia's. King, as he demonstrated at the 1943 Quebec conference, was not primarily interested in military strategy, although he was more concerned with the arrangements to be made to end the war, establish the peace and Canada's position vis-a-vis the U.S. and the U.K. in the post-war world.²³²

The U.K.'s appointment of High Commissioners to the Dominions before and during the war had an impact on war-time collaboration, most notably in Australia where it seems no coincidence that a period of difficult U.K.-Australian relations occurred after the appointment of two rather unsuccessful High Commissioners. Before the war the U.K. had posted civil servants of varied Whitehall experience to the Dominions.²³³ Sir G. Whiskard, who was posted to Canberra in 1936, was the first D.O. man to be appointed, (although he was a late-comer to that Office) but it seems as if he was not a success. In addition to lacking zeal and enthusiasm, he regarded the job rather in the manner of a rest-cure - hence his remarks

231. Mackenzie King Record Vol. I, pp. 525-528.

232. C. P. Stacey, Mackenzie King and the North Atlantic Triangle, p. 56. For Quebec conference see chapter 4, p. 186.

233. See Garner, op.cit., pp. 43-53 for a discussion of the early policies of U.K. representation in the Dominions and the D.O.'s initial battle to get the representatives under its authority not the F.O.'s.

This is a most amusing job; but by God, I shall be tired of it before I've finished it

and

There really is very little work for the H.C. to do here . . . It's the rarest thing in the world for me to go to the Office in the afternoon.

He also displayed an aloofness and superiority more serious in their effects. He was extremely scathing about Australian Ministers and officials and his lack of political judgment can be seen from his verdict on Menzies.

Menzies has no more backbone than a jellyfish. It is regrettably true that Menzies would not last a day if there were any visible alternative, but there is none. ²³⁴

Yet when this was written in 1940, Menzies had already been making it clear to Churchill that he was not prepared to be disregarded. In 1941 Churchill decided to appoint politicians with some Ministerial experience to the Dominions. Although there was some suggestion that this was a convenient way of side-tracking individuals, it was also an attempt to ensure good co-ordination of the various war efforts. ²³⁵

Sir R. Cross, previously Minister for Shipping, was appointed to succeed Whiskard, but rather than reversing the former's sad example, he appears to have continued it. Hasluck has described him as "one of the less successful occupants of that post" because he saw himself as a "guide and mentor with whom the colonials should seek to have consultation". ²³⁶ It is clear from his messages to London, and especially from his own review of his appointment in 1944, that he never gained the confidence of the Australian government, that he found them

234. Garner, op.cit., p. 47.

235. There were those who suggested that Churchill was finding a convenient method of side-tracking politicians, see Garner, p. 181. Whatever Churchill's reasons for appointing Cross and Harlech, MacDonald did not stand high in his favour. Cadogan, who had a high opinion of MacDonald and would have liked him as Foreign Secretary, noted that Churchill would not have him because he regarded him "as rat-poison on account of his connexion with the Eire ports", Cadogan Diaries, op.cit., entry for 18th December 1940, and see chapter 1.

236. P. Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness: Australian Foreign Affairs 1941-1947, (Melbourne, 1980), p. 117.

uncongenial and that he was convinced the Labour Party was responsible for deliberately stirring up anti-British sentiment in Australia.

None of this facilitated his task. His advice to Cranborne in January 1942 that the U.K. should be unaccommodating in its financial and commercial dealings with Australia in order to induce a less pressing attitude about its political representation in London and on other war councils, a proposal rejected out of hand by Cranborne, gives an indication of Cross' lack of diplomatic talent.²³⁷ There were genuine problems in Anglo-Australian relations which did not possess easy solutions during this period, but the role played by Cross as the U.K.'s representative can have done nothing to ease them.

Another politician appointed in 1941 was Lord Harlech, (W. Ormsby-Gore) who had been Colonial Secretary in 1937-38 before moving to the upper House. Sir E. Harding, previously Permanent Under-Secretary at the D.O., had been appointed to Pretoria in 1940 but suffered bad health which led him to resign. Churchill wanted to appoint Lord Winterton but he declined the appointment because he did not want to give up his seat in the House of Commons. Harlech, described as being too "autocratic and impetuous", did not establish close relations with Smuts, who preferred to deal with the Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. C. R. Price.²³⁸ The effects of Harlech's appointment were minimised by the close relations between Smuts and senior U.K. Ministers.

Undoubtedly the most successful politician appointed as a High Commissioner was MacDonald. Despite his youthfulness he did have greater experience of various Offices than the other two Ministers; but his success seems to have stemmed from his approach to the task and his own abilities. Having concluded two successful terms of Office at the

237. Cranborne memorandum to Churchill, 22nd January 1942, Prem4, 50/7A; Garner, op.cit., pp. 187-188.

238. Garner, op.cit., p. 182.

D.O. and with his Ministerial future lying in the balance because of his lack of a party base and his rather cool relations with Churchill, it is likely that if MacDonald had not begun a career as a diplomat his talents might have not been utilised. In Ottawa MacDonald succeeded Sir Gerald Campbell who had no experience of the D.O. or of the Dominions (he had previously serviced in the Consular Service) and while he performed more than adequately, trying hard to interpret Canadian opinion and attitudes to the U.K., he seems never to have fully understood them and particularly King.²³⁹ However, it was no small task to understand and then establish close relations with the Canadian Prime Minister, who was an extremely complex individual.²⁴⁰ Perhaps the outstanding aspect of MacDonald's period in Ottawa was the close relations he managed to forge with King.²⁴¹

The one D.O. official appointed as a High Commissioner during the war, Sir H. Batterbee, had been Under-Secretary at the Office under Harding. He went as the first High Commissioner to New Zealand shortly before war broke out and stayed there until 1945. Batterbee had long experience of Dominion affairs and by all accounts was successful in Wellington. Garner describes him as devoting himself to his new task "with vigour and enthusiasm", and while commenting that his excitability sometimes failed to appeal to some Ministers and officials, says that he maintained close relations with the government and was "regarded everywhere with affection".²⁴² The two potentially difficult Dominions, in terms of their involvement in the war and their definite attitudes towards collaboration, were Australia and Canada. The better relations which the U.K. experienced with Canada were perhaps not unconnected with the calibre of its representation there.

239. Garner, op.cit., pp. 46 & 176-179.

240. See C. P. Stacey, A Very Double Life: The Private World of Mackenzie King (Toronto, 1976).

241. Mackenzie King Record Vol. I, p. 178.

242. Garner, op.cit., p. 182.

The war tended to illustrate more starkly the divergent attitudes of the Dominions towards collaboration which had already been visible during the inter-war years. The debate over whether to establish an Imperial War Cabinet amply demonstrated Canada's determination to stand by the maxim that Canadian policy would be decided by the elected Canadian Government, and not be delegated or shared. Joint Commonwealth bodies were undesirable because they would result in too great a loss of control over policy, because the Canadian people wanted to see policy formulated in Ottawa, not London or Canberra, and because ultimately they would weaken and destroy the association, not strengthen it. King and his Government appreciated the need to co-ordinate policies during the war but their aim was to pursue parallel, mutually beneficial policies, rather than a common policy dictated by London.

South Africa took less share in the war than the other three Dominions. No troops fought outside Africa and its contribution reflected the tense political situation there. The hesitancy of its support for U.K. policies in the 1930s and the division within Parliament when the crucial vote was taken in September 1939, derived from growing Nationalist opposition towards the Commonwealth connection. Although relations between Churchill and Smuts remained extremely close, those between the two governments were more muted. To a far greater extent than Canada, South Africa could not be seen to be involving itself in joint schemes which would in any way prejudice South Africa's independence. Smuts had been the driving force in bringing South Africa into the war and remained the most important figure in its Commonwealth connection. But, by the 1940s Smuts was in his seventies, increasingly reluctant to leave his country (although he did make war-time trips to London and Cairo) and not the dominant figure he once had been. In comparison with the prominent place South Africa had occupied in Commonwealth affairs in the 1920s and early 1930s, during the war it played a rather peripheral role.

During the war New Zealand generally displayed a calm countenance of co-operation combined with a firm regard for its own interests and independence. Although alarmed and worried by the developments in the Pacific in 1941-3, it never demonstrated the aggressive fear of its neighbour. New Zealand's requests for consultation were as much attempts to achieve fuller co-operation from the U.K. as they were assertions of its own independence. Perhaps the major difference between New Zealand and Australia was that it never really doubted that U.K. and New Zealand interests were ultimately compatible, and abided by Savage's dictum that the fates of the two were bound together. However, its war experience and especially its closer association with the U.S. in fighting the Pacific war, did make New Zealand more conscious of, and experienced in, international affairs and it certainly developed as an independent international actor during the war.²⁴³

Australia's concern for the position in the Far East, the general direction of war strategy, and the U.K.'s consultation procedures, together with a very real fear for its own future, did not manifest itself in an isolationist or anti-British posture. As in the inter-war years, Australia looked for greater co-operation and consultation with the U.K. although this was sometimes done in an aggressive manner. Its sense of its own independence greatly increased during the war, as did its perception of its own interests. Both attitudes were largely forced upon Australia by the threatening actions of Japan, which were by far the worst danger the country had ever had to face. Although it can be argued in hindsight that there was never any real danger of an invasion of Australia, at the time this fear was very strong. On 16th February 1942 Curtin announced that "the fall of Singapore can only be described as Australia's Dunkirk" adding that it initiated the "Battle

243. For an impression of Fraser's premiership and working habits, see Alistair McIntosh, 'Working with Peter Fraser in Wartime: Personal Reminiscences', in N.Z. Journal of History, 1976, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 3-20.

of Australia".²⁴⁴ In 1944 a member of the U.K. High Commission, Mr. W. Hankinson, attempted to sum up Australian fears in 1942-1943, commenting

She (Australia) had been brought up to rely on the protection of the Royal Navy. Her whole strategy was based on that and on the fact that Singapore, which she had been assured time and time again could hold out for three months, was her bastion in the north. In that faith she had sent her divisions to help us (the U.K.) in the Middle East, and it was entirely understandable that when her props fell one by one in quick succession and the enemy was at her very gates, she should²⁴⁵ say things which in her heart of hearts she did not mean.

The reaction of the Australian Government to its predicament was to try and ensure that it had a larger voice in the decision-making because it believed that Commonwealth strategy should be jointly formulated in order to protect the interests of all its members. This contradicted Canada's view, yet neither country could be said to be less concerned with its vital interests. The answer to this dichotomy seems to lie in the nature of the two countries' war efforts and in two different theoretical views about the Commonwealth.

Australia's troops were more involved in operations against the Axis powers and at an earlier stage than Canada's, and significantly fought in the Middle East and Asian theatres while Australia was threatened in the Far East. This was the main reason for Australia's anxiety to have a voice in the strategic direction of the war. Australian governments, Menzies' and Curtin's, also believed that their interests would be best secured by making the Commonwealth a closer partnership. They did not want to be dictated to by the U.K. any more than Canada did, but they believed that the more U.K. policy could be modified by them, the better this would be for Australia. Inherent in this attitude was the view that British policy so dominated the whole association, at least in time of war, that it effectively determined the options open to the other members. Thus, rather than stand apart to some extent, as

244. Hasluck, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 70.

245. Hankinson to Stephenson, 26th May 1944, D035/1118, G579/25.

Canada chose to do, Australia must try to impress its wishes on the U.K. and needed a voice at the centre of the U.K.'s operations. The military contributions of the two countries, and especially their deployment, are crucial to the respective attitudes, and it remained to be seen whether Australia would retain this conception of Commonwealth collaboration in peacetime.

It could be argued that the most appropriate description of Commonwealth relations during the war is one of monopolisation by the U.K., rather than genuine collaboration by all the members. Despite elements of inequality in the relationship and some dissatisfaction about the extent of collaboration, such a description would not be accurate, or at least not a fair reflection of the efforts made by the U.K. to associate its Commonwealth partners with the war. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the U.K.'s provisions for collaboration is the fact they were not static arrangements which the Dominions had to accept for the duration. If there were inadequacies, there were also continual efforts to improve the position at all levels of contact, Ministerial and official. Moreover there were three important factors which made an equal partnership impossible. First, the difference in status and capacity between the U.K. and the Dominions; the U.K. was a leading world power with widespread interests and responsibilities and effectively dominated the international diplomatic arena during the early stages of the war. By contrast the Dominions were minor international actors, militarily and industrially much weaker and lacking in experience of world affairs. London was necessarily the centre of the war effort and equally the U.K. the guiding force in its direction. Second, the fact that the Dominions were geographically so far-flung raised enormous practical difficulties for Commonwealth collaboration in terms of the physical presence of senior Dominion Ministers or officials

and for the security of crucial information. It is arguable whether Churchill was too security-conscious, whether more information could have been safely sent to the Dominions, but the secrecy of almost any information relating to the war was a crucial factor, and to multiply the recipients of this by a factor of four obviously contained dangers. Third, the entry into the war of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. created new problems for Commonwealth collaboration. Because of the size of these countries' war efforts and their political importance internationally, their entry inevitably meant that they, together with the U.K., dominated the direction of the second half of the war. Nor was it merely a question of the U.K. having to co-ordinate strategy first with its new allies; it also lost some control of policy and was not always able to keep the Dominions privately informed of events or plans before they came public knowledge. If a decision was reached, as at Cairo between the U.S.A., the U.K. and China, it was not always possible to persuade the other Powers to delay an announcement while information went to the Dominions. Protests followed, some of which were legitimate because of negligence or slowness on the part of the U.K.; others were not.

The U.K. did try to mould its machinery of collaboration to meet the desires of the Dominions and some important concessions were made, particularly allowing the Dominions to appoint accredited representatives to the U.K. War Cabinet. Although this arrangement did not lead to an always easy relationship between Bruce and Churchill, it improved upon the previous position and most importantly was an attempt to comply with Australia's demands. Similarly, while the meetings between the Dominions Secretary and the Dominion High Commissioners did not always keep the latter as well informed as they wished, they were positive attempts, within the confines of security requirements, to keep the Dominion representatives up to date. Moreover, as the war progressed,

first a military liaison officer and then an F.O. liaison officer were appointed to meet Dominion complaints. An important development during the war was Newton's appointment as F.O. Liaison Officer to the High Commissioners and the later expansion of the D.I.D. of the F.O. During the discussions about Newton's appointment there was a recognition that the responsibilities of the D.O. mainly encompassed the presentation of policy decisions to the Dominions, as opposed to liaison about policy during its formulation. This reflected the absence of much consultation on incipient policies in the 1930s, but also the inability of the D.O. to keep in close contact with all aspects of U.K. policy while it was under consideration in the various U.K. Ministries unless it was brought to their attention by officials from those Offices. The D.O. was able to give definite Dominion views on policy, or at least offer their likely opinions, either by reference to their High Commissioners or simply on the basis of their experience. Nevertheless, the initiative in placing prospective U.K. policy before the Dominions came mainly from other Ministries. The expansion of the D.I.D. into a genuine department for Commonwealth liaison was a recognition of the increased appetite of the Dominions for information and consultation on foreign affairs and the need to improve the U.K.'s liaison activity in this sphere, which meant increasing the role of the F.O. in Commonwealth relations. The extent to which there could or should be consultations on policy before Ministers made decisions was a subject much discussed during the latter stages of the war and the early years of peace. The identification of the problem and the respective roles of the D.O. and F.O. constituted an important development in the U.K.'s policy towards the Commonwealth. Closer relations between these two Offices improved the U.K.'s relations with the Dominions and contained advantages for the D.O. in its dealings with them. As the F.O.'s involvement in Commonwealth relations increased

and the Dominions extended their international activity, the question arose of increasing the F.O.'s involvement, perhaps to the exclusion of the D.O.

During the war the Commonwealth acted together as a unit to a far greater extent than in the previous two decades. In addition to the extensive co-operation between the U.K. and each Dominion, inter-Dominion co-operation also increased. Representation by the Dominions in each other's capitals expanded rapidly from 1939 and the Dominions worked together in such projects such as the Air Training Scheme.²⁴⁶ For the first time the Dominions began to develop the habit of genuine inter-Commonwealth consultation, completing the circle of Commonwealth communication which had hitherto been mainly bi-lateral. With the end of the war in sight, the Commonwealth could be proud of its achievements and each member of its individual contribution. The Dominions' experience of the war, and the confidence which resulted from their participation, caused each to see the prospect of taking an international role of some significance. They had proved themselves in the war and entered the discussions about the post-war world eager to take a more active part in those deliberations. As the Minister of the State at the F.O. had noted in 1943, the Dominions, despite their complaints, had put up with considerable dominance by the U.K. during the war and all hoped that the return to peace-time conditions would allow them more scope. Moreover, the fact that Europe and Asia lay ravaged by the war, while they had expanded their economic and industrial capacities and were untouched by any fighting on their territories, made them optimistic about their future roles.

246. For details of the Air Training scheme see Granatstein, Canada's War, op.cit.; Stacey, Arms, Men and Governments, op.cit.; J. M. McCarthy, 'The Defence of Australia and the Empire Air Training Scheme, 1939-42', in Australian Journal of Politics and History, 1974, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 326-334.

Chapter ThreeUnited Kingdom Plans for Post-war Collaboration within the
British Commonwealth, 1943-1944

While the war was still being fought, governments turned their attention to the peace and the policies they would pursue once the hostilities were over. In its planning the U.K. gave prime consideration to the establishment of an international organisation to supersede the League of Nations. As well as considering its own position within this body, it also had to give thought to the Dominions' position and the way in which the whole Commonwealth might be represented internationally. There were many facets to this planning, including questions such as the position to be accorded the Great Powers, the establishment of regional councils, and whether it was desirable or possible for the British Commonwealth to be represented as a simple unit. As well as planning for international co-operation, the U.K. also turned its attention to its own requirements in the post-war world and, having identified the need for increased collaboration with its Commonwealth partners in all aspects of foreign policy, it considered ways by which it could improve the machinery of collaboration to fit its own needs and those of the Dominions. As the Dominions became more interested in foreign affairs, the F.O. recognised they would have more important roles to play in world affairs and that as an Office it would be more closely associated with Commonwealth relations than hitherto. This led to considerable planning by the F.O. on the subject of collaboration with the Dominions, a development which followed on from the expansion of the Dominions Intelligence Department of the F.O.

In the autumn of 1942 the U.K. Foreign Secretary, Mr. Anthony Eden, began to give serious attention to the U.K.'s post-war policy. In October he sent a memorandum to Churchill entitled 'The Four Power Plan',

a document of thirty-nine pages, discussing the organisation of the peace on the basis of the dominance of the four major Powers - the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., the U.K. and China.¹ (The latter was included because Eden assumed that the U.S.A. would insist upon this.) Churchill showed a reluctance to discuss post-war policy and in his reply to Eden he was disparaging about the point of formulating such plans so far ahead of the end of the war when the situation could change totally. He ended with the backhanded remark that those who had nothing else to do could study such documents, but that for him the first objective was to beat the enemy.²

Churchill did agree eventually that Eden should submit a paper to the War Cabinet. Eden identified the first aim of the U.K. as continuing to "exercise the functions and to bear the responsibilities of a world Power". The second aim lay in the U.K.'s historic concern for a free and independent Europe, which not only ensured the U.K.'s own defence, but enabled it to protect its interests elsewhere. In order to fulfil these objectives, Eden stipulated

We have to maintain our position as an Empire and a Commonwealth. If we fail to do so we cannot exist as a world Power.

Eden was convinced of the need for the Great Powers to take a firm and positive lead within the United Nations Organisation citing his experience of Geneva as evidence that only when the major Powers provided a lead, were the smaller ones prepared to follow. But in taking this lead it was important for the Great Powers to co-operate most fully and Eden warned against the danger of Great Power rivalry. In referring to the Great Powers, and discussing the need to include the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.'s insistence on including China, Eden mentioned

1. Memorandum by the F.O., 'The Four Power Plan', October 1942, Prem4, 100/
 2. Minute from Churchill to Eden, 18th October 1942, *ibid*; see P. A. Reynolds and E. J. Hughes, The Historian as Diplomat: Charles Kingsley Webster and the United Nations, 1939-46, pp. 29 & 31-37, for Webster's account of Churchill's reluctance to consider post-war issues.

the "British Commonwealth" as the fourth Power.³ In a subsequent memorandum to the War Cabinet in January 1943 Eden continued to speak of the British Commonwealth as one of the members of an executive committee of the U.N.⁴ Although Eden had maintained in his paper of November 1942 the need for the U.K. to keep its position as an Empire and Commonwealth, in neither memorandum did he explain how the Commonwealth as a whole was to be represented as one unit on a council.

In February 1943 the U.K.'s association with its Commonwealth partners was taken up by MacDonald, the U.K.'s High Commissioner in Ottawa and formerly Dominions Secretary, and Attlee, the presiding Dominions Secretary. MacDonald considered the likely position of the U.K. after the war and concluded that, despite the great moral authority which it would possess, it would lack sufficient weight in terms of population and wealth to stand on equal terms with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

If Britain stands alone after the war, she will gradually sink to the position of a second-class Power in world affairs.

MacDonald's solution was for the U.K. to establish itself as the central member of the Commonwealth which collectively would be as powerful as either of the other two.⁵ But MacDonald was not advocating any disregard for the Dominions' independence, let alone their relegation to an inferior status with the U.K. speaking on their behalf. He supported the right of the Dominions and other small Powers to have a voice in affairs and while acknowledging the need for the major Powers to possess special authority and powers as leaders of the international community, he thought these should not be exclusive. He believed that if the U.K. did not champion the right of the Dominions, and others,

3. Minutes between Eden and Churchill 19th October 1942 and 21st October 1942, *ibid.*, and Memorandum by Eden to War Cabinet, 8th November 1942, WP(42)516, CAB66/30.

4. Memorandum by Eden to War Cabinet, 16th January 1943, WP(43)31, CAB66/34.

5. Memorandum by MacDonald, 23rd February 1943, WP(43)115, CAB66/35.

to be associated with international councils and have some share in the authority and responsibilities of the post-war order, it would lose their confidence. The U.K. needed to lead a Commonwealth that actively collaborated in a more extensive and productive manner and the need to consult the Dominions before policy was decided was particularly stressed. Thus MacDonald seems to have envisaged a Commonwealth acting together on major issues providing the U.K. fought for the rights of the Dominions and improved its methods of collaboration. He did not specify how the Commonwealth should be represented internationally, but the implication was that one or two Dominions should be members of world councils, in their national capacity, as should some other smaller Powers, and that with limited and changing Dominion representation the U.K. as the leading nation of the Commonwealth would retain its world Power status.

A month earlier Attlee had presented a memorandum to the War Cabinet in which he referred to some of the points made by the Foreign Secretary and urged on the Cabinet the need to realise the position of the Dominions. He stressed that the U.K. could only maintain the Commonwealth by continued close collaboration, which would depend on the Dominions' satisfaction with the post-war order. Attlee referred to Eden's naming of the British Commonwealth as one of the four members of the council and commented that there was no such organ of government as the British Commonwealth. He added

there are formidable objections and difficulties about joint representation on an international body of all the Empire countries by any one of them

However, Attlee thought that the Dominions would be dissatisfied if they held no representation on a four Power body of which the U.K. was a member, referring to Canadian demands for representation according to the capacity of nations to contribute to the tasks of a particular body.⁶

6. Memorandum by Attlee, 28th January 1943, WP(43)44, CAB66/34.

Like MacDonald, Attlee seemed to anticipate demands from the Dominions for some measure of representation; but although he mentioned in this paper that joint representation would be open to grave objections, he did not express his own views as to how the association should be represented. His main concern at that point was to stress to his colleagues the need to consider the position which the Dominions should occupy when formulating plans for the post-war organisation.

There was some disagreement within the U.K. about the importance of the Dominions and the D.O. tended to place greater premium on the value of the Commonwealth. MacDonald and Attlee had both stressed the importance of the Commonwealth partnership in the future and Mr. Stephen Holmes, (the D.O.'s representative in Washington) put forward a rather extreme view when, in emphasising the need for Commonwealth unity he said it should be remembered that with the recognition of Dominion status the U.K. had ceased to be a great Power, with the only great British Power being the British Commonwealth.⁷ Officials in the F.O. were not so convinced of the crucial importance of the Commonwealth to the future of the U.K. Mr. J. D. Campbell, a junior official in the D.I.D. of the F.O., thought that while the Dominions were potentially useful, they were not an essential adjunct, and that the U.K. would remain a Great Power without them.⁸ Mr. Gladwyn Jebb, Head of the Economic and Reconstruction Department of the F.O., fiercely denied Holmes' contention and argued that on grounds of population, military strength, financial power, and its increased international prestige, the country would remain a Great Power whatever the policies of the Dominions. This seems as overstated as Holmes' comment, and Jebb did concede that there were advantages to be gained from the Commonwealth, that if the members pursued common policies on at least

7. S. Holmes to MacDonald, no date (pre-May 1943), FO371/36608, W6886/6886/68.

8. Minute by Campbell, 13th May 1943 *ibid.*, and memorandum by Campbell 22nd July 1943, FO371/36607, W12262/5467/68. (Campbell left the F.O. in 1945.)

all major issues "that would add vastly to the importance which attaches to all parts of it (the C-W.) in world affairs."⁹ As Eden's early memorandum had indicated, the Commonwealth was therefore accepted to be of value in maintaining the U.K.'s position after the war. It remained to be seen how the Dominions could be associated with the U.K. to promote the latter's position. Both Campbell and Jebb thought it would be wrong for the U.K. to start with the admission that Dominion support was vital. This approach when later set out in an F.O. memorandum, received support from the Senior Secretary at the U.K. High Commission in Ottawa, Garner who, while convinced of the U.K.'s need of the Commonwealth, commented that it was preferable to overstate the U.K.'s strength after the war than to admit that it would be very weak and require all the assistance it could, including that of the Dominions.¹⁰ But this was a question of tactics, not a denial of the Commonwealth's increasing value.

One notable stumbling block, which confounded many efforts to reach agreement within the Commonwealth on the best method of international representation, was the problem of whether the association could function as a corporate entity, with one member in a position to speak and act on behalf of the others. Some limitation on the number of states which could sit on the world council was clearly necessary. A large body would be unwieldy and ineffective and the major states were claiming the right to sit on a council which would attempt to regulate world peace. If the U.K. was to be a member of that body, and it was the Commonwealth member with the best claim to a seat, should it act in an individual capacity, or as the spokesman for the whole association? Moreover,

9. Minute by Jebb, 26th May 1943, F0371/36608, W6886/6886/68.

10. Ibid., and minute by Jebb 16th March 1943, F0371/35362, U1677/310/70; Garner to Costar, 4th February 1944, D035/1204, WC75/23.

would such unitary representation on this world council necessitate similar representation on all other international bodies, or could the Commonwealth choose individual, and perhaps multiple representation on lesser committees and only resort to representation as one corporate body on the world council? The aim of the U.K., as Eden, Attlee and MacDonald had all said, was to retain its leading position within the Commonwealth in order to retain its own position internationally; but as one official put it,

the problem is how this combined influence can be exerted or how the combination of the members of the British Commonwealth can be effected for international purposes.¹¹

From December 1942 onwards, F.O. officials tackled the question of joint or unitary representation. They conceded the possibility of a Dominion representing the whole association "as circumstances might show to be suitable".¹² Mr. Nigel Ronald, the superintending Assistant Under-Secretary of the F.O. Economic and Reconstruction Department, advocated this and defined those areas where he thought representation could be undertaken by the Dominions. Major political questions would have to be the prerogative of the Great Powers (and therefore of the U.K.) through diplomatic channels. Other issues, such as the operation and supervision of multilateral agreements under the charge of formal committees were as capable of being handled by the Dominions as the U.K.¹³ Jebb had reservations, and doubted the practicability of unitary representation without an imperial legislature to provide the authority and the identity of the delegates, and thought that without this, representatives would give primary attention to their own government's interests and only secondary consideration to those of other members. He also doubted whether the Dominions would agree to the practice

11. S. Holmes to Hall, 18th March 1943, F0371/35362, U1548/310/70.
 12. Minute by Jebb, 28th December 1942, F0371/35362, U310/310/70.
 13. Minute by Ronald, 31st December 1942, ibid.

since it would be reversing the whole process which had resulted in the Dominions staying within the Empire instead of breaking away.

Jebb's idea for a legislature was one in which the members of the Commonwealth would be represented in proportion to their total populations and he assumed that the Dominions would regard this as a surrender of part of their sovereignty.¹⁴ Ronald denied the need for such a body, confident that the co-ordination of views could be achieved through existing channels of communication.¹⁵ Mr. Nevil Butler, Head of the North American Department of the F.O., saw dangers for the U.K. in any scheme of unitary representation. He warned that a Dominion might become "hostile" towards the U.K., but not sufficiently "disloyal" to have left the association. In such a situation representatives of that country would make poor trustees of U.K. interests.¹⁶ The one occasion in which some of the members were represented by an Australian delegate did not prove a wholly satisfactory experience,¹⁷ and Attlee for one thought that public opinion in the U.K. would not welcome its interests being entrusted to another country, even if it was one of its Commonwealth partners.¹⁸

The D.O. was concerned to secure for the Dominions the greatest measure of representation possible, in a form acceptable to them and compatible with the U.K.'s objectives. To some extent it acted as a watchdog over the F.O., checking that the latter took account of Dominion views and did not commit the U.K. to a scheme which would be unacceptable to them. Early in 1943 Attlee and MacDonald had presented some preliminary considerations which had to be borne in mind, and S. Holmes, who by March 1943 was stationed in Washington with the task of

14. Minute by Jebb, 28th December 1942, *ibid.*

15. Minute by Ronald, 31st December 1942, *ibid.*

16. Minute by Butler, 17th January 1943, *ibid.*

17. This was when the Australian, Mr. MacMahon Ball, represented Australia, New Zealand, the U.K. and India on the Tokyo Council in 1945. See chapter 7, pp. 363-368.

18. Memorandum by Attlee, 15th June 1943, WP(43)244, CAB66/37.

co-ordinating with Dominion representatives, wrote a memorandum on Commonwealth representation which circulated within the F.O. Holmes concluded that the Dominions' opposition to any collective representation, particularly Canada's, meant that the only possible alternative was for the U.K. to work on the principle of informal acceptance of general responsibility for the interests of those members not represented on a council by those who were, the emphasis being placed on the word informal.¹⁹

Campbell, commenting on this memorandum, thought that such a solution (which was essentially little different from the pre-war situation) possessed merit, providing the informal representation was, on major issues, undertaken by the U.K. More generally he wrote,

The present fluidity in our relations with the Dominions is, I think, more likely to preserve the unity of the Commonwealth than an attempt to form a united bloc strong enough to stand up to the United States and Russia. This would antagonise those with whom it is most essential that we should co-operate, would not meet with the approval of the Dominions themselves, and would not achieve the object for which it was designed owing to the inconvenient fact of geography and the dispersed interests of its components.²⁰

Campbell went on to reflect upon the growing inter-dependence of the world, as an argument that could be used against too structured a bloc within the states system. While stressing the value of the Commonwealth to both the U.K. and the Dominions, he concluded that the association was likely to be more beneficial to all concerned, and survive longer, if not too closely defined. This viewpoint was closer to the D.O.'s attitude than to other F.O. discussions about collective representation. In June 1943 Attlee stressed the need for independent Dominion representation and the difficulties if any country attempted to act on behalf of the others, adding that provided the system of collaboration worked effectively, a U.K. representative would in fact

19. Memorandum by S. Holmes, 15th March 1943 enclosed in despatch from Lord Halifax, 26th March 1943, FO371/36608, W6886/6886/68.
20. Minute by Campbell, 13th May 1943, ibid.

be able to speak with the confidence that his views would be broadly acceptable to the other members who were not represented.²¹

If members of the F.O. were accepting the impossibility of unitary Commonwealth representation, some did so with regret, remarking on it with disappointment and commenting that the idea of the association's interdependence needed longer to take root.²² There are signs that a minority did not want to jettison schemes of joint action because of Dominion opposition. Ronald was certainly of this opinion. He felt strongly that it was in the Commonwealth's interest to arrange for representation of the whole association and that the U.K. should continue to work towards this end. He anticipated "occasional hysterical cries", but thought success could be achieved if the U.K. was patient and did not present the Dominions with out and dried choices, but rather worked "towards our end according to a preconceived plan by a series of apparently ad hoc decisions".²³ This should not be taken as F.O. policy, for it was a personal opinion expressed in a departmental minute not written for the consumption of outsiders, and it is clear that the Foreign Secretary had doubts about the feasibility of collective representation. At a meeting in May 1943 with his officials he particularly questioned whether one of the Great Powers on the proposed four Power Council could be termed "The British Commonwealth of Nations" as in earlier papers, and expressed his own doubt that the Dominions would agree to the U.K.'s representing them on a world council.²⁴ Memoranda by D.O. officials and the Dominions Secretary had been available to Eden, but he also had considerable personal experience of the Dominions. Not only had he been Dominions Secretary for the first nine months of the war, but he had worked with

21. Memorandum by Attlee, 15th June 1943, WP(43)244, CAB66/37.

22. Minute by Viscount Hood, (Economic & Reconstruction Department) 9th April 1943, F0371/35362, U1568/310/70.

23. Minute by Ronald, 10th April 1943, F0371/35362, U1567/310/70.

24. Record of meeting between Eden and F.O. officials, 12th May 1943, F0371/35396, U2196/402/70.

the Dominions at Geneva before the war and was consequently well aware of their staunch defence of their independence.

In April 1943 Attlee discussed the question of Commonwealth representation with the Dominion High Commissioners (in the presence of the F.O.'s Liaison Officer to the latter, Sir Basil Newton). There was general agreement among the High Commissioners that a measure of control by the major Powers was necessary, but they did not accept the idea of no Dominion representation on supreme world bodies. They felt themselves and the lesser Powers entitled to a degree of representation and thought the criterion for selecting membership of international councils should be the capacity of a nation to fulfil the functions required by each council.²⁵ By June 1943 the D.O. had clarified its position on representation and the probable attitudes of the Dominions.²⁶ Attlee identified the need to reconcile the U.K.'s desire to maintain the unity of the Commonwealth (in order to uphold its own position) with the need to satisfy the legitimate claim of each Dominion to rank as an independent nation. An obvious solution was for all members to be represented and Attlee said this was ideal for political or technical conferences which were open to all members of the U.N., but as soon as it became necessary to make some selection amongst nations "the inclusion of all the Dominions is clearly unacceptable to foreign governments". There was the question of joint, or unitary representation, either by the U.K. always acting on behalf of the others, or by alternating the member country which would act as spokesman for the rest. The idea of British representation of the whole association was described by Attlee as a "reversion to the pre-1914 arrangement" and thought to be unacceptable to the Dominions by obscuring their

25. Meeting at D.O., 1st April 1943, FO371/35362, U1537/310/70. (The D.O. note of the meeting mentions these discussions and notes they were recorded separately. No note of them is contained in the D.O. files.)

26. Memorandum by Attlee, 15th June 1943, WP(43)244, CAB66/37.

independent status, denying them a share in the direction of affairs, and likely to impose obligations upon them without consultation. Even if the latter two drawbacks could be overcome by an improvement in consultation, the vital first consideration was insurmountable. Nor did the D.O. think the Dominions were likely to favour a joint system of representation in which each would be entitled to act in turn as a leading member. This possibility had already arisen in connection with membership of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. There had been the suggestion that the answer to Canada's desire for representation on this, was for it to sit on the Central Committee as the Commonwealth representative instead of the U.K. Canada had rejected this notion outright because it disagreed with such collective representation.²⁷ Attlee noted this instance and added that although this solution was theoretically attractive as demonstrating the parity and unity of the Commonwealth, in practice the Dominions tended to be more jealous of each other and preferred to entrust their interests to the U.K. than to one another. The fourth suggestion which was most favoured by the D.O., was essentially a continuation of the pre-war system, whereby the U.K. and one Dominion sat on international councils, the Dominion as a temporary member, with neither country acting on behalf of the other members. This did at least make it clear to other nations that each member of the Commonwealth was independent, although Attlee noted that such a system could only work if a

moderate, though not a drastic, degree of selection
can be exercised

in the membership of councils, because if a Dominion had a seat, other small nations would also feel entitled to representation.

27. For discussion of the Canadian attitude to U.N.R.R.A., see chapter 6, pp. 296-297.

There was little new in the D.O.'s proposals, and a recognition that no system was ideal; that it was a question of finding the formula least objectionable. The pattern of the previous two decades with the continued emphasis placed by the Dominions on their independent status had put paid to any unitary plans. As one official had suggested a few months earlier, it would not be inconsistent with the Balfour Report for the Commonwealth to develop a system of collective representation,

but in the seventeen years which have elapsed practice has been all in the other direction, with separate Delegations, separately empowered, and the separate signature of the resultant instrument in respect of each participating member of the Commonwealth.

Another consideration which acted against the notion of collective representation was the possibility that once the Commonwealth formed a collective or corporate presence, separate representation by each member would not be allowed on other bodies.²⁸ If this view of the likely attitude of other states was correct, and there certainly existed enough confusion in the minds of most countries as to the precise relationship of the Commonwealth countries, then the members would be faced with a straight choice between unitary representation or its previous practice of as many individual delegations as possible. Faced with this, it is highly improbable that any member would have favoured permanent unitary representation. In the June memorandum it was suggested that

some system of grouping, involving the surrender of some part of the rights of independent sovereign States may grow up. But this development is for the future, and the Dominions cannot be expected to lead the way in reversing their progress to independent States.²⁹

The F.O. plans for the post-war, especially the United Nations, reflected its commitment to the need for the major Powers to take a

28. Memorandum by S. Holmes, 15th March 1943 enclosed in despatch from Lord Halifax, 26th March 1943, FO371/36608, W6886/6886/68.

29. Memorandum by Attlee, 15th June 1943, WP(43)244, CAB66/37.

lead in international affairs and reserve to themselves the main responsibility for keeping the peace. The dominance of the major Powers would clearly have a great effect on the participation of the lesser states, including the Dominions. By March 1943 the F.O. was anticipating a two-stage arrangement for the post-war³⁰. In the initial period the major Powers would, with the consent of the United Nations, assume leadership for themselves by forming a provisional executive council for the whole association until it was found practicable to establish a more permanent body.³⁰ But there was an indication that the F.O. knew that it had to accommodate the smaller states. Jebb, the author of the draft memorandum, stressed the need to "sell" the idea to the Dominions by playing down the four Power council and stressing that it was designed to execute two functions - to harmonise the policies of the major states, and ensure that between them they could amass sufficient armed strength to act in the name of the U.N. to resist any renewed aggression.³¹ He also stated elsewhere that this had been included because Mr. Bruce, the Australian High Commissioner, had said it was important to say that the "whole thing will be temporary and provisional, pending the 'general consent of other nations'". He emphasised the primary function of the council to produce a consensus between the Powers so as to make it "more palatable to the Dominions and other small states."³² Some alterations to Jebb's draft memorandum might have come from Professor C. K. Webster, who had been seconded to the F.O.'s Research Department and worked closely with Jebb in the planning of the U.N.O. He thought it was important to present the plan in language which was acceptable to the Dominions and other small nations and suggested that as the council would have to summon such

30. Draft F.O. memorandum 'Suggestions for a Peace Settlement' written by Jebb, 26th March 1943, FO371/35396, U1823/402/70.

31. Minute by Jebb, 18th March 1943, FO371/35362, U1548/310/70.

32. Minute by Jebb, 20th April 1943, FO371/35396, U1823/402/70.

states when it was settling disputes between them, it would be advantageous if it also promised to invite them to its discussions when issues of vital importance to them were being considered.³³

Eden did not think that the major Powers could dominate the post-war organisation completely. In May 1943 he told his officials that while there was a need for a provisional executive committee of four,

he himself was convinced that we could not stick to Four Powers forever. A kind of 'Inner Council' of the Four Powers, primarily designed to iron out difficulties arising between themselves was of course possible, and might even endure as a system; but he was convinced that some rather larger Council would shortly be shown to be necessary.³⁴

In a Cabinet memorandum of July 1943, the F.O.'s proposals did attempt to combine the importance of four Power leadership with some regard for the other states, and in this paper Eden referred to the need to include adequate representation of the smaller Powers on any world Council, while stressing that the final decisions on issues of peace or war had to be taken by the Great Powers acting unanimously.³⁵ Contained in the paper were a number of suggestions for associating the smaller nations with the work of the various committees which would be needed, and some greater detail on how the F.O. envisaged the Commonwealth functioning within the U.N.

One method of associating the Dominions and other small nations in the work of the world organisation, was by their membership of 'lesser' committees which dealt with subjects in which such nations had an interest and a capacity to contribute to their solution. This could give the Dominions a share in decision-making without weakening

33. P. A. Reynolds and E. J. Hughes, The Historian as Diplomat: Charles Kingsley Webster and the United Nations, 1939-46, (London, 1976), pp. 18-19. The authors suggest that Webster had a strong influence over altering Jebb's draft to accommodate the interests of the Dominions. But, Jebb's minutes indicate that Bruce and others had made him aware of this before Webster gave his views.

34. Record of meeting between Eden and F.O. officials, 12th May 1943, F0371/35396, U2196/402/70.

35. Memorandum by Eden, 7th July 1943, WP(43)300, CAB66/38. See also F0371/35396, U1823/402/70.

the position of the Great Powers. But which subjects could be dealt with by councils containing small and major powers alike? Jebb recorded that it had been assumed that various economic matters would be suitable, but that discussions on the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration had demonstrated the political importance of such issues; it had then been decided to refer all discussions on this to the Great Powers, an event which prejudiced the smaller Powers against the four Power thesis generally. However, he still thought it might be possible to associate the Dominions with economic bodies.³⁶ As one F.O. official explained, the smaller countries rightly expected to have representation where their interests were involved and especially when they were in a position to contribute something in terms of special experience or technical knowledge.³⁷ In the memorandum presented to the Cabinet in July, Eden explained that if the major Powers assumed the responsibility for maintaining peace, they should be careful to see that schemes which deal with economic issues, so long as they do not endanger security, are handled by wider assemblies.³⁸

Regional Councils offered another means to involve the Dominions. In January 1943 Eden had suggested that such councils should be encouraged providing they were subject to the world organisation, provided the principle was accepted that no one country had sole responsibility for keeping the peace in any given area. He envisaged councils for the various geographic areas of the world, on which members of the Commonwealth would sit according to their geographical positions, plus the "British Imperial Conference" as a separate regional council.³⁹ In the July Cabinet memorandum Eden reiterated the importance of subjugating regional

36. Minute by Jebb, 2nd February 1943, FO 371/35362, U 402/402/70.

37. Minute by Sir David Waley, undated, FO 371/35362, U 1677/310/70. (It seems that this was a later minute by Waley, as he only transferred to the F.O. in 1948 according to Who's Who.)

38. Memorandum by Eden, 7th July 1943, WP(43)300, CAB66/38.

39. Memorandum by Eden, 16th January 1943, WP(43)31, CAB66/34.

councils to the authority of the world organisation and the dangers of regional rivalry if it was not accepted that the major powers all had an equal interest in maintaining order throughout the world. It was suggested that regional councils would be used for specific, but wide-ranging purposes, including defence collaboration and economic and political co-operation. This would allow small powers to have authority at least in regional affairs, and such councils could be used as a basis for selecting representatives to sit on the world council.⁴⁰

Churchill favoured regional groupings and in May 1943 outlined his ideas in a conversation with a group of Americans at the British Embassy in Washington. He explained that he envisaged the four Powers forming a Supreme World Council, under which would be three regional councils; one each for Europe, the American hemisphere and the Pacific. The Prime Minister agreed to other nations being elected from the regional bodies to the Supreme Council, but said he attached great importance to the regional bodies as only those countries directly affected by a dispute could be expected to apply themselves to its settlement.⁴¹ This conception was at variance to the F.O.'s idea of more numerous regional bodies with specific functions subordinate within a general organisation. Moreover, Churchill outlined his scheme without reference to the F.O. and clearly caused annoyance within that Office.⁴² Until the 1944 Prime Ministers' meeting Churchill and Eden held differing views on regional councils.

Regional councils would particularly affect the Commonwealth because of its diverse geographical composition. Some officials in the F.O. thought that such councils could partially solve Dominion objections to

40. Memorandum by Eden, 7th July 1943, WP(43)300, CAB66/38.

41. Memorandum by Churchill, 10th June 1943, WP(43)233, CAB66/37.

42. P. A. Reynolds and E. J. Hughes, *op.cit.*, p. 20. Webster's diary describes the consternation of the F.O. at Churchill's statement at some length. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of this subject.

the four Power thesis by providing them with an arena in which to express their individuality.⁴³ Jebb supported the plan as a means to enable smaller nations to feel that they were pulling their weight and allow them to achieve their "national destinies".⁴⁴ The feasibility of such councils and their acceptability to other states could not be determined by the U.K. While the scheme might provide the U.K. with the means of satisfying the Dominions' desire for a share in the decision-making, it was also potentially dangerous for an association of scattered states to emphasise their differences. For if the Dominions participated only in regional councils, their contact with each other would be reduced and, perhaps more importantly, such a system could serve to reinforce interests which were not shared by fellow members, rather than those which were. (The only two Dominions likely to draw more closely together under such a system were Australia and New Zealand, who were already improving their bi-lateral contacts.)

In a Cabinet memorandum of July 1943 the Dominions Secretary, Attlee, expressed agreement with the principle of regional councils as long as there was adequate opportunity for discussions and co-operation between Commonwealth members as well, and provided countries could belong to more than one council where their interests justified this.

He cited the example of Canada as an Atlantic and Pacific Power. (Attlee doubted if Canada would wish to be a member of the Pan American Union if that body was solely concerned with the Americas, but thought it might if that association became part of the world organisation.)

The Dominions Secretary also warned his colleagues,

It will of course be of the highest importance to secure that the regional organisation does not impair the unity of the British Commonwealth.⁴⁵

43. Minute by J. E. Coulson (Economic & Reconstruction Department), 30th January 1943, FO371/35396, U402/402/70.

44. Minute by Jebb, 2nd February 1943, ibid., and 16th March 1943, FO371/35362, U1677/310/70.

45. Memorandum by Attlee, 19th July 1943, WP(43)321, CAB66/39.

Attlee noted that Australia was capable of playing an important role in the Pacific region but that to do so it would need to be backed by the full weight of the Commonwealth. A matter of some concern to Attlee was the role of the U.S.A. in Europe. He thought that if the U.S. did not co-operate with the U.K., and the latter was forced to concentrate all its resources in Europe while the U.S. attended to the Far East, it would cause trouble for the Commonwealth. The international position of the Dominions in their own regions would be weakened as they would be unable to count on the full military support of the U.K. Their increased reliance might have a disruptive effect on the association. Lord Cranborne, Dominions Secretary before and after Attlee, had greater doubts about regional councils. Early in the war he had been worried about the implications of American defence policy which he felt ran counter to the U.K.'s principle that the world's peace was indivisible and that all nations should co-operate with each other in its defence. He expressed his fear to Churchill that the U.S.A.'s policy could lead to its withdrawal after the war into its own hemisphere, taking with it "Canada and the rest of British America and possibly Australia too."⁴⁶ In the Spring of 1944, after returning to the D.O., Cranborne told the Cabinet of his strong doubts as to acceptability of regional councils to the Dominions if this would exclude them from having a voice in Europe, a region which they had twice fought to defend. In a private minute to Churchill, Cranborne wrote that he thought the plan for regional bodies contained "the possible seeds of Imperial disruption".⁴⁷ There seems therefore to have been an appreciable difference between Attlee's and Cranborne's views on this question, with the former much more inclined to favour regional bodies. However,

46. Minute from Cranborne to Churchill, 5th March 1941, Prem4, 43B/2.

47. Minutes of War Cabinet meeting, 27th April 1944, WM(44)58, CAB65/42, and Minute from Cranborne to Churchill, 11th May 1944, DO121/10A, No. 62.

both appreciated that there were problems for the Commonwealth in such a scheme, notably the danger of reinforcing existing differences rather than promoting centripetal forces.

No final decision could be made by the U.K. on arrangements for the post-war phase, and by the Summer of 1943, more detailed discussions were needed with the other Powers. Eden's two Cabinet memoranda of July 1943 clarified the objectives of the U.K. and the kind of machinery which could bring them about. He allowed for the association of the Dominions with international bodies on the lines of the League of Nations precedent - rotating Dominion membership in conjunction with the U.K. - without specifying precisely the arrangements. These two memoranda also envisaged Dominion participation in regional bodies and on specialist committees.⁴⁸ The association of the Dominions with the work of the supreme political council would depend on the size of that body. Attlee, in a memorandum of 19th July 1943, accepted the Foreign Secretary's allowance for the general participation of the Dominions in international councils and expressed the wish that the main political council should have a membership of around eleven states, rather than just the four major Powers, so the Dominions and other small States could be represented on it. He also accepted that specialist bodies and regional councils could provide for further Dominion participation in international affairs. Above all, Attlee stressed the need for consultations with the Dominions to discuss these issues. This could be begun by talks with officials and telegraphic correspondence, but he suggested that a full Prime Ministers' Conference should be called.⁴⁹

As the end of the war approached and more attention was devoted

48. Memoranda by Eden, 1st July 1943 and 7th July 1943, WP(43)292 and WP(43)300, CAB66/38.

49. Memorandum by Attlee, 19th July 1943, WP(43)321, CAB66/39.

to the post-war situation, collaboration between the members of the Commonwealth and any changes which needed to be made to the machinery became increasingly important. The D.O. had emphasised the need to hold discussions with the Dominions about the arrangements for the future, and was also concerned that the Dominions were kept fully up to date with all aspects of U.K. foreign policy. With the prospect of a Prime Ministers' meeting the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the D.O., Mr. Paul Emrys-Evans, convened a meeting between the D.O. and the F.O. in March 1943 to discuss liaison in relation to post-war issues. At the beginning of 1943 the D.I.D. of the F.O. had been expanded and centred its attention wholly on liaising with the D.O. on foreign policy issues which the Dominions should be informed about.⁵⁰ Although never a large department within the F.O. its staff did grow quite quickly, dependent on the personnel and finance available at the time, and as the department grew it became the better able to initiate greater co-ordination of policy; it could cover a wider range of papers and was less reliant on other departments' remembering to pass material on to it. However, with the work of the F.O. divided by region, and despite a number of circulars sent round to each, it remained the responsibility of the D.I.D. to ensure that the Dominions were informed of all developments which would be of interest to them.

According to the Minister of State at the F.O., Mr. Richard Law, the purpose of the D.O. in calling the meeting was not to berate the F.O. for ignoring the Dominions, but to suggest the advantages of closer contact between the two Offices at an early stage in the discussion of policy, so that the D.O. could have a chance to give the F.O. an indication of the probable attitudes of the Dominions to any U.K. proposals.⁵¹ It is clear from the D.O.'s record of the meeting that

50. See chapter 2, pp. 104-106.

51. Minute by Law, 26th March 1943, F0371/36605, W8107/4084/68.

it was not happy with the system as it had been operating and the minutes show a general agreement that the F.O. should consult as soon as ideas began to take shape. Furthermore when issues were under consideration in a committee, it was agreed that the D.O. should be shown a draft report so that a document could be put forward which would have the approval of both offices.⁵² In a note to Law, Emrys-Evans urged that inter-departmental consultation should take place before papers were submitted to the Cabinet; although the D.O. could not speak on behalf of the Dominions, it could frequently suggest modifications which were likely to make proposals more acceptable to the Dominions.⁵³

The D.I.D. produced a draft circular for all heads of F.O. Departments which laid down guidelines for improved liaison with the D.O. Law had clearly been impressed with the arguments of the D.O. and he passed the draft to Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the F.O., with the comment that it seemed "quite sensible".⁵⁴ As well as stressing the importance of consultations with the D.O., the circular advocated the sounding out of prospective policies in the Dominions before they had become official U.K. policy. Cadogan pointed out the problem of communicating information before the Foreign Secretary had seen papers and particularly doubted the wisdom of informing Dominion Governments of proposals that were still under discussion. He anticipated objection from Churchill to telegrams from any Dominion Prime Minister which commented on issues which had not been discussed by the U.K. Cabinet.⁵⁵ Law conceded that the draft might be rather

52. D.O. record of inter-departmental meeting, 11th March 1943, FO371/36605, W8107/4084/68. (Law and Ronald attended for the F.O., Emrys-Evans, Machtig and Stephenson for the D.O.) In November 1942 Stephenson had written to Newton about sending more information to the Dominions. See chapter 2, p. 105.

53. Emrys-Evans to Law, 16th March 1943, ibid.

54. Minute from Law to Cadogan, 26th March 1943, FO371/36605, W8107/4084/68.

55. Minute by Cadogan, 27th March 1943, ibid.

too sweeping, but he urged Cadogan to consider the issue seriously. Law thought the Dominions were tolerating an inadequate system of collaboration because of the war, but that in the future they would be less prepared to put up with it. If the U.K. did not take measures to improve its performance it could lose its Commonwealth partners and sink to the level of a small, insignificant island. Law also noted that the draft had not recommended consultations with the Dominions prior to the Foreign Secretary receiving papers, only that the D.O. should be kept fully informed of developments by the D.I.D.⁵⁶

The timing of consultations with the Dominions was a perennial problem for the U.K., as was the decision to make informal soundings. There were obvious difficulties in formally consulting Dominion Governments before the U.K. Cabinet had made a decision on policy, but there were other methods of gauging opinion. As Mr. P. Grey, Law's Private Secretary, noted, the F.O. often had discussions with the Head of a foreign mission and sometimes with a foreign government before the Foreign Secretary decided on a line of policy. It seemed reasonable for the U.K. to take the same care to consider the opinion of the Dominions before committing itself to a definite line of action which would affect the Commonwealth. He saw nothing wrong if the D.I.D. informed the D.O. of proposals, the D.O. then sounded out the High Commissioner's opinion and the latter unofficially sought the opinion of his own government. It would only be when a policy had Cabinet approval that Dominion Governments would be formally consulted. Grey thought they did not sufficiently trust the discretion or use the advice of the D.O. and its representatives and doubted whether the F.O. could refrain from exchanging ideas with the Dominion Departments

56. Minute by Law, no date, ibid.

of External Affairs. He commented that such great effort was being expended in keeping the U.S.A. in step with themselves that the least the U.K. could do was to allow the Dominions the chance of commenting on policy.⁵⁷ This was the essence of Law's proposal, which he had urged not just because it would make an improvement for the Dominions, but because of the importance to the U.K. of carrying the Dominions on foreign policy questions.

Some officials in the F.O. had reservations about such close consultation and about the D.O.'s ability to conduct such close collaboration. Jebb expressed concern at the danger of becoming "muscle bound" if all records of meetings had to be forwarded to the D.O. Furthermore he was alarmed at the prospect of leaving to the D.O.'s discretion what material should be passed on to the Dominions. Jebb thought that the D.O. was already well enough informed of events because it usually had an official sitting on U.K. inter-departmental committees; and he objected that the D.O.'s judgment tended to be sometimes

'more Royalist than the King' and so sensitive of Dominion opinion that they hardly welcome any expression of views by H.M.G. at all!⁵⁸

Mr. Greenway, Head of the D.I.D., agreed with Jebb that there were some officials in the D.O. who were "somewhat uncontrolled", but he was confident that the D.I.D., together with other D.O. officials such as Mr. N. E. Archer, an Assistant Under-Secretary, "who shares our views and is most helpful in every way", could cope with greater consultation with the Dominions. He said that trouble only tended to arise when an issue went straight to the D.O., rather than via the D.I.D.⁵⁹

These minutes illustrate a slight friction between the D.O. and

57. Minute by Grey, 1st April 1943, ibid.

58. Minute by Jebb, 10th April 1943, ibid.

59. Minute by Greenway, 3rd May 1943, ibid.

F.O. which was a permanent aspect of Commonwealth collaboration while the two Offices remained separate. Before the war the F.O. had had comparatively little active collaboration with the Dominions who in turn had underdeveloped foreign policies. From 1942/3 onwards the F.O. was increasingly involved in Commonwealth collaboration in foreign affairs and consequently had more contact with the D.O. The F.O. tended to regard the D.O. as being too sensitive to Dominion sensibilities, as Jebb's minute indicated. There was some justification in this, but the D.O. considered that its main responsibility was to ensure that Dominion views were taken into account and while other Offices showed a tendency to ignore the Dominions unless prompted by the D.O., it would continue to stress the importance of adapting U.K. policy to accommodate the Dominions whenever possible. At two points in the 1940s there were serious discussions within the F.O. on the subject of that Office's assuming responsibility for foreign affairs collaboration with the Dominions. On neither occasion did this lead to a change in the D.O.'s authority over all aspects of Commonwealth relations, but an element of friction remained.⁶⁰

The D.I.D. had made efforts in 1943 to improve the information passed on to the D.O.; but the F.O. had no up to date instructions about the marking of papers to be sent to the D.I.D. The instructions of 1927, when a Dominions Information Department was first established, were the only ones in existence and these were not only inadequate, but had long been forgotten.⁶¹ Ronald supported Greenway's request to fill this gap in office procedure, making the observation that if the D.O., and through it the Dominion Governments, were kept better informed, the latter were less likely to send embarrassing telegrams

60. See pages 157-159.

61. Minute by Greenway, 28th May 1943, F0371/36605, W8107/4084/68.

to the Prime Ministers than they then did in their state of "incomplete knowledge".⁶² Cadogan agreed that new instructions should be issued to Heads of Departments concerning the papers which should be forwarded on to the D.I.D., but he warned Greenway that this could never guarantee that all papers did reach his department and that it would be the D.I.D.'s responsibility to keep track of what was happening and maintain close contact with all departments.⁶³

The circular issued in May 1943 covered three main points. First, that the fullest amount of information likely to be of value to the Dominions in the formulation of their policies should be sent (via the D.I.D. and the D.O.); the paper mentioned the safe methods of transmitting information which until then had been foolproof.⁶⁴ Thus Heads who had previously withheld matters on security grounds should have no worries. Secondly, it was laid down as a matter of principle that the Dominions should be informed before, or simultaneously with, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Thirdly, the Dominions were to be notified of all decisions which would affect the British Commonwealth as a whole. This was essential if the association was to function as a group, but explicit concurrence, or specific comment, from the Dominions was not necessarily required. It was the act of notification which was critical. (This was in line with the D.O.'s practice, and intended to accommodate the difference in attitude between the Dominions. Canada regarded the majority of communications from the U.K. as inforatory, and often did not wish to comment upon them, while Australia, and sometimes the other two, frequently sent their views on U.K. policy.) The circular allowed, if the situation demanded immediate action or the U.K.'s allies insisted on a delay in the announcement of decisions, for the Dominions to be informed simultaneously with the action contemplated. However,

62. Minute by Ronald, 28th May 1943, ibid.

63. Minute by Cadogan, 29th May, 1943, ibid.

64. For details see chapter 2, p. 65.

officials were warned that the Dominions should not be left in the embarrassing position of procuring knowledge from the press, rather than from the U.K. Government. On major issues the Dominions were generally informed at least before the world press, although this often did not satisfy their requirements. Sometimes during the three or four Power meetings it was difficult to keep the Dominions in touch with the proceedings, for instance during the Cairo conference of November 1943. The communique outlining the aims of the allies fighting the Pacific war was rushed to the Dominions, especially Australia and New Zealand, hours before the time of the press release. This fulfilled the minimum requirement but led to protests from Australia, which felt it should have been consulted about the ^{contents} ~~comments~~. 65

Commenting on the importance of keeping the other members of the Commonwealth abreast of events and policies, the circular cautioned F.O. officials:

Failure to consult or inform a Dominion Government does not always or even often lead to protests from them, but the absence of complaint does not indicate that no harm has been done. Not only may there be short term adverse result, e.g. irritation which may lead to refusal to co-operate regarding some other issues of importance to us, but there is, in any case, the long term effect of discouraging the spirit of co-operation and encouraging the tendency for Dominion Governments themselves to take independent action in matters which may be of vital concern to ourselves. 66

This passage closely mirrored Law's minute to Cadogan of two months before, and indicates that the D.I.D. had grasped the importance of Commonwealth consultation if the U.K. was to receive the active co-operation of its Commonwealth partners. The U.K. could not take the Dominions for granted. Their assistance was seen to be a positive asset, if not an absolute pre-requisite, for the U.K.'s post-war

65. Attlee to Churchill 29th November 1943; D.O. to Australian and New Zealand Governments, 30th November 1943; and D.O. to all four Dominion Governments, 1st December 1943, D035/1666, WG573/17.

66. F.O. Circular no. 14, 31st May 1943, F0371/36605, W8107/4084/68.

position and that co-operation had to be earned. The circular concluded that if the U.K. Government was to succeed in its policy

of making Dominion partnership a reality and of maintaining the British Commonwealth as an essential element in the British position in world affairs, the fullest use must be made of the existing machinery of consultation and co-operation and whenever possible this machinery will have to be developed and improved by all possible means.⁶⁷

After clarifying internal office procedure the D.I.D. turned its attention to methods of improving collaboration with the Dominions and in particular its own role. Underlying these discussions lay three basic assumptions about the future of the Commonwealth. First, the Dominions seemed likely to continue to extend their activities in world affairs. The establishment of missions abroad was one indication of this and, perhaps more importantly, the Dominions appeared to regard themselves as fully entitled to have an effective voice in world councils. If Australia and Canada were the most developed in this respect, it was assumed that the other two would not be far behind. Second, and closely related, was the expected manner in which the Dominions would exercise this increase in their status. It was generally anticipated that they would become more assertive and Law had warned that the U.K. could not expect automatic co-operation from them. Australia had given indications during the war that she would assert her independence vigorously. Finally, there was the recognition of a shift in the balance of world power towards the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.; and the support of the Dominions for U.K. foreign policy would assist in maintaining the U.K.'s world position.

High-level collaboration between Commonwealth countries was fairly well-established. Newton noted that if the scheme mentioned by the Australian Prime Minister, Curtin, for an Empire Council and Secretariat, were implemented in some form,

67. Ibid. (Author's italics.)

no doubt the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would be closely concerned on the highest level and some F.O. official would presumably participate in the work of the Secretariat.

Such matters would await the Prime Ministers' meeting, but Newton and his colleagues were keen meanwhile to investigate ways to improve lower-level official collaboration, and thought that this might be equally important for the Commonwealth in the long run.⁶⁸

In July 1943 Campbell (D.I.D.) drafted a memorandum on British Commonwealth relations. In this he attempted to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the Commonwealth; the basic feeling of loyalty to the "Commonwealth idea" and the sentimental attachment of the Dominions to the 'Mother country' on the one hand, and their extreme sensitivity for their individual rights as independent nations on the other. He identified the task for the future as being the preservation of Commonwealth unity, whilst allowing the Dominions the independence they possessed and wished to exert. He rejected alteration of the basic structure of the Commonwealth, believing that its survival depended on the existence of common interests, rather than formal ties. In addition Campbell saw the future as depending on the U.K.'s leadership, for if it ceased to be a Great Power, the association would dissolve, as none of the other countries possessed sufficient in common with one another. To achieve this the U.K. should not woo the Dominions, but demonstrate to them its strength as a European Power, its ability to co-operate on equal terms with the U.S.A. and its progressiveness in all fields of policy. He suggested two particular lines of action for the U.K. First, it should not regard the Dominions as offspring, but as fellow members of the international community whose friendship it already possessed and wished to retain. Second, it should accept with "good grace" a certain

68. Minute by Newton, 4th November 1943, F0371/36605, W16485/4084/68.

U.S. presence in Commonwealth affairs. Relations between the English-speaking world could be endangered if the U.K. resented either the behaviour of the Dominions or the intervention of the U.S.A., and a workable collaboration was necessary between these nations.⁶⁹

Officials in the F.O. who commented on this memorandum agreed with Campbell's basic thesis. Greenway, his departmental Head, described it as a lucid and just summing-up of inter-Commonwealth relations,⁷⁰ although there was some disagreement over particulars. Butler (Head of the North American Department) thought it preferable to stress the dependence of the Commonwealth on the U.K.'s naval and air forces in places and at a level which contributed to the security of the Dominions, rather than the U.K.'s progressive policies. He agreed that there would be greater contact between the U.S. and the Dominions, anticipating a defensive arrangement between the two antipodean Dominions and the U.S. along the lines of the Canadian link. He agreed that the U.K. could not stop this contact and to do so would only anger both the Dominions and the U.S.⁷¹ Newton approved of the memorandum, but pointed to two omissions from it; reference to Dominion representation internationally, and an apology for lumping all the Dominions together, when they were in many respects different.⁷² Campbell's paper became the basis of a memorandum sent to U.K. Missions abroad to clarify Commonwealth relations, and stimulate interest in the problem of how to concert foreign relations within the Commonwealth,⁷³ the final version owing much to Newton's work. This paper reflected a change in the F.O.'s perception of the Commonwealth. In it and many of the replies, there was an appreciation of the Dominions as important international actors.

69. Memorandum by Campbell, 22nd July 1943, FO371/36607, W12262/5467/68.

70. Minute by Greenway, 27th July 1943, *ibid.*

71. Minute by Butler, 28th July 1943, *ibid.* (Butler's prediction proved correct. In 1951 Australia and New Zealand signed a defence treaty with the U.S.A.)

72. Minute by Newton, 19th August 1943, *ibid.* The latter point was mentioned in the F.O.'s circular accompanying the memorandum when it was sent to H. M. Missions.

73. Circular to Foreign Missions by Foreign Secretary accompanying F.O. memorandum, 11th December 1943, *ibid.*

Most importantly there was a readiness to treat them as allies and near equals. However, perhaps distinguishing the F.O.'s attitude from that of the D.O., such equality did not necessarily allow for the intimacy which had always characterised the D.O.'s pursuit of Commonwealth relations, and the F.O. tended to regard the Dominions in a more 'rough and ready' fashion, as merely other allies. This no doubt reflected the lack of first-hand experience of F.O. officials with Dominion personnel and in handling Commonwealth relations.

In the discussion of Commonwealth representation internationally there had been some disagreement within the F.O. on the future of the U.K. if it lost the Dominions. Campbell had stressed the need for their support and also added the observation that the Commonwealth could probably only survive if the U.K. remained a Great Power, implying that the Dominions might not think the association worthwhile otherwise.⁷⁴ Other officials agreed with the importance of the Dominions to the U.K.,⁷⁵ but while acknowledging this the memorandum stressed the fact that the U.K. was a Great Power even without the Dominions. This was one aspect of the paper with which the D.O. disagreed when it was informally submitted in draft form. Mr. N. E. Costar, a Principal in the D.O., thought the usefulness of the Dominions to the U.K. should be stressed more, as in terms of industrial potential, population and raw materials the U.K. could hardly equal the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

In short, insofar as a Great Power maintains its position through sheer strength, as time goes on the U.K. will have a greater need of the Dominions than in the past, and it should therefore be a major U.K. interest to preserve the integrity of a willing Commonwealth.⁷⁶

Commenting on the final draft, Costar noted that a reference had been added on the value of the Dominions, but thought it could have been made

74. Memorandum by Campbell, 22nd July 1943, ibid.

75. Minutes by Grey, 6th August 1943 and Newton, 19th August 1943, ibid.

76. Minute by Costar, 13th September 1943, D035/1204, WC75/23.

more forcibly as it was a factor U.K. officials abroad too often forgot.⁷⁷ Here a tactical element was present for as Garner (Senior Secretary at the High Commissioner in Ottawa) recognised, it was often sounder when approaching either foreign or Dominion Governments not to under-sell the U.K.'s potential.⁷⁸ On the other hand, in purely domestic discussions, the D.O. wanted the importance of the Dominions to be acknowledged. Costar also appreciated that the benefits were by no means one-way, and reinforced a point made by Newton that the Dominions had access to information by their association with the U.K. which would be beyond their grasp as independent nations.⁷⁹

The general opinion in the D.O. of the memorandum can be illustrated in the correspondence between Sir John Stephenson (Assistant Under-Secretary at the D.O.) and S. Holmes (the D.O.'s representative in Washington). The latter had asked if the D.O. had approved of the document and was told that it had been submitted to the D.O. for its consent to its circulation and that some suggestions made by the D.O. had been incorporated. Stephenson added

While we see no reason to object violently to anything in it, we must not be taken as endorsing any particular opinion or emphasis it may contain.⁸⁰

This was a rather vague reply. However, the High Commissioner in Ottawa thought that things had come to a "pretty pass" if the F.O. had sent material to its missions relating to the Dominions without having previously obtained D.O. approval for that document "in its entirety, both in form and substance". Garner, who transmitted MacDonald's views, criticised the memorandum for being written from a superior standpoint.⁸² According to Greenway, the D.O. had from the start

77. Minute by Costar, 9th November 1943, ibid.

78. Garner to Costar, 4th February 1944, ibid.

79. Minute by Costar, 13th September 1943, ibid.

80. Stephenson to S. Holmes, 12th January 1944, ibid.

81. Garner to Costar (quoting MacDonald) 4th February 1944, ibid.

82. Minute by Greenway, 16th May 1943, F0371/42674, W6458/1103/68.

disliked the fact that the F.O. had taken the initiative in the matter.⁸³

Fifteen replies were received from Foreign Service representatives, some enclosing additional memoranda on collaboration. All demonstrated considerable enthusiasm for, and interest in, the Commonwealth. There was some justification for Garner's criticism that the memorandum was patronising, containing as it did the assertion that the U.K. would be a Great Power with or without the Dominions and with its concentration on the pre-eminent position of the U.K. within the association. However, it did attempt an honest appraisal of Commonwealth relations and stressed the need to treat the Dominions as equals. The replies echoed the honesty and intent of the original memorandum and took Commonwealth collaboration seriously. For instance Sir N. Bland, the U.K.'s representative to the Netherlands Government, urged that the closest possible contacts be established with Dominion officials, especially at foreign capitals where personal contact and friendly advice, if "given unpatronisingly", would be very important.⁸³ Similarly, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, U.K. Ambassador to Turkey, thought it important to have the right human approach to Commonwealth relations and that the U.K. needed "to avoid giving, however unintentionally, an impression of superiority". He also thought it would be helpful if the Dominions tried to eliminate their "baseless inferiority complex".⁸⁴ The latter was perhaps not totally unfounded as both these letters do seem to imply that in the past U.K. representatives had tended to be patronising towards their Dominion colleagues. Yet at least there were indications of a change in attitude on the F.O.'s part. The replies received contained a number of different proposals and these,

83. Bland to Eden, 9th March 1944, F0371/42674, W3794/1103/68.

84. Knatchbull-Hugessen to Eden, 29th January 1944, F0371/42674, W2369/1103/68.

together with others put forward by those on the F.O., were eventually presented in a further F.O. memorandum which formed a programme of contributions to improve Commonwealth collaboration.

Closer contact with the D.O. was seen by most as a vital factor in increasing the F.O.'s involvement in Commonwealth collaboration and to some extent the meeting between the two Offices the previous March had begun an improvement in this area. Emphasis was also placed on more consultations with the staff of the High Commissions in London,⁸⁵ which mirrored proposals put forward within the F.O. Members of the D.I.D. were unhappy about their contact with staffs of the High Commissions and Greenway, responding to a suggestion from Grey for greater personal contact between Commonwealth officials, explained the difficulties he had encountered. He wrote that although progress had been made with the younger officials, "the High Commissioners themselves are godlike and aloof", expressing his regret that they had not taken more interest in the work of the D.I.D.⁸⁶ There is little record of close contact between the High Commissioners and D.I.D. officials, apart from the attendance of Newton and sometimes Greenway at the meetings between the Dominions Secretary and the High Commissioners, and the latter seemed to confine their acquaintances mostly to D.O. officials and Ministers of the Crown.⁸⁷ Newton endorsed Greenway's comment, although he did note that the lack of staff at the High Commissions and the F.O.'s own manning problems were partly responsible. Such liaison was to be encouraged and Newton said the aim of the F.O. in the future should be to provide a "Dominions corner" by setting aside

85. Enclosure by Mr. P. Garron, official at Lisbon Embassy, in letter from Sir R. H. Campbell to Eden, 13th January 1944, FO371/42674, W2571/1103/68.

86. Minute by Grey, 21st June 1943 and minute by Greenway, 22nd June 1943, FO371/36607, W11982/5467/68.

87. The Canadian High Commissioner gives the impression that the Dominion High Commissioners found Newton rather difficult to communicate with. See V. Massey's Diary, 27th October 1942, (chapter 2, p.101).

a room for Dominion officials to consult with D.I.D. members, who in turn would act as intermediaries between Dominion staff and officials in different F.O. departments who were dealing with subjects of interest to the rest of the Commonwealth. At the end of the war the D.I.D. did try to provide such a service and generally promote contact with Dominion officials. This developed slowly.⁸⁸ The draft F.O. programme of contributions included the suggestion that each Dominion High Commission should have an official who would give priority to foreign affairs and liaison with the F.O., adding that this should not detract from the High Commissioners own interests in foreign policy, but "facilitate and increase the scope of that interest".⁸⁹ The D.O. agreed in principle, but recommended that the question be discussed by the Expert Committee which had been proposed at the Prime Ministers' Conference to discuss Commonwealth collaboration.⁹⁰ The final programme merely stated that the F.O. hoped staff at the High Commissions would be adequate to allow one member to devote his time to foreign affairs.⁹¹

Some representatives thought the policy of treating the Dominions as fellow members of the U.N. rather than 'offspring' of the U.K. should be implemented by transferring the responsibility for Commonwealth relations in foreign affairs to the F.O.⁹² Such proposals amounted to an amalgamation of the D.O. under the aegis of the latter, or at least the curtailment of a vast amount of the D.O.'s activities by their transference to the F.O. Various reasons were suggested to justify this development, but most agreed that such a change would be welcomed by the Dominions and that it would be to the U.K.'s advantage to have

88. Minute by Newton, 4th November 1943, F0371/36605, W16485/4084/68.

89. Draft 'Programme of Contributions from the F.O. Towards Commonwealth Collaboration', written by Newton, 17th April 1944, F0371/42674, W2571/1103/68.

90. Stephenson to Newton, 29th June 1944, D035/1204, WC75/39.

91. Final 'Programme of Contributions from the Foreign Office towards Commonwealth Collaboration', 25th April 1944, F0371/42674, W5904/1103/68.

92. Skrine-Stevenson to Eden, 24th January 1944, F0371/42674, W1116/1103/68.

all its foreign relations handled by one department qualified in such matters. Sir K. Cornwallis, U.K. Ambassador in Baghdad, thought that once all external relations came under the F.O., U.K. representation in the Dominions could develop on "sound lines" from a pool of men specialising in that field.

With United Kingdom missions on a properly organised basis established in each Dominion and in charge of representatives selected with particular regard to their suitability for employment in 'new' countries directed by a Secretary of State in London in active contact with foreign problems, the task of inter-imperial consultation and co-operation would, I feel sure, be greatly simplified and improved.⁹³

This proposal implied that the usual practice within the F.O. of posting officials to a great variety of locations and departments would be abandoned, but if a group of specialists was established for the Commonwealth, but not elsewhere in the Office, there was surely the danger of divisions developing within the Office.

Sir R. C. Skrine Stevenson, U. K. Ambassador to Yugoslavia, thought the amalgamation of the D.O. and F.O. would be a symbolic step in the Commonwealth's evolution. He was critical of the D.O. for being too like the Colonial Office from which it was born, and thus indicative of the U.K.'s failure to recognise the Dominions' independence.⁹⁴

Another official who had previously been posted to South Africa, referred to the "vaguely proprietary flavour" of the term Dominions Office, describing it as a half-way house between the C.O. and F.O. and he said that many South Africans disliked its existence.⁹⁴ Mr. Shuckburgh, a junior official at the U.K. Embassy in Buenos Aires who had also had experience of the Dominions, was another advocate of amalgamation, seeing it as an extension of the practice of seconding F.O. officials to U.K. High Commissions and D.O. men to Foreign Service missions.

93. Cornwallis to Eden, 6th February 1944, FO371/42674, W2572/1103/68.

94. Minute by Mr. Wallinger (Later Head of Central Department, 1948) 2nd August 1943, FO371/36607, W11982/5467/68.

Ultimately he thought this process would lead to the unification of the two Offices which he considered performed identical functions.⁹⁵

This was a proposal which would take time to evolve, and Shuckburgh's Ambassador, Sir David Kelly, while agreeing with his subordinate's objective, thought it was only practicable for the distant future.

However, when it occurred, he expected it to

remove any feeling that the Dominions Office is only a transitional compromise between the Colonial Office, from which it sprang, and the ⁹⁶now situation acknowledged by the Statute of Westminster.

The Head of the D.I.D., Greenway, also agreed that Commonwealth collaboration on foreign affairs should be the responsibility of the F.O. The D.O. could continue to exist as a department, but would be reduced in its areas of function so as to lay claim no longer to its own Secretary of State. Such a move would mean more staff for the F.O. and an enlarged D.I.D. possibly with representatives of the Dominions in it. Greenway thought it possible that the Dominions would suggest this development, and was certain they would be wholly in favour of it. He also speculated that it could lead to the creation of a joint Commonwealth Secretariat.⁹⁷ One of the principal advantages of the D.O. to the Dominions was that it gave them direct access to a Secretary of State, normally in the Cabinet, who could specialise in their affairs. If Commonwealth foreign affairs collaboration was assigned to the F.O., the Dominion Governments and High Commissioners would be just one extra responsibility for an overworked Foreign Secretary, in an Office which approached foreign policy on distinct regional lines, not necessarily the most suitable means of handling relations with a geographically disparate group of states, and strove to produce diplomats with wide

95. Memorandum by Shuckburgh, enclosure in letter from Sir David Kelly, U.K. Ambassador to Yugoslavia, to Eden, 26th January 1944, F0371/42674, W2573/1103/68.

96. Kelly to Eden, 26th January 1944, *ibid.*

97. Minute by Greenway, 2nd February 1944, F0371/42674, W1116/1103/68. (This reference to a Commonwealth Secretariat presumably meant a joint Commonwealth body along the lines Curtin was suggesting. See chapter 4, pp.206-209.)

general knowledge, rather than specialists. Newton who did not think amalgamation would be desirable pointed to the benefit the Dominions derived from having the full attention and authority of a Secretary of State, adding that in practice they also had direct access to the Foreign Secretary and the F.O. when necessary, a useful double advantage.⁹⁸ The Permanent Under-Secretary also doubted whether the Dominions would in fact favour the proposal, especially an expanded D.I.D. with their own representatives in it as Greenway had suggested. This could make them suspicious of a British attempt to dictate Commonwealth foreign policies from Whitehall.⁹⁹ Law, the Minister of State, did think the abolition of the D.O. would be welcomed by the Dominions, providing the F.O. took over the handling of their relations on the same basis as it conducted relations with other states.¹⁰⁰ The Foreign Secretary did not officially comment on this suggestion in these papers, and whatever their individual standpoints, officials agreed that the F.O. should not raise the issue itself. Greenway and Newton considered it possible that the matter would be raised by the Dominions at the forthcoming Prime Ministers' meeting, but thought it an issue to which the F.O. could only be prepared to respond, not initiate.¹⁰¹

The F.O. decision to await events on the issue of fusion did not prevent the suggestions from being known outside the Office. The D.O. had seen the original circular to H. M. Representatives and was also shown the draft summary of replies. Greenway expected it to object to some of the proposals but thought "it would be wiser to be ingenuously honest over this".¹⁰² Possibly he thought that by showing the paper to the D.O. the F.O. could air the question of amalgamation without officially raising it themselves. Campbell's summary noted

98. Minute by Newton, 4th February 1944, ibid.

99. Minute by Cadogan, 4th February 1944, ibid.

100. Minute by Law, 8th February 1944, ibid.

101. Minutes by Greenway, 2nd February 1944, and Newton, 4th February 1944, ibid.

102. Minute by Greenway, 13th March 1943, FO371/42674, W3280/1103/68.

that the F.O. had decided not to put forward the suggestion as it should be properly raised by the Dominions themselves.¹⁰³

The D.O. not suprisingly opposed any such development and was critical of the F.O.'s justification for not changing the arrangements. Machtig said it amounted to little more than saying that as the Dominions were likely to be satisfied with the D.O.'s continued handling of Commonwealth relations for some time to come, there was no need for any alterations. In his opinion.

The fundamental consideration is that the relations between the Dominions and the United Kingdom are (and it is to be hoped, long will be) very different from those between foreign countries and the United Kingdom, and that this is necessarily reflected in business with the Dominions being entrusted to a separate Minister and Service with special experience and outlook.¹⁰⁴

The D.O. did not believe that there was no difference between the functions of the Foreign and Dominion Services, as Shuckburgh and Kelly had argued. It distinguished between the U.K.'s foreign and Commonwealth relations, for membership of the Commonwealth involved a country in a wholly different association with the U.K. from that of even its closest and most valuable allies. In the Commonwealth members were united by common allegiance to the Crown and thus bound by a more powerful link than self interest or political expedience. There was an intimacy absent from relations with any other state. Moreover it was a total relationship embracing all aspects of those country's affairs; and the D.O. firmly maintained that Commonwealth relations should always be viewed as a whole, not separated into their different facets under different Offices.

The final draft of the circular containing the Programme of Contributions reflected the tone and arguments of Machtig's minute. It stated that the issue of amalgamation had been raised on previous occasions, but had never found favour with the U.K. Government because the position of the

103. Memorandum by Campbell, 22nd March 1943, FO371/42674, W4861/1103/68.

104. Minute by Machtig, 24th July 1944, DO35/1204, WC75/39.

Dominions was fundamentally different from that of foreign countries and the existence of a separate department specialising in Dominion relations reflected and safeguarded that position.¹⁰⁵ Although the issue was not raised by the Dominion Prime Ministers at the meeting in May 1944, the matter was by no means completely laid to rest. With the increased scope of the F.O.'s participation in Commonwealth affairs, and a much greater enthusiasm within the F.O. for the Commonwealth, the debate about responsibility for Commonwealth relations continued. Between 1946 and 1948 the F.O. tried to increase its authority in this sphere. The issue was finally settled with the fusion of the two offices in 1968.¹⁰⁶

In the 1930s the F.O. had begun the practice of seconding junior officials to serve in U.K. High Commissions in the Dominions. Until 1943 the experiment had been limited to two capitals, Ottawa and Pretoria; but amongst the suggestions for improving liaison were proposals for extension. One official who had spent some time in Ottawa described such postings as being of the greatest value to the official, and earlier had commented that as the Dominions increased their international activity it was important for F.O. officials to know and understand them better.¹⁰⁷ The F.O. did not want a seconded officer to become "merely another hand in the High Commissioners' Office" and lose touch with the F.O.¹⁰⁸ It wanted him to maintain direct contact so as to discover reactions to policy initiatives and the information it sent via the D.O. The arguments put forward for increasing this direct contact at Dominion capitals smacked of those used on the issue of fusing the

105. Final 'Programme of Contributions from the Foreign Office towards Commonwealth Collaboration', 25th April 1944, F0371/42674, W5904/1103/68.

106. For the 1948 discussions see chapter 9, pp. 450ff.

107. Memorandum by Shuckburgh, enclosure in letter from Kelly to Eden, 26th January 1944, F0371/42674, W2573/1103/68.

108. Minute by Newton, 4th November 1943, F0371/42674, W1103/1103/68.

F.O. and D.O.¹⁰⁹ There were those who thought that F.O. representatives were more capable of negotiating with Dominion officials. Wallinger, who had previously been posted to Pretoria, said F.O. officials could consider local problems more objectively and set aside the "self-conscious awareness, on the part of the D.O., of the 'constitutional issue'". He summed up the difference by the statement that an F.O. official regarded a Dominion as a "potential enemy", while a D.O. man was afraid that it could be a "potential renegade".¹¹⁰ In June 1943 Greenway had sent instructions to the two F.O. representatives in Ottawa and Pretoria, Mr. Maitland and Mr. Sullivan, stating that the F.O. wanted to learn as much as it could about factors influencing Dominions' policy, and urged them to do all they could to extend their personal contacts with External Affairs officials.¹¹¹ Sir R. H. Campbell also urged that such contacts were established to "foster the sense of membership of the same family".¹¹²

The D.O. felt generally satisfied with the F.O. representatives posted in Dominion capitals. M. MacDonald told Newton that Shuckburgh had been especially good, and thought that his replacement, Maitland,

109. This was reflected in Knatchbull-Hugessen's comment that the F.O.'s aim should be "the direct association of the Dominions with foreign affairs through Dominion personnel, and not second-hand as hitherto", or to turn the phrase round, the direct association of F.O. officials with Dominion personnel and Dominion policy. Knatchbull-Hugessen to Eden, 29th January 1944, F0371/42674, W2359/1103/68. Mr. Alan Dudley (North American Department) also favoured closer contact between F.O. and Dominion officials. Minute of 1st October 1943, F0371/36605, W11178/4084/68.
110. Minute by Wallinger, 2nd August 1943, F0371/36607, W11982/5476/68. Mr. P. Mason of the North American Department who had also served in Ottawa thought that secondments were beneficial to the individual, but doubted any wider value because the advice needed, and the information received, by the High Commissioner did not transcend the capacity of any trained official from any department. It is not clear precisely when Wallinger served in Canada, (he says this information was not included in the F.O. List) but it must have been early in the 1930s and this no doubt was the reason for his remark about the scope of action for an official. The F.O. were certainly anticipating an even greater increase in diplomatic activity at High Commissions. (Minute by Mason, 3rd April 1944, F0371/42674, W4861/1103/68.)
111. Greenway to Maitland and Sullivan, 10th June 1943, F0371/36605, W11178/4084/68.
112. Sir R. H. Campbell to Eden, 12th February 1944, F0371/42674, W2571/1103/68.

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was settling down well.¹¹³ Some surprise was expressed by Mr. Pugh, (Acting Principal at the D.O.) at a comment by Mr. Sullivan that he had felt there to have been some jealousy when he first arrived in Pretoria. Pugh commented that the D.O. had wanted to retain Sullivan's predecessor, Mr. Busk, and requested that a replacement be sent for him. Pugh said his own impression was that all the staff had welcomed Sullivan's arrival and tried to facilitate his contacts with the Department of External Affairs.¹¹⁴ There was, as Mason remarked, bound to be some "good natured" chaff between the two departments, but Pugh's and MacDonald's comments indicate that the D.O. was not averse to the practice. Mason also gave a timely reminder to officials;

The F.O. man should remember that it is he who is being educated - an education worthwhile - quite apart from the useful contribution he can make himself to the general work of the H.C.'s Office.¹¹⁵

When Greenway told the D.O. that the F.O. wished to extend the practice of secondment to the other two Dominions, the initial reaction of Mr. Archer, (an Assistant Secretary in the D.O.) was favourable. The question which had to be settled was the rank and experience of the men, which the F.O. wished to raise. The D.O. wanted a junior official who could perform useful functions without posing a threat to its own management of, and responsibility for, liaison with the Dominions. This threat was acknowledged by Newton when he said that he wanted the officials to approximate to the position of Commercial Secretaries, commenting

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113. Minute by Newton, 4th November 1943, FO371/36605, W16485/4084/68. The F.O. was not so satisfied with Maitland. Newton thought that his reports were uninformative, despite their length, and that the appointment was "inadequate". But this seemed to have been a case of one individual not fulfilling expectations. Minutes by Newton, 20th October 1943 and 3rd November 1943, FO371/36605, W12589/4084/68.
114. Minute by Pugh, 14th September 1943, FO371/36605, W12717/4084/68.
115. Minute by Mason, 7th October 1943, ibid.

I realise that such a development may seem to pave the way for the establishment of a U.K. diplomatic mission in the Dominions. My answer would be that if this is going to come it will come anyway and that we should not be deterred by such fears from developing our liaison machinery along the most practical lines. After all, permanent missions have evolved precisely because they were the best method of keeping in touch with another Government on foreign affairs: it would be absurd if for the sake of appearances we were to put ourselves at a disadvantage with foreign missions in Dominion capitals and to deprive ourselves of the best machinery we can devise for keeping in touch with our fellow governments in the British Commonwealth.¹¹⁶

Newton added that he thought the improvement in liaison between the F.O. and External Affairs Departments would enhance the superior and privileged nature of the U.K. High Commissions, compared with foreign diplomatic missions at the Dominion capitals. The F.O. was envisaging a man of eight or ten years' experience in the service,¹¹⁷ but as Newton told the D.O., it was willing to accede to the D.O.'s request that a Dominion official would act as number two in the High Commission.

Newton also noted that there could be some delay in implementing the new proposals, because of staffing shortages, but wanted a decision to be reached in principle so that budgets could be worked out.¹¹⁸ Machtig agreed in principle to the scheme, and to the F.O.'s choice of a First Secretary or junior Counsellor.¹¹⁹

Another aspect of collaboration was the improvement of contact between Commonwealth officials at foreign capitals. The number of Dominion missions would continue to grow. Sir Nevil Bland, Ambassador

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116. Minute by Newton, 4th November 1943, F0371/36605, W16483/4064/68. (Others, such as Jebb, who wanted the F.O. to take responsibility for foreign affairs collaboration with the Dominions, took note of Newton's warning and thought it would be a "healthy development".)
117. Minute by Jebb, 11th November 1943, ibid.
118. Minutes by Mr. I. Mallet (Head of Personnel Department), July 1943 and Wallinger, 2nd August 1943, F0371/36607, W11982/5467/68.
119. Newton to Machtig, 13th August 1943, F0371/36605, W17181/4084/68. (Mallet warned Newton of substantial delays in procuring the extra finance for these posts, 5th November 1943, F0371/36605, W16485/4081/68).
119. Machtig to Newton, 7th December 1943, F0371/36605, W17181/4084/68.

to the Netherlands Government, suggested that it was easier to influence people when they were abroad than at home, and that much could be done through the Dominion Missions at foreign capitals to present U.K. policy in an acceptable fashion to Dominion Governments.¹²⁰ Proposals centred on the sharing of information and co-ordination of action. This type of co-operation had been begun in Moscow, and Newton urged that it be followed elsewhere. Consultations and shared information were obvious benefits to be gained from the presence of multiple Commonwealth missions. By forming close contacts and by keeping up or increasing the amount of information the Dominions received from U.K. sources, the F.O. hoped to counteract any divisive tendencies which could result from the extension of the Dominions' own Foreign Services. The U.K. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Sir Philip Nicols, was worried that Dominion Services would become too distinctively different from the U.K.'s. He thought that it was important for them to share certain qualities, methods and traditions. Or, as Bland phrased it, every effort had to be made by the Foreign Service to "keep in" with the Dominion representatives.¹²¹ Two ambassadors saw positive advantages stemming from the Dominions' expansion of their foreign services. Sir C. Orde, Ambassador at Santiago, thought that this would facilitate a greater appreciation of foreign affairs and of the common interests of all the Commonwealth, and Lord Killearn, Ambassador to Egypt, envisaged Dominion Missions as providing a useful counterweight to the efforts being made by other Powers to penetrate the Middle East.¹²² These comments assumed that greater knowledge would make the Dominions agree

120. Bland to Eden, 9th March 1944, FO371/42674, W3794/1103/68.

121. Mr. Balfour of the U.K. Embassy in Moscow reported that close co-operation between Commonwealth missions already took place in Moscow. Balfour to Eden, 23rd January 1944, FO371/42674, W2496/1103/68; Nichols to Eden, 20th January 1944, op.cit.; Bland to Eden, 9th March 1943, op.cit.

122. Orde to Eden, 21st February 1944, FO371/43674, W3675/1103/68, and Killearn to Eden, 23rd February 1944, FO371/42674, W3280/1103/68.

more often with the U.K. and that they would support U.K. policy in the Middle East. However, while these were speculations, both men did at least demonstrate a positive attitude towards the Dominions. If neither hope transpired, it would indicate a more serious problem with the relationship.

A rather more politically sensitive suggestion was also put forward by Lord Killearn for Dominion representatives to be attached to U.K. Embassies where the Dominions had no missions themselves.¹²³ It was noted that this had been tried successfully in the case of Mr. Keith Officer's appointment to the U.K. Embassy in Washington; the qualification that "he was an unusually co-operative and 'British' person" was added.¹²⁴ The plan had advantages but assumed a Dominion willingness to accept something which might smack of political subservience. Another possibility was for all despatches from Embassies where there were no Dominion missions to be forwarded to Dominion External Affairs Departments. This was acknowledged to take place to a limited extent, but it was thought that it could be intensified to give the Dominions a fuller appreciation of the U.K.'s policy.¹²⁵ Campbell suggested that the information already sent via the D.O. covered this suggestion and that direct despatch of telegrams would only lead to repetition. This was not a view which the Dominions would have necessarily shared, especially Australia, and in November 1942 and in March 1943 the D.O. had told the F.O. that it thought the information sent should be improved.¹²⁶

There were some proposals for more in-service training of F.O. officials, (lectures and courses while they were stationed in London) and a general encouragement for representatives to visit Dominion capitals

123. Killearn to Eden, 23rd February 1944, *ibid*.

124. Margin comment on Campbell's minute of 22nd March 1944, by Law (?), FO371/42674, W4861/1103/68. (Officer had been appointed in 1937 before Australia established its own mission two years later. See chapter 1, p.)

125. Skrine Stevenson to Eden, 15th January 1944, FO371/42674, W1116/1103/68.

126. Minute by Campbell, 22nd March 1944, FO371/42674, W4861/1103/68,

when they were en route elsewhere, where finance and time permitted, to consult with officials in the External Affairs Departments.¹²⁷ When the F.O. included, under the general heading of visits to the Dominions, the notion that the Head of the D.I.D. should also travel, it met opposition from the D.O. After a meeting between the two Offices, the Assistant Under-Secretary at the D.O., Sir John Stephenson, wrote to Newton confirming that the D.O. did not want it to be a recognised function of the Head of the D.I.D. to pay such visits. Cranborne's Private Secretary explained later that the former was opposed to the idea because he felt the official channel between the F.O. and the Dominions should continue to be the D.O.¹²⁸

From a purely domestic standpoint, various ideas were put forward to educate the British people about the Commonwealth. Lord Killearn stressed the need for a greater awareness of the Commonwealth which would "instill a less insular attitude of mind", and Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, Ambassador at Baghdad, thought the politico-economic importance of the Dominions should be brought home to the British people.¹²⁹ Sir P. Nichols suggested the extension of the curriculum in schools, more arranged tours to the Commonwealth and more contacts between professions and work associations, so that more people could have first

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127. Sir O. O'Malley (U.K. Ambassador to Poland) to Eden, 15th December 1943, FO371/36607, W17625/5467/68, and Draft 'Programme of Contributions from the Foreign Office towards Commonwealth Collaboration', 17th April 1944, FO371/42674, W2571/1103/68.
128. Stephenson to Newton, 29th June 1944 and minute by W. A. W. Clark, (Secretary of State's Private Secretary) to Stephenson, 7th September 1944, DO35/1204, WC75/39. (S. Holmes informed Stephenson that the High Commissioner in Ottawa, MacDonald, was keen that any officials who visited the Dominions should contact the High Commission first. Although all official visitors were supposed to, this had not always happened, apparently sometimes with disastrous results. Holmes did not give any examples of the latter. Holmes to Stephenson, 5th March 1945, *ibid.*)
129. Killearn to Eden, 23rd February 1944, FO371/42674, W3280/1103/68, and Cornwallis to Eden, 6th February 1944, FO371/42674, W2572/1103/68.

hand experience of the Dominions.¹³⁰

Officials also considered proposals for the direct secondment of Dominion diplomats to the F.O. and other Whitehall departments. On the whole representatives advocated short-term secondments of junior officials as a way of keeping Commonwealth policies in tune with each other.¹³¹ Most also suggested an exchange of officers between the F.O. and the Departments of External Affairs as a way of maximising contacts, with the main emphasis on familiarising officials with each other to eradicate suspicion that stemmed from ignorance and misunderstanding.¹³² Here the most radical proposals came from Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, who suggested that each Dominion should post a senior official to the F.O., possibly attached to the P.U.S., who would be in close touch with policy and keep his Government informed of it. He envisaged a reciprocal arrangement with the Dominions. He also advocated the appointment of a junior official to serve in the D.I.D. in conjunction with an official from the D.O., with the former department becoming the official channel of communication between the U.K. and the Dominions in foreign affairs, except in matters of the highest importance, when contact would continue at the Prime Ministerial level. It should be remembered that Hugessen favoured the fusion of the two Offices and also advocated a centralisation of Commonwealth institutions which went beyond any other proposals, and certainly beyond what the Dominions would accept. He admitted that his plans for a supreme Commonwealth

130. Nichols to Eden, 20th January 1944, FO371/42674, W1103/1103/68. He added that direct contact was important because "imagination has never been our strong point". (The D.O. was involved in generally promoting contacts within the Commonwealth, but this task was mostly left to non-governmental bodies. The F.O. does not seem to have taken any positive action in this direction.) See Cranborne's speech November 1943, Chapter 4.

131. This was suggested to Skrine Stevenson, 15th January 1944, FO371/42674, W1116/1103/68; Nichols, 20th January 1944, FO371/42674, W1103/1103/68; Killearn, 23rd February 1944, FO371/42674, W3280/1103/68 and Shuckburgh, 26th January 1944, FO371/42674, W2573/1103/68.

132. Sir R. H. Campbell to Eden, 12th February 1944, FO371/42674, W2571/1103/68, and memorandum from Mr. Adrian Holman (Counsellor at H.M. Legation Teheran) enclosed in despatch from Sir R. Bullard (Minister to Teheran) to Eden, 25th January 1944, FO371/42674, W1912/1103/68.

authority with unified foreign and defence services, a joint economic board and even a Commonwealth Cabinet, were probably not practicable, but he thought secondments were.¹³³

While the original F.O. circular was being studied by Foreign Service representatives an official at South Africa House unofficially raised the question of appointing a South African official to the F.O.'s Reconstruction Department so he could learn about the subject, and the machinery for dealing with it.¹³⁴ Campbell and Greenway for the D.I.D. were keen on the idea, but when it was discussed with the Economic and Reconstruction Department, difficulties arose over security. Too many papers within the department were not suitable to be seen by the Dominions, either because they contained secret material which could not be divulged outside the circle of the Great Powers, or simply because the U.K. would want no other country to see it.¹³⁵ Newton said he appreciated these difficulties, but questioned whether in the long run complete frankness might not be advantageous. He was reluctant to snub this tentative suggestion. The D.O. was informally consulted through Stephenson, and no objection was voiced providing that the official severed all links with his own Government during the period of secondment, a matter already agreed upon in the F.O.¹³⁷ The matter was put to Cadogan, and after reassurances on a number of points from Newton, such as communication between the official and his home department, it was approved providing an official request came from the South African

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133. Knatchbull-Hugessen to Eden, 29th January 1944, FO371/42674, W2369/1103/68. He makes no mention of his ideas on Commonwealth collaboration in his memoirs Diplomat in Peace and War (London, 1949).
134. Minute Campbell, 25th November 1943, FO371/36598, W17543/1091/68. (The South African official was Mr. Sole.)
135. Minutes by Mr. J. G. Ward and Mr. J. E. Coulson of the Economic and Reconstruction Department, 25th November 1943, ibid.
136. Minutes by Newton, 26th November 1943 and 1st December 1943, ibid.
137. Newton to Cadogan, 31st December 1943, FO371/42674, W1211/188/68.

Government. It was left to Mr. Sole, the official who had suggested the scheme, to persuade his own government to take it up.¹³⁸ (The South African Government never officially requested an officer to be attached to the F.O. - nor did any other Dominion Government ever do so.)

Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen's idea of attaching senior Dominion officials was thought to raise more problems. Mr. I. Mallet again raised the problem of security, and Newton did not think the Dominions would find this acceptable, except perhaps Australia. Cadogan was perplexed as to how a plan to attach four senior officials to his office could work. These proposals were deleted from the Programme.¹³⁹

Finally, during the discussion on the posting of F.O. officials to U.K. High Commissions, the D.O. made a suggestion which was incorporated into the F.O.'s Programme. Machtig proposed that a D.O. official be appointed to U.K. Missions where there was multiple Dominion representation. He thought this officer should be of slightly higher rank than F.O. officials at High Commissions, because he would be dealing with Heads of Missions.¹⁴⁰ (A precursor of this had been Mr. S. Holmes' appointment to Washington in 1943).¹⁴¹ The F.O. showed scant enthusiasm. It thought its own officials were capable of liaising with Dominion officials, that the Dominions would prefer to deal directly with F.O. staff, that the Heads of Dominion Missions would wish to communicate only with the Ambassador or his Deputy, and that the appointment would make other countries doubt the independence of the Dominions or suspect that the

138. Minutes by Cadogan, 6th January 1944 and Newton, 25th January 1944, *ibid.*

139. Minute by Mallet, 31st March 1944, F0371/42674, W4861/1103/68; minute by Newton, 17th April 1944 and minute by Cadogan, 23rd April 1944, F0371/42674, W5904/1103/68.

140. Machtig to Newton, 7th December 1943, F0371/36605, W17181/4084/68. (This idea had been suggested by Shuckburgh, but had not been taken up by the F.O., 26th January 1944, F0371/42674, W2574/1103/68.)

141. S. Holmes, although posted in Washington with the rank of Minister, kept in close contact with M. MacDonald at the High Commission in Ottawa, where he had previously been posted, and MacDonald told Machtig how successful he thought Holmes' appointment to Washington had been. MacDonald to Machtig, 16th December 1943, F0371/36605, W17181/4084/68.

Commonwealth was trying to form a united front against them.¹⁴² However, Campbell and Newton did not think that the idea should be dismissed, the former conceding that a junior official could be generally useful and that it would help to develop closer relations with the D.O. Newton thought the F.O. should agree to the idea in principle and reserve its right to decide in each case, as long as it did not restrict contact between the Heads of Missions; the official "is not to lengthen the way between them, but to broaden it."¹⁴³ Newton also thought that agreement would incline the D.O. to be slightly more receptive to the F.O.'s own proposals. The final Programme of Contributions towards Commonwealth Collaboration noted this proposal which had been agreed in principle between officials.¹⁴⁴

After fairly extensive replies from Foreign Service representatives, and substantial discussions between F.O. officials, Greenway suggested that a memorandum containing a summary of the proposals should be submitted to the Cabinet; Law and Cadogan concurred.¹⁴⁵ The F.O. was also keen to have its proposals discussed in some form at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting. The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs had prepared a Cabinet Memorandum on Co-operation within the British Commonwealth. This dealt mainly with high level co-operation, while the F.O.'s, in the words of Newton,

may . . . seem unimpressive but we must build brick by brick and collectively they may amount to a substantial contribution to the improvement of our contacts & collaboration with the Dominions in foreign affairs.¹⁴⁶

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142. Minutes by Mr. Compton (D.I.D.) 17th December 1943; Campbell, 22nd December 1943; and Greenway, 28th December 1943, FO371/36605, W17181/4084/68. (Butler, Head of the North American Department, especially feared American reaction to appearance of a Commonwealth front, 6th January 1944, *ibid*, and Mallet stressed that the Dominions would not welcome such an arrangement, 13th March 1944, FO371/42674, W4861/1103/68.)
143. Minutes by Campbell, 22nd December 1943 and Newton, 5th January 1944, FO371/42674, W17181/4084/68.
144. Circular despatch to H. M. Representatives abroad, with enclosure, from Eden, 3rd October 1944, FO371/42674, W17181/4084/68.
145. Minutes by Greenway, 15th February 1944, Cadogan, 25th February 1944, and Law, 1st March 1944, FO371/42674, W2369/1103/68.
146. Minute by Newton, 28th February 1944, *ibid*. (For discussion of Dominions Secretary memorandum, see chapter 5, pp. 256-258.)

Some officials thought the D.O.'s attitude towards future collaboration too negative, that to expect Curtin and King to fight the subject out between themselves while suggesting few positive measures itself, was inadequate. But Cadogan and Newton both agreed with Cranborne's tactics of putting forward the U.K.'s proposals when divergences between the Dominions had emerged.¹⁴⁷ By the time the F.O.'s memorandum was ready, it was too late to be submitted to the Ministerial Committee which had co-ordinated U.K. preparations for the Prime Ministers' meeting. However, Law, the Minister of State, was a member of the committee and Greenway attended two of the three meetings held in the Spring of 1944. At these meetings the F.O. had an opportunity of commenting on proposals for collaboration, some of which were similar to its own, and raising other subjects. On the 27th April the Cabinet agreed that the F.O.'s paper should be submitted to Cranborne for his consideration.¹⁴⁸

In chapter five the range of issues broached with the Prime Ministers and senior Commonwealth officials is discussed, together with the D.O.'s plans. Stephenson, commenting on the F.O.'s paper, was critical of certain aspects but gave general support to the notion of increased co-operation between the F.O. and Dominion Departments of External Affairs. Machtig thought it a comprehensive memorandum, but advised his Minister that it rather went "off the rails" in some places. He thought the only two points worth discussing with the Prime Ministers were more Dominion liaison officers with the F.O., and secondment of F.O. officials to the Dominions and vice versa. Even these would be better tackled with senior officials rather than their political chiefs.¹⁴⁹ The D.O. was ready to hold discussions with the F.O. but there was a delay until

147. Minutes by Newton, 14th February 1944, Greenway, 11 April 1944 and Jebb, 12th April 1944, FO371/42681, W2162/2145/68. (For further details see chapter 5, pp. 259-260.)

148. Law to Eden, 25th April 1944, FO371/42674, W6723/1103/68; Minutes of D. P. M. Meetings see CAB98/27, and chapter 5, pp. ; War Cabinet Conclusions of 27th April 1944, WM(44)58, CAB65/42.

149. Minute by Stephenson, 3rd May 1944, and Machtig, 6th May 1944, DO35/1204, WC75/39.

the delegations were on the point of leaving the U.K. because Cranborne had been extremely busy with the Prime Ministers' Meeting. Law pressed Cranborne for more positive efforts from the D.O. to convene a meeting. He said that he understood the D.O. had suggested that the proposals should be examined, in conjunction with others on defence collaboration, by a technical committee, but said that he felt this decision could not apply to the F.O.'s proposals as they were not concerned with defence co-operation.¹⁵⁰ Cranborne replied that in his opinion the F.O.'s ideas fell into two categories, those which concerned the internal administration of the U.K. Government, and those which directly affected Dominion Governments. The first should be the subject of departmental discussion, the second be held over for consideration by the proposed Expert Committee. He said that the suggestion for this had come from the Australian Prime Minister and that it was not to be confined to defence subjects; Cranborne preferred therefore that the U.K. should not take the initiative in raising these subjects with Dominion officials during their present visit, but that if they themselves did so, then the F.O. and D.O. should discuss the issues with them.¹⁵¹ The Head of the D.I.D. thought the Expert Committee would confine itself to defence discussion and in fact doubted whether it would ever meet at all, referring to the D.O.'s attitude as "destructive".¹⁵² The two Offices managed to produce a memorandum acceptable to both, which toned down some of the F.O.'s proposals so that the U.K. appeared not to be initiating plans, but indicating the kind of alterations which it would welcome. This revised memorandum was sent to F.O. Missions abroad.¹⁵²

150. Law to Cranborne, 25th May 1944, *ibid.* (Cranborne also had to take care of the additional duties of being Leader of the House of Lords.)

151. Cranborne to Law, 27th May 1944, *ibid.*

152. Minutes by Stephenson, 28th June 1944 and 20th July 1944, *ibid.*
F.O. Circular to H.M. Representatives abroad, 3rd October 1944,
F0371/42674, W12206/1103/68.

Such episodes in relations between the F.O. and D.O. illustrate tensions between the two and began a five year period in which both Offices tried to exert their authority over Commonwealth relations. The D.O. fought a rearguard action in defence of its responsibilities, while the F.O. moved to increase its activity in this sphere. It would be wrong to suggest that either Office placed inter-departmental rivalry above its responsibilities to the Commonwealth; but the situation did not make co-ordination any smoother. Each Office had fairly set views about the other, which hindered collaboration, and the relative standing of the two within the Whitehall hierarchy exacerbated the situation. The F.O. was one of the most weighty Offices of State and in some senses separate from the rest of the Civil Service, with the Head of the latter exercising no control over it. The D.O., on the other hand, was a comparative newcomer and had found it difficult to shake off the impression that it was little more than a post office. The fact that it rarely secured a Minister of the highest reputation did nothing to improve its standing.

While it is not easy to extract quotations from F.O. files to demonstrate the feeling of superiority within the F.O., the papers leave such an impression, not unknown to the D.O. There were those who considered F.O. officials more able to handle relations with Dominion representatives because they could take a more objective attitude and were less preoccupied with constitutional considerations, or simply because of the general calibre of the respective officials.¹⁵³ It could be argued that this reflected a consciousness of their expertise in foreign affairs together with a lack of distinction between relations with the Commonwealth and those with foreign state. However, when the

153. Minute by Wallinger, 2nd August 1943, F0371/36607, W11982/5476/68; Minutes by Mr. T. North Whitehead, 17th April 1941 and Mr. R. T. E. Latham, 16th April 1941, (Officials in The General Department), F0371/26149, A1893/18/45. Mr. Crompton, (a junior official in the D.I.D.) thought F.O. officials were perfectly capable of liaising with Dominion representatives, minute, 17th February 1944, F0371/36605, W17181/4084/68.

F.O. discussed collaboration with the Dominions during the early stages of policy formulation, Jebb expressed a rather derogatory view of the D.O.

I am rather alarmed at leaving to the Dominions Office's discretion the decision on what exactly is suitable for passing on to the Dominions.

and Greenway referred to some "uncontrolled elements" within it. Skrine Stevenson was critical of the D.O., telling his department that it was too similar to the C.O., and there seemed to be a feeling that once the Dominions had demonstrated their increased international status, it was time for relations with them to be handled by a senior, more competent department. Cornwallis commented that as the Dominions had achieved

complete equality of status . . . it is time that the handling of our relations with them and with foreign countries should be coordinated in one department of State charged with the supremely important task of conducting our external affairs.¹⁵⁴

Not all F.O. officials shared this attitude; Newton consistently upheld the rights of the D.O. over Commonwealth relations and seems to have had a rather higher opinion of it than some. Moreover Mr. P. Grey had expressed his opinion that the F.O. did not trust the discretion, or use the advice, of the D.O. enough. Perhaps an indication of the importance F.O. officials and Ministers attached to the D.O. may be derived from comments written about it in their memoirs; these are very sparing.¹⁵⁵

The F.O. possessed a collective confidence which was possibly a reflection of the high standard of entry into it and its continuing recruitment from the social and intellectual elite of the U.K. It

154. Minutes by Jebb, 10th April 1943 and Greenway, 3rd May 1943, FO371/36605, W8107/4084/68; Skrine Stevenson to Eden, 24th January 1944, FO371/42674, W1116/1103/68; Cornwallis to Eden, 6th February 1944, FO371/42674, W2572/1103/68.

155. Minute by Grey, 1st April 1943, FO371/36605, W8107/4084/68. (There are, for example, very few references in The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn (London, 1972) Lord Avon's memoirs devote comparatively little attention to his time at the D.O. (see The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning (London, 1965). The picture is the same for Foreign Service officials such as Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen.

undoubtedly conveyed this to U.K. and Dominion colleagues and both the D.O. and Dominion representatives were sensitive about their own positions. Massey records that generally Dominion Ministers or officials were often too inhibited in their speech and actions when they visited the U.K. and later at San Francisco Evatt, the Australian Minister of External Affairs, complained about the F.O.'s attitude to the Dominions.¹⁵⁶ Garner records that as the D.O. grew apart from the C.O. it developed a closer affinity with the F.O. and "began to shed some of its feelings of inferiority" towards it, indicating that this sentiment had indeed been conveyed. He adds that despite this relations with the F.O. in the 1940s were not wholly harmonious, and quotes a number of patronising comments by Cadogan about the Dominions to indicate this.¹⁵⁷ So many of the F.O.'s suggestions for closer collaboration did affect its role in Commonwealth collaboration and the D.O. was particularly sensitive to any F.O. initiatives which increased this; hence the D.O.'s rejection of the idea that the Head of the D.I.D. should visit Dominion capitals. Garner noted that the D.O. "was ever vigilant" to protect itself against F.O. encroachments.

An incident during inter-departmental discussions illustrates the tension in the relationship. A member of the D.I.D. informally showed a copy of the F.O. original memorandum to Mr. Ritchie of Canada House, which the D.O. only discovered when Ritchie asked for permission to send a copy informally to his government. The D.O., annoyed at this disclosure, agreed, after consulting its representatives in Ottawa, to prevent a garbled version based on memory being sent. The High Commissioner, MacDonald, was reported as thinking it "a grave mistake to have shown the document to Ritchie" and assumed that the D.O. would

156. V. Massey, What's Past is Prologue, (Toronto, 1963), pp. 310-311.

157. Rt Hon Lord Garner, The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968, (London 1971) p. 174.

have left the F.O. "in no doubt as to their views".¹⁵⁸ Subsequently, when the F.O. asked if it could discuss a despatch from Lord Halifax, at the Washington Embassy, on Commonwealth Relations, with Mr. Norman Robertson, Head of the External Affairs Department in Canada, the D.O. said it did not want to give a copy to him even unofficially, though no objection was raised to the F.O.'s doing so, provided the paragraph on the D.O.'s representation in Washington was omitted.¹⁵⁹ This section was a piece on the position of S. Holmes in Washington, which stated that he was not used as the principal contact with Dominion representatives in order to avoid a feeling on the part of the Dominions that they were special, different and not entirely equal to their foreign counterparts. It also noted that this was also to avoid the danger of the D.O. man becoming a shield, rather than a promotor of more contacts between Dominion and F.O. personnel.

S. Holmes wrote to the D.O. about this passage stressing that there was something "special" about the relationship and deploring the tendency to smooth this away to obscurity. He insisted that there was the closest contact between him and Dominion representatives (a fact the memorandum had not denied) and concluded with the comment

If therefore there is anything at all in the idea behind this passage, it surely is that we regard the Dominions as not only 'special' but in some way inferior. It would certainly suggest something inferior about the Dominions Office which nevertheless happens to be the Department through which their Governments have their dealings with the Government of the United Kingdom.¹⁶⁰

This was perhaps a rather stiff reaction. The Washington despatch seems essentially to have pointed out the dangers of antagonising the Dominions and of the D.O. man becoming a barrier to closer consultation generally, a point made by Newton in the more general discussion of D.O. postings to U.K. Missions.¹⁶¹

158. Garner to Costar, 4th February 1944, D035/1204, WC75/23.

159. Minute by Greenway, 16th May 1944, F0371/42674, W6458/1103/68.

160. S. Holmes to Stephenson, 24th April, D035/1204, WC75/23.

161. Minute by Newton, 5th January 1944, F0371/36605, W17181/4084/68.

(see p. 173).

Commenting on the D.O.'s insistence that the paragraph on the position of the D.O. official should be omitted, Greenway described it as "foolish", but part of the D.O.'s policy of "censoring anything which might cause the recipients even to raise an eyebrow". He added that the D.O. had from the start disliked the F.O.'s taking the initiative on Commonwealth collaboration which that office regarded as "poaching" on their preserve. Greenway suggested that the whole memorandum should be shown to Robertson and the other three Heads of External Affairs Departments. "I think we should in fact resist D.O.'s perpetual attempts to censor our communications".¹⁶² It is not clear whether the D.O. made its request as a result of S. Holmes' comments, or because it considered the matter to be a purely domestic one for the U.K. It is also possible that after the F.O.'s original indiscretion, the D.O. was less inclined to be co-operative on such issues. It was Newton who once again came to the defence of the D.O. when he reminded his colleagues that "The D.O. are responsible for our relations with the Dominions so we must accept their views."¹⁶³ The offending passage was not sent to the Canadian Department of External Affairs.¹⁶⁴

The U.K. Embassy at Washington had also received the F.O.'s memorandum on Commonwealth relations and returned two despatches, one which dealt specifically with the position of the Crown and a second more general piece. In his paper which had formed the basis of the F.O.'s memorandum, Campbell had detected a feeling of loyalty "if not to the Crown, at any rate to the Commonwealth idea"¹⁶⁵ but in the memorandum no reference was made to the position of the Crown, and no other reply considered this aspect. Lord Halifax was disturbed at this omission which he thought impaired the balance of any picture of the Commonwealth. He did not doubt the need for improvements in the machinery for co-

162. Minute by Greenway, 16th May 1944, FO371/42674, W6458/1103/68.

163. Minute by Newton, 17th May 1944, ibid.

164. Minutes by Greenway, 26th May 1944 and Newton, 14th June 1944, ibid.

165. Memorandum by Campbell, 22nd July 1943, FO36607/W12262/5467/68.

operation or adaptations to fit increased Dominion independence, but warned against under-estimation of the probably increasing value of the Crown which remained the only effective symbol of unity and common organism.

Its appeal to powerful sentiment and emotions which are not transitory but permanent, invests it with a quality largely independent of the changes and chances of politics. These, however disquieting or reassuring at any particular time, are likely often to be fallacious as indications of the real forces affecting permanent relations.¹⁶⁶

He suggested that since the 1926 report the members' appreciation of the value of the Crown had increased as its meaning had been more fully apprehended. Halifax also referred to M. MacDonald's memorandum of February 1943 in which the High Commissioner had stressed that Dominion links with the Crown should be strengthened, and suggested that the Royal Family should not just go to the Dominions for periodic visits there, but also for periods of residence.¹⁶⁷ Halifax agreed and was convinced that such a practice would "deepen the foundations of loyalty, extend our horizons of Imperial thought, and infuse new strength into our Imperial partnership."

Halifax and MacDonald were senior and important representatives. Halifax had been Viceroy of India and Foreign Secretary; and MacDonald, who stood on excellent terms with Commonwealth Prime Ministers and High Commissioners alike, was not part of the Service, which possibly added weight to his opinions. Both men stressed an aspect of Commonwealth relations about which it was always difficult to be precise. However, few people doubted that the loyalty of the majority of the Dominion people towards the Crown had an effect on the decision of the Dominions to enter the war in 1939. There seems to be no record in the D.O. of any

166. Halifax to Eden, 2nd February 1944, FO371/42674, W2370/1103/68.

167. Memorandum by MacDonald, 23rd February 1943, WP(43)115, CAB66/35.

discussions on this despatch from Halifax, but one could surmise that it would have been in agreement with him. The F.O. paid little attention to this aspect of Commonwealth relations. There was little internal discussion on Halifax's remarks, Newton merely noting that it was an "interesting suggestion" which went beyond the sphere of the F.O. and should be passed on to the D.O.¹⁶⁸ The attitude of most F.O. officials towards treating the Dominions as allies, much like any others, seems to have been reflected in this lack of appreciation of the position of the Crown and the underlying forces of the relationship. Although it could later justify its attitude by pointing to the change in the Crown's position with India's entry into the Commonwealth in 1949, this arrangement did not alter the position of the older Dominions, or the need to appreciate the meaning of the Crown in those countries. Common interests could lead to close alliances but, as Halifax stressed, there was a fickleness to political perceptions of joint interests, whereas the Commonwealth had been founded on a basis which might at times appear less relevant than other factors, but could have a more enduring effect. (The second despatch from the Washington Embassy, which arrived after the F.O.'s programme had been drafted, confirmed rather than supplemented the other discussions. However it does provide an interesting comparison with Lord Halifax's speech in Toronto in January 1944 and will be studied in that connection.)¹⁶⁹

Opinions on Commonwealth collaboration and plans to improve it are difficult to separate into a strictly chronological order, or place into distinct categories. Many aspects mentioned will recur in connection with statements made by Commonwealth leaders and in the talks at the May 1944 Meeting. While emphasis has been given here to the F.O.'s proposals, plans were also being developed in the D.O. These will be given consideration in the context of the 1944 Prime Ministers' Meeting.

168. Minute by Newton, 2nd March 1944, FO371/42674, W2370/1103/68.

169. Halifax to Eden, 14th April 1944, FO371/42674, W6458/1103/68.
See chapter 4, p. 227ff.

Emphasis is placed on the F.O. for two reasons; first because so much time was spent on this subject, not only within the D.I.D. The F.O. would clearly have more contact with the Dominions the more the latter voiced their opinions in world councils; but these papers show that its interest went beyond what might have been expected. The second reason for concentrating on the F.O.'s plans lies in the motive behind its study. The cardinal point is that once the Office appreciated that the Dominions would become increasingly active in world affairs and that the U.K. was likely to have reason to call upon them for support, its objective was to increase the co-operation between members and its own role in this process. The F.O. thought not only of friendlier relations, but of foreign policies closely aligned with that of the U.K. The early acceptance that the Commonwealth was unlikely to become a genuinely corporate body, a posture not necessarily welcome to the U.K., did not distract the F.O. from its task. Rather, it meant that it concentrated on a multitude of schemes "by which the evolution of an Empire foreign policy would be facilitated".¹⁷⁰

170. Minute by Law to Eden, 25th April 1944, F0371/42674, W6723/1103/68.

Chapter FourDominion Views on the Post-War World

By 1943, with eventual victory in sight, Ministers and officials in the Dominions were turning their attention to the future with the expectation that they should contribute towards international planning for the post-war. Dominion plans ranged over the establishment of an international organisation, the international representation of the Commonwealth and the mechanisms of Commonwealth collaboration. Much of the impetus came from the Australian government. Its Prime Minister, Mr. John Curtin, and his Minister for External Affairs, Dr. Herbert Evatt, made a series of statements in 1943 and 1944 about their views on the future. These, together with statements by spokesmen of the other Dominions, provided the background to much of the discussion at the 1944 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting and assisted in informing members of the lines along which the other governments' policies were progressing. In some cases there were clear signs of modifications to proposals, in light of reactions from other members, and as Newton commented in connection with a speech by Lord Halifax in Toronto, it was beneficial for all members to "learn how we respectively feel about such matters".¹ At the same time the major Powers were convening a series of meetings at which decisions were taken which crucially affected the future international environment.

In January 1943 Roosevelt and Churchill had met at Casablanca. Their discussions included the status of the Free French, military strategy in both major theatres of war and the pledge of unconditional surrender as the only basis on which the allies would accept peace with the Axis Powers. (A phrase not included in the communique, but announced

1. Minute by Newton, 2nd February 1944, FO371/38553, AN704/29/45.

by Roosevelt in a press conference.) In August those two leaders met again, this time in Quebec, and in the predominantly bi-lateral discussions which took place they covered the issues of Italian surrender, the second front and Far Eastern strategy, as well as the "tube alloys" project, which pooled the resources of both countries in the research and manufacture of the atomic bomb. Two months later the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. and the U.K. met in Moscow where agreement was reached on important aspects of the post-war world. The Four Power Declaration pledged those governments, and China, to the creation of a general international organisation for the maintenance of peace and security; advisory commissions were agreed for Europe generally and Italy in particular; an independent Austria was accepted by all three; and co-operation on the punishment of war criminals was accepted. Then the leaders of the U.S.A., the U.K. and China met at Cairo. There the Far Eastern settlement was discussed and the communique outlined the territorial terms they would impose on Japan. At the end of the year Roosevelt and Churchill met Stalin at Teheran to consider a great number of issues concerning all theatres of war and many aspects of the peace settlement.²

A number of meetings open to all the allied countries, to discuss issues such as Relief and Rehabilitation, had a bearing on the latter stages of the war as well as the beginning of the peace. One such meeting was the Food and Agricultural conference at Hot Springs in June 1943. All allied countries were invited to send delegates for the purpose of discussing policy which would then be referred back to each Government.³ However, during 1943 and the beginning of 1944 the

2. For fuller details of these conferences see Sir E. L. Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War.

3. For discussions on Hot Springs Conference see H. V. Evatt, Foreign Policy of Australia (speeches) (London, 1945), and J. W. Holmes, The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the search for world order 1943-1957 Vol. 1 (Toronto, 1979), pp. 47-52.

majority of the allies, including the Dominions, had virtually no part in the decisions which were beginning to be made about the peace settlements and the general shape of the post-war organisation. Canada, which played host to the meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt in August 1943, was not exempt from this isolation even on that occasion. The U.K. had considered the role of the Canadian Government, (MacDonald, had written to the D.O. pointing out the delicate position in which King's government would be placed) and it had been suggested that King and his principal military advisers should attend the plenary sessions, while allowing time for bi-lateral U.K.-U.S. discussions. However, Roosevelt had vetoed this, anticipating requests from many other nations to attend if Canada were admitted. Consequently, although Canada and the U.K. held discussions, and King and Roosevelt had a meeting, King and his Chiefs of Staff did not attend any of the main meetings. Canada's participation was confined to King's chairing a press conference with the other two leaders, and entertaining them at two dinners. While Roosevelt was no doubt right to expect other nations to want the right of entry, it is significant that King went to some lengths to assure both leaders that he was not pressing for Canadian participation and was confident that Roosevelt and Churchill would ensure that adequate discussions would be held with the Canadian Staffs. This episode reflects the fact that King never attempted to claim anything like the same influence in the military policy-making of the allies as Menzies or Curtin did.⁴

While the major Powers were meeting separately, the D.O. tried to ensure that the Dominions were kept informed of the U.K.'s policy and the discussions being held. In March 1943 it had initiated discussions with the F.O. to try and ensure that the Dominions were kept abreast of

4. Canadian Documents, Vol. 9, 1942-43, Nos. 234-239 and The Mackenzie King Record pp. 527-560. (See chapter 2, p.94. King's relative unconcern for the higher strategic direction of the war.)

events,⁵ but in the case of top-level meetings, this inevitably meant that it could do little but provide them with information about decisions already agreed upon. The dominance by the major Powers of these early meetings and the scant attention they seemed to pay to the opinions of their lesser allies upset the Dominions, especially Australia, and led them to voice their views publicly. Speeches made by Dominion spokesmen, particularly Australian Ministers, have to be seen against this background.

During the war, as we have seen, Australian governments had pressed the U.K. for a greater share in the decision-making, to which some accommodation had been made by accepting an accredited representative to the U.K. War Cabinet.⁶ In 1941-42 U.K.-Australian relations had reached their lowest point, with added acrimony over the deployment of troops. Coincidentally with this temporary rift in relations, the U.S. entered the war; and while this fact would inevitably have led to close co-operation between Australia and the U.S.A., the state of relations with the U.K. led Australia to concentrate even greater attention on the U.S. than it otherwise might have done. The U.S.A. was a Pacific Power and as the situation in the Far East worsened, Australia had recognised the importance of relations between the two. It had first placed a representative in Washington in 1937, and established its own Mission there in 1939.⁷ In the first two years of the war Menzies had urged Roosevelt to do all he could to assist the allies, especially during the crisis of May - June 1940,⁸ and when Curtin assumed office the Far Eastern situation had further deteriorated, as had Australia's contacts with the U.S., and this was an obvious consequence

5. See chapter 2, p. 105.

6. See chapter 2, pp. 86ff.

7. See chapter 1, p. 415 and M. R. Megan, 'Undiplomatic Channels: Australia's representation in the United States 1918-1939', Historical Studies 1973, Vol. 15, No. 60, pp. 610-630.

8. Australian Documents, Vol. 3, Jan.-June 1940, Nos. 280, 300, 307, 380, 384, 420.

of the U.S.A.'s entry into the war, quite apart from the difficulties with the U.K. Moreover, in addition to a desire to co-operate closely with the U.S.A., Australia felt a need to try to change the tendency of the U.S.A. to regard all the Dominions as mere adjuncts of the U.K., usually addressed through the U.K., (if at all) which was reflected by the fact that until 1943 relations with the Dominions were dealt with by the European Division of the State Department. By December 1941 Curtin was in private contact with Roosevelt, appealing to him for assistance in meeting the defence of Pacific Islands;⁹ then at the end of the month Curtin wrote his article which said how Australia looked to the U.S. for its main support in the Pacific battle. In the following year Australia continued to try and improve its relations with the U.S.A., with Mr. Richard Casey (the Australian Minister in Washington) working hard to put across his Government's policies and an extended visit by Evatt in June 1942.¹⁰

However, Australia did not have a great deal of success in its political initiatives towards the U.S.A. Scope for its participation on the Washington Pacific Council was severely limited by Roosevelt, and Australian officials found it difficult to turn their closer relations with American colleagues to any practical advantage. A close relationship developed between Curtin and General MacArthur, (American Commander in Chief in the Pacific) although some people have argued that this worked to Australia's disadvantage because of Curtin's relinquishment of control of Australia's military forces to MacArthur; but from 1943 onwards there was dissatisfaction over the deployment of Australian troops to ancillary campaigns, and some friction within Australia over the presence of American troops. By March 1943, Curtin was acknowledging that Australia's opposition to America's policies in the Pacific had

9. Curtin to Roosevelt, 13th December 1941, R. J. Bell, Unequal Allies: Australian-American Relations and the Pacific War, (Melbourne, 1977), p. 4.

10. Ibid., pp. 58-63.

largely been ineffective, and in April a Department of External Affairs memorandum was warning the Government of the likelihood of Australia being dominated in the Pacific by the U.S. and in need of some "European counter-weight".¹¹ The lack of consultation over the Four Power Moscow declaration or the Cairo communique on the Far Eastern peace settlement, seemed only to have confirmed to Curtin's Government that the U.S.A. would not allow Australia the representation to which it felt entitled, and that the U.K. was a more reliable ally. Thereafter Australian pronouncements took on a more aggressive attitude towards the U.S.

In the first few months of 1943 Evatt made various references to Australia's continuing desire to play an active role in the South-West Pacific. For instance at a press conference in Washington in April he said it "would have special concern in the economic as well as the strategic arrangements of the Pacific after the war."¹² In August Curtin declared that Australia had already achieved a place of respect within the international community, but that after the war it would be necessary to increase collaboration with Commonwealth countries and other allies.¹³ Curtin followed this by stressing Australia's prominent position in the Pacific and its need for a voice in the decisions taken for that area, making particular reference to the likely economic competition in the Far East and to the problem of bases there.¹⁴

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11. R. J. Bell, op.cit., pp. 135-142; and C. Thorne, Allies of a King: United States, Britain and the War against Japan, 1941-1945, (London, 1978), pp. 364-365. Also John Robertson, 'Australian War Policy, 1939-1945', Historical Studies Vol. 17. No. 69, 1977, pp. 489-504, and C. Thorne, 'MacArthur, Australia and the British, 1942-43', Australian Outlook, April and August 1975, Vol. 29, Nos. 1 & 2.
 12. Speech by Evatt, quoted by Sir R. Cross (U.K. High Commissioner to Australia) in a report to the D.O., 18th February 1944, D035/1993, WR227/21. (Circulated to the War Cabinet on 29th March 1944 as WP(44)169, CAB66/48.
 13. Speech by Curtin, 14th August 1943. See P. N. S. Mansergh, Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs, 1931-1952, Vol. 1, p. 562.
 14. Ministerial statement by Evatt, 'Australia's War Aims', 14th October 1943, H. V. Evatt, Foreign Policy of Australia (speeches), (London, 1945), pp. 135-153.

In October 1943 Evatt made a major policy statement in the Australian House of Representatives in which he prefaced his remarks on the post-war settlement with the comment

Australia's right to take part in all aspects of the post-war settlement being undoubted . . .

and went on to declare Australia's interest in Europe; "the centre of the British Commonwealth"; and its right to a voice in the measures taken to secure a lasting peace there. But the Pacific, especially the South and South-West Pacific, was the prime area of interest for the Australian Government, including the eventual settlement with Japan and the status of all territories within the region. Evatt took up Churchill's suggestion for regional councils, provided they were subordinate to the world organisation, and proclaimed Australia's right to be heard in the decisions affecting the area because of its geographical position and its special knowledge, maintaining it had a contribution to make as well as an interest in the region. He did not conceive of an isolationist role for Australia, emphasising the need to associate any regional bodies with the central world council; he insisted on the need for a general world organisation, denouncing the prospect of a treaty of alliance between the three or four Great Powers. While agreeable to their taking a lead in the organisation, he said it was vital for the smaller states to be brought into the framework of a group of nations determined to give effect to the declared objectives of the United Nations.¹⁴

Curtin and Evatt were determined that Australia should extend its international activity. Traditionally the Australian Labour Party had been extreme in its isolation, unconcerned for, and at times positively opposed to, an active foreign policy. The U.K. High Commissioner, Sir Ronald Cross, told Cranborne of the frequent occasions when Curtin had said it was useless for him to discuss with the U.K. post-war arrangements

until his own Party had modified its position.¹⁵ It might then be assumed that one of the reasons for the statements made by the two men was to impress upon their own followers the need to abandon their isolationism. Certainly in December 1943 Curtin determined to change Labour policy. At the triennial Party conference he appealed to his supporters to jettison their past attitude and support increased collaboration with all Australia's allies within the United Nations. Curtin retained the Commonwealth as the principal vehicle and inspiration for further co-operation, and at the end of the conference proposed two motions; that the evolution of the Commonwealth had exemplified the manner in which autonomous nations could co-operate on matters of mutual interest; that participation in the development of co-operation within the Commonwealth and with nations of the world generally, and Pacific nations in particular, should be subject to the sovereign control of the Australian people, Parliament and Government.¹⁶

Cross described Curtin's speech as the "outstanding feature" of the conference. He reported that Curtin had asked for a free hand in external affairs and had been completely successful in his bid. Although the conference had been private, the Prime Minister had given the full text of his speech to the press who had awarded it an appreciative reception. Cross said that the only dissenting voice had come from Menzies who described the speech as a "complete disappointment", containing nothing which had not been fact for the country or the Commonwealth for years, and criticised Curtin for not travelling abroad more often and for failing to consult with his Commonwealth colleagues. The High Commissioner agreed that there was little novelty in Curtin's speech, but emphasised that its significance lay in being delivered to

15. Cross to Cranborne, 13th January 1944, WP(44)136, CAB66/47.
 16. Speech by Curtin, 14th December 1943, P. N. S. Mansergh, Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs, 1931-1952, Vol. 1, pp. 563-565.

the Labour Party conference and in the reception which it received from those members. Even Menzies agreed that signifying as it did a reversal in Labour policy, the speech was to be welcomed.¹⁷

In addition to these policy statements, Evatt conceived of a more positive demonstration of Australia's intention to make its weight felt in Pacific affairs, while at the same time showing the solidarity of the two antipodean Dominions. Contact between Australia and New Zealand had gradually increased as they each extended their foreign affairs activities. In December 1938, for instance, Mr. Savage, the New Zealand Prime Minister, had contacted the Australian leader, Mr. Lyons, advocating discussions about closer liaison between the two countries, and in March 1939 Lyons confirmed Australia's willingness to exchange information.¹⁸ In July 1940 we find Mr. Peter Fraser, Savage's successor, telling of his views on the Far Eastern situation and stressing the importance he attached to exchanges of view.¹⁹ At this point there was no formal mechanism of consultation, and no interchange of High Commissioners. There was a submission by the Australian Minister for External Affairs, in August 1940 for an interchange of officials with New Zealand, but although this was accepted in principle, it was not implemented.²⁰ The D.O. had the impression that in the early years of the war New Zealand generally took the initiative in seeking co-operation, and New Zealand suggestions in March 1941 for a Council of Ministers or periodic meetings of Ministers were only rather grudgingly taken up in an agreement to form a joint supply committee by Mr. A. Fadden the Acting Prime Ministers. He commented to Menzies who was visiting London that New Zealand had given

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17. *Cross to Cranborne, 13th January 1944, LP (44) 136, CA13 66/47.*
18. Savage to Lyons, 22nd December 1939, Australian Documents Vol. 1, No. 335. Lyons to Savage, 3rd March 1939, Australian Documents Vol. 2, No. 35, and New Zealand Documents Vol. 1, App. 3.
19. Fraser to Menzies, 30th July 1940, Australian Documents Vol. 4, No. 42.
20. Memorandum by Minister of External Affairs, Mr. J. McEwan, 13th August 1940, Australian Documents Vol. 4, No. 71.

the arrangement greater importance than "the circumstances warranted".²¹ The New Zealand official war historian describes how it was common for the two governments to discuss issues before sending their comments to London and how with the accession of Curtin's Labour Government in Australia closer collaboration grew up between two likeminded governments, although this did not always mean an identity of views.²² The two countries exchanged High Commissioners in February 1943. In October 1943 Evatt proposed talks between the two about the future of the Pacific, stating that Australia and New Zealand should be the foundation of the British sphere of influence in the South and South-West Pacific and that the future of both depended upon having a decisive voice in the area.²³ This led to an invitation to a conference at Canberra in January 1944.

With the background of the Moscow Declaration and the Cairo communique, about which Australia had been informed but not consulted, Evatt's initiative to call a conference seems to have stemmed from a desire to ensure the unity of the two countries in pressing their agreed views in London, Washington and elsewhere.²⁴ The announcement of the meeting described it as being for the purpose of preliminary discussions on the South and South-West Pacific before consultations with other Powers. (By this time the Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers had been fixed for May 1944). Evatt was the principal architect of the conference, with the rest of the Australian Cabinet having only a vague idea of what was intended. It had been pointed out that Curtin was only told of Evatt's proposals to produce a formal agreement at a late

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21. Minute by Shannon, 25th January 1944, D035/1991, WR227/16; Australian Government to Mr. Anthony (N.Z. Minister without Portfolio), 4th March 1941, and Fadden to Menzies, 11th April 1941, Australian Documents Vol. 4, Nos. 329 and 398.
22. F. L. W. Wood, The New Zealand People at War: Political and External Affairs, (Wellington, 1971), pp. 310-312.
23. Ibid. and P. Hasluck, The Government and the People Vol. 2. 1942-1945, (Canberra, 1970), p. 479. (For details of the development of Australia and New Zealand External Affairs Department see P. Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness: Australian Foreign Policy 1941-1947, (Melbourne University Press, 1980), pp. 3-16 and op.cit., pp. 304-308.
24. P. Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness, p. 111.

stage when his approval was necessary. From Paul Hasluck's account of events, it appears that Evatt had only envisaged the meeting agreeing to a series of resolutions, but that the day after the conference began, Evatt suggested to his senior officials that a formal agreement should be concluded.²⁵

The New Zealand Delegation received a series of papers prepared by the Australian External Affairs Department, with which they substantially agreed.²⁶ The delegates negotiated a formal agreement which did go beyond the original description of the meeting, not least because it was not confined to Pacific policy, but dealt with more general issues and, like several of Curtin's and Evatt's speeches, stressed the right of the Dominions to representation. Clause seven read:

The two Governments declare that they have vital interests in all preparations for any armistice ending the present hostilities or any part thereof and also in the arrangements subsequent to any such armistice, and agree that their interests should be protected by representation at the highest level on all armistice planning and executive bodies.²⁷

and the agreement proposed a regional defence zone in their area which would be part of a general system of world security. The Governments stressed the "cardinal importance" of their association in the planning and the establishment of this international body which had been heralded by the Moscow Declaration. The agreement did give emphasis to Far Eastern subjects and noted that the wartime construction and use of bases did not afford any territorial rights or claims of sovereignty in peacetime and stated that as interested parties, Australia and New Zealand should be consulted on the disposal of all enemy territories and any change of sovereignty in the Pacific. In addition to the security

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25. T. Reese, 'The Australia-New Zealand Agreement, 1944 and the United States', Journal of Commonwealth and Political Studies, 1966, Vol. 4, pp. 3-15 and P. Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness, p. 112.
26. Reese, op.cit.
27. Text of Australia-New Zealand Agreement 21st January 1944, D035/1214, WR227/11 or H. V. Evatt, Foreign Policy of Australia, pp. 179-188.

zone, the agreement proposed a South Seas Regional Commission to further the welfare and advancement of the native peoples, on which they and other colonial Powers would be represented. With a view to continuing close co-operation between the two governments, machinery for joint collaboration was set up to cover foreign, defence, economic and colonial policy, including the establishment of a joint secretariat. The most ambitious aspect of the agreement was the proposal to convene a conference of all nations with interests in the South and South West Pacific - the U.K., the U.S.A., France, the Netherland and Portugal - in Canberra to discuss the problems of security, post-war development and native welfare. This, together with the Antipodeans' claim to be heard in the general armistice arrangements, does seem to have been specifically directed towards the U.S.A. and its reluctance to take note of Australia's views or allow it to participate in key discussions. Thorne describes the agreement as "clearly directed in the main against United States' high-handedness", and Reese observes that it was a reaction to Australia's concern at U.S. dominance of the Pacific.²⁸

The Australian delegation was the more ambitious in its proposals, with the New Zealand delegation hesitantly agreeing to a formal agreement and toning down some of Australia's suggestions. Fraser informed the U.K. High Commissioner in Wellington, Sir Harold Batterbee, that he was slightly nervous of American reactions, but this had not diminished his resolve to sign the Agreement.²⁹ Fraser was not easily persuaded to act against his will and despite the fact that Evatt seemed to regard New Zealand as a "fruitful seconder of his motions" the New Zealand-Australia relationship did not always work so smoothly for Evatt, because Fraser and Nash (Deputy Prime Minister) held strong

28. C. Thorne, Allies of a Kind, p. 480; and Reese, op.cit.

29. Reese, op.cit.

attitudes.³⁰ New Zealand agreed with the clauses in the agreement, but left to its own devices might not have publicised them in the same way. It was the New Zealand delegations which insisted that a report of the conference should be sent to London in order not to offend the U.K. or those who might fear that the Commonwealth was being undermined.³¹

The U.K. certainly had little advance notice that the two governments were seeking an agreement. Cross told the D.O. that he knew about the meeting from his colleague in New Zealand, Batterbee, only two weeks before it met; when he enquired of the Australian Government he was told that it was for preliminary discussions on local issues. On the third day of the conference, January 19th, Cross saw press reports referring to issues of more general significance and sought a meeting with Curtin, when he was informed that Australia and New Zealand were contemplating signing an agreement.³² On 19th January several messages were exchanged between the D.O. and the High Commission in Canberra about this revelation, with Cross trying to recoup the position by getting Curtin's assurance that Australia would announce that the first objective would be to hold consultations with the U.K., when the agreement was made public. While the Australian and New Zealand Governments did inform the U.K. on 25th January about the details of the agreement (the day it was publicly announced), explaining that they desired to protect their interests in Europe and the Pacific at the highest levels and that they wanted a share in the planning, Curtin neglected to include in his speech the two governments' intention of seeking immediate consultations with the U.K. before holding talks with any other countries. Curtin told Cross that he had overlooked this

30. Batterbee to D.O., 1st February 1944, D035/1214, WR227/10; P. Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness, pp. 109-110.

31. Reese, op.cit.

32. Cross to Cranborne, 27th January 1944, D035/1993, WR227/21.

in the hurried preparation of his speech.³³

In his detailed account, Cross emphasised the lack of information himself and his staff were provided with, and commented:

there has throughout been an atmosphere of secretiveness both on the part of Ministers and officials which must have been a deliberate policy firmly impressed on all concerned.

He thought this had been due to Evatt's

personal desire to burst upon the world with what he regards as a development in British Empire relations and to appear as the author of a foreign policy which was obviously free from overseas influence, an attitude with which the Prime Minister must at a later stage have agreed.

Cross thought it possible that Curtin did not know originally what Evatt was planning; however, it made "immense demands upon one's credulity" to suppose he was as ignorant as he had portrayed.³⁴ This episode makes startling reading as a description of communication between two Commonwealth governments. The explanation may lie partly in relations between the U.K. High Commission and the Australian government. Hasluck says that Australia's omission to inform London about the agreement was "not deliberate", and comments that Cross "was one of the less successful occupants of that post" who saw himself as the "guide and mentor with whom the colonials should seek to have consultations". He adds that with very little exertion Cross could have found out much more than he did and kept his government better informed.³⁵ Two years earlier, when Labour came to power, Cross certainly sent some unusual reports back to London which indicated his conviction that a virulent anti-British campaign was being conducted by Australian Ministers and he advocated stern sanctions in economic matters as a way of forcing Australia to co-operate more fully with Britain. As one historian has commented, Cross' appointment did not help Anglo-Australian

33. Cross to D.O., 19th January 1944; Australian/N.Z. Governments to U.K. 25th January 1944, ibid., and Cross to D.O. 26th January 1944, D035/1989, WR227/12.

34. Cross to D.O., 26th January 1944, D035/1993, WR227/21.

35. Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness, p. 117.

relations.³⁶ No doubt Cross would have received more co-operation during the Australia-New Zealand conference if he had previously established good relations with Ministers and officials.

Cross told the D.O. that he suspected Curtin of knowing more than he had revealed; that Evatt could not have failed to divulge his intentions. We have seen how Evatt decided only on 18th January to ask for an agreement, at which point he did seek Curtin's approval, but the relationship between these two Ministers is interesting. There is evidence to suggest that Curtin was not especially interested in foreign affairs. He certainly did not travel abroad to discuss with other leaders very often, and it was the opinion of the New Zealand delegation to the conference in January 1944 that Curtin was uninterested in most of the discussions and in overseas affairs generally.³⁷

Cross suggested to the D.O. that relations between Curtin and Evatt were not good, that there was a tendency for them each to work in "watertight compartments".³⁸ However, Hasluck thinks that Curtin appreciated Evatt's abilities, while knowing that he needed watching. Nine months before, when Evatt was leaving for the U.K. and the U.S., Curtin seems to have attempted to control Evatt when he advised him against wakening "disfavour by forcible intrusion".³⁹ It is clear in 1943 and afterwards that Evatt was the dominant and initiating force in Australian foreign policy and that Curtin was content to allow this. However, this does not signify any disagreement between the two, or any lack of authority on Curtin's part. It is possible that Curtin used his brilliant, but abrasive, External Affairs Minister as a foil to his own role of honest, solid broker. The Americans tended to hold contrasting views of the two men, generally disliking Evatt,

36. C. Thorne, 'MacArthur, Australia and the British, 1942-1943', Australian Outlook, April and August 1975, Vol. 29, Nos. 1 & 2. (See chapter 2, pp. 112-113.)

37. Batterbee to Cranborne, 9th February 1944, D035/1993, WR227/21.

38. Cross to D.O., 19th January 1944, Prem4, 42/2.

39. Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness, p. 126, and C. Thorne, Allies of a Kind, p. 364.

but holding Curtin in high regard. However, with Evatt's dominance over policy, and his attendance at so many meetings, other countries' views, and especially the U.S.A.'s, on Australian foreign policy became coloured by their personal reactions towards Evatt, which often had an adverse effect on Australia's foreign relations.⁴⁰ At the major post-war meetings to which the smaller Powers were invited, such as the San Francisco Conference, Evatt's style of diplomacy affected the outcome of Australian policy.⁴¹

The Australian-New Zealand Agreement caused a reaction in the U.K. and the U.S.A. For two countries of the international stature of these Dominions to publish a formal agreement on procedures for peace-making and announce their intention to organise a major conference, was running the risk of censure from the Great Powers for sheer arrogance, and a diplomatic snub of the first order. Coming after many speeches by Curtin and Evatt in the same vein, the conference proceedings left little room for confusion as to Australia's ambitions and these were now publicly shared by New Zealand. Cross informed the D.O. that Australia thought that the U.K. conceded too easily to U.S. proposals touching on the Pacific, without first consulting Australia, and he had been given to understand that the claims made for consultation in the Agreement were intended to secure that the U.K. should not acquiesce to any U.S. proposals without prior discussion. He quoted Evatt's attitude as being "it needed saying. You couldn't say it. We could", and that this was a view frequently expressed in Government circles.⁴² There is an element of truth in Australia's claim, as the consequences of a rift in Anglo-American relations would have been far more damaging to the U.K. and the Commonwealth, than U.S.

40. See P. G. Edwards, 'Evatt and the Americans', Historical Studies 1959, Vol. 18, No. 79, pp. 546-560.

41. See chapter 7, p. 347-348.

42. Cross to D.O., 26th January 1944, DO35/1989, WR227/12.

irritation at Australian action, and this view was shared by the Head of the F.O.'s North American Department. Mr. Neville Butler said the Dominions could say things to the U.S. "which it would be most impolitic for London statesmen to say" and said he thought Casey (the Australian Minister in Washington) had been able to speak more plainly in 1940-41 than Lord Lothian or Lord Halifax. He said if the U.K. had issued the agreement it would have provoked angry discussions and possibly have had dangerous consequences for the settlement of Lend-Lease. But he thought there were occasions when it was inevitable that the U.S. should have their way

if only in the major interest of the Prime Minister preserving his very special relations with President Roosevelt, and in the constant need for give and take as between e.g. American interests in Latin America & our own in the Middle East.⁴³

Butler also interpreted the Agreement as a movement away from the U.S., now the fear of invasion had receded, and concern at being too closely associated with the U.S.A.⁴⁴

The U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Cordell Hull, replied to the Australian and New Zealand Governments acknowledging their desire to consult together on issues of common concern but said he was "frankly disturbed" at the suggestion of an early conference. He argued that the war had still to be won and such a meeting would be premature, adding that Roosevelt and he were also worried that a formal conference would be prejudicial to the united war effort:

Such a conference might well arouse suspicions and possibly bring into focus conflicting opinions on matters which do not require decision at this time.⁴⁵

The other reservation entertained by the U.S.A. concerned the proposed regional security zone. It interpreted the Agreement as advocating such a zone before the establishment of a world security system, which it thought could jeopardise the latter. Hull ended with a request that

43. Minute by Butler, 9th February 1944, FO371/42681, W2145/2145/68.

44. Minute by Butler, 5th February 1944, *ibid.*

45. Hull to Curtin and Fraser, 1st February 1944, D035/1990, WR227/15.

the countries took no further action until they had held talks with the President and himself in Washington.

Hull's reply caused no surprise. The Dominions had admitted that the whole exercise had been largely directed against the U.S. and they did not expect it to be enthusiastic. Despite the questionable wisdom of such forthright speaking, Butler for one said that generally the U.S.A respected the tactic of hard trading.⁴⁶ Yet the reaction of the U.S. was not dissimilar to the U.K.'s. Both were irritated by the lack of consultation, although on slightly different accounts, and neither welcomed the prospect of a conference. The Permanent Under-Secretary of the D.O., Sir Eric Machtig, noted his misgivings:

I do not for a moment suppose that the Government here are anxious to take part in a Conference in the Pacific with foreign countries about the Pacific. The Prime Minister's view will probably be that such issues ought to be dealt with here and between him and the President in the first instance.⁴⁷

This, of course, was precisely the view which the two Dominions were trying to counter.

The initial reaction of the D.O. was one of astonishment at the two governments' publication of an agreement of such scope and import. Mr. Boyd Shannon, a Principal at the D.O. who wrote a detailed minute on the agreement, could not hide his amazement. Referring to the claim in clause seven to representation at the highest levels of all armistice planning, he commented that if this meant representation on a level with the Great Powers, it was "absurd". He noted that the demand for a voice in the establishment of the world organisation had also been made by the Canadian Government, but more moderately, and that although the U.K. agreed with the statements about bases, it had not found it necessary to say it "so bluntly". The section on trusteeship would, Shannon thought, appear to the C.O. and the other colonial countries

46. Minute by Butler, 5th February 1944, FO371/42681, W2145/2145/68.

47. Minute by Machtig, 27th January 1944, DO35/1989, WR227/12.

"as an impertinent claim by two very minor countries with a few island dependencies of whose administration they have not made a conspicuous success", and his patience was finally stretched to the limit with the proposal for a conference. He wrote:

the declaration by a small country of an intention to convene a Conference including Major Powers, without first consulting any of the other Governments, is an extraordinary and impudent way of conducting affairs.

Assessing the agreement as a whole for the Deputy Under-Secretary, Sir John Stephenson, Shannon concluded:

But when all allowances have been made it remains a deplorable monument of egregious amateurism in international affairs. It will not, I think, prove helpful to the Commonwealth Government or to Dr. Evatt personally in international affairs. It is too early yet to judge whether it will have any adverse effect on British policy. 48

After submitting a draft to the War Cabinet, Cranborne replied to the two Dominions in a cautious and tactful manner. He did not labour the U.K.'s annoyance at the lack of consultation, but was not enthusiastic about many aspects of the Agreement, stressing the importance of ensuring the success of a general world security system before any local arrangements were concluded, and emphasising the interests of the other Powers.

However, the U.K.'s position was not helped by a conversation between Cadogan and the Counsellor at the U.S. Embassy, Mr. Bucknell. The latter showed Cadogan a copy of Hull's reply and asked for guidance on the U.K.'s attitude. Cadogan told him that although the U.K. had welcomed the agreement, it had doubts about the wisdom of calling a conference, but he was uncertain whether the two Dominions had, or would be, told of these, adding that he could safely tell Bucknell that they existed and that the U.K. saw the matter in the same light as the

48. Notes on Australia-New Zealand Agreement and Minute by Shannon, both of 25th January 1944, DO35/1214, WR227/11.

U.S.⁴⁹ The D.O. was not pleased with Cadogan's remarks which Machtig described as "a little unfortunate". He argued that the War Cabinet had approved the reply given to the Dominions, while the U.S. had been given the impression that the U.K. Government concurred with the U.S. against the two Dominions. Machtig was also worried that the Dominions would hear of the episode and object. Cranborne agreed that the conversation could have been phrased rather better and thought that the almost identical replies to the two Dominions would make them suspicious of collusion. The only option was to stress that there had been no communication with the U.S. Government, as he had already done to Mr. Walter Nash, the visiting New Zealand Minister, and to instruct the U.K.'s High Commissioners to repudiate any suggestions of collusion. Evatt did comment to Cross on the similarity of the replies, stating that it looked as if there had been consultations between the U.K. and the U.S.⁵⁰

If the D.O. did not wish to highlight the similarity between the attitude of the U.S. and itself, neither did the F.O. intend to be pushed by the Dominions into any friction with the U.S.A. Australia's reply to Hull demonstrated no softening of attitude. The suggestion that the New Zealand Government should send an identical reply Fraser turned down as being likely to cause offence.⁵¹ Evatt challenged U.S. objections to Australia's calling an early conference and reasserted its right to be consulted. It did agree to talks in Washington in May, but also mentioned July as a possible date for the conference,⁵² as the Head of the D.I.D., Mr. Greenway, commented, Evatt did not "mince his words".⁵³ Butler warned his colleagues against being drawn

49. Minute by Cadogan, 10th February 1944, FO371/42681, W2483/2145/68.

50. Minutes by Machtig, 14th February 1944, DO35/1990, WR227/15 and Cranborne 18th February 1944, DO35/1991, WR227/16.

51. Batterbee to D.O. 26th February 1944, DO35/1990, WR227/15.

52. Evatt to Hull, 24th February 1944, FO371/42677, W3317/1534/68.

53. Minute by Greenway, 2nd March 1944, ibid.

into an anti-American stance by Evatt "whose intrigues with the Republican Party and general behaviour made him persona-ingratissima to Pres Roosevelt and his Administration". Butler recorded that in 1942 Evatt had acted badly towards Roosevelt and said that since Evatt was clearly the author of the Australia-New Zealand Agreement which had been sprung at such short notice on themselves and the U.S., it would not be necessary to "hasten to support him". Butler obviously did not trust Evatt and seemed to suspect him of calling a conference in order to manoeuvre an alignment of the U.S. and China on one side, and the British Commonwealth on another, a situation to be avoided, or at least deferred.⁵⁴ However, there was no substantial difference in the attitudes of the D.O. and F.O.; rather, their perspectives were different. The D.O. saw the danger that the Dominions might suspect or find evidence of any collusion with the U.S., while the F.O. was more concerned to ensure that the U.K.'s relations with the U.S. were not damaged by the actions of the Dominions. On the whole the conference and the agreement were not prejudicial to the U.K.'s interests. The Cabinet, though regretful at the lack of consultation, thought that the events might be useful, especially the public statement of the Dominions' interest in the defence of the Pacific. Mr. H. O. Clarke, an official in the F.O.'s North American Department, suggested that it was encouraging in terms of the world influence of the Commonwealth, and Butler thought parts of the text had served as a useful reminder to the U.S.A. For its part, the U.S.A. did not suspect the U.K. of using the Dominions to launch an attack on it, but seemed to accept the responsibility of the Dominions. The two Dominion Prime Ministers accepted the offer of talks with the President immediately prior to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, and Shannon commented that the

54. Minutes by Butler, 1st March 1944, F0371/42681, W2762/2145/68, and 2nd March 1944, F0371/42677, W3317/1534/68. (See P. G. Edwards, 'Evatt and the Americans', Historical Studies 1979, Vol. 18, No. 73.)

U.K. could leave "the further disillusionment" of Curtin and Fraser to the Americans.⁵⁵

The Australian and New Zealand Governments had made some positive comments in the agreement which were relevant to the prevailing situation. They knew full well that the major Powers were planning and taking decisions which would affect the peace settlement and they also knew that the smaller allies' help was still required in the final stages of the war. Moreover, if they said nothing until the end of the fighting, a great number of decisions would already have been taken which would prejudice any final settlement about the peace, or the world organisation. These two were upholding the right of the smaller allies to have their views considered and protect their interests before it was too late. Hull's assertion that an early conference could cause unnecessary disunity among the allies was possibly right; but Evatt regarded such a process not as unnecessary, but as the only way of making the U.S. take notice and "avert the grave risk of insufficiently considered decisions which . . . could prejudice a final peace settlement."⁵⁶

Given the worries of the Australian and New Zealand government both as to the scale of the U.S. activity in the Pacific, and the tendency of the major powers to settle outstanding questions without due regard to the views and interests of others, was there any chance of gaining a real voice in the decision-making? Did either Dominion, or both together, have any chance of getting the principles laid down in the agreement put into practice? Politicians and officials of both countries realised that regardless of the justice of their claims, or the amount of noise they made, they were incapable on their own of affecting the decisions to any great degree. But the sentiments

55. Minute by Shannon, 26th February 1944, D035/1991, WR227/16.

56. Evatt to Hull, 24th February 1944, F0371/42677, W3317/1534/68.

expressed by Evatt and Curtin in their public speeches, and in the Agreement with New Zealand, were not wholly expressions of vain aspirations, because they were combined with a scheme for strengthening the unity of the Commonwealth so that individual members would have the power to act with the knowledge that the support and power of the whole organisation was behind it. Many of the changes desired by the Australians were designed to improve collaboration; the result of all the changes was to make the Commonwealth a more cohesive body which had the capacity to be a major force in international affairs.

In contrast to past notions for strengthening the unity of the Commonwealth, Curtin's government did not envisage a tightly-knit corporate body with common policies conceived in London, with the rest of the members playing a supportive role. Nor were there any plans for an Imperial Parliament or Cabinet, and in considering his plans we must keep in mind the second motion Curtin proposed to his party conference; that co-operation within the Commonwealth, with the nations of the world generally, and those of the Pacific in particular, should be subject to the sovereign control of the Australian people, Parliament, and Government.⁵⁷

In his August speech, Curtin followed his commitment to increased collaboration generally with an assertion that some form of Imperial consultation had to be developed:

I do not believe that Britain can manage the Empire on the basis purely of a government sitting in London. I believe some Imperial authority must be evolved so that the British Commonwealth of Nations will have, if not an executive body, at least a standing consultative body.⁵⁸

The progress in communication meant that meetings could be more frequent, it being possible for members to have immediate consultations when an

57. Curtin's motion to the Australian Labour Party Conference, 14th December 1943, P. N. S. Mansergh, Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs, 1931-1952, Vol. 1, pp. 563-565.

58. Curtin speech of 14th August 1943, ibid., p. 562.

urgent matter arose. In September Curtin expanded on his ideas for the post-war Commonwealth. He suggested a Council, on the lines of the Pacific War Council, which would consist of representatives of all members, possibly High Commissioners replaced at times by Ministers which, befitting the equal status of all members, would not confine its meetings to London. To enable this Council to function properly a Secretariat was envisaged consisting of men as expert in the problems of peace as those then advising the councils were in war.

The most detailed outline of Curtin's plans for the Commonwealth was delivered to his party conference, and then issued to the press. To his followers he spoke of the Commonwealth moving into its fourth era where the independent peoples would be associated in a common policy on matters which were of common concern. Once again, no doubt with a mind to his critics elsewhere in the Commonwealth, he stressed that the aim was full and continuous consultation which was consistent with the sovereign control of each government over its policy. Curtin upheld the periodic meetings of Prime Ministers as the principal element of the machinery, for "no one else can speak with the same authority". Ministerial meetings would discuss such questions as trade or communications. In the background to these channels would be accredited representatives of each member to their partners, which Curtin saw as a vital personal link that could supplement the frequent correspondence between them. The High Commissioners could also be ready to represent its government on any specialised committee which considered issues of special Commonwealth interest, such as the Committee of Imperial Defence in London.

These methods of collaboration would involve men already accepted as part of the machinery of Commonwealth co-operation, although the participation of High Commissioners in the sub-committee would have brought a change in their status. The establishment of a Secretariat

to the Imperial Conference was the most novel aspect of his plans. Curtin gave a precise description of its functions. It would consist of officials of all members and be based in London, but move according to the place of meeting.

It would be responsible for seeing to the preparation and presentation of information on subjects to be considered by the Conference from time to time. It would have regard to the completion of action or resubmissions to the Conference. It would provide the Conference with an agency for continuity in its detailed work which is important in view of changes which occur in governments and Prime Ministers.

To reassure those who might fear the creation of a 'super bureaucracy', Curtin added the condition that

The Secretariat would not supersede the present established direct channels of communication between governments though its members would be directly responsible to their respective Ministers.

Thus the Commonwealth was to continue as an association based on inter-governmental co-operation, with no body standing above each national Parliament. The Heads of Government would meet to discuss issues which were of common interest to all and would be supported by a body of officials; but neither the politicians nor the officials would possess any corporate powers, merely the inclination to reach a consensus on policy. Curtin's plans anticipated by some twenty-two years the Commonwealth Secretariat eventually established in 1965. The Australian government hoped that by strengthening the Commonwealth machinery it would not only achieve closer co-operation, but also the elevation of each member's status. As he announced in September 1943:

The place Australia will occupy in the Pacific after the war can never be the same as it was up to 1939 and she must have available the advantage of concerted Empire policy if she is to be a Power to stand for democracy in the South Pacific. Similarly the power of Britain as a force for peace in the future will be strengthened in the world if the firm voice against potential aggressors comes from the Empire, and not merely from London.⁶⁰

Evatt echoed his Prime Minister's conception of the future Commonwealth. He announced to Parliament that membership of the Commonwealth, the

59. Curtin speech of 14th December 1943, *ibid.*, pp. 563-65.

60. Curtin speech of 6th September 1943, *ibid.*, p. 563.

retention of ties of loyalty with the throne, and the affections which united everyone of British kin, were fundamental to Australia's foreign policy. It was because of those basic tenets that his government placed so much emphasis on improving the machinery of consultation, and he referred to Curtin's "positive suggestion" as providing a possible solution to the problem.⁶¹ If Curtin and Evatt agreed on the desirability of improving Commonwealth collaboration, however, it was perhaps strange that the conference with New Zealand was characterised by so singular a lack of consultation with their fellow members. The British High Commissioner in Canberra had not been fully informed of the scope of the subjects to be discussed, and there had been no consultations with either the U.K. or the rest of the Commonwealth before publication.⁶² The Australian Government explained that consistently with their intention to speak more plainly to the U.S. it would have been impossible to have discussed the agreement with the U.K. Such consultations would have embarrassed the U.K. which would have had to ask for modifications in the text.⁶³ This was true, as Butler had realised, and one can assume that consultations with Canada would have seen the same result.

Two distinct strands stand out in the Australian Government's discussion of the post-war world. First, its position as a small power in a region dominated by one of the Great Powers, and second, its membership of the British Commonwealth. The Government's planning was designed to cover both aspects of its foreign identity, as Evatt outlined to Parliament:

61. Evatt speech to House of Representatives, 14th October 1943, H. V. Evatt, Foreign Policy of Australia, p. 148.

62. Batterbee to D.O., 1st February 1944, D035/1214, WR227/10.

63. Cross to D.O., 18th February 1944, D035/1991, WR227/16.

There are two means open for expression of the Australian Governments' views on international affairs. One is by consultation within the British Commonwealth with a view to joint action. The other is by the exercise, where that is thought appropriate, of Australia's distinct international status. Both these means have to be used to ensure that reasonable Australian requirements are satisfied.⁶⁴

There were likely to be occasions for Australian action on an issue which did not concern the rest of the Commonwealth, or only New Zealand, and one would assume from Evatt's statement that it would then utilise its own international position. However, Australia was moving towards a form of Commonwealth unity where, in instances where there was not an issue of common interest, one member could act in a particular region with the knowledge that it possessed the full support of the Commonwealth. Such a conception did not necessarily require any form of joint action. Rather, it became a question of confidence, both within the association and as transmitted to the rest of the world. If this could be achieved the two aspects of Australia's status could be reconciled to some extent, and its external policy made more effective.

With the publication of the agreement, and the ensuing discussions, the scene was set as far as the Australian and New Zealand governments were concerned for the Prime Ministers' conference in May. By their public announcements the two governments had offered the rest of the Commonwealth much food for thought, even if the methods were not universally approved of. The U.K., Canadian and South African governments each had their own views on their individual positions in the post-war world and that of the Commonwealth as the Australian and New Zealand governments found when they arrived in London in May.

Among the Dominion Prime Ministers, Field Marshal Smuts looked to the peace settlements and the arrangements for the post-war world with the degree of objectivity and a disinterestedness befitting a statesman who had contributed so much to the 1919 settlement. Smuts had been

64. Evatt speech to House of Representatives, 14th October 1943, op.cit., p. 147.

more closely connected with the prosecution of the war than the other Dominion leaders and might have been expected to play a significant role in the peace-making, or at least in the formulation of the policy which the U.K. and perhaps the U.S. would follow towards the Russians. He did continue to take a close interest in foreign policy and Mr. Heaton Nicholls recalls that he always made prompt observations on the information he received from the U.K. Government.⁶⁵ Smuts was also keen to contribute towards the planning of the peace. He told Lord Harlech in February 1943 that he anticipated an early end to the war in Europe and expressed his desire to get to London swiftly to participate in the formulation of the post-war world. But by the later stages of the war and the first years of peace Smuts was increasingly pre-occupied by domestic considerations. The Nationalist Party under Malan's leadership was increasing in strength and mounting a fierce challenge on his Government, and there was the interminable issue of the status of Indians in South Africa which took up much of Smuts' time and energy until his fall from office. In 1945 he told an old friend that it was only his sense of duty which would take him to San Francisco, for he was badly needed in South Africa.⁶⁶ Furthermore, by this time Smuts was approaching his mid-seventies, and he seemed to retain his vigour remarkably well.⁶⁷ Though age, the illness of his wife and domestic pre-occupations restricted his participation, he did play an important role at San Francisco and when considering his part in the immediate post-war years it is important to remember that he was the most influential of all the Dominion Prime Ministers, not merely in the U.K., but internationally. His relationship

65. G. Heaton Nicholls, South Africa in My Time (London, 1961), p. 387.
 66. Harlech to Attlee, 1st February 1943, Avon Papers, F0954/4, Dom43/3; Smuts to M. C. Gillett, 4th March 1945. Smuts' Papers, Vol. 6, No. 662.
 67. Minute by Jebb, 19th December 1943, F0371/35443, U6254/1216/70. (He said he detected a note of tiredness in Smuts' speech and a lack of dynamic appeal.)

with Churchill was, in the words of Eden "incomparable", and he was one of few whom Churchill respected intellectually. This esteem was shared by most U.K. Ministers. Eden recorded "there was no man living whose wisdom I respected more"⁶⁸ and Nicholls remarks that after Labour took power, Bevin was "always solicitous of his (Smuts') good opinion and had remarked that he thought Smuts an even greater man than Churchill".⁶⁹

In November 1943 Smuts delivered a speech to the Empire Parliamentary Association. He took that opportunity to voice "certain lines of thought which are running through my mind." They concerned the peace settlement, the alignment of powers after the war, the future of colonies and the questions of race and colour which would be dominant in the future. He warned his audience of the dangers of oversimplifying the problems ahead and trying to find easy solutions, believing that in 1919 the leaders had rushed the peace settlement; if that error were repeated "we shall move to even greater disasters than we have seen in the past." To ensure careful consideration he thought it might be necessary to have a comprehensive armistice and then proceed by investigations and researches over a long period before a final solution was reached.⁷⁰ Eight months earlier, in a letter to his old friend M. C. Gillett, Smuts had bemoaned the fact that in 1919 the leaders had scrapped the vast amount of preparatory work which had been done. "It must not be so again", he said, but feared that it would.⁷¹ He cautioned his audience against simple prescriptions for the Empire's problems of race, colour, culture and civilisation, and said these called for wisdom, humanity and farsightedness, and were only likely to be solved by trying different methods over a period of time.

68. The Eden Memoirs Vol. 2. The Reckoning, p. 350 and p. 68.

69. Nicholls, op.cit., p. 387.

70. Smuts' speech to the Empire Parliamentary Association, 25th November 1943, D035/1205, WF201/12.

71. Smuts to Trygve Lie, 12th November 1942, Smuts' Papers Vol. 6, No. 584.

Smuts was concerned with the question of power and leadership. He referred to the cliches used during the second war; that the democracies were fighting for freedom while the Axis fought for the leadership principle. Such catch-words would not help to secure a safe and stable future, for without leadership freedom was inadequate. Similarly he thought that the experience since 1919 had shown that universality and the avoidance of a Balance of Power did not solve the problem of world security. Idealism had reigned after the previous war and the fundamental question of power had been ignored; Smuts' advice for the coming settlement was for them to continue to provide for freedom and democracy, but also to provide for leadership and power. Unlike other Dominion Prime Ministers Smuts wanted the Great Powers not merely to take a lead, but to dominate certain aspects of the post-war world. He advocated a trinity, the U.K., the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., at the head of the United Nations and responsible in the first instance for maintaining security, a task which would not be affected by those duties resting on the other members of the United Nations. This arrangement would prevent a repetition of the debacle under the League of Nations, where "what was everyone's business in the end proved to be nobody's business". Apart from this alteration to the world organisation, Smuts praised other aspects of the League of Nations and hoped that they would be continued, with an even heavier emphasis on economic factors which were crucial and had tended to be ignored in the past.⁷⁰ A year earlier Smuts had outlined his views on the importance of Great Power leadership to Mr. Trygve Lie, Norway's Foreign Minister. He commented that the presence of a powerful, predatory power in the middle of Europe made the position of all other nations there precarious without a fully effective peace organisation. In the new world organisation it would be necessary for the Great Powers

to take the lead and assume the main burden of responsibility which they had failed to do after 1918. He added

The smaller powers will no doubt welcome this development even if it may appear to affect their technical sovereign rights. The modern developments of war have brought about a far-reaching change in our old-time concepts of neutrality and sovereignty.⁷¹

In London the F.O. had been basing its plans for the future on the primacy of the Four major Powers (including China) and generally agreed with Smuts' point about the need for leadership by them. However, it had made room for representation by other states, not least because of pressure from the D.O., and the Head of the F.O.'s Economic and Reconstruction Department, Jebb, while welcoming Smuts' comment that universality was not the answer to the world's problems, thought it rash to speak in terms of a trinity.⁷² Smuts had suggested to Lie that the smaller powers would welcome the lead of the major ones. The other Dominions did not deny the need for a lead, or that the Great Powers would have to bear the major responsibility for keeping peace, but did not favour the dominance which Smuts seemed to be advocating. Perhaps reflecting the tendency of the other Dominion Prime Ministers to view issues from the point of view of the international status of their own countries, the Canadian reaction to Smuts' speech was disapproving. The U.K. Deputy High Commissioner there, Mr. J. Garner, reported particular hostility to the speech for revealing a mind thinking

in terms of the bad old days of balance of power and betraying a shameless advocacy of machtpolitik for the Great Powers. This is particularly offensive to Canada who had always supported the rights of the smaller powers.⁷³

72. Minute by Jebb, 19th December 1943, F0371/35443, U6254/1816/70.

73. Garner to D.O., 20th January 1944, D035/1205, WF201/12.

Nor was Smuts' plan well received by the opposition in South Africa. In a debate in the next session of Parliament where Malan used parts of the November speech against Smuts, one part of the motion stated that a stable and just peace was impossible by the "domination or so called leadership" of any combination of Great Powers supported by their armed forces. In that debate Smuts countered that Malan's solution meant a recreation of the League and all its inbuilt weaknesses.⁷⁴

One fact determining Smuts' conviction of the necessity for strong leadership was his conception of Europe at the end of the struggle. He thought that the shape of that continent would be drastically altered with three Great Powers disappearing, Germany, Italy and France, perhaps never to emerge again as a force in the world. That left the U.K. and the U.S.S.R. He described the Soviet Union as the "new Colossus", a fact that must be reckoned with "coldly and objectively". He recognised Russia as having the power to dominate Europe, not least because it was likely to be unchecked by Japan in the East, and so being in the position of power which no other European nation had ever achieved. The remaining state in Europe would be the U.K. and despite its achievements during the war and its great moral prestige, it would be weak and poor. The retention of its Empire would continue its world base, but its European position would be weak and crippled. Smuts' picture of the future was therefore an extreme one; on the one side the Great Powers, on the other the small powers, with three major European states and Japan having been reduced to the lower ranks. As to the role of the Great Powers, he rejected an alignment between the U.K. and the U.S. on the grounds that it would be too powerful a combination that would provoke opposition and international enmity. Instead, the three should lead the world together. Although this view

74. Lord Harlech (U.K. High Commissioner in South Africa) to D.O. 25th January 1944, ibid.

of the future seemed to most people to be rather too severe, it was remarkably prescient. By the end of 1945, the situation corresponded quite closely to the vision he had outlined two years earlier.

Having outlined the problems which the U.K. would counter as a result of its war effort, Smuts could not see how it could equal the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and he thought this inequality was a destabilising factor, particularly for Europe. This view led him to suggest his most controversial plan - that the U.K. should strengthen its position by working closely with the small democracies of western Europe. He pointed to the similarities between them and their vulnerability after the war. He assumed they had realised that neutrality and isolation did not work, and that to stand alone in the future would be impossible. Instead, there existed in the form of the Commonwealth a tried and tested organisation, stable and permitting the closest co-operation and mutual security, while also allowing the retention of full sovereign status and all the rights and institutions which went with it. It was for the smaller democracies to decide, but he thought they could help themselves

by helping to create out of closer union with Great Britain a great European State, great not only in its worldwide ramifications, great not only as an Empire and a Commonwealth stretching over all the continents, but great as a power on this Continent, an equal partner with the other Colossi in the leadership of the nations.⁷⁵

Smuts outlined this aspects of his speech more precisely in a separate paper which he sent to Law and Eden. The countries he had in mind were Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Belgium, with the possibility of other western and southern ones entering too. The Commonwealth thus constituted would emphasise "its truly international character", would lose its British complexion and become a real Commonwealth of free nations.⁷⁶

75. Smuts' speech to the Empire Parliamentary Association 25th November 1943, op.cit.

76. Smuts' Paper to Law, 'The New Europe, the New Commonwealth and World Security', 2nd December 1943, F0371/35443, U6263/1816/70.

The F.O. did not agree with his assumptions about Europe's future. Jebb commented on the rashness of supposing that three major states in Europe would disappear and remarked on the often astonishing ability of nations to recuperate. He thought that to lump France with Germany and Italy was "not only a lapse of taste but also probably a mis-statement of fact". The picture of Russia as a Colossus in Europe was an exaggeration, as that country would be weak and exhausted too, and the description of the U.K. was too exaggerated in the opposite direction. Mr. Roberts, Head of the Central Department, minuted that Smuts' remarks about Russia had been regarded by them as a "thinly disguised invitation to this country to prepare to stand up to Russian domination after the war". He thought the whole speech was badly conceived as propaganda to Germany, and had annoyed the French and most other small allies who disliked the references to France.⁷⁷ The F.O.'s repudiation of Smuts' thought on the likely configuration of Europe is extremely revealing. Jebb's notion that it was exaggerated to imagine Russia as a Colossus of Europe and the implied shock of another Head of Department that the U.K. might have to counter Russian domination of Europe after the war, demonstrate a severely limited outlook of possible developments and of the potential strength of the U.S.S.R. After all, these minutes were written only fifteen months before Yalta.⁷⁸

Mr. Neville Butler, Head of the North American Department, objected to Smuts' public statement that France, Germany and Italy would be exhausted, and said it was not good for the U.S. to hear such comments; ~~for that government needed to hear more of the enduring value of Europe.~~ Rather they needed to have the enduring value of Europe brought home to them much more. As to the association of the U.K. and the west European states, Jebb said that he had sympathy for the

77. Minutes by Jebb, 19th December 1943, and Roberts, 22nd December 1943, F0371/35443, U6254/1816/70.

78. For an example of Jebb's optimistic view of the U.K.'s strength after the war, see chapter 3, p. 127.

idea as it would increase the political bargaining power of the U.K. and link its fate decisively with Europe, but he doubted if Smuts had chosen the right time to put forward the idea. Roberts approved only if the association would include France, if it was a natural growth, and if it did not give the impression of dividing Europe into zones of influences.⁷⁹ (On this latter point Smuts had written in his other paper to Law that a group such as he contemplated would not prevent other groupings, or a Council of Europe, which would include the U.S.S.R. and the U.K., plus some other European states, but he thought that the League had shown them that to have only a world organisation was inadequate for keeping peace; less universal and ambitious groups that corresponded to natural affiliations were also needed.⁸⁰

Elsewhere Smuts' plans received varied comments. The Nationalist opposition in South Africa attacked this portion of the speech as well. Malan ridiculed the suggested expansion of the Commonwealth to bolster the U.K.'s position. He thought the central European states should be kept strong as a bulwark to communism, and took up Smuts' description of the U.K.'s weakness after the war as a justification for South Africa's leaving the Commonwealth and becoming an independent republic.⁸¹

Canada interpreted the plan for the Commonwealth, and its position as a balance to the other two major powers, as advocating a single foreign policy and centralised machinery to which it was opposed.⁸² The U.S.A. was puzzled by the speech. According to the U.K. Ambassador it was only the genuine veneration in which Smuts was held that had prevented more criticism. The Americans questioned whether he was advocating a naked Balance of Power that made it imperative for the U.K. to surround

79. Minute by Butler, 26th December 1943, F0371/35443; U6254/1816/70, and minutes by Jebb and Roberts, 19th December 1943 and 22nd December 1943, ibid.

80. Smuts' Paper to Law, 2nd December 1943, op.cit.

81. Harlech to D.O., 25th January 1944, D035/1205, WF201/12.

82. Garner to D.O., 20th January 1944, ibid.

itself with European satellites solely for the purpose of propping itself up against the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Halifax said the U.S. approved of Smuts' rejection of a U.S./U.K. condominium, and he thought it a

useful corrective the view too often taken we come as a suppliant seeking an American Alliance because without it we should be unable to hold our own in a post war world dominated by Russia.

On the other hand the mixture of imperial sentiment and admission of economic weakness were ingredients unlikely to receive sympathy in the U.S. Halifax thought the Americans had only read versions of the speech reproduced there, which were without the section on the Commonwealth and Empire, which had no doubt reduced the criticism voiced in the U.S.A. As to the rest of Smuts' remarks, the absence of any reference to China had been noted, and the French had been offended, but Halifax thought it important that the U.K.'s strong pro-European disposition had been put across, and said it could not have been said so well by anyone else. According to him, Smuts' prestige in the U.S. was second only to that of Churchill's and Smuts' upbringing, personality and general outlook provided an almost perfect embodiment of the American national ideal; a combination of "benign practical wisdom with vision, strength and enterprise of rugged pioneer."⁸³

The other main subject discussed by Smuts was the future of the British Empire. He drew attention to the fact that whereas the Commonwealth was a highly decentralised body, the Empire was exactly the opposite with everything originating from London, and questioned whether this dichotomy could endure. He proposed that the dualism be reduced and the two associations brought closer together. Decentralising from the C.O. in London would mean giving administrative powers to

83. Halifax to F.O., 11th December 1943, ibid.

small units, many of which were in primitive and differing stages of development. To counter this problem Smuts suggested that the situation should be tidied up by combining units, so power could be given to more viable entities. When such a situation had developed he thought the Dominions close to certain colonial groupings could take a greater interest in them, and thereby bring the Commonwealth more closely into contact with the Empire. With this more decentralised association would come the prospect of regional conferences and co-operation, as well as the existing imperial conference, which would create,

in our great worldwide Commonwealth, a new esprit de corps, a common patriotism, and a larger human outlook.⁸⁴

Smuts' colonial plans were thought by Jebb to be largely inspired by South Africa's own desire to annex Swaziland and Basutoland and establish one native policy throughout the country, although he did think there was something to be said for regional groupings of colonies. Roberts was terse in his reaction, stating that the colonial passages were "frankly reactionary and embarrassing".⁸⁵ As was seen from Halifax's letter, the U.S. reports did not carry this section, but in Canada, Garner reported little enthusiasm for sharing colonial responsibilities.⁸⁶ The question of the future of the colonial Empire was discussed at the Prime Ministers' meeting of May 1944.⁸⁷

Despite criticisms of individual passages in Smuts' speech, the general reaction was not wholly unfavourable. Jebb, for instance, thought it contained much "good sense", although some things should

84. Smuts' speech to the Empire Parliamentary Association, 25th November 1943, op.cit.

85. Minute by Jebb, 19th December 1943, and Roberts, 22nd December 1943, F0371/35443, U6254/1816/70.

86. Garner to D.O., 20th January 1944, D035/1205, WF201/12.

87. Smuts was not the only person to raise this issue. Eden had advocated closer association between the Dominions and the Colonies in a speech to the annual conference of the Conservative Party in May 1943, (Times May 31st 1943) and Massey reported to his Government that this issue was frequently being discussed in London. (Massey to Canadian Government, 25th May 1943, MG26, J I, Vol. 346, p. 298439.)

have been left unsaid; "Toute vérité n'est pas bon à dire." Butler thought most of his comments would make healthy reading for the Americans, although Halifax's report had demonstrated interest rather than approval. But there were some who thought it a mistake. Greenway, Head of the D.I.D., thought the good effects were far outweighed by the bad aspects, and he said that echoes were reverberating back "asdic-like", and Roberts also thought it had done more harm than good. Law, (Minister of State at the F.O.) in common with the Dominion High Commissioners, thought that despite everything it might be an advantage that the speech had been delivered. He minuted

I think that everything that Smuts said was wrong, & yet I have a feeling that, in the long run, it may have been a good thing for him to say it. It must be a good thing to make people think.⁸⁸

According to Sir Basil Newton (F.O. Liaison Officer to the High Commissioners) when the matter was discussed with the High Commissions, Massey, with the agreement of his colleagues, had called the speech a valuable contribution to the debate as it would force people to face up to the issues. He felt this even about the doubtful reference to France for if it did cease to be a Great Power then the world should be prepared, and if not, France would act as a spur. He also said that no-one from the U.K. could have made such a blunt speech, and that only Smuts outside the U.K. possessed the detachment and authority to make such an effective pronouncement.⁸⁹ However, in a telegram to his government, Massey described Smuts' reference to France as "lamentable", declaring that it was no time to state that France was gone, possibly throwing it into the arms of Germany in the process. In the same message he also referred to the suggestion that the U.K. be more closely associated with western democracies as unfortunate,

88. Minutes by Jebb, Butler, Greenway, Roberts and Law, December 1943 and January 1944, F0371/35443, U6254/1816/70.

89. Minute by Newton, 30th December 1943, ibid.

saying that the Germans had made much of it in their Dutch propaganda.⁹⁰ Massey makes no reference to Smuts' speech in his diary or his memoirs, but his telegrams to Ottawa reflected official opinion there, as reported by Garner. There is some divergence between his statements at the High Commissioners' meeting at the D.O. and his comments to his own government, but it is possible his reaction to the ~~wide~~SM speech was much the same as Law's, objecting to its particulars, but feeling that it was a positive and useful text to have been given.

The publication of the speech produced a variety of responses, but one important fact is that it was never intended for publication. It was delivered to a private meeting and it was only when M.P.s asked for copies that Smuts' consent for it to be published was requested and given. Thus an address, delivered informally to a group of M.P.s was circulated worldwide, whereas a paper designed for the purpose might not have contained material which Smuts himself had called explosive. The decision to publish was taken by Sir Drummond Shiels and Mr. Amery, Chairman of the U.K. Empire Parliamentary Association, and was not referred to Eden, Cranborne or Stanley. So, as Newton noted, criticisms as to how Smuts' remarks would be accepted abroad, should be directed against the fact of publication, and so to the E.P.A., and not against the speech itself.⁹¹ Another consequence of publication was the speculation that the speech reflected the official attitudes of the U.K. government. Mr. Shinwell asked in the House of Commons whether or not, in view of the fact Smuts was an acting member of the War Cabinet, the speech's references to France reflected the opinion of the Government.⁹² Attlee denied that it was a statement of Government policy, but Greenway for one thought that whatever was said the Russians, French and others would never believe that it was not an officially approved indication of the

90. Massey to Canadian Government, 28th December 1943, MG26, J I, Vol.347, p. 299101.

91. Minute by Newton, 30th December 1943, op.cit.

92. Parliamentary Question by Mr. Shinwell, 7th December 1943, Hansard Vol. 395, Cols. 773-4.

U.K.'s position.⁹³ Smuts, aware of the comment surrounding the publication of the text, was anxious not to embroil the U.K. in any further problems. He had earlier written a paper dealing with particular aspects of his address and this he sent to Law shortly before he left England for his and Eden's perusal, with a note that he had refrained from discussing the subject with them

so that I may not be taken as having in any way committed the Foreign Office or British policy by my Address.⁹⁴

If Smuts tried to reduce the effects of his speech, the F.O. were not so tactful in shielding him from predictable criticisms. The D.O. intervened with considerable spirit when the F.O. were proposing to forward to Smuts the protest of the French Committee. Stephenson, the Assistant Under-Secretary at the D.O., minuted that there was no reason to bother him with "this futile complaint", and his Permanent Under Secretary, Machtig, thought it would be "intolerable" to send it, regretting that the F.O. had been so half-hearted with the French representative Mr. Vienot; a view which the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Mr. P. Emrys-Evans, concurred in. Cranborne informed the F.O. of his strong opposition to the despatch of the protest, a measure which he said would accomplish nothing and only irritate Smuts who would be well aware of the French reaction.⁹⁵

In his November address Smuts did not dwell entirely on Commonwealth matters. Consequently his attitude to future co-operation within that body remained rather uncertain. From his remarks about the Colonial Empire and the Commonwealth it is clear that he did envisage the closest co-operation continuing in the latter association, and he was more specific in answering a question in Parliament the following March. When the Prime Minister declared that in view of the dangerous world they

93. Minute by Greenway, 28th December 1943, FO371/35443, U6254/1816/70.

94. Smuts to Law, 2nd December 1943, FO371/35443, U6283/1816/70.

95. Minutes by Stephenson, 9th December 1943, Machtig 10th December 1943, Emrys-Evans 9th December 1943, and Cranborne 11th December 1943, DO35/1205, WF201/12.

lived in, he was keen to harmonise South Africa's policy with those of its friends. He announced that he was going to London to discuss with the other Commonwealth leaders ways in which they could co-operate together and endorsed King's statement that there should be the closest co-operation within the Commonwealth, declaring that nothing he had said should be construed as meaning anything else. In reply to an interjection, he said that South Africa's friends would not be confined to the other Commonwealth countries and that he desired the closest relations with their neighbours in southern Africa. The prime consideration would be South Africa's interests.⁹⁶

In statements about the arrangements for the post-war world the Australian government had been the first to press for closer co-operation within the Commonwealth. At the same time, Australia sought to reduce the dominance of the leading Powers. In contrast, the South African government was suggesting that the Commonwealth, possibly with an expanded European membership, would provide its leading country with support to enable it to join a triumvirate of Powers which would head a pyramidally organised post-war world. On November 2nd 1943, Lord Cranborne joined the debate on the future of the Commonwealth when he replied to two motions in the House of Lords which related to Curtin's proposals.

In this speech he said that he was concerned to detect in the statements by his fellow Peers the suggestion that the Commonwealth was directed from London, without adequate consultations with the Dominions. He welcomed discussion of the subject and stressed that the association was dynamic and changing, which meant that machinery must adapt to meet new situations. However, he told his Peers that they were under a misapprehension if they thought that except in unusual exigencies of

96. Lord Harlech to D.O., 18th March 1944, D035/1204, WC75/31.

was there was any lack of co-operation with the other members.⁹⁷

Three weeks later, Cranborne addressed an audience at the Guildhall on the subject of "Unity within the Empire". He began by defending the U.K.'s Imperial record towards its Colonies, contrasting it to others' such as Hitler's New Order which had barely survived its creators. The British Empire (and here he was meaning the Colonial Empire and Commonwealth) had lasted because it was based on the concept of one family of nations that included different races, cultures and religions. It was impossible to standardise policy towards the Empire because of the different development of the territories, but the policy pursued with regard to the Dominions in the previous two decades had been vindicated in September 1939. Cranborne explained that the Dominions had appreciated the immensity of the issue and sacrificed everything for the common cause, realising that isolation had been impossible in an association that straddled the globe. Looking to the future of the Commonwealth, Cranborne asked if such unity was possible in peace-time? He told his audience that he had no fears:

They could not expect unanimity in virile communities, but unity of view in important matters was as essential to the world as to the Commonwealth itself.

The essentials for the post-war Commonwealth he defined as a single foreign policy, a coherent scheme of defence and close mutual understanding, not just between governments, but between peoples. He referred to the extensive machinery already in operation, but added that this was not necessarily enough for the future. Cranborne made reference to the "most interesting proposals" put forward by Curtin and others, and said that these must be discussed with the other Prime Ministers as soon as possible. Mentioning another aspect of collaboration, Cranborne suggested that the conferences between the Great Powers (such as the Moscow meeting) had demonstrated the improvement in communications

97. Hansard House of Lords Debates, Vol. 129, Cols. 510-518.

and mobility and that annual meetings of Ministers of External Affairs would not be unpractical. He emphasised that the most crucial component in the Commonwealth was undoubtedly the mutual understanding between the peoples of each country, and that if that was lacking the machinery would be "like a skeleton without flesh and blood". He suggested that migration could promote this understanding, adding that it was unhealthy for the U.K. to be overpopulated and over-industrialised, while the Dominions were the reverse. Another remedy he proposed was improved facilities for travel, so that everyone could be familiar with each other in their own environments.⁹⁸

Cranborne's speeches were imprecise in their details, but his general line of thought is clear; close collaboration without the dominance of the U.K. in, or unanimity of, Commonwealth policy. His views will be studied in the context of the U.K.'s preparation for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting; but one significance of these two speeches lies in the use which Halifax made of them as guidance for his Toronto address of January 1944. Halifax had not only been Viceroy of India and a Minister in every Conservative cabinet since Bonar Law's of 1922, he had been Foreign Secretary at a most critical time in the 1930s and for the first fifteen months of the war. During this period he had had many dealings with Dominion High Commissioners and was well known to most leading Dominion Ministers. He understood the complexities in Dominion thinking and the inter-war problem of Canada and South Africa's refusal to be committed to policy, notwithstanding their wish to be kept closely informed of events. Halifax's 'progressive', liberal attitude towards the Commonwealth is evidence from his term as Viceroy of India. During this difficult time he won the goodwill of Indians, (and the hostility of many British diehards) for his sympathy with Indian aspirations and his Viceroyalty did much

98. Cranborne speech at the Guildhall, 23rd November 1943, The Times, 24th November 1943, p. 2a.

to pave the way for the 1935 Government of India Act. So as an experienced British statesman who had had a long association with the Empire and Commonwealth affairs, Halifax was well qualified to speak on the future of the Commonwealth and made some perceptive comments which tended to be ignored in the wake of some virulent criticism.

Addressing the Toronto Board of Trade on January 24th 1944, Halifax briefly surveyed the development of the Dominions since the Durham report and remarked on the unusual character of the association, resting as it did on principles of unity under a single Head, but still allowing for the sovereign independence of each unit. He considered the position of the Commonwealth in 1939, when the U.K. declared war on Germany, and how although the Dominions had been informed of events, and had had some influence on U.K. policy, they had not been responsible for that policy or committed to it; and indeed Eire had illustrated the freedom of action they enjoyed. He paid tribute to the crucial part the Dominions had played in the war, but questioned whether they should be content with the existing situation:

there is a real danger that, with this experience before our eyes, we may be tempted to conclude that all is for the best in our affairs.

Although the Commonwealth with its allies would win the war, they had not previously managed to save the peace. Halifax declared that the Statute of Westminster had recognised the Dominions' right to equality of status and to complete self-government, but he thought it had left unresolved the problem of equality of function; how to regularise foreign and defence policy. In September 1939 the Dominions had been put in a difficult position:

Either they must confirm a policy which they had had only a partial share in framing, or they must stand aside and see the unity of the Commonwealth broken, perhaps fatally and forever.

The fact most of them did enter the fight had not removed the dilemma which existed because equality of status did not correspond to equality of function. The Dominions were free to do anything they wished but each time there was a crisis in international affairs their predicament was highlighted.

Halifax suggested that there were two ways of overcoming the problem. Either the Dominions would choose the road of national isolation, deciding that their foreign policies would be concerned only with immediate national interests and not reflect an underlying unity of ideal or strive towards unity in action, or they would strengthen and multiply their contacts with the other members of the Commonwealth, so there was great unity of thought and action in all international matters. The former was an old policy which in a shrinking world was difficult to pursue and unlikely to get any easier; but Halifax thought the second alternative did offer a viable future. He argued that the association had twice proved that it was a powerful and beneficent force in the world and that instead of drawing apart the Commonwealth should strengthen its relationship. He rejected the notion that the Commonwealth ought to "retrace our steps along that path that led from the Durham Report to the Statute of Westminster. To do so would be to run counter to the whole course of development in the Commonwealth". The Commonwealth must achieve greater unity in matters of common interest. Acknowledging the obstacles, Halifax suggested that the machinery of consultation should be extended.

Halifax described the Statute of Westminster as a declaration of interdependence as well as one of independence. He thought it was a recognition of the impossibility of existing alone in the twentieth century world, and that in not laying down a rigid formula of co-operation, but by leaving the greatest latitude of behaviour, it left the members to discover that interdependence and independence were not

incompatible concepts, but complementary and necessary to each other. Looking to the future and the predictable dominance of the U.S., the U.S.S.R. and China, Halifax pointed to the impossibility of the U.K. equalling their strength on any criterion. Yet he predicted that after the war western Europe would look to the U.K. as never before for leadership and guidance, so if the U.K. was to play its part it had to have behind it the support which had sustained it through the war.

Not Great Britain only, but the British Commonwealth and Empire must be the fourth power in that group upon which, under Providence, the peace of the world will henceforth depend.

Halifax added that to attain such a position was not a selfish claim on the U.K.'s part, for Commonwealth unity would be a necessary condition of a working partnership with other three major Powers, not an obstacle to it. He ended with the assertion that if the Commonwealth was to play its part in the peace it could only do so if it were "united, vital and coherent". Only then could it hope to achieve the "high purposes to which we are dedicated by the suffering and sacrifice of war".⁹⁹

Halifax's speech combined aspects of Curtin's and Smuts' pronouncements. Like Curtin, he stressed the need for closer consultation between members; but he placed more emphasis on the leadership of the major Powers, as an inevitable development, and agreed with Smuts that it was important for the U.K. to have the backing of the whole Commonwealth, and the support of western Europe, if she were to co-operate equally with the other Great Powers. However, he did not fully support Smuts' vision of Europe's future or the trinity of states taking responsibility for security. Halifax had stressed the independence and equality of the Dominions and it is even clearer from a letter to Eden the following April that he had no sympathy for the notion of a centralised Commonwealth,

99. Halifax speech at Toronto Board of Trade, 24th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.

dominated by the U.K.

Replying to the F.O.'s memorandum on Commonwealth collaboration in foreign affairs,¹⁰⁰ Halifax suggested in April 1944 that the test for the Commonwealth would be

whether membership will . . . enable the component States to pursue the policies, which their respective interests require, with greater freedom, force and effectiveness than if they were not members of the Commonwealth.

This would mean that

subject always to agreement on major lines of policy, members should not be bound always either to consult or to act together, but rather should be free to adapt¹⁰¹ their tactics to the needs of changing circumstances.

As at Toronto, Halifax stressed the importance of consultations, but recognised that it might not always be advantageous for members to take simultaneous action. He also envisaged occasions when it would be appropriate for some, but not all, members to consult together, an important recognition of the flexibility needed within this diverse group of states. Halifax suggested to Eden that the only means of achieving "this interdependent freedom" was to have a minimum of formal machinery and a maximum of close, continuous consultation. (Like Cranborne, Halifax mentioned the benefit of meetings between Ministers responsible for foreign affairs, and the need for permanent co-ordination of Commonwealth defence, and co-ordination of this with United Nations defence. He said that having set up a system during the war, however imperfect, it should be kept and improved upon; a reference to the Washington joint Chiefs of Staff with which as Ambassador Halifax had been closely involved.)

Like the F.O.'s North American Department, and again drawing upon experience in Washington, Halifax favoured closer relations between all members of the Commonwealth and the U.S.A., echoing Evatt's remarks when he suggested

100. See chapter 3, pp. 181-182.

101. Halifax to Eden, 14th April 1944, FO371/42674, W6458/1103/68.

on many subjects representatives of the Dominions can speak to the United States with more acceptance than those of the United Kingdom.¹⁰²

He rejected the view that the Commonwealth would be weakened by multiple contacts with the U.S.A., and stressed that the U.K. should not expect its partners to always follow a lead from an Anglo-American combination.

Above all, Halifax took a very positive attitude towards the future.

He told Eden that it was wrong to talk of "preserving" the Commonwealth

"as if it were a venerable but hoary building which has to be shored and buttressed", adding that this was especially so in conversations

with the Americans who responded best to self-assurance. Secondly,

we must once and for all forget in thought, and abandon in action, any lingering tendency to assume that the States members of the Commonwealth are in any way less than equal, or that the United Kingdom should consider herself as coming first or as inherently entitled to leadership.¹⁰³

This statement demonstrates conclusively Halifax's acceptance of the equality and independence of the Dominions. He had emphasised in Toronto that the Commonwealth should not retrace its steps away from the Statute of Westminster, and it is clear that his desire for closer collaboration did not involve any centralising restrictions on the individual members. It is perhaps unfortunate that Halifax had not included such sentiments more explicitly in his Canadian speech, as this might have forestalled the considerable opposition aroused by the address. The Canadian public and government misinterpreted Halifax's views, perhaps because of his references to the Dominions' supporting the U.K. as a Great Power.

King's reaction to the first reports of the speech was to be "simply dumbfounded",¹⁰⁴ and he and his government objected to the speech on several grounds. First impressions in Ottawa, seemingly gained from press headlines and frantic telephone calls, were that the main theme

102. For Evatt's comments see chapter 4, p. 199.

103. Halifax to Eden, 14th April 1944, *op.cit.*

104. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944, and Mackenzie King Record pp.637-8.

of the speech was imperial centralisation, and there was a feeling of outrage that the U.K. Ambassador to the U.S. should have made such a speech in Canada, let alone in Toronto. To the Earl of Athlone, the Governor-General of Canada, King expressed his incredulity that Halifax should have come to Canada and, without a word to him, made a speech "which raised the most controversial issue we had".¹⁰⁵ As Massey was told by his department, the speech was made without prior consultation with any Canadian authority and was

already causing serious domestic political difficulties and it was in our view most inopportune.¹⁰⁶

Massey wrote in his diary for that day that he thought the speech would cause trouble and the next day he explained to the Dominions Secretary the sensitivity of these issues in Canadian party politics, the likelihood that the speech would be construed as an official statement by the U.K. Government and as an attempt to influence Canadian policy. He added that Halifax's position as ambassador to the U.S. and member of the War Cabinet was likely to give credence to this view.¹⁰⁷

The intensity of King's reaction is shown clearly by his diary:

it seemed such a complete bolt out of the blue, like a conspiracy on the part of imperialists to win their own victory in the middle of the war. I could not but feel that Halifax's work was all part of a plan which had been worked out with Churchill to take advantage of the war to try and bring about this development of centralization of makings of policy in London.¹⁰⁸

If the Canadians did have one issue upon which they tended to react irrationally and in an extreme fashion, it was over any hint that a centralised Commonwealth should be run from London, and especially if such sentiments were voiced by a member of the Conservative Party. King always attached great importance to party labels, allowing for little variation in attitude within a party, or over a span of years.

105. Ibid.

106. Secretary of State for External Affairs to Massey, 25th January 1944, MG26, J I, Vol. 366, p. 317471.

107. Massey Diary, 25th January 1944.

108. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944, and Mackenzie King Record, p. 637.

Thus, in his diary he refers to the Byng incident of 1926 and quoted Asquith's remark about English Tories who possessed "the tranquil consciousness of effortless superiority" that made them so intolerable to others.¹⁰⁹ There were some extreme diehards in the Conservative Party and Churchill was not its most liberal member when it came to Empire and Commonwealth affairs. However he recognised the independence of the Dominion's policy and Halifax could certainly not be classified as a 'Tory Imperialist'.

King did have some reason to be worried about the Canadian domestic political reaction. The role of Canada in the Commonwealth was an issue of party politics in Canada, and one capable of dividing French and English Canadians. The one basic tenet of King's leadership, especially during the war, was to keep Canada united and while on some occasions he might have used this situation to avoid awkward decisions, it was a sincere and necessary basis for his policy. The Progressive-Conservative Premier of Ontario was Colonel Drew, a particularly outspoken critic of King's Government, and the Deputy U.K. High Commissioner, Sir P. Duff told the D.O. that the more Drew managed to use Halifax's speech to fuel his attack on the Government, the more the rest of Canada would interpret the speech as an attempt by the U.K. to influence opinion behind the back of King's Government. Duff confirmed Massey's comments that Halifax's position in the War Cabinet would lend weight to those who were convinced that it was an official statement of policy, and as such an unwarranted interference in Canadian affairs.¹¹⁰ In a subsequent telegram reporting press reactions, the D.O. was told that the importance of the critical comments should not be underestimated as Canadian nationalist opinion was very "touchy" after the speeches by Smuts and Curtin, and suspicious of appeals to unity.¹¹¹

109. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944.

110. Duff to D.O., 25th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.

111. Duff to D.U., 27th January 1944, ibid.

A further entry in King's diary noted the progression of events; Smuts' speech, Casey's appointment first to the Middle East and then to India and the fact that the London newspapers all had editorials prepared for the following morning; on which he commented "The whole thing, a complete frame-up".¹¹² The High Commission in Ottawa also reported on 27th January that the Progressive-Conservatives had begun a strong attack on the Government and that the likelihood of an election during that had heated the issue.¹¹³

Stemming from King's anger that such a hornet's nest had been aroused was his annoyance and hurt that Halifax should have been responsible. Although King and Halifax do not seem to have been particularly close acquaintances, they had known each other for a great number of years in the course of their political careers and Halifax was highly respected in Canada, especially by the French Canadians.¹¹⁴ MacDonald, the U.K. High Commissioner, reassured King that Halifax would not intentionally do anything to injure him politically, and told King of the high regard in which Halifax held him, quoting Halifax's praise of the Prime Minister in the speech. King was predictably flattered by the remarks, and admitted that he could not accuse Halifax of deliberately trying to undermine his Government; however, he still thought it all reflected a "Tory attitude of mind".¹¹⁵ In an attempt to understand the reason for Halifax's action, King suggested to MacDonald that it had been a subject which Halifax had been considering for many years and probably thought he was handling in a philosophical manner. But King thought

112. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944.

113. Duff to D.O., 27th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.

114. U.K. High Commission to D.O., 27th January 1944, ibid.

115. King Diary Vol. XII, 26th January 1944, and MacDonald to D.O., 28th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9. (The U.K.'s copy of the speech from the British Information Service did not include Halifax's personal remarks about King.)

it was a case of a philosopher building his city of God - working out the ultimate way of ruling the world without any political sense as to what effect his statement would have on existing conditions.¹¹⁶

King's reaction was extreme, but not greatly different from that of his colleagues (according to his own account). He records that when he met his Cabinet, Ministers and officials were incensed, uttering remarks such as "no worse treatment could have been meted out to anyone", and "Halifax had shown how unfit he was as an Ambassador". The Head of the External Affairs Department, Mr. Norman Robertson, and the Head of the P.M.'s Office, Mr. Arnold Heeney, were both said to be "appallingly depressed".¹¹⁷ Duff told the D.O. that although officials in External Affairs might personally agree that close scrutiny of the speech revealed no sinister meaning, large sections of the press would interpret it differently; hence the Government's annoyance.¹¹⁸

Halifax was inevitably taken aback at such reactions to his speech. Apart from the mis-interpretations of his words, he does not seem to have anticipated that to speak on Commonwealth relations in what was considered to be a traditional stronghold of the Canadian Opposition, would be contentious. He had not consulted the Canadian Government about the speech, believing it to be uncontroversial, and the only indication he had given was in a conversation with the Canadian Ambassador in Washington, Mr. McCarthy. Halifax asked the latter to suggest a theme, and McCarthy had proposed that of unity, but the Canadian Ambassador assured King that they had never discussed the subject again.¹¹⁹ Nor did Halifax communicate with the U.K. High Commission about the content of his speech, but this would have been unusual unless he had been concerned that he might be broaching sensitive ground. (MacDonald was in fact away at the time, and did

116. King Diary Vol. XII, 26th January 1944.

117. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944.

118. Duff to D.O., 25th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.

119. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944. (When King first rang McCarthy the latter said he had known nothing about the speech, as the Mackenzie King Record shows. However, later McCarthy rang King back to tell him of this one conversation.)

not return until the morning after the speech.)

Although speaking in Toronto, and naturally stressing the Canadian aspect, Halifax's speech was concerned with the general theme of Commonwealth relations. In the previous four months Curtin, Smuts and Cranborne had all spoken on the subject. Halifax obviously assumed that it was a perfectly safe topic. However, his speech made a far greater impact in Canada than the others by being delivered in that country. Halifax later told Eden of his distress that any words of his should have caused his government embarrassment (by being interpreted as an official statement), and assured Eden that he had no intention of making "exciting" speeches. He also explained to Eden that he thought he had kept well within the bounds of Cranborne's speech the previous November at the Guildhall, not an unreasonable comment.¹²⁰ Halifax had also written earlier to Cranborne to express his regret, and had sent a personal note to King, apologising for any difficulties he had caused him. This reached King at the same time as a mollifying one from Churchill, and MacDonald reported that both had an excellent effect.¹²¹

King's suspicions about the U.K.'s intentions had been fuelled by the publication of the speech, and editorial comment, in the U.K. press. This also produced some consternation in the U.K. as the D.O. and F.O. were unprepared for the speech. It turned out that Halifax had sent a copy a few days in advance through the British Information Service in New York, so that the press could carry the speech, but neither the D.I.D. nor the D.O. had received the text. Apparently the Ministry of Information (M.O.I.) was sent a copy and contacted an official at the D.O., but without indicating that anything out of the ordinary was to be said.¹²² The F.O.'s News Department had received

120. Halifax to Eden, 21st February 1944, F0371/38553, AN704/29/45.

121. MacDonald to D.O., 28th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.

122. Minute by Stephenson, 27th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9 and minute by Nevil Butler, 2nd February 1944, F0371/38553, AN704/29/45.

a copy, but did not pass it to the D.I.D. or the D.O.¹²³ A gap in the U.K.'s screening processes had meant that the U.K. Government were not able to forestall the crisis; however, it must be questionable whether anyone would have taken steps to alter or stop Halifax's speech.

After the fuss had died down and King himself was calmer, the speech was studied more carefully. There remained major differences between Canada's viewpoint and that adumbrated by Halifax. On the question of greater co-ordination of policy, King told MacDonalld that he saw the only consequence being the derogation of the Dominions' sovereignty and MacDonalld was unable to persuade him otherwise, despite quoting from Halifax that the only basis of co-operation had to be the preservation of each's sovereign independence.¹²⁴ The Canadian government chiefly opposed not Halifax's actual words but the 'scheme'. An External Affairs paper on the speech said any centralisation would be a reversal of the previous decades, while there could be no "equality of function" unless responsible government was to be abandoned or each country had a power of veto over the others. The first alternative was "taxation without representation" and the second the "complete absence of dependable 'Power'", which was not what Halifax was envisaging; in fact totally opposite to it.¹²⁵ In a paper drafted by Mr. Hume Wrong before Halifax's speech, it had been argued that a common policy was impracticable. What would happen if one Parliament rejected the policy? Would sanctions or expulsion follow? Could no policy be pursued which did not have the unanimous support of all? It also questioned the criteria for deciding which policies should be 'common', and which not, and whether the issues which made up Canada's foreign policy to the U.S. should be submitted for the approval of the

123. Minute by Mclachlin, 27th January 1944, D.O. 35/1204, NC 75/7.

124. MacDonalld to D.O., 27th January 1944, *ibid.*

125. Paper entitled 'Lord Halifax', no date or authorship, MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, pp. C.160231-160236.

others. The Canadian policy-makers did not consider any formal common policy workable.¹²⁶ These criticisms are difficult to refute, except by noting that when close co-ordination is seen as vital, either in war or peace, nations have managed to circumvent the difficulties, or at least have considered the sacrifices in terms of their sovereign rights worth the benefits gained. This was so during the war and also afterwards in associations such as N.A.T.O. and the E.E.C.

King was disinclined to discuss the subject before the end of the war and when MacDonald told him that it would almost certainly be raised at the Prime Ministers' meeting in May, King said he was concerned that this would lead to disagreement. He thought the meeting should be confined to issues connected with winning the war, and that co-operation was working well enough and would continue to develop satisfactorily providing they did not accept too many precise definitions and seek too perfect unanimity.¹²⁷ Wrong, in his draft paper echoed this:

The Commonwealth contains many parliaments and many cabinets each of which is responsible to its own people for the conduct of their affairs. To impose rigidity on its methods of operation is to invite disruption.¹²⁸

The Canadian Government did not object to any schemes for closer unity simply because it preferred a loose-knit arrangement; it also feared the consequences of such moves, convinced that it would wreck the association. This explains King's diary entry for 31st January which, if rather histrionic, expresses this view.

I saw again that it has fallen to my lot to have to make the most difficult of all fights. This perpetual struggle to save the Empire despite all that Tories policies will do - by fighting the Tories, save the British Empire from its dismemberment through its own policies.¹²⁹

126. Draft paper by Wrong "Intra Commonwealth Relations" pre 24th January 1944, MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, pp. C.160263-160272.

127. MacDonald to D.O., 28th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.

128. Draft paper by Wrong, *op.cit.*

129. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944, and Mackenzie King Record, p. 637.

In his speech to Parliament King reiterated the satisfaction of the Canadian Government with the existing machinery of consultation, and questioned the need for more collaboration, maintaining that every topic could be, and was, discussed between members.¹³⁰ Yet the Canadian Government's requirement for collaboration and co-ordination of policy during the war was significantly less than Australia's. King was satisfied with the existing machinery because he did not want the degree of collaboration which others favoured. Canada did not desire levels of co-ordination which Curtin, and to some extent the U.K., did. This divergence in the basic objective, rather than the means to achieve it, was always bound to engender serious differences, as the May 1944 Prime Ministers' meeting showed.

The Canadian government had some reason to be optimistic about that meeting because it identified a change in Australia's attitude towards the Commonwealth compared with the 1930s, and also some mellowing of Curtin's view in the months before the meeting. There had been comparatively little public comment in Canada on Curtin's proposals, especially those of August and September 1943. From correspondence between Robertson and Massey it seems that this was due to the press' preoccupation with the Quebec Conference. Garner also commented how surprising it was in light of the muted reaction to Curtin's proposals that Smuts' speech had aroused so much publicity and criticism.¹³¹ Mr. Davis, the Canadian High Commissioner to Australia, commented on the underlying motives behind Australia's plans. He suggested that Australia's attitude towards the U.K. was no longer one of subservience, as it had been before the war. Rather, the Australian government felt that its future was inextricably tied

130. MacDonald to D.O., 1st April 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.

131. Garner to D.O., 20th January 1944, D035/1205, WF201/12.

up with the U.K.'s and in order for its interests to be properly considered, wanted more involvement in decision-making. Closer consultation was considered the best way of protecting its own position.¹³² It is significant that Canadians appreciated that Australia was determined not to lose its independence, even though Canada's attitude was very different; if Canada had assumed that Australian subservience of the pre-war years still remained, any talks would have been virtually impossible.

An official in External Affairs detected a change in Curtin's policy in his December speech, and one for the better from Canada's point of view. Mr. John Holmes minuted that Curtin's stress on the consultative nature of the machinery he proposed; the need for governments to retain control of policy; the fact that the Council would be merely one item in a variety of methods of co-operation and one which would have no executive capacity, making it a less revolutionary proposal; and finally the emphasis placed on common interests of the Commonwealth and United Nations, which avoided any implication of an Empire bloc, made these proposals more palatable.¹³³ Given the close relationship with the U.S.A., the last factor held considerable importance for Canada. King had always been opposed to the Commonwealth's acting too much as a bloc and one official summed-up his attitude when he rejected any attempt to make a "synthetic great power" out of the Commonwealth. This would arouse suspicion and resentment among others, could lead to conditions which might result in another war, and was anyway unpractical.¹³⁴ Wrong described the Commonwealth as

132. Davis to Robertson, 17th March 1944, MG26, J 4, Vol. 248, File 2564, pp. C.166585-166586.

133. Notes on Curtin's speech to the Australian Labour Party, December 1943, by Holmes, MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, pp. C.160249-160251.

134. Paper entitled 'Lord Halifax', no date or authorship, MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, p.C.160233.

an "entente cordiale" and a tough and enduring one, but added that each member should be ready to co-operate in an unexclusive manner with all likeminded nations. The entente was not a closed circle.¹³⁵ Many Canadian commentators assumed that Halifax had implied, by his reference to the British Commonwealth as the fourth Great Power, that the Dominions should side with the U.K. against the U.S.A., and this was particularly criticised. In fact it is clear from Halifax's letter to Eden that he favoured the closest relations within the English-speaking world.¹³⁶

Finally, one point which Canada did share with Australia, but not with South Africa or the U.K., was its attitude towards the role of the Great Powers. In a draft prepared for King, the thesis that peace depended on the Great Powers' being equal in strength, or that the U.K. would need buttressing by the Dominions was challenged. There should be co-operation between likeminded nations and the establishment of a preponderance of power on the side of peace, not a balance between three or four Great Powers. It would be best to

aim at the necessary superiority of power by creating an effective international system inside which the co-operation of all peace-loving countries is freely sought and given

Halifax's proposal that Canada's first commitment should be to a common policy framed and executed by all governments of the Commonwealth ran counter to this and was therefore not in the true interests of the association.¹³⁷

For all the opposition to Halifax's speech, and King's personal anger, the Canadian government's public reaction was very moderate and restrained. King told his Cabinet that he would address Parliament

135. Draft paper by Wrong "Intra Commonwealth Relations", pre 24th January 1944, MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, pp. C.160270-160271.

136. See p.230. (MacDonald also thought that this was the one fault of Halifax's speech. MacDonald to Cranborne, 12th February 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.)

137. External Affairs, paper, no title, date or authorship, MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, pp. C.160226-160229.

on the 31st January, and that he would not speak to the press before then.¹³⁸ He told MacDonald that he had considered cabling Churchill to complain, but had decided not to, and assured MacDonald that he was determined not to make the situation any more difficult while the war was raging.¹³⁹ The messages from Churchill and Halifax obviously calmed King down and he told the High Commissioner that he would try and restrain others and make an uncontroversial speech himself.¹⁴⁰ In his statement in the House of Commons, King began by supporting the policy of full co-operation within the Commonwealth; he then announced that he would not attempt to interpret Halifax's view, emphasising that it had been a personal statement on a subject close to Halifax's heart and that many aspects of it had been misunderstood. He did add that he thought it unfortunate that the speech had been delivered at that time.¹⁴¹ King could have made more political capital out of this event. His diary shows that he even considered dissolving Parliament, commenting that Halifax's words would have ensured the Liberals' return at the polls.¹⁴² However, he abided by his resolution not to raise contentious matters during the war.

MacDonald's reaction to Halifax's speech is unclear, because King's record of his attitude does not accord with his own comments to the D.O. According to King's diary, when they met on 25th January

Malcolm was quite frank in saying he deplored the whole business. He went on to say that it was difficult not to believe it was all part of some carrying on of Tory Imperialist policy of which Churchill's talk about Empire and Commonwealth, etc. was part.

King also records MacDonald's denial that Halifax would do anything

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138. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944.
 139. King Diary Vol. XII, 26th January 1944; Mackenzie King Record pp. 638-9; and MacDonald to D.O., 27th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.
 140. MacDonald to D.O., 28th January 1944, ibid., and King Diary, Vol. XII, 29th January 1944.
 141. MacDonald to D.O., 1st February 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.
 142. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944, and Mackenzie King Record, p. 637.

to undermine his government.¹⁴³ MacDonald did attempt to explain to the D.O. the Canadian reaction, but he commented that the speech had "quite unwarrantably" put King into one of his worst moods, and led him to talk of imperialist plots and fighting elections, which was very disappointing.

It indicates that Canadian politicians are still capable of moods in which they do not do themselves justice as leaders of a mature democratic nation. The real thing which bedevils such situations as this is the bitterness of party politics here.¹⁴⁴

The reliability of King's diary must be questioned here, especially as the language which he attributes to MacDonald is so similar to his own. It is likely that seeing King's nervous irritability, MacDonald did express some sympathy with his views, waiting until later, when he knew he would have calmed down, to attempt a serious discussion with him about the speech, as he tried to do on the 27th January.¹⁴⁵ Looking to the future, MacDonald cautioned the D.O. from being too annoyed and apprehensive about Canada's attitude. He was sure that Canada would work with the U.K. and the rest of the Commonwealth, providing the U.K. did not create too many difficulties by doing or saying things which upset responsible Canadian opinion or suggested an infringement of national sovereignty.¹⁴⁶

The first reaction of the D.O. had been to tell MacDonald to make it clear that the speech had not been authorised by the Government, and that Halifax had been doing no more than Cranborne himself had done at the Guildhall, which was to underline some obvious considerations affecting Commonwealth relations which seemed to call for study after Curtin's statements. Cranborne stressed that there had never been any question of the U.K.'s pressing a particular view; it had always been considered an issue to be discussed by all members.¹⁴⁷ Beyond this

143. King Diary Vol. XII, 25th January 1944.

144. MacDonald to D.O., 27th January 1944, D035/1204, WC75/9.

145. Ibid.

146. MacDonald to Cranborne, 12th February 1944, ibid.

147. Cranborne to MacDonald, 27th January 1944, ibid.

comparison with Cranborne's speech, there is little indication in the D.O. files of the attitude of its staff to the content of the speech. Its main concern was to reduce the effects of Halifax's statement and explain the circumstances of its appearance in the U.K. Churchill's view is much clearer. He minuted to Cranborne

It seems to me that Lord Halifax ought not to have made this very important speech at Toronto without reference here beforehand. It is in effect an interference in Canadian politics, turning markedly against Mackenzie King.¹⁴⁸

However, it is not known whether Churchill had studied the speech, or merely read the Canadian press reactions.

Generally the F.O. approved of the content of Halifax's speech, even if it agreed the circumstances were less than perfect. For instance Jebb minuted

This speech may not be popular with some Canadians, but it seems to me to be excellent none the less. Lord Halifax makes no specific proposals; he merely points the way.

Newton agreed with Jebb that the "actual matter" was sound and hoped that it would receive the serious consideration it deserved. But he admitted that in the wake of Smuts' and Curtin's statements and considering the location, it was not surprising that many thought it tendentious.

Newton also agreed with MacDonald's judgment about Canada's future co-operation. Despite the fact it had shied away from any political commitment in theory, in practice it had proved co-operative and efficient, as had Massey and the High Commission staff in London.¹⁴⁹

The Head of the North American Department, Nevile Butler, had only one criticism; that by stressing the U.K.'s weakness and its inability to live on equal terms with the U.S. and U.S.S.R. without the Dominions, Halifax had encouraged the "unfortunate belief", fostered by Smuts,

148. Churchill to Cranborne, 31st January 1944, ibid.

149. Minutes by Jebb, 2nd February 1944 and Newton, 2nd February 1944, F0371/38553, AN704/29/45.

that the U.K. would be too weak to "play at Balance of Power" without the Commonwealth. Another official in the Department also thought it a pity to justify closer collaboration by giving "less than credit to Britain's strength". The P.U.S., Cadogan, also found that aspect of the speech unacceptable; the rest he thought "admirable".¹⁵⁰ This is a further example of the F.O.'s denial of Britain's likely weakness internationally after the war.¹⁵¹

The various statements made by Commonwealth spokesmen illustrate a deep concern for the future, if not a great measure of agreement as to what it should be. The role of the Commonwealth internationally produced a significant divergence. From Halifax and Cranborne we see again the U.K.'s appreciation of the need for more support from the Dominions, while both stressed unity rather than unanimity, although Halifax was rather more ambiguous in his Toronto speech, especially in his references to the Commonwealth acting as the fourth Great Power. In sum, the U.K. wanted informal unity within the Commonwealth, so as to use the members' basic concurrence with its policies when necessary, while not being weighed down by a formal unity which they thought unattainable. The Australian government was probably more in tune with the U.K. than with Smuts. As the Canadians had appreciated, its suggestions for greater consultation were based on the recognition that its interests were linked with the U.K.'s but Curtin and Evatt had also made it abundantly clear that they intended to take an independent stand in the Pacific, although they wanted the general backing of the association. The New Zealand government, like Australia, desired close contacts with the U.K. but also to play its part in the region, in its own right and as a member of the Commonwealth.

The position of South Africa was notably different from that of the other Dominions. It had no Great Power as a neighbour and in the

150. Minutes by Butler, 2nd February 1944, Cook (?), 3rd February 1944 and Cadogan, 3rd March 1944, ibid.

151. See also p. 217.

early 1940s none showed much interest in southern Africa. Moreover, Smuts' suggestions for the organisation of the post-war world reflects his own assessment of what was required, based on his role as an elder statesman with experience of the 1919 settlement, rather than his position as Prime Minister of South Africa. Whereas King epitomised the hopes and fears of the majority of Canadians, Smuts did not always reflect opinion in his country, especially with regard to foreign policy. His elevation of the status of the Great Powers was not just based on their likely domination of the post-war world, but was what he considered desirable for the stability of international affairs. By contrast, King's and Curtin's conviction that the preponderance of the Great Powers must be curbed rested on their belief that smaller powers should have their interests protected and be allowed a say in matters affecting security. These Dominions, and New Zealand, took on the mantle of most small powers when discussing the role of the Great Powers, and the relevance of their Commonwealth membership lay in the assistance it could give them to intrude into those circles and achieve some recognition for the rights of the smaller nations. Canada was perhaps more tolerant of some degree of Great Power leadership, as it had to admit that according to the functional principle it was their responsibility to provide for security.¹⁵² It also had no intention of unnecessarily arousing the enmity of the U.S.A. and it thought that Australia would do well to cultivate both the U.K. and the U.S.¹⁵³

If the Commonwealth was to take a clearer international position, whether or not it attempted to act as one power, the question remained whether any change in the machinery of co-operation was necessary.

There was more agreement on the question of co-operation than might appear. MacDonald and Newton recognised the willingness of Canada to

152. Robertson memorandum for King, 17th March 1944, MG26, J 4, Vol. 234, pp. C.158503.

153. Davis to Robertson, 17th March 1944, MG26, J 4, Vol. 248, pp. C.166585-166586.

co-operate and expected this to continue; but we have seen King's stern opposition to the centralising and tightening of the processes, which stemmed from his belief that too great a rigidity would destroy the Commonwealth. Smuts', discussing the two prevailing tendencies within the Commonwealth, separation and federation, criticised both and stood on the rights of the Dominions under the Statute of Westminster.¹⁵⁴ The U.K. sought some improvement in the methods of co-operation, especially between High Commissioners and Ministers for External Affairs. However, the government was careful in its official statements not to advocate particular proposals, and stressed that any change had to be made only after agreement by all members. Thus the scene was set for the Meeting of Prime Ministers in May 1944. In the months before the views of each Government had been aired and discussed, so that the others had at least been able to consider the proposals seriously.

154. Harlech to D.O., 18th March 1944, D035/1205, WF201/12.

Chapter Five

Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting

With the exception of Curtin, all the Commonwealth Prime Ministers had visited England during the war. Until 1944, however, they held no full meeting. We have seen the reluctance of King and Smuts to leave their countries because of practical problems, domestic difficulties and the difficulty of delegating their responsibilities to a suitable deputy. The experience of Menzies offered a powerful lesson to all of them. Fraser had the fewest domestic problems but in common with the others believed that a Prime Minister should be predominantly at home supervising the war effort.¹ Curtin was reluctant to visit the U.K. for two reasons. First, he seemed to prefer to concentrate his efforts on domestic rather than foreign affairs and was content to give Evatt a fairly free hand in the latter. Evatt had already paid two visits to London during the year. Second, as he told the U.K. High Commissioner, he wanted to see the tide of the war against Japan turn and have time to modify his own party's attitude towards foreign policy.² Moreover, Churchill felt no desire to convene a meeting in the early stages of the war, and it was only in 1943 that the U.K. Government began to press strongly for one.

From 1943 the major allies had begun to discuss plans for concluding the war and establishing a new international framework for the peace.

1. See chapter 2, pp. 71-73 & 90. (Smuts had told Harlech in February 1943 of the difficulty of entrusting the leadership to a deputy, and commented that Hofmeyr was "too clever" and "no leader". Harlech to Attlee, 1st February 1943, Avon Papers, F0954/4, Dom43/3.)
2. U.K. High Commissioner Canberra to Cranborne, 13th January 1944, CAB66/47. WP(44)136 of 28th February 1944; Curtin to Attlee, 20th April 1943, Prem4, 42/2. (Evatt visited the U.K. in the summers of 1942 and 1943. Many British Ministers and officials found his forceful and aggressive personality rather to their disliking and this is reflected in a minute on Eden's copy of the telegram informing the U.K. of his 1943 visit. Someone commented "The uninvited guest!". For further views on Evatt, see chapter 6, pp. 373-377.)

In April 1943 the U.K. Government suggested a meeting of the leaders to be held that summer and stressed the need for the Commonwealth to collaborate to enable the association to take its full share in the planning of the peace.³ No-one but King could visit the U.K. at the time suggested, but the D.O. was anxious to convene a meeting and Attlee told Churchill that apart from needing to discuss important post-war issues

It is moreover of the first importance from the point of view of keeping together the British Commonwealth.⁴

When commenting on the Foreign Secretary's memoranda on the future world organisation in July, Attlee had urged the need to discuss with the other leaders ways in which the Commonwealth could act together internationally, and in September he advised his Cabinet colleagues of the need to press the Dominions strongly for a meeting because it was imperative to discuss policy and the machinery whereby,

in collaborating with the major Allies, the British Commonwealth will be able to express a united view.⁵

Another consideration was the need to bolster the Commonwealth's position in the eyes of the rest of the international community. Thus Attlee reminded his colleagues of

the important question of the prestige which a meeting between the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth at this stage would have in the world generally.⁶

This appreciation of the attention which a Commonwealth meeting would attract was reinforced by Halifax immediately before the conference. He told the F.O. how closely the Americans would be watching the proceedings and how it could affect their attitude towards post-war

3. Churchill to four Dominion Prime Ministers, 15th April 1943, Prem⁴, 42/2. (Telegram to Canada was sent on 12th April.)

4. Minute Attlee to Churchill, 27th April 1943, ibid.

5. War Cabinet Memorandum by Attlee, 17th September 1943, CAB66/41, WP(43)404. See also War Cabinet Memorandum by Attlee, 15th June 1943, CAB66/37, WP(43)244. (In July, Attlee had stressed the need for a Commonwealth meeting during the discussions of the F.O.'s Papers on the world organisation.)

6. War Cabinet Memorandum by Attlee, 17th September 1943, op.cit.

collaboration; the greater the solidarity demonstrated by the association, the more the U.S. would respect it, though the conclusions reached and the manner of their presentation would also count for much. If the emphasis lay on exclusiveness, in the shape of Imperial Preferences or otherwise, it would adversely effect America's willingness to consider plans for international co-operation. If, on the other hand, the Commonwealth's cohesion was expressed in conjunction with a willingness to consider wider international co-operation and as a contribution to it, the U.S. would regard that favourably and be encouraged to work with the Commonwealth and other nations. "A good deal may depend on this", he concluded.⁷

The War Cabinet decided at the end of September 1943 that a Prime Ministers' meeting should be convened and the U.K. tried to arrange one for November. Complications arose when it was decided to hold a meeting between the U.S.A., the U.K. and the U.S.S.R. at Teheran at the end of November and it was decided to postpone the Commonwealth meeting until the New Year. This incident revealed a degree of irritation on Churchill's part at Dominion requests to be told full details of U.K. policy and participate in high level talks. He minuted in October that it was impossible to inform the Dominions in advance of British Ministers' views as they were

trying to go with open minds to hear for the first time the formidable demands which will be made by Monsieur Stalin

after his great victories, adding

we must be careful, that the Dominion claims to representation at discussions do not make all discussions impossible.⁸

It was finally agreed that May would be the most suitable date for the Commonwealth meeting, with Smuts visiting at the end of the year as planned and then returning for the main meeting.⁹

7. Halifax to F.O., 7th May 1944, Prem4, 42/6.

8. Minute by Churchill, 2nd October 1943, Prem4, 43A/14.

9. Minutes by War Cabinet Meeting, 22nd September 1943, CAB65/35, WM(43)130.

The May 1944 gathering was termed a Prime Ministers' Meeting, not an Imperial Conference. Rather more than a change of nomenclature was involved. King first assumed that the U.K. wanted an Imperial Conference, in which issues such as the future status of India and other constitutional matters would be discussed and he told Churchill of his relief at discovering that a meeting of Prime Ministers was proposed;¹⁰ the implication being that the latter would involve serious discussions between peers on immediate issues of common interest, rather than a full-blown Imperial gathering, orchestrated with all the trappings of Empire, which would consider the constitutional basis of the association. King also took up the point Halifax made later and expressed concern lest other allied nations, especially the U.S.A., should misunderstand the purpose of a Commonwealth meeting and look upon it with suspicion. Smuts and Fraser likewise warned the U.K. Government against giving this impression, stressing that the meeting should confine itself to war issues.¹¹ When Attlee extended new invitations in September 1943, he told the Prime Ministers that the meeting was not to be a formal Imperial Conference of the pre-war type, but a gathering of the five leaders with the attendance of officials kept to the minimum.¹² In January 1944, when the subject was again before the War Cabinet, Cranborne who had returned to the D.O., reiterated to his colleagues that it was to be a personal meeting, and the replies from the other leaders stressed this aspect too.¹³

10. King to Churchill, 14th April 1943, Prem4, 42/2.

11. King to Churchill, 26th April 1943; Smuts to Churchill, 19th April 1943; Fraser to Churchill, 22nd April 1943. (King had also told MacDonald after Halifax's speech that he did not want to discuss inter-Commonwealth collaboration until after the war had ended. MacDonald to D.O., 28th January 1944, DO35/1204, WC75/9.)

12. D.O. to four Dominion Governments, 8th September 1943, CAB66/41, WP(43)404

13. War Cabinet Memorandum by Cranborne, 7th January 1944, CAB66/41, WP(44)41; War Cabinet Minutes of 20th January 1944, CAB65/41, WM(44)9. See also telegrams to and from the Dominions, March 1944, CAB99/27, DPM(44)8, 18th March 1944.

By 1944 there was less reluctance on the part of the Dominion Prime Ministers to discuss post-war issues and these were included on the agenda. (However, King told MacDonalld in January 1944, after Halifax's speech, that he wanted to postpone all consideration of inter-Commonwealth relations until after the war had been won.) Perhaps the most important consequences of the change in the description of the meeting was the strengthening of the expectation that although opinions would be readily exchanged, few conclusions would be attempted; that it was for the purpose of mutual understanding rather than a common policy.

The emphasis placed on the size and personal nature of the meeting caused one complication, (which might have arisen anyway) about the position of India and Southern Rhodesia. In September 1943 L. S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, wrote to Attlee urging that representatives of the Indian Government and the Indian States should be invited. He noted their participation in Commonwealth discussions over the previous twenty-five years and their right to representation in the U.K. War Cabinet during both wars, adding that he had the backing of the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in this plea.¹⁴ This question was discussed at the War Cabinet on 22nd September when Amery again pressed for their inclusion. Attlee argued that although Indian representatives had taken part in Commonwealth meetings since 1918, the position had been altered by the Statute of Westminster. He said that the prospective meeting was for Prime Ministers and India lacked anyone with the authority to represent it. (Whether Attlee was trying to justify the Indian's exclusion on the basis of the Statute of Westminster or by the new designation of the meeting, or both, is not clear. The latter were more convincing grounds as India had sent representatives to the 1937 Conference, although the Secretary

14. Amery to Attlee, 14th September 1943, D035/1472, WC60/2.

of State for India, the Marquess of Zetland, had headed the delegation.) Churchill accepted the view that India could not participate on equal terms, but said that its representatives ought to be present for some discussions. He suggested that they should be invited to London to be on hand. This was agreed.¹⁵ Cranborne later raised the question of attendance again. Referring to the provision for Indian representatives to be present in London, he suggested that the same arrangement be adopted for the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia. The Cabinet agreed that Sir Godfrey Huggins should be invited to London on the understanding that he would be invited to some of the discussions only.¹⁶ When the D.O. informed the Dominion governments, King emphasised that the meeting was a special one for Prime Ministers, and although not objecting to the attendance of representatives of India and Southern Rhodesia when issues of special interest to them were discussed, said

I think that we should maintain a sharp distinction between the character of the meeting and a regular Imperial Conference.

He asked that no public mention should be made of the participation of either country.¹⁷ The D.O. replied by explaining the extreme difficulties of preventing any publicity as the presence of those representatives would be well known, but assured King that the clear distinction would be drawn.¹⁸

The War Cabinet decided on 20th January 1944 that a committee, under the chairmanship of Cranborne and consisting of E. Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service, L. S. Amery, O. Stanley (Colonial Secretary) and R. Law, with the power to co-opt others, should prepare the agenda and papers for the meeting. This "Committee on Preparations for the Meeting with Dominion Prime Ministers" (hereafter

15. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 22nd September 1943, CAB65/35, WM(43)130.

16. War Cabinet Memorandum by Cranborne, 7th January 1944, and War Cabinet Minutes of 20th January 1944, op.cit.

17. Canadian Government to D.O., 2nd February 1944, D035/1203, WC60/4.

18. D.O. to Canadian Government, 5th February 1944, ibid.

the D.P.M. Committee) first met on 15th February 1944. The agenda was sent to the Dominions at the beginning of March, after approval by Churchill and was divided into four sections; the immediate war situation, the requirements of the war against Japan, the post-war settlement, and the issues affecting co-operation within the Commonwealth. The covering telegram gave the U.K.'s opinion that the best use of the time available would be to concentrate on the wider issues of policy, and specified the main subjects which they thought would arise.¹⁹ Although there was some reluctance to publicise the scope and objectives of the meeting,²⁰ the Dominion leaders were generally in agreement with the draft agenda, and they received confirmation, requested by Fraser, that it would not preclude anyone from raising other subjects.²¹ The Canadian External Affairs Department had been ready to correspond with the U.K. over details, but King told Robertson, its Under-Secretary, not to question the agenda in any respect but to await the meetings, while in the meantime preparing material for all topics.²² Thus, King made no objection to discussing Commonwealth co-operation.

Having established the broad parameters, the D.P.M. Committee discussed in detail the preparations required by the U.K. Cranborne raised the question of political co-operation within the Commonwealth, and pointed to the divergent tendencies of Australia and Canada on the subject of central co-ordinating machinery. He rejected Bevin's suggestion that both trends be allowed to develop simultaneously, with the warning that it would be too dangerous to attempt to establish a formal organisation that was clearly unacceptable to Canada, and tantamount to forcing it into independent action, possibly towards a

19. D.O. to four Dominion Governments, 5th March 1944, CAB99/27, DPM(44)8.

20. For example see Curtin to D.O., 13th March 1944, CAB99/27, DPM(44)9.

21. Fraser to D.O., 15th March 1944, CAB99/27, DPM(44)10.

22. See contents of File 'Correspondence with S. of S. for Dominion Affairs, March 1944', MG26, J I, Vol. 571.

closer relationship with the U.S.A. Cranborne declared that the U.K. should leave Curtin to state his proposals; others would then respond; and the U.K. should introduce its own suggestions when they appeared likely to be acceptable. He mentioned two proposals; a formalisation of the High Commissioners' meetings after the war and periodic meetings of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for foreign affairs, promising to furnish the committee with a memorandum on the latter question.²³

The D.O. was the department principally concerned with political co-operation and provided the committee with this material. However, the Dominion Intelligence Department (D.I.D.) of the F.O. had also been considering the issue and produced its own proposals.²⁴ The F.O. was involved in preparations for the Prime Ministers' Meeting in respect of particular issues and the pattern of inter-Commonwealth consultations on foreign policy. Under the second heading came Curtin's proposals and the F.O.'s own programme. Discussing the role of the F.O. at the meeting, Sir B. Newton, the F.O.'s liaison officer with the Dominion High Commissioners, referred to that programme and commented that while it might not be important enough to be brought to the attention of the P.M.s, unless all others failed to gain acceptance, the proposals were of value because they would commit the Dominion governments less than high-level interchanges. He hoped a meeting of officials could be convened after the Prime Ministers' meeting to discuss them. Cadogan supported the F.O.'s plans, and also Cranborne's proposed tactics:

In the likely event of a divergence of view between certain Dominions on 'methods', we shall probably have to make some proposals ourselves, not of a far reaching nature but more in the form of improvement and development of existing machinery.²⁵

23. Minutes of D.P.M. Committee, 15th February 1944, CAB99/27, DPM(44), 1st meeting.

24. See chapter 3.

25. Minute by Newton, 14th February 1944 and minute by Cadogan, 25th February 1944, FO371/42681, W2162/2145/68.

The D.O.'s proposals for political co-operation appeared in the paper submitted to the D.P.M. Committee by Cranborne. Again he recommended the tactic of leaving the initiative to Curtin. Curtin was expected to propose the recognition of the Dominion High Commissioners and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs as a standing sub-committee of the 'Imperial Conference' and the establishment of a joint secretariat of the Conference. Cranborne identified Curtin's objectives as securing an effective voice in the framing of policy, while retaining the sovereignty of the Australian government, rather than pressing for a common policy. Canada's attitude, seen especially in relation to the reaction to Halifax's speech, was based on a desire to avoid any element of exclusiveness in Commonwealth action, and King had frequently expressed himself content with the existing arrangements for consultation. Cranborne explained that both Curtin and King wanted national control of policy, and influence in world affairs. The difference was that King did not think the best way to achieve this was by associating Canada more closely with the other Commonwealth members. King was opposed to a third Power grouping attempting to rival the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., preferring a wider association of like-minded states in which Canada might have an influence. This was a view inevitably shaped by Canada's proximity to the U.S.A. and the fact that the majority of Canadians were no longer of British descent. Cranborne noted that the New Zealand Government had not made any public statements on post-war issues, except in its agreement with Australia, but anticipated that it would side with the latter on the question of Commonwealth consultation. Smuts had already supported the thesis of a third Power grouping, balancing the other two; he was expected to favour strengthening Commonwealth ties. As to the position of the U.K., Cranborne mentioned it had been careful to refrain from committing itself to either side in the controversy, content to indicate a willingness to consider changes with an open mind, provided they were unanimously

approved. (However, many people in Canada had interpreted Halifax's speech as evidence of the U.K.'s support for Curtin's proposals.)

The compromise suggestions to be offered were those mentioned at the first meeting. Discussions between foreign affairs Ministers would be important because it was difficult for Prime Ministers to meet very frequently, and the best time for these was immediately prior to an equivalent meeting of the world organisation. Cranborne thought if the consultative nature of these talks was stressed, Canada might agree to them. (The fact that three Dominion Prime Ministers were currently also External Affairs Ministers was noted, but that situation was thought unlikely to persist.) Formalising the London meetings between the Dominions Secretary and the High Commissioners was part of Curtin's proposals too, and open to objection. The Dominion Governments did not always appoint men of the highest calibre as High Commissioners. They tended to lose touch with their countries. Cranborne also thought King might object, but hoped that he would agree to a greater permanency for these meetings on perhaps a less formal basis. Commenting on Curtin's proposal for a secretariat he said

This involves frankly setting up centralised machinery for the co-ordination of Empire policy. It is difficult to believe that any proposal on these lines would be acceptable to either Mr. Mackenzie King or to Canadian public opinion as a whole, in its present mood, and I am afraid that for us to support it would frighten the Canadians and do more harm than good.

The most the U.K. could suggest would be for each Dominion to appoint an official to their High Commissions in London with responsibility for keeping in contact with the F.O., the Cabinet Office and the Joint Planning Committee of the Chiefs of Staff. This would be open to fewer objections but would keep them in close touch with foreign and defence policy during its formulation. Australia already enjoyed such facilities, but the others had not chosen to utilise them. Cranborne thought it worth renewing the offer, for if it were not taken

up the U.K. would have shown its goodwill, while at that level of collaboration uniformity was not essential.²⁶ (This suggestion was also contained in the F.O.'s programme.)

Cranborne's memorandum was discussed at the third meeting of the D.P.M. committee on 12th April. The principal disagreement arose from Cranborne's interpretation of the secretariat's implications. Amery disagreed that its functions would extend to co-ordinating policy, suggesting it would be no more than a post-office to facilitate the collation and exchange of information, and the preparation of agenda. Amery thought this would be more acceptable to King and hoped to persuade Smuts to influence the Canadian leader in its favour. The committee agreed that Cranborne's memorandum should be revised to express Amery's conception of the secretariat, and it was presented to the War Cabinet with this revision.²⁷ The functions of a secretariat cannot be defined without reference to its attributed purpose. One could either be established to co-ordinate policy, possibly with some executive functions, or merely to act as a central sorting office with responsibility for servicing Commonwealth conferences, as the Commonwealth Secretariat did after it was eventually established in 1965. In this respect neither Amery nor Cranborne was wrong in his interpretation and the precise details of Curtin's proposals had to be awaited. It was perhaps unwise to give only one view to the War Cabinet, and the more innocuous one at that, as it might lead its members to regard the Canadians as unreasonable for not accepting such a proposal. They would tend to assume that Canada had rejected a non-executive body, when Canadian opposition to a secretariat stemmed from its fear that it might assume, or later receive, powers not originally assigned to it.

26. Cranborne Memorandum "Co-operation in the British Commonwealth", 7 April 1944, CAB99/27, DPM(44)14.

27. Minutes of Committee 12th April 1944, CAB99/27, DPM(44) 3rd meeting; Cranborne memorandum "Co-operation in the British Commonwealth", 18th April 1944, CAB66/49, WP(44)210.

At this same meeting of the 12th April, Greenway (Head of the D.I.D.) urged the committee not to reject out of hand Curtin's proposals as impracticable simply because of likely Canadian opposition. He thought Australia and New Zealand would press their ideas very strongly, that South Africa would probably support them, and that the U.K. could at least be benevolently neutral. In the face of this, Canada might not wish to reject too much.²⁸ As a prognostic of the various Dominion standpoints and of Canada's likely capitulation on this question, Greenway was to be proved wrong. The only other comment at the meeting concerned the choice of the two suggestions, with Law preferring the foreign Ministers' meetings, and whether the two were alternatives, or mutually compatible. The memorandum for the War Cabinet made it clear that they were complementary.

In a F.O. minute Greenway declared that he could not see the objections to developing machinery for five-member co-operation even if all five would not join in and he thought Cranborne's fears as to Canada's reaction were exaggerated. He had doubts about the proposal to formalise the High Commissioners' meetings, principally because of his belief that the Dominion Governments had not learnt to place full confidence in, or give enough responsibility to, their representatives. Nor did he have a very high opinion of the existing arrangements.

It is clearly unlikely that Mr. Bruce or Mr. Massey who are regarded with a somewhat jaundiced eye by their Govts: or Col. Reitz who appears to take little interest in his duties & none at all in foreign affairs: or Mr. Jordan, who is past praying for, would in present conditions add any weight to the Councils of the Empire.²⁹

Cadogan did not make any comment on these papers and although Greenway received support for his views from Jebb,³⁰ (Head of the Economic and Reconstruction Department) Newton did not share his criticisms, supporting both Cranborne's thesis and tactics. Similar divisions

28. Third meeting of DPM Committee, op.cit.

29. Minute by Greenway, 11th April 1944, F0371/42682, W5507/2145/68.

30. Minute by Jebb, 12th April 1944, ibid.

in opinion within the F.O. had been evident in the previous six months when it had been discussing Commonwealth collaboration in foreign affairs, with Newton tending to align himself with the D.O.'s viewpoint and Greenway adopting a more aggressive view towards both the Dominions and the D.O. At this stage the F.O. was not sufficiently involved with key decisions on Commonwealth collaboration for these opinions to affect the pattern of collaboration.

Newton added his support for Foreign Ministers' meetings, suggesting that they should be held whenever there was an opportunity, not just annually, as this would not frighten the Canadians by rigid regularity, or waste opportunities. He thought the High Commissioners' meetings, which he attended, could be made more effective and given greater scope, and he dismissed criticisms of the selection of High Commissioners or their lack of contact with their countries as unimportant; the former would improve with the elevation of their status. One idea he offered was for the Minister of State, or if there were no such post, the Permanent Under-Secretary, to attend these meetings. However, he stressed that whatever changes were made, their informal character should not be altered. Newton said he would be "pleased but very surprised" if a secretariat was accepted, but agreed with the modifications to the memorandum. In the event of its not being accepted, he wanted to see more meetings between Ministers and officials and repeated his suggestion that there should be a meeting of Commonwealth officials after the end of the Prime Ministers' meeting to discuss these issues fully.³¹

Cranborne's memorandum was revised according to the recommendations of the committee, considered by the War Cabinet on 27th April, and approved. Apart from the altered interpretation of the implications of a secretariat, the D.O.'s plan to attempt some improvement in the

31. Minute by Newton, 13th April 1944, ibid.

machinery of collaboration by supporting no Dominion view, but playing a neutral though positive role, carried the day. At this meeting Eden informed the Cabinet of the F.O.'s Programme, (it was not prepared in time to be considered by the D.P.M. committee) and it was agreed that it should be communicated to the D.O. for Cranborne's consideration.³² There was no inter-departmental discussion of the F.O.'s proposals before the meeting of Prime Ministers, which was due to open four days later. There was some complaint within the F.O. that the D.O. was holding up matters to stop consideration of its plans, but undoubtedly the D.O. was working under intense pressure. Full study of this question did not take place on the official level at the end of the meeting, but there were talks with the D.O. in June.³³ The F.O.'s programme contained some interesting suggestions, but that office's discussions had covered many unrealistic proposals and the comments of some officials in this period and the frustration shown over the D.O.'s handling, indicated that many within the F.O. did not understand the attitudes of the Dominions as well as they might, and that some of its officials were willing to risk serious dissension at a meeting which was primarily designed to further unity, and above all the appearance of unity.

The U.K. War Cabinet had considered various memoranda on post-war schemes and specifically the proposed world organisation. The U.K. had taken part in the Teheran talks and representatives were due to visit Washington in June for talks with the Americans. However, British policy had yet to be approved by the War Cabinet and the F.O. encountered some difficulties with Churchill who on the one hand complained at having to spend time on such plans while running the war,³⁴ and on the

32. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 27th April 1944, CAB65/42, WM(44)58.

33. See chapter 3. pp. 174-175.

34. At the end of 1942 Churchill had shown a reluctance to consider post-war plans and the Diary of Sir Charles Webster, (seconded to the F.O.'s Research Department, and closely involved in post-war planning) shows that on occasions this was still the case by April 1943. P. A. Reynolds & E. J. Hughes, The Historian as Diplomat: Charles Kingsley Webster and the United Nations, 1939-1946 (London, 1976), p. 29.

other had different ideas from the F.O. The subject was scheduled to be discussed at the Prime Ministers' meeting and the F.O. prepared a series of papers which Eden asked Churchill's permission to circulate to the other leaders, "not as committing you or any of us, but simply as an official study".³⁵ Sir E. Bridges, Secretary to the Cabinet, had also sent Churchill a summary of the F.O.'s plans in an attempt to assist Eden in gaining Churchill's permission.³⁶ The Prime Minister's differences with the F.O. were principally over the formation and functions of regional councils, but his notion of the World Council was more exclusive in membership and more akin to an alliance of the Four Major Powers.³⁷ Churchill agreed to the presentation of the F.O.'s papers to the Dominion leaders and also tabled a separate memorandum of his own on regional councils.

Commonwealth defence co-operation was one of the first matters to be considered by the D.P.M. Committee. This was predominantly the preserve of the Chiefs of Staff, but both Amery and Bevin had written to Cranborne on this topic. Amery was keen for the Commonwealth to decide its objectives in terms of bases and strategic vantage points, arguing that the Americans and Russians would have done so already. Discussions should revolve around regional commitments and the U.K. ought to have its policy sufficiently advanced to place proposals before the Dominions.³⁸ Bevin mentioned Halifax's reference in his Toronto speech to the Commonwealth acting as a unit in the new organisation

35. Minute by Eden to Churchill, 4th May 1944, Prem4, 30/7.

36. Summary of F.O. memorandum by Bridges, to Churchill, 1st May 1944, ibid. (On the 26th April Webster noted in his diary a conversation with Bridges: "he said we must go softly with the P.M. re papers. He had a plot for Sec of State to handle him. They should ask for comments and later S of S (should) get P.M. to agree." Reynolds and Hughes, op.cit., p. 31.

37. Churchill's thinking seems to be rather fluid at this juncture as to precisely what arrangements he wanted, but on 28th April, Webster recorded a conversation with Law who reported that Churchill did not want "any world organisation at all but continental Leagues of Nations and a Four Power Alliance." Reynolds and Hughes, op.cit., p. 31.

38. Amery to Cranborne, 25th January 1944, D035/1744, WG785/1.

and thought it should first form a defensive unit, general unity only being feasible if there existed a solid defensive unity for its self-preservation. This should be on a zonal system, and he predicted that many advantages would follow; less anti-British sentiment, better communications and trade, increased migration and facilities for joint troop training; and he denied that this would be prohibitively expensive, as a joint budget could be negotiated.³⁹

The D.O. hoped for an extension of defence co-operation. It acknowledged that the Dominions might not yet be able to give a clear indication of their plans, but said the U.K. needed to know the areas of agreed co-operation, Dominion requirements from the U.K. and what they could offer in return. It anticipated that discussions would cover equipment, training, use of joint facilities, allocations of production and co-operation in combined operations and types of warfare, and wanted the Prime Ministers to authorise their Staffs to hold preliminary talks with U.K. Staffs.⁴⁰ The D.O. wrote to the three Service Ministers enclosing a note on Commonwealth defence and asking for their suggestions.⁴¹

Defence collaboration was discussed at the second meeting of the D.P.M. Committee on 29th February which was attended by the Service Ministers. Bevin reiterated the points expressed in his paper and Cranborne agreed to furnish the Chiefs of Staff with details of the political background to defence co-operation and the degree of collaboration which could be expected from the Dominions, to aid them in their preparations of a memorandum on post-war defence and security. Law

39. Bevin to Cranborne, 1st February 1944, ibid. (Both Papers were reproduced as DPM(44)3, CAB99/27.

40. D.O. Minute drafted by Mr. Boyd Shannon, 27th January 1944, D035/1744, WG785/1.

41. Cranborne to A. V. Alexander, Sir J. Grigg and Sir A. Sinclair, 27th January 1944, ibid.

informed the committee that the F.O. had requested an appreciation of U.S. military strategy from its Embassy in Washington, so discussions could be held in light of American plans.⁴² Cranborne's minute to the Chiefs of Staff identified the U.K.'s aims as agreement in principle to continued liaison and co-operation and authority for Commonwealth Staffs to pursue talks with the U.K.⁴³

The Vice Chiefs of Staff forwarded two memoranda to the D.P.M. Committee, one on the military aspects of the world security organisation and one on Commonwealth defence co-operation within the organisation. The former did not relate to the position of the Commonwealth, except in its assumption that the U.K. would be one of the four Powers on the world council. It did, however, note that if regional political councils were established, (and the Vice Chiefs identified difficulties in dividing up the world for security purposes) those councils should have military staffs attached to them.⁴⁴ In the second memorandum the Vice Chiefs noted that in the inter-war years the lack of any firm Dominion commitments had made joint plans impossible. In the post-war world the major Powers were expected to be predominant militarily and the need for the Commonwealth "to speak with a united voice and to throw its whole weight into the scale when vital issues were at stake" was stressed. It was a geographical reality that the Commonwealth would be involved in all regions and each member had to be able to rely on the political and military resources of its partners when necessary. Close links had to be established if the Commonwealth was to take its place alongside the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Again we see the basic U.K. thesis of the importance of equalling the power of the other two major states and its need for the support of its Commonwealth partners.

42. Minutes of D.P.M. Meeting, 29th February 1944, CAB99/27; DPM(44) 2nd Meeting. See also minute by N. Butler (head of F.O. North American Department) proposing that a summary of U.S. intentions be sought, 12th February 1944, FO271/42677, W2166/1534/68.

43. Cranborne to Chiefs of Staff Committee, 3rd March 1944, DO35/1744, WG785/1.

44. Vice Chiefs of Staff memorandum, 7th April 1944, "Military Aspects of any Post-War Security Organisation"; CAB99/27, DPM(44)16. (Also COS(44)202(0).)

This paper did relate Commonwealth defence to world defence and did not separate Commonwealth defence co-operation entirely from wider co-operative action with other Powers. The Vice Chiefs were convinced of the need for the Commonwealth to be strong enough to deal on equal terms with the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and to this end they wished the Dominions to recognise the association as a single major Power grouping in defence. They urged that Dominion leaders be persuaded to accept a responsibility for defence, even with a slight loss of sovereignty, but admitted that it might be impossible because of the Dominions' insistence on their freedom of action. If this were so, "the chances of arriving at an effective system of world security will be remote".

The Vice Chiefs recognised that closer defence collaboration would also necessitate a great share for the Dominions in political decisions. Subject to those political considerations they recommended six methods for improving collaboration: a permanent secretariat (with one or more Standing Committees) attached to the Imperial Conference; periodic meetings of Ministers and Chiefs of Staff; an extension to the system of interchanging military staffs; an expansion of training in the principles of Imperial defence; all organisation, equipment and training to continue the same; and the industrial potential for waging war to be studied and co-ordinated. Three other subjects were also mentioned. They suggested that if a regional system were set up, some decentralisation of defence plans could result, enabling the Dominions to play a major role in their areas. With regional military staffs reporting to those on the world council, this could allow them the voice in the framing of policy which they desired. Secondly, Bevin's proposal for U.K. troops to be trained in the Dominions was welcomed in principle. Finally, issues such as bases, which affected the

Commonwealth as a whole, should be discussed with Dominion officials and Ministers, and it was hoped to secure authority from the Prime Ministers to do so, and then frame a joint policy.⁴⁵ At the third meeting there was some discussion on the advisability of pursuing plans for co-ordinating Commonwealth defence before decisions had been taken internationally. Amery was anxious to make progress because of the probable delay in setting up the world organisation, especially as their own plans could be accommodated within that wider framework and form a solid contribution to them. Cranborne reminded the meeting of Canada's reluctance to be too closely identified with Commonwealth, as distinct from international, plans. However, he thought Canada would be more willing to join in if the Commonwealth proposals were framed with reference to their place in the world plan.⁴⁶ The Vice Chiefs of Staff memoranda were to form the basis of the U.K. delegation's brief in Washington on defence, but were not circulated as U.K. policy statements to the Prime Ministers.⁴⁷

During the war the level of inter-Commonwealth communications had increased, as had Ministerial and official visits. This interchange of information, together with the various statements made by Dominion spokesmen in 1943, meant that the U.K. was reasonably well informed of each Dominion's policies towards post-war issues, insofar as these had been decided. Before the May Meeting of the leaders, MacDonald and Cross sent appreciations of the attitudes of King and Curtin.

MacDonald's extensive memorandum was written by him not by his staff. It furnishes the best explanation of Canada's attitude to Imperial co-operation written by a servant of H.M. Government. He assessed King's position acutely:

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45. Vice Chiefs of Staff memorandum, 7th April 1944, "The Co-ordination of Defence Policy in the British Commonwealth in Relation to a World System of Security", CAB99/27, DPM(44)18. (Also COS(44)58.)
46. Minutes of D.P.M. Meeting, 12th April 1944, CAB99/27, DPM(44) 3rd Meeting.
47. Note in F0271/42677, W5444/1534/68.

His influence is so paramount that his personal policy becomes the party's and the Government's policy. But like all statesmen who succeed in keeping a grip on office for many years, he is only partly the original author of his policies and partly a shrewd interpreter of the prevailing opinion of his fellow-countrymen.

He summed up King's attitude to the Commonwealth as one of support for Canada's continued membership, provided it remained on the basis of full recognition for the sovereign rights of the Dominions. King advocated full co-operation and consultation, which he thought were being largely achieved, but he did allow some room for improvement if achieved by extending the existing "informal" methods. The creation of formal machinery would be vetoed by King as likely to result in a reduction of Dominion independence; because he was unconvinced that it would improve co-operation; from an anxiety not to alienate French-Canadian opinion; and due to his fear that it would lead to American suspicions of an unfriendly Commonwealth bloc. These last two determinants were unique to Canada, which could explain its policy differences with Australia and New Zealand; and, inasmuch as South Africa had reservations about the extent of inter-Commonwealth co-operation, so too did that country contain a substantial non-British population. MacDonald said that despite such negative factors, which inevitably affected its policy, Canada should not be regarded as the 'black sheep' of the Commonwealth. Instead, the U.K. ought to be all the more appreciative of Canadian statesmen's success in maintaining that country's staunch and loyal support to, and significant co-operation with, the association.

MacDonald dwelt on the implications of the French-Canadian complication, estimating that except for a minority who were openly antagonistic to the U.K., the majority's loyalty was increasing as a result of Canada's recent relationship with the U.K. and because of the latter's performance during the war. French-Canadians would nevertheless

put Canada first and the Commonwealth second. Membership must therefore not seem to prejudice Canada's growth as an independent nation.

MacDonald did stress the explosive nature of the Commonwealth connection in Canadian politics, as recent speeches had demonstrated. He said many Canadians had been lukewarm to Curtin's suggestions not because of any caution as to the value of the association, but because they thought such proposals ran the risk of destroying national unity in Canada and with it membership; it was precisely that which they wanted to preserve.

The despatch stated categorically that the Canadian Government, collectively and individually, supported the Commonwealth rather than any closer links with the U.S.A. But that was not to deny the close geographical, economic and cultural links between the two, which required Canada to reconcile its policies towards both. This was especially pertinent to foreign and defence policies where such harmony was crucial and helped to explain King's opposition to centralised Commonwealth machinery. Moreover, Canadians regarded it as being in the U.K.'s interest, as well as its own, for the U.S. to view Canada as an independent and free nation and thus take more notice of its views. A formalised structure with the Dominions acting as secondary states backing up the U.K. would not strengthen such an impression. This was one of the reasons for Canadian opposition to Halifax's speech the previous January. Canadians had no desire to weaken the relationship, or the Commonwealth's influence in world affairs. However,

They know that the Commonwealth's influence and power will be far greater if it is a true partnership of nations who are all undoubtedly free, and whose co-operation is clearly the result of a voluntary community of ideas.

Against the negative factors stood positive ones. These were given as long historical relationship; similar traditions; identical

political faith and institutions; blood relationship; military security; economic advantage; and above all loyalty to the same Crown. This last bond was one by which MacDonald set great store, and he said King did too. One of MacDonald's main suggestions for improving Commonwealth unity was for the King and Queen to spend more time in each Dominion, residing and executing their duties there for a period of months.⁴⁸ He thought King would agree to this although he had not raised it with him because "he attaches much importance to the Crown and is so personally devoted to the present King and Queen". MacDonald's other suggestions consisted of developing to the full the exchange of information by cable; the rigorous observation of the principle of prior consultation before policy decisions were taken; continuation of periodic Prime Ministers' meetings, combined with more frequent Ministerial meetings between two or more members on foreign and defence matters, to be supplemented by ones between officials. Finally, the High Commissioners' meetings with the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs should be continued and developed. MacDonald mentioned the value he had found in these gatherings, as Secretary of State, and also King's initial reluctance to allow Massey to attend them. Despite this opposition, he had always insisted to the Canadian Prime Minister that they were informal and not publicised, and King had accepted this 'mechanism' during the war years as something to be prized. MacDonald used this as an example of how to proceed in improving Commonwealth machinery, while avoiding the dangers of formalising the relationship. As to Curtin's proposal that the High Commissioners' meetings become a standing committee of

48. MacDonald had stressed this point in a memorandum written in February 1943. See chapter 3, pp. 181-182. (It is worth noting that in March 1939 before the King's visit to Canada, Lord Tweedsmuir was stressing to Chamberlain the importance of this and how it would bolster support for the U.K. and for the coming war. Tweedsmuir to Chamberlain, 11th March 1939, Buchan Papers, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario.)

the Imperial Conference, MacDonald thought that Curtin's objectives could be as well achieved without making them formal, or raising the status of those representatives. Although the difference in theory was great, he doubted if it would be so in practice. Moreover, there was no reason why Australia should not attach more importance to the meetings than others might, and at least Canadian participation would be secure:

The fact is that if we allow matters to develop in practice, without making challenging public speeches on the theory of Empire unity or seeking abruptly to create new formal machinery for achieving it, Canada will become an increasingly co-operative and useful partner in the Commonwealth.⁴⁹

MacDonald's memorandum comprised an extremely thorough analysis of Canada's position. While none of his suggestions was startlingly original, except perhaps that the King should reside for a time in each Dominion, they did provide Cranborne and the U.K. Government with a valuable guide to King's position. It is possible to detect a view among less informed sources in the U.K. and some F.O. officials that Canada tended to be obstructive towards plans for improving co-operation from selfish or unworthy motives. The High Commissioner's memorandum gave Cranborne a useful counter-balance. The circulation given to this memorandum is not known; probably Cranborne showed or described it to Eden, a very close personal friend, and informed Churchill.

The letter from Cross bore a slightly different character. It enclosed a biographical account of the Prime Minister, and commented on his attitude to foreign affairs; a subject about which he was less knowledgeable than the other Prime Ministers, who were their own Foreign Ministers. Cross emphasised Curtin's achievement in persuading his party to reject its traditional isolationism, and judged that he was gaining in ability and stature as his term of office progressed. Despite a lack of experience with the world outside Australia, Curtin's conviction

49. MacDonald to Cranborne, 8th April 1944; D035/1489, WC75/35.

that it should remain in association with the U.K., rather than the U.S.A., was firm and Cross applauded his basic convictions and intentions. With regard to the Agreement with New Zealand, he thought its proposals would be regarded as ideas for the Commonwealth pool, rather than as a rigid programme which had to be enacted. Immediately on his return to Australia Curtin was due to fight the final stages of a referendum campaign to permit the national government to assume temporary powers to enact post-war reconstruction measures. Cross told Cranborne of the Prime Minister's anxiety to return from London with the highest possible prestige to tip the balance in that campaign and that he was assuming an attitude of relative indifference to the Prime Ministers' Meeting in order to protect himself against accusations of failure. He had been saying that the subjects on the agenda could easily be discussed through regular channels. Cross doubted if he would prove stubborn if that would result in his appearing to have failed. The High Commissioner also thought that Curtin was apprehensive about the meeting, as he had never previously encountered

anything as formidable as a collection of United Kingdom Ministers, still less a Churchill, a Roosevelt or a Smuts. In short, I think he has fears as to how he is going to show up in such company . . . He felt long ago that Winston Churchill had not got a good opinion of him and he was anxious to justify himself and to stand well in Churchill's regard.

Cross added that Curtin had the very highest impression of Cranborne and obviously felt less intimidated by him.⁵⁰

Cross had failed to establish a close rapport with the Australian Government necessary to enable him to successfully fulfil his functions as High Commissioner, and his relations with Curtin were not close. His paper to Cranborne must be viewed in light of this. However, this does not mean that his summary of Curtin's attitude is inaccurate and it did at least show a marked difference from his communications of two

50. Cross to Cranborne, 13th April 1944, Prem4, 50/15.

years earlier. Two weeks earlier Cross had written to Eden about Curtin. This communication bore traces of his earlier frustrations with Curtin: "There is also a chance that his former little Australian mind may at moments reassert itself", but, as with his letter to Cranborne, Cross indicated that he was convinced of Australia's allegiance to the Commonwealth.

I cannot guess quite how he will shape in London, but fundamentally he is a good man, reasonable, and wants to march with us.⁵¹

A summary of the prevailing conditions in each Dominion was drafted by the D.O. at the request of the King. These concentrated on the problems facing each and their contribution to the war effort, rather than their expected policies. They demonstrate His Majesty's eagerness to be informed about all his countries before meeting his Prime Ministers. The House of Commons was prepared for the forthcoming Meeting in a debate on Dominion Affairs two weeks beforehand. Cranborne sent Churchill a minute as to the attitude the Government should adopt, which bore close comparison to the strategy he outlined to the D.P.M. Committee. This debate was mainly for the purpose of allowing the members to express their views on the Commonwealth; for the Government's part

we shall be wise not to commit ourselves in advance of the Prime Ministers' meeting to advocating any particular suggestions or proposals but to maintain the line that while we welcome any suggestions the next step must be informal discussion round the table with the Dominion Ministers.

The broad policy of the U.K. was to maintain the closest possible co-operation in pursuit of the common ideals for which they all stood. The Government should firmly reject any suggestion that it was for them or any other member to force upon others any particular policy, and in response to suggestions that the U.K. should take the lead in pressing the Dominions into closer co-operation, the Government should say that nothing would be more deplorable than the impression that the U.K. was trying to dictate how Commonwealth affairs should be managed.

51. Cross to Eden, 30th March 1944, Avon Papers FO954/4, Dom44/4A.

"Discussion round the table between equals is the proper method for dealing with Empire problems." Criticisms of pre-war defence co-ordination were to be countered by the justifiable reliance the U.K. had placed on the Dominion's participation in war, and in foreign affairs any comment on lack of consultation could be firmly refuted. In anticipation of the Prime Ministers' meeting Cranborne was most anxious for the Government to say nothing in Parliament which would prejudice the forthcoming discussions. Without a seat in the Commons himself, on this occasion the Prime Minister was to act as spokesman, (on other occasions the Parliamentary Secretary usually did so.)⁵²

The May 1944 meeting lacked trappings of past Imperial gatherings, and proved a more workmanlike meeting. King wrote in his diary during the meeting that the U.K. Ministers "all seemed much quieter and more subdued" than when he was last in London, in 1941, "very intent on the questions before them".⁵³ Certainly this meeting was important to the U.K. The proceedings were scheduled to last only two weeks and there was a limit to what could be achieved in that time. The U.K. Government chiefly sought general agreement in principle for continued close co-operation, and the authority to initiate discussions which would secure it. Cranborne had clearly chosen the U.K.'s role as one of peacemaker and healer of any dissension between the Dominions, and while it had its own ideas on what it would like to see achieved in the sphere of co-operation, the U.K.'s first task was to ensure that the basic unity of the association emerged unimpaired. The Commonwealth could not easily move faster than its most reluctant member wished, unless the odd man out were the U.K.

The Prime Ministers' meeting opened on 1st May, and after the initial speeches the next three sessions were devoted to discussions of the war

52. Minute Cranborne to Churchill, enclosing notes for House of Commons debate, 20th April 1944, DO121/10A; Hansard House of Commons Debates, 20th & 21st April 1944, Vol. 399, Cols. 390-486 & 297-586.

53. Mackenzie King Record Vol. I, p. 672.

situation. The meeting was as much about the war as the future, and these reviews gave the other leaders an opportunity to hear. Churchill and the Chiefs of Staff give a full description of the military situation. The prosecution of the war against Japan was considered separately. Curtin's part in this discussion was remarked by King.

Curtin did not spare anyone's feelings in the way in which he spoke out. I confess I admired his straightforward direct statement. I equally admire Churchill's restraint⁵⁴ in listening to the presentation as Curtin made it.

(This refers to Curtin's insistence on Australian participation in high level policy decisions.) The subsequent two meetings were taken up with Eden's review of foreign affairs. The discussions at the end of his comments revealed virtual unanimity on basic foreign policy objectives and approval of the U.K.'s approach to foreign affairs throughout the war, and its communication of this information to them. After meetings on economic and colonial policy, the Prime Ministers met on 9th May to discuss the post-war settlement. The F.O.'s paper on various aspects of post-war organisation was distributed to the Prime Ministers with the explanation that it did not represent official policy, but was a draft which could be used as a basis for the Washington talks. The Prime Ministers, not unnaturally, demonstrated a reluctance to comment on a paper they had not had time to study and asked for the chance to give their official views after consultations with their own governments. The U.K. Government agreed that there was time for this. However, the leaders of the Dominions did make some important comments, especially at the second meeting.

Discussions divided into three broad areas; the membership, size and functions of the world council; the Commonwealth's representation on it; and the role of regional councils within a world organisation.

54. Ibid., p. 699.

The F.O.'s plans proposed a world council of the Great Powers and a number of other states, although they were vague as to how these were to be chosen. Churchill's paper, which was mainly concerned with regional councils, suggested a world council of only the four major Powers, the rest of the nations being represented through the bodies in their region.⁵⁵ Opening the meeting of the 9th May, Eden stressed the need for a compact world council with sufficient force behind it to make it work effectively, and noted the importance of its possessing the confidence of the other nations. At the second meeting, Churchill also emphasised the need for a small council, but his idea was for one which consisted of the Four Major Powers, plus one member from each of the three regional councils and in an attempt to make this more palatable, he limited the council's functions to the keeping of the peace. It should not interfere with the internal affairs of any nation or derogate from any state's sovereignty, except to stop the outbreak of aggression.⁵⁶ This idea took the form of a Great Power Alliance, rather than a pyramidal world organisation. In a subsequent minute to Eden he commented that the Supreme Council was not "to rule nations" but only to "stop them tearing each other to pieces", and his objection to any domestic interference is clear.

We should certainly not be prepared ourselves to submit to an economic, financial and monetary system laid down by, say Russia, or the United States with her faggot vote China.⁵⁷

He named the British Commonwealth as the third Great Power.

Smuts and Curtin both agreed with the necessity of placing responsibility for action firmly in the hands of the three major powers, with Curtin

55. Memorandum by Foreign Secretary, 8th May 1944, "Future World Organisation" PMM(44)4, CAB99/28; memorandum by Churchill, 8th May 1944, "The Post-war World Settlement", PMM(44)5, MG26, J 4, Vol: 323, File F.3409, pp. C222585-C222587.
56. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 9th May 1944 & 11th May 1944, CAB99/28, PMM(44) 9th and 12th meetings.
57. Minute Churchill to Eden, 25th May 1944, Prem4, 30/17. (The words underlined were written in by Churchill.)

commenting that a large body would merely become a debating chamber. King spoke of the danger that the council might be represented as a body determined to dictate to other nations, adding that it was easy for misunderstandings to arise over that and the other nations must not be presented with a scheme which seemed to take away their rights and their sovereignty. In a paper read out to the meeting on the 11th May, King agreed with the F.O.'s memorandum in its provisions of a world council and a General Assembly of nations, and accepted the principle that power and responsibility had to correspond. Thus the major Powers would have the right to permanent seats on the world council because they would have the major responsibility for world security. However, he also stressed that the same principle should apply to all nations and to all international bodies, and that the difference between, say, Canada and Panama should be recognised to the same extent between Canada and the U.S.S.R.⁵⁸ King clearly did not want too exclusive an international organisation, but one which allowed all states to participate according to their capacity. It is not clear from the minutes of the meeting whether Smuts and Curtin were commenting on Eden's memorandum or Churchill's, but from their previous statements it is inconceivable that however openly they were prepared to recognise the predominant position of the major powers, they would not also wish the smaller Powers to have some say in the direction of the post-war organisation.

Everyone assumed that the U.K. would have a seat on the world council. But would the U.K. represent only itself? While Eden and Cranborne doubted if the Dominions would allow the U.K. to speak on their behalf, Churchill had referred to the British Commonwealth as a Power on the council. King specifically posed the question; would the U.K. or the Commonwealth be a member of that body? Churchill

58. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 9th May 1944 & 11th May 1944, op.cit.; Memorandum by King annexed to minutes of 12th meeting, 11th May 1944, CAB99/28, PMM/44) 12th meeting.

reacted ambiguously with the comment that it would be very serious if they could not be united when grave issues arose.⁵⁹ At the subsequent meeting this was discussed more fully. In his paper King stated that the Commonwealth was not a unitary state and because the world council would be an executive body, capable of prompt and single-minded action, it would be impossible for the U.K. to discharge its duty if it had to simultaneously act on the instructions of all member governments. He reminded the meeting that the Commonwealth had decided in 1926 against acting as a single unit, and he asked how other nations could be expected to accept the Dominions as sometimes independent and sometimes formally part of a Great Power grouping. Through its association with the Dominions, and because of the reputation of the Commonwealth, the U.K.'s prestige stood high. The Commonwealth was recognised as being a like-minded group but not one which was bound by selfish motives, and nothing should be done which might revive old suspicions that this was the case. As to the U.K.'s individual status, King declared that its strength had always lain in its "alliance potential" and that remained the position. He was confident that the position of the Dominions would be safeguarded by close consultations with the U.K. He had no fear that the U.K. would not give due consideration to their views, because it needed their support.⁶⁰

After the first meeting N. Robertson, Head of the Canadian External Affairs Department, had spoken to Sir Charles Webster, seconded to the F.O. Research Department, and expressed his Government's alarm at these attempts to have a Commonwealth, rather than a U.K., representative on the council. He asked whether the U.K. was "so uncertain of being

59. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 9th May 1944, op.cit.

60. One Canadian official, Mr. J. W. Holmes, has described the memorandum read by King as a "succinct outline of the approach to the Commonwealth in a new post-war setting which was being developed in Ottawa". Holmes also remembers how King almost declined to answer the Curtin thesis on closer collaboration and that it was himself and N. Robertson who persuaded him that the Canadian viewpoint had to be presented and drafted a paper which he read out virtually unaltered. J. W. Holmes, Shaping the Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1943-1957, Vol. I, p. 149. (Conversation between author and Holmes, November 1979.)

a Great Power" that the Commonwealth had to aid it in this way.⁶¹

Churchill predicted that Dominion representation at the council would give rise to other claims, for example from the sixteen states of the U.S.S.R. He then cautioned the others that the U.K. acting on its own would not carry the same weight as it would speaking for them all, adding that important action would only be taken after consultations with the Dominions and that crises of war gave warning of their arrival. He admitted that occasionally one Dominion might want to disassociate itself, but thought this could be accommodated

Might it not be better that we should on occasion announce that there are certain nations in the Commonwealth who wished to stand aside, rather than that we should forgo for ever the advantage of our composite strength?

Curtin also emphasised the advantages of the U.K.'s being able to speak for the Dominions. If it could not its effectiveness would be less; which was surely not the meeting's desire?⁶² Despite these pleas by Churchill and Curtin, Fraser and Smuts supported the views of the Canadian Prime Minister. Before the meeting the Canadian delegation knew that Smuts opposed any centralising machinery, and Fraser's press conference of 5th May indicated that he would not try to push through any extreme proposals.⁶³ In a statement at the meeting which was largely reminiscent of King, Fraser said there was much to be said for making no changes.

Could we, in fact, better the existing arrangements in practice? The United Kingdom, thanks to its closest liaison with the Dominions, was in a position to interpret their minds, and to use its judgment with that knowledge as a background. Could that be improved upon?

Fraser agreed with Churchill that Dominion claims for a seat on the council would lead to counter requests; however, this issue should be adjusted

61. Reynolds and Hughes, op.cit., p. 35.

62. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 11th May 1944, CAB99/28, PMM(44) 12th Meeting.

63. Robertson to Wrong (Canadian External Affairs Department); 6th May 1944, MG26, J I, Vol. 366, p.316906.

between themselves and could not "wisely be embodied in a new constitution or formula". Smuts concurred, recognising the constitutional and parliamentary complications that would arise from any joint representation. He said that under King's scheme the U.K. would be the member, in alliance with the rest of the Commonwealth. It would be responsible for putting forward views consonant with those of the Commonwealth, but unhampered by the need for formal consultation on particular issues and able to act decisively with the knowledge that it was speaking in its own capacity and not as the mouthpiece of the association. This he agreed with, providing close consultation continued.⁶⁴ King might have been surprised at the support he received from Fraser, but from a talk with Smuts on 5th May, he was sure of the South African Prime Minister's view. King had remarked to Smuts on the similarity of their views, and the latter had predicted that Churchill would be on the back of them in talking of "Imperial Unity and damn nonsense of the kind".⁶⁵

The proposed regional councils attracted much debate. The F.O.'s memorandum emphasised the primacy of the world council, but gave a role to other bodies

Just as there are special functional organisations, so there may be regional associations for various purposes when there is obvious advantage to be obtained by limitation of the sphere of action. Such regional associations might come into existence for security, for economic co-operation, for the promotion of welfare in colonial territories or for other purposes. It is, however, essential that they should not conflict with the other world-wide organisation but rather assist it to carry out its purpose.⁶⁶

Churchill proposed that the Four Power world council should create as quickly as possible three regional councils for Asia, Europe and the Americas. These councils would include the major powers involved in the region as well as those states situated there. They would provide

64. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 11th May 1944, op.cit.

65. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. I, p. 672.

66. Memorandum by Foreign Secretary, 8th May 1944, "Future World Organisation CAB99/28, PMM(44)4.

the method by which additional members could be appointed to the world council. The councils would be responsible for improving the prosperity and harmony of the area, with a prime duty to prevent the vanquished from rearming. At the first sign of trouble, the regional councils would inform the world council and act according to its instructions. Churchill added that from the European council he hoped a United States of Europe might develop. Only thus could that continent recover.⁶⁷

Curtin questioned the Prime Minister about the Asian council, and whether it would include Pacific territories as well as Asian? In general terms he supported the idea and pointed to the Dominions' concern for areas in which they were often in a better position to advise the U.K. than its own officials. Churchill expressed no hard and fast view as to composition. If Curtin felt some enthusiasm for regional councils, Fraser was more hesitant. At the meeting of the 9th May he said such bodies would divide the world's security. He objected to the Asian council as outlined, on the grounds that it was merely a miniature of the world council and still dominated by the major powers. He doubted that in an interdependent world many issues could be so confined, and expressed his reservations about any multiplicity of bodies.⁶⁸ In a paper read at the following meeting, Fraser expressed strong objection to the regional councils' providing the forum for election to the world council, preferring that this be done through the Assembly. He declared that there was "no such degree of community of interest and sentiment" among the Asian and Pacific nations as to allow New Zealand to be suitably represented by one of them. He also rejected any interpretation of the nationality clause as prohibiting a Dominion from serving on the council. Returning to the worldwide

67. Memorandum by Churchill, 8th May 1944, "The Post-War Settlement", MG26, J 4, Vol. 323, File F.3409, p.C.222585-C.222587.

68. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting of 9th May 1944, CAB99/28, PMM(44) 9th Meeting.

aspect of security, he said that although Churchill had recognised the universal jurisdiction of the world council, the implication that the regional associations were the real foundation of order and peace

could hardly fail to result in a weakening of the solidarity between the Members of the Organisation as a whole, and a tendency on the part of those outside a Region to withhold their help from those inside. Such an arrangement might very well provide the basis for the United States and others to leave Europe to manage its own affairs and to decline to become involved in the case of trouble until too late to avert a major catastrophe.

If there were to be any regional bodies, Fraser wished them to have specific functions under the authority of the world organisation, to which every state would have the right of appeal. Local defence arrangements were permissible, but the division of security into regions was considered too dangerous.⁶⁹ This as an almost identical point of view to the F.O.'s.

Churchill's principal concern was to see a European council formed; here he had the support of Smuts who was anxious to see all three major powers represented on that council, and also thought it should include North African and Middle Eastern states. He agreed that it would stabilise the continent. However, Smuts, while liking the U.K. Prime Minister's emphasis on Europe, (he himself had concentrated on that continent in his speech in November)⁷⁰ preferred the F.O.'s emphasis of the primacy of the world council and the essentially secondary position of any other bodies.⁷¹ Churchill explained to the meeting that his concern for Europe was based on his belief that Russia was likely to favour satellite states, of a communist character, and that in order to retain the individual identities of the smaller nations there should be a body on which all, plus the U.S.A., would be represented. He added that he wanted Europe to be able to handle its affairs

69. Memorandum by Fraser, 11th May 1944, CAB99/28, PMM(44) 12th Meeting, Appendix II.

70. See chapter 4, pp. 212ff.

71. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 9th May 1944, op.cit.

without the need for States from South and Central America of Siam, or China, which were unfamiliar with the nature and complexities of these problems to be associated with their solution.⁷²

The Canadian attitude was similar to New Zealand's, with emphasis placed on the indivisibility of world security. Like New Zealand it agreed with local defence plans, as geography dictated, (it had its own defence arrangements with the U.S.) but these should not be exclusive and the world organisation had to remain predominant. King also warned of the perils of continental isolationism. Churchill had talked about his regional schemes a few days before the meeting to King who had reacted sharply to his suggestion that Canada might represent the U.K. on the American council. Churchill had responded with the right of the U.K. to take a seat by virtue of its West Indian possessions, but the minutes do not record his mentioning this aspect to the meetings.⁷³

The F.O. disagreed with Churchill's conception - hence the two papers - and at the meetings Eden raised some questions. Like many of the others he was worried at the possible dominance of the regional bodies, that the U.S.A. would use the plan as a mean of extracting itself from world problems, and he was worried about Russian suspicions that the European council was directed against themselves. Attlee was hesitant about the European plan, without the U.S.A., as he saw the two major powers attracting other states around them, which could lead to a clash of systems, while the U.S.A. adopted a distinterested attitude, concentrating its attention on the Pacific.⁷⁴ Cranborne also opposed the regional scheme and sent Churchill a minute after the second meeting explaining his views. He said he had not wanted to express his doubts in the presence of the other Prime Ministers, but that he had grave fears about the plan. Under it the Dominions would be concentrating on issues affecting their particular area, and Canada's

72. Minutes by Prime Ministers' Meeting, 11th May 1944, op.cit.

73. Mackenzie King Record Vol. I, p.675.

74. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 11th May 1944, op.cit.

only approach to the world council would be through the U.S.A., which could only strengthen that relationship. Previously under the League of Nations all the Commonwealth governments had belonged to the Assembly. One Dominion had a seat on the council. This had encouraged close inter-Commonwealth consultations at Geneva and they had usually kept in step with each other. Cranborne did not think this would be possible under a regional scheme, as the Dominions would not be present at the meetings of the central council. By its emphasis on the geographical diversity of the Commonwealth and its members' varying interests, rather than those held in common, the plan contained "possible seeds of Imperial disruption".⁷⁵

After hearing at the meeting the various objections to his conception of regional councils, Churchill agreed to withdraw his paper. He said it had served to stimulate discussion, but could now be re-stated in a more mature form. Summing up he suggested that the F.O.'s papers should also be revised "from the point of view of emphasis, and re-cast to show the alternative solutions to particular problems and be drawn in more non-committal terms".⁷⁶ One official recorded Law's impression that Churchill was "much taken aback at the universal opposition to his views" and "hard hit" at the preference for the F.O.'s proposals.⁷⁷ The minutes of the discussion indicate well enough that the consensus of the Dominion Prime Ministers went against Churchill's ideas on regional councils. Eden certainly believed this and wrote in his diary on the 11th May,

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75. Minute Cranborne to Churchill, 11th May 1944, Prem4, 30/7.
 76. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting of 11th May 1944, op.cit., (Churchill's paper was withdrawn and the Cabinet Office asked for all copies to be returned. It is listed among the papers discussed at the meeting, but is not available in the U.K. Cabinet Records. However, the Canadians had taken one or more copies and although Robertson requested that the copy sent to Ottawa be returned, a copy does survive in the Canadian archives. MG26, J 4, Vol. 232, File 3409, p. C222585- C222587.)
 77. Reynolds and Hughes, op.cit., p. 34 & 35.

In morning a very good meeting of Dominion Prime Ministers. They all took my line and not W's about the future world set-up. This was very helpful, in particular they were nervous of regional councils and for the same reasons.⁷⁸

However, in his suggestions for revising the F.O. plans so that the alternatives could be shown, Churchill was ambiguous and possibly using this as a way to retain some of his idea.

The revision of the F.O. Papers posed a problem. The two officials primarily concerned with these plans, Jebb and Webster, first re-drafted them with the minimum of concession to Churchill's regional plans; but were then told by two of the secretaries to the Meeting, Sir E. Bridges and Sir G. Laithwaite, that the Dominion Prime Ministers had not rejected Churchill's conception of a four Power council with the sole responsibility of keeping peace and that the re-draft was inadequate. Jebb and Webster disagreed with this interpretation of the minutes of the meeting, but had been told to change the memorandum further. This they did, making alterations which were innocuous: "to suit P.M. taking care to do no harm". Eden and Cadogan were both upset at this turn of events, with Cadogan threatening to refuse to go to the Washington talks with the changed papers as his brief. However, they both agreed that the substance had been retained.⁷⁹ These papers were circulated in their second revised form to the Dominion Prime Ministers and produced a sharp response from Fraser. He said he would have found it acceptable, although not representative of the tenor of the meeting, if both proposals had been included with the objections to the regional councils also stated; as it was they were re-stated with greater emphasis. He repeated his objections to the scheme and warned that if it were brought before a general conference, or publicly discussed, the New Zealand Government would have to air its objections.⁸⁰ A copy of this letter was sent to the other Prime Ministers and King wrote agreeing with Fraser.⁸¹

78. The Eden Memoirs Vol. II, The Reckoning, (London, 1965), p.443

79. Reynolds and Hughes, op.cit., pp. 34-35.

80. Fraser to Eden, 18th May 1944, Prem4, 30/7.

81. King to Eden, May 1944, MG26, J I, Vol. 371.

Cadogan was delighted at Fraser's complaint, noting in his diary,

This is all to the good - we may frighten the P.M. off his stupid line.⁸²

Eden spoke to Churchill, suggesting the confusion had arisen because the minutes of the meeting did not "represent very exactly" the sense of the meeting. Churchill reiterated to Eden that he wanted the memorandum to point to the different alternatives without committing the U.K., but on the substance of the issue he said the only aspect he was pressing for was U.S. involvement in Europe and for that continent to have its own council. The next day he minuted to Cranborne

Yes, I feel that the idea of Regional Leagues is full of dangers. I hope however to rescue "The United States of Europe" from the midst of them.⁸³

On 24th May Churchill spoke in the House of Commons about the post-war organisation and to Webster's relief, did not air all his divergent notions; the final re-draft of the memorandum only included the possibility of a United Nations commission for Europe which could lead to Churchill's plan for a United States of Europe.⁸⁴

Inter-Commonwealth co-operation was not discussed as a separate subject. Some aspects had arisen in the course of discussions on the post-war arrangements and others in discussing defence co-operation. The timing of this latter meeting was rather unusual, occurring on the penultimate day of the Meeting and after the draft declaration on the proceedings had been discussed. King's worst suspicions were aroused when after discussing the declaration Cranborne proceeded to introduce the subject of inter-Commonwealth defence co-operation and read a paper containing various suggestions. King recorded that "everything that they (the U.K.) had been trying for years was jammed into this statement". He went on to record in his diary

82. D. N. Dilks ed., The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945 (London, 1971) entry for 19th May 1944, p. 630.

83. Minutes by Churchill to Eden and Cranborne, 21st & 22nd May 1944, Prem4, 30/7.

84. Reynolds and Hughes, op.cit., p. 37; The Eden Memoirs, op.cit., p. 433.

It really amounted to high pressure of the worst kind in trying to shove this kind of thing through at the last moment . . . after we had come to an agreement on a statement which covered the whole proceedings.⁸⁵

King's suspicions of Imperialist machinations were fully revived and he reflected on Canada's possible fate if he had not been present to forestall such plots. The scheduling of this meeting is not explained and was perhaps due simply to the great pressure of time. However, if anyone had cause to be dissatisfied it was Curtin, who had come to London with a memorandum on this subject which seemed to be relegated to an after-thought. Perhaps as this was recognised to be one of the most contentious issues, it was decided to leave it until the end. Moreover, neither Churchill nor Smuts attended the meeting. Hankey recorded that Curtin was "so hurt that he did not bother to develop his full case on his proposals", commenting himself:

That is how the present Government fosters the loyalty of the Empire!⁸⁶

Churchill later wrote to Curtin to apologise for his absence.⁸⁷

The meeting began with Cranborne suggesting various ways in which the Commonwealth might improve its collaboration, stressing the political consultations necessary if the Dominions were to participate in defence commitments. It is rather surprising that he opened the discussions, in view of the strategy he had outlined before the meetings opened; but this was possibly because the talks of the previous two weeks had indicated sufficiently the respective positions of the Dominions for him to feel more secure. His proposals were all based upon the paper put forward by the Vice-Chiefs of Staff.

King was at his most negative in replying to these proposals. He thanked the Secretary of State for his suggestions and declined to

85. Mackenzie King Record Vol. I, pp. 686-687.

86. S. Roskill, Hankey: Man of Secrets Vol. 3 (London, 1974), p. 592. (Curtin had told Cross that he was rather in awe of Churchill, whom he had described as 'formidable'. By the end of the first week of the meeting Curtin told Hankey that he had refused an invitation to spend a day at Chequers because "I do not care to sit in an armchair and listen to one man", ibid., p. 591.

87. Churchill to Curtin, 20th May 1944, D035/1490, WC75/37.

comment without first consulting his colleagues, adding that in any case he did not consider the issues raised to be capable of decision until after the war was over. Curtin, not surprisingly, was more forthcoming. He had prepared his own paper for the meeting which he proceeded to read out. His first proposal was for the U.K. Prime Minister to attend a meeting of the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the High Commissioners once a month to bring them up to date on matters and hear of Dominion policies and problems. He suggested this as an alternative to the Australian representative attending War Cabinet meetings, but reserved the right of Australia's representative to attend in particular situations. He repeated his suggestions of the previous January for more frequent meetings of Prime Ministers, for these to be supplemented by meetings between other Ministers and officials (in London and other capitals), and to place the meetings of the Dominion Secretary of State and the High Commissioners on a formal basis. On the most controversial issue of a secretariat to the Imperial conference Curtin tried to avoid using that term, because it had created misunderstandings, but urged that with so much co-operation established between members, the time had come to place it under some central direction. He proposed that a small committee should study the alternatives. Curtin identified three levels of defence; national, Commonwealth and world, with the effectiveness of each having a bearing on the others. He pledged Australia's support towards increased defence co-operation with the rest of the Commonwealth and other allied nations. Having doubts about the formation of an effective world security organisation, he stressed the need for the first two levels of defence to be built up.

Fraser had also prepared a paper on defence co-operation, but did not read it to the meeting. Its thesis was that without prejudice to the world organisation, the Commonwealth should co-operate closely in

defence. He wanted to see the Committee of Imperial Defence concentrate more on Commonwealth, rather than Empire, defence, and the Dominions to have a closer relationship with it, as well as similar committees in each Dominion co-ordinated with London. Fraser again endorsed the value of local defence arrangements, but again without prejudice to the necessary wider co-ordination.

The minutes of the meeting do not record Cranborne's mentioning his proposal for meetings between Foreign Ministers, although it is possible that he mentioned this privately to the Prime Ministers and received little encouragement for the idea. The one suggestion accepted by everyone was that the British Prime Minister should hold monthly meetings with his Secretary of State and the Dominion High Commissioners. Curtin told the meeting that he had already mentioned this to Churchill who would undertake this if the meeting agreed to it. The only definite result was therefore that the daily meetings be continued, and supplemented once a month by this extra gathering.⁸⁸ As to the other suggestions they were rejected. As Garner says,

The meeting dismissed the proposals under the polite formula of remitting them for further study.⁸⁹

This might seem a rather harsh comment, inasmuch as one of the objectives of the U.K. was to gain authority for further study of detailed issues; but neither King nor Fraser had given support to Lord Cranborne's suggestions. The Dominions would consider the various proposals and whether a small technical committee should be set up to examine them further. There was no authority given to start such detailed discussions.⁹⁰ The meeting's proceedings were summarised for Churchill who wrote to Curtin, apologising for his absence from the meeting, and confirming the new arrangement for a monthly meeting. The one aspect which did cause some

88. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 15th May 1944, CAB99/28, PMM(44) 14th Meeting.

89. Rt. Hon Lord Garner, The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968 (London, 1978) p. 266.

90. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 15th May 1944, op.cit.

dispute was whether this signalled the end of Bruce's attendance at the War Cabinet.⁹¹

The other discussions between the Prime Ministers covered wide fields. One was devoted to economic and monetary policy, and was described by the F.O. as a full exchange of views which as expected had not resulted in any immediate decisions. The Canadian delegation described it as "inconclusive and not very satisfactory". In talks on Colonial policy the Prime Ministers agreed to the U.K. proposal for Colonial Regional Commissions, and there was no discussion of the Dominions' taking over responsibilities. In the session on post-war shipping and aviation there was a general discussion of the principles, and little dissension. Migration was also discussed and it was agreed that this should be referred to officials for them to work out practical arrangements.⁹²

U.K. expectations of how the discussions would proceed on the subject of foreign and defence co-operation were but partially fulfilled. Cranborne had expected Smuts and Fraser to favour proposals to increase co-operation; and although neither was quite as firm as King in resisting some measures and insisting on consulting his colleagues, neither showed much enthusiasm. Fraser had indicated in his press conference that he was unlikely to stand out for any specific proposals. While demonstrating his firmness over issues which he strongly disagreed with, such as the regional scheme of Churchill, he had no desire to proceed without full agreement of the association. The U.K. had possibly been led astray by New Zealand's seeming concurrence with the Australian viewpoint at Canberra, the previous January, although then Batterbee had indicated a difference between the two Dominions' attitudes. It does seem that away from Canberra, the New Zealand delegation was able

91. See chapter 2, p. 98.

92. F.O. Report of Prime Ministers' Meeting, circulated to F.O. Representatives abroad, 12th June 1944, FO371/42674, W9280/1534/68; Canadian delegations' report on meeting, MG26, J 4, Vol. 322, File F.340, p.C222292-C222296.

to stand up for itself better.⁹³ Smuts held a slightly ambiguous position, and his attitude was not always correctly predicted as a consequence. He was highly respected in the U.K. and frequently taken into Churchill's closest confidence, which meant he was regarded in a dual capacity, that of wise elder statesman, and as Prime Minister of a Dominion which also contained a sizeable opposition to the Commonwealth. Thus, when discussions came down to practical measures which would affect the independence or international status of the Dominions, Smuts had to stop thinking disinterestedly of international politics, and speak on behalf of South Africa with the knowledge of what would and would not be acceptable to that country. To combine the role of international statesman and national Prime Minister, safeguarding the best interests of the world and of that particular country would demand perfection. Smuts' role at Commonwealth meetings is more easily understood if one accepts the ambiguity of his position.

Curtin's attitude during the May meeting accorded well with the D.O.'s predictions. Possibly because of the impending referendum, as Cross suggested, or due to other factors, he was not as insistent in his demands as the F.O. had expected. Without failing to impress upon his fellow P.M.'s the importance he attached to close consultation, and without fear of standing up to Churchill, his general demeanour was moderate and reasonable. He probably worried the other leaders at his press conference of 5th May when, asked if he would go ahead with his proposal for a secretariat if one member opposed, he seemed to indicate that he would; but when pressed further he agreed that there had to be a consensus before any changes were made.⁹⁴ Although Curtin mentioned several times during the discussions items agreed to, or statements made, at the Canberra conference with New Zealand, there was no recorded discussion of the conference as a piece of Commonwealth 'machinery'.

93. Fraser's press conference, 5th May 1944, D035/1204, W60/34.

94. Curtin's press conference, 4th May 1944, ibid.

However, several spokesmen did refer to the need to have meetings of different Ministers and officials and the practice of more frequent, and not necessarily five power, meetings seemed to have become an accepted method of consultation, even if some felt more enthusiastic than others.

King's policy during the meeting vindicated MacDonald's predictions. One Canadian historian and former member of the Canadian delegation has commented that

As was often the case King was less forceful on such issues (as Commonwealth co-operation) in London than in Ottawa and had to be prodded by Norman Robertson to state his case at meetings.⁹⁵

This had probably always been true in King's case, but it was possibly also because he was aware that the U.K. Government knew his position, and that the D.O., at least, would not push him to commit himself. He had spoken to Cranborne on April 28th, and explained that with an election in the offing, he could agree to nothing that looked like a commitment in advance of a decision by the Canadian Parliament. On the 1st and 2nd May they had further talks in which King told him of his doubts about creating new machinery. The Canadian delegation were sure enough of the D.O.'s attitude to be able to tell Ottawa on 6th May that the department was opposed to centralising machinery.⁹⁶ Obviously rather surprised at Cranborne's list of suggestions at the meeting on defence co-operation, King explained to the meeting

It was essential that he should be able to return to Canada without having committed his Government in any way upon these questions.⁹⁷

The declaration signed by all five Prime Ministers announced the

95. Holmes, *op.cit.*, p. 419.

96. *Mackenzie King Record* Vol. I, pp. 663 & 668; Robert to Wrong, 6th May 1944, MG26, J I, Vol. 366, p.316906.

97. Minutes of Prime Ministers' Meeting, 15th May 1944, CAB99/28, PMM(44) 14th Meeting.

success of the talks and the basic unity between them in their determination to fight the war to its finish, in the principles which governed their foreign policies, and their desire to see a world security organisation established. The Declaration ended with the statement

In a world torn by strife, we have met here in unity. That unity finds its strength, not in any formal bond but in the hidden springs from which human actions flows. We rejoice in our inheritance of loyalties and ideals, and proclaim our sense of kinship to one another. Our system of free association had enabled us, each and all, to claim a full share of the common burden We believe that when victory is won and peace returns, this same free association, this inherent unity of purpose, will make us able to do further service to mankind.⁹⁸

This passage could hardly offend anyone, and was designed to impress the supporters and detractors of the Commonwealth by its emphasis on the loyalty and unity of the association. There was no hint of exclusiveness which might alarm the U.S. or the U.S.S.R., but a willingness to serve the cause of peace. Nor is there any doubt of British satisfaction with the meeting. There had been no clash between Prime Ministers, or serious disagreements with the U.K. The discussions had enabled the leaders to discover each other's views on a variety of issues and had brought forth some surprises; for example Fraser's support of King over creating new machinery. Personal contact was also improved. The F.O.'s opinion of King rose. A paper from that Office described him as "most helpful, friendly and enthusiastic". Describing the meeting as a whole to its representatives, the F.O. said

Although few, if any, hard-and-fast decisions were taken the meetings were successful beyond our hopes. Discussions were completely frank and took place in a strikingly friendly atmosphere.⁹⁹

98. Declaration of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, 16th May 1944, CAB99/28, PMM(44)9.

99. F.O. Circular to Representatives abroad, 12th June 1944, op.cit.

Whether the subjects discussed at the meeting would be taken further, and the Commonwealth's methods of consultation would advance, remained to be seen. The U.K. had not moved, perhaps, as far as it would have wished; but as one F.O. official wrote

If the Conference had achieved less it would have been a failure, but if it had accomplished more it might have been a disaster.¹⁰⁰

100. Minute by Campbell, (D.I.D.), 16th June 1944, F0371/42682, W8985/2145/68.

Chapter SixThe Commonwealth on the International Stage, 1944-46

By the end of the war the U.K. had declined in power, relatively in terms of other Powers, and absolutely in terms of its wealth and resources. The Dominions, on the other hand, had all increased in power and risen in the hierarchy of states. The Commonwealth members were more nearly equal than before, although disparities still existed between them. One major difference between the members lay in other countries' perception of their positions, for, despite its undoubted decline, the U.K., because of its massive war effort and its historic place in world affairs, was still considered a Great Power and continued to participate in high level counsels with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. The U.K.'s membership of this elite, combined with the increase in the power of the Dominions, meant that the Commonwealth as a group was a potentially powerful association.

On the whole the Dominions had accepted the Great Powers' direction of the war, or at least were not prepared to cause a rift or jeopardise the war effort by attempting to alter it. There was however a strong determination on their part to ensure that they did have a voice in the peace-making and in the direction of affairs after the war. Canada, Australia and New Zealand were all displeased with the phrasing of the Draft Instrument of Surrender for Germany, of June 1944, which was made in the name of the Big Three with no reference to the other states, such as themselves, which had been fighting for up to five years.¹

Despite the eagerness of the Dominions and other small Powers to contribute to international affairs, the Great Powers were reluctant to allow others to participate in their discussions and would not forego

1. D.O. Confidential Print on Armistice Planning, D0114/104.

the practice of separate consultations before the views of other Powers were sought. The major Powers were conscious of their own strengths, their inevitable involvement in any threat to peace, and of the necessity of reaching agreement amongst themselves if peace was to be secured. It would seem that the 'lessons' of the inter-war years, which had shown the dangers if some of the Great Powers abstained, were excluded from the organisation of world affairs, had been learnt. Eden and Churchill both frequently mentioned the danger to peace if the U.S.S.R. split from the United Nations. As the major three Powers began to disagree more often about the arrangements for the post-war organisation and the peace treaties, the need to reach some consensus, often involving significant compromises, was greater; and once points had been traded to obtain agreement it became far more difficult for other countries to alter the compromise. The Yalta agreement on the Great Power veto was a compromise worked out between the three states, without reference to any other Powers, and during discussions on Germany and Poland. When it was referred to the rest of the world at San Francisco no alteration was possible despite the almost universal objections of the smaller states.²

One problem for the Commonwealth lay in the fact that the U.K. at times thought and acted as a Great Power rather than as a member of the Commonwealth. Its membership of the Great Power elite sometimes clashed with the aspiration of the other Commonwealth members. Dominion objections were not directly related to their positions within the hierarchy of states. For example, New Zealand, the smallest Dominion, opposed vigorously the Great Powers' exclusiveness. Often Australia and Canada, as the two strongest Dominions, waged the battle on specific issues where they thought they, and others, had the right to be consulted.

2. For details of the Yalta agreement, see E. L. Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, (London, 1962), p. 488ff.

Indeed, Canada produced a coherent theoretical framework of the place of medium-sized powers in the decision-making bodies. Canada had begun its attempts to gain representation during the war in connection with the various combined allied boards established in 1942 to co-ordinate the war effort. These covered food production, munitions, raw materials, and shipping, and were mostly situated in Washington. Canada, a major producer and provider of food, munitions and other products, and applied for membership of several of these Boards. Even at such an early stage of the war it was apparent that the U.K. and the U.S.A. did not want other states associated with the executive councils of the war effort. They resisted Canadian demands. In the Spring of 1942 as the U.K. and U.S.A. were establishing the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Canada requested membership of this body too. Its efforts to gain a seat on these Boards and U.N.R.R.A. represented Canada's most positive effort to achieve high-level representation during the war and reflected its substantial financial and industrial war effort which give it a right to such representation. Canada was permitted membership of the Combined Production and Resources Board, allowed to attend meetings of the Washington Munitions Assignment Board when Canadian issues were being discussed, and given representation on the Commodities Committee of the Combined Food Board. The compromise worked out over U.N.R.R.A. gave it the chairmanship of the supplies committee.³ In its efforts to persuade both the U.S. and the U.K. to allow its membership of these bodies, the Canadian Department of External Affairs developed the 'functional theory' as justification for its requests. According to this theory, nations best qualified by their resources and experience

3. See J. L. Granatstein, Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government 1939-1945, (Toronto, 1975), pp. 295-321; J. W. Holmes, The Shaping of the Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order 1943-1957, Vol. I, pp. 30-31, 35-36; L. B. Pearson, Memoirs 1897-1949: Through Diplomacy to Politics, (London, 1973), pp. 214-215, 250-258.

to make a constructive contribution to the solution of problems, should be given responsibility to do so, even if they would not qualify for other responsibilities.⁴ The other Dominions did not request membership of the Combined Boards, although they were closely co-ordinated with the U.K. side of these bodies.⁵

At the Civil Aviation Conference in November 1944 the Canadian delegation assumed a prominent role, not through any special designation, but because it was able to use a unique set of circumstances to its own advantage. The U.S.S.R. did not attend at Chicago and there was a major divergence of view between the U.K. and the U.S.A., particularly over the "fifth freedom" concerning the right to pick-up and disembark passengers anywhere en route. Canada, which had some sympathy with the U.S. position and had worked extensively to produce a draft convention which took into account the prejudices of both Powers, stepped in and acted as mediator between the two, eventually producing a partial compromise. It was a good example of the functional idea in practice. The Canadians had a vital interest in civil aviation, particularly American and British plans, and had done a great deal of preparatory work before the conference. Thus, they were able to coax the two Great Powers towards an agreement, producing alternative plans and demonstrating their competence in the subject.⁶ The value of Canada's contribution can be seen from the remarks made by the U.S. Chairman of the conference, Adolf Berle, in his closing statement:

let me also pay tribute with particular affection to the Delegation of Canada, which tirelessly worked to reconcile the different points of view.⁷

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4. For discussions of the 'Functional Theory' see J. Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence, Vol. III (Toronto, 1972), pp.161-162; Holmes, op.cit., pp. 72-73.
 5. Rt. Hon Lord Garner, The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968 (London, 1978) pp. 225-228.
 6. Report by Shannon on the Chicago Conference, D035/1236, A341/5/65.
 7. Holmes, op.cit., p.66.

The absence of the U.S.S.R. and other Powers provided Canada with a chance that was not repeated at most later meetings. In this respect it was probably more frustrating for Canada to be as another 'small' state on subsequent occasions, than for some of the others. However, it had not only gained valuable experience in international affairs, but also the respect of other nations by its role, despite some jealousy on the part of the other Dominions.⁸ The Canadian Government continued to put forward its functional idea as the guiding principle for international representation, but found itself increasingly blocked by the Great Powers.

From the publication of the proposals drawn up by the major Powers at Dumbarton Oaks, until after the end of the 1946 session of the United Nations (U.N.), the Dominions together with other small nations attempted to reduce the immense powers allotted to the designated permanent members of the Security Council, and also attempted to introduce a graduated scale of nations within the U.N. in place of the twofold distinction between the Great Powers and the rest. In their efforts to moderate the powers of the permanent members of the Security Council the Dominions were not specifically attacking the U.K.'s membership of that group, or suggesting that it was the principal culprit in wishing to reserve such power to the group. As a member of the Great Power elite, however, the U.K. did clash with its Commonwealth colleagues over this matter.

The veto was seen by the Dominions as possibly the worst example of the Great Powers' determination to monopolise power. They opposed it in two respects. At Yalta the three major Powers had reached a compromise formula on the application of the veto which was incorporated into the Dumbarton Oaks proposals. This specified that a permanent

8. Report by Shannon on the relations between Commonwealth Delegates at the Chicago Conference, D035/1236, A341/5/65.

member could veto action suggested by the Security Council to settle a dispute, provided a party to a dispute abstained from voting. In procedural matters a majority vote of the whole Council was sufficient.⁹ The problem with this formula lay in its ambiguity. Did it mean that a permanent member could veto consideration and discussion of a dispute when it was itself not a party to it? Or was this to be considered a procedural matter, and thus exempt from the veto?

At the Commonwealth meeting in London of April 1945, called to enable members to discuss the Dumbarton Oaks proposals before the main conference met, this issue was prominent. All the Dominions, with the exception of New Zealand, were prepared to accept the veto in the case of enforcement action, although they did not welcome it. Hume Wrong, Canada's representative referred to his Government's reluctant acceptance, and Evatt declared that while he supposed no one liked the principle of the veto, his Government were "inclined to accept it" as the price for preserving the existing partnership between the three major Powers.¹⁰ Smuts accepted the veto for enforcement action on the grounds that it was an essential feature of the Crimea agreement.¹¹ For New Zealand, Fraser vociferously opposed the veto in all its forms. He said that it meant that a Great Power which threatened the peace could not be stopped, and argued,

surely it was a negation of any attempt to prevent aggression if, while small Powers could be easily suppressed, those big states which entered upon aggressive policies could get off scot-free.¹²

which, in essence, was a perfectly correct interpretation of the veto. If the Great Powers could not agree and one or more embarked on an aggressive policy, nothing short of war was going to prevent it; but that was the reality of the post-war world. At a further meeting Fraser

9. U.S. compromise of the use of the veto see Woodward, op.cit., pp. 462 &

10. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 9th April 1945, BCM(45) 6th meeting, CAB99/30.

11. Ibid.

12. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting; 6th April 1945, BCM(45) 4th meeting, CAB99/30.

told his colleagues that while he realised that Russia's attitude had led to the Yalta formula, which was an inevitable compromise, New Zealand would stand on the principle and vote against it.¹³

The London meeting discussed whether or not the Yalta formula could be interpreted to allow the veto to be used to stop consideration of a dispute, and whether this should be opposed. All four Dominions disagreed with such an interpretation, with New Zealand identifying it as a measure which would 'stultify' the purpose of the Organisation". Although Smuts said that South Africa would accept it if the "Big Three" thought it essential, both Canada and Australia vigorously opposed such an application.¹⁴ Discussion of this aspect was curtailed because the U.K. did not disagree with its fellow members. Eden, explaining the Yalta compromise, said that originally he and Churchill had had reservations because it "was open to strong objection as putting the Great Powers above the law", but that after some consideration they had accepted it as a formula based on "realism".

(It) would enable the new World Organisation, if set up, to discuss any political topic germane to the issue put before it, brought to its notice by any Power, and no Great Power would be able to prevent such a discussion taking place. It would be open equally to the Organisation to make recommendations and to give advice. The question of a veto would arise only when we passed to physical action.¹⁵

During discussion on this point Eden repeated that he interpreted the formula as meaning that discussion could take place

irrespective of the wishes of a Great Power party to a dispute, while enforcement action was not in fact practicable without unanimity among the Great Powers.¹⁶

Churchill emphasised to his Dominion colleagues the importance of the U.S.S.R.'s remaining within the U.N. He explained how he had tried to

13. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 9th April 1945, BCM(45) 6th meeting, CAB99/30.

14. Ibid.

15. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 6th April 1945, BCM(45) 4th meeting, CAB99/30.

16. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 9th April 1945, BCM(45) 6th meeting, CAB99/30.

reassure Stalin at Yalta that to permit a dispute to be heard would not result in the U.S.S.R. being "forced into a difficult position" by telling him that while the British would allow the Chinese to present their case for the return of Hong Kong,

if it came to action contrary to our interests, we should not hesitate to use our veto.¹⁷

While this does not correspond to Churchill's earlier statement that the U.K. supported Roosevelt's proposal that the Great Powers should be subjected to the "will of the lesser",¹⁸ it does illustrate that the U.K. was willing to see the use of the veto restricted to enforcement action, and interpreted the Yalta formula in that way. Discussion of this aspect of the veto was concluded after Sir W. Malkin (F.O. Legal Adviser) had told the meeting that he thought such an interpretation would stand up. He argued that as any member of the U.N. could bring a dispute to the attention of the Security Council, such action would be argued that it was a procedural matter and not subject to the veto. He and Eden reassured Evatt that the purpose of the Yalta formula had been to ensure that sanctions could not be imposed upon a Great Power, and that there was no reason to interpret it as conferring a right of veto upon mere consideration of a dispute.¹⁹

The second application of the veto to which the Dominions objected, that of amendments to the Charter, evoked less agreement between the members. Australia, Canada and New Zealand firmly opposed the extension of the veto to Charter amendments. Evatt argued that the existence of a veto for the Great Powers was "so obnoxious" that unless there was some reasonable chance that this could be amended some nations might not accept the Charter. Hume Wrong also rejected the application of the veto in this matter, and Fraser concurred with their statements.²⁰

17. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 6th April 1945, BCM(45) 4th meeting, CAB99/30.

18. Ibid.

19. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 9th April 1945, BCM(45) 6th meeting, CAB99/30.

20. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 10th April 1945, BCM(45) 8th meeting, CAB90/30.

The obvious difficulty was that inasmuch as Evatt was right in assuming that the smaller nations would be reluctant to sign a Charter which permitted the Great Powers to veto any reduction in their powers, so would the Great Powers themselves be reluctant to agree to the other nations' right to limit their powers. Cranborne pointed this out, saying that the chance of the veto being voted away would be wholly unpalatable to Russia.²¹

It might be assumed that the U.K. would not be happy with this possibility, or with the chance that the composition of the permanent membership of the Security Council might be changed and the U.K. itself relegated to the ranks of the lesser powers.

Australia did not think that it should be too easy for the Charter to be amended, and Evatt suggested that a special three-quarters majority of the Assembly should be required as well as a majority of the Security Council. Canada proposed a system of two-thirds majority in the Assembly over two years so that in the intervening period the proposals could be ratified by national parliaments. Canada did warn against the difficulty of the U.S.A. Senate's delaying or blocking proceedings. Smuts did not mention the use of the veto in this context, but did advocate some provision for amending the Charter after five years, and recognised that ratification by the U.S. Senate could present problems. All the Dominion delegates agreed that after a specified time, from five to ten years, there should be some provision for amending the Charter. Cranborne said that the U.K. Cabinet had not discussed this issue, but thought that the balance of considerations was in favour of some means to amend it. However, in light of the likely objections from the U.S.S.R., he suggested there should be no attempt at this before a general review of the Charter.²²

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

At the San Francisco Conference the Dominions continued their efforts to restrict the Great Powers' veto on these two issues. In conjunction with other "small" countries they challenged the Great Powers' authority to apply the veto in any case other than the application of sanctions. The issue of vetoing discussion or consideration of a dispute dragged on into the beginning of June, with the U.S.S.R. standing firmly against any concession. An additional issue raised at the conference was the "hidden veto" where if one Great Power abstained, this had the same effect as voting against a proposal.²³ On the 5th June Cockram wrote a memorandum for Cranborne in which he discussed the veto issue. In this he suggested that while Canada was standing firm in its opposition to the veto on anything except enforcement action, Australia might agree to accept the veto in the case of a discussion of a dispute

provided the Great Powers indicated in a separate protocol those occasions on which they would not use the veto.²⁴

Cockram also expected New Zealand to moderate its London position, trading the veto for a concession on the subject of an untrammelled conference within a specified period to amend the Charter. Shortly afterwards, at a meeting of Commonwealth delegates which seems to have been characterised by a general despondency as to whether a charter would indeed be signed, Smuts had announced that the only solution was to leave it to "Yalta to interpret Yalta"; it must be left to the three major Powers to reach a compromise which should then be accepted.²⁵ The Great Powers did hold many private sessions to debate this issue, and the suggestion of a protocol in which the Powers would agree to limit their veto was under consideration.

At the same time the question of the application of the veto to amendments to the Charter was also being considered, and for some countries concessions on one aspect could be traded for concessions on

23. D. N. Dilks, ed., The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945, London, 1971), p. 750 (editor's footnote).

24. Memorandum by Cockram to Cranborne, 5th June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

25. Cockram to Stephenson, 16th June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

another." As Cockram told Stephenson on 5th June, while all four Dominions were in favour of an untrammelled conference after a specified period, and opposed the veto, New Zealand might accept the latter in favour of the former, or even drop its insistence on a conference in the belief that the pressure of world opinion would force a change. It was also suggested that Australia might give up its pressure for a conference rather than force a breach with the U.S.S.R., while Canada might be persuaded by the U.S.A. to end its opposition. In the case of South Africa, Cockram thought that it was possible that Smuts would drop his opposition if agreement between the Great Powers could be secured on other matters.²⁶ The U.K.'s policy was set out in a letter of Cockram to Stephenson. He noted that the U.S.A. strongly opposed an untrammelled conference, as was the U.S.S.R., and explained that as the U.K. was committed to sponsoring the proposal, it could not support any amendment altering it. Because there was a chance of persuading the U.S.S.R. to concede on the issue of vetoing discussions, and little likelihood of the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. agreeing to abandon their veto on amending the Charter, the U.K.'s policy was to continue to press for the former while not insisting on an untrammelled conference.²⁷

From Webster's diary it appears that after a meeting with the Dominion representatives on 30th May, Halifax and Cadogan had agreed to press for a revision of the Charter after a specified term, and telegraphed London to this effect. Webster had protested vigorously to Cadogan, and later Halifax, that to do this would be too harmful for the U.K.'s relations with the U.S.S.R. and both agreed to send a supplementary despatch to London pointing out his objections and advising a more cautious approach. Webster thought such a course would have

26. Note to Secretary of State, 5th June 1945, ibid.

27. Ibid.

caused the greatest suspicion in the mind of the Soviet Union & have thrown confusion into the ranks of the United States Delegation.²⁸

U.K. policy was modified to that outlined by Cockram, with the Dominions receiving no positive support from the U.K. for an open conference.

The situation at San Francisco had reached a crisis in early June, as is illustrated by Cockram's statement that "it was an amazing relief" to hear on 13th that the U.S.S.R. delegation had been authorised by Moscow to give way on the question of vetoing discussion and consideration of a dispute.²⁹ A protocol was signed by the Great Powers in which they undertook to limit their application of the veto. This was gained at the expense of any alteration to the veto in the case of amendments to the Charter. The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. stood firm on this issue and the U.K. concentrated its efforts on the use of the veto in other issues. In a later letter to Stephenson, Cockram described how strongly all the Dominions had felt about the calling of an untrammelled conference, but added that all of them had realised that the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. would not concede on the issue, and had not expected the U.K. to fight on their behalf.³⁰

No major clash occurred between the U.K. and a Dominion over either aspect of the veto issue. In the main the U.S.S.R. was regarded as the principal opponent, that the U.K. credited with assisting the Dominions in achieving the interpretative statement limiting the application of the veto.³¹ However, Canada, Australia and New Zealand did not support the powers extended to the major states and, inasmuch as the U.K. was a Great Power, these Dominions opposed its privileged position. South Africa, or perhaps more accurately Smuts, was more tolerant of the Great Powers' reserving such rights to themselves and was more concerned with the capacity of the U.S.A. and the U.K. both to resist the U.S.S.R. and

28. P. A. Reynolds and E. J. Hughes, The Historian as Diplomat: Charles Kingsley Webster and the United Nations, 1939-1946, (London, 1976), pp. 64-65.

29. Cockram to Stephenson, 16th June 1945, DO35/1884, WR208/261.

30. Cockram to Stephenson, 23rd June 1945, ibid.

31. Ibid.

keep it within the U.N. The confirmation of the position of the permanent members of the Security Council at San Francisco, which was incorporated into the Charter, meant that there would always exist an issue on which members of the British Commonwealth would be in disagreement, and on which the U.K. might be forced to take the side of one of its Great Power partners, rather than one or all of its Commonwealth partners. This was inherent in the U.K.'s dual position, but created a potentially divisive situation.

The effectiveness of the interpretative statement signed by the Great Powers as a compromise solution on the application of the veto to anything but enforcement action, soon proved wholly illusory. In the first year at the U.N. the veto was used frequently by the U.S.S.R. and in the eyes of the Western world unjustifiably, negating the spirit of Yalta and the interpretative statement of San Francisco. The Dominion to react most positively to Russia's actions was Australia, which tabled a motion to be discussed at the final session of the U.N. General Assembly in the last three months of 1946. It was possibly Australia's membership of the Security Council, and its experience at first hand of Russia's use of the veto, which prompted that government to attempt to alter the application of it. The motion put forward by Australia called for a review of the application of the veto article, but the Australian neglected either to discuss the matter with the U.K. first, or even inform it that it was putting forward such a motion. (The General Election in Australia did delay the proceedings, but, possibly due to the arguments between the two countries within the Council, and the slightly strained relations between the two Governments, the U.K. had no prior warning of the Australian motion.) When the U.K. did eventually manage to elicit some reply to its enquiries as to how far the Australian Government would press for a change in the Charter, the Australian reply mentioned its motion "of which we assume you are aware"

in very vague terms without answering the question directly.³²

The principal fear of the U.K. was expressed by F.O. and D.O. officials. Mr. P. H. Gore-Booth of the Reconstruction Department of the F.O. wrote, in a letter to Shannon of the D.O.,

it would be most unfortunate if Dr. Evatt's persistence forced us to take a Big Five line more openly than we should do had he left the subject alone.³³

In a suggested additional paragraph to the F.O. memorandum on this question, Shannon expanded on this:

Our own position is complicated by the fact that it is Australia who has put one of the items on the agenda. Both on general grounds and because Australia is at present at loggerheads with Russia in the Security Council and at the Paris Conference, we ought to avoid getting into a position of siding with Russia against Australia.³⁴

The U.K.'s policy on the veto's application was contained within the rest of the memorandum. Discounting the practicability of amending the Charter, it put forward two alternatives; either a new interpretative document should be drawn up limiting the application of the veto, and agreed to by the Five, or some Rules of Procedure be introduced which defined a dispute and the method of submitting cases in writing. The first was thought impracticable and ineffective if achieved. The second embodied a proposal which the Cabinet had already approved, but which had not been publicly put forward. The implication was that this had been due to the known opposition of the U.S.A., and the memorandum recommended that renewed efforts were made to overcome U.S. opposition.³⁵

Before the Commonwealth delegations left for New York the D.O. telegraphed to the Dominions explaining in broad terms the U.K.'s policy towards the veto. The D.O. had impressed upon the F.O. the importance of discussions with the Dominions, especially Australia, before U.K. policy was finalised and discussed with foreign countries, despite the

32. Australian Government to D.O., 22nd October 1946, DO35/2047, WR362/1.

33. Gore-Booth to Shannon, 12th September 1946, ibid.

34. Shannon's additional paragraph, no date, ibid.

35. Ibid.

lack of courtesy shown by Australia in its handling of the matter.³⁶
 When the delegations arrived in New York considerable divergencies of view became clear, especially between Australia and the U.K. In its telegram to the Dominions the U.K. condemned the U.S.S.R.'s use of the veto over the previous year, but stated that it thought any amendment of the Charter was impossible; the agreement of all the permanent members would not be forthcoming. Moreover, the U.S.A. attached high importance to the veto, and would not forego its use. The telegram added that

it is by no means certain that United Kingdom Government should forgo right of veto. Circumstances might arise in which a majority on Security Council voted in favour of a course which appeared detrimental to interests of United Kingdom or other members of British Commonwealth.³⁷

The telegram put forward the two suggestions in the F.O. memorandum, again favouring the second Rules of Procedure, but without mentioning the earlier decision of Cabinet, or the U.S.A.'s opposition to it. The U.K. did consider if it could volunteer to restrict its own application of the veto to chapter seven of the Charter, enforcement action, whether or not the other four Powers agreed. On this subject Sir Charles Dixon, Assistant Under Secretary at the D.O., noted that the U.K. might well want to retain the freedom to use the veto under chapter six, which concerned pacific settlement of disputes, particularly article 36 (I) which authorised the Council power to recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment at any stage of a dispute. The result of this was that

the danger arises that if the Australians persist in the line set out in their telegram we may find ourselves forced to vote against them and with Russia, a state of affairs which would obviously be better avoided.³⁸

The Australian reply to U.K. enquiries had intimated that it would

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36. Shannon to Gore-Booth, 17th September 1946; minute by Shannon, 7th October 1946, ibid.
 37. D.O. to four Dominion Governments, 15th October 1946, ibid.
 38. Minute by Dixon, 25th October 1946, ibid.

press for a vote on restricting the application of the veto to chapter seven of the Charter. The two U.K. proposals were dismissed as not going far enough to meet the case.³⁹ At New York the Australian delegation was committed to this line of policy, but Cadogan (now British representative at the U.N.) was authorised to show that delegation the full U.K. brief and try and persuade them of the advantages of the U.K. proposal. Meanwhile the D.O. telegraphed to the Australian Government stressing that the U.K. wanted to avoid siding openly with the Russians against the smaller powers. It was explained that it was impossible for the U.K. to repudiate the terms of the statement by the sponsoring Powers at San Francisco, but that the U.K. proposal had a chance of success without requiring any amendment to the Charter. It ended with the wish that U.K.-Australian differences should be kept to the minimum.⁴⁰

At the October-December session of the General Assembly the British Commonwealth delegations met frequently, with the question of the veto figuring prominently in the discussions. The other three Dominions, while agreeing with Australia's condemnation of the veto, did not agree with its aggressive tactics. St. Laurent, the head of Canada's delegation, made it clear that his country did not want to see a breach between the General Assembly and the Security Council. He was agreeable to the Great Powers' trying to reach a new joint statement which could then be accepted by the Assembly. Such an agreed statement

might appear less an attack on the veto and a division between the great and small powers than one passed by the Assembly in the teeth of Soviet opposition.⁴¹

At a further meeting of 8th November 1946, St. Laurent said that while the debate in the Assembly had demonstrated the desire for a new

39. Australian Government to D.O., 22nd October 1946, ibid.

40. D.O. to Australian Government, 28th October 1946, ibid.

41. Minutes of Meeting of British Commonwealth Representatives in New York, 5th November 1946, D035/1892, WR208/5/29.

resolution from the Great Powers, it would be unfortunate if the appearance were given of the smaller powers trying to wrest away from the Big Five something which they had been given in the Charter. On the other hand, he thought confidence would be restored if an agreement between the Assembly and the Council could be reached.⁴² Smuts supported the Canadian view, saying that the indiscriminate use of the veto had badly shaken the confidence of the world in the U.N.; but he urged his Commonwealth colleagues to be constructive, commenting that the Australian resolution would achieve nothing. At the meeting on the 8th November, Smuts suggested that the major Powers be permitted to debate the matter. Otherwise the U.S.S.R. would suspect the Assembly of being mobilised against them.⁴³ This was precisely what the Australians were attempting to do. At a meeting of the 18th November, the Hon. N. J. Makin, a member of the Australian government, said that his country had been working to obtain an "expression of opinion from the Assembly which would clarify the position of the majority and register resentment at the abuse of the veto". Recognising that the Great Powers only rarely fulfilled the wishes of the majority of nations, Makin suggested that

the more the views of the great majority of the Assembly were disregarded by Russia the more apparent it would be to the world that Russia was taking on an indefensible attitude. It was also important that this fact should be realised as widely as possible.⁴⁴

The New Zealand delegation were willing to fall in with the Canadian and South African proposals, favoured by the U.K., and allow the Great Powers time to try and agree on a new statement, although pessimistic as to the outcome.

It was agreed in the General Assembly, after a strong speech by

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42. Minutes of Meeting of British Commonwealth Representatives in New York, 8th November 1946, *ibid.*
 43. Minutes of Meeting of British Commonwealth Representatives in New York, 5th November 1946 & 8th November 1946, *ibid.*
 44. Minutes of Meeting of British Commonwealth Representatives in New York, 18th November 1946, DO35/2048, WR208/5/29.

the Canadian delegate,⁴⁵ that proceedings of the Assembly be postponed while the Great Powers tried to reach agreement. The U.K. submitted a memorandum to the other permanent members of the Security Council which contained suggestions for further Rules of Procedure and a formula for defining a dispute. It also proposed that the abstention of a Great Power should not have the effect of a veto.⁴⁶ The Dominions accepted the U.K. paper; although Australia said that it did not go far enough, and that the Assembly resolution would still be tabled.⁴⁷ The U.K. paper was accepted by all the Great Powers except the U.S.S.R. and after no agreement had been reached by the permanent members the matter went back to the General Assembly.

Before a meeting of Commonwealth representatives on 25th November, Cockram prepared a note for the Foreign Secretary which recapitulated the attitudes of the Dominions. The wish of the Australian delegation to submit its resolution to the Assembly was noted, as were the difficulties for the U.K. in supporting it. If, as was anticipated, the other permanent members would not agree to restrict the use of the veto, Cockram suggested that the U.K. could not agree to do so itself. There would be no gain in denying itself rights which other Powers were using. However,

if the Assembly passes a request, and Australia and the other Dominions vote for it, would there not be the risk that, every time that we are obliged to use our veto otherwise than under Chapter VII, our enemies will see in our action a divergence of policy between the United Kingdom and the Dominions?⁴⁸

Further discussions were held with the Australian Delegation on 26th November when Hasluck told the British that he had the most "categorical instructions" to press a resolution to the vote, and that Australia

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45. Note by Shannon and Cockram, no date, DO35/2048, WR362/6.
 46. Memorandum to representatives of U.S.A., U.S.S.R., France and China. Annex to II to report of British Commonwealth meeting of 18th November 1946, DO35/2048, WR208/5/29.
 47. Minutes of Meeting of British Commonwealth Representatives in New York, 8th November 1946, DO35/1892, WR208/5/29.
 48. Cockram note for Foreign Secretary, 25th November 1946, DO35/2048, WR362/6.

would be reluctant to amend its resolution. Cadogan explained to him that the U.K. could not support a motion calling on members to restrict the use of the veto to enforcement action under Chapter VII. In the final sessions of the Assembly a milder version of the Australian resolution which, while not actually criticising the past use of the veto, did request the permanent members to consult with each other with a view to reducing the application of the veto, and recommended that the Security Council should adopt practices and procedures to assist in reducing its use, was adopted. The U.K. supported this, as did the other Dominions.⁴⁹

The refusal of the U.S.S.R. to make any concessions on the use of the veto and the hesitation of many nations, including three of the Dominions, to isolate publicly the Soviet Union on this issue meant that there was no open conflict within the Commonwealth. As long as the U.S.S.R. took an intransigent stance the U.K. and the other Great Powers could express sympathy for the complaints of the lesser Powers, and be secure in the knowledge that no changes would be made. The U.K. did consider whether the veto would be limited to enforcement action under Chapter VII, and if the other four had agreed, it is likely that it too would have consented. However, the F.O. had already stated that it would be reluctant to draw the line so severely. The U.K.'s worst fears did not materialise; it did not have to support the U.S.S.R. against the Dominions, nor vote against the Australian resolution; but there was no disguising the fact of Commonwealth disarray on this important issue. As a member of the Great Power elite the U.K. possessed powers which all the Dominions thought excessive and wrong in principle.

49. Note by Shannon and Cockram, no date, ibid.

The Dominions opposed one other aspect of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals; the lack of power conferred upon the General Assembly. This was consistent with their opposition to the immense powers allocated to the Security Council, especially the Great Powers. At the April 1945 meeting of Commonwealth representatives, the Dominions all recommended a widening of the authority of the General Assembly, with New Zealand appearing as its strongest supporter. At the fifth meeting, Fraser said that a "serious defect" of the proposals lay in the division of power between the two bodies, with the smaller Powers not possessing an adequate voice. To tell them "theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die" was not good enough.⁵⁰ During detailed discussion of the powers of the Assembly, at the eighth meeting on 10th April, Fraser announced that his country wanted the Assembly to possess the widest possible powers in all matters not specifically reserved to the Security Council and perhaps some which were; that it should have the right to recommend action even when the Council was considering an issue; that it should be primarily responsible for achieving international co-operation in economic and social matters; and, except in cases of extreme emergency, have the authority to confirm or reject decisions of the Council for enforcement action.⁵¹

The other three Dominions supported additional powers of the General Assembly, although none was as strong in its demands as New Zealand. Australia accepted that the Assembly should not have the authority to interfere in a dispute once it had been taken up by the Security Council, and was happy to keep the imposition of sanctions as a responsibility of the Council. Canada, concerned about sanctions for another reason,⁵² believed that the Assembly should be able to discuss any question of

50. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 6th April 1945, BCM(45) 5th meeting, CAB99/30.

51. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 10th April 1945, BCM(45) 8th meeting, CAB99/30.

52. See pages 318-320.

international relations, the main body responsible for economic and social co-operation, and capable of discussing a matter even if the Security Council was debating it. For South Africa, Smuts thought that as the Organisation's sovereign body, the Assembly should possess full powers under the Charter except those expressly reserved for the Security Council.⁵³

At the San Francisco Conference, it was acknowledged that the Assembly did possess the right to discuss any aspect of international affairs and make recommendations, except when the Security Council was considering the matter.⁵⁴ This had always been the U.K. interpretation of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, and it had not supported the New Zealand notion that the Assembly should be allowed to make recommendations when the Security Council was debating an issue.⁵⁵ The U.K. delegation summed up the conference's decisions on the Assembly with the words

- . In matters of power the General Assembly has really no larger role assigned to it than it had in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals.⁵⁶

The Great Powers' success in retaining their considerable power of the veto and the primacy of the Security Council in an issue which endangered the peace, meant that the Assembly was in many respects confirmed in the secondary role to which Fraser had objected in London. While its powers seemed widely drawn in international crises the Security Council would possess the decisive authority, and within that Council the Great Powers who determine the important issues. The history of the Assembly in the first years of the United Nations did tend to conform to Fraser's

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53. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 10th April 1945, BCM(45) 8th meeting, CAB99/30. See also Wellington Resolution of 6th November 1944 by Australia and New Zealand quoted in Annex A. of memorandum on Dumbarton Oaks proposals, 29th March 1945, BCM(45)4, CAB99/30.
54. Article 10 and 12 of United Nations Charter, J.A.S. Grenville, The Major International Treaties 1914-1973, (London, 1974), p. 247ff.
55. U.K. Delegation, San Francisco, to F.O., 23rd June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261; Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 10th April 1945, BCM(45) 8th meeting, CAB99/30.
56. U.K. Delegation, San Francisco, to F.O., 23rd June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

description of the fate of the small powers: "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die."⁵⁷

In addition to objecting to the powers which the major countries had reserved for themselves, some of the Dominions opposed the twofold distinction which was central to the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, which recognised only the division between the permanent members of the Security Council and the rest. No priority was suggested for any other 'middle' category of Powers in the election of temporary members to the Security Council or any of the other United Nations bodies. The two Dominions which particularly objected to this stark division were Canada and Australia. As the two most powerful Dominions, which felt entitled to be consulted on many important issues, both wanted due recognition to be accorded to middle-ranking states, and disliked the tendency of the major countries to put them on a par with the smallest. The U.K. understood and supported the views of the Dominions on this point, not least because it was to its own advantage to see Canada and Australia elected to positions of responsibility. However, as Cranborne was to explain to them, this view encountered opposition from the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

The Canadians had been expressing the importance of distinguishing between 'middle' and 'small' Powers for some time; it was the basis of the functionalist theory that states capable of making a contribution should be adequately recognised. In January 1945 the Canadian Government sent the four major Powers a memorandum embodying this theory, which urged the four to devise a way to associate states of the calibre of Canada with the work of the Security Council more effectively.⁵⁸ At the April 1945 Commonwealth discussions in London, before the San Francisco conference, Massey insisted that Canada's attitude was not a question of

57. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 6th April-1945, BCM(45) 5th meeting, CAB99/30.

58. J. L. Granatstein, A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft, 1929-1968, (1981), p. 149.

"prestige or status", rather

if recognition were given to the contribution which such States could make, popular support for the World Organisation would be proportionately greater in these communities. He did not see how the view could be accepted that there should be parity between the Dominions and like States on the one hand, and countries like the smaller South American Republics and Liberia on the other.⁵⁹

The Canadian delegation pressed for a separate category of middle Powers to be recognised as most suitable for election to U.N. Councils, although it did not think that a system of weighted voting would be acceptable in elections to the Security Council. Consistently with its policy the year before, the Canadian delegation did not want any regional criteria to be decisive in elections. They conceded its relevance in some instances, but pointed out how difficult it would be for the Commonwealth. Of course this was especially so for Canada, sharing a continent with the U.S.A. and the Latin American nations.⁶⁰

Evatt agreed with Massey's view and stressed the contribution made by all the Dominions in the two great wars and the need to ensure that Dominions and similar states became entitled to seats. Unlike Massey, Evatt was in favour of representation on a regional basis, and thought it posed no special problems for the Commonwealth. This was entirely consistent with Australia's efforts to play a dominant role in the Far East. Support for 'middle Power' recognition was also forthcoming from New Zealand and South Africa. Fraser suggested the Commonwealth should be entitled to periodic representation, and added that he had no fundamental objection to election on a regional basis, although he recognised that there were problems for Canada. South Africa, while not assuming a special position for itself, said that it considered the situation unfair to countries such as Canada. However, Smuts thought that the best solution would be to defer the question for a time and then review it. Smuts tied this question closely with the

59. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 9th April 1945, BCM(45) 6th meeting, CAB99/30.

60. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meetings, 9th and 10th April 1945, BCM(45) 6th & 7th meetings, CAB99/30.

amendment of the Charter, for he recognised that there were States which would grow, and others whose aberrations would be forgotten, and thought that changes would have to be made in the selection of States recognised as permanent members of the Security Council.

In due course (revision would) be necessary and a place could then be found for rising Powers.⁶¹

Smuts did not consider that issue important enough to delay the establishment of the Council, provided that it was made quite clear that the arrangements made were not permanent. The Great Powers' success in retaining the right to veto any amendment to the Charter effectively meant that it was impossible to reduce the status of a permanent member of the Security Council unless it volunteered such action.

Attlee, for the U.K. delegation, supported regional representation and thought that this would provide the Commonwealth with an adequate voice, the only problem lying in the probable opposition of the South American powers. After further discussions in London by the committee of officials, it was accepted that continental representation was difficult to use as a single criterion for it would not necessarily result in the election of responsible Powers, would not enhance the prospects of middle powers, and would not be liked by Europeans or South Americans since it would probably result in under-representation for those continents. The suggestion that one member of the Commonwealth be allocated a seat was rejected by the committee as allowing the principle of representation by political groups, and because it would never allow for more than one member of the Commonwealth to secure a temporary seat. The meeting agreed that due consideration should be given to the potential contribution of the candidate State, while not overlooking the need to have the different regions represented in some

61. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 9th April 1945, BCM(45) 6th meeting, CAB90/30.

capacity.⁶²

The Dominions all supported the policy of providing adequate recognition for the middle powers. This was not an issue in which the Dominions disagreed with the U.K. Various difficulties arose in making any further distinction between countries, most of which the Dominions appreciated, and they knew the other Great Powers had no reason to want any further categorisation. In the main their allies tended to be smaller countries; the middle Powers were generally independent of any of the permanent members and lacked their direct support, or the power to force a compromise. At the April 1945 meeting Cranborne informed the Dominions that at Dumbarton Oaks the U.K. Delegation had pressed for provision that in the elections to the Security Council,

'due regard (should be paid) to the contribution of the members of the Organisation towards the maintenance of international peace and security and towards the other purposes of the Organisation'. This proposal had been strongly opposed by the United States and Russia and had had to be dropped.⁶³

Thus, although the U.K. supported the Dominions, it could do little to help them secure their point. In the end it had to rest on the individual judgment of all members to elect 'suitable' countries on the basis of their qualifications, rather than for purely political reasons. The division of the world into blocs immediately after the war did not aid such a course.

In pursuit of its aim to secure adequate protection for the rights of the middle-ranking Powers, Canada took issue with the implication in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals that enforcement sanctions should be automatically accepted by all members of the U.N. once agreed upon by the Security Council. This issue was closely tied to the election of states to the non-permanent seats on that Council. If the middle powers were certain of representation, then they would automatically be included

62. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meetings, 9th & 10th April 1945, BCM(45) 6th & 7th meetings, CAB90/30.

63. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 9th April 1945, BCM(45) 6th meeting, CAB90/30.

in the decision to take enforcement action. However, if they were not allotted seats, but, by virtue of their strength, were likely to be asked to contribute forces for U.N. enforcement action, provision had to be made for associating them with such decisions. Hume Wrong suggested three ways in which this could be done; through consultation with the General Assembly, by inviting the participating states to hold temporary membership of the Council, or through a special approach by the Council to a country whose help was required.⁶⁴ On this issue Canada was supported to some extent by both South Africa and New Zealand. Smuts stressed how the use of military forces was a national commitment which needed to be verified by the national Parliament and doubted the willingness of states to accept open-ended commitments for the use of their troops.

In his view therefore, the responsibility for furnishing the armed forces necessary to take enforcement action must be placed on members of the Security Council alone in the first instance He did not think that other countries could be obliged to act unless they concurred in the decision or had been consulted about it.⁶⁵

The New Zealand Delegation agreed with the Canadian thesis that countries which had no voice in the decision to implement sanctions could not be expected to contribute troops automatically. Its solution was in keeping with New Zealand's general conception of the organisation; that the General Assembly should be the principal body. It advocated reference of such an issue to the General Assembly, where every state would have a voice, dismissing the argument that any great delay was likely to occur. If on rare occasions rapid action was needed, the Security Council could always act immediately themselves. It noted that consulting the Assembly introduced an element of doubt, but without such reference it foresaw

the lamentable process of pledge-breaking, which had been⁶⁶ a feature of the decade before the war, beginning again.

64. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 10th April 1945, BCM(45) 10th meeting CAB90/30.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

The other Dominion which frequently championed the cause of middle and lesser ranking states and might have been expected to support Canada on this issue, Australia, sided resolutely with the U.K. and the 'Great Power' point of view." Evatt announced that while he could sympathise with the Canadian position, Australia considered the obligation on all members to impose sanctions so central to the main purpose of the U.N., the universality so fundamental, that anything less would "cut at the root of the whole organisation".⁶⁷ The Dumbarton Oaks proposals provided for special agreements between individual states and the Organisation, to plan the nature and extent of military assistance a country would be able to contribute, and Evatt tried to minimise the actual consequences of the universal commitment to support sanctions by stressing this. For the U.K. Cadogan told the Commonwealth representatives that in order to alleviate the difficulties mentioned by the three Dominions, the U.K. had managed to insert two paragraphs which called for a nation not represented on the Military Staff Committee to be invited to associate itself with the work of that committee when it was being asked to participate, and that a nation which encountered special economic problems on account of a decision of the Security Council to implement economic sanctions be allowed to consult the Council concerning these.⁶⁸ All the same, the U.K. was uneasy about Wrong's recommendations. Cranborne emphasised that the paramount consideration was the preservation of peace, and anything which made action less certain was bound to endanger this:

It was necessary that an aggressor should know at the very start that, if he embarked on aggression, he would find himself faced, immediately and automatically, with the embattled might, both military and economic, of the other nations of the world . . . He feared that the Canadian proposal would have the effect of clogging the machinery and diminishing its deterrent effect.⁶⁹

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

Discussion proceeded no further at the London meeting. Cranborne concluded the session by promising that the U.K. would carefully consider the points made in the discussions, and suggesting that now each member was clear about the attitudes of the others, they could think over the issue again. At San Francisco Canada managed, with the support of others, to achieve its objective in substance. As the U.K. Delegation reported to the F.O., the concession represented a "considerable change in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals"⁷⁰ and effectively gave Canada its second proposal. Article 44 stated:

When the Security Council had decided to use force it shall, before calling upon a Member not represented on it to provide armed forces in fulfilment of the obligations assumed under Article 43, invite that Member, if the Member so desires, to participate in the decisions of the Security Council concerning the employment of contingents of that Member's armed forces.⁷¹

This question of associating nations with the application of sanctions had several dimensions. As Canada, South Africa and New Zealand each conceded, one reason for their opposition to the original proposal had been that it eroded the national sovereignty of the countries not represented on the Security Council. However, for Canada it was also a question of preserving the rights of the middle powers in the face of the power possessed by the permanent members. But as we have seen, Australia, which consistently supported the cause of the lesser nations and campaigned against the powers reserved to the Great Powers in matters such as the veto, opposed its partners on this question. For its government the deterrent of automatic collective action was of greater importance than national sovereignty or the protection of the rights of nations not members of the Security Council. It would be wrong to accuse Canada of trying to avoid using its troops to maintain peace; that was not the motive then and its record since 1945 is one of the more impressive. But it did have Canadian public opinion to

70. U.K. Delegation, San Francisco, to F.O., 23rd June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

71. Article 44 of United Nations Charter, op.cit.

take into account and King also equated the original proposal with the League's Covenant, the abortive attempt at sanctions and his own earlier efforts to ensure that Canada was not automatically committed.⁷²

The discussions on this question illustrate the complexities of Commonwealth policies and show that on questions affecting status the Dominions were not solidly grouped against the U.K. Most subjects interacted with others and for some, concessions on one would minimise opposition to another. This had the advantage at San Francisco and elsewhere of showing that the Commonwealth did not follow a single policy; that a seat for a Dominion did not amount to an extra vote for the U.K. The Commonwealth discussions prior to San Francisco gave the members a chance to hear in full each other's policies and almost certainly assisted in preventing too many public clashes at San Francisco or at later U.N. meetings. In the main, while continuing to object in principle to the authority given to the permanent members of the Security Council, the Dominions had little quarrel with the U.K.'s own use of its powers and appreciated the need for the U.K. to pay regard to Great Power unanimity.

At the meeting of 6th April, Fraser asked Churchill whether the Sponsoring Powers expected the lesser countries to accept the Dumbarton Oaks proposals as they stood. In reply, Churchill assured Fraser that

there was no question of attempting to avoid discussion. Amendments suggested by the smaller Powers would, of course, receive the utmost consideration. But the overwhelming advantages of keeping Russian (sic) in the fold must not be overlooked.⁷³

At a later meeting, Evatt asked whether the U.K. was committed to the Yalta formula "in the sense that they would be bound to oppose any amendment of it at San Francisco." To this Australian attempt to clarify the situation on the veto, Cadogan replied that the U.K. had

72. Granatstein, Man of Influence, op.cit., p.149. (For details of Canadian policy at the League of Nations, see P. Wigley, Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: British Canadian Relations 1917-1926, (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 235-238.

73. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 6th April 1945, BCM(45) 4th meeting, CAB90/30.

approved the formula as a suitable compromise, but that it formed, like the rest of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, "merely a basis for discussion".

If it turned out at San Francisco that there was strong feeling against the Yalta formula, it might be possible for the United Kingdom Delegation to consider their position further and perhaps to accept some modification of it.⁷⁴

Evatt expressed surprise at Cadogan's reply, saying that his Government was under the impression that the U.K. was "almost irrevocably committed to the Yalta formula". Evatt's scepticism, which was shared by the other Dominions, did not prevent them from attempting to achieve changes, with limited success. The U.K. Delegation's report to the F.O. began with the statement

It can be said that all the essentials of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals remain.⁷⁵

So, although some important concessions were won - on the veto, on sanction enforcement, on trusteeship, and with the elevation of the Social and Economic Council - the primacy of the Great Powers remained intact.

The pattern of Great Powers conducting exclusive discussions continued after San Francisco with all its attendant problems for the remaining countries, including the Dominions. Immediately after the end of the U.N. conference, there was a three Power meeting at Potsdam which discussed the peace treaties for Germany, Poland and Japan. At Potsdam the three agreed to establish a Council of Foreign Ministers in London, which was empowered to prepare the draft peace treaties. Under the provisions of the Potsdam conference "Other members will be invited to participate when matters directly concerning them are under discussion",⁷⁶ which left the nature and extent of such involvement uncertain.

74. Minutes of British Commonwealth Meeting, 9th April 1945, BCM(45) 5th meeting, CAB90/30.

75. U.K. Delegation, San Francisco, to F.O., 23rd June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

76. Potsdam Conference Protocol, 2nd August 1945, Conclusion I.3(ii); Grenville, *op.cit.*, p.231.

All the Dominions were eager to secure a measure of representation on this Council for three reasons. First, that their contribution to the war effort justified it; second, that each had vital interests involved in some aspects of the peace arrangements which they wanted to safeguard, and third, because they realised that it would be difficult to alter any arrangements which were agreed upon by the Council. The New Zealand Government was quick to question the scope of the Council's powers. In a telegram of 13th August 1945, it asked to what extent the Council would formulate policy and take decisions, and commented that from the U.K.'s message describing its task as one of formulating the treaties, it seemed to have authority beyond reviewing the relevant problems for submission to a conference of the belligerent nations. This did not accord with New Zealand's view that the belligerent nations should all have a voice in the treaties while those nations like the Dominions which had made such a great contribution should not be treated in the same manner as those whose belligerency had been 'nominal'.⁷⁷ The Canadian Prime Minister did not limit himself to dissatisfaction with the arrangements for the Council of Foreign Ministers, but attacked the basis upon which international affairs was being conducted:

I felt at the San Francisco Conference that the preliminary settlement between the Great Powers in private meetings of matters of general concern before the Conference at times unnecessarily tried the patience of all the more responsible smaller countries. We have been concerned lest the Council of Foreign Ministers should continue the war-time pattern through the framing of the peace settlement and into the United Nations organisation. It would, for example, be particularly unfortunate in our view if the operations of the Council of Foreign Ministers, composed as it is of representatives of states with permanent seats on the Security Council, were to lead to a system whereby the permanent members virtually settled in advance between themselves all important matters coming before the Security Council.⁷⁸

Australia also pressed the U.K. for participation in the Council's discussions, and Evatt stressed to Bevin its right to do so on the basis of its war effort, as well as its direct interest in many of the

77. New Zealand Government to D.O., 13th August 1945, D035/2014, WR334/3.

78. Canadian Government to D.O., 28th August 1945, ibid.

detailed subjects.⁷⁹ Smuts, like King and Fraser, was fully aware that "the decisions of the Council may be difficult to change thereafter and may thus determine the Peace Treaty and final settlement."⁸⁰ At one of the meetings of Commonwealth representatives held at the beginning of the Council's deliberations, the Foreign Secretary was questioned on the exploratory nature of the talks. In reply Bevin confirmed the fears that if they could not influence the Council at that stage, few changes could be gained afterwards. He said

the Council would take no final decisions, but it was to be expected that the final settlement would not differ materially from the agreed recommendation of the Council.⁸¹

which was a most apt description of the by now usual method of reaching any agreement in international affairs, although this was to be short-lived.

The U.K. encountered difficulties in securing admittance for the Dominions. In the Council the U.K. opposed the admission of some states unless the Dominions were also allowed representation. By the 13th September Bevin was reporting to the meeting of Commonwealth representatives that the Council had still failed to agree on additional representation. Bevin assured the Dominions that he would not permit any other country to be admitted unless the Dominions were, and suggested that as it was clear that no-one would be allowed admittance during the present session, the best way forward was to proceed with the draft treaties without consulting anyone, as the public would not stomach a breakdown on what looked like a procedural matter. Nicholls stressed that South Africa would stand with the other Dominions on the right to be heard, and Evatt said that the problem of associating countries with the work of the Council would continue to arise with

79. Evatt to Bevin, 11th September 1945, D035/2019, WR334/37; note of meeting 12th September 1945, D035/2018, WR334/19.

80. Nicholls to Attlee, (enclosing message from Smuts) 29th August 1945, D035/2014, WR334/3.

81. Minutes of meeting of Commonwealth representatives, 18th September 1945, D035/2019, WR334/37.

every peace treaty unless it was settled then, once and for all. He insisted that a new approach was necessary; the Great Power principle had been tolerable in war-time, but was not for peace-time.⁸²

Reacting to these statements from Dominion representatives, Bevin reassured them that the U.K. supported the Dominions and commented that it was a game of "power politics".⁸³ Some concession was gained when the Dominions were permitted representation at the meeting of 17th September on the Italian-Yugoslavian frontier. However, Evatt complained that the association was inadequate as it involved "no discussion, no consultation and no exchange of views".⁸⁴ By this time the relations between the Great Powers had deteriorated sufficiently for the question of Dominion representation to become irrelevant. The Council broke up on 2nd October. The following day Bevin met with the Dominion representatives and declared that he was glad that proceedings had broken down. In a remarkable statement about the conduct of negotiations between the major powers he told the Dominions he had

never relished taking over the "Big Three" idea of his predecessor at Potsdam. Moreover, in the course of the Conference world-wide revolt against this narrow conception had manifested itself. The late general election was, in fact, a manifestation of the same tendency, in that it was a revolt against the "big one". It had obviously become impossible to continue on that basis. . . . To the end M. Molotov had expected to get everything agreed by the "Big Three" behind the scenes. Mr. Bevin had always refused to meet the Big Three "en trois", and had insisted on seeing them separately. Now all that business was past and we should be able to make a clean start next time on a healthier basis.⁸⁵

If the Foreign Secretary was really so optimistic about the widening of consultations in the future, he was to be disappointed. The practice of the "Big Three" and later the "Big Two" holding exclusive discussions was destined to stay. In a departmental minute Boyd Shannon anticipated

82. Minutes of meeting of Commonwealth representatives, 13th September 1945, D035/2018, WR334/19.

83. Ibid.

84. Minutes of meeting of Commonwealth representatives, 24th September 1945, D035/2017, WR334/17.

85. Minutes of meeting of Commonwealth representatives, 3rd October 1945, D035/2017, WR334/17.

that with the breakdown of the Council, the likelihood was a reversion to a system of ad hoc Three Power meetings with occasional U.N. conferences. He thought Dominions' reactions to this would vary, anticipating Canadian concern at the growing conflict between Russia and the U.S.A., while Smuts' suspicions of Russia would receive added stimulus. He thought that the Labour Governments' of Australia and New Zealand would be perplexed at the U.K.'s failure to agree with the Soviet Union, and expected Evatt, for one, to welcome the breakdown of a system which had given France and China a privileged position in the counsels of the Great Powers.⁸⁶ Sir John Stephenson, Assistant Under Secretary at the D.O., agreed that, from a Dominion point of view, if there had to be a small inner body, the more selective the better. He thought that all the Dominions would prefer a three Power to a five Power grouping, as they hoped the former would encourage the creation of a larger intermediate body of 15-20 countries on which they would be represented.⁸⁷

At the meeting of 13th September, while Dominion participation was still under discussion, Addison had asked the representatives to do what they could to prevent harmful publicity, and commented that they must surely recognise that the U.K. was doing its best.⁸⁸ In the main the Dominions did think that the U.K. was doing all it could on their behalf. Before the Council met, the New Zealand government had expressed confidence that the U.K. would always use its influence to ensure that co-operation between the Great Powers would not weaken the general co-operation of all nations.⁸⁹ King, in a telegram to Attlee, had prefaced his criticisms of the Great Powers' private consultations with the comment

86. Minute by Shannon, 2nd October 1945, D035/2020, WR334/40.

87. Minute by Stephenson, 3rd October 1945, ibid.

88. Minutes of meeting of Commonwealth representatives, 13th September 1945, D035/2017, WR334/17.

89. New Zealand Government to D.O., 13th August 1945, D035/2014, WR334/3.

You and we are confronted with a situation which, I imagine, is not much liked by either of us.⁹⁰

The Australian government caused some slight embarrassment to the U.K. by making a direct request to Washington concerning its right to participate in the Council's proceedings, and the D.O. was very conscious of the importance of not giving Evatt a pretext for alleging either that the U.K. had not supported Australia's request, or that it had been laggard in doing so.⁹¹ Contentious press reports followed, and Evatt implied that the U.K. had 'lied' in its statements. He also described his visit to London as a 2nd diplomatic "fight" he had won, when he was of course going at the invitation of the U.K. The U.K. High Commissioner in Wellington, Sir Patrick Duff, reporting on these instances, said that while Fraser had deprecated Evatt's behaviour, referring to it as "unjustifiable", he feared that New Zealand's confidence in the U.K. might have been weakened.⁹² Evatt's action should perhaps be viewed as another example of his lack of diplomatic tact, and attempts to enhance his own reputation, rather than a sign of lack of confidence in the U.K. At the London discussions Evatt was persistent in his attempts to gain admittance to the discussions, but not antagonistic to the U.K. In a private letter to Bevin, Evatt said that he appreciated Bevin's "active help in this vital matter" and went on to make the unusual request that if Australia was not allowed early representation at the Council's meetings, he should be associated with the U.K. delegation as a special consultant so that he could gain first-hand knowledge of these important meetings.⁹³ Such a request was a departure from recent Commonwealth practice, although Australia had been less insistent than others, such as Canada, on the preservation of the niceties of Commonwealth co-operation. The reason for the request probably lay in the aggressive display made by Evatt before he left Australia, which made him reluctant to return.

90. King to Attlee, 28th August 1945, ibid.

91. Minute by Shannon to Stephenson, 24th August 1945, ibid.

92. Duff to D.O., 31st August 1945, ibid.

93. Evatt to Bevin, 11th September 1945, D035/2019, WR334/37.

without even entering one of the main meetings. The U.K. did not invite Evatt to associate himself with its delegation.

A conference of the Foreign Ministers of the three major Powers was called by Byrnes for December 1945 under the Yalta provisions and held in Moscow. There it was agreed that a full peace conference should be convened in Paris, not later than 1st May 1946, by which time the Council of Foreign Ministers would have agreed the text of five draft treaties. In fact it was not until July 1946 that the Powers met in Paris, and the great Powers had not reached full agreement on the treaties. There was, however, some measure of accord and the three major Powers were pledged to sponsor these provisions at Paris; which made it impossible for them to support any Dominion amendments.

The D.O., mindful of the consistent Dominion criticism of exclusive arrangements, learned with displeasure of Bevin's commitment to support the clauses of the draft treaties. In the words of one D.O. official, the U.K. was placed in the San Francisco position again, which as the D.O. had emphasised to the F.O., it was anxious to avoid. Admittedly the U.K. would be morally bound even if it had not undertaken a specific pledge,

but we are no longer in a position to give any support to amendments desired by the Dominions Delegations in the Conference proceedings, except in the secret conclave of the Four Powers.⁹⁴

The D.O. made two suggestions; either there should be a change in the Rule of Procedure to amend the requirement for two-thirds majority, or an alteration in the timing, so that stages two and three could be taken simultaneously. The latter would allow the U.K. support the Dominions, as the sponsorship did not apply to stage three, the final drafting procedures. The D.O. thought that the major Powers were not committed to the draft procedures, and knew that Bevin opposed them, while Byrnes had reserved to his delegation the right to support

94. Note on position of Four Powers at Paris Conference, 24th July 1946, D035/1213, WR207/7/28.

a responsible amendment of the Rules. The effect of the two-thirds majority was that with the four Powers voting together, and the Soviet satellite states supporting the U.S.S.R., amendments would fail to gain the requisite majority. So the D.O. realised that the chance of achieving an abandonment of the two-thirds majority was uncertain, and that it was vital that the U.K. should secure negotiations by the Council of Ministers on the final drafts. The Office anticipated that it would receive strong support from the U.S.A. on this point, but to achieve it the U.K. would have to embark on difficult procedures at the beginning of the conference "and without pressure, the Foreign Office may be reluctant to undertake them". The position of the D.O. was worsened by the fact that Bevin agreed to sponsorship on 8th July 1946, while the Dominion Governments had been told only a week earlier that the U.K. assumed it would not be debarred from supporting amendments at the peace conference. The D.O. had no doubt how the Dominions would receive the news:

It is, however, perfectly clear that the Dominions will have the strongest objections to the rubber stamp procedure at present proposed, and it is highly desirable that we should not start off the conference with tension between the United Kingdom and the Dominion Delegations, which seems to be inevitable, if at the Conference our membership of the Big Four Club has to take formal precedence over our obligations to other British Commonwealth Delegations.⁹⁵

The D.O. accepted that Bevin's acceptance of Great Power sponsorship was a final concession necessary to obtain a peace conference at all, but it strongly urged that the attempt be made to persuade the U.S.S.R. to synchronise stages two and three, and a Commonwealth campaign at Paris to achieve this would at least have the advantage of uniting the various delegations in a common enterprise at the start of the meeting. Lord Addison wrote to Bevin advising him of the difficult position with the Dominions and asking him to support a Dominion motion to eliminate the requirement for a two-thirds majority, and attempt to synchronise

stages two and three. In any event, Addison stressed the need to have a meeting with the principal Dominion delegates where the position, and alternatives, could be fully explained.

The Peace Conference met in Paris in July 1946 and although the D.O.'s predictions of Dominion attitudes were largely correct, its worst fears were not realised. The delegations did discuss the voting procedures and the U.K. must have been pleasantly surprised by Russia's concession that amendments passed by a bare majority would be considered by the Great Powers, as well as those with the prescribed two-thirds majority. King recorded in his diary that he advised a meeting of Commonwealth representatives that on important matters a two-thirds majority was all right, as against a bare one, "in that I doubted if the Big Four would pay any attention to a bare majority". King also recorded that Evatt monopolised the whole meeting in a manner "which was distinctly rude and unpleasant", and it seems clear that Evatt was protesting hard at the way the major Powers had taken matters into their own hands. King took Evatt to task for his outbursts, stressing the importance of making sure the conference succeeded;

protesting, if they liked, against the extent to which we had been circumscribed and not making certain things precedents but at all costs keeping Russia in the Conference, not allowing her to bring forward fresh difficulties each time fresh difficulties were raised by our own people.⁹⁶

Perhaps not surprisingly, King gives the reader an impression of the wise and moderate elder statesman who appreciated the worldly ways of the powerful, concerned that the conference should meet and that the U.S.S.R. should not renege on the few concessions extracted from it. This latter aspect was also emphasised by Attlee, who thanked King for his helpful comment.

On the issue of the timing of the Great Powers' consideration of

96. Mackenzie King Record Vol. III, p. 290

amendments, King records that it was Brooke Claxton, the number two in the Canadian delegation, who suggested that the Four should consider recommendations as the conference went along, rather than waiting until the end. He commented: "That seemed to impress the British and they are going to try and have it followed".⁹⁷ Inasmuch as this was one of the D.O.'s own proposals for enabling the U.K. to support Dominion amendments, it is not surprising that the U.K. supported the move. Moreover, it is possible that British officials had discreetly suggested this to their Canadian colleagues so that it could be put forward as a Canadian request. (Brooke Claxton was one of the less British-orientated of the Canadian Government and there is irony in this if he was prompted to voice a U.K. proposal.) At the first plenary session of the Conference King made this suggestion and the Foreign Ministers of the Great Powers did meet periodically during the conference to discuss the proposals.

The Canadian delegation played a modest role at Paris. King personally found the atmosphere disturbing and the procedural wrangling distasteful. He delegated most of the work to Claxton and when he returned to Ottawa at the end of August Claxton took over completely. Although the Canadians worked hard, they were under instructions to keep a very low profile. King described Canada's role at the conference as one of a commentator, and General Pope, Head of Canada's military mission to Berlin, was told "that at no time and in no circumstances should I express a view in the Commission".⁹⁸ The Paris Peace Conference was the last great occasion when King represented Canada as Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs. In September 1946 Louis St. Laurent took over the latter office. He succeeded King as Prime Minister in 1948. Under St. Laurent Canadian foreign policy

97. Ibid., pp. 290-291.

98. Lt. Gen. M. A. Pope, 'Soldiers and Politicians' (Toronto, 1962), p. 312. cited in Bayrs, In Defence of Canada, Vol. III, op.cit., p. 182.

was more adventurous and initiating than under King's leadership.⁹⁹ This was partly due to the personalities of the two men, but also the result of Canada's being in a position by 1947/8 to perform a more positive part and this was largely due to the cautious, tentative King.

The part played by Australia at Paris was infinitely more energetic, but not more effective, than Canada's. The Australians, and primarily Evatt, formed the most active delegation, submitting 70 resolutions compared with Canada's 1; but most of the former's were defeated, some by a vote of 20:1. One Canadian recalled that Evatt "jarred the sensitivities of many" and commented

Few can be more successfully abrasive than a determined Australian and Evatt was a past master in giving offence.¹⁰⁰

The Peace Conference lasted until October 1946; by then 53 recommendations for changes in the draft treaties had been approved by a two-thirds majority and 41 by a simple majority. These all went forward to the November meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in New York, but in all important clauses, the draft treaties remained intact where final agreement could be reached between the major Powers.

The Far Eastern peace settlement was dominated by the U.S.A. Australian efforts to gain a voice in wartime strategy and the plans for Japan's defeat failed and the U.S. gave no support for a conference of Pacific Powers, proposed by Australia and New Zealand at the January 1944 Canberra conference. America's experience of San Francisco and other inter-allied consultations up to 1945 resulted in a greater determination to dominate post-war planning in the Pacific. Russia provided the principal reason. Following the latter's actions in

99. Dale C. Thomson, Louis St. Laurent: Canadian (Toronto, 1967), especially pp. 202-204; J. F. Hilliker, 'No Bread at the Peace Table: Canada and the European Peace Settlement, 1943-1947', Canadian Historical Review, 1980, Vol. 61, No. 1, pp. 69-86.

100. B. Heeney ed., The Memoirs of A. D. P. Heeney, (Toronto, 1972) p. 87; Eayrs, op.cit., p. 181. (For further impressions of Evatt at the Paris Conference and the San Francisco Conference, see chapter 7 pp. 374-377.)

Germany and Eastern Europe and Stalin's virtual repudiation of the Yalta agreements, the U.S. wanted to limit Russian penetration eastwards, and avert American-Russian tensions in another region. The predominance of U.S. troops in the Pacific campaigns, especially their deployment in the offensives against Japan, as opposed to the 'mopping up' exercises, meant that the U.S. was in a very good position to dictate terms. A Far Eastern Advisory Commission was established in Washington, soon superseded by the Far Eastern Commission, which had greater powers. All Commonwealth countries, barring South Africa, were represented on this and the U.K., Australia, New Zealand and India also had a joint representative on the Allied Council in Tokyo; but none of these bodies was very effective in reducing U.S. control of Far Eastern policy. The U.K. was content to allow this domination, not wanting to antagonise the U.S. and hoping to gain reciprocal support for its policies in more crucial areas for the U.K., such as the Middle East.¹⁰¹

The potential incompatibility of the U.K.'s association with the Great Power elite and its membership of the British Commonwealth, was recognised by the U.K. and it was anxious to avoid having to make a direct choice between the two. On occasions, the Commonwealth cause had to be abandoned. The U.K.'s commitment to Great Power solidarity and the importance it attached to keeping the U.S.S.R. within the U.N. in those early years, meant that on some issues such as the veto, the U.K. could vote with the Soviet Union, against a Dominion. Although the Great Powers did reserve large powers to themselves, and operated under exclusive arrangements, relations between the U.K. and the Dominions remained generally good in 1945 and 1946.

It is probably true that in some instances the U.K. hid behind the

101. R. J. Bell, Unequal Allies: Australia-American Relations and the Pacific War, (Melbourne, 1977), pp. 181-202. (For more details on the Allied Council and the U.K.'s policy of not antagonising the U.S., see chapter 7.)

cloak of American or Russian opposition to any alteration in the conduct of negotiations, expressing sympathy for the Dominion viewpoint, while in fact valuing the existing arrangements. Certainly the U.S.S.R.'s often implacable opposition to a broadening of discussions suited both the U.S.A. and the U.K. in their dealings with the smaller Powers. But on many issues the U.K. did give strong support to the Dominions as the latter were provided with a considerable amount of documentation passing between the Great Powers (such as the papers at the London Council of Foreign Ministers)¹⁰² the Dominions could verify U.K. statements against their actions. Moreover, on occasions when the U.K. could not support the Dominions, either a compromise was worked out, or the Dominions appreciated the reasons for the U.K.'s policy and a major breakdown in relations was avoided. After 1946 the question of Great Power exclusivity was to some extent abated by the increasing hostility between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. and U.K. Smuts had always been deeply suspicious of Russia's intentions, King was quickly forced into an anti-Soviet stance with the Gouzenko revelations, and after an initially pro-Russian policy, Australia adopted a vehemently anti-Russian position. New Zealand did not have any hesitation in condemning Soviet actions, and supporting the western Powers. Thus, by the late 1940s the Dominions were resigned to the politics of the Cold War where the Great Powers, especially the Big Two, still reigned supreme, but not in the same way as at Yalta, San Francisco, Postdam or Paris.

102. See chapter 7, p. 359.

Chapter SevenThe Practicalities of Commonwealth International Relations,1944-1946.

The meetings to discuss the peace treaties and the establishment of the United Nations had seen some disagreement between Commonwealth countries, but on the whole the full expression of these divergencies occurred during inter-Commonwealth discussions. Unanimity on policy was an ideal to be aimed for, rather than a likely occurrence. A crucial factor in both reducing differences and making the Commonwealth an effective group was the co-operation and consultation practised before and during international meetings. The League of Nations had seen the birth of international Commonwealth collaboration. All member countries had held a seat in the League Assembly and the U.K., plus one Dominion consistently sat on the League Council. At Geneva the Commonwealth had begun the habit of joint meetings. As the series of conferences began at the end of the Second World War, the Commonwealth continued to hold meetings, but of a slightly different variety and initially with some hesitation. Several factors affected these gatherings: the extent to which the Dominions were determined to assert their individual identities, as opposed to their Commonwealth membership; the Dominions' aversion to being seen to act as a bloc and thus to risk the hostility of other nations, especially the U.S.A.; and the personalities.

After the third conference of the U.N.R.R.A., held at Montreal in October 1944, the F.O. were shown a copy of a report from the South African Minister at Washington on the conference. He described how the U.K., the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. had dominated the proceedings, settling matters behind the scenes; and he also criticised the U.K.'s supply of information to the Dominions. However, he acknowledged the difficulties and reminded his Government that the consultations of Geneva

days no longer continued:

It is wisely thought, with the U.S.A. so strongly in the picture now, that such group meetings during conferences would lead to unfortunate suspicions; and the Americans are particularly sensitive on this point.¹

In September 1943 Fraser had cautioned Attlee about convening a meeting of Prime Ministers in case it antagonised the U.S.A.² In May 1943, at the Food and Agricultural Conference at Hot Springs, the Australian, New Zealand and South African delegations had shown a disinclination for joint talks. The Australians explained that amidst such general agreement group meetings were unnecessary and tended to give the wrong impression to foreign states about the Commonwealth. The F.O. official present at the conference explained it in terms of the Dominions' eagerness to retain their freedom of action and demonstrate their independence and Sir Basil Newton was told by the D.O. that all the Dominions were anxious to avoid collective action and consultation, but that they did want direct discussions with the U.K. This hostility to joint meetings was also attributed by the Deputy Under Secretary at the D.O. to a desire to assert and enjoy their independence.³ In relation to the Montreal conference it was noted that at the previous meetings at Atlantic City and Hot Springs the practice of having no regular Commonwealth meetings was followed, but it was thought that the Dominions' aversion to them sprang less from a fear of upsetting the U.S.A. than from their own reluctance to appear to act as a bloc. The F.O. minutes mentioned that S. Holmes, of the High Commission in Ottawa, thought that the time for such Commonwealth meetings had passed.⁴

In fact, Commonwealth discussions took place at all three

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1. Report by Dr. Gie (South African Minister to Washington) to External Affairs Secretary, Pretoria, 13th October 1944, F0371/42668, W17101/188/68.
 2. Fraser to Attlee, 11th September 1943, War Cabinet Memorandum of 17th September 1943, CAB66/41, WP(43)404.
 3. Minutes by P. Grey (Private Secretary to Law) 21st June 1943, and Newton, 2nd July 1943, F0371/36607, W11982/188/68.
 4. Unidentified minute, 17th November 1943, F0371/42668, W17101/188/68.

conferences. However, these consultations held elements of tension and hesitation. The fact that F.O. officials were responsible for collaboration with the Dominions at Hot Springs and Montreal, could provide a partial explanation, because they were less experienced in Commonwealth affairs. However, Mr. P. Grey, who was at the Hot Springs conference, was a firm believer in Commonwealth co-operation and supported the D.O. in the face of some F.O. ^{criticism} ~~criticism~~.⁵ It was perhaps inevitable that the Dominions would stress their newly found freedom, and be anxious not to appear lackeys of the U.K. Problems over the forms of consultation did not, according to Grey, detract from the generally good relations between Commonwealth countries,⁶ but if the Commonwealth was to function well internationally, all the U.K. representatives would have to learn how to conduct such talks differently, without offending the sensibilities of the Dominions. Conversely, the Dominions would have to decide whether to reject the benefit of joint discussions for the sake of appearing wholly independent, or try to combine such participation with a credible national standpoint.

The International Monetary Conference at Bretton Woods, in July 1944, provided the Commonwealth, and especially the U.K., with some interesting lessons in joint consultation. Mr. A. W. Snelling, Principal in the D.O., was a member of the U.K. delegation and wrote a comprehensive report on the conference. It began:

This Conference has, I think, done much to demonstrate that the countries of the British Commonwealth by no means always speak with one voice and that the Dominions certainly cannot be relied upon to dance to the tune which London calls.

He even expected some Dominions to criticise the U.K. for not ensuring fewer public arguments between the members. Preliminary discussions

5. Minute by Grey, 21st June 1943,
F0371/36607, W11982/188/68.

6. Ibid.

were held with Dominion delegations at Atlantic City and at Bretton Woods (the Canadian, Australian and Indian delegations were consulted first at Atlantic City) and full meetings with them were possible at the beginning of the conference. In addition Snelling records many private meetings between the U.K., especially in the person of Keynes, and individual delegations. The problem of fitting in Commonwealth talks once a conference was fully launched recurred often. At Bretton Woods it proved impossible to hold any once the question of quotas came up for discussion, but New Zealand was said to be the only one to show any interest in them.

Snelling noted that there were remarkably few public clashes on major questions, and where they occurred they arose from "fundamental divergencies of interest" which he judged no amount of private talks would have reconciled. The U.K.'s relations with individual Dominion delegations did vary, their success being in his view directly related to the quality of the Dominions' representatives. Thus, the fullest co-operation had been achieved with the Canadians, with whom disagreements had only occurred on technical issues "about which two or more views could legitimately be held", the poorest with New Zealand which had fielded a weak delegation.⁷ Snelling did suggest that at technical conferences the Head of the Delegation should not be the chief expert, as this had proved too onerous a task for one man, and meant he could not hold the consultations which were desired. He stated that in any event Commonwealth co-operation was difficult when the conference timetable was grossly overloaded, which meant the Dominion delegates had to rely on chance meetings, or interviews booked a long way ahead. In a note of optimism he commented that such meetings were more fruitful the better the delegates knew each other:

7. For further details of individual delegations, see pp. 372-380.

luckily there are now a number of regular Dominion conferenciers whom a good many U.K. officials have met, so it is to be hoped that each successive gathering will be more successful from this point of view.⁸

He suggested that the D.O. representative concerned with Commonwealth liaison should not be committed to secretarial tasks as well, as these impinged on the former.

At the International Aviation Conference of November 1944 in Chicago, disagreement between the U.S. and the U.K., and strict instructions from London to the U.K. delegation, created difficulties for Commonwealth consultations. The members of the Commonwealth arrived in Chicago in broad agreement on aviation policy, having met in October 1943 in London and October 1944 in Montreal to discuss it. At Chicago differences between U.S. and U.K. policy soon became apparent, especially over the "fifth freedom" concerning the right to pick-up and disembark passengers anywhere en route. Agreement looked remote. Canada adopted the role of mediator, eventually producing a partial compromise. While these three powers held separate talks the U.K. kept the other Dominions informed of their progress. The Canadian delegation did not attend any of these Commonwealth meetings, but Shannon noted that as the Canadians disagreed with aspects of the U.K. policy "their presence might have been embarrassing". He also thought that some of the Canadian delegates were opposed to Commonwealth meetings.⁹ Cranborne had not been aware, and was displeased at hearing, that the U.K. was primarily responsible for the absence of the Canadians. He regretted this as he thought such meetings should not merely impart information, but also

8. Report by Snelling on Bretton Woods Conference, 31st July 1944, D035/1216, WR254/1/40.

9. Minute by Shannon, 5th June 1945, and report by Shannon 'Relations between the United Kingdom and the other British Commonwealth Delegations' at Chicago, D035/1236, A341/5/65.

to concert a United Empire policy. For that purpose, it was important that the Canadians shd be present, and I feel that, by our action in excluding them, we have given them a genuine grievance.¹⁰

Shannon was generally cirtical of the U.K. delegation's imperfect co-operation with the Dominions, and commented

if consultation is to be more than a formality, they (the Dominions) expect some account to be taken of their views, and at least an explanation of the reasons, when their views are rejected. The mere 'ipse dixit', even of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, is not enough.¹¹

Whereas the U.K. may have thought that Commonwealth solidarity was even more important when it was in opposition to the U.S., (and it certainly resented the closeness between the Canadian and U.S. delegations) the Dominions all disliked having to side with the U.K. against the U.S., and as the U.K. objections to U.S. policy did not win the inner conviction of any Dominion they found it difficult to give the U.K. unqualified support, at least in private conversations. Shannon added at the end of his summary of the conference that the outstanding feature was the strong desire of the Dominions and India for "mutual agreement and co-operation" between the countries of the British Commonwealth and the United States.¹² A further aspect which complicated Commonwealth relations was the order given or the conviction held, by Lord Swinton, the Head of the U.K. delegation, to keep strictly to his brief and alter the policy only on direct instructions from London. This resulted in sometimes swift and unexpected changes in U.K. policy which caught the Dominions by surprise, and at times publicly espousing a different point of view, which they thought was the U.K.'s position.

Cranborne minuted:

10. Minute by Cranborne, 14th January 1945, ibid.

11. Report by Shannon on Commonwealth relations at the Chicago conference, op.cit.; ibid.

12. Summary by Shannon of Chicago conference, undated, ibid.

One gets the impression that it was unfortunate that Ld. Swinton was not given a freer hand. He felt that he was tied by his instructions from London, & we in London were unaware of many of the detailed facts of the constantly changing position . . . We should bear this in mind for future international & inter-imperial conferences, held outside this country.¹³

The Chicago Conference was unlikely to have furthered the U.K.'s relations with the Dominions, as Machtig noted on 9th January,¹⁴ but an irrevocable break with the U.S.A. was avoided and the U.K. at least seemed to learn from the experience some of the problems involved in post-war co-operation, and did so before the first major conference at San Francisco was convened.

In August and October 1944 the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and the U.K. had met at Dumbarton Oaks, with China replacing the U.S.S.R. for the latter meeting, to produce a set of proposals for the future world organisation.¹⁵ The governments of the Commonwealth corresponded by telegram and through their representatives on these proposals, and prior to the conference in San Francisco where all the United Nations could discuss them, the Dominions were invited to send delegations to a meeting in London. The representatives who arrived in London in April 1945 were of varied rank. It was not a Prime Ministers' meeting, although all had been invited. Fraser and Smuts did attend but Curtin sent his deputy Forde, and his External Affairs Minister, Evatt. Massey led the Canadian delegation, but Hume Wrong, of the External Affairs Department, tended to dominate the discussions for Canada.¹⁶

Although quite substantial differences between the members of the Commonwealth arose during the discussions, the meeting was judged a success in terms of the fullness of the talks, the willingness of the

13. Minute by Cranborne, 14th January 1945, ibid.

14. Minute by Machtig, 9th January 1945, ibid.

15. For arrangements for the 1945 meeting see D035/1479, WC60/35, and Prem4, 31/6.

16. For list of delegations to the May 1945 meeting, see CAB99/30, "List of Visiting Delegations".

delegates to listen to alternative viewpoints, and the generally friendly atmosphere. No-one suggested that the Commonwealth should be jointly tied to a common policy on all issues; the meeting was designed to minimise differences by prior discussion, not to force a consensus.¹⁷ Recognition of divergent opinions formed an important part of Commonwealth discussions as it allowed the members to reassess their policies and if necessary prepare for public disunity. A member might then abstain, rather than vote against a proposal which it knew was supported by the others, or explain why the Commonwealth had been unable to agree on a particular policy.

The U.K. sent a strong delegation to San Francisco. Eden records his determination to make sure of this, and his request to Churchill that it should include both Attlee and Cranborne. In addition there was Halifax, the U.K. Ambassador in Washington, junior Ministers from all parties and top officials, including the PUS of the F.O., Cadogan. In a minute to Churchill, Eden requested Cranborne partly because he knew the issues well, but also because he would be able to assist Eden in collaborating with the strongly represented Dominions.¹⁸ Cranborne's absence from London required other arrangements to be made at the D.O. and he stressed to Churchill that while his PUS and Parliamentary Secretary, Machtig and Emrys-Evans, could cope with the day to day running of the department, a replacement was required specifically to represent the Office in the Cabinet, to chair the meetings with the High Commissioners, and be available for consultation if any critical matter arose. He recommended that Mr. Law, Minister of State at the F.O. should deputise for him as he would be attending the Cabinet in Eden's absence, and knew the foreign issues well. Perhaps Law's

17. At San Francisco Evatt did complain at one point that policies agreed to in London were not being followed, but the U.K. denied that any common policies had been agreed to. See p.351.

18. Minute by Eden to Churchill, 8th March 1945, Prem4, 31/7. See also The Eden Memoirs, The Reckoning (London, 1965), p. 528.

persistently perceptive interest in the Commonwealth was another factor in Cranborne's choice.¹⁹

Eden and Attlee could not stay at the conference for its duration; as senior Ministers their presence was missed in London and Churchill's decision to call an election in June added urgency to their early departure. Cranborne, however, did remain at San Francisco. Eden, in a telegram of 30th April commented favourably on Cranborne's work with the Commonwealth delegations, and advised Churchill to appoint him as number two in the delegation to Lord Halifax when he and Attlee left, rather than asking Smuts to lead it. Eden thought Smuts would refuse anyway on principle, and because he was fully occupied with the chairmanship of one of the commissions. Later, Halifax also spoke highly of Cranborne's work at the conference.²⁰ To assist Cranborne with inter-Commonwealth co-operation Mr. B. Cockram, the D.O.'s representative at Washington, was assigned to San Francisco and Cranborne's Private Secretary, Mr. Clark, also attended. The flexible and practical arrangements for Commonwealth discussions worked well on the whole.

The Commonwealth partners held meetings between Heads of Delegations and their senior officials. The Dominions were represented by top-level teams, much the same as those which had visited London at the beginning of the month, with the addition of King and other leading Canadians. (King could only stay in San Francisco until the 14th May because of the Canadian General Election, but he did return for the closing ceremony.) Cockram, reporting to the D.O. of the early discussions with the Dominions, described the relations with the Dominions as "admirable":

19. Cranborne minute to Churchill, 16th April 1945, DO121/10A, No. 112.

20. Eden to Churchill, 9th May 1945; Churchill to Eden, no date, Halifax to Churchill, 27th May 1945, Prem4, 31/7.

there is every indication that as a result of the talks in London all of them are doing their very best to be as helpful and co-operative as possible.²¹

In addition to these gatherings, there were informal talks between delegates and officials in committees whenever advisable, and separate talks every other day between Cockram and leading Dominion officials. These consisted of Robertson, Wrong, Pearson and Escott Reid (Canadian Delegation); Watt and Bailey (Australia); McIntosh (New Zealand), and Forsyth, Smut and Jordan (South Africa). Finally, Cranborne, Cockram and Clark gave a number of dinners to Dominion personnel to promote harmonious personal contact. To keep the delegations in touch with communications outside San Francisco, the additional arrangement of sending the Dominions category 'D' telegrams (read out to the High Commissioners in London) was organised. They appreciated this.²²

When the Dominions submitted their amendments to the Charter, Cockram and his colleagues decided that it was necessary, "if there was to be any degree of co-operation", for them to be classified and then sifted by the officials to judge which needed to be considered by the Heads of Delegations. It became apparent when trying to arrange meetings of senior officials that the pressure of committee work was making Commonwealth consultation difficult. In the event they had to meet bi-laterally, having failed to find a time convenient for all.²³

Conferences of such size easily became bogged down in bureaucratic procedure. Delegates worked under pressure, being required in their countries. Moreover, the schedules did not allow for extensive meetings between particular groups of delegates, although the practice did become more common. It was perhaps not surprising, therefore, that Cockram informed Sir John Stephenson, Deputy Under Secretary at the D.O., that

21. Cockram to Machtig, 28th April 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

22. Ibid., and Cockram to Stephenson, 2nd June 1945, ibid.

23. Cockram to Stephenson, 15th May 1945, ibid.

arrangements (for consulting the Dominions) had begun to creak badly under the strain of the three or four conference committees a day to which nearly all the Dominion delegates and officials were exposed, and which left them little or no time to consult with the other members of their own delegations, let alone the other Commonwealth delegations.²⁴

He said that he had tried to overhaul and tighten-up the arrangements, in consultation with his fellow officials. Commonwealth delegates on committees were reminded that they could suggest joint meetings at any time, and that they should keep their opposite numbers informed of their plans. Dominion delegates were empowered to take the initiative in calling for Heads of Delegation meetings. The result of these new arrangements was reported to be good, with the leaders of the delegations meeting about every other day, and close co-operation occurring in the committees. As for discussions between the Commonwealth officials, Cockram told his colleagues that he would be available in his office at certain hours for them to meet and exchange information. He told Stephenson that

somewhat to my surprise, knowing how little time they had, the plan of Dominion officials calling on me in the morning has worked admirably.²⁵

For the U.K., Cockram was complementing Cranborne's efforts with the leaders of the delegations by expending considerable time and energy at the official level, and his success is demonstrated by the co-operativeness of the other delegations. Nor was co-operation merely a matter of the U.K. holding bi-lateral or multi-lateral talks with the Dominions. King's diary records meetings between him and other Dominion leaders, without the British, and John W. Holmes remembers that at all meetings after the war the contact between officials from the Dominions was frequent and extensive.²⁶

Australia provided one exception to otherwise successful collaboration

24. Cockram to Stephenson, 2nd June 1945, ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Mackenzie King Record Vol. II, pp. 385-386; author's interview with Professor Holmes, 15th November 1979.

among the Commonwealth countries. As at London, its delegation was headed by Forde, the deputy Prime Minister, and Evatt, Minister for External Affairs, with Forde the nominal leader. From the official minutes of the London meeting it is difficult to gauge the tenor, as opposed to the substance, of the talks. Australia strongly supported the U.K. on some aspects of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, and opposed it on others - in this it resembled the other Dominions. The crucial factor was Evatt's personality. Despite his obvious abilities, he was an abrasive and domineering character. Before the London meeting Cockram had written to the F.O. predicting the attitude of the Dominion delegations; on Australia's he wrote that it was likely to be disunited and split by personal ambitions, predominantly because of Evatt,

Dr. Evatt's tendency to suspicion of things British may lead him to take an unco-operative attitude on others, and much will depend on the relations established in London with Mr. Forde.²⁷

and from San Francisco Cockram was to report many difficulties in dealing with him.

Forde's initial speech indicated that Australia would act circumspectly on matters where Australia differed with the U.K., but Evatt's own actions soon proved otherwise. On 15th May Cockram reported that Evatt was the "biggest thorn in the flesh" of all the Commonwealth countries through

27. Cockram to Jebb (F.O.), 20th March 1945, D035/1891, WR208/2/28. (The Counsellor at the Australian Legation, Mr. A. Watt, who was a member of the Australian delegation to San Francisco presumed that Forde was sent to act as a brake on Evatt. He says that although Forde gave the opening speech, it was drafted under Evatt's supervision and thereafter "Evatt simply ran the show", and represented Australia on all the important committees. A. Watt, Australian Diplomat: Memoirs of Sir Alan Watt, (London, 1972), p. 62.

his attempts to deal with all questions himself, to consider that Australia is being let down if he does not obtain immediate and unquestioning support for every suggestion which he makes, whether it be dictated by the genuine interests of Australia, the platform of the Australian Labour Party, or the prestige of one of its representatives at San Francisco,²⁸

and his tactlessness, which appeared to most people as rudeness. On the 2nd June Cockran reported further difficulties with Evatt as he became disgruntled when most of the inordinate number of amendments he tabled were dismissed. He managed to antagonise almost all the other delegations. On one day he had first set the Great Powers against him, then upset Belgium and the Netherlands, followed by the Arab States, the Jews and the Latin American countries.²⁹

A serious problem which had arisen by the first week in June was Evatt's opposition to his officials' attending joint Commonwealth talks. Cockram explained that the arrangement whereby he was available to see officials in his office would help Australian officials, as they could attend "without the suggestion of attending a meeting". The split within the delegation becomes more apparent with his comment that Forde and the unofficial advisers continued to be co-operative and friendly, as were all but a few officials. The letter of 2nd June also records an apology from Cockram for losing his temper and arguing with Evatt, although there is little indication of any genuine remorse from Cockram.³⁰ Two weeks later Evatt was described by him as

playing his own hand throughout, without paying any more heed to the success of the Conference as a whole than he has to the interests of the British Commonwealth.³¹

The U.K. delegation's telegram to the F.O. reported on the conference and relations with the Dominions again highlighted the divisions within the Australian team and Evatt's own behaviour, describing him as hasty

28. Cockram to Machtig, 28th April 1945 and to Stephenson, 15th May 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

29. Cockram to Stephenson, 2nd June 1945, ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Cockram to Stephenson, 16th June 1945, ibid.

and suspicious", demanding full support from other delegations but feeling under little obligation to reciprocate.³² Cadogan's personal opinion of Evatt was that he was "the most frightful man in the world", who made long tiresome speeches, "advocated the wrong thing "with a view to being inconvenient and offensive" to the U.K. while advancing his own cause. But he added that by then, the end of May, everyone hated him and consequently his stock had fallen to the point where he mattered much less.³³

Certainly Evatt had provoked other delegations too. An early attack on the Pan American States for their attitude to Chapultepec had aroused the fierce opposition of all the American countries and led to a State Department comment that while Evatt headed Australian foreign affairs there was no chance that the U.S. would support it for membership of the Security Council. This led Cockram to describe Evatt as the "generally most disliked man at the Conference", who had lost most of the respect still held for him among his Commonwealth colleagues; which he thought a shame since Evatt did possess great ability and a diligence which could have made him an invaluable colleague.³⁴ At one point Truman spoke to Forde about Evatt's behaviour, stressing to him the need for good American-Australian relations which were not being facilitated by Evatt's behaviour.³⁵

Robertson failed to control his anger after receiving a note from Evatt at the end of a vote in a committee, in which Evatt asked how King would like to hear in the Canadian press that Canada had just voted against full employment. This led Robertson to remark that while he had often known Commonwealth collaboration, he had never previously

32. U.K. Delegation to F.O. Pt. II, 23rd June 1945, *ibid.*

33. D. N. Dilks ed., The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945 (London, 1971) entry for 23rd May 1945, p. 745.

34. Cockram to Stephenson, 2nd June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

35. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, Vol. VI, No. 486. (C. Thorne suggests that Australia's failure to gain access to high-level councils through its wooing of the U.S.A. in 1941-43, led Evatt to adopt a blustering approach to the U.S. C. Thorne, Allies of a Kind: U.S., Britain and the war against Japan, 1941-1945, (London, 1978), p. 712.

experienced Commonwealth blackmail.³⁶ (King's antipathy towards Evatt can be seen from his relief that Evatt had decided not to visit Canada at the end of the Conference.³⁷) However, others considered Evatt's role at San Francisco impressive. Pearson described him as the public defender and belligerent champion of the smaller states and said his refusal to compromise made him the hero of many delegations from the smaller states,³⁸ and Holmes comments that "the redoubtable Herbert Evatt hollered his way to some considerable influence".³⁹

Some Australians had reservations about Evatt's tactics. The U.K. High Commission in Canberra reported a feeling that the role of leading the small states had not gained for Australia as much as might be imagined, and that his method of negotiating had possibly left an unfavourable impression which could rebound upon Australia later.⁴⁰

The U.K. delegation lamented that the Dominions were sometimes too ready to register opinions at variance with those of the U.K., and give other powers the impression of disunity within the organisation. However, it was understood that the Dominions wished to demonstrate that they were not mere ciphers of the U.K. Snelling's report from Bretton Woods had seized upon this feature,⁴¹ and Cockram from San Francisco said that all the Dominions had at times registered votes in the opposite sense to the U.K., either because they felt their decision to be right, or to make their independence known. In his view such votes had not mattered and there was

36. Cockram to Stephenson, 2nd June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

37. Mackenzie King Record Vol. II, p. 431.

38. L. B. Pearson, Memoirs 1897-1948: Through Diplomacy to Politics (London, 1973), p. 277.

39. J. W. Holmes, The Shaping of the Peace: Canada and the search for world order, 1943-1957 Vol. I, p. 44.

40. Monthly Report from the U.K. High Commission, Canberra, 11th July 1945, D035/1119, G579/49.

41. Report by Snelling on Bretton Woods Conference, 31st July 1944, D035/1216, WR254/1/40. (see p. 337.)

a lot to be said for the reasoning of the Dominion delegations, particularly at a Conference in the United States where the suspicions are strongest.

Interestingly Cockram records that during the conference he only once had to exert strong pressure. This was an occasion where New Zealand had tabled an amendment for all members to resist aggression against one member, and there had been a real danger that the Sponsoring Powers would be defeated over it. Guessing that Australia would support it, and sensing that the others might, Cockram spoke to Canada, South Africa and India and persuaded them. The result, with the amendment just failing to attain the 2/3rds majority needed, indicates his success.⁴²

As the conference progressed, most of the Dominions became more amenable to co-operation with the U.K. McIntosh (New Zealand) and Forsyth (South Africa) told Cockram that as the Dominions had proved their freedom of action, and the conference was reaching its vital stages, they would use their acquired reputation for independence to support unified Commonwealth action. Canadian and Australian officials apparently concurred, although the latter were worried about their ability to take part in joint talks. After one evening at the conference when Evatt in particular was dissenting strongly, Halifax called all the leaders of the delegations together and "uttered some reproaches".⁴³ He conceded the Dominions' desire to demonstrate their independence, but warned against the appearance of disunity, and asked them to appreciate the problems of the U.K.; which if it were to retain its place with the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A., and exercise influence with them, needed the Commonwealth.⁴⁴

With regard to Halifax's worries about disunity, Smuts thought they had done a great public service by dispelling the illusion that the Commonwealth would mean six votes for the U.K. He rested content with the knowledge that while it was uncomfortable for friends to disagree,

42. Cockram to Stephenson, 16th June 1945, DO35/1884, WR208/261.

43. U.K. Delegation to F.O., 23rd June 1945, pt. II, ibid.

44. Minutes of meeting between Commonwealth representatives, 18th June 1945, ibid.

they were united on major issues. Evatt was less happy, and accused the U.K. of being the cause of the disunity by its failure to carry out the conclusions reached at the London meeting. He maintained that this had occurred on seven or eight separate issues, and while appreciating the problems of Great Power solidarity, felt that some officials had adhered to this too slavishly. Cranborne pointed out to Evatt that no conclusions had been reached at London, that it had been a meeting for the exchange and explanation of views, and that at San Francisco the U.K. had tried to keep Dominion views in mind. The British were possibly surprised to hear a Dominion delegate asserting the existence of a common policy, and the Canadians no doubt alarmed. Where Evatt annoyed the U.K. most was in repeating at a press conference during the last week of the conference, the allegation that the U.K. had departed from agreed conclusions. Cockram's only comment on this episode was to quote from Mrs. Trollope's "Domestic Manners of the Americans" thus,

The veracity of newspaper statements is perhaps, nowhere quite unimpeachable, but if I am not greatly mistaken, there are more direct falsehoods circulated by the American newspapers than by all the others in the world, and the one great and never-failing source of these voluminous works of imagination is England and the English.⁴⁵

Halifax reported that his admonition had a temporarily good effect, but that the meeting also provoked criticisms about the U.K. delegation.

Fraser complained about the attitude and behaviour of some members of the U.K. delegation, specifically Mr. D. Foot and Mr. Mabane, parliamentary delegates, and Professor Webster, who had been seconded to the F.O. He described Foot and Mabane as treating the remarks of Dominion representatives "with lofty superiority even when they were not engaged in a ceaseless campaign to defeat them". He added that none of the three had ever attempted to consult Dominion colleagues during the committee sessions, and considered that Professor Webster

45. Cockram to Stephenson, 23rd June 1945; ibid.

should never be allowed to represent the U.K. internationally again. He assured the meeting that these criticisms did not apply to the D.O. officials, and paid tribute to the care with which Halifax and Cranborne had heeded the interests of the Dominions. Evatt joined in the tribute to the latter two, but commented that the F.O. officials too often appeared to think that the Dominion delegations should be seen but not heard.⁴⁶

Support for the U.K. came from N. Robertson of Canada, who, while admitting that some unpleasant incidents could have been avoided, said that he had found co-operation on the official level excellent and reminded Fraser of the U.K.'s handicap with so few of its officials remaining, and their need to consult with the other Great Powers as well as the Commonwealth. Hume Wrong supported him with the comment that the practice of submitting every question to the Great Powers for clearance had put an intolerable strain on the U.K., and had undoubtedly hampered complete Commonwealth agreement.

The report of this meeting, which was attended on the U.K. side only by Halifax, Cranborne, Cockram and Clark, was sent to the D.O. by Cockram with the comment

for obvious reasons it ought not to go to the Foreign Office.⁴⁷

A month later the D.O. received a letter from Stephen Holmes of the British High Commission in Ottawa, referring to the report of the meeting and Cockram's letter. Holmes informed Stephenson that the High Commissioner, Malcolm MacDonald, believed the matter should be brought to the attention of the F.O.

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46. Minutes of meeting between Commonwealth representatives, 18th June 1945, *ibid.* (For further comments by Evatt about Webster, see P. Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness: Australian Foreign Affairs, 1941-1947, (Melbourne, 1980), p. 26; Dingle Foot's only criticisms of Evatt was that he could not delegate and kept other delegations waiting for him as a consequence. See article by Foot in the Canberra Times, 11th July 1970. Quoted in Watt, *op.cit.*, p. 64.)
47. Cockram to Stephenson, 23rd June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

He felt, and feels, it particularly important, from the point of view of the future co-operation between the members of the Commonwealth at Conferences and elsewhere, that the opinions expressed - by Mr. Fraser in particular - regarding the uneven quality of the United Kingdom⁴⁸ delegation should be heeded and the lessons learnt.

Holmes added that he personally tended to agree with Fraser as to the unsuitability of Professor Webster in a delegation which had to maintain close contact with the Dominions, while not disputing Webster's qualities and qualifications. The matter does not appear to have been taken up with the F.O., or at least not officially. Stephenson minuted that as Webster had left the F.O. for good, and Foot and Mabane had lost their seats in Parliament, he did not feel in the circumstances it right to raise ill feeling by broaching the matter with the F.O. No further action is recorded.⁴⁹

The criticisms of Professor Webster are perhaps not too difficult to understand; at least from the style in which he wrote up his own diary it is easy to imagine that he possessed a measure of confidence, even arrogance, which the Dominions officials and Ministers balked at in the British. However, it is also clear from his diary that Webster appreciated better than some U.K. personnel the need for the Great Powers to make concessions to the Dominions and other small Powers and warned his colleagues of the risk to the successful establishment of the U.N. if Canada and Brazil did not accept the proposals put forward by the Four. As for Evatt, like many Webster recognised his ability while reacting violently against his personality:

He was the ablest of the statesmen of the smaller powers - and a really malignant man. He obviously hates us. . . . This egotistical and ambitious Australian has overplayed his hand.⁵⁰

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48. S. Holmes to Stephenson, 21st July 1945, *ibid.*
 49. Minute by Stephenson, 1st August 1945, *ibid.* (In fact Webster was kept on at the F.O. as special adviser to the Minister of State and in January 1946 participated in discussions with Dominion officials about the election to the Security Council. See DO35/1887, WR208/325.)
 50. P. A. Reynolds and E. J. Hughes, The Historian as Diplomat: Charles Kingsley Webster and the United Nations 1939-1946, (London, 1976), pp. 40, 51 & 72.

Cockram's original letter to Stephenson was seen by the High Commission in Ottawa because he kept that office informed of the developments at San Francisco, and copied to it some of his letters to the D.O. It is not clear whether or not he did the same in the case of the other High Commissions, but it seems that he did not. The proximity of Canada and the important role of the Canadian delegation may have been the reason for this extensive supply of information. Canadian journalists were also given preferential treatment. Cockram informed the D.O. that Marett (D.O. Information Office in Canada) had continued to keep in close touch with the Canadian press, and had also received a request from Australian journalists asking for guidance and information, as they got little from their own representatives. Cockram referred to it as an occasion for "helping, but also for caution". Marett did provide the journalists with information, but Cockram comments that by giving them only factual information, and avoiding regular meetings, they had kept them on the same footing as the American press and hoped to avoid any criticism from the Australian delegation. The explanation for this uneven treatment of the Dominion press seems to lie in Marett's position. While the U.S. was served by the British Information Service, the Dominions each had their own Information Officer. Marett was posted in Canada, but had gone to the San Francisco conference, presumably to assist the Canadian journalists, and had no official brief with regard to the other delegations.⁵¹

With the United Nations established in June 1945, the major issue to conclude was that of the peace treaties with the Axis Powers. It was agreed at the Potsdam Conference, of July-August 1945, that a Council of the Foreign Ministers of the five Great Powers should be

51. For details of the D.O.'s press and information division, see Rt. Hon. Lord Garner, The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968 (London, 1978), pp. 169-170.

established to prepare the ground work for the treaties. The Potsdam Protocol also specified that in addition to the five, who would participate with those treaties referring to the countries with whom they had signed surrender terms,*

Other Members will be invited to participate when matters directly concerning them are under discussion.⁵²

It was under this rather loosely worded clause that the Dominions hoped to gain representation at the meetings of the Foreign Ministers.

The U.K. anticipated opposition from the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. to Dominion attendance, and the D.O. was worried that if the U.K. pushed too hard for wide ranging Dominion participation, the result might be none. The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs met with the Secretaries of State for India and the Foreign Affairs to discuss the question of participation and also consultation with the Dominions over the terms of the treaties. In a letter to Bevin, Addison referred to the problem of getting Prime Ministers to visit London for talks. Following so soon after the San Francisco Conference he doubted if Smuts or Fraser could leave their countries, or if Chifley, having been in power only a few weeks, would leave Australia. With the Canadian Parliament due to meet shortly, he did not think it likely that King would attend. At the meeting on 21st August, Bevin stressed his desire to get the support of the Dominions for U.K. proposals, although he realised that there were some divergencies of view. While making a general point about improving consultation, he commented that if the Dominions wanted to enjoy the advantages of belonging to the Commonwealth they had to fall in line with the general policy of the U.K. He wanted to speak with the whole moral support of the Commonwealth behind him. He suggested that the U.K. should either raise the issue with them as a matter of constitutional procedure - the desirability of

52. For the Potsdam Conference, see E. L. Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, (London, 1962), pp. 540-573.

closer co-ordination of policy - or by telling the Prime Ministers of particular problems which affected the vital interests of the Commonwealth. Addison preferred the second course, pointing out that as a matter of course the Dominions would be informed of current problems and the U.K.'s views.⁵³ The Cabinet agreed that existing machinery was inadequate to ensure that the U.K. could speak at the Council with the full support of the Dominions, and discussed whom it should invite for consultations. Addison noted that if they asked for high-ranking delegates Australia would probably send Evatt, which he did not think would be desirable.⁵³ Ministers agreed that the Dominion Prime Ministers should be told that the U.K. would try to ensure some Dominion attendance at the Council when matters directly concerning them were discussed, that they would be sent U.K. proposals for the treaties and that the U.K. was anxious to present a united Commonwealth front at the Council. The Prime Ministers would therefore be asked either to give their High Commissioners special powers to commit their governments, or send special representatives to London so that a common policy could be pursued at the Council.⁵⁴

The Dominions, especially Australia, pressed hard for full participation at the Council. The D.O. felt it unwise to ask for too much on their behalf, and Addison told Bevin that a F.O. draft on this matter was not specific enough on the subject of issues directly concerning the Dominions; he thought it wiser to ask the minimum the Dominions considered necessary, so as not to prejudice their chances of participating altogether. The D.O. thought that the minimum would be for Australia, and if possible New Zealand and Canada, to join the

53. In a letter to Bevin of 17th August 1945, Addison wrote that he thought "in the present circumstances" Evatt's presence in London would "not really help matters". Addison to Bevin, D035/2013, WR332/2.

54. Minutes of meeting between Bevin, Addison and Pethick Lawrence at F.O., 21st August 1945, D035/2014, WR334/3.

deliberations on the Japanese treaty, and Far Eastern matters generally; for South Africa to participate when the Italian colonies were discussed; for any Dominion to be called when a topic of direct interest was under consideration. An example of the latter was given as Canadian, Australian and New Zealand participating in the Italian peace settlement, the former country because of its contribution to the Italian war, the latter two because of their interest in the sea route through the Mediterranean.⁵⁵

On 25th August a telegram was sent from Attlee to the other Prime Ministers in which the importance to the Commonwealth of the issues to be discussed was stressed:

I am anxious therefore that there should be the fullest and most effective consultation between us in the hope that on all major issues at any rate we may succeed in establishing an identical point of view.⁵⁶

The necessity for this was underlined by his prediction that the Russians would prove to be harbouring expansionist notions, and that the U.S.A. would not always resist them strongly enough. The right of the Dominions to be included in the Council's deliberations was repeated and Attlee promised that the U.K. would press strongly for this, but could not do so until the Council met. The leaders were told of the U.K.'s desire to extend consultations, and asked either to come to London themselves, or send representatives who could speak on their behalf. The Dominions, eager to gain some measure of representation at the Council,⁵⁷ all agreed to discussions with the U.K., although the status of the representatives varied. King replied explaining that neither he nor any of his colleagues could leave Canada with the Parliamentary session about to start. He again expressed his satisfaction with the

55. Addison to Bevin, 21st August 1945; and minutes by Stephenson, 15th & 16th August 1945, D035/2013, WR334/2.

56. Attlee to four Dominion Prime Ministers, 25th August 1945, D035/2014, WR334/3.

57. See chapter 6, p. 323ff.

existing channels of communication, and added that neither he, nor any other delegate could speak on behalf of Canada without consultation with the Cabinet. If Canada was to be allowed representation on the Council, King promised to send someone suitable; otherwise it was left to the Official Secretary at Canada House, Mr. Frederick Hudd, to consult with the U.K. Government.⁵⁸ Smuts replied that he could not attend himself and that it would be difficult to spare a Minister. He decided to shelve the matter for the moment until they knew if South Africa would be allowed representation, but in the intervening period the High Commissioner, Mr. Heaton Nicholls, would be kept fully informed of South Africa's attitude.⁵⁹ Fraser likewise could not leave New Zealand. In the event the Acting High Commissioner in London, Mr. R. M. Campbell, took part in the discussions in London.⁶⁰ The exception to this official level of representation was Australia, which, as Addison had feared, sent Evatt. While there was support for the Dominion desire to gain entry to the Council, the U.K. must have joined in Fraser's deprecation of Evatt's description of his visit to London as a second diplomatic "fight" he had won, when, as Fraser observed, he had been invited by the U.K.⁶¹

As the opening of the Council's session approached and the level of Dominion representation in London was established, Addison and Bevin decided that information to the Dominions about the Council's activities should take the form of an initial meeting with the Dominion representatives to outline the procedure by which the U.K. delegation hoped to attain Dominion involvement, the despatch of daily telegrams to the Dominion Governments and daily meetings with the Dominion representatives.⁶²

Addison agreed to show the Dominion representatives all the Council

58. King to Addison, 28th August 1945, D035/2014, WR334/3.

59. Nicholls to Attlee, 29th August 1945, ibid.

60. Duff to D.O., 31st August 1945, ibid.

61. Australian Government to D.O., 27th August 1945,; Duff to D.O., 31st August 1945, ibid.

62. Report of meeting between Bevin and Addison, 7th September 1945, D035/2019, WR334/37.

papers, but stressed the vital importance of discretion. (When Addison raised the matter with Bevin, the latter replied that he did not want to be officially consulted; Addison should use his own judgment.)⁶³ Meetings at the D.O. between Dominion representatives, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, and D.O. and F.O. officials, were convened between 10th September and 3rd October 1945, by which time the Council had broken up in disagreement. In December 1945 Byrnes proposed a meeting of Foreign Ministers under the Yalta provision for periodic meetings. This took place in Moscow where attendance was restricted to the Ministers of the Three Major Powers and the Dominions had to rely on the existing channels of communication between Commonwealth Governments for information.

The Paris Peace Conference which was supposed to settle the Peace Treaties with Italy and the minor European Powers did not meet until July. Prior to this the U.K. invited Dominion Prime Ministers to London to discuss the Paris proposals, and Commonwealth defence liaison. King was unable to leave Canada before 19th May because of Parliamentary and Provincial discussions and by that time Chifley had returned to Australia, although Evatt did remain in London. Fraser was unable to attend but sent his deputy, Nash. Smuts attended. The London discussions were rather different from those of 1945 inasmuch as there were more discussions between two or three nations and fewer sessions of all delegates. Nor was this just because of King's late arrival; Australia and New Zealand were more interested in defence liaison with the U.K. than were South Africa or Canada. Some talks were therefore confined to these two countries and the U.K.

King liked the arrangements for the 1946 meeting, preferring the more informal, discursive style. It would be untrue to say that in

63. Meeting of Commonwealth representatives, 13th September 1945, and rest of file, DO35/2017, WR334/17.

1946 the British were not trying to reach agreement between all the members, or that in the past they had been demanding a common policy on all issues. King, for one, seemed to have accepted the fact that the U.K. was no longer illicitly trying to push through centralist schemes. He records in his Diary that at one meeting he had said how good the conference was because it enabled them to receive information which they could pass on to their colleagues and other states and also make representations to the U.K. and have "British policy take them into account".⁶⁴

Perhaps one reason why King seemed to feel more at ease in 1946 was the change in Government in the U.K. On hearing of Labour's victory at the election of July 1945, King wrote in his Diary,

To me it is a relief also in that at Imperial Conferences I know I will not have to be bucking centralized Imperialism again.⁶⁵

King knew many of the leading members of the Labour Government, either through their membership of Churchill's National Government, or through personal contacts over the years. The Liberal Party in Canada stood nearer to the British Labour Party than to the Conservative. However, the principal reason for King's satisfaction at the change of Government lay in his undying, though vastly exaggerated, opinion that all Tories were deep down old-style imperialists. There was in fact very little difference in the attitude of the two parties towards the Commonwealth, except in relation to India. The Labour Government too wanted close collaboration with the other Commonwealth members, because it was recognised as a necessary for the U.K., not for any particular ideological reasons. Bevin's comments to Addison and Pethick Lawrence (India Secretary), before the 1945 London Council of Ministers - that he wanted the support of the Dominions and they should provide it if they were to

64. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. III, p. 227.

65. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. II, p. 446.

enjoy the advantages of the Commonwealth⁶⁶ - reflected Eden's awareness in 1943-45 of the U.K.'s need for the Dominions and was, if anything, less tolerant of the Dominions' freedom of action than some Conservative Ministers had been. Although Bevin never quite phrased this sentiment in the same terms when addressing the Dominions, in some respects the Labour Government could be tougher with Australia and New Zealand precisely because it was a 'Labour' Government as were theirs, and also with Canada because it was no longer possible for the Canadians to view U.K. actions as a Tory imperialist plot. King apparently had a particular liking for Attlee and found him easier to do business with than Churchill. He had known Addison for some time, and was said to have found him a 'homey' character.⁶⁷ Their correspondence indicates a relaxed, friendly relationship.

Smuts was the one Commonwealth leader who regretted the change of government. He described the election result as a "political debacle", greater than that of 1906, and was pessimistic about the consequences in foreign affairs. There

the hand of Churchill was most visible and his influence in the world enormous. No one can predict what the absence of his dominating position and prestige may have on British policy and British influence. It may be far reaching.⁶⁸

He thought the new Labour Government would be no check on the "wild career" of the U.S.S.R. By August 1945 he was expressing his disappointment with the results of the Potsdam Conference (which discussed the future of Germany) and attributed this to the absence of Churchill.⁶⁹ In September 1947, Smuts was depressed about the internal situation in the U.K. and the state of world affairs. He thought Churchill's loss had made the U.K. leaderless, a fact which had rebounded on the Commonwealth, Europe and the world.⁷⁰ Smuts was not sympathetic to Labour's domestic policies and had been a close friend of Churchill

66. See p. 355.

67. Author's interview with Professor J. W. Holmes, 15th November 1979.

68. Smuts to M. C. Gillett, 29th July 1945, Smuts Papers Vol. VI, No. 675.

69. Woodward, op.cit. pp. 540-573; Smuts to M. C. Gillett, 10th August 1945, Smuts Papers Vol. VI, No. 676.

70. Smuts to D. Moore, 3rd September 1947, Smuts Papers Vol. VII, No. 760.

and many of his Cabinet. However, it does seem that he was blaming the Attlee government for a situation which was inescapable, whoever had won the 1945 election.

The delay between the London and Paris meetings made difficulties for some of the Dominions.⁷¹ Nash (New Zealand) protested that they should not have been brought together until they knew the date of the Conference and King noted that he was satisfied at having delayed his arrival in London. As it was he could travel back to Canada and go on to Paris in July, but Nash returned to New Zealand and Fraser told the U.K. High Commissioner that as he and Nash had spent so much time abroad that they could not go to Paris. Instead he sent the Attorney General, Mr. Mason, and the ex-High Commissioner to the U.K., Jordan.⁷² Smuts and Evatt led the delegations of the other two Dominions. At Paris the Commonwealth followed its usual practice of holding meetings between the Heads of Delegations, and between officials, as well as other bi-lateral talks and social engagements.⁷³ If the Paris Conference failed to settle all aspects of the Peace Treaties and brought into relief the schism between the U.S.A. and the U.K. on the one hand and the U.S.S.R. on the other, it was satisfactory from the point of view of inter-Commonwealth consultation; although once again Evatt bombarded the conference with amendments, most of which were defeated, adding thereby to his reputation for forceful, but undiplomatic behaviour.⁷⁴

The German settlement was left almost exclusively to the Great Powers, (except China). In October 1943 at the Moscow Conference a European Advisory Commission had been established to make recommendations for the termination of hostilities, terms of surrender and occupation of Germany; and at Yalta in February 1945, and Potsdam in July-August 1945, the Great Powers discussed in greater detail Germany's future. By the

71. Mackenzie King Record Vol. III, p. 225.
 72. Duff to Machtig, 26th July 1946, D035/1213, WR207/7/40.
 73. Mackenzie King Record Vol. III, Ch. 9.
 74. Holmes, op.cit., p.114.

end of August the Allied Council of Germany had been established with representatives of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., the U.K. and France.⁷⁵

The absence of any effective Dominion participation in the workings of the Council of Foreign Ministers resulted in their having virtually no influence over the future of Germany, although they occupied a privileged position inasmuch as they were kept well informed by the U.K. of developments.

The Far Eastern settlement produced an interesting experiment in Commonwealth collaboration. In October 1943 the U.S. agreed to the establishment of a Far Eastern Commission with the task of formulating policy to fulfil the Japanese surrender terms. This replaced the Far Eastern Advisory Commission and although this new Washington body was responsible for formulating policy on Japan, the interpretation of its decisions and their translation to MacArthur remained exclusively the prerogative of the U.S.A.⁷⁶ There was also an Allied Council established in Tokyo to advise the Supreme Commander, and while the two commissions contained representatives from Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. wanted to restrict the Council to the four major Powers (excluding France), which meant no room for any Dominion representation. Eventually the U.S., aware of Australia's demands for representation, suggested that the British Commonwealth should be allotted one seat, rather than the U.K. This raised again the question of corporate representation which had been rejected in connection with the U.N., and is an interesting reflection on the U.S.A.'s understanding of the Commonwealth.

Canadian reaction to this was predictable. In a memorandum to King, Hume Wrong enclosed a draft telegram to Massey on the U.S. proposal, noting that on his own initiative Pearson had already voiced Canadian

75. Woodward, *op.cit.*, pp. 450-452, 480-481, 492-493, 540-542.

76. R. J. Bell, Unequal Allies: Australia-American Relations and the Pacific War (Melbourne, 1977), pp. 198-200.

objections in Washington and advised that the Government should record its opposition at once. King noted on the file "I am wholly opposed". Massey delivered Wrong's telegram to Addison. It called the proposal "misleading, conveying an inaccurate impression of the British Commonwealth relationships". Any joint representation must be specified by name to avoid giving the impression that the association as a whole was being represented.⁷⁷ Bevin, in Moscow, thereupon opposed the American proposal and put forward an alternative form of phrasing which was duly accepted.⁷⁸ Canada's principal concern, Massey explained, was that to have one Commonwealth representative would prejudice Dominion chances of individual representation in the future, as the U.S.S.R. was thought likely to invoke the occasion as a precedent.⁷⁹ On 8th January Addison replied to Massey's letters, explaining Bevin's actions in Moscow and the reasons for joint representation - Australia's eagerness to participate and the subsequent requests from India and New Zealand to also be part of the mission. Addison thought it unlikely that the incident would be used as a precedent for Canadian or Australian representation on a wider body, and pointed to acceptance of the new phraseology suggested by Bevin.⁸⁰ Massey had proposed in his second letter that the U.K. send a formal protest to the U.S.A. about its suggestion. Officials in the D.O. minuted that this could not be done without approaching the other Dominions, and doubted its advisability. They observed that the Canadian government could express its view to the U.S. directly, even when not informed directly from Washington, and that the U.S.'s proposal owed a great deal to Evatt's insistence and would therefore be difficult to object to.⁸¹ Massey was told by Addison that the U.K. did not feel it could lodge

77. Memorandum by Wrong to King, 7th December 1945, enclosing telegram. MG26 J 4, Vol. 237, File 2346, pp. C159847-C159848; Massey to Addison, 10th December 1945, D035/2037, WR335/51.

78. Minute by J. M. C. James (Assist. Principal) 31st December 1945, ibid.

79. Massey to Addison, 27th December 1945, ibid.

80. Addison to Massey, 8th January 1946, ibid.

81. Minutes by James & Shannon, 31st February 1945, ibid.

a protest, but was assured, with the F.O.'s concurrence, that the correspondence would be sent to Halifax in Washington in case a similar situation arose again.

South Africa had no desire to be represented on the Far Eastern Commission or the Tokyo Council and made no comment on the arrangements. New Zealand's attitude underwent a change. In November 1945 it had telegraphed the U.K., mentioning the idea of setting up a Council and saying that if it was established Australia ought to be included and that the Commonwealth should not be treated as a unit.⁸² However, by January 1946, New Zealand requested that it be represented by the joint delegate too.

It was agreed that Australia would provide the joint representative on the Allied Council, which was to be the first time a Dominion had acted on behalf of the U.K.; a reflection of the elevation of the Dominions, the more equal character of Commonwealth relations and the important place Australia was to occupy in the defence of the Pacific. However, the U.K. was not enthusiastic about the Australian Government's choice for the appointment. Evatt nominated Mr. Macmahon Ball, previously Australia's representative in Indonesia, but he was not to the liking of Addison or Bevin. Bevin wrote to Addison expressing his doubts about Ball's suitability, primarily because he had not sufficient rank or diplomatic experience, and said all he had heard about Ball made him dubious of his capacity to represent the four governments. He added that this was a new experiment for the Commonwealth, and one which he wanted to succeed, which made it all the more important that the right individual should be chosen.⁸³ The Permanent Under-Secretary at the D.O., Sir Eric Machtig, concurred with Bevin's opinion and advised Addison that Ball would be a "very poor choice".⁸⁴ Addison then suggested to Mr. Beasley, the new Australian High

82. New Zealand Government to D.O., 9th November 1945, *ibid.*

83. Bevin to Addison, 26th January 1944, D035/2038, WR335/34.

84. Minute by Machtig to Addison, 26th January 1946, *ibid.*

Commissioner, that Mr. Keith Officer would be more acceptable to the U.K. (Officer had been stationed in London in the 1930s, before being posted to the U.S.A., and was popular with practically all U.K. personnel concerned with the Dominions - a fact which tended to reduce his value in Evatt's eyes.) Beasley undertook to mention the idea to Evatt, and later told Addison it had been rejected. The Dominions Secretary asked Attlee to telegraph to Chifley, saying that as it was a joint appointment the U.K. was entitled to insist that its interests were entrusted to someone in whom it had confidence. The draft acknowledged that Ball was experienced in Pacific affairs, but stated that the U.K. attached great importance to the post and considered a wide knowledge of the world and diplomatic experience essential.⁸⁵ Attlee hesitated, because he thought this might make Evatt even more stubborn; and suggested that he wrote a personal note to Evatt.⁸⁶ Addison disagreed, because he thought the D.O. had done all it could through Beasley and the only chance lay in a personal appeal to the Australian Prime Minister. He did not want to make a precedent of an appeal to Evatt as it might embarrass Chifley and make Evatt even more difficult to deal with in the future. The draft was altered to read that Attlee hoped neither Chifley or Evatt would mind his direct approach.⁸⁷ The telegram was sent but produced no change in the appointment.

The appointment of Ball did not prove a success; whether this was primarily due to Ball or to Evatt is uncertain. Ball received his instructions from Evatt, who was responsible for co-ordinating policy with the other three countries.⁸⁸ By April 1946 the U.K. heard that

85. Minute Addison to Attlee, 6th February 1946, enclosing draft telegram, DO121/10C.

86. Minute by Attlee to Addison, 6th February 1946, DO35/2038, WR335/54.

87. Minute by Addison to Attlee, 7th February 1946, DO121/10C; Attlee to Chifley, 15th February 1946, DO35/2038, WR335/54. (MacArthur's reaction to the appointment of Ball was similar to the U.K.'s, according to the U.K. Liaison Mission in Japan, see telegram to F.O., 27th February 1946, *ibid.*)

88. 'Instructions to Ball' Note in DO35/2039, WR335/64.

Ball was attempting to act as mediator between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. and was critical of MacArthur. The British government felt disturbed at this, for it did not want to antagonise the U.S.A. over Japan and did not consider that Ball should mediate. It expressed this view to Evatt, explaining that U.K.-U.S. collaboration was so important the U.K. was not prepared to be committed to a policy of mediation in the Far East which could fail and might cause friction with the U.S.A. Evatt reassured the U.K. that the Australian government did not approve and had privately warned Ball of the dangers of mediation.⁸⁹ However, Evatt apparently told Ball when he was first appointed to "take a distinctly Australian line, even if it annoyed MacArthur and his staff".⁹⁰ Whether Evatt gave counter-orders after the U.K.'s protest is unclear, but it has been suggested that his behaviour towards Ball was just one example of Evatt's disloyalty to his staff, and that Evatt's visit to Tokyo in July 1947 when he publicly praised MacArthur's efforts was a repudiation of Ball who had been acting under his instructions.⁹¹ Throughout 1946 and 1947 relations between Ball and MacArthur deteriorated to the grave dissatisfaction of the U.K. and especially the F.O. which, the D.O. thought, had never been entirely happy about the representation of British interests by an Australian.⁹² The U.S.A. determined from the beginning not to allow the allied Powers much of a voice in the Japanese settlement, mainly because it wanted to exclude the U.S.S.R. from this region. Thus the importance of this experiment in representation derived not so much from its effect

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89. D.O. to Australian Government, 16th April 1946, and rest of file, D035/2041, WR335/75; see also D035/2040, WR335/70 and D035/2044, WR335/107.
90. K. Tennant, Evatt: Politics and Justice, (London/Sydney, 1970), p. 198. (Australia's policy towards Japan was for a much harsher peace treaty than the U.S. were proposing, which was not the policy of India, or the U.K., see Watt, op.cit., pp. 86-7.)
91. P. G. Edwards, 'Evatt and the Americans', Historical Studies, 1979, Vol. 18, No. 73, pp. 546-560.
92. Minute by C. R. Price (Assistant Secretary at the D.O.), 19th May 1946, D035/2048, WR335/70.

on policy but from its example as a mode of Commonwealth collaboration. In this context the U.K. regarded it as an episode never repeated. Ball himself described the work of the Council as "on balance a failure and at times a fiasco".⁹³

At the 1946 and 1947 sessions of the United Nations the Commonwealth representatives continued the practice of meeting together to discuss policy and exchange views. Cadogan, who had at times shown impatience with the Dominions generally, commented favourably on Commonwealth meetings after he went to the U.N. as the U.K.'s chief representative. In contrast to the discussions with the U.S.S.R., which Cadogan found wearisome, in the Commonwealth meetings he encountered a welcome and different atmosphere.

Respect and goodwill prevailed; serious arguments were heeded even when agreement could not be reached.⁹⁴

The Commonwealth countries' precise status and function as a group of nations within a wider organisation were mainly established by trial and error, with the Dominions wanting both to make their mark and to co-operate with their partners for the greater benefit of all. The internal relations of the Commonwealth and its general position as a recognised grouping were predictably challenged by the elections to the Security Council. The Charter had provided for six non-permanent members of the Council to be chosen with regard to their potential contribution and their geographical position,⁹⁵ a qualification which owed its origin to the Dominions, especially Canada. All were potential candidates, particularly Canada and Australia.

The F.O. and D.O. thought that Canada had the stronger claim to a seat, especially in light of its participation in the atomic discussions, but also knew that Australia would put itself forward, and that the other Dominions thought they should all support the latter even if it were not

93. Bell, op.cit., p. 202.

94. Dilks, Cadogan Diaries, op.cit., p. 787.

95. U. N. Charter chapter 5, Article 23, clause 1.

successful.⁹⁶ On 21st December 1945 D.O. and F.O. officials met with Dominion officials to discuss the candidatures. The U.K.'s representatives read out its full list, which mentioned Canada and not Australia, and explained that they thought Canada, as the senior Dominion, could make an important contribution to peace. When the other Dominions raised Australia's candidacy, including Massey who said Canada would welcome Australia also on the Council, Addison said he thought it impossible that two Dominions would be elected, adding that even if they were it would leave them ineligible for a time afterwards, which could create a gap in Commonwealth representation. He suggested that Australia withdrew and put itself up next time when it could receive the support of all.⁹⁷ Australia had no intention of standing down, as can be seen from an aide memoire from Evatt to Bevin which the High Commissioner delivered on 9th January. It stressed Australia's contribution and geographical position, and said Evatt would welcome the U.K.'s support.⁹⁸ The other Dominions were divided over this issue, with Fraser stating that New Zealand would not oppose Canada or stand itself, but felt bound to support Australia as a Pacific nation. South African and Indian officials were concerned that if both stood, neither would get in, and an F.O. official explained how difficult it would be for the U.K. to back both.⁹⁹ In the elections there was a tie between the two Dominions, resulting in Canada's standing down and allowing Australia to go through.

There was no doubt as to the claims of both and the U.K. wanted to continue as far as possible the Geneva practice of having one Dominion on the Council. It was probably correct to assume in 1946 that the other nations, especially the Latin American and Soviet groupings,

96. Minutes by Shannon, 19th November and 12th December 1945, D035/1887, WR208/325.

97. Minutes of meeting at D.O., 21st December 1945, ibid.

98. Aide memoire from Evatt to Bevin, 9th January 1946, ibid. (The D.O. did not like Evatt approaching the F.O. directly, see notes in file.)

99. Minutes of meeting at D.O., 9th January 1946, ibid.

would not permit more than two Commonwealth members to sit on the Security Council simultaneously, and to support both Dominions would mean the withholding of support from another country it favoured. Presented with a choice between Canada and Australia the U.K. was always likely to prefer the former, not so much because of its greater potential, although the atomic discussions did perhaps give it an edge, but because of Australia's performance at past international meetings, and the respective calibre of the officials. This is not specifically stated as a reason for preferring Canada, but it is perhaps not too fanciful to assume that Australia was to some extent paying the price of Evatt's behaviour over the previous years. Nor, as we shall see, were relations between the two countries at the Security Council always smooth. In March 1946 Cockram reported that Fraser had told him that had he known the quality of officials which Australia would send to the Council he would not have voted for it.¹⁰⁰

Election difficulties were renewed in late 1946 with the news that India was seeking election to the Security Council when one of the original one year seats became vacant. (These had been established to ensure mid-term re-election to the Council.) The D.O. repeated the view that it would be impossible to have two members of the Commonwealth on the Security Council, and had reservations about supporting India. That would be to throw away a vote. It would mean forfeiting any prospect of attaining an agreed list with the U.S.A., which they needed to get New Zealand voted on to the Economic and Social Council, and would weaken the case for a solid Commonwealth front in the future. The D.O. was also concerned about Canada's position. After Australia had been elected the U.K. had given its promise of support to Canada when the former's term of office was over, and an intervening attempt by India, if backed by the U.K., could prejudice solid support for Canada.¹⁰¹

100. Cockram to Stephenson, 28th March 1946, D035/2000, WR261/9.

101. Minute by Shannon, 25th September 1946, D035/2001, WR261/25.

The U.K.'s response to India's application was affected by India's position within the Commonwealth and its uncertain future. Thus the India Office were very keen to give the fullest support to its wishes, while the D.O. was more concerned about the interests of the Dominions.¹⁰² After protracted discussions within the U.K. government it was agreed that the U.K. should support India in the 1947 election but that if it did not win a seat it would fulfil its commitment to support Canada in 1948, when Australia relinquished its seat. India did not secure election in 1947, and in 1948 Canada took up Australia's vacated seat on the Security Council.

Such incidents illustrate the inherent problems for the Commonwealth when its members were devoting as much effort to demonstration of their international standing as to furthering the interests of the group. Rivalry between members was not new, especially between Canada and Australia, and would continue. But it did not threaten the unity of the association, and was in the main restricted to inter-Commonwealth discussions. The elections of the first few years also show the problems the Commonwealth was to incur from other nations' perception of them as a definite grouping. Initially the Dominions had not been keen to continue the Geneva pattern of one member holding a rotating Commonwealth seat on the Council. Canada, for one, had ambitions to hold a seat more than once a decade, and both Australia and India were confident of their right to play a substantial role in the maintenance of peace.¹⁰³ However, it became clear that with the U.K. holding a permanent seat, the other nations would not allow more than one Dominion to be elected. With the growth of regional voting patterns at the U.N., geography and political alliances became recognised criteria for choosing candidates, and the Dominions did not easily fit into geographical

102. Unidentified minute, 25th September 1946 and Pethick-Lawrence to Addison, 10th October 1946, *ibid.*

103. Holmes, *op.cit.*, pp. 265-268, for discussion of Canadian ambitions re. the Security Council.

regions, or become spokesmen for them. Thus although Canada was an American country it was outside the Pan American Union and the organisation of American States established in 1948, and representation was accorded to Central and Southern American states. Nor did Australia or New Zealand, as countries of western population and culture, win the sponsorship of Asian and Pacific nations. The Commonwealth was a geographical oddity, but was regarded as an interest group, and had to accept that this perception of itself would be reflected at elections.

In his report on Commonwealth co-operation at Bretton Woods, Snelling concluded that

the closeness of the co-operation with individual Dominion Delegations, and their satisfaction at the attitude of the U.K. representatives towards them, tends to vary directly with the quality of the Dominion personnel concerned.¹⁰⁴

While this statement absolves the U.K. from any blame in failures to co-operate and relies on the subjective judgment of U.K. representatives as to the ability of others, it provides one explanation for the variable closeness and success of Commonwealth co-operation.

The fullest collaboration existed between the U.K. and Canada, and throughout the series of conferences the calibre and performance of the latter's representatives, especially of its officials, were praised. At Bretton Woods the Canadian delegation was said to have contained some of the most competent technicians, and earned the praise of all delegates. Snelling described the occasion as having again demonstrated that Canada was fully aware of the responsibilities of its new status as an "almost-Great Power", and proved that it possessed the officials with the "breadth of vision and intellectual development" capable of enacting that role.¹⁰⁵ Recognition of Canada's position

104. Snelling's Report of Bretton Woods, 31st July 1944, D035/1216, WR254/1/40.

105. Ibid.

and capabilities was reflected in its appointment as chairman of the supplies committee of U.N.R.R.A., with the right to sit on the Council whenever that subject was under discussion, which was almost always, and its hosting the third meeting of the Council in Montreal, in October 1944.¹⁰⁶ At the Chicago Conference Canada played an important mediating role, which led Adolf Berle, the U.S. Chairman, to give special mention to it in his closing remarks. Co-operation with the U.K. worked less well at Chicago, despite the presence of a capable delegation and thorough preparation.¹⁰⁷ This conference led to certain frustration on the part of some Canadian officials when on later occasions they were unable to enact the same role, not because they were incapable, but because they were squeezed out by the Great Powers' dominance which had been absent on that occasion. Canada's performance at the meeting also aroused a degree of jealousy from the other Dominions, especially Australia, and this reflected a subdued but persistent rivalry between the two, internationally and within the association.¹⁰⁸

U.K.-Canadian co-operation flourished at San Francisco. Cockram frequently reported the helpfulness and co-operation of the Canadian delegation and recounted its active role on the preparatory committees, explaining that by limiting its amendments to those which were practicable, and by preparing the ground with other delegations well beforehand, it had usually achieved its ends.¹⁰⁹ The U.K. Delegations's report referred to the Canadian Delegation as one of the "strongest and ablest" teams at the conference, one which had a genuine concern for the welfare of the organisation and had worked closely with the U.K.¹¹⁰ Pearson records that the delegation, under the strong and positive direction of St. Laurent and with the tacit, if sceptical, acquiescence of King, played a more

106. Pearson, Memoirs 1897-1948, op.cit., pp. 250-255; Holmes, op.cit., pp.33-44.

107. See chapter 6, pp.297-98; Holmes, op.cit., p. 66.

108. Report by Shannon "Relations between the United Kingdom and the other British Commonwealth Delegations" at Chicago, D035/1236, A341/6/65.

109. Cockram to Stephenson, 28th June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

110. U.K. Delegation to F.O., 23rd June 1945, ibid.

dynamic role at San Francisco than at other international conferences; because the Canadian Parliament and government were prepared to accept commitments for peace and security.¹¹¹ In the first few years of peace Britons and Canadians worked closely together in friendship and, more importantly, mutual trust. On the Canadian side one official recalls that collaboration with the British from Chicago onwards was very close, despite some policy differences, and that it was then that the residual Canadian fear of British centralist schemes was finally laid to rest.¹¹²

To a certain extent the U.K.'s relations with Australia were determined by the behaviour of Evatt. He dominated Australian foreign policy and frequently led his delegation at conferences. Even when he did not the representatives received strict instructions and enjoyed little leeway in negotiations. This was so at Bretton Woods and caused difficulties for the Australians and other delegations. On that occasion it was not until the very last minute that the Australian representatives were permitted to sign the Final Act, despite the fact it was not binding upon governments. This reprieve apparently led some delegates to quote from Luke 15:7,

there will be greater joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent.¹¹³

Some clashes of personality between the Australians and British occurred. At Bretton Woods Snelling reported that Professor Keynes and Mr. Melville had not got on well, although he personally found Melville and the other Australian representatives "extremely co-operative".¹¹⁴

At San Francisco relations with Evatt tended to be stormy. The U.K. did not always appreciate the forthrightness of many Australians, and it took Cockram some time, and a little courage, to learn that on

111. L. B. Pearson, 'Forty Years On: Reflections on our Foreign Policy', International Journal, 1967, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 357-363.

112. Author's interview with Professor J. W. Holmes, 15th November 1979.

113. Snelling's report of Bretton Woods, 31st July 1944, D035/1216, WR254/1/40.

114. Ibid.

the whole Evatt respected and took notice of outspokenness, rather than the more normal British habit of subtle understatement and polite fencing. Cockram, referring to an occasion at San Francisco when he answered Evatt back, explained that he was not so worried as he might have been about his slip in decorum, as "experience had shown that rudeness equal to his own was a card which it sometimes paid to play".¹¹⁵ On the whole he and Eden had followed three principles in their dealings with Evatt; to keep to courses of procedure already agreed with other Commonwealth delegations; to reject the notion that Evatt had the right of appeal to the Head of the U.K. delegation in matters that were being dealt with by Cranborne; to agree to any reasonable suggestion by Evatt which did not contravene the first two, and give the maximum assistance to the Australian delegation on points of real difficulty.¹¹⁶ Evatt's tactics of bluster and forcefulness paid off inasmuch as he secured meetings with the leading delegates of other nations, especially the U.S., and these were often arranged by the U.K. Cockram's letters record occasions when Halifax agreed to take him along to meetings with Stettinius. Nor did Evatt fail to appreciate the efforts of the U.K. in this respect. Despite the obvious difficulties in Anglo-Australian co-operation at San Francisco, real collaboration did take place and the two did not drift far apart from each other.

At the U.N. sessions of 1946 the Australian delegates continued to be hamstrung by strict instructions from Canberra, which allowed virtually no flexibility in changing conditions and frequently made Australian policy out of date and wholly inadequate.¹¹⁷ The principal representatives, Hodgson and Hasluck, were both friendly and forthcoming

115. Cockram to Stephenson, 2nd June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

116. Cockram to Stephenson, 15th May 1945, ibid.

117. Cockram to Shannon, 28th March 1946, D035/2000, WR261/9; Cockram to Stephenson, 26th November 1946, D035/2048, WR362/6.

with Cockram, (once again the D.O. representative on the U.K. delegation) explaining to him the problems entailed by their narrow brief, and Evatt's opposition to their attending private meetings of the executive committee of the Security Council, unless they were purely procedural.¹¹⁸ At the October session of the U.N. Cockram had a protracted discussion with Mr. Alan Watt of the Australian External Affairs Department. Watt explained how Evatt attempted to direct Australian policy from wherever he was, Paris, Canberra or London, which resulted in hasty decisions coloured by a personal reaction to events. Watt judged that Australian policy had been essentially correct at San Francisco, where it had been based on a principle which had the support of many other countries. He thought, however, that matters had gone wrong in May-June 1946 at the Security Council when, over the Spanish question, Evatt initiated a policy doomed to failure. Then again at Paris Evatt continued on the wrong course by submitting too many amendments leaving himself open to the charge of wasting time, and then compounding the error by returning to Canberra just when his proposals needed his skill in committee if they were to have any chance of being adopted. Watt considered the Paris conference a major failure for Australia. He was concerned that in addition to antagonising the U.S.S.R., Evatt had also managed to upset the U.S.A, especially over Pacific issues and through the appointment of Macmahon Ball to the Tokyo Council, and the U.K. through his tactlessness. Watt also told Cockram of the problems being undergone by the External Affairs Department which was badly organised, with inadequate training, and deeply divided between a number of Evatt's own favourite officials, and the career officials of previous administrations.¹¹⁹

118. Cockram to Machtig, 2nd & 4th April 1946, D035/2000, WR261/9.

119. Account of Cockram's conversation with Mr. A. Watt, October 1946, D035/1893, WR208/5/39. (A very similar view of Evatt is given in Watt's memoirs *op.cit.*, pp. 48-50. Watt served in the Australian Department of External Affairs from 1937-1962. After serving as Secretary in that department 1950-54 he was posted to South East Asia, 1954-56, Japan, 1956-59 and West Germany, 1959-62.)

It is clear that Mr. Watt was a professional diplomat of the latter category, which is no doubt why he spoke in this vein to Cockram. The division among Australian officials had important effects on Australian policy, and on relations with the U.K. On the whole the U.K. personnel found relations easier with those officials who were not part of Evatt's personal entourage. This did not ease relations with Evatt. There is some evidence to suggest that the reason why Australia insisted on appointing Macmahon Ball to Tokyo was because first, he was Evatt's own candidate, and secondly, the U.K.'s own choice, Keith Officer, was an experienced diplomat who had spent some time in London, and was known to be approved by the U.K. That approval may well have sealed his fate in Evatt's eyes.

Relations with Canada and Australia followed very different patterns. British respect for Canada's representatives was generally higher than for Australia's, and co-operation easier, although Australia was often more willing to extend the field of collaboration to include, for instance, Commonwealth defence. Whatever the problems of co-operation with these two Dominions, they were the most important for the U.K. as they were the largest, most active and internationally most important. South Africa and New Zealand did not aspire to such prominence in these years.

The U.K.'s collaboration with New Zealand ran smoothly on most occasions. New Zealand lacked the capacity and resources of personnel of the two senior Dominions and sometimes, either through the weakness of its representatives or the idealism of its policies, clashed with the U.K. At Bretton Woods, for instance, Snelling reported that co-operation could have been much better, but that the New Zealand delegation was very weak. It was headed by Mr. W. Nash, who had often represented his country in the absence of Fraser; according to Snelling, however, he had deteriorated and was "unexpectedly difficult to handle", often

intervening embarrassingly, and failing through vanity to establish close relations with the leaders of the U.K. delegation.¹²⁰ New

Zealand had been forging closer contacts with Australia, as represented in the dual agreement of 1944, and bi-lateral talks following that.

But New Zealand had always been the junior partner, and while wanting to support Australia's demands for a greater voice in the Pacific, was slowly becoming disenchanted with its domineering attitude, especially Evatt's. Cockram reported from San Francisco that Fraser was becoming more immune to Evatt's "poison" on the subject of trusteeship, and more willing to listen to the U.K.'s viewpoint.¹²¹

At the first session of the U.N. in 1946, two New Zealand officials complained to Cockram of Australia's performance, told him that they had advised their Government to dissociate itself from them, and pointed out that

at best, the Australia idea of a joint policy had been slavish adherence from New Zealand coupled with the right of Australia to ignore New Zealand's views whenever these differed from her own.¹²²

New Zealand officials, while not as highly regarded as those of Canada, or some of Australia's, generally worked well with their U.K. colleagues. There was a certain variety of personality amongst New Zealand officials - Berendson tended to be full of "fire and fury" while McIntosh exerted a more moderating influence¹²³ - but the verdict of the U.K. delegation at San Francisco on the performance of the New Zealanders was that they had been friendly

although Mr. Fraser has, occasionally, been carried away by his feelings, and his interventions in debate have not (repeat not) always been judicious.¹²⁴

120. Snelling's report of Bretton Woods, 31st July 1944, D035/1216, W254/1/40.

121. Cockram to Stephenson, 16th June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

122. Cockram to Shannon, 11th April 1946, D035/2000, WR201/9.

123. Cockram to Shannon, 23rd June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

124. U.K. Delegation to F.O., 23rd June 1945, ibid. (Cadogan commented on Fraser in his diary, noting that he was almost as tiresome as Evatt, "but mainly from silliness: he's rather a dear old thing really, and at heart quite friendly", Dilks, Cadogan Diaries, op.cit., p. 745.)

This tended to be the pattern of U.K.-New Zealand relations, reasonably friendly and easy co-operation, unsettled occasionally by a crusade by New Zealand or a particular policy, or a misunderstanding with the U.K. over a point of technicality, but nothing to endanger the fundamental close relationship between the two.

To a very great extent relations between the U.K. and South Africa during this period amounted to the close relations between Smuts and senior U.K. Ministers, especially Churchill. U.K. Ministers and senior officials all had the greatest respect for him, and many D.O. officials had been brought up on the legend of this Dominion leader who had participated at Versailles, gained the confidence of many leading British statesmen, and was now to help re-shape the world again at San Francisco and Paris. But in addition to the pre-eminence of Smuts in Anglo-South African relations, his country had many competent officials, and co-operation at this level expanded successfully in the immediate post-war years. At San Francisco, which Smuts attended and chaired one of the preparatory commissions, Cockram described him as a "tower of strength", and the Delegation's report noted that he had

in countless ways both in public and private been consistently helpful.¹²⁵

At Bretton Woods South Africa was said to have sent a "good team", and relations with them had been excellent. This was no doubt helped by the fact that at the monetary conference South Africa had no need for its quota, with its own very large gold reserves, and thus had no axe to grind.¹²⁶ At San Francisco the South Africans were described by Cockram as helpful and co-operative throughout, and as a delegation, they won the support and respect of many by their restrained attitude.¹²⁷

125. U.K. Delegation to F.O., 23rd June 1945, D035/1884, W208/261.

126. Snelling's Report of Bretton Woods, 31st July 1944, D035/1216, W254/1/40.

127. Cockram to Stephenson, 16th June 1945, D035/1884, WR208/261.

Cockram recounts many consultations with the leading South African officials, notably Forsyth, Smit and Jordan, which indicate a comfortable and mutually beneficial dialogue, but there is also an indication that these officials relied to some extent on the U.K.'s influence over Smuts, not always being able to convince him of the right course themselves. For instance, Forsyth was worried at the beginning of June that Smuts was thinking of returning home, satisfied with the progress which was being made. He told Cockram this, and explained how they had purposely cut down on the number of their amendments in order to build up the goodwill of other nations and reserve the prestige of Smuts for a crisis. If he left at that point it would all be wasted. The U.K. might help him in dissuading Smuts from leading?¹²⁸ Cockram discussed the matter with Halifax, who agreed to help but by then the veto issue had arisen, and Smuts seemed to have changed his mind.

To some extent co-operation and consultation between delegations came down to personalities, and the degree to which they accorded or clashed. Some individuals were highly regarded by the British, such as Pearson, Robertson and Holmes for Canada, Bruce and Officer for Australia, or Forsyth for South Africa. To some extent these individuals were held out in contrast to others, but while the F.O. was slower than the D.O. to appreciate Dominion personnel, the British generally tended to make generous allowance for the comparative newness of External Affairs departments, and the Dominions' lack of experience in world affairs. Inevitably national stereotypes were formed, and expectations about the general character or competency of a member's diplomats based upon them. Thus a forthright, blustering Australian aroused no surprise, but a Canadian with such characteristics would have done.

In the autumn of 1945 Cockram prepared a memorandum for the D.O.

128. Cockram to Stephenson, 2nd June 1945, ibid.

on the relationship of the Dominions to the Five Great Powers. In this paper Cockram looked at Commonwealth relations in light of the war, the recent experiences of San Francisco and Potsdam, and in the context of the Great Powers. He considered why Australia and New Zealand had made more complaints about lack of consultation; especially since King had always been "the protagonist of the Dominions in their efforts to control their own foreign policy and to have a say in any decisions which may effect them" and Smuts was not a man to keep quiet if South Africa's rights were being adversely affected. Cockram concluded that personal and political factors were the cause of this; King and Smuts were politicians of great experience accustomed to take a wide view of the world, and confident that U.K. governments tried to keep the interests of all members of the Commonwealth constantly in mind. He thought that both men appreciated how finely balanced world peace was, and were careful not to act in such a manner as to upset this. If they had complaints, they could be relied upon to use discreet, confidential channels to make their representations.¹²⁹

By contrast, Cockram described Fraser and Evatt as "newcomers to the international scene", men who had previously spent their careers in the isolation of the South West Pacific politics, who were ready to believe that other governments failed to pay enough regard to their problems.¹³⁰ He thought this resulted in "hasty and ill-judged actions". On the personal side, Evatt's ambition within Australian politics led him to pose as the champion of Australian interests, while his suspicion of everyone led him to see neglect of Australia, or personal affronts, where none had occurred. Fraser he judged to be "more balanced" with a "wider vision", but a natural crusader with the tendency to champion before he had seen all the evidence. These factors led both men to

129. Memorandum by Cockram, August/September (??) 1945, D035/1890, WR208/544. (For fuller details of this memorandum, see chapter 8, pp. 387ff.)

be apt to be "quick and trenchant". Political factors were identified as affecting the judgments of both men, especially Fraser. Thus, his passionate belief in the rights of the common man and the virtues of democracy had affected his attitude to the U.K.'s policy towards Greece, Poland and Belgium. Evatt's appreciation of the native people of Asia's desire to be rid of their old masters led him to crusade for better conditions in these territories in order that a new attack from Asia could be resisted. Cockram thought that both men's attitude to the U.K. Government had altered since the national Government had ended, despite their respect for Churchill, Eden and Cranborne. He anticipated that with the election of the Labour Government, relations would be much improved. In the case of Australia, and Evatt, this was more likely to be realised by action

calculated to impress on him that the new Government in the United Kingdom both knows what it wants to do and is not ready to be bounced out of its course once this has been decided. Otherwise he might tend to regard any concessions made to Australia not only as vindication of his own criticisms of former Governments but as the occasion for further demands.¹³⁰

We have seen how, to a very considerable extent, the Dominions were in wartime prepared to accept the primacy of the U.K., and later three Great Powers, in the formation of military strategy. There was often a fine distinction between issues which related to the conduct of the war and those which affected the future shape of the world. It was also becoming more apparent that the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. would dominate the post-war world, with the U.K. acting as a junior partner. This tended to increase the practice of exclusive Great Power meetings and, with the growing divergencies between Soviet and American policy, such meetings became more important in order to reach some consensus on proposals to be put before the lesser powers. This exclusiveness and dissension made open discussion of the issues

difficult, and had its effect on the amount of information imparted to the Dominions.

On occasions the Dominions had pressed the U.K. for more information. During the Casablanca conference, of January 1943, the Dominions, who had been warned of the meeting and an impending communique, were duly sent the agreed statement of the proceedings, but Attlee realised that this was insufficient, and wrote to Churchill saying

I have received indications that there will be considerable resentment among Dominion Prime Ministers at their being kept so much in the dark. This has been inevitable so far, but their feelings could now be assuaged if we could give them a somewhat fuller account . . .

I really attach great importance to this from the point of view of avoiding friction with the Dominion Prime Ministers and retaining their fullest co-operation.¹³¹

Attlee's assessment was correct, for two days after he wrote to Churchill he received a request from the Canadian Government for further details.

Churchill agreed to a fuller message being sent to the Dominions, with extra details on the Pacific discussions being sent to Australia and New Zealand. It is also clear from the correspondence that Churchill had already sent additional information, in a personal letter, to Smuts.¹³²

On many occasions the Dominions were kept informed of U.K. policy and Great Power discussions by use of the two main channels of communication, the inter-governmental telegrams and the meetings with the Dominion High Commissioners in London. For instance the Dominions were sent various telegrams about the arrangements for the Moscow meeting of Foreign Ministers, in October 1943, and prior to the meeting Mr. Strang (the F.O.) and then Eden, attended the High Commissioners' meetings at the D.O. and outlined to them the policy which the U.K. would be putting forward. In this

131. Attlee to Churchill, 26th January 1943, D035/1512, WF207/10.

132. For further examples of the personal correspondence between Smuts and Churchill, see chapter 2, p.108.

133. D.O.'s information to Dominions re arrangements for Moscow meeting, see D035/1525, WF223/1. (messages of 18th-30th October 1943.) Minutes of High Commissioners meetings with Dominions Secretary, see D0121/13. (For High Commissioners' briefings re Casablanca Conference, 28th January 1943 & 2nd February 1943, D0121/13.)

instance Bruce used his attendance at some U.K. Cabinet meetings to urge that all the Dominions be kept informed of the course of the meeting. This was agreed to, and a selection of telegrams sent.¹³⁴

The Dumbarton Oaks proposals were sent in full to the Dominions and a meeting in London arranged to discuss them before the United Nations met at San Francisco.¹³⁵ The principal Great Power conference after Dumbarton Oaks was held at Yalta in February 1945. At the end of January the Dominion High Commissioners and their Governments were told of the prospective meeting, and the ban on information until after its conclusion. They were warned that the agenda which had been sent, and the supplementary questions which the U.K. wanted to raise, should be kept secret. Twenty-seven further telegrams were sent between 6th and 20th February detailing the progress of the discussions, the difficulties over the communique, and the outstanding problems. A D.O. minute also noted that the cable giving the full text of the communique had been despatched with arrangements made to ensure that it would arrive before any press information could. This was particularly important as the 1943 Cairo communique had almost simultaneously arrived with press announcements, causing embarrassment and annoyance to the Dominion Governments. Earlier in the war the news of the withdrawal from Dakar had not been transmitted to the Dominions in advance of press notices, which had also caused irritation.¹³⁶

Despite the number of telegrams sent to the Dominions, there were aspects of the Yalta discussions of which they were not informed, as King discovered when he passed on to the U.K. information received by the Canadian Ambassador at Chungking. This concerned the conditions the U.S.S.R. was demanding as a condition to its entry into the war against

134. Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, 4th October 1943, CAB64/36, WM(43)134.

135. During the Dumbarton Oaks meeting, Cadogan met the Dominion representatives stationed in Washington to give them details of the discussions. See Dilks, Cadogan Diaries, op.cit., pp. 659-664.

136. Telegrams from U.K. to Dominion Governments, 6th-20th February 1945, DO35/1506, WF207/1/3; minute by J.M.F.(?) to Machtig, 12th February 1946, ibid.

Japan, and embraced territorial and commercial rights. In essence it was the agreement worked out between Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta. (Churchill signed the agreement but did not take part in the negotiations.) The Dominions had been told nothing of this. King's initiative in drawing the U.K.'s attention to its Ambassador's report led to Churchill's explaining the agreement to all the Dominion Prime Ministers. However, Cadogan noted that he had had some difficulty in persuading the Prime Minister to do this.¹³⁷ This secret Yalta agreement was to cause the D.O. some consternation at the beginning of 1946 when the U.S. publicly referred to the terms, for officials could find no reference to the D.O.'s or the Dominions' having been informed. The D.O. anticipated furious telegrams complaining at the lack of consultation and Addison agreed that a letter of protest should be sent to the F.O. There was relief, and no doubt some embarrassment, when the relevant file was unearthed and it was realised that the Dominion Prime Ministers had been told. The letter to the F.O. was recovered and the Dominion Governments were sent a full copy of the Yalta agreement, prior to press releases, to supplement information sent in the previous July.¹³⁸

On the whole the Dominion Governments were kept fairly well informed of U.K. policy and its discussions with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. On occasions there were delays, sometimes the fault of the U.K. and sometimes not, and the Dominions were certainly not told everything. Whether the absence of information was due solely to security considerations is not clear, except that on occasions the Dominions were given highly secret information. During the Dumbarton Oaks meeting Cadogan, who met the Dominion representatives periodically, "Told them (the Dominions) the truth, under seal of secrecy", and during the 1945 London Council of Ministers the Dominion representatives were shown the papers under

137. King to Churchill, 27th June 1945; Churchill to Dominion Prime Ministers, 5th July 1945; Minute by Machtig, 14th July 1945, D035/1602, WF312/33.

138. Minutes by J.M.F.(?) 30th January 1946, Stephenson, 1st February 1946, Machtig, 1st February 1946, letter to F.O., 1st February 1946, ibid.

discussion with a similar warning.¹³⁹ It seems that, at least on this second occasion, the other Great Powers were not aware of such consultation, but it is not clear how often the U.K. withheld information on the insistence of the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. The D.O. consistently tried to ensure that the Dominions were not forgotten and was not afraid to challenge the F.O. if it thought it had fallen down in its task of communicating to the D.O. important information. The mistake in its filing system, which led to the precipitate letter to the F.O. over the secret Yalta agreement, does at least illustrate the D.O.'s awareness of the Dominions' requirements and its own efforts to meet them. But the U.K. was in a difficult position because it did not want to lose the confidence of the other Powers by passing on too much information, nor did it want to lose the goodwill of the Dominions by revealing too little. Such questions of information or policy were generally decided on the merits. Moreover, while the Dominions had some right to complain at any absence of information, they were nevertheless extremely well informed by comparison with other states of comparable size, and had the opportunity to make comments to the U.K. on prospective policy and thus the opportunity to influence one of the Great Powers directly. After the war, the British government had to ask itself how far it would allow the Dominions to comment upon its foreign policies and itself take heed of their opinions.

139. Dilks, *op.cit.*, p. 664; see page 17. (During the Potsdam Conference the Dominions were sent 60-70 telegrams explaining U.K. policy and the progress of the discussions. See D035/1508, WF207/1/6.)

Chapter EightInter-Commonwealth Collaboration, 1946-1947

Before the war the U.K. had welcomed, and sometimes sought, the backing of the Dominions; from 1943 onwards this support was increasingly seen as a necessary ingredient of British influence. In July 1945 Sir O. Sargent, Deputy Under-Secretary at the F.O. and shortly to take over from Cadogan as Permanent Under-Secretary, wrote a memorandum entitled "Stocktaking After V.E. Day". In this paper Sargent considered the U.K.'s position in the world and its relations with the other two Great Powers. He concluded that the U.K. had to base its foreign policy on co-operation with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., but that to strengthen its position vis-a-vis the other two, it needed to enrol the Dominions (plus France and the smaller western European nations) as collaborators with the U.K. in the tripartite system. The U.K. would be the leader and spokesman for this group of nations and thus be able to maintain its prestige and status.¹ This memorandum was endorsed by Cadogan and shown to Eden, who minuted "I think this is an excellent paper" and sent it to Churchill for his information.² It was also shown privately by Sargent to Cranborne and obviously given some distribution within the D.O. as Cockram wrote a memorandum in response to it.

Cockram's paper "Relationship of the Dominions to Big Five Politics" took up Sargent's point about enrolling the support of the Dominions for U.K. foreign policy and made some interesting observations about the likely future course of Commonwealth relations. He had no hesitation in anticipating the Dominions' full integration in world affairs. They appreciated the indivisibility of world peace and this, combined with their experience of the war, would mean that all would take

1. Memorandum by Sargent, 11th July 1945, F0371/50912, U5471/5471/70.
2. Minutes by Cadogan and Eden, ibid.

a much closer interest in international problems and show a greater readiness to express their views. Cockram thought the San Francisco Conference had provided a valuable lesson. Rather than complaining that they were not allowed sufficient freedom to express their policies, the Dominions had asserted that the U.K. had not supported Dominion revisions often enough. The conference had been characterised by energetic efforts to secure the support of all British Commonwealth delegations, but particularly the U.K., for individual amendments. Evatt had even criticised the U.K. for changing its policy since the preliminary meeting of delegations. Cockram concluded

it is likely therefore that the Dominions will express their views on many more international questions, and more fully, than they have done in the past, that they will be anxious to obtain United Kingdom support for these views, and that they will resent anything which can be considered as backsliding by the United Kingdom from conclusions jointly reached with the Dominions, either at conferences or by correspondence.³

Cockram identified as the main danger to future Commonwealth relations the fact that

some of the Dominions at present are living in the period of the Statute of Westminster, and that they have not yet brought themselves to realise that the world has changed fundamentally in the past fifteen years.

He thought the Dominions had to choose between continuing to emphasise their independence and, with the possible exception of Canada, sinking into obscurity, or recognising that only as part of the Commonwealth could they expect to exert some influence in the world. The choice was theirs; but

if they choose the latter then they must be prepared to render more than lipservice to the unity of the British Commonwealth, and be as vocal when necessary in their support of the United Kingdom vis a vis the United States or the U.S.S.R. as they were before the war free of their criticism. They must practise a restraint which will come with difficulty to some of them, for, like Hassan, they must ever 'keep the tongue of propriety in the cheek of discretion'.⁴

3. Memorandum by Cockram, August 1945, DO35/1890, WR208/544.

4. Ibid. (There is a close similarity between this comment and Bevin's statement about Commonwealth collaboration immediately prior to the 1945 Council of Foreign Ministers. See chapter 7, p. 355.)

Cockram was not wholly pessimistic for the future, believing that the very able Canadian delegation had played such a role at San Francisco "with conspicuous success".

The experience of the years 1944 and 1945 had perhaps facilitated the chances that the Dominions would adopt a more positive attitude towards the Commonwealth. Their position had altered; they were countries of greater power and status; but their increased involvement in international affairs, the dominance of the Great Powers and the relative decline of the U.K., had made their positions less comfortable. The politics of the post-war world were fiercer and for the first time the Dominions were closely involved. As membership of the U.N. increased and international affairs became even less Euro-centric, their positions were not made any easier. But had this not been so, if the Dominions had been allowed to play the kind of role craved by Evatt and to a lesser extent the Canadians, and international affairs had been less problematic, the temptation to forsake the confines of the Commonwealth might have been stronger. As it was, the U.K. proved to be a reasonably valiant and honest supporter of Dominion causes and they recognised that they would not receive the like from any other Great Power.

The 1944 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting had rejected the notion of centralising the machinery for Commonwealth collaboration and left it virtually unchanged and the 1946 Prime Ministers' Meeting did the same. The meeting of April-May 1946 characterised the developing equality of the association and the more businesslike nature of Commonwealth gatherings. A Canadian diplomat has described it as "very functionalist", the result being "consultation, not navel gazing". Comparatively little time was spent discussing machinery and according to Canada House's report to Ottawa the reason "was the remarkable degree of agreement" among the representatives of the

Commonwealth.⁵ The official communique declared that the existing methods had "proved their worth":

they are flexible and can be used to meet a variety of situations and needs, both those where the responsibility is on one member alone, and where the responsibility may have to be shared . . . While all are willing to consider and adopt practical proposals for developing the existing system, it is agreed that the methods now practised are preferable to any rigid centralised machinery. In their view such centralised machinery would not facilitate, and might even hamper, the combination of autonomy and unity which is characteristic of the British Commonwealth and is one of their greatest achievements.⁶

But if the machinery changed little at the end of the war, the positions of the Dominions and the U.K. did. With the Dominions taking a greater interest in international affairs, the quality and range of information sent to their Governments and shown to their High Commissioners was reconsidered. The association of the Dominions with aspects of U.K. policy, either in the sense of expressing agreement with the U.K.'s actions, or being able to make effective comments on U.K. policy, was another difficult issue and one complicated by the fact that their views were by no means identical. If, as Sargent and others had indicated, the U.K. wanted the Dominions to take a more positive attitude to Commonwealth collaboration, the U.K. also had to ensure that it was receptive to Dominion contributions, and not only on the occasions when it needed their support. In 1946 and 1947 three aspects of U.K. foreign policy illustrated that the U.K. still had decisions to take, and lessons to learn, about Commonwealth collaboration.

In the spring of 1946 the U.K. was re-negotiating its treaty with Egypt; particularly the provisions for stationing British troops and maintaining bases there. This treaty was central to the U.K.'s defence policy, but also affected the Commonwealth because of the close relationship

5. J. W. Holmes, The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the search for world order, 1943-1957, Vol. I, (Toronto, 1979), p. 153.

6. Extract from Final Communique of the 1946 Prime Ministers' Meeting, 23rd May 1946, P. N. S. Mansergh, Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs, 1931-1952, (Oxford, 1953), Vol. I, pp. 595-596.

between U.K. and Commonwealth defence. According to the provisions laid down for consultation the Dominions were kept informed of U.K. policy towards Egypt, but in April 1946 the F.O. suggested that the Dominions should be more closely associated with U.K. actions. Sargent wrote to Machtig telling him that the F.O. wanted the Dominions to accede to the revised treaty, or at least publicly express their support for the new policy and demonstrate their interest in the Middle East, in order to indicate plainly to the Egyptian Government that the U.K. had the backing of the whole Commonwealth.⁷ Machtig doubted whether the Dominions would be willing to take such action and intimated to Sargent that Canada, for one, was extremely unlikely to do so. He suggested that Sargent raised the matter with the Prime Ministers while they were in London, and before King arrived.⁸ (King was scheduled to arrive later than the other representatives because of Parliamentary commitments in Canada.)

This suggestion was immediately taken up and the Ministers of New Zealand and Australia were given details of the U.K.'s policy and its method of approach towards the Egyptians. Neither Smuts nor King had arrived in London at this juncture, but Australia and New Zealand were traditionally the Dominions most interested in the Middle East and the most likely to give some public support for U.K. policy.⁹ After giving this information to the two Ministers, Evatt and Nash, which was supplementary to telegrams already sent to Dominion capitals, the F.O. persisted in its desire to seek from the Dominions some positive support. In a memorandum to Bevin, officials reminded the Foreign Secretary of a resolution introduced by Eden, and since endorsed by Attlee's government, which stated that the U.K. should play a more prominent role in the Middle East and consult with the Dominions in order

7. Sargent to Machtig, 9th April 1946, D035/1206, WF271/29.

8. Machtig to Sargent, 25th April 1946, *ibid.*

9. Meeting of Prime Ministers, 25th April 1946, PMM(46) 4th meeting, D035/1534, WF271/37.

to gain their support. In his paper of April 1945 Eden had suggested that

Solidarity with the Dominions on this issue would strengthen our position vis-a-vis the United States and their practical assistance - were they disposed to afford it - would lessen the strain on our resources . . . which would be imposed by our assuming sole responsibility for security in the Middle Eastern area.

Bevin was told that there had been no consultation with the Dominions, apart from their being kept informed of U.K. policy and the objectives desired from the revision of the treaty, with Egypt. The paper stated that after discussions with the D.O. it had been agreed that it was doubtful if any Dominion would accept a direct commitment in the Middle East, and that Dominion accession to the revised treaty would tend to complicate the issue without any corresponding advantage. However,

it might be extremely useful, and possibly even decisive, if all or some of the Dominion Governments felt disposed to indicate quite plainly to the Egyptian Government that they approved, and supported, the policy which the British negotiators were following and to make clear their interest . . . in the security of the Middle East.

Bevin was told that Dominion Governments knew of the basis upon which the U.K. was conducting negotiations, and it was suggested that Smuts, Evatt and Nash should be consulted about giving positive support to the U.K.¹⁰ The next day Smuts, who had just arrived in London, raised the subject himself. He had been informed earlier of the details, and was alarmed at U.K. policy, particularly that the announcement of the withdrawal of British troops would not be made simultaneously with one regarding facilities to be granted to the British in Egypt.¹¹

Discussions had progressed no further when Attlee spoke in the House of Commons on the government's plan to revise the treaty. The

10. Memorandum, unsigned, to Bevin on consultation with Australia, South Africa and New Zealand on the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, 27th April 1946, D025/1206, WF271/29.

11. Meeting of Prime Ministers, 28th May 1946, PPM(46) 6th meeting.

Opposition questioned him as to the attitude of the rest of the Commonwealth, and Attlee replied that the Dominions agreed that the U.K.'s policy was the best approach to the Egyptian government. Eden queried this statement and specifically asked if the Dominions had agreed with "the timing, method and wording" of the submission. Attlee confirmed that they had. Churchill questioned the Prime Minister still further and asked whether the Dominions had been consulted, or whether the decision had been taken by the U.K. and the Dominions merely informed of it. Attlee replied "of course they were consulted before the decision" but he assured the House that he was not trying to "shelter myself by putting responsibility on others. I am saying they were fully consulted".¹² It is perhaps rather surprising that a British Prime Minister, who had himself held the office of Dominions Secretary, should allow himself to be cornered into making such comments about Commonwealth consultation in Parliament. Information on the U.K.'s policy had been transmitted to the Dominion Governments and further details had been outlined to the three visiting Commonwealth representatives. But Smuts had expressed his opposition to U.K. policy and King had been absent from the London talks and had given no indication to the U.K. that he concurred with its policy.

The day after his House of Commons statement Attlee met the three Dominion Ministers residing in London. He explained the events in Parliament, recalling that two weeks earlier he had outlined U.K. policy towards Egypt to Evatt and Nash and their acquiescence to the approach. Attlee announced that he had been anxious in the debate not to commit the Dominions and now wanted to make it clear that the U.K. took full responsibility for the decision.¹³ To say privately to Dominion Ministers that the U.K. did not regard them as committed to its Egyptian policy,

12. Attlee's statement in the House of Commons, 7th May 1946, Hansard House of Commons Debates, Vol. 422, Cols. 858-859.

13. Meeting of Prime Ministers, 8th May 1946, PMM(46) 14th meeting, FO371/65574 W5543/5543/68.

and to admit implicitly that he made a mistake in saying so much in Parliament, hardly sufficed. A public statement could only be retracted by a second public announcement correcting any wrong impression that had been given about the nature and extent of Commonwealth consultation.

Smuts was very unhappy with Attlee's action. The morning after the statement he wrote to Attlee repeating his reservations about U.K. policy and its implications for Commonwealth communications, and reminded the Prime Minister that this had been his consistent attitude and that he had not agreed with U.K. plans. He said that Attlee's comments were likely to be misunderstood both in the U.K. and in South Africa, and asked for the issue to be set straight.¹⁴ Smuts also wrote to Addison, enclosing a copy of the letter to Attlee, and asked for the former's help in rectifying the situation, saying that he refused to go on record as having agreed to a policy which he had strongly opposed.¹⁵ At the meeting of British and Dominion Ministers Smuts expressed some sympathy with the awkward position in which Attlee had been placed, and said that he did not think British Ministers should be questioned on the views of the Dominions, as those country's representatives had no voice in Parliament and were bound to be placed in a difficult position. He repeated that he expected to be questioned closely about the issue when he returned to South Africa. Although

Dominion Ministers were certainly informed of what was in mind, he did not think it would be right to say that they were consulted in such a way as to associate them with the decision. The decision was clearly that of the U.K. Government.

Smuts added that it would be helpful if some general statement could be issued about the nature and purpose of Commonwealth consultation in order to reduce the risk of misunderstanding on the present issue and in the future.¹⁶

14. Smuts to Attlee, 8th May 1946, D035/1534, W271/37.

15. Smuts to Addison, 8th May 1946, ibid.

16. Prime Ministers' meeting, 8th May 1946, PMM(46) 14th meeting, F0371/65574, W5543/5543/68.

Evatt also questioned the Prime Minister's statement. He noted that at the meeting of 25th April the issue had been presented to them as a U.K. decision on policy, which they had accepted on the grounds that it was an issue which lay within the jurisdiction of that Government. He also warned Attlee that Dominion representatives would be questioned by their Parliaments and press. Widening the subject, Evatt suggested that Commonwealth communications could be categorised into three classes: first, when a Dominion was merely informed of action the U.K. was proposing to take; second, when it was consulted before a decision was made; and third, when assent was necessary because the Dominions would share the responsibility for the policy. The U.K.'s plans for revising the Egyptian treaty should be placed into the first category as an issue of which the Dominions had been informed; but they had not been consulted and least of all had they assented to the course of action, because it was a matter within the U.K.'s sphere of responsibility.¹⁷

A week later in a broadcast Evatt returned to the theme of Commonwealth co-operation, repeating his three classifications.¹⁸

The New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister, W. Nash, agreed with his colleagues that the U.K. could not say that the Dominions had shared in the decision. He agreed that they had been kept fully informed, and that personally he had had no doubt that the U.K. was following the only course open to it, although he said Smuts' comments had prompted some misgivings.¹⁹ The following day Nash reported to his Prime Minister. He recounted the sequence of telegrams to Wellington and the two discussions he had had in London. Nash told Fraser that following these conversations he thought the U.K. was following the only policy possible, "but we were not called upon either to agree or disagree".

17. Ibid.

18. Broadcast for the B.B.C. by Evatt, 10th May 1946. See Dr. H. V. Evatt, Australia in World Affairs - speeches and articles, pp. 188-9.

Reported in The Times, 16th May 1946. See also D035/1534, W271/37.

19. Meeting of Prime Ministers, 8th May 1946, op.cit.

He described the events in the U.K. House of Commons and the subsequent discussions with U.K. Ministers. Nash reported that the other Dominion Ministers had been satisfied with Attlee's remark that the policy was the responsibility of the U.K. and that this would be clearly stated, adding "but to me it does contain certain elements of concern". He explained that despite the fact that this matter lay within the purview of the U.K., the course of action contemplated could involve New Zealand in difficulties and possibly even war. Contemplating a solution to this situation Nash acknowledged that a joint Cabinet or joint Secretariat on foreign policy and defence, and the acceptance of joint responsibility for the execution of decisions, were unacceptable to the other members. At the London discussions the most that could be agreed upon was full consultation with a view to reaching agreement whenever practicable. He suggested that on Pacific issues the U.K. increasingly took into consideration the views of Australia and New Zealand, but that on European or Middle Eastern issues, and especially where serious commitments were involved, the bias of the U.K. decisions "will obviously be their own position and responsibilities".

It may not now be the time to raise the subject but I feel that there is no major question of foreign policy or action that is the exclusive responsibility of the U.K. The U.K. may under certain circumstances have the final word, but we cannot as I see it say that on any question we have no responsibility, and if we have responsibility our voice must be heard and taken note of, and as a corollary we must, if we tender advice or views that we desire accepted, share the responsibility.²⁰

This view of one Minister, albeit a senior and influential one, reflected the basic attitude of the New Zealand Government. It was in keeping with a greater responsibility and awareness of the need for the Commonwealth to act as a more cohesive force. New Zealand had generally been less protective about its independence than Australia or Canada, not afraid to disagree with the U.K. when it differed with

20. Nash to Fraser, 9th May 1946, D035/1534, W271/37.

its policy, but not so ready to stand on its dignity. It had generally favoured Curtin's plans for improving Commonwealth collaboration, including the establishment of a Secretariat, which had foundered at the 1944 Prime Ministers' Meeting. New Zealand alone would have little capacity to influence the course of Commonwealth co-operation but Nash's statement illustrates its willingness to take an active interest in Commonwealth and U.K. policy, to tender advice when asked and appreciate the unitary nature of the post-war world and the inevitable influence of one country's policies on other.

In the face of the Dominion Ministers' reactions to his statements, and the request of Smuts to make some announcement countering the erroneous impression which he had given about the process of Commonwealth consultation over the Egyptian Treaty, Attlee spoke for a second time in the House of Commons immediately after his meeting with the Dominion representatives. He announced that he was anxious to ensure that there had been no misunderstanding about the nature of consultations with the Dominions, and told his colleagues

It is our practice and our duty as members of the British Commonwealth to keep other members of the Commonwealth fully and continuously informed of all matters which we are called upon to decide, but may affect Commonwealth interests. The object is to give them an opportunity of expressing their views in confidence, if they so desire. These views are taken fully into account, but the decision must be ours and the other Governments are not asked, and would not wish, to share the responsibility for it.²¹

He added that this course had been followed for the Egyptian Treaty and his statement that the Dominions had "agreed" to the method of approach in that instance had probably given the wrong impression. They had been given full information and been given the chance to discuss the issue, but had not been asked to express agreement with the U.K.'s policy; they realised that it was a matter for the U.K. to decide in light of the conditions and the statements by their advisors.

21. Attlee's statement to the House of Commons, 8th May 1946, Hansard House of Commons Debates, Vol. 422, Cols. 1069-1070.

The one Dominion Prime Minister who had not arrived in London, or sent a deputising Minister, was King. The Canadian Government had received telegrams about the Egyptian Treaty, but no consultations had been held. King was predictably disturbed by the news of Attlee's statement in the House on 7th May which he first heard of, not through press reports or messages from London, but from a question from the Progressive Conservatives in the Canadian Parliament. King replied that he had not seen any such report but assured Parliament that it could not have referred to Canada as "We had not been asked for, nor given advice". He continues in his Diary

It irritates me beyond words to see the British try to bring all the self-governing nations into one bag, as it were, labelled 'The Dominions' as if we had a common policy on everything and seeking to make us the screen for their own inadequacies and the reason for their policies.²²

King spent a long time drafting a letter to Attlee which he referred to as being rather more "emphatic" than he would have liked to someone who had his own problems and was a true friend, and when it was not Attlee who was writing the letters or controlling the situation. But,

I am certainly not going to have Canada made a puppet of any official in the Dominions (Office) or any other official of the British Government.²³

Quite what King meant by Attlee not controlling the situation is unclear, but the letter does not seem to have been sent because the next day King found to his "great surprise" telegrams from the U.K. which were of a "wholly satisfying and realistic character", making clear that the "'Dominions' were asserting their position along the lines that I have been striving for right along."²⁴ This and the subsequent statement by Attlee made any official protest by King unnecessary. His attitude is interesting for three reasons. The D.O. was quite right in its advice to the F.O. not to approach King for Canada's public support for

22. Mackenzie King Record Vol. 3, p. 220.

23. Mackenzie King Record Vol. 3, p. 221.

24. Ibid.

the Egyptian Treaty, as is revealed by King's distaste for U.K. attempts to use the Dominions as a screen or an excuse for its own policies. King made it clear that he did not object to the U.K.'s consulting other Dominions about policy, or their giving advice or approval; that was an issue for each Government to decide; it was the use of the blanket term 'Dominions' which was objectionable. Finally, he felt surprised that the other Dominions did not agree to the policy, and more importantly, were objecting to the U.K. statement, a fact which obviously pleased him in that he was receiving support for his view on consultations.

Attlee's statements and the reactions from the Dominions led the F.O. and the D.O. to review the machinery for keeping the others informed of policy. Mr. Coverely-Price of the D.I.D. drafted a new circular for distribution within the F.O. outlining the purposes and procedures of Commonwealth consultation to replace the previous one of June 1945.²⁵ At the same time Boyd Shannon of the D.O. also wrote a paper on this subject. He recorded that the Dominions had been kept informed of most stages of U.K. policy, except the decision to offer the total evacuation of troops and the decision to announce this publicly, although the Ministers visiting London had had a chance to comment on the announcement. He thought the procedure followed until that point had been satisfactory, but he noted that it was wrong for views expressed in such consultations to be disclosed. The frank exchange of views between Governments would, he thought, be seriously hampered if consultations had to be conducted on the assumption that the views expressed would later be published. Dominions' sensitivity over the independence of their policies and the readiness of some sections of opinion within each Dominion to challenge Governments on this issue,

25. See Office Circular No. 41, 7th June 1945, F0371/50373, W10798/10798/68.

made the point even more important. Shannon also criticised the Opposition's behaviour in the matter.

Any attempt to make the question of consultation with other Governments of the British Commonwealth - a practice to which His Majesty's Government are committed, whichever the party in office - into a party political issue, is to be deplored.²⁶

Referring to the general machinery for consultation Shannon noted that this had been discussed with Dominion Ministers and confirmed as being satisfactory.

The F.O. Circular, which was sent to Shannon for the D.O.'s approval, did not differ radically from previous ones but did emphasise the need to raise at the earliest possible stage any issue which required consultation with other members. Commenting on an early draft of the circular Shannon wrote,

The whole Foreign Office attitude to the subject appeared to me to ignore the responsibilities of the Dominions Secretary and the Dominions Office in the matter.

However, a few changes he suggested had been accepted. He said the circular was not expressed as the D.O. would have phrased it, but that there was only limited scope for "intervening on a matter of Foreign Office domestic procedure". As for the distribution of the document he noted his initial objection to the circular's distribution abroad, which he did not press because F.O. representatives were likely to see it when on leave, and because it was to the D.O.'s advantage on general grounds that all F.O. officials should be aware of the need to consider whether an issue ought to be discussed with the Dominions.²⁷

The F.O. circular was despatched on June 27th 1946 and echoed Evatt's statements categorising the different degrees of Commonwealth collaboration although four separate categories were outlined: 1) when they were kept informed of policy so that they could express their views if they wished; 2) when they were invited to express their attitude; 3) when the U.K. actively sought their agreement to a course of action; 4) when

26. Paper by Shannon, 23rd June 1946, D035/1534, W271/37.

27. Minute by Shannon, 5th July 1946, D035/1205, WF203/1/25.

their co-operation was required for joint action. The circular stressed the responsibility of each F.O. department to raise the question of consultation with the D.I.D. or the D.O. They were also reminded that Dominion Governments "dislike being expected to express their views on a matter which may affect their interests, at a stage when it is too late for them to give adequate consideration to it, and to formulate effectively any comments they may wish to make." 28

The blunder of Chanak in 1922 was not quite repeated in 1946, but the U.K. Government did not endear itself to any of the Dominions by its clumsy attempt to commit them to a U.K. foreign policy initiative. The 1946 episode took rather more the form of a blunder than an Imperialistic plot. The F.O. did suggest public support from all the Dominions for U.K. policy, or possibly direct association, but seemed to take the advice of the D.O. as to the impossibility of this and limited its aim to some public statement from Australia and New Zealand, and possibly South Africa, for U.K. policy. Simultaneously with this, Attlee allowed himself to be out-maneuvred in Parliament by taunts from the Opposition that he lacked the support of the rest of the Commonwealth for a policy which they clearly opposed. It was perhaps advantageous that the Labour Government should be reminded fairly early its term of office that it could not treat the Dominions with such casualness. These events also served to remind officials in the F.O., who had increasing contacts with the Dominions, of the same point. The following year the U.K. had to reconsider its attitude to Commonwealth collaboration from a rather different standpoint; the extent to which it was willing to divulge information and its preparedness to postpone decisions until the Dominions had time to comment. If the U.K. wanted Commonwealth support for its foreign policy, should it not be willing to submit all aspects of that policy

to the scrutiny of the Dominions, or could it retain a genuinely independent policy on issues which were of no direct concern to the other member countries?

In January 1947 Lord Addison wrote to Bevin about the re-negotiation of the U.K.'s treaties with the U.S.S.R. and the French, reminding him of the importance of carrying the Dominions with the U.K. He suggested that the U.K. inform the other members of its intentions vis-a-vis the U.S.S.R. when it began the talks, giving them time to comment if they wished, and that it sent information of any changes desired by Moscow. He added that as the French Treaty was not just an extension of existing arrangements

I feel strongly that we ought to show our proposals to the Dominions, and give them a chance to comment, before showing them to the French. It would be very difficult to modify our proposals, once the French had seen them.²⁹

Bevin reassured Addison that the Dominions would be consulted over the revision of the Russian Treaty. He sent Addison copies of all messages exchanged with the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. to date over the revision of the Treaty, so the Dominions could be kept abreast of the position, but did not think that the U.K.'s enquiry to Stalin as to changes should be held up for their replies. He told the Dominions Secretary that a draft treaty had been prepared with the French along the lines of the proposed Russian Treaty and that it was awaiting the comments of other U.K. departments before being given to the Ambassador as a basis for the negotiations. He expected the draft to be amended in many respects, and described it as by no means a final one. He said it was not to be shown to the U.K. Cabinet yet and he thought the time to do that, and show it to the Dominions, would come after some progress had been made. If the Dominions had a draft which was continually altered,

29. Addison to Bevin, 31st January 1947, FO371/65580, W1011/1011/68. (In April 1942 the Dominions had not wanted to be associated with the Anglo-Russian Treaty, D. N. Dilks ed., The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945, (London, 1971), entry 21st April 1942, p. 448.

misunderstandings might follow, and that it was sufficient to indicate to them the kind of treaty the U.K. wanted.³⁰ Addison agreed with Bevin's suggestions in both cases, providing the D.O. was shown a copy of the draft for the French Treaty.³¹

The process of keeping the Dominions adequately in touch did not work altogether smoothly, despite the D.O. reminder. Various telegrams about the French negotiations were despatched in February 1947 - summaries of the different drafts³² - but the discussions with the French came to a swift conclusion, with the French Government pressing for an immediate release of the terms of the agreement. Consequently, copies of the Treaty were sent to the Dominions only after it had been agreed upon by both sides and about twenty-four hours before it was due to be published, allowing no time for any comment. The Australian Government protested at the lack of opportunity to express its opinion, considering it a breach of the consultation procedures.³³ Addison responded by explaining the peculiar difficulties encountered on that occasion, and said that the U.K. would continue to try and keep the Dominions informed and, where possible, with time to comment.³⁴ However, he was clearly not pleased with the F.O.'s handling of the matter. When Addison had been told of the early announcement he had telephoned Bevin warning of his apprehensions about the Dominions. He wrote again on 5th March telling Bevin of the complaint he had received and commenting that

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30. Bevin to Addison, 8th February 1947, ibid.
 31. Addison to Bevin, 11th February 1947, ibid.
 32. Minutes by Mr. A. S. Halford (Private Secretary to Sargent) and Sargent, 10th April 1947 & 22nd April 1947 for the information despatched to the Dominion Governments, F0371/65580, W2552/1011/68.
 33. Beasley to Addison, (conveying a message from Evatt) 3rd March 1947, F0371/65580, W1941/1011/68. According to the Canadian High Commissioner's report to his Government, Beasley blamed the F.O. for the lack of information and was suspicious of the F.O. holding back information. He credited Addison with sincere intentions. Robertson to St. Laurent, 8th March 1947, MG26, J I, Vol. 429, File: Robertson Feb.-April 1947, pp. 389881-389882.
 34. Addison to Beasley, (enclosing a message for Evatt), 5th March 1947, ibid.

while the U.K. was not constitutionally required to consult the Dominions, the treaty being a subject of U.K. foreign policy, he had stressed the importance of giving them an opportunity to comment on such an important issue. Addison said that he appreciated the difficulties, but asked Bevin to ensure that

on issues of the first political importance, which are likely to be of interest to Dominion Governments on general grounds, we do afford them a real opportunity to let us have their comments, if they so desire, at the earliest stages of our consideration of the matter. If we keep them informed not merely of our conclusions when reached, but of the ideas we have in prospect, and the way in which our minds are moving, any comments they may have to make will be most useful, and we shall not be exposed to the charge that we are merely keeping to the letter of the arrangements for Commonwealth co-operation. As you know I have urged this before.³⁵

Bevin replied that while he agreed that the Dominions should generally be given a chance to reply, he did not think that on issues where no constitutional obligation existed to consult with them, matters should be held up especially for them, as the Australian complaint had seemed to imply. He repeated the peculiar circumstances of the French Treaty, and warned that the same thing could happen in the case of the Treaty with the U.S.S.R., adding that he thought "it would be unreasonable to expect us, when we had reached the point of clinching (the treaty) to wait for the comments from them" (the Dominions). Bevin also reminded Addison that no other Dominion had complained at the procedures and suggested the incident was an example of Evatt's propensity to make trouble.³⁶ It appears from the F.O. files that the Head of the Western Department, Mr. F. R. Hoyer-Millar, had advised his colleagues of the necessity of sending the complete text to the Dominions immediately after the Cabinet had approved of it and allowing them ten days to reply.³⁷ But partly because of the unexpected early

35. Addison to Bevin, 5th March 1947, F0371/65580, W2304/1011/68.

36. Minute by Sir P. J. Dixon (Principal Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary), 20th March 1947, and letter Bevin to Addison, 20th March 1947, *ibid.*

37. Minute by F. R. Hoyer-Millar, 21st March 1947, referring to his earlier minute of 22nd January 1947, *ibid.*

signing and announcement, the Dominions were not sent the text until four days before it was due to be signed, and were then told that only twenty-four hours would elapse before its publication. The most startling aspect of the F.O.'s attitude, before and after the Australian complaint, was its reluctance to send the Dominions an actual text of the proposed treaty, and its unwillingness to consider that it might revise its proposals in light of comments from the Dominions. It was of course a matter of U.K. policy, and it was quite reasonable for the U.K. to expect no comment from the Dominions. However, Addison's original suggestion that the Dominions be shown a full text of the U.K.'s proposed plans before they were shown to the French was never seriously considered by the F.O.

Bevin did ask Sargent to review the machinery for Commonwealth consultation to see if any organisation change could improve the system. Officials considered the procedure, as laid down in the circular of June 1946, and reported that nothing was faulty with the basic system; the key to improved success was to get the machinery in motion at the earliest possible moment if it was an issue in which the Dominions had to be informed or consulted. The D.I.D. suggested that the circular be sent round departments again as a reminder that the responsibility for raising an issue with the other Commonwealth members lay with them.³⁸ To some extent this avoided the real problem. It was generally agreed, at least by the British, that the information sent to the Dominions had been satisfactory until the French insistence on immediate publication. What was lacking was the necessary detail in terms of a full text (or texts) to enable them to see the extent of the U.K.'s proposals and avoid the problem of rushing one through once it had been agreed, days or hours before publication. However, the F.O. continued to take solace from the fact that none of the other Dominions had

38. Minutes by Mrs. Hamilton (American Information Department), 1st April 1947, Mr. Finch (Commonwealth Liaison Department), 1st April 1947, Halford, 10th April 1947, and Sargent to Bevin, 22nd April 1947, FO371/65580, W2552/1011/68.

complained.³⁹ Not only had the other Dominions not complained, at the High Commissioners' meeting of 8th March, in the presence of Sir Orme Sargent and Mr. Mayhew, the Canadian High Commissioner said that Beasley's criticisms implied a conception of U.K. policy which did not apply to Canada. Canada conceded the U.K.'s right to have its own foreign policy, in the same way as Canada did, and although it wished to keep its fellow members informed, it did not consider that each country had to secure the consent of the others before deciding on its policy. He said his Prime Minister was appreciative of the information he received through the usual channels.⁴⁰

The D.O. was disturbed by the situation and Machtig wrote to Sargent questioning whether the U.K.'s machinery was as efficient as it could be. He pointed out that it was a prime objective of the Government to keep in the closest contact with the Dominions on major foreign policy questions. He said that the D.O., without accepting the validity of Evatt's complaints, thought it might be possible on important issues to involve the Dominions earlier. Admitting that in the two treaties at issue the Dominions were not directly concerned, for they were not being asked to undertake obligations themselves, he said they clearly had an interest in such policy

since, if as we hope, they are and will remain closely associated with us, they must be affected by the important obligations which we undertake. It is therefore, we suggest, of vital importance that every care should be taken to see that they are given a real opportunity of offering any comments or views, not merely at the last stages of the negotiations but in the early stages while it is still possible to give proper weight to any comments they may have to offer.⁴¹

This was perhaps as frank and stern a letter as passed between the two offices for some time. It was fully in accord with Addison's letter of 31st January which had been to some extent ignored by the F.O., and

40. Robertson to Pearson, 8th March 1947, MG26, J I, Vol. 429, File: Robertson Feb.-April 1947, pp. 389881-389882.

41. Machtig to Sargent, 11th April 1947, FO371/65580, W2803/1011/68.

39. Minutes of Finch, 2nd May 1947 and Bevin, 6th May 1947, ibid

demonstrated a real problem within the U.K.'s handling of Commonwealth relations; whereas the D.O. was the department responsible for those relations, the F.O. was solely responsible for judging the amount of information disclosed, and the timing of it, subject to direct instructions from the Prime Minister or Cabinet. Machtig was informed that no change in the machinery was contemplated, but that the circular was to be re-distributed.⁴²

After the protests over the French Treaty, and in light of Addison's first letter, the F.O. reconsidered the position of the Dominions in relation to the Russian negotiations. At the beginning of March, when the U.K. was about to commence talks, it was suggested that the Dominions should be sent a full draft. However a Northern Department official, Mr. A. E. Lambert, minuted that if this were done every verbal amendment which was introduced would also have to be sent to them which would be "tiresome" for all concerned. He also thought that the Dominions ought not to be told that the U.S.S.R. was being offered similar measures of consultation in the event of renewed German aggression as had been negotiated with the French.⁴³ Another official, Mr. Matthews, argued in favour of sending the Dominions more information. He noted the Dominions' tendency in the past to take offence if the U.K. appeared to withhold information, and the recent complaint from Evatt. Without agreeing with this protest, and admitting that Evatt probably used the incident as an excuse for criticism, he warned his colleagues of the importance of not providing him with such opportunities, which "he never scruples to use in public". He suggested that Bevin's arguments against closer consultation were in fact less important than the risk of exposing the U.K. to criticism from the Dominions, whether ill-founded or not. Matthews thought

42. Sargent to Machtig, 21st April 1947, ibid.

43. Minute by Lambert, 4th March 1947, F0371/65580, W2462/1011/68.

that the risk of misunderstanding might be greater if they told the others nothing, than if they were sent full information from which the U.K. might depart later. He advised delaying no further in sending the Dominions a telegram, unless Bevin was expected to make major revisions to the plans. He added that the U.K.'s talks with the U.S. over the treaty had gone so far that this was likely to be misconstrued by the Australians unless they were informed immediately.⁴⁴

The Office decided that any communication should await the return of Bevin from his discussions with General Marshall. Delay while the Foreign Secretary returned to approve the draft, and for the Cabinet to agree on the proposals was not unreasonable or surprising, but, when the Cabinet approved the draft on 18th March, nearly two weeks later, the Dominions were still sent only a general summary of the U.K.'s proposals, excluding information about the provisions for German aggression.⁴⁵

Pressure from the D.O. continued. On the 25th March Addison contacted the F.O. again, expressing his worry that nothing more far-reaching had been given to the Dominions. After the criticisms of the Anglo-French Treaty it was essential for them to receive all material possible, and he suggested that only the text would crystallise their ideas. Officials thought it impossible to communicate an actual text but "At the pressing request of the Dominions Office" another telegram was drafted which, in the eyes of the F.O., would not "do any harm". This one did contain details of the proposed articles to counter German aggression which had been omitted previously.⁴⁶

The discussions over Commonwealth consultation in the case of the

44. Minute by Matthews, 6th March 1947, *ibid.*

45. Minutes by R. M. A. Hankey (Head of Northern Department), 6th & 11th March 1947, C. F. A. Warner (Assistant Under Secretary), 13th March 1947, and Lambert, 19th March 1947, Cabinet Conclusions, of 18th March 1947, CM(47) 29th meeting, *ibid.*

46. Minute by Hankey, 25th March 1947, F0371/65580, W2463/1011/68.

Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian Treaties illustrate a clear difference of opinion between the D.O. and the F.O. Constitutionally the U.K. was not obliged to do more than inform the Dominions of its actions before they became public knowledge, and in that respect it acted quite correctly in both instances. However, in terms of the future success of Commonwealth collaboration the D.O. was concerned that the U.K. should not give the impression that it was only abiding by the "letter of the arrangements for Commonwealth consultation".

If one contrasts the actions of the F.O. in the revision of the Egyptian Treaty with its actions during the revision of the Russian and French Treaties, a significant divergence appears. In the one instance it was keen to enlist the greatest possible support from the Dominions when it felt that the U.K.'s policy needed such backing; in the other it was reluctant to furnish full information before the treaties had been negotiated. In both cases the issue was a matter of U.K. policy with similar obligations resulting in terms of consultation, but the degree of consultation which took place was very different. The D.O. followed a far more consistent line. In the former case it warned the F.O. against asking the Dominions for an unrealistic amount of support, which they were likely to refuse outright. In the second it continually urged the F.O. to be more forthcoming in providing the Dominions with information about U.K. policy. Perhaps the real danger for the U.K. lay in pursuing neither of these attitudes; it encouraged the Dominions to take an interest in policy and express their views, while refusing to give them full information. Such inconsistency was likely to lead not only to confusion, but to severe dissatisfaction, and work against mutually beneficial collaboration with the U.K. It is true that the different attitudes of the Dominions towards collaboration made life very difficult for the U.K. and it was predictably Australia who made the protests about the Anglo-Russian

Treaty. But whereas there were genuine problems in pursuing actual consultations towards joint policy, there should have been no difficulty about furnishing all the Dominions with sufficient information and allowing them to comment upon it if they wished; if Canada did not want to express an opinion, well and good, but Australia or New Zealand could be given the opportunity. However, and perhaps not unnaturally, the F.O. did not welcome the need to notify the Dominions of every step of its policy, or wait for their views. It was one thing to co-ordinate policies on issues of general international concern, such as the U.N. Charter, and another to have its bi-lateral relations with other states vetted.

At the end of the war the U.K. also considered two important aspects of inter-Commonwealth representation; the supply of information to the Dominion High Commissioners, and their status and title. The first was a substantial part of the machinery for Commonwealth collaboration and the second was not merely an issue about which the Dominions held strong feelings, but one which reflected the particular nature of the Commonwealth association and distinguished it from relations between foreign states. With the Dominions all taking more initiatives in world affairs, the D.O. was all the more anxious not to allow the distinctiveness of the association to be undermined by discarding nomenclature and customs which exemplified the differences.

Re-consideration of the telegrams shown to Dominion High Commissioners in London was prompted at the end of 1946 after a complaint from the Australian High Commissioner, Rt. Hon. Jack Beasley. Under the system practised in the latter stages of the war and the early months of peace, a separate category of telegrams, the 'D' series, containing the more important despatches from Foreign Missions and those despatched

from the F.O. itself, were selected by the D.I.D. of the F.O. and, when approved by the D.O., sent to Dominion Governments and shown to the High Commissioners in London. The other document regularly received was the 'Weekly Political Intelligence Summary' but the High Commissioners also saw background information on issues which were of interest but not suitable to be sent directly to Dominion capitals. The only exception to this distribution of information had been the Australian High Commissioner, Mr. Bruce, who, because of his exceptional status as Australia's accredited representative to the U.K. War Cabinet, received F.O. telegrams of Cabinet distribution in his room in the Cabinet Office. Bruce's replacement was another former politician, Jack Beasley, originally sent to London in January 1946 as Resident Minister, but who, after representing Australia at the Paris Peace Conference, returned to London as High Commissioner. During the first months of Beasley's tenure in London, as a Minister of the Crown, he received Cabinet Distribution telegrams as Bruce had done. After his assumption of the office of High Commissioner, this was discontinued and, like his colleagues, he received the 'D' series. In November 1946 Beasley complained to the D.O. and the F.O. that he was no longer receiving the same amount of information and asked for renewed access to Cabinet telegrams.

The U.K. was mindful of the difficulties it had incurred in the past with Australia, and had already had experience of Beasley's abrasive character. The Minister of State at the F.O., Mr. McNeil, described him in a minute as "one of our most difficult customers", and in a letter to Attlee as "a tricky customer", while Garner recalls that Beasley "struck a new note of aggressiveness".⁴⁷ The D.O. thought that because the Australian High Commissioner had received the Cabinet

47. Minute by McNeil, 6th December 1947 and letter McNeil to Attlee, 31st December 1946, FO371/65577, W761/25/68. Rt. Hon. Lord Garner, 'The Commonwealth Office, 1925-1968', p. 299.

distribution telegrams until he returned from Paris that distribution ought to be resumed, despite the normal practice of giving all High Commissioners the same information. However, the D.O. did want to ensure that such telegrams would be carefully screened so that nothing unsuitable was sent, such as criticisms of Australian policy.⁴⁸

Mr. Matthews, of the D.I.D., pointed to two problems in acceding to this advice. First, it would probably be impossible to treat Beasley in a different way from the others and there was no justification for so doing; secondly, that the screening would be difficult because of the many telegrams which, as an official rather than a Minister of the Crown, Beasley should not be allowed to see and the lack of staff to do the work. It was pointed out that either Beasley would receive many less telegrams, which he would notice and complain of, or would have access to secret material not available to other Dominion representatives. Matthews was unhappy about abandoning the established tradition that information to the Dominions needed special presentation, as embodied in the 'D' series. If a change was necessary, he suggested two alternatives, either the creation of an entirely new series for all High Commissioners with "an attractive title" such as 'Cabinet and High Commissioners' which contained more "innocuous material" than the existing Cabinet series, or the down-grading of the 'General' series and the inclusion of material from other series and the creation of a separate series to cover the real Cabinet telegrams.⁴⁹ To extract telegrams from various series might lead to complications, with embarrassing references to despatches which had not been included.⁵⁰ The Minister of State ruled that a change had to be made, and that a new series based on the 'General' distribution,

48. F. E. Cumming-Bruce (Dominions Secretary's Private Secretary) to J. V. Robb (McNeil's Private Secretary, 4th December 1946, F0371/65577, W761/25/68.

49. Minute by Matthews, 5th December 1946, ibid.

50. Minute by Sir D. Scott (Deputy Under Secretary at F.O.) 6th December 1946, ibid.

but containing other material, should be begun.⁵¹

Considerable discussion took place over the administrative arrangements and various F.O. departments pleaded lack of manpower to cope with the problem. (The Communications Department was especially concerned at the prospect of losing half its secretarial staff once the Government abolished the Employment Control Order, which it was expected to do at the beginning of 1947.)⁵² The Minister of State submitted the proposed alterations to Attlee at the end of December 1946, recommending the expansion of the 'General' series, adding that the Australian High Commission staff should be encouraged to visit the D.I.D. and other F.O. Departments to discuss foreign affairs.⁵³ Attlee, after consultations with the D.O. and Cabinet Office, agreed to McNeil's proposal but warned him that the increased distribution needed careful monitoring on security grounds.⁵⁴ McNeil duly informed Beasley of the new arrangements, leaving it to Lord Addison to mention the invitation to his High Commission staff to visit the F.O. more often.⁵⁵ Initially there were some problems with the new arrangements due to the organisation of the Australian staff in London. The Australian Liaison Officer, who was responsible to the Department of External Affairs, had offices in the U.K. Cabinet Offices, and received material for the High Commissioner. But there was a division of authority, as the High Commissioner and his staff were the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Department in Canberra. Relations between the two departments, and the two offices in London, were not always cordial and the Liaison Officer did not pass on the additional information at first, which led the Australian High Commission to complain that no more telegrams were being received. After some tactful comments by the F.O., the issue was sorted out.

51. Minute by McNeil, 6th December 1946, ibid. (Still referred to as the 'D' series.)

52. See Minutes by Matthews, 10th, 14th & 16th December 1946, and by Mr. Dunlop, 10th, 12th & 16th December 1946, ibid.

53. McNeil to Attlee, 31st December 1946, ibid.

54. Attlee to McNeil, 13th January 1947, FO371/65577, W762/25/68.

55. McNeil to Beasley, 15th January 1947, ibid. See Minutes by Matthews, 5th March 1947, FO371/65577, W1320/25/68.

Addison informed the F.O. that he would not raise the matter at that time because Beasley had made no further complaints, and he did not think it timely for the U.K. to revive the subject. He said it would be helpful if the F.O. could include as many telegrams as possible of the old 'General' series in the new circulation to the Dominions and added

The Dominions Office have no reason to believe that either the Australians or the other Dominion representatives in London are in general dissatisfied with the adequacy of the existing arrangements on Foreign Affairs, but we might have the possibilities explored in the first place between officials with a view to their putting up to us some agreed recommendations.⁵⁶

The D.O. seemed reluctant to sanction an increase in the direct contact between F.O. officials and Dominion staff, although they continued to encourage the transmission of the maximum of information. The reason for this attitude seems to lie in the determination of the D.O. to retain responsibility for Commonwealth relations and remain the principal channel between the Dominions and the U.K. It knew that members of the F.O.'s staff wished that Office to take over the U.K.'s relations with the Dominions in the sphere of foreign affairs,⁵⁷ and was anxious to preserve its own authority. This was said not merely because of the D.O.'s natural anxiety to preserve their own positions, but because the Office was convinced that Commonwealth relations were distinctively different from the U.K.'s relations with other countries, and that it was essential to have a separate Minister in the Cabinet responsible for them.⁵⁸ In December 1947 an F.O. minute pointed out that with the acquisition of a second room for the D.I.D., it would be much easier for Dominion representatives to peruse papers without dislocating the work of the department. It was thought that this might make them more eager to come, and redress the hitherto uneven practice of the High Commissions. The

56. Addison to McNeil, 13th February 1947, F0371/65577, W762/25/68.

57. See chapter 3, pp. 157-159.

58. Garner, op.cit., pp. 300-301.

Australians were said to visit quite often, (possibly because of invitations since the previous December) but the South Africans rarely did.⁵⁹

The Australian High Commission re-opened the question of access to telegrams in November 1947. Mr. Heydon, the Australian Liaison Officer, requested that his High Commissioner be allowed to see more telegrams arguing that with the ending of the Weekly Political Intelligence Summary a gap had been created. The cancellation of the Summary was connected with the independence of India,⁶⁰ but this request was regarded by Mr. Finch, the D.I.D. official he approached, as a further attempt by Mr. Beasley to gain access to Cabinet telegrams. However, he noted that the Australians' wishes would be substantially met when the F.O. altered its distribution of telegrams in an attempt to economise. The Office planned to combine the new 'D' series with some 'Cabinet' material in a series called 'Political' (internally), while the remaining 'Cabinet' telegrams would be included in the 'Diplomatic' series.⁶¹ Thus the Dominions 'D' series would incorporate more Cabinet telegrams than before. Although the stimulus for this last change in telegram distribution came from domestic factors, the pattern from the end of the war was one of increasing the supply of U.K. intelligence and information to Dominion Governments and Dominion High Commissioners, despite the problems of consultation as demonstrated by the revision of the Egyptian, French and Russian treaties.

At the end of the war, with the Dominions conscious of their new positions internationally, there was some dissatisfaction with the status of their representatives in the U.K. and with the titles employed.

59. Minutes by Finch, 28th November 1947 and 2nd December 1947, F0371/65577, W8389/25/68.

60. See chapter 9, p. 439.

61. Minutes by Finch, 2nd December 1947, F0371/65577, W8389/25/68.

within the association. Commonwealth representatives had traditionally been styled 'High Commissioners', rather than 'Ministers' or 'Ambassadors',⁶² and ranked in order of precedence after Secretaries of State under the rank of Baron, and visiting Ministers of the Crown, which was below not only foreign Ambassadors, but foreign Ministers Plenipotentiary and Envoys.⁶³ The principal reason why the U.K. originally insisted upon, and wanted to retain, this separate title was because the title 'Ambassador'

was applied to representatives of a foreign sovereign whereas all members of the Commonwealth have the same sovereign.

and if the relationship between the members of the Commonwealth was

to be in any sense different from that obtaining between two foreign countries, their respective representatives could not well hold diplomatic titles.⁶⁴

There had been some opposition to this distinction between foreign and Commonwealth representatives, notably by South Africa in 1928,⁶⁵ but the only major departure from this practice had been made by the U.K. in 1939 when it appointed Sir John Maffey to Eire. On this occasion, immediately after the war had begun, de Valera asked that Maffey be called "Ambassador". The U.K. refused, but agreed to 'Representative' "as a colourless compromise" to avoid the deadlock. This was not regarded by the D.O. as a precedent for discontinuing the title 'High Commissioner'.⁶⁶

In February 1944 the issue was raised again with articles in two French Canadian newspapers, l'Action Catholique and Le Devoir. At that

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62. This dated from 1880 and the elevation of Canada's representative to the U.K. See D.O. memorandum "Representation of One British Commonwealth Country in the Territory of Another". December 1946, D035/1270, G564/1.
63. The ranking precedence had been laid down in 1930 (for the Dominions) see above document and discussion in D.O., 17th December 1946, ibid.
64. Wiseman (Assistant Secretary, D.O.) to Garner on the status of Commonwealth representatives, 25th February 1944, D035/1116, G551/1.
65. For South Africa's opposition, see Minute by Sir J. Stephenson recalling this, 2nd February 1945, D035/1228, WX101/90. Also Mr. Louw's question in the South African Parliament on the issue, D035/654, K97/2.
66. See letter Machtig to M. MacDonald and Batterbee, 8th February 1945, and Minute by Stephenson, 2nd February 1945, D035/1228, WX101/90.

time several Canadian legations abroad were being elevated to the rank of Embassies and these newspapers strongly advocated that Commonwealth representatives should also be styled 'Ambassador' because 'High Commissioner' suggested a country "under colonial tutelage".⁶⁷ This was an exaggerated interpretation of the position, but indicates the kind of pressure exerted by some sections of French Canadian opinion. The D.O. did not want the matter to be raised again and stressed to the High Commission in Ottawa that Commonwealth relations should remain on a different footing from those between foreign countries. The F.O. agreed that the fallacy in the argument for change lay in the fact that the King would have to appoint ambassadors accredited to himself; but as one official of the D.I.D. observed, there were sections of opinion in the other three Dominions which favoured a change in the title and status of High Commissioners.⁶⁸

The Government of Eire was responsible for resurrecting the issue in February 1945 when it requested that the New Zealand representative be styled 'Commonwealth Minister'. The D.O. tried to forestall a change by saying that there could be no alteration without consultation and agreement between all members.⁶⁹ The change was not agreed to, but it became clear that the Canadian High Commissioner in Dublin, Kearey, also wanted a change. Cranborne was sensitive to these complaints and realised that the old title 'High Commissioner' was becoming unpopular, seemed "out of date, a relic of the Colonial period, a badge of inferiority etc."; he accepted the likelihood of a change.⁷⁰ More serious discussion was demanded in November 1946 when the Canadian Government raised with

67. See press reports of December 1945 and telegram from U.K. High Commissioner in Canada to D.O., 13th February 1944, D035/1116, G551/1.

68. Wiseman to Garner, 24th February 1944, Minutes by Wiseman and Machtig, 18th & 23rd February 1944, *ibid.* Minutes by Campbell, 13th March 1944, Dunbar, 23rd March 1944 and Newton, 17th March 1944, F0371/42666, W3186/80/68.

69. Minute by Stephenson, 2nd February 1945, and letter Machtig to MacDonald and Batterbee, 8th February 1945, D035/1228, WX101/90.

70. Maffey to Stephenson, 29th January 1945, and Minute by Cranborne, 7th February 1945, *ibid.*

the U.K. the possibility of changing the title of its High Commissioner in Dublin to 'representative', which would bring it in line with the U.K.'s. It also reported that the Eire Government had asked Australia to alter the title of its representative. There was no immediate alteration, as the Canadians were persuaded to delay action pending discussions, and the Australian Government rejected Eire's suggestion that its representative be called Minister Plenipotentiary.⁷¹ The U.K. was not pressed to hold discussions.⁷² King, when announcing the new Canadian appointments on 7th November 1946, told a press conference that the question was to be reviewed. The following day the U.K. High Commissioner informed his Government that Canada had requested informal talks in London to be preceded by an exchange of views with the High Commission.⁷³ At the same time Evatt told the U.K. High Commissioner in Canberra that he was attracted to the idea of calling ~~up~~ Commonwealth representative 'Ministers'.⁷⁴

The D.O. sent the High Commission in Ottawa guidance for its preliminary talks.⁷⁵ In London an inter-departmental meeting of officials considered a memorandum drawn up by the D.O. on inter-Commonwealth representation. This paper noted a suggestion that the Commonwealth representatives should continue to be treated as a separate group but rank equally with Ambassadors, and the idea of ranking a visiting Minister equally with his

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71. See U.K. High Commissioner Canada - D.O., 1 November 1946, D.O. - U.K. High Commissioner Canada, 2nd November 1946, and U.K. High Commissioner Canada - D.O., 2nd November 1946, D035/1270, G564/1.
72. D.O. - U.K. High Commissioner Canada, 2nd November 1946, ibid.
73. See U.K. High Commissioner Canada - D.O., 1st November 1946, 2nd November 1946, 7th November 1946 and 8th November 1946, ibid.
74. U.K. High Commissioner Australia - D.O., 6th November 1946, ibid. (The High Commissioner thought the Australian Department of External Affairs would like the change as it could enable them to take responsibility for the post which was still under the Prime Ministers Department.)
75. D.O. - U.K. High Commissioner Canada, 19th November 1946, ibid. Discussions were held in Ottawa on 27th January 1947 between all Dominion High Commissioners and Canadian officials, and there were further discussions on 21st March 1947. However, by the time the second meeting was convened the Canadians had heard that Evatt had ~~said~~ ^{decided} that the matter was so important that it required a meeting between Prime Ministers. Later the Canadians heard that this was an attempt by Evatt to stop the Ottawa talks. No further meetings were held in Ottawa on this issue. See Memorandum on "High Commissioners: Title and Status" prepared for the 1947 London discussions, 10th October 1947, MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, File 2352, pp. C160350-C160351.

High Commissioner to avoid embarrassment on that score. A suggestion by Stephenson that High Commissioners should rank with, but separately from, Foreign Ministers Plenipotentiary (which would place them below Ambassadors but above all but the four most senior Cabinet Ministers, was accepted. It was agreed that the title should remain unchanged, but that if this were impossible, acceptable alternatives would be 'Resident Minister', 'Resident Minister and High Commissioner', 'Commissioner of State' or 'Representative'.⁷⁶

Inter-Commonwealth representation was placed in the wider context of inter-Commonwealth relations in May 1947 when the Prime Minister, Attlee suggested to his senior Ministers a review of "the existing status and inter-relationship" of the British Commonwealth and Empire in light of the recent changes. He noted that the Dominions disliked the term 'Dominion status' and that it was not attractive to India, Burma or Ceylon. He pointed to the anomaly of the High Commissioners' status, especially as the Dominions sent their own ambassadors to many foreign states. Attlee thought the position needed reconsideration and added

The critical position in India, Burma and Ceylon makes this an urgent need.⁷⁷

He indicated the seriousness with which he viewed the matter with the comment that there was not time for lengthy consideration by constitutional lawyers. A political decision by the Cabinet was required, and then discussion with the Dominions, without the need for the "lengthy formalities of an Imperial Conference". A meeting of Ministers on 9th June considered Attlee's minute and a memorandum prepared by the D.O. on the existing structure of the Commonwealth. It decided to set up a Ministerial Committee, consisting of the Prime Minister, the Foreign

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76. D.O. Memorandum for inter-departmental committee, "Reception of one British Commonwealth country in the territory of another", December 1946, D035/1270, G564/1, and Meeting of officials 17th December 1946, minutes, *ibid*.
77. Minute by Attlee, 14th May 1947, No. M221/47, FO371/65588, W4785/4414/68. (Attlee's review covered wider aspects than the position of High Commissioners. Other aspects are discussed later.)

Secretary, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, and the Lord Chancellor, to consider the future structure of the Commonwealth, with a committee of officials to assist it.⁷⁸

At the first meeting of the officials on 4th July 1947, Stephenson put forward proposals radically different from those he had suggested seven months earlier. He told his colleagues that Dominion High Commissioners thought it "derogatory and inconvenient" to be ranked below ambassadors, and of the informal Canadian suggestion that they should become ambassadors and rank accordingly. He informed the meeting of Addison's wish that High Commissioners be given the highest possible status, "preferably above that of the representatives of foreign states", while being kept as a separate group with their traditional ranking inter se according to seniority of the country, not the date of other appointment. The majority of the committee agreed to this idea and the subsequent proposal that the top seven Offices of State be altered in precedence so they ranked above Ambassadors and High Commissioners, and that visiting Dominion Ministers should rank below these offices but above Ambassadors and High Commissioners, to ensure their precedence over their own representatives. Agreement was not unanimous, with Gwatkin registering the F.O.'s opinion that High Commissioners should not rank above foreign ambassadors; nor should the seven highest Offices of State.⁷⁹ An interim report circulated on 10th July noting the majority's view and the objection of Gwatkin. The F.O.'s alternative proposal - that ambassadors retain their position, with the High Commissioners elevated to a rank behind the highest seven Offices - was included.⁸⁰

78. Minutes of a meeting of Ministers, 9th June 1947, Gen/86/ 2nd meeting, FO371/65588, W4939/4414/68.

79. Minutes of meeting of official committee, CR(O)(47) 1st meeting, 4th July 1947. (The seven Highest Offices were: Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord High Chancellor, Prime Minister, Archbishop of York, Lord President of the Council, Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Privy Seal.)

80. Draft Interim Report of Cabinet official committee on Commonwealth Relations, 10th July 1947, CR(O)(47)1, FO371/65589, W6873/4414/68.

The F.O. was not itself united to this question. There were those, such as Mr. R. Dunbar, Head of the Treaty Department, who were content to see the High Commissioners on an equal footing with Ambassadors, if a concession had to be granted, and did not object to a single list of representatives. Dunbar thought it might be healthy for a High Commissioner to be Doyen of an enlarged diplomatic body.⁸¹ Some would not agree even to this. M. Cheke, H.M. Vice Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, stressed the historic position of foreign representatives laid down at the Congress of Vienna. He noted the important difference between foreign representatives and the British High Commissioners, who represented one part of a family of nations, and said it was in harmony with "time-honoured principles of courtesy" to allow foreign guests to go in front of 'family'. He anticipated any change in the order of precedence causing discourtesy and outrage to the Diplomatic community, and opposed the idea of High Commissioners' ranking with ambassadors because they were in "a different category".⁸² Cheke was supported by Sir John Monck who emphasised the fact that ambassadors were the personal representatives of their Sovereigns, or Heads of State, and that courtesy demanded preference to be given to them over all but the Sovereign. Monck would accept the High Commissioners after the ambassadors, before the seven High Offices, and agreed with their being kept as a separate group. He added

If the Foreign Office are not prepared to stand up for the foreign Ambassadors and support their claim, no one else will.⁸³

Monck also protested against any incorporation of the High Commissioners with the Diplomatic Corps and thought it would be deeply resented by the latter.⁸⁴ The analogy of the family was frequently used in the

81. Minute by Dunbar, 10th July 1947, FO371/65589, W6873/4414/68.

82. Minute by M. Cheke, 9th June 1947, ibid.

83. Minute by Monck, 10th July 1947, ibid.

84. Minutes by Sargent, 21st July 1947; M. Cheke, 24th July 1947 and Monck, 28th July 1947, ibid.

Commonwealth connection, for instance by Gwatkin who wrote of relatives residing in the house of the immediate family and giving way to distinguished guests.⁸⁵

At the second meeting of officials, little progress was made as the majority on the committee favoured altering the order of precedence to place the seven High Offices above both Ambassadors and High Commissioners and ranking those two as equal, but parallel, groups. The F.O. registered its objection to the demotion of Ambassadors.⁸⁶ Sticking to its position that the High Commissioners should be promoted, but the ambassadors retained in their traditional place, Gwatkin suggested that this could create little real grievance for the former as the Foreign Corps had its own entree on Court occasions, while at public dinners the two were traditionally 'interleaved'.⁸⁷ This official 'protest' to the secretary of the committee, making it clear that it could not agree to the majority view, was made after a meeting at the F.O. to decide whether it could accept the committee's recommendations.⁸⁸ The F.O.'s objection was noted in the committee's report, and the matter was scheduled to go to the Cabinet. Before any ministerial discussion the Foreign Secretary was briefed on the subject, and told that if the F.O. did not support the ambassadors' position, no one else would.⁸⁹

At a meeting of Ministers on 19th November 1947 the subject arose while another matter was under discussion. They agreed that the High Commissioners should be promoted to a rank below that of the seven Highest Offices, but that the position of Ambassadors should remain the same.

85. Minute by Gwatkin, 22nd July 1947, ibid.

86. Minutes of meeting of officials 8th August 1947, CR(O)(47) 2nd meeting, FO371/65589, W6876/4414/68.

87. Minute by Gwatkin, 8th August 1947, and letter to Wilson (Ca. Offices) 18th August 1947, FO371/65589, W6876/4414/68.

88. Minute by Gwatkin, 12th August 1947, and note by Gwatkin 18th August 1947, ibid.

89. Report of status and title of High Commissioners in London, 24th September 1947, CR(47)5, FO371/65589, W6872/4414/68. Minute by Gwatkin, 30th September 1947, FO371/65589, W7230/4414/68. Meeting between officials and Secretary of State, 19th November 1947, and Minutes by Finch, 4th & 8th December 1947, FO371/65589, W8052/4414/68.

However, this was not a meeting of the full cabinet, or the committee on Commonwealth Relations. The F.O. tried to ascertain whether this decision was final, but were told by the Prime Minister's Office that Attlee preferred the matter to be placed on the agenda of a formal meeting, particularly as the Prime Minister had had subsequent talks with King, and felt that his views should be taken into consideration.⁹⁰ The issue was not decided by the Cabinet until May of the following year, when the Foreign Secretary withdrew his objections to the foreign ambassadors' and High Commissioners' being given equal ranking (in separate groups) behind the seven highest offices of state.

Even then, discussion was not entirely over because the U.K. had at the outset agreed to discuss the question with the Dominions; and wanted their agreement, and similar arrangements in all Commonwealth capitals. In July 1947 the U.K. High Commissioner in Ottawa, Sir A. Clutterbuck, when shown a copy of the Interim Report, had said that the Canadians were pressing for the title and rank of ambassador, with the superior status the more important issue.⁹¹ On 4th August 1948 the four Dominions were all sent the proposals, including the idea that High Commissioners be addressed as 'His Excellency', be appointed by the King (although not with formal letters of credence) and told that visiting Dominion Ministers would be given precedence equal to their opposite numbers in the U.K.⁹² The replies of the Dominions

90. Meeting of Ministers, 19th November 1947, note by Finch, 8th December 1947. McAlpine (Assistant Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary) to Cumming-Bruce (CRO) 2nd December 1947, Note from P.M.'s Office to McAlpine, 3rd December 1947, FO371/65589, W8052/4414/68.

91. U.K. High Commissioner Canada - C.R.P., 29th July 1947, FO371/65589, W6874/4414/68. The Canadian memorandum for the London discussions of November 1947, drafted in October, suggests the Canadian attitude should be to favour the eventual adoption of the title of ambassador, but not press for any immediate change, anticipating that the U.K. would become more unsatisfactory if India left the Commonwealth, and its Ambassador ranked above the representatives of the Commonwealth, and its memorandum confirms the U.K. High Commission view that Canada would be satisfied with Commonwealth and foreign representatives ranking equally according to their date of taking office. Memorandum on "High Commissioners; Title and Status" prepared for the November 1947 London discussions, 10th October 1947, MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, File 2352, pp. C160353-C160354.

92. Telegram to four Dominions, 4th August 1948, see Cabinet memorandum by S/S C.R.O., 24th September 1948, CR(48)7, Annex 1, FO371/70201, W5889/2458/68.

were not entirely favourable. New Zealand, Australia and Canada all objected to the proposal that visiting Ministers should only rank equivalently with their opposite numbers in the U.K. as that would place them below their country's representatives on many occasions. New Zealand and Australia were thinking especially of the frequency with which Nash and Evatt visited as Deputy, or Acting Prime Minister, and the rank which ought to be accorded to them. Some objection was also raised to the idea that the two groups of representatives would be kept separate; the practical difficulties of 'interleaving', whether a High Commissioner would be 'Doyen' and whether this was not making too great a distinction between foreign and Commonwealth representatives.⁹³

In light of these Dominion reservations to the U.K. proposals, modifications were put forward. The Dominions Secretary still wanted to keep the High Commissioners as a separate group, but was willing to see them ranking, for purposes of precedence only, with foreign ambassadors. On inter-Commonwealth occasions the traditional ranking according to the seniority of the country was to be kept. To meet the objections to the ranking of visiting Ministers, it was proposed that they be accorded ad hoc ranking, which in practice would be above that of their own representative. This was accepted by the U.K. Cabinet and proposed to the Dominion Prime Ministers at a meeting in London on 13th October 1948.⁹⁴ It was submitted to a committee of Commonwealth officials who reported on 18th October. The majority of the committee decided that High Commissioners should rank with ambassadors and that the practical application of this principle should be left to member

93. See telegrams from New Zealand Government 7th August 1948, U.K. High Commissioner New Zealand, 7th August 1948, U.K. High Commissioner Australia, 18th August 1948, Australian Govt., 20th August 1948, F0371/70201, W4619/2458/68, and memorandum by S/S C.R.O., 24th September 1948, op.cit.

94. Cabinet memorandum by S/S C.R.O., 24th September 1948, op.cit., and note by Attlee for meeting of Prime Ministers, 13th October 1948, re status of High Commissioners, F0371/70201, W6244/2458/68.

states. It proposed that the separation of the two groups should be ended, and agreed that there were arguments for a High Commissioner as 'Doyen' of the Corps. It recommended that ambassadors and High Commissioners should take precedence according to the date of their appointment and that seniority of countries should be abandoned as a basis for precedence of High Commissioners inter se. The British suggestion about the rank of visiting Ministers was accepted, as was the style of a High Commissioner - 'His Excellency'. It was not recommended that they should be accredited by the King, but only that some form of credentials should be considered. On the subject of the title, which the U.K. had recommended should stay the same as there did not seem a suitable alternative, the committee stated,

There is strong objection to 'High Commissioner'. If it is to be changed the general sense was in favour of⁹⁵ 'Ambassador' despite the arguments against that style.

The F.O. only had two real objections to this report, that a High Commissioner could be made 'Doyen' of the Diplomatic Corps, and that the High Commissioners should be called Ambassadors. They had no objection to the amalgamation of the two groups and the change in the order of precedence, conceding that those responsible for Dominion affairs should comment on that. It thought credentials unnecessary; Gazetting the first interview with the King, or his representative, would be sufficient.⁹⁶ The Commonwealth Prime Ministers agreed to raise the status of High Commissioners to that of ambassadors, and combine the two in one Diplomatic Corps. International agreement was obtained for this. In the U.K. the question of seniority was solved by interleaving High Commissioners with foreign ambassadors and the U.K. did not allow a High Commissioner to become Doyen even if the most senior representative.

95. Recommendations of committee of officials appointed to consider the status of High Commissioners, 18th October 1948, FO371/70201, W6244/2458/68.

96. Minute by Sir N. Charles (Assistant Under-Secretary at F.O. superintending CLF), 19th October 1948, ibid.

(This situation existed until 1973, when the Jamaican High Commissioner, Sir L. Lindo, became Doyen.) The one alteration to the report of the committee of experts concerned the title of High Commissioners, which had caused the subject to be first raised. It was decided in 1948 to retain 'High Commissioner'.⁹⁷ Garner recounts that supporters of 'ambassador' had never been more than a minority, but it does seem that very many Ministers and officials on the Dominion side favoured such a change, and that it was the insistence of the U.K. which prevented it.⁹⁸

One further change in Commonwealth terminology had taken place in July 1947; the name of the Office and Minister in the U.K. responsible for Dominion affairs. At the time when Attlee opened up the general discussion of the Commonwealth relationship the D.O. was considering this change. In the spring of 1947 it separated from the C.O., and in the summer it was due to take over the functions of the Information Office. Moreover the D.O. had been aware that the Dominions disliked the terms "Dominion status" and "Dominion Office" and would welcome a change. Addison said that a change had been under consideration, and that the alternatives "Commonwealth Relations" or "Commonwealth Affairs" Office had been suggested. It was agreed that the Dominions should be consulted.⁹⁹ The D.O. sent a telegram to the four Prime Ministers saying that it thought the existing titles were not "entirely appropriate" and tended to present a misleading impression of the relationship between the U.K. and the other members. It mentioned the proposed alternatives as being

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97. During the 1948 Prime Ministers meeting, King had come down in favour of the term High Commissioner, rather than Ambassador because the latter, he wrote in his diary, indicated "further separation from the Commonwealth". It is likely that the discussions about India and the future of the Commonwealth association had made King more eager to stress the ties of Commonwealth. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 4, p. 417.
98. See Garner, op.cit., p. 316.
99. Minutes of meeting of Ministers, 9th June 1947, Gen/186/2nd meeting, F0371/65588, W4939/4414/68. In 1943 Newton thought the name of the Office should be changed because the Dominions disliked it, F0371/42674, W1116/1103/68.

more accurate descriptions of the functions of the Office. The telegram added that it would also make it easier to include relations with India, Burma and Ceylon within the functions of the Office if such a change were made.¹⁰⁰ This was perhaps a surprising comment as Lord Addison had been keen to contact the Dominions quickly

to avoid giving the impression that the proposed change of nomenclature is put forward solely from considerations related to Indian and Asiatic affairs.¹⁰¹

Encouraging replies came back. Australia's leader though the idea contained merit, but suggested that it might require other changes (possibly a reference to the title of High Commissioners), and proposed that it should be discussed together with other questions at the meeting of Prime Ministers in the autumn of 1947. The other three Prime Ministers favoured a change. Fraser preferred "Commonwealth Affairs", Smuts and King "Commonwealth Relations". Smuts thought "Affairs" smacked too much of administration, while King, careful to insist that it was entirely a matter for the U.K. to decide but appreciating its courtesy in asking him, thought "Relations" indicated more adequately the nature of the Office.¹⁰² The title of the Dominions Office was altered on 3rd July 1947 to the "Commonwealth Relations Office" and its political head was known as the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.

Attlee's minute of July 1947, which had stimulated a full review of inter-Commonwealth relations, had noted that the Dominions, particularly South Africa and Canada, disliked the term "Dominion status". In April 1944, in a telegram on collaboration with the Dominions, Halifax had suggested the U.K. stopped using the term 'Dominion status', as

100. Telegram to Prime Ministers of four Dominions, 12th June 1947, F0371/6580, W4414/4414/68.

101. Minute from Cumming-Bruce to Sir P. J. Dixon, 8th June 1947, asking for F.O. approval for the draft, ibid.

102. Replies from the four Dominion Governments, New Zealand - D.O., 14th June 1947, Australia - D.O., 16th June 1947, South Africa - D.O., 17th June 1947, and Canada - D.O., 23rd June 1947, F0371/65580, W4414/4414/68.

it was interpreted as implying a difference in status.¹⁰³ The continued use of the term "Dominion" had also been raised during the debates of the India Independence Bill, on 14th July 1947, by a Conservative M.P., Mr. Geoffrey Nicholson. He questioned the continued suitability of the term and noted the paradox of changing the title of the Secretary of State responsible for Commonwealth Relations from 'Dominions Secretary', and yet still using the term 'Dominion' in relation to India. He suggested a revision of the Statute of Westminster in light of the change in the use of the word 'Dominion' which he thought subject to several misconceptions. Attlee agreed, and said it might be necessary in the future to consider a different term, admitting that the word was "not always popular in other Commonwealth countries". He said it was a matter to take up with the other members.¹⁰⁴ Lord Addison's reply to Attlee's minute enclosed a D.O. memorandum which took up this point. The D.O. acknowledged that the terms 'Dominion' and 'Dominion status' were not acceptable to general opinion, mentioning South Africa and Canada specifically. The memorandum said that the terms were regarded as "disguising the equality and independence" of those countries and that there was particular objection to any classification "which puts the United Kingdom on the one hand and the other countries in a group on the other".¹⁰⁵ With the change in the name of the Office, the term 'Dominion' was gradually phased out, especially as India did not accept 'Dominion status'. A U.K. memorandum of October 1948 noted that certain terms were outmoded and should not continue to be used officially; these included, 'Dominion', 'Dominion Government' and 'Dominion status'. It also noted that although no formal change was recommended, it would be useful to drop the term 'British'

103. Halifax to Eden, 14th April 1944, FO371/42674, W6456/1103/68.

104. Hansard House of Commons Debates Vol. 440, Cols. 40-41 & 44-45. See J. W. Holmes report on the U.K. House of Commons debates on the India Independence Bill, 1st August 1947, MG26, J I, Vol. 429. File: Robertson May-December 1947, pp. 390133 and 390148.

105. D.O. Memorandum entitled "The Structure of the British Commonwealth" enclosed in Addison's minute to Attlee of 19th May 1947, DO121/10C, No. 73.

to describe the 'Commonwealth of Nations'.¹⁰⁶

The alteration in the name of the D.O. to C.R.O. also led to a change in the F.O. From July 3rd 1947 the Dominions Intelligence Department was changed to the Commonwealth Liaison Department (C.L.D.).¹⁰⁷ (This change caused some early confusion because of Whitehall's partiality for using initials rather than full names, and some papers went astray, usually straight to the C.R.O. rather than to the C.L.D. But it could not be called the Commonwealth Intelligence Department (C.I.D.) as this was thought likely to have caused even greater confusion!)¹⁰⁸

The status of High Commissioners complicated by the intricate protocol procedures in the U.K., was an issue of some significance. The F.O., anxious to prevent any alterations which might antagonise foreign states, emphasised the 'family' character of the Commonwealth. The F.O. sometimes ignored the special nature of the relationship, tending to regard the Dominions as merely other allies, potentially useful, but not worth the cossetting which it thought the C.R.O. gave them. From the point of view of the C.R.O. the central issue was to retain the distinctiveness of the Commonwealth relationship, upon which its own future rested too. If High Commissioners were restyled 'Ambassadors' and recognised to be little different from representatives of foreign states, would there be any need for a separate Office of State to conduct relations with the Dominions?

The independence of India marked a watershed in the history of the Commonwealth. The I.O. was absorbed into the C.R.O. and the Commonwealth was tentatively set to embark upon a new era with an expanded membership, and ultimately a different basis for the association. It would nevertheless be wrong to say that the independence of India was the reason for altering the name of the Office, the status of High Commissioners,

106. U.K. memorandum, October 1948, MG26, J 4, Vol. 234, File 2346, pp. C159859-C159860.

107. F.O. Circular No. 82, 11th July 1947, F0371/65590, W6234/4898/68.

108. Minutes by J. R. A. Bottomley (Private Secretary, C.R.O.), 21st August 1947, Joy, 21st August 1947 & Gwatkin, 22nd August 1947, ibid.

or the use of some nomenclature. The old Dominions had become increasingly disenchanted with the term 'Dominion' and while they did not press the U.K. for change in the same way as they did over the status of their representatives, it was a logical and probably inevitable one. The position of India, Burma and Ceylon no doubt added some urgency to the U.K.'s consideration of these matters, and the U.K. was aware of the interpretation which the Dominions might place on its actions; but the title fitted the new relationship developing between the U.K. and its senior Commonwealth partners. In this relationship the other members were conscious of their increased international status, of their relations with non-Commonwealth countries, and of fulfilling a more active role than before; but on their terms, not necessarily the U.K.'s. The distinctive Commonwealth relationship, characterised by the use of titles such as 'High Commissioner', was about to be challenged to a far greater degree by India's independence and the discussions over its future association with the Commonwealth.

Chapter Nine

Indian Independence and the Expansion of the Commonwealth

In 1935 the U.K. Parliament had passed the Government of India Act, designed to establish an all-Indian Federation with a central government which would be in charge of all matters except defence and external affairs. The Congress Party won ^{considerable support} ~~control of the majority of Provinces~~, but was reluctant to assume responsibilities in the national Government. Fierce divisions were appearing between the Congress Party and the Muslim League. Lacking a responsible central government, the Viceroy declared war in September 1939 without consulting the Indian leaders, which caused a protest from the Congress Party, many of whose leaders were imprisoned during the war. Talks between the U.K. and Indian leaders in March 1940 ended in failure, as did the Cripps mission of 1942. Indian self-government, possibly in the form of Dominion status, was the ultimate intention of the U.K. Government, but the timing of the British withdrawal remained uncertain, especially after the failure of the Simla conference of June 1945.¹

In the Speech from the Throne which opened the new Parliament on 15th August 1945, the government promised to

do their utmost to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realization of full self-government in India.²

Attlee's government, and the Prime Minister in particular, determined to reach a solution to the Indian problem. Attlee had served on the Simon Commission of 1928 and the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee of 1933, and possessed a good knowledge of Indian affairs. He selected as Secretary of State for India Lord Pethick Lawrence who had many friends

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1. For further details on India's progression towards independence see: Constitutional Relations between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-1947, (H.M.S.O., London, 1970-8?), ed. P. N. S. Mansergh. For more general accounts which related to the Commonwealth aspect, see P. N. S. Mansergh, The Commonwealth Experience (London, 1969), pp. 295-299; J. Wheeler-Bennett, King George VI: His Life and Reign (London, 1965), pp. 692-704; P. Gordon-Walker, The Commonwealth (London, 1962), pp. 47-49 & 132-133.
 2. Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 15th August 1945, Vol. 413, Col. 57.

in India and was therefore suited, in Attlee's view, "to inaugurate a new policy".³ Attlee authorised elections to be held at the end of 1945 and in March 1946 sent a team of Ministers for further discussions. (The team consisted of Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty.) The Prime Minister announced that the purpose of the mission was to establish a constitution-making body and a representative Viceroy's executive Council, but that it was for Indians to decide the form of the constitution and to choose whether or not they wished to stay in the British Commonwealth.⁴ The Cabinet Mission rejected partition, but failed to heal the breach between the two groups, Hindu and Muslim; although both signed the proposals for an Interim Government, Nehru and Jinnah had reservations and the first attempts to form such a body failed. In July, elections were held for a constituent Assembly and in August Attlee authorised the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, to form an Interim Government, which he succeeded in doing.

Relations between the Congress Party and the Muslim League worsened, and after the failure of the London talks of December 1946, between the U.K. and the two leaders, Nehru and Jinnah, and the lack of progress made by the Constituent Assembly, also meeting in December, some fresh impetus was needed. Wavell suggested to Attlee that the U.K. should set a definite date for withdrawal, and begin a phased departure. However, Attlee was not happy about Wavell's plan, and told the King so. The King noted in his diary that Attlee had said it

savours too much of a military retreat & (Wavell) does not realize it is a political problem & not a military one. Wavell has done very good work up to now but Attlee doubts whether he has the finesse to negotiate the next steps when we must keep the 2 Indian parties friendly to us all the time.⁵

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3. C. R. Attlee, As It Happened (London, 1954), p. 181. See also Pethick-Lawrence's statement to India press representatives, August 1945, Mansergh, India: Transfer of Power, op.cit., Vol. VI, No. 10.
 4. Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 15th March 1946, Vol. 420, Col. 1421.
 5. The King's Diary, 17th December 1946. Quoted in J. Wheeler-Bennett, King George VI: His Life and Reign, pp. 709-710.

Attlee still hoped the Hindus and Muslims would establish some kind of co-existence; but he decided that a firm date had to be set for the U.K.'s withdrawal or no solution would be found and the U.K. would be responsible for the failure. He also decided to appoint a new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, whom he described as a man of "imagination, sympathy and tremendous drive" and who might be the man to "pull it off".⁶ In February 1947 Attlee announced that the British would leave India and transfer power to Indian hands no later than June 1948. In March 1947 Mountbatten arrived in India and within two months it had been decided that two self-governing Dominions should be established. June 1948 as the date of withdrawal was recognised as being too late, and in July 1947 the U.K. Government introduced the India Independence Bill to Parliament. This became law, without a division, on July 18th and on 15th August 1947, exactly two years after the Speech from the Throne, power was transferred to the new Governments of India and Pakistan.⁷

A week before India's independence, officials of the C.R.O., F.O. and the soon to be extinct I.O. met to discuss what information should be sent to the two new members of the Commonwealth. It was agreed that there should be no diminution in the amount or quality of the information sent to the four older members. Security arrangements in Karachi and Delhi were inadequate, which made leakages quite likely; and an I.O. official said that the "known communistic bias" of the prospective Indian High Commissioner to London, Mr. Krishna Menon, made it "probable that anything of importance will find its way into Russian hands". It was decided that the U.K. should not inform either country of the

6. Attlee, op.cit., pp. 183-4.

7. See Wheeler-Bennett, op.cit., pp. 711-714; Attlee, op.cit., pp. 184-185.

of the negotiations to revise the Anglo-Russian Treaty, about which the old Dominions had received some information. The problem did not lie in the lack of security. Would India remain within the Commonwealth for long, and if not, should it receive highly secret information, the safety of which was certainly in jeopardy in the short term and possibly in the long term if it left the association? As a guide to their policy, officials noted Attlee's statements that the new Dominions would be treated as full and equal members of the Commonwealth, and agreed that the U.K. should do all it could to try and persuade India to stay in the association. Could the desire to treat them as equal members and demonstrate the value of membership in terms of shared information be reconciled with the concern for the security of U.K. intelligence?⁸ At a meeting at the end of August, it was agreed that whatever system was devised to send information, it should avoid "any appearance of discrimination, particularly in any formal respect".⁹

The C.R.O. prepared a memorandum at the end of August on the existing machinery of collaboration to provide a basis for discussions.¹⁰ This was transmitted to the F.O. at the beginning of September and was accredited with supplying "a very useful summary of the present position and present mechanism".¹¹ Meanwhile, Mr. Ashton Gwatkin (Assistant Under Secretary at the F.O.) had requested a paper from the D.I.D. outlining the categories of information which could safely be transitted to India and Pakistan, the key criterion being "whether or not we should wish the Soviet Government to know about it".¹² An internal F.O. committee met to consider issues concerning the U.S.S.R. and discussed the question

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8. Report of a meeting of officials, 7th August 1947, F0371/65574, W6057/7/68.
 9. Report by Joy, 3rd September 1947, of meeting of officials at the end of August, F0371/65575, W6316/7/68.
 10. Memorandum drafted by Twist (C.R.O.) "Principles and Practices of communication and consultation with the other British Commonwealth Governments in relations to Foreign Affairs", 28th August 1947, F0371/65580, W6317/1101/68.
 11. Minute by Joy, 3rd September 1947, ibid.
 12. Minute by Gwatkin, 12th August 1947, F0371/65574, W3142/7/68.

of what information should be transmitted and it decided that the F.O. should "begin with less rather than more" information and await events. In a further minute Gwatkin suggested that until a firm decision had been made, F.O. telegrams and F.O. Print would not be circulated to the new Dominions as freely as to the old. Sir Orme Sargent wanted a document indicating the sort of information which it would be dangerous to send.¹³ Mr. Joy, of the D.I.D., submitted a draft,¹⁴ and on 1st September 1947 Gwatkin circulated a minute to other F.O. departments outlining the kinds of information which it was thought appropriate to send to India and Pakistan; the U.K.'s long term policy towards the U.S.S.R., information received from friendly contacts in Eastern Europe; any material classified 'Top Secret', the U.K.'s long term defence policy and any information about the future of the colonial empire. Papers on all other subjects, which would normally be sent to the senior Dominions, should also go to India and Pakistan. These included all issues on the U.N.O. agenda and Middle and Far Eastern subjects (although it was noted that care would have to be taken to ensure that they should not discredit French policy towards Indo-China). Two other subjects considered suitable were U.K. policy towards countries outside the Soviet bloc, and bi-lateral or multi-lateral treaty negotiations in which the U.K. was involved. Gwatkin pointed out that in every instance it would be as much a question of drafting as of selection of material, which would govern the supply of information. Telegrams should be drafted not only with the views and needs of India and Pakistan in mind, but also in the knowledge that any one of them may be read in Moscow.¹⁵

Other F.O. departments each had their own area of responsibility which

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13. Minutes by Gwatkin, 15th August 1947, and Sargent, 16th August 1947, ibid.
14. Minute by Joy, 3rd September 1947 and draft memorandum, 20th August 1947, F0371/65574, W6316/7/68.
15. Minute by Gwatkin, 1st September 1947, ibid.

was reflected in their replies, but asked that caution should be exercised in relation to the new Dominions. The North American department was anxious for the U.K. not to jeopardise its flow of information from the U.S.A. If it were not made clear to the Americans that the U.K. did not intend to transmit information listed under Gwatkin's forbidden categories

the Americans will be nervous lest secret information of this type which they give us leaks to the Russians, via India and Pakistan, and they will become less forthcoming.

It also thought that details about standardisation of arms, and the close co-operation between the U.K. and the U.S. on military and intelligence matters, should be withheld. Mr. D.J. Cheke, of the Japanese and Far Eastern Department, agreed with giving factual information on Far Eastern issues, with a qualification:

beyond that, in the field of policy, there is not strictly speaking, very much we should wish to tell them in the knowledge that it might be read in Moscow.

He noted that the joint representation of the U.K., Australia, New Zealand and India as the Allied Council in Tokyo already gave India considerable information on Far Eastern issues, which he thought should be continued, in some instances by discriminating against Pakistan. He concurred with the American department's view that the U.K.'s close co-operation with the U.S.A. should not be prejudiced.¹⁶ The Northern Department was doubtful about sending any information on the treaty revisions with the U.S.S.R. or Scandinavian defence measures, and it did not want any intelligence from its friendly East European contacts passed on, in case these sources were compromised. (Mikolajczyk and Cyrankiewicz of Poland were mentioned as examples). Finally, it wanted to omit details of the U.K.'s tactics to counter the U.S.S.R.'s political manoeuvres. Summing up the department's attitude, Mr. R. M. A. Hankey wrote

16. Minutes by P. S. Stephens (N. American Dept.), 3rd September 1947, and D. J. Cheke (Jap. & Pacific Dept.), 18th September 1947, *ibid.* (For details of the representation on the Allied Council in Tokyo, see Chapter 7.)

I should hope that each question or paper would be judged individually on its merits. It would, I think, be dangerous to draw up a list of forbidden subjects and say that anything outside the list was harmless.

The Eastern Department agreed with Hankey's conclusion. In its particular sphere of action it advised that Middle Eastern questions be handled with care, as many concerned the U.K.'s long-term defence policy, and it also warned that other areas, such as oil policy, should be treated circumspectly. It asked for the information it received from Persian sources to be withheld, as the Persians had a very low opinion of Indians and would stop passing on information if they knew it was being forwarded.¹⁷

While the F.O. had been discussing the content of telegrams which could be sent to the new Commonwealth members, it was also holding talks with the C.R.O. to decide on a system. At a meeting on 1st September it was suggested that material common to all six Dominions should be sent in the form of circular 'D' telegrams to all Dominion Governments, but that all other material should be sent to the British High Commissioners in the Dominion capitals. The High Commissioners in the older Dominions would pass this information on to the Dominion governments, while those stationed in India and Pakistan would exercise great caution in doing so, but would have the material for their own information.¹⁸ The C.R.O. was not satisfied with this arrangement. Shannon held further talks with Joy, and explained that the C.R.O. had always attached great importance to maintaining the direct governmental links with the Dominions. Eire and South Africa had both tried, and were still trying, to deflect communications through the High Commissioners, but this had been resisted. He added that the Office expected Australia and New Zealand to object if a substantial proportion of information were diverted away from the inter-governmental channel. In a minute reporting this conversation, Joy noted that if the High Commissioners were used, fewer papers would need re-drafting; it would be

17. Minutes by Hankey (Head of Northern Dept.), 10th September 1947 and P. Garren (Eastern Dept.) 17th September 1947, *ibid.*

18. See Paper by the D.I.D. prepared for a joint meeting with the C.R.O. 18th September 1947, F0371/65574, W6365/7/68.

great deal simpler for us if High Commissioners are used more approximately to H.M. Representatives in foreign countries. We have always maintained this view strongly, in the case of India and Pakistan where we would like U.K. High Commissioners to be in the position of Fathers Confessor to the Governments, to which they are accredited.¹⁹

Joy added that an additional benefit of the original proposal was that India and Pakistan would not formally be treated any differently from the other Dominions, although in practice they would. In the case of the Dominion High Commissioners in London, Joy said those representing the older Dominions could be given copies not as of right, but as of grace, but that in practically all cases the High Commissioners of India and Pakistan would not. The F.O. was not to get its way, although its attitude to the use of High Commissioners reflected a persistent attempt to increase its authority over them in the field of foreign affairs.²⁰ The C.R.O. put forward an alternative system which also circumvented the problem of theoretical discrimination against India and Pakistan. The circular 'D' telegrams would be sent to all six Governments and these would be supplemented by individual un-numbered telegrams to Dominion governments, usually just those of the four older members, which would only bear the name of the recipient.²¹

Confirmation of the poor security in India and Pakistan came even while the two Offices were continuing their discussions. The U.K. High Commissioners in Delhi and Karachi had been asked for their comments on the situation and about the U.K. proposals. The High Commissioner to India, Mr. T. H. Shone, replied on 12th September, having consulted his colleague in Pakistan, Sir L. Grafftey-Smith. He reported that security arrangements "for the custody and disposal of material may be assumed to be non-existent". He suggested that any information sent

19. Minute by Joy, 5th September 1947, ibid.

20. See pp. 449-457.

21. Paper prepared by the D.I.D. for a meeting with the C.R.O., 18th September 1947, F0371/65574, W6365/7/68.

would be liable quickly to end up either in the hands of a political group hostile to both the Indian and U.K. Governments, or in a foreign mission. Shone said that in the case of India he had no proof of foreign agents working, but

in view of the lax security arrangements and the presence of large numbers of ill-paid clerks and office servants who have access to even secret documents, it will be no difficult task for foreign missions, should they wish to do so, to suborn individuals in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He advised his Government not to increase the amount of information transmitted from pre-independence levels. He argued that India had received very little information before and would be unlikely to ask for more unless the U.K. raised the subject. Moreover, Shone felt that

harm rather than good would be done by discharging at the two new Dominions a mass of (confidential) material conflicting in many cases with their own instincts and attitudes. Indeed this might well work provocatively, by stiffening existing resistance, rather than educationally, by stimulating co-operation.²²

This posed a problem for the U.K. One of the justifications accepted by the committee of officials for sending more information on as wide a range of subjects as possible was to attempt to interest India and Pakistan in world affairs generally "as seen through our eyes".²³ On the one hand the U.K. wanted to inform and consult India and Pakistan as much as the security permitted, in order to persuade them to stay in the Commonwealth and to 'inculcate' a British interpretation of international affairs, while on the other hand its High Commissioner was warning that this could provoke the opposite reaction.

Shone's reply was discussed by both Offices. The F.O. extended its list of unsuitable subjects to include material "the tone of which is in conflict with the 'basic instincts and attitude' of India and Pakistan" in response to Shone's analysis. The C.R.O. later decided to abandon its plan to send circular 'D' telegrams supplemented by individually

22. Shone to C.R.O., 12th September 1947, F0371/65574, W8614/7/68.

23. Report by Joy of a meeting between officials, 13th August 1947, F0371/65574, W6057/7/68.

addressed ones, because of difficulties stemming from the fact that other topics, apart from foreign affairs, were included in the 'D' series. Eventually it was decided that two new series would be started, after Ceylon was made independent in December 1947, the 'H' and 'Q' series, but the distinction between the volume and quality of information sent to the new and old members remained.²⁴

The U.K.'s Weekly Political Intelligence Summary, which had been sent to Dominion Governments and shown to Dominion High Commissioners, was one source of information which the C.R.O. did not want the new members to see. Because it would be difficult to stop circulation to the old Dominions, it asked the F.O. if the Summary could be phased out.²⁵ This was an attempt to reduce the formal discrimination in the treatment of the new and old Dominions, but once the principle had been accepted that the new members could not receive as much information, and that the older ones should not receive substantially less, the U.K. left itself open to such a charge. The F.O. was concerned that the existence of two series would become known and lead to protests; it preferred the option of individual telegrams. It was also worried that the 'white' Dominions would not be aware of what material India, Pakistan and Ceylon were receiving. Joy was convinced that Addison would not agree to the older members being informed of the U.K.'s plans for restricting information, but he advised that the F.O. should make the distinction clear when the new series started so "no 'white' Commonwealth representative is in any doubt what he can, or cannot, discuss with his 'brown' colleagues."²⁶ If Addison was reluctant to tell the senior Dominions of the U.K.'s cautionary attitude towards the new members, his successor, Rt. Hon. P. Noel-Baker, who took office in October 1947, was less so. In his diary King recorded his surprise that the Indian and Pakistani High Commissioners were present at a meeting on 24th November 1947 at which Bevin briefed

24. F.O. paper for meeting with the C.R.O. on 18th September 1947, F0371/65574, W6365/7/68.

25. Minute by Joy, 3rd September 1947, F0371/65574, W6316/7/68.

26. Minute by Joy, 27th December 1947, F0371/65574, W8614/7/68.

Commonwealth representatives on the international situation. This was after Noel-Baker's private explanation to him that there were some things Bevin could not communicate to India because of the lack of security.²⁷

The procedure for inter-governmental communication had been established but there remained other aspects of Commonwealth collaboration which also had to be considered. Contact between U.K. departments and Dominion staff in London had been growing closer. The main link was provided by the meetings between the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the Dominion High Commissioners, which were usually attended by a F.O. representative. At the 1944 Prime Ministers' Meeting it had been agreed that these meetings should continue, with the Prime Minister attending periodically to give a resume of U.K. policy. The proposal for the U.K. Prime Minister to attend meetings was never properly implemented. Churchill attended two meetings, one in June and another in December, but thereafter the practice lapsed.²⁸ From 1945 onwards meetings between the Dominions Secretary and the High Commissioners became much less frequent and regular. In 1946 there are records of only seven meetings. There may have been more which were not recorded, but certainly their frequency lessened.²⁹ In February 1947 Addison proposed that the meetings should be placed on a more firm fortnightly basis. Reporting this, the Canadian High Commissioner thought this offer stemmed from Australian criticism of lack of consultation during the Deputy Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Beasley "warmly welcomed" the idea, but Robertson said he preferred ad hoc meetings when required and insisted that it was important to preserve their "private and informal"

27. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 4, p. 110. (King speculated whether Bevin was deliberately trying to leak information to the U.S.S.R.; namely the determination of the U.K. and the U.S.A. to stand up to Russia; but he doubts the likelihood of this.)

28. Garner recalls Churchill's lack of attendance, Garner, op.cit., p. 266.

29. Records of High Commissioners' Meetings, See D0121/15 & 16.

character, and not to build them up into "an additional form of Commonwealth consultation". He said Addison had appreciated this point, but the offer had been made and accepted.³⁰ King was told of the proposal and felt "very strongly" that it was a matter to be treated with great caution. Canada should not get itself in a position

where we begin to assume responsibility for shaping 'imperial policy' and having 'a Cabinet of High Commissioners'.

He did not see why Canada should submit to Australia; all it wanted was to be "informed, and not to get tied up".³¹

L. B. Pearson, Under-Secretary of State at External Affairs, asked Robertson for the attitudes of the other two Dominions and asked if the question could be reviewed. He told King that while he disliked the idea it would be difficult to stand out against the other three, but that he suspected it would die a natural death in the course of time.³² Robertson shared Pearson's prediction, because of Addison's commitments and those of the other High Commissioners. These predictions were correct; during the remaining months of 1947 meetings with the High Commissioners were convened only once, or occasionally twice, a month and this pattern continued for the next two years. Robertson told Ottawa that since his representations to Sir Eric Machtig, Addison would not refer to the new arrangement as "a significant cog in Commonwealth machinery", but he feared that Evatt would.³³ The Canadian attitude did not seem to have changed significantly since King's objection to Massey's attendance at High Commissioners' meetings in 1936 and his statements in 1939 that such meetings as the Canadian High Commissioner

30. Robertson to Pearson, 26th February 1947, MH26, J. I, Vol. 429, File: Robertson Feb.-April 1947, pp. 389828-389829.

31. Memorandum for Pearson by J. A. Gibson (External Affairs) 27th February 1947; MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, File 2352, p. C160326.

32. Minute for King by Gibson, 28th February 1947, *ibid.*, p. C160327, and Pearson minute to King, 1st March 1947, MG26, J4, Vol. 281, File F2981, Imperial Relations, p. C193120.

33. Robertson to Pearson, 8th March 1947, MG26, J I, Vol. 429, File: Robertson Feb.-April 1947, p. 389881.

did attend did not constitute consultation between the two countries.³⁴ Undoubtedly the Canadian Government placed a different interpretation on these meetings from that of the U.K. or Australia. The latter was consistently eager to gain the most in the way of information and consultation by this means. The U.K. included the meetings with the High Commissioners in its list of methods employed to inform and consult with the Dominions. In a C.R.O. memorandum on the subject in August 1947, the purpose of the meetings was described as providing an opportunity to give the Dominions background information which it would be difficult to include in circular telegrams, "and to exchange views informally with United Kingdom Ministers and Officials". The meetings were not regarded as a substitute for direct communications with Dominion Governments.³⁵

These different opinions about the purposes of the meetings between the High Commissioners and the Secretary of State did not become a major bone of contention as their frequency diminished and their character changed. In August a C.R.O. official was informing the F.O. that it should not be too concerned about the Indian and Pakistani High Commissioners' receiving confidential information at these meetings as

The discussion there of important matters involving Ministerial decisions was bound, in C.R.O.'s view, to cease.³⁶

A week later Gwatkin noted that the two new High Commissioners would be invited to the meetings, but that these would be "less confidential and probably less frequent".³⁷ Recounting his experience at the C.R.O., Garner writes that from 1947 onwards meetings with the High Commissioners

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34. V. Massey, What's Past is Prologue, (Toronto, 1963), p. 238 and U.K. High Commissioner in Canada to P.O., 21st March 1939, D035/576, F706/110.
 35. C.R.O. Memorandum, "Principles and Practices of Communication and Consultation with other British Commonwealth Governments in relation to Foreign Affairs", 28th August 1947, F0371/65574, W6317/1101/68.
 36. Report of meeting of officials, 7th August 1947, F0371/65574, W6057/7/68.
 37. Minute by Gwatkin, 15th August 1947, F0371/65574, W6142/7/68.

outlook and in the main could be trusted with confidential information. (The exception during the war had been Jordan, the New Zealand High Commissioner, who was thought to be sympathetic to and indiscreet with the Russian Ambassador.)⁴² At the end of the war the Dominions had begun to show greater diversity in their interests in international affairs, reflecting their different geographical positions and priorities. The entry of India, Pakistan and later Ceylon, increased the divergencies and introduced an Asian outlook. This, together with the introduction of abrasive personalities, and the doubts about security, seemed to sound the death knell for the meetings as a major part of Commonwealth machinery. Canada's refusal to consider them as a part of the consultation process was likely to cause difficulties, and perhaps the increase in the number of members would have devalued the benefit of the meetings anyway.

The F.O. had been trying to encourage the staffs of the old Dominions to visit the F.O. to discuss issues and look at additional information. It was less keen to show the same encouragement to Indian and Pakistani officials. One official thought that these two High Commissioners should not be shown any F.O. telegrams,⁴³ but by the end of December the D.I.D. had decided it wanted to invite the staff of the new Dominions to visit the Department. Joy noted that for "formal purposes" it was desirable for the contact to be established (previously there had only been a little contact with the S. E. Asia Department) although he said his department could not be "so forthcoming" as it was with the other Dominions. He envisaged them acting as an "introductory and distributing centre for the other (F.O.) Departments".⁴⁴ The other measure taken by the F.O. to preserve security was to inform its representatives abroad to be rather more cautious in discussions with Indian and Pakistani

42. See chapter 2, p. 49.

43. Minute by Halford (Private Secretary to the Permanent Under-Secretary), 12th December 1947, *ibid.*

44. Minute by Joy, 26th December 1947, F0371/65574, W8614/7/68.

colleagues than with the others. Since 1943-44 it had been encouraging its Foreign Service officers to consult with Dominion colleagues and provide them with as much additional information as possible. It circulated a note the policy.⁴⁵

These arrangements for collaboration with India and Pakistan turned on the future of two countries within the Commonwealth. Would co-operation, as Shone had warned, be hindered if the U.K. told them too much about its policy, aspects of which clashed with their own "instincts and attitudes"? If the two countries did decide to stay in the Commonwealth, the U.K. would encounter difficulties in terms of its obligations to consult with all members unless they were admitted on a different basis from the other members, as 'associate members' in a two-tiered association.

By 1946/7 the F.O. wished to do more than improve its contacts with Commonwealth officials; it also wished to assume a greater and more direct responsibility for liaison with Commonwealth countries about foreign affairs. Earlier, in the discussions on Commonwealth collaboration in 1943/4 some officials had suggested greater F.O. involvement, some the amalgamation of the F.O. and D.O., but these notions had been allowed to lie dormant. India's independence provided the F.O. with an opportunity to increase its participation in the U.K.'s discussion of foreign affairs with the other members of the Commonwealth.

In October 1946 the first U.K. High Commissioner arrived in Delhi. (Mr. Alec Symon, an I.O. official, had established the Commission the previous summer.) At this time the Interim Government had been established but the Viceroy remained the head of the Government and responsibility for policy towards India still lay in the hands of the Secretary of State for India. The U.K. was trying to treat the Indian Government as a quasi-

45. Circular to Foreign Service Representatives, 15th August 1947, F0371/65574 W6042/7/68, and Minute by Joy, 26th December 1947, F0371/65574, W8614/68.

independent body, in an attempt to accelerate a solution to the political problem. Mr. T. H. Shone, formerly H. M. Ambassador in Beirut, was the first British High Commissioner selected from the Foreign Service. Pethick-Lawrence told Bevin that "the appointment of a F.O. man was "quite accidental" and that he would have preferred a man from among the other High Commissioners had a suitable candidate been available.⁴⁶ The Indian Government insisted that the High Commissioner should be regarded as the agent of the U.K. Government as a whole, and not just the I.O. (This together with the fact that the I.O. had never been an overseas service, no doubt explains why an I.O. man was not chosen.) However Pethick-Lawrence did not think the High Commissioner should be placed under the control of the D.O. Such a "pretence" he argued, would be "clearly, and on occasion embarrassingly, exposed". Sir Stafford Cripps suggested that the Cabinet Offices should provisionally act as the channel of communication and although Addison disliked the idea, his officials persuaded him to accept it in order to avoid prejudicing the responsibility to the D.O. of the other High Commissioners in the Dominions.⁴⁷ This was approved by Attlee and a committee of officials attached to the Cabinet Offices were established to act as the channel of communication with the High Commissioner.

Although the F.O. was pleased to have one of its own representatives appointed, it disliked the arrangement which it thought unsuitable for the handling of information, and consultation with Shone, on foreign affairs. The draft letter to the High Commissioner outlining his responsibilities did not mention foreign affairs, but the F.O. argued that with the establishment of an Interim Government, it would be difficult for the Viceroy to "exercise that control of India's foreign relations"

46. Pethwick-Lawrence to Bevin, 5th September 1946, FO371/54717, W992/560/68.

47. See Garner, op.cit., p. 306, and minutes by Stephenson, 24th November 1945, 1st December 1946 & 1st August 1946, D035/1112, C257/1/26.

which was essential. It thought the High Commissioner would be the person to discuss foreign affairs with the Indian Government.⁴⁸ Sargent, now Permanent Under-Secretary at the F.O., was under the impression that in matters of foreign policy the Foreign Secretary would have direct communication with the High Commissioner, but he wanted the directive to state this explicitly. He also proposed that the F.O. ensure that the vice-chairman of the officials committee should always be an F.O. official, not one from the I.O.; this would secure effective chairmanship, with the Chairman, Sir E. Bridges, likely to be absent most most meetings.⁴⁹

The Foreign Secretary wrote to Attlee requesting that he should instruct, and receive reports from, the High Commissioner directly. He added,

The position of the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India will not in all respects be analogous with that of our High Commissioners in the other self-governing Dominions. As part of the Asiatic continent India is contiguous with other countries such as Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet and Nepal, and is bound to have a special relationship with China. In all these countries the United Kingdom has interests more or less important, and while we do not know what the future status of India will be, it is essential that we should try to persuade her to walk in step with United Kingdom policy in these countries.⁵⁰

Pethick Lawrence opposed Bevin's proposal. He told the Foreign Secretary that the main channel of information between India and the U.K. would remain that of the India Office to the Government of India. If the Interim Government needed any special guidance on foreign affairs, the Viceroy would be approached first; but if it were "expedient" to use the High Commissioner, communication would be through the committee created for that purpose. He saw no reason for the F.O. to have direct

48. Minute by Dening, 26th August 1946, F0371/54717, W9991/560/68.

49. Minute by Sargent, 26th August 1946, *ibid.* (The F.O. seemed to have achieved this, see minutes of meetings of India & Burma Committee, 1st October 1946, *ibid.* and 22nd November 1946, F0371/54719, W11185/560/68.)

50. Bevin to Attlee, (copy to Pethick Lawrence) 31st August 1946, F0371/54717, W9991/561/68.

communication with the High Commissioner and asked Bevin to abandon his scheme.⁵¹

Mr. Dening, of the D.I.D., noted that the I.O. "who are no doubt supported by the Dominions Office" were trying to treat India as an ordinary Dominion, despite the F.O.'s argument about the geographical differences. The Office also thought that Indians required different treatment from the other Dominions, "which, after all, spring from our own race".⁵² Sargent's comment on the situation was that he hoped the Foreign Secretary would continue to press for direct communication because

An important question of principle is involved which if not secured at the outset may go by default - to the great detriment of the F.O. in future years.⁵³

The F.O. continued to try and secure its objective, despite Attlee's support for the constitutional authority of the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy.⁵⁴ Bevin explained that he thought the relationship between the two governments in the field of foreign affairs had been "radically altered" by the establishment of an Interim Government. He stressed the importance of "the inter-play between the interests of the United Kingdom and India and of the neighbouring states" and said it was essential for the High Commissioner to have all information available to him from the F.O. and for the F.O. to be fully informed of the day to day attitudes and actions of the Indian government. This must be done by direct communication between the F.O. and the High Commissioner if they were to avoid delays and misunderstandings.⁵⁵ From Sargent's minute it does appear that if the F.O. was not trying to usurp the authority of the I.O., it was certainly attempting to anticipate the

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51. Pethick Lawrence to Bevin, 5th September 1946, F0371/54717, W9992/560/68. (Shone had been seconded from the Foreign Service, with his emoluments being borne by the Treasury vote.)
 52. Minute by Dening, 6th September 1946, F0371/54717, W9991/560/68.
 53. Minute by Sargent, 6th September 1946, ibid.
 54. Attlee to Bevin, 9th September 1946, F0371/54717, W9993/560/68.
 55. Bevin to Attlee, 16th September 1946, ibid.

D.O.' eventual responsibility for relations with India, and encroach upon its authority.

Attlee, Bevin and Pethick Lawrence met on 26th September 1946 to discuss the situation; and Bevin agreed to using the Cabinet office committee as his channel of information. It was also established that he would consult with the I.O. if he wanted to send instructions directing the High Commissioner to take some positive action, and that he would copy all informatory telegrams to the I.O.⁵⁶ The method of communication had been settled; but the question of using the Viceroy or the High Commissioner as the person primarily responsible for presenting the U.K.'s foreign policy to the Indian Government had not been. The F.O. maintained that while the Viceroy was responsible to the Secretary of State, who in turn was responsible to Parliament, for the conduct of India's foreign relations, he could not be responsible for U.K. foreign policy. The task of persuading the Indian Government to support the U.K.'s foreign policy should rightly be the High Commissioner's because the Viceroy, as the head of the Interim Government, was on the side of India, not the U.K.⁵⁷ This interpretation was challenged by Sr. E. Bridges in a letter to the F.O. which reiterated the I.O.'s point of view. Normal communication on foreign affairs would pass between the I.O. and the Indian Government with copies going to both High Commissioners, which was comparable to the direct correspondence between the D.O. and Dominion Governments. When the U.K. wanted to persuade the Indian Government of a certain policy, "it would at the outset normally be more appropriate for the Viceroy to come into action", although sometimes it could be expedient to use the High Commissioner. From the London end, Bridges suggested that for the most part the F.O. would determine the substance of communications on foreign affairs to

56. Note by Bridges of a conversation between Ministers, 27th September 1946, FO371/54717, W9995/560/68.

57. See Minute by Dening, 1st October 1946, *ibid*, and Minutes of India and Burma Committee, 1st November 1946, FO371/54717, W11110/560/68.

the Indian Government, but that it would be primarily for the Secretary of State for India to "judge the tone and channel of the communication".⁵⁸ The F.O. decided that providing it could dictate the substance of representations to the Indian Government and the High Commissioner, it did not object to Bridges' proposal. However, it did reiterate to the I.O. that it would probably be necessary to use the High Commissioner to make representations to the Indian Government.⁵⁹

The F.O.'s request for direct communication with the U.K. High Commissioner to India has to be related to India's status and the position of the other Dominions. India was about to be given its independence, and while its future was uncertain it was likely to remain in the Commonwealth for a time. When it became independent, and if it did stay in the association, responsibility for relations with India would be transferred to the D.O. (The I.O. would effectively be amalgamated with the D.O.). The F.O. had no direct communication with any other U.K. High Commissioner or with the other Commonwealth Governments. Any information to them was sent via, and after being approved by, the D.O. In short, the F.O. was pressing for a significant change in the conduct of the U.K.'s relations with its Commonwealth associates. Sir Orme Sargent's eagerness to secure the F.O.'s responsibility for the U.K.'s relations with India in the field of foreign affairs was an effort to establish a new principle. His concern that it would go by default if not gained at the outset, was an appreciation that once the D.O. assumed responsibility for India's relations, the method employed would be the same as for the other Commonwealth countries and the chances of the F.O.'s securing direct communications thereafter were slim. India's geographical position was very significant, possibly more so than the other Dominions. It was

58. Bridges to Dixon, 21st October 1946, F0371/54617, W10825/560/68.

59. Minute by Mayall, 25th October 1946, and letter, J. P. E. C. Henniker-Major (Assistant Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary) to Bridges, 29th October 1946, ibid.

situated in a vital area for the U.K. and its foreign policy would affect crucially the U.K.'s own policy in the Gulf and South East Asia. The F.O. also seemed to suggest that because India did not contain a predominantly 'white', 'British' population it was the correct Office to handle relations with India.

An F.O. official had assumed that the D.O. was supporting the I.O.'s right to retain control of the U.K.'s relations with India, and it would be surprising if that had not been the case; for the D.O. was utterly opposed to any alteration in the basis of the U.K.'s relations with the Commonwealth. It had always believed that relations between member states were different in mind from the U.K.'s relations with foreign states, and that the former needed to be considered as a whole and be supervised by a special Ministry with separate Cabinet representation. To allow the F.O. the authority to conduct the U.K.'s relations with India in the field of foreign affairs would undermine this principle and possibly lead to that Office's taking over responsibility for all the other members. Taken to its logical conclusion, this would have meant that all the functional Ministries in Whitehall would assume responsibility for Dominion relations within their own spheres of action.

The position of the F.O. and the Dominions in relation to foreign affairs was raised again by the F.O. two years later in 1948. The I.O. and with it responsibility for Indian affairs, had in the meanwhile been absorbed into the newly named C.R.O. In March 1948 Sargent expressed his concern that Bevin was unable to deal directly with the Dominions and suggested that it was time to question the future of the C.R.O. in its existing form. Had it outlived its purpose? He stated that originally it had had administrative functions but that these had mostly gone now that the Dominions were independent, a curious statement as the Dominions were independent when the D.O. was set up. Sargent emphasised the importance of the Dominions' international role and said

that the C.R.O., channels of communication between Prime Ministers, were "woefully inadequate & cumbrous". Instead, relations within the Commonwealth on foreign affairs should be handed over to the F.O., which he suspected would mean that the C.R.O. would be so depleted that it would hardly warrant the status of an important department of state. Whatever course was chosen, Sargent was confident that the Dominions would be pleased and he also thought it would make it easier to retain India and Pakistan within the Commonwealth.⁶⁰ Bevin decided to speak to Attlee about this. While he did not repeat all Sargent's suggestions, he said that he should have the authority to deal directly with the Dominions' High Commissioners, adding that this could lead to an improvement in the calibre of men appointed and commenting that only N. Robertson (Massey's replacement) was of first class ambassador calibre. Bevin told Attlee that he did not mind the Commonwealth Secretary or a senior C.R.O. official being present at such meetings and in May 1948 the Prime Minister and Noel-Baker agreed to Bevin's seeing the High Commissioners.⁶¹

In March Sargent had talks with Machtig about the future of the C.R.O. in which the latter defended his Office's position. But Sargent was determined to try and secure a change and after the meeting he listed the minimum requirements of the F.O. These were direct dealings with the Dominion High Commissioners, (which was granted the following month); with the U.K. High Commissioners in the Dominions; and with the Dominion Foreign Ministers.⁶² The C.L.D. had also considered the question of amalgamation and one official suggested that the whole C.R.O. would be

60. Minute by Sargent, 9th March 1948, F0371/70202A, W3053/3024/68.
 61. Minute by F. K. Roberts (Private Secretary to Bevin) 12th March 1948, F0371/70202A, W3067/3024/68; Noel Baker to Bevin, 1st May 1948, F0271/70202A, W3331/3024/68.
 62. Minute by Sargent on conversation with Machtig, 24th March 1948, F0371/70202A, W3067/3024/68.

somewhat indigestible for the F.O. to swallow but that there should be no insuperable difficulties in the way of removing the Commonwealth aspect of foreign affairs from the purview of the C.R.O. and adding them to the responsibilities of the F.O.⁶³

The superintending Under-Secretary of the C.L.D., Sir Noel Charles, agreed with his official, adding that the F.O. could borrow, or "take-over" a C.R.O. official such as Shannon (then Head of the Foreign Affairs Department of the C.R.O.).⁶⁴

After agreement had been reached with the C.R.O. for Bevin to have direct access to the High Commissioners, Charles proposed the idea of amalgamating the Foreign Affairs Department of the C.R.O. with the F.O.⁶⁵ Despite the obvious lack of enthusiasm in the C.R.O., the F.O. did not give up its efforts to increase its responsibility over Commonwealth foreign relations and in December 1948 Sargent wrote officially to the newly appointed (although not yet incumbent) P.U.S. at the C.R.O., Sir Percivale Liesching. After congratulating him on his appointment, Sargent went immediately to the heart of the matter and told him that the increased activity of the Dominions in world affairs had led Bevin to feel that

in the interests of efficiency and co-ordination he ought to communicate on foreign affairs with the Ministers of External Affairs in the Dominions either directly or more normally through the United Kingdom High Commissioners. This would require a division to be made between inter-Dominion questions and foreign affairs and this he feels could be done without overlapping or friction in the two departments.⁶⁶

In a memorandum Sargent set out four specific requirements: first, for responsibility for the conduct of relations with Commonwealth countries in all matters pertaining to foreign affairs to be vested in the Foreign Secretary; second, that in consequence there should be direct contact between the Foreign Secretary and the Dominion Governments; third, the C.R.O. department dealing with foreign affairs should be integrated with

63. Minute and note by Mr. Furlonge, 17th March 1948, ibid.

64. Minute by Charles, 22nd March 1948, ibid.

65. Minute by Charles, 13th May 1948, F0371/70202A, W3331/3024/68.

66. Sargent to Liesching, 6th December 1948, D0121/22.

the appropriate department of the F.O.; fourth, to assist the Foreign Secretary a senior C.R.O. official should be established in the F.O. with the rank of Assistant Under-Secretary to supervise the department(s) dealing with the Commonwealth

Liesching clearly felt these tactics unfair. He told Sir Norman Brook, the new Secretary to the Cabinet, how hard it was to be asked so substantial a question, which affected the whole C.R.O., before he had even taken up his post. He hoped Brook would support him in stalling since he needed three or four months in the job before he could possibly give an answer.⁶⁷ (Liesching had served in the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Food since 1942.)

This was the first time the F.O. had directly challenged the right of the C.R.O. to conduct the U.K.'s relations with the Dominions, but the minuting within the F.O. and Sargent's letter show quite clearly that it was definitely proposing some form of amalgamation which would automatically reduce the position of the C.R.O. The discussions over the High Commissioner to India in 1946 had been a warning of the F.O.'s intentions and previously, in 1943-44, the possibility of the amalgamation of the two offices had been discussed within the F.O. and with Foreign Service representatives. On this occasion a number of F.O. officials had favoured the idea, including the Head of the D.I.D. at the time, Mr. Greenway, and the Minister of State, Mr. Law. It was not officially raised then although an F.O. memorandum including the proposal was circulated to the D.O. and produced a strong reaction. The F.O. justified its proposals chiefly by reference to the increased international importance of the Dominions; the independence of India which had created two new states in Asia, an area of such importance to the U.K., added force to their efforts. Moreover, the Indian Government were keen for the F.O. to play a greater role in Commonwealth affairs. Nehru told King in

67. Liesching to Brook, 11th December 1948, ibid.

October 1948 that there would be an advantage if the F.O. sent its telegrams direct to the Dominions' High Commissioners for forwarding to their governments, instead of via the C.R.O. The next day India's Minister for External Affairs, Sir Girja Bajpai, spoke to King on the same subject, telling him that he wanted the Commonwealth High Commissioners to deal directly with the F.O. on the same basis as did foreign representatives. A few days earlier Bajpai had told a F.O. official that he wanted direct contact with the F.O. and disliked the the C.R.O.⁶⁸ Support for the F.O.'s proposal had also come from the U.K. High Commissioner to Australia, Mr. E. Williams, who was not a C.R.O. official. He had told the F.O. that it would be easier to keep Australia informed of events if the F.O. dealt directly with the Dominions.⁶⁹ It also seems that Sargent was a key figure in pushing the issue so far. In 1943-44 Cadogan, then P.U.S., had not been so enthusiastic about any proposals for amalgamation, although it is possible that he might have taken a different attitude by 1948-49.

The C.R.O. wanted to retain its authority to supervise Commonwealth relations, to amend F.O. telegrams if it thought necessary and especially to uphold the principle that Commonwealth relations were fundamentally different from any others. In notes prepared by Sir G. Laithwaite, Deputy Under-Secretary in the C.R.O., in February 1949 for discussions with the F.O., it was pointed out that while there were shortcomings in the collaboration procedures the difficulty was of a more fundamental kind, stemming from arrangements for the handling of foreign affairs but related to the "reality of the Commonwealth relationship". Laithwaite added that the Commonwealth

68. Mackenzie King Record Vol. IV pp. 405-406; Minute by R. Hadow, 9th October 1948, F0371/70202A, W7113/3024/68.

69. Despatch from Williams, May 1948, F0371/70202A, W3330/3024/68.

will still continue to need special handling by an experienced agency, which can take account of reactions in all fields of work with the knowledge of the general political position in the particular Commonwealth country.⁷⁰

The issue eventually went to Attlee. He ruled that the C.R.O. should retain its responsibility for the U.K.'s relations with the rest of the Commonwealth.⁷¹ At the end of 1948 and the beginning of 1949 measures were taken to improve liaison with the Dominions on foreign affairs, chiefly by the despatch of extra categories of telegrams to the Dominions, but also embracing plans for increased contact between C.R.O. and F.O. officials.⁷²

Canada however favoured an independent C.R.O. Mackenzie King told Bajpai that he did not want too much authority to be vested in the High Commissioners, for they might form "some sort of government unto themselves" and develop a secretariat in London. A Canadian official recalls that although Canada felt it an issue for the U.K. to decide, it also found many advantages in retaining the C.R.O. There at least the Dominions were the prime concern, which they would never have been for the F.O. (This point some Commonwealth officials repeated with some regret after the two offices were eventually combined.) Canada also felt that the F.O. lacked knowledge of, and any real interest in the Commonwealth; that had to come from service in those countries, an experience which very few of the F.O. staff had enjoyed.⁷³ With Attlee's decision the issue rested for a time. Most positive efforts were made to ensure harmonious collaboration between the two offices and in 1950 Liesching wrote to Bevin to say that the 1948 memorandum by Sargent seemed to have been inspired by a feeling that co-operation

70. C.R.O. notes for discussions with F.O. by Sir G. Laithwaite, 2nd February 1949, D0121/22. (Laithwaite, after serving in the Cabinet Offices moved to the I.O. in 1946 and then to the C.R.O. when it combined with the latter. He was Deputy Under-Secretary of the 'Indian Division 'B' at the C.R.O.)

71. Garner, op.cit., pp. 301-302.

72. See Notes on recent action to increase and expedite information supplied to Dominions, 1949, D0121/22.

73. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. IV, pp. 405-406; Professor J. W. Holmes in conversation with the author. He noted that the F.O.'s contact with Dominion officials was increasing in this period, with the frequent international meetings.)

between the two offices was not good, a situation which must be rectified.⁷⁴ Garner records that relations did improve in the 1950s.⁷⁵

India's membership of the Commonwealth followed no inevitable progression. Until 1949 no-one knew whether India would decide to stay in the Commonwealth. Some within the U.K. felt uncertain if its membership would serve the best interests of the association. In addition, the admission of India was not purely the responsibility of the U.K., but also that of all the other members; and if the basis of the Commonwealth relationship had to be adjusted to accommodate India, it had to be a unanimous decision. To some extent the rather hostile attitude of many Congress members, including Nehru, towards the British, and their intention to establish a republic, led the U.K. to assume that India would want to leave the Commonwealth. Attlee had stated that India was at liberty to do so. But the Chiefs of Staff showed the greatest keenness to retain India, and at a Defence Committee meeting of October 1946 Lord Montgomery emphasised that the strategic advantages "were beyond question".⁷⁶

In November 1946 Sir David Monteath, Permanent Under-Secretary at the I.O., wrote to his opposite numbers at the F.O., D.O. and C.O. about India's membership of the Commonwealth, or its association with the U.K. by means of a Treaty. Monteath told the others that the I.O. thought it

unlikely that India will wish to remain within the Commonwealth at any rate as at present constituted, and we are also doubtful whether it would be in the general interests of the Commonwealth to induce India to stay in the Commonwealth if this were possible.⁷⁷

74. Liesching to Bevin, n.d. (1950), D0121/22.

75. Garner, op.cit., p. 302.

76. Minutes of Meeting of Defence Committee, 2nd October 1946, D0(46) 26th meeting. P. N. S. Mansergh ed., India: The Transfer of Power, op.cit., Vol. VIII, No. 398.

77. Monteath to Machtig, 8th November 1946, D035/1251, C257/1/55.

He enclosed a memorandum containing the views of the I.O. and some correspondence with the Chiefs of Staff (C.O.S.) The memorandum doubted if India would "interpret the obligations of membership in the same spirit as the four major Dominions", and thought the Congress leaders possessed an "emotional complex" about the British. It was thought likely that India would leave the issue of membership in abeyance until after the constitution had been framed, while at the same time creating a republican constitution inconsistent with the existing framework of the Commonwealth. Nehru's statements had shown it clear that he wished India to be non-aligned and neutral in world affairs.

The chief advantage to be gained from India's remaining in the association was thought to be military. Montearth enclosed a memorandum by the C.O.S. which reiterated the importance of India's membership for the future strategy and security of the Commonwealth. It said the alternative was for the U.K., deprived of its main administrative and strategic bases in the Indian Ocean, to reorientate its strategy; its sea communications to the Far East would have to follow the Cape route under the protection of naval and air forces based on Africa, Singapore and Western Australia, or, subject to American goodwill, follow the Panama route.⁷⁸ The I.O. memorandum stated that it was impressed with the arguments of the C.O.S. but thought that defence requirements could be achieved by means of a treaty. At least the mutual obligations of each party would then be defined at in time of war the U.K. would have rights "which could not be called into question by anyone". Whether such rights would be upheld by India, outside the Commonwealth, was another question, but one which the I.O. seemed to ignore. But it did recognise that the disadvantage of a treaty

78. Letter, C.O.S. to India Office, 4th October 1946, attaching annex "Future Treaty with India - Military Considerations"; Montearth to Major Hollis, Secretary to the C.O.S., 31st October 1946; Memorandum enclosed in letter, Montearth to Machtig, 8th November 1946, "India and the British Commonwealth" n.d., D035/1251, C257/1/55.

relationship lay in the difficulty of prescribing for an unforeseen future and acknowledged that the C.O.S. had said it would be impossible to get an independent state to agree to detailed arrangements for defence assistance.

The I.O.'s memorandum admitted that other advantages in the realms of foreign policy co-operation and trade would accrue from India's continued membership, and that the U.K.'s commercial assets in India could be endangered if it were outside the Commonwealth. In more general terms it noted that

The prestige and power of the Commonwealth in world affairs would be greatly weakened if India went out of the Commonwealth. Moreover, owing to her dominant position her example is likely to determine the conduct of other parts of the Empire now on the road to Dominion status, particularly Burma, and possibly Ceylon and Malaya.⁷⁹

Despite these advantages, the I.O. still thought India's membership would not be beneficial, or necessarily the best way to derive the most from the U.K.'s relationship with India. It did not want to admit a new member, especially one dominating South East Asia, which was not sufficiently "imbued with the spirit and ideals" which constituted the basis of the Commonwealth policy internationally. It considered it inconceivable that India could become a similar partner to the other four, which had common racial origins to the U.K. and "sentiments, symbolised by the common allegiance to the Crown", and were also "christian and particularly protestant civilisations" with democratic institutions and English legal systems. The non-British elements in Canada and South Africa had proved difficult enough to absorb and retain in the Commonwealth, and India, possessed none of the characteristics mentioned above. It further noted that it would be disadvantageous to have a member who could not be relied upon to act in time of need according to the unwritten obligations of the association.

79. I.O. memorandum "India and the British Commonwealth" n.d., ibid.

The I.O. listed the lack of security in India as another problem and, arguing against one of its own earlier points, thought that trading benefits would possibly be the same whether India were a member of the Commonwealth or not. India had already made it clear that it would not remain within the system of imperial preferences whatever happened. As for the U.K.'s prestige, the memorandum suggested that the nominal retention of India, carrying no advantages in practical collaboration, would not improve the U.K.'s position, but that its prestige would be high if it unreservedly recognised India's independence and collaborated with it outside the Commonwealth. The most important consideration was thought to be the recognition and definition of rights and obligations of both countries in a treaty, either as part of India's membership, or outside the association. Inducements would have to be offered to India to remain. On balance the office was sceptical of the benefits to be secured by India's membership and hoped the military requirements might be achieved by treaty alone.⁸⁰

In reply, Sir Eric Machtig said the D.O.'s general view was that the Commonwealth's interest would be served if India remained within the association. Its departure

would certainly be regarded by the general public in this country and the Dominion and the world at large as a weakening of the Commonwealth, and as a criticism of the Commonwealth system. Moreover, the inference might well be drawn that India's failure to remain within the Commonwealth was due to some theory that equality of status and real independence was not compatible with the Commonwealth system - with consequent reactions in the existing Commonwealth countries.⁸¹

The D.O. also doubted the advantages of a rigid treaty system, the value of which would in the last resort depend wholly on goodwill. If India accepted the Commonwealth with goodwill, co-operation would probably be more forthcoming than under a treaty. The D.O. had no doubt that

80. Monteath to Machtig, 8th November 1946, ibid.

81. Machtig to Monteath, 22nd November 1946, ibid.

the other four Dominions would welcome India, and said its inclusion would support the Commonwealth ideal. Admittedly, there would be problems; Machtig referred to the dispute between India and South Africa at the U.N.O. as one such difficulty, but said that there was no reason why these should not lessen in time, provided India accepted the principle of co-operation. He told Monteath that Indian representatives at international gatherings had welcomed the benefits of Commonwealth co-operation. The D.O. considered a written Commonwealth agreement a possibility, despite the unfortunate precedent of Eire, but wanted some form of genuine acceptance of the Crown.

A similar letter was addressed to Sir Orme Sargent, who was specifically asked if the F.O. considered India to be a benefit or a liability to the Commonwealth. Overruling the view of one of his officials,⁸² he said that "it would undoubtedly be a great advantage" for India to remain in the Commonwealth and agreed with Machtig that its departure would be universally interpreted as a blow to British prestige and authority and as a "diminution in the political, military and economic strength of the Commonwealth as a whole". On the subject of a new type of treaty relationship, Sargent said if India opted for membership, "military and political relations with her (India) become very much simpler". The difficulty would arise if it made its membership conditional on British agreement to a new type of Commonwealth association other than one based on the Crown. This would also be interpreted by foreign opinion as a blow to the unity of the association. Sargent anticipated that India would elect to leave the Commonwealth, not because it was in its interests, but because unreasoning nationalism and xenophobia may well require her to sacrifice her economic and even her national security for what she will consider the necessary assertion of her new found independence.

82. Minute by A. L. Mayall (D.I.D.), 18th November 1946, F0371/54719, W11185/560/68.

In view of this antagonism, he thought it would be very unwise for the U.K. to arouse suspicions and court a rebuff by even suggesting any long-term political or military agreement. To be refused would further weaken the U.K.'s authority in Asia. Sargent also warned that if India were partitioned, Pakistan was likely to enlist U.K. aid by offering military facilities; "but would it be worth our while . . . to commit ourselves to what would be in effect the defence of one Indian State against another?" Turning to the C.O.S.'s description of what the U.K. needed from India in terms of strategic bases, manpower and industrial capacity, he noted their admission that a written agreement which would meet these requirements could not be secured.⁸³

The third Office to be consulted was the C.O. Its P.U.S., Sir George Gater, tended to share the I.O.'s own view and advised that in the interests of the Colonial Empire it would be better if India did not remain in the Commonwealth. He opposed any strong persuasion because the basis of the Commonwealth was "a willing partnership founded on unwritten understandings" and he thought a reluctant member would prove a liability. Gater pointed out that the U.K. consulted the Dominions on its colonial policy and usually secured their agreement. If India became a member, the C.O. would be obliged to treat it in the same way; but its approach to colonial problems was fundamentally different.

The results might well be delay and deadlock on many important colonial questions, and the only way out of the deadlock would be to proceed deliberately contrary to the strong views of the Government of India, with consequent strain on Commonwealth relations and on the unwritten basis on which the Commonwealth operates.

Gater also thought that it would be easier to handle the question of Indian minorities in Empire territories if India were a foreign state. He anticipated that India would continue to champion the rights of such

83. Sargent to Monteath, 7th December 1946, ibid.

communities and clash with the U.K. over this, as in the South African dispute, which would have an embarrassing effect.

If a new type of Commonwealth relationship was to be introduced, the C.O. emphasised that the U.K. should not appear to think that only 'white' countries should have full membership. The decision should be based on the degree of interest and the form of association most suitable to the individual case. If India formed a treaty association, rather than a Dominion relationship, that must not be considered a precedent for all 'non-white' territories. With these qualifications, the C.O. thought a treaty relationship an admissible alternative goal for the constitutional development of the colonies.⁸⁴

After receiving the replies from the three departments, the I.O. revised its paper and sent it to the three departments, requesting discussions among officials before it was submitted to the Cabinet. The introduction to the new paper stated that there were certain disadvantages involved in India's membership.

though I do not suggest that these necessarily outweigh other considerations.

It was assumed that India would not be keen to stay in the association. The U.K. had therefore to consider whether to attempt persuasion, and be willing so to modify the relationship that a republican state could be included. Four advantages were identified: a better safeguarding of the U.K.'s defence requirements; the chance for close contact to engender co-operation; the absence of a precedent for colonies to follow; no loss of the U.K.'s prestige or weakening of the internal bond of the relationship. However, rather more disadvantages were given. The absence of racial, cultural and institutional ties was stressed, as was the likelihood of internal tensions between members, especially India and South Africa, which could destroy the harmony of the association. On the subject of defence co-operation, the

84. Gater to Monteath, 6th December 1946, ibid.

memorandum stated that India would probably prove "unreliable" and "elusive" and act like Ireland; a treaty relationship would be more clear and beneficial. Finally if India rejected association with the Crown and was allowed to remain inside the Commonwealth, this could weaken the position of the others and lead others to follow its example. If sufficient co-operation were not forthcoming, India would be a liability in the Commonwealth. The paper recommended that India should not stay in the association unless it accepted the obligations of membership; and if admitted as a republic, India should be asked to sign a Treaty of Friendship and Alliance binding it to co-operate with the rest of the association.⁸⁵

This revised memorandum did not really reflect the views of the D.O. or the F.O. A month later, officials from these Offices, plus the Burma Office and the C.O.S. met at the I.O. Machtig reiterated the D.O.'s dislike for the Eire precedent of a treaty relationship, but did not exclude the possibility, provided that India recognised an appropriate position for the King and the other Dominions agreed. Sargent had apparently changed his mind; and although still maintaining that India would choose not to be in the Commonwealth, he suggested that it would be too unreliable if it did. The U.K. would have a moral obligation to go to its defence, but India would have none to assist the U.K. This position was satisfactory in the case of the four Dominions because they had the same outlook as the U.K.

but he could not believe that it would be a satisfactory form of relationship with the Indians who were totally different in outlook and fanatically nationalist. In the long run he thought a Treaty relationship with India would be necessary.⁸⁶

85. Monteath to Machtig, Sargent and Gater, enclosing memorandum "Future Relations of India and the British Commonwealth", Mansergh, India: Transfer of Power, op.cit., Vol. IX, No. 338.

86. Record of meeting at I.O., 11th March 1947, Mansergh, India: Transfer of Power, op.cit., Vol. IX, No. 522. (According to a memorandum by Mr. Turnbull (C.R.O.) in February 1949 the F.O.'s view remained its latter attitude that India's membership might not be beneficial. Turnbull memorandum, 7th February 1949, D0121/72.)

For the C.O., Sir Thomas Lloyd reiterated India's opposition to the U.K.'s colonial policy and the danger that a hybrid status within the Commonwealth would be a precedent for others.

The one person to object sternly to the terms of the memorandum, was Ismay, for the C.O.S. He said there were too many imponderables to reach any firm conclusion, but thought that

every effort should be made to keep India in the Commonwealth and that the main objective should be to get friendly relations with India in the subsequent period.

He did not agree that a treaty relationship would be more reliable; whatever rights a country had, in war they were valueless without a will to co-operate. He also thought it mistaken to place a paper before Ministers in which the objections to membership were presented "as equal to, if not outweighing the advantages".⁸⁷ It was agreed that the memorandum was inappropriate as it stood for submission to the Cabinet, and that a paper should be prepared which would delineate the relations the U.K. desired with India whether or not it stayed in the Commonwealth - thus shifting the emphasis from the question of whether the U.K. wanted India in the Commonwealth, to the practical details of future U.K.-Indian relations.

While the consistent attitude of the C.O.S., Ismay's interjections at the meeting, and the reservations of the D.O., seemed to have prevented the I.O. from advising the Cabinet that Indian membership of the Commonwealth was of doubtful benefit, the attitude of that Office remains surprising. After its history of service to the Indian Empire, the I.O. might have been expected to welcome India's entry into the Commonwealth as the crowning glory for many years of effort. Nor does it seem that the Secretary of State for India was backtracking on India's independence. Attlee had appointed Pethick-Lawrence partly because of his sympathy for Indian aspirations and while the Dominions Secretary and the Minister of Defence had their hesitations about aspects of policy,

87. Record of meeting at I.O., 11th March 1947, op.cit.

such as the U.K.'s declaration of a definite date for withdrawal, Pethick-Lawrence did not.⁸⁸ The memorandum discussed with the other offices was a draft for the Cabinet, and thus had presumably been accepted by the Secretary of State for India. The explanation for this attitude is not readily forthcoming.

It is possible that having supervised Indian affairs for so long, the I.O. felt that there was a distinctiveness about India and Indians which meant it could not be transplanted easily into an association the membership of which had little in common with India. For many officials the idea of Dominion status and Commonwealth membership might well have been their ambition for India, but they might also have been acute enough to realise that the result might not be satisfactory for either party - that the depth of anti-British feeling was so strong and the cultural and religious difference so great, that it would be a disastrous marriage. Thus, their inclination to want India within the Commonwealth was overlaid by their fear that it could lead to tragic results. The I.O.'s judgment on the benefit of a defence treaty for securing the U.K.'s strategic requirements must be questioned, but its warnings about the danger of tensions within the relationship, of other colonies following the example of India's association with the Crown, and the risk of weakening the Dominions' bond with the association, were partially justified by later events.

The view of the C.O.S. about the risks involved in leaving the U.K.'s defence requirements to treaty negotiations after India became independent is important. Like the D.O., it appreciated that not only would India as an independent state be unwilling to enter into detailed commitments, but that the value of any arrangement was extremely uncertain in a crisis. The U.K. knew of Nehru's intention

88. See Cabinet Meeting of 18th February 1947, CM(47)23. Mansergh, India: Transfer of Power, op.cit., Vol. IX, No. 421.

that India should be non-aligned in world affairs. However, this did not alter the need for the U.K. to secure defence arrangements with India and, if anything, increased the need to retain India in the Commonwealth. Then more detailed defence arrangements could at least be discussed internally and there was always the chance that the close contact membership would bring would enable the U.K. to alter its attitude.

To decide on India's independence was a British responsibility; its membership of the Commonwealth concerned the whole association, a point which the D.O. had stressed to the I.O. as early as 1939.⁸⁹ The U.K. had kept the Dominions informed of the U.K.'s policy towards India, although Attlee's announcement in March 1946 that India could choose whether or not to join the Commonwealth anticipated detailed discussions with the other members, as membership would be difficult to deny beforehand.⁹⁰ Indian independence had been talked about for some time as had its full membership of the Commonwealth, although no precise dates had then been tabled. No Dominion had indicated opposition to this, and confirmation came at the 1946 Meeting of Prime Ministers.⁹¹ Before the statement announcing the date of the U.K.'s withdrawal from India was made, the Dominions Secretary had underlined the need for the Dominions to be informed and allow their comments to be made.⁹² As the Indians' determination to form a republic became more obvious, the attitude of the Dominions was crucial.

The Dominions had not always been willing to allow India access to Commonwealth discussions before independence, and it was debatable whether in fact it was a member of the Commonwealth or not before 1947. Its status since 1919 had been anomalous. On the one hand it had been

89. Machtig to Stewart. (P.U.S. at I.O., 1937), 17th November 1937, D035/539, C74/30.

90. Mansergh, India: Transfer of Power, op.cit., Vol. VI, No. 533.

91. Machtig to Monteath, 22nd November 1946, D025/12151, C257/1/55.

92. See Mansergh, India: Transfer of Power, op.cit., Vol. IX, Nos. 235, 245, 262 & 390.

a full member of the League of Nations and was a founding member of the United Nations Organisation; on the other, it was still under British rule, with no independent foreign policy. In 1943 the Secretary of State for India had tried to secure an invitation for India to the 1944 Prime Ministers' Meeting, but Attlee, then Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, had objected, declaring it to be a Prime Ministers' Meeting and pointing out that India had no one to represent it.⁹³ King also objected strongly, insisting that a "sharp distinction" should be maintained between the character of the meeting and a regular imperial conference.⁹⁴ After the war the slightly uneasy relationship between India and the Dominions continued. An Indian delegation attended the preliminary discussions about the U.N.O. in London and the San Francisco Conference, but it seems that its representatives rarely attended meetings of Commonwealth delegates, although there was close and fruitful co-operation with the U.K. delegation.⁹⁵ During the meetings of Dominion representatives at the time of the September Council of Foreign Ministers the Dominions objected to the presence of an Indian representative at their meetings. Evatt declared India to have no international status and no control over its external affairs, and said it should not be treated in the same way as them; "meetings with Dominion representatives should not be diluted in this manner". The next day when they were debating the association of countries with the framing of the Italian Treaty, Evatt suggested that the U.K.'s idea of India's inclusion was complicating the issue for the U.S.A.⁹⁶

If the Dominions were rather jealous of their positions as 'Dominions', they still welcomed India's independence. On hearing Attlee's announcement on 15th March 1946 that the U.K. would grant independence to India,

93. Chapter 5, pp. 252-253.

94. King to D.O., 2nd February 1944, D035/1203, WC60/4.

95. Cockram to Stephenson, 10th June 1945, and Cockram's note of meeting of 18th June 1946, and rest of file, D035/1884, WR208/216.

96. Minutes of meeting with Dominions representatives, 12th September 1945 and 13th September 1945, D035/2017, WR334/17.

King wrote in his diary "that is the right course". (He thought anything else would have resulted in the overthrow of British rule.) In May 1946, when he was in London, he disagreed with Churchill's criticisms of the Indian policy and his pessimistic forecasts, telling Churchill that self-government would work out for India.⁹⁷ By February 1947, King was less optimistic, the news about India's civil strife making him "sad at heart", and contemplating that India would leave the Commonwealth completely, possibly aligning itself with other Asian countries in opposition to the West. He was possibly cheered by a letter from Lord Addison in March, which was fairly hopeful about the future and informed King that the Indians had asked Auchinleck to stay on as Commander in Chief and seemed to want the U.K.'s help. Addison wrote, "I think that the liberalism that kept South Africa with us may yet succeed."⁹⁸

There was some difference of opinion between the Canadian Department of External Affairs and King on whether Canada should comment on the position of India and the question of its joining the Commonwealth. Lester Pearson, Under-Secretary in the Department, realised that any comment could be seen as intervening in a matter of U.K. concern, but he wanted to make sure that Canada did not appear to give the U.K. the sole right to invite other states to join the Commonwealth. He thought two principles ought to be established; that no new state could be admitted without the consent of the other members; and that a new member should be fully independent.⁹⁹ King rejected Pearson's draft establishing these points, and told him that it would constitute an unnecessary and possibly dangerous interference in a matter which "was of no special concern" to Canada. He added that the draft endorsed a "doctrine of participation in imperial affairs which he had opposed

97. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. III, pp. 188 & 241.

98. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. IV, p. 34; Addison to King, 1st March 1947, MG26, J 1, Vol. 420, pp. 380752-380755.

99. Memorandum by Pearson for King, 30th May 1947, MG26, J 4, Vol. 281, File: 2925, pp. 193262-193267.

all his life" and that it could be exploited in London for undesirable purposes. King also took his Minister for External Affairs, St. Laurent, to task for responding to another U.K. telegram on an aid programme to India.¹⁰⁰ Thus King was still protecting Canada from the machinations of U.K. Ministers, and perhaps the explanation for King's extreme caution with regard to India stems from the fact that he was near the end of a distinguished career devoted to Canadian unity. King did not oppose India's independence or its membership of the Commonwealth. The new British High Commissioner to Canada, Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, reported that after King returned from the wedding of Princess Elizabeth, in August 1947, he had been very "cagey" about his talks in London because he did not want to be embroiled in the issue of India and Pakistan.¹⁰¹

King did break his self-imposed silence in connection with the Indian Independence Bill. He told Clutterbuck that he disagreed with the use of the term 'independence', seemingly because it was inappropriate for a country which was to remain for the time being within the Commonwealth. Quite why King made such an objection is uncertain, considering he had been fighting for years to establish Canada's right to an independent foreign policy. Clutterbuck consulted Addison and told King that although the U.K. had received similar representations from Smuts, it could not alter the title of the Bill as the Indians had already seen it, and so to do so would arouse their suspicions, especially as the phrase "independence whether within or without the Commonwealth" had been used freely in discussions.¹⁰²

The Australian Government also welcomed India's independence. It had a relatively progressive policy towards colonial questions and approved of the U.K.'s policy. One historian considers Evatt's attitude

100. Pearson to Robertson, 2nd June 1947, (no ref, ibid ??); Mackenzie King Record, Vol. IV, pp. 42-43.

101. Clutterbuck to D.O., 8th October 1947, D0121/70.

102. Clutterbuck to King, 7th July 1947, MG26, J. 1, Vol. 422, pp. 382827-382828.

to have been similar to Attlee's; that because independence was inevitable, it ought to be granted, not postponed. He also records Evatt's willingness to assist India and Pakistan and the appreciation of both countries for this offer which led to the request for Australia to act as arbiter in the Kashmir dispute.¹⁰³ When Attlee announced the appointment of Mountbatten as Viceroy in February 1947, Evatt told the U.K. High Commissioner, Mr. E. Williams, that he hoped there would be no severance of association between the Commonwealth and India, and of Australia's intention to maintain close relations with India.¹⁰⁴ Some Australians had their doubts about India's membership. R. G. Casey, Australian diplomat, Minister of State in the Middle East and later to become Australian Minister of External Affairs and Governor-General, recorded that although he thought self-interest would dictate a close British-Indian link, 'Dominion status' was an artificial conception for people of a non-British race, which needed the British tribal instinct to make it work.¹⁰⁵ This was not a dissimilar attitude from the I.O.'s. The New Zealand Government had a comparable attitude to Australia's on colonial policy and offered no criticism of U.K. policy. Both countries were to play important roles in 1949 when India's precise association with the Commonwealth was being decided.

Smuts' attitude to what he considered the disintegration of the British Empire (i.e. the independence of India, Burma and Ceylon) was uncertain. He welcomed the independence of India, but mourned the losses.¹⁰⁶ In 1942 Smuts had urged Churchill to take a positive attitude towards India's political aspirations. He said that 'Dominion status' would have to follow the war and if the U.K. promised it then, it would be good for India's war effort and for relations afterwards.¹⁰⁷ From

103. R. Ward, History of Australia: The Twentieth century 1901-1975, (London, 1978), pp. 283-390.

104. Williams to Addison, 22nd February 1947, Mansergh, India: Transfer of Power, op.cit., Vol. IX, No. 447.

105. R. G. Casey, Personal Experience, 1939-1946 (London, 1962), pp. 247-248

106. W. K. Hancock, Smuts: The Fields of Force, 1919-1950 (Cambridge, 1968) pp. 443.449.

107. Smuts to Churchill, 20th January 1942, Prem4, 44/1.

1945, however, South Africa's relations with India became tense.

The Indian Government was protesting at South Africa's treatment of its Indian minority and raised the issue at the U.N. In a letter to a friend in March 1946, Smuts regretted that fact that the issue was to be ventilated there, and predicted that it would put South Africa at odds with world opinion and make his country appear more reactionary than it was. In a letter of October 1946 Smuts explained South Africa's wish to create a European civilisation in Africa and commented

India is threatening this noble experiment with her vast millions who have frustrated themselves and now threaten to frustrate us . . . they are invading, infiltrating, penetrating in all sorts of devious ways to reverse the role which we have thought our destiny.¹⁰⁸

Smuts was clearly annoyed at India's policy towards his country. In February 1947 he expressed his opposition to U.K. policy. Attlee had informed the Dominions of his intention to set a definite date for the transfer of power to India. He thought the effect would be to hand over power to Congress and betray the Muslim League; rather than quit, the U.K. ought to start negotiations afresh, consulting with the Dominions and possibly the U.S. Attlee replied and after apologising that the Dominions had been given short notice of his intended statement, told Smuts that the U.K. was setting a date because it was convinced the two parties would otherwise never co-operate to reach a solution.¹⁰⁹

Smuts was not wholly anti-Indian in the Commonwealth context. By May 1947 he was anticipating considerable support among "reasonable" Indian leaders for Commonwealth membership and offered no protesting comment.¹¹⁰ The next month he made efforts to normalise relations with India, which had withdrawn its High Commissioner and imposed sanctions against South Africa. He told Nehru that he had not taken

108. Smuts to M. C. Gillet, 3rd March 1946 and 27th October 1946, Smuts Papers Vol. VII, Nos. 701 & 730.

109. Smuts to Attlee, 16th February 1947, Attlee to Smuts, 19th February 1947, Mansergh, India: Transfer to Power, op.cit., Vol. IX, Nos. 409 & 428.

110. Smuts to D. Moore, 18th May 1947, Smuts Papers Vol. VII, No. 748.

action at the U.N. against India's hostile behaviour because he wanted to have friendly relations with India and look upon it as a "fellow member of the British Commonwealth". He continued

In the same spirit the Union had favoured the rise of India to her full status of freedom and sovereignty in the most recent constitutional developments, and I have publicly welcomed this splendid achievement of Indian and British statesmanship, and wholeheartedly given it such blessing on behalf of South Africa as I can.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, Smuts was prejudiced against the non-European. Writing to a friend shortly afterwards, he admitted to being "mildly sceptical" of the "political capacity" of the Oriental, and thought that popular self-government was "mostly beyond them", citing the mess the Indian and Pakistani leaders had made of their countries. By 1949 Smuts was extremely pessimistic at the thought of India's entry on a different basis and warned against weak toleration of India which would drain the Commonwealth of all substance and significance.¹¹²

In August 1947 India became independent; in November 1947 Burma received its independence; and in December 1947 the Ceylon Independence Act was passed. After the June 1948 elections, the new Burmese Government announced that it would adopt a republican constitution and not join the Commonwealth, assuming that India would behave likewise.¹¹³ By contrast Ceylon was moving towards Dominion status and membership of the Commonwealth. Its Independence Act was supplemented by agreements with the U.K. on defence and external affairs, under which Ceylon undertook to adopt and follow the resolutions of past imperial conferences and observe the principles and practices of consultation.¹¹⁴ The key to the future remained with India. The U.K. was convinced that its decision would be crucial to the action of other colonies gaining

111. Smuts to Nehru, 16th June 1947, Smuts Papers Vol. VII, No. 755.

112. Smuts to D. Moore, 23rd September 1947, Smuts Papers Vol. VII, No. 764; W. K. Hancock, Smuts Vol. II, The Sanguine Years, 1919-1950 (C.U.P. 1968)

113. P. N. S. Mansergh, The Commonwealth Experience (London, 1969), p. 331.

114. P. N. S. Mansergh, Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs, 1931-1952, Vol. II, pp. 749-751.

independence, and to the general future of the association.

In October 1948 the three Asian Prime Ministers joined those of the four older members and the U.K. at a meeting in London. It was not called to discuss the membership of India and Pakistan, which was not treated at any of the formal meetings. Issues of defence, economic development and international security were debated, designed to give these three Prime Ministers a better idea of how the Commonwealth functioned.¹¹⁵ However, the question of membership was inevitably broached in private talks, as King's diary illustrates. King had been worried that both India and Eire would be forced to leave the Commonwealth because of the stress placed on allegiance to the Crown, and was anxious to avert the situation "in spite of the Tories who will put all their emphasis on the Crown and symbols" and who would allow countries to leave. He thought reality more important than appearance, and that in the existing international situation it was vital to keep the Commonwealth together. "The larger vision is one that must be kept to the fore".¹¹⁶ He continued in this vein in London, telling Sir A. Lascelles, the King's secretary, and Addison, of the danger of raising the question of the Crown's position in relation to the Commonwealth. He said the emphasis should be placed on the community of nations possessing certain ideals, rather than the "symbolism of the Crown". He spoke in similar terms to Nehru.¹¹⁷ In response to a comment from St. Laurent that there should be something to make the Commonwealth a unit, King rejected the importance of symbols and said in reality there was no such thing as a Commonwealth "as an entity - with policies of its own". It was a community of free nations held together by similar ideas.¹¹⁸ He noted down a possible basis for the

115. F. Williams, A Prime Minister Remembers (London, 1961), p.219.

116. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. IV, pp. 386-387. (King was ill during meeting and stayed in his hotel where he received numerous visitors.) (Eire had just announced its intention to repeal the 1936 External Relations Act, and thus sever its last link with the Crown.)

117. Mackenzie King Record, Vol. IV, pp. 403-404.

118. Ibid.

Commonwealth, to include any country which at the time, in the past, or in the future, gave allegiance to the Crown. He also thought "Commonwealth of Free Nations" would be a more suitable title.¹¹⁹

The U.K.'s thinking about India had progressed. A memorandum of October 1948 on the general principles of the Commonwealth stated that room should be found for independent peoples who could not formally accept the full constitutional ties of the Statute of Westminster, although nothing should be done to impair the constitutional relationship of other members. It continued: "nor is it desirable that the independent peoples of the Commonwealth should be formally divided into two classes" according to their constitutional position. "There can be scope for variety in the relations between the different parts of the Commonwealth". As to how far a country could 'deviate' from the relationship, all members were asked to recognise the King's role, which would not prevent a state from adopting a republican constitution, providing the President accepted that he would act as the King's representative in external relations. A country offering less than this would be regarded as a foreign state, but could choose to be associated with the Commonwealth; and this special relationship would be acknowledged without implying any constitutional link, or any formal union with the association. It was thought inexpedient to define precisely what would be meant by such an association; the link would emerge in time.¹²⁰

Although the recognition of the King in external relations was similar to the position adopted by Eire in 1936 (which it had just decided to renounce) this scheme did contain two new elements. First, that a country could possess a 'republican' constitution, if modified with regard to foreign affairs. Second, while rejecting a two-tiered Commonwealth, a new informal undefined 'associate' relationship was

119. Personal and Private Memorandum by King, 10th October 1948, MG26, J 4, Vol. 237, File 2352, p. 160472.

120. Draft Statement of General Principle for discussion at October Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. CAB134/118, App. to CR(48)5.

thought possible as a solution to the position of India, Eire and possibly others. This would not involve actual membership of the Commonwealth, and so would not create a two-tier system, but the hope was that there would be a close association which would amount to a de facto membership. However, this solution had some of the disadvantages of two-tiered membership without the benefit of retaining India within the association. Although this formula did not provide the basis for India's membership, the paper shows a willingness to explore solutions, even if the first was rather contrived. The intent is clear from the first paragraph -

Commonwealth policy should be directed towards maintaining the existing membership of the Commonwealth, even though some Commonwealth countries (i.e. Eire, India, Pakistan and possibly South Africa) may be unable to accept the precise form of constitutional relationship which is preferred by the other members.¹²¹

(It is not clear to whom this memorandum was circulated. It was marked Top Secret, but King was certainly given a copy as it appears in the Canadian archives.)

The crux for the Commonwealth came in 1949 with the imminent adoption of India's constitution. By this time it had become clear that India and Pakistan wanted to remain in the Commonwealth if a suitable basis could be found.¹²² Between December 1948 and February 1949 the U.K. Committee on Commonwealth Relations, set up in 1947 (which was a Ministerial Committee supported by a Committee of officials), considered the future structure of the Commonwealth. The Committee of Officials produced a memorandum which suggested two methods of retaining India within the association. The first was to define the relationship as one consisting of states "which owe, or have owed, allegiance to the Crown", equal and freely associated with each other, "some by their allegiance to the Crown, and all by their acceptance of the principle of consultation

121. Ibid.; see Garner, op.cit., p. 318.

122. Nehru in conversation with King, October 1948, Wheeler-Bennett, op.cit. p. 720.

on all matters of common concern" and by the rights of common citizenship. The second was that a formal statement redefining the relationship might not be necessary (and would certainly attract attention and controversy). Instead India could confirm and renew its membership when it adopted its republican constitution, the others declaring that "India, on becoming an independent republic, is and continues to be a member of the Commonwealth". It was acknowledged that this second option did not alter the fact that the relationship had been altered. The paper suggested that if such a change were permissible it was important to avoid the inference that "there was some practical or constitutional difference between the republican and the other members", for this would lead to a two-tier system not desired by the U.K. or India. The memorandum made it clear that if the change was adopted it would be possible, and necessary, to preserve the position of the original members, although allegiance to the Crown would no longer be "a feature of the Commonwealth relationship or the essential test for Commonwealth membership". The principal problem of this solution was the danger of accelerating the tendency towards republicanism and possibly weakening the Crown in those countries where the connection remained unimpaired.¹²³

These discussions in 1947/8 showed a remarkable change in the U.K.'s attitude, especially the D.O.'s. Before the war common allegiance to the Crown had been regarded as the central aspect of the Commonwealth. In the 1930s the D.O. had thought neutrality incompatible with membership, mainly because it considered common allegiance to mean the indivisibility of the Crown. When South Africa and Ireland made references to plans for remaining neutral in a war, the D.O. decided not to face the issue directly. It accepted that Ireland would be neutral, at least

123. Memorandum by Committee of officials, 4th February 1949, CR(49)2. See also "The Commonwealth Relationship", 23rd February 1949, CR(49)5, CAN134/119.

to begin with, but refused to declare that this was inconsistent with membership and let it lie dormant for the duration of the war. In South Africa's case, it essentially adopted a 'wait and see' policy, while trying to influence it towards participation.¹²⁴ However, it is clear that the D.O. regarded the Commonwealth's common link with the Crown as the essence of the relationship. As Harding, (P.U.S. in the 1930s) minuted, the Crown was "something much more than the symbol of the co-operation of these units."¹²⁵ The D.O.'s capacity for flexibility had been shown by the acceptance of the 1935 External Relations Act for Ireland, which limited the King's sovereignty, but the attitude of the D.O. before the war indicates that it would then have been unthinkable to have any country within the Commonwealth which did not possess a common constitutional link with the Crown.

By 1948 the U.K. was moving away from too strict an insistence on this relationship, while trying to retain an historical tradition, perhaps as a substitute for the link, but also in order to differentiate the Commonwealth from any other group of foreign states. The proposals were also remarkably similar to King's own thoughts in October 1948, and may have owed something to him. In February 1949 Attlee called a meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers to discuss the situation, and also decided to send emissaries to the Dominions to hold prior discussions with the leaders. Sir Norman Brook, Secretary to the Cabinet, was sent to Canada, Mr. P. Gordon-Walker, Under-Secretary of State at the C.R.O., went to India, Pakistan and Ceylon, Lord Listowel went to Australia and New Zealand and Sir Percivale Liesching, P.U.S. at the C.R.O., to South Africa. In his letter to St. Laurent (now Prime Minister of Canada) on 25th February explaining the position, Attlee said that the issue was whether the basis of the Commonwealth could be modified to accommodate members with no allegiance to the Crown,

124. See chapter 1.

125. Minute by Harding, 30th March 1937, D035/530, C6/10. (Harding's italics.)

which he admitted raised the widest issues.¹²⁶ Meanwhile he was urging his own Cabinet to accept members without monarchical allegiance. He told his colleagues that the political advantages of keeping India in the association were so great that they justified adapting the basis of the relationship. He carried his Cabinet with him and from the 3rd March 1949 the U.K., at least, accepted the principle that common allegiance to the Crown was no longer the essential feature of the association.¹²⁷ India's precise attitude was not known, but Sir A. Nye, now U.K. High Commissioner in India, sent an appreciation of Nehru's probable position. He thought that the Indian Prime Minister might relent, and accept a connection with the Crown, if he was convinced that the other members would refuse membership otherwise; whereas if Nehru had an inkling that India's membership would be acceptable on other terms, he would press his objections very strongly.¹²⁸ The C.R.O. valued this appreciation and advised the Prime Minister to appraise the other Prime Ministers of it and warn them not to withdraw from their insistence on a link with the King until Nehru's proposals had been considered jointly by them all. It thought Mr. Chifley might easily be won over by Nehru if not warned.¹²⁹

The 1949 Prime Ministers' meeting lasted less than a week and managed to reach a satisfactory conclusion. The formula adopted to define the Commonwealth relationship seems to have been first suggested by Mr. P. Gordon-Walker.¹³⁰ Realising that it would be very difficult for India to recognise the King as having any jurisdiction over Indian affairs, he thought India might recognise the King's position in relation to the whole Commonwealth, which would not impair India's

126. Attlee to St. Laurent, 25th February 1949, MG26, J4, Vol. 274, File 2783, pp. C188899-C188901.

127. Wheeler-Bennett, *op.cit.*, p. 724.

128. Sir A. Nye to Noel-Baker, 1st April 1949, D0121/73.

129. Minutes by F. F. Turnbull (Assistant Secretary C.R.O.) and Noel-Baker, 13th April 1949, *ibid.*

130. P. Gordon Walker, The Commonwealth (London, 1962), p. 183.

republican status. This idea for recognition of the King as 'Head of the Commonwealth' was put to Attlee after Gordon-Walker had returned from his mission to Asia in the spring of 1949. The speed with which the meeting reached an agreement was probably due to the extensive talks which had been taking place in the Dominion capitals, and to Attlee's introduction from the first meeting of the idea of the King as 'Head of the Commonwealth'.

Lester Pearson, who attended in place of St. Laurent, wrote detailed notes on the meetings and his private conversations. He recorded that both Attlee and Sir N. Brook were determined to allow a republican India to remain a member, although the Commonwealth Relations Secretary, Mr. P. Noel-Baker, was worried about the effect on the political development of Pakistan and Ceylon. Pearson met Mr. Malan, the new South African Nationalist Prime Minister, whom he expected to create problems because of the difficult relations between India and South Africa. He was rather surprised to find Malan friendly towards the Commonwealth and to India, which, he said, "removed one big hurdle".¹³¹ The U.K. had also been apprehensive about South Africa and had not always included that Government in its discussions about India.¹³² Within Commonwealth ranks a division which arose tended to lie between Australia and New Zealand on the one side, and the three Asian Dominions on the other, with Canada and the U.K. holding the middle ground. The antipodean Dominions strongly emphasised the desire of most members to keep their link with the Crown and tried to play down the Indian development as a single exception. This was disliked by the Asians, especially Pakistan and Ceylon, which wanted to keep the way open for altering their constitutional basis in the future. At one point, Pearson recorded that Fraser became "more and more British" in his

131. Pearson's 'Notes on Visit to London, April 19th-30th 1949'. (Private Papers of J. W. Holmes.) (For more details on the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting, see J. Eames, In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence (Toronto, 1972), pp. 226-257.)

132. Memorandum by Turnbull for Noel-Baker, 7th February 1949, D0121/72.

emphasis on the Crown.

The term 'Head of the Commonwealth' was acceptable to all in principle, with some disagreement over the phrasing. Malan thought that the original phrase 'symbol of our association and Head of the Commonwealth' could be interpreted as a move towards a centralised association, and Pearson agreed. Instead, the words 'and as such Head of the Commonwealth' were eventually accepted. The minutes record that the expression had no constitutional significance. Eventually a balance between the views of all the Ministers was found and the final communique issued at the end of the meeting noted that India had informed the other members of its intention to form a republic while affirming her desire to remain within the Commonwealth

and her acceptance of the King as the symbol of the free association of its independent member nations and as such the Head of the Commonwealth.

The Governments of the other countries of the Commonwealth, the basis of whose membership of the Commonwealth is not hereby changed, accept and recognise India's continuing membership in accordance with the terms of the declaration.

Accordingly the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Ceylon hereby declare that they remain untied as free and equal members of the Commonwealth of Nations, freely co-operating in the pursuit of peace, liberty and progress.¹³³

On the 27th April, having reached agreement, the eight Ministers waited on the King to inform him of their discussions. George VI congratulated them on their promptitude, wisdom and tolerance. He described the solution as a striking example of the elasticity of the Commonwealth system and gave his blessing to the new basis for the Commonwealth relationship.¹³⁴

133. Mansergh, Documents and Speeches, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 846.

134. Wheeler-Bennett, op.cit., pp. 729-730.

Summing up the conference, Pearson thought this a momentous occasion.

We have avoided a break in the Commonwealth which might have been the beginning of its end, and we certainly have established a new basis which may be the beginning of something very important and far reaching.¹³⁵

That it was a new beginning was irrefutable. The basis of countries' association with the Commonwealth had been changed substantially and this step had immediately ensured the entry of three Asian Dominions, with the prospect of more Asian and African countries to follow. The Commonwealth had changed from being a closely-knit, 'white', British one, based on the consequences of Britain's emigration policy, to a genuinely multi-racial, international one, based on Britain's imperial expansion. The one member to be lost to the association was Eire. It repealed its External Relations Act in November 1948, a few months before before the constitutional basis of the Commonwealth was revised. However, it never re-joined the association, despite continuing close ties with the U.K. in some areas of policy, especially citizenship. The proximity of the two events may mislead. The U.K. did not miss by a few months a chance of preventing Eire from leaving, for it had ceased to be an active member of the Commonwealth in 1939 or before.

The governments and personalities involved in the final negotiations of India's membership of the Commonwealth had a bearing on the outcome. Those absent included Smuts, the stalwart of South Africa's Dominion existence whose political career had ended, and King, who had retired. Churchill and Menzies were in Opposition. King's absence was not an important factor since Canadian policy was the same, and he had done

135. Pearson, "Notes on Visit to London, April 19th 1949 - April 30th 1949", op.cit. (During the meeting, on 22nd April, Pearson met Sir A. Lascelles to inform him of the progress they were making. Lascelles thought the formula 'Head of the Commonwealth' was good and that the King would be pleased. "He said they had been looking into the question of inclusion of a Republic in an association of monarchies and found that it had been done in the Holy Roman Empire in connection with the Republics of Danzig and Lubeck." Pearson was relieved to hear that the Palace was not likely to object to the compromise being worked out.)

much to promote India's membership before 1949 (although Pearson and St. Laurent were more positive in their approach). The position in the other countries is perhaps significant. The Labour parties of the U.K., Australia and New Zealand ensured the Commonwealth's continuation in this changed form. This might not have occurred had they not been in office. Churchill had been a fierce opponent of Attlee's Indian policy and it is probable that had Labour not won the 1945 election India would not have been in the position of negotiating its membership in 1949. He accepted the conclusions of the 1949 meeting with grace and in a helpful speech applauded the fact that "neither the majesty of the Crown nor the personal dignity of the King had been impaired",¹³⁶ but had opposed India's original independence. Smuts was not constructive in his public statement,¹³⁷ and in letters to Churchill he anticipated the reaction in South Africa would be to push the Nationalists further on the path to republicanism "as a stepping stone to full secession". He said the U.K. had acted with full knowledge of the consequences, but he feared that the Commonwealth could "go the way of the Holy Roman Empire and become nothing but a name, and lose all meaning and reality".¹³⁸ Menzies also spoke against the new arrangement, insisting that the Crown's position was the lynch-pin of the association and should not have been altered.¹³⁹ This defence of the Crown received little appreciation from George VI, who told Pearson that while he had been pleased by Churchill's speech, "he had little patience with Menzies" and was "sad" that Smuts had taken the same attitude.¹⁴⁰ The attitudes of three deposed Prime Ministers, however prescient they may have been, suggest that the new basis for the Commonwealth could not have been achieved if they had still been in office.

136. Wheeler-Bennett, op.cit., p.731.

137. Pearson Notes on the 1949 London meeting, op.cit.

138. Smuts to Churchill, 21st May 1949 and 23rd May 1949, Smuts Papers Vol. VII, Nos. 847 & 849.

139. J. Tennant, Evatt, Politics and Justice (London/Sydney, 1970), pp. 192-3.

140. Pearson Notes on 1949 London meeting, op.cit.

Conclusion

It was suggested in a D.O. memorandum of May 1947 that membership of the Commonwealth

implies an obligation to consider one another's interests, to make every effort to ensure that pursuit of individual needs and interests is adjusted wherever practicable to consideration of the needs and interests of other members of the Commonwealth, and to give mutual support where practical in all essential matters.¹

This rather imprecise outline of Commonwealth duties differs little from statements made about the association at the 1930 Imperial Conference, and by the late 1940s the principles of Commonwealth collaboration had changed very little from those of a decade or more earlier. What had altered was the position of the members within the international community, and while a study of the Commonwealth in the 1940s does not reveal revolutionary changes in the principles of collaboration, it does demonstrate how the U.K. had adapted to new demands from its fellow members in the field of foreign affairs, and how its own perceptions of the Commonwealth had undergone a transformation.

There was a consistency in the attitudes of each Dominion throughout the period under consideration, despite deviations of their policy. Canada was always opposed to the pursuit of a Commonwealth policy merely for the sake of unanimity. It stood by the principle that each country's policy had to be decided by its own Government and Parliament, and thought that to attempt to tie members by decisions made at Commonwealth meetings would jeopardise the association. The balance between the desire for independent action and continued association would be tipped in the direction of the former and lead to the breakdown of the Commonwealth. Yet the Canadian government firmly believed that on major issues the Commonwealth would almost always agree on policy,

1. D.O. memorandum "The Structure of the Commonwealth" enclosed in a Minute from Addison to Attlee, 19th May 1947, DO121/10C, No. 73.

because their association rested on their likemindedness and community of interests.² Between 1944 and 1945 the Canadians co-operated closely with U.K. and Commonwealth colleagues and played a leading role internationally. It seemed that King's fear of committing Canada to any international action had been laid to rest and Canadian officials flourished in their new freedom. However, in his last year or two of office King became more hesitant about such an active Canadian foreign policy and more unpredictable in his decisions. Louis St. Laurent, Canada's new External Affairs Minister who was destined to take over the leadership from King, believed in a firm positive foreign policy, but was at times restrained by King.³ Mr. A. Heeney of the External Affairs Department recalls that by the autumn of 1945, after he had left the Paris Peace Conference, King was growing greatly fatigued⁴ and this perhaps explains his increasing unpredictability. Once King had retired and St. Laurent assumed the Premiership, Canada embarked on a more positive foreign policy, but its attitude towards common Commonwealth policies remained unchanged. It wanted to retain a flexible association which did not force members to adopt joint policies.⁵

The South African government under the leadership of Smuts maintained a consistent approach to inter-Commonwealth collaboration and one largely determined by the internal divisions within the country. While Smuts had his own hopes for the future of the association, particularly closer co-operation with Western Europe, and was in close touch with Churchill and other U.K. Ministers, the South African government played a diminishing role within the Commonwealth in the 1940s. As the strength of the Nationalist Party grew, and the divisions within the

2. Mackenzie King Record Vol. IV, pp. 386-87.

3. D. C. Thomson, 'Louis St. Laurent: Canadian', (Toronto, 1967), pp. 216-240.

4. B. D. Heeney ed., The Things that are Caesar's: Memoirs of a Canadian Public Servant, (Toronto, 1972), p. 90.

5. Thomson, op.cit., ch. 10 & C. Stacey, 'Through the Second World War' in M. Careless & R. C. Brown The Canadians 1867-1967, Vol. I, (1969), pp. 304-5.

country sharpened, Smuts' Government had to pay more attention to internal policy. Moreover its principal involvement at the United Nations arose from the status of Indians within South Africa and the dispute with the new Indian Government. When the Nationalists won the 1948 election the balance Smuts had tried to retain between association with the British Commonwealth and a degree of independence seemed doomed. Although the new Prime Minister, Dr. Malan, reaffirmed South Africa's allegiance to the Commonwealth at the 1949 Meeting, and South Africa stayed in the association for a further twenty years, the political balance had swung permanently in favour of the Nationalist Afrikaners, which resulted in more muted support for the Commonwealth; and South Africa's racial policies alienated it from other members, especially the new Asian and African countries.

The Australian government's policy contained the most variations during the 1940s, but at the end of the decade it possessed many similarities with that of Menzies' government. The Curtin government, with Evatt as Minister of External Affairs, had initiated a more positive, aggressive and independent policy during the second half of the war and made an attempt to forge closer relations with the U.S.A. It is extremely doubtful that the Australian government seriously intended to replace its close alignment with the U.K by a similar relationship with the U.S.A. Certainly by 1945/6 its traditional allegiance with the U.K. and the Commonwealth had been reaffirmed but not at the sacrifice of an independent foreign policy. Menzies' attempts to secure a greater say in the direction of the war, and Curtin's and Evatt's actions from 1944, whether at U.N. meetings or during discussions on U.K. policy, were designed to protect Australian interests, not to bow submissively to the U.K. Under Evatt's direction the Australian department of External Affairs expanded, as did the scope of Australian

foreign policy. The repeated suggestions by the Australian government for closer collaboration in Commonwealth policy, and a greater degree of unity in the various policies pursued, did not indicate any desire to lose its independence, but rather a desire to have a greater say in aspects of Commonwealth policy, especially those concerning the Pacific and South East Asian regions. Unlike Canada, Australia felt that its interests were best protected by a greater, rather than lesser, involvement in U.K. policy.

New Zealand maintained an equanimity in its relations towards the U.K. which none of the other Dominions quite achieved. It had begun the decade content to allow the U.K. to play the dominant role in Commonwealth foreign policy and although the scope of its own foreign policy increased substantially, New Zealand did not suffer the doubts or irritation about its relations with the U.K. which sometimes plagued the other members. This is not to suggest that New Zealand always submitted to the U.K.'s direction. During the war, especially in connection with the Pacific theatre of war, Fraser was not slow to indicate his disagreement with the U.K. and in the discussions concerning the establishment of the U.N. the New Zealand government was firm, even stubborn, in its views on the Great Power veto and the right of all nations to have a voice in world affairs.

The early post-war period was unusual inasmuch as the European states were badly weakened by their war experiences and, in contrast to subsequent decades, most of the African and Asian states were still under colonial rule. Thus the status of the Dominions within a relatively small U.N. increased. They were for the first time significant international actors, not of the first rank, but nonetheless possessing the will and position to make some impact, especially in collaboration with other smaller powers. Their increased interest in foreign affairs

inevitably resulted in a concentration on their own regions.

Another development of some import was the increased representation of the Dominions abroad. Apart from protecting their interests and establishing a level of representation in keeping with their status, this meant that the Dominions no longer relied so markedly on the U.K. for information on foreign affairs. Inevitably any material passed on by the U.K., however factual in content, reflected its general view of the world and its particular attitude to the policies of foreign governments. Indeed in connection with the supply of information to the newly independent India, the F.O. was conscious of the importance of educating India in the British perspective upon world affairs. With their own representatives posted abroad, the Dominion governments were more able to formulate genuinely independent policies according to the information received from their own representatives, and had the opportunity to shape policies with a more distinctive national flavour. This process would take time to develop and not necessarily detract from the close community of interests and interpretation within the Commonwealth. Another development in Commonwealth representation led to a full complement of representatives in all Commonwealth capitals, which completed the circle of collaboration and meant that all members were fully aware of each other's policies, and did not have to rely on the U.K. for discovering the attitudes of their partners, which had sometimes occurred in the past.

If the Dominions were more important international actors, and wanted to demonstrate their independence, why did they not only stay within the association, but continue to try and strengthen it and improve collaboration between the members? Despite their unusually strong position in the 1940s and early 1950s, the Dominions all recognised that alone they would be relatively ineffective. They were strong enough in comparison with other small states to survive alone, providing

no major power were positively aggressive towards them, and in that respect secession from the Commonwealth was not wholly unrealistic. However it was quite clear to all of them that within the association they would have a great influence over events, not least because their close collaboration with the U.K. meant that they were almost always better informed than any other state of comparable size. Nor did any Dominion want to exchange its close relationship with the U.K. for client status under another major power, especially the U.S.A., which was the obvious example for either the Antipodean Dominions or Canada. The latter had spent many years trying to balance its relations between its powerful neighbour and its traditional ally and intended to keep that balance. Australia and New Zealand had experienced close association with the U.S.A. during the war and decided that their interests would be protected better by continued association with the U.K. Moreover the Dominions disliked the polarity of the post-war world and wanted to do all they could to protect the rights of middle and minor states and create a genuine international community of nations. Association with the Commonwealth was felt to be a way in which such polarity could be reduced. Fundamentally, the Dominions realised that on their own they were not strong enough, despite the advances they had made, to stand alone; if co-operation could be achieved without undue loss of freedom, this suited their interests. There was however a clear indication that the degree of collaboration they were willing to share with the U.K. would not be offered without some changes, and the post-war period saw a shift in the centre of gravity of the Commonwealth. The U.K. remained the most powerful and influential member, but the exclusive right to stage meetings and initiate policy was lost. Commonwealth Ministers held meetings in other capitals and collaboration between the Dominions and non-members became a recognised and acceptable

event. Thus the U.S. took over prime responsibility for the defence of Australia and New Zealand; Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. were the main instigators of the North Atlantic Alliance Treaty; and the South East Asia Treaty Organisation contained some Commonwealth members and other non-members. The association was not so exclusive as it had been pre-war and combined more easily with the rest of the international community.

Many aspects of the Dominions' attitudes had remained consistent. There remained a clear division between the degree of collaboration desired by Canada and that by Australia, with New Zealand coming somewhere between the two and South Africa comparing somewhat with Canada, especially after the Nationalist Government gained power. Given these attitudes it is not surprising that complaints continued about the modes of the U.K.'s collaboration and that disagreements continued on new proposals. With no clear consensus it was difficult to create a system which satisfied everyone. However, the U.K. had attempted to fulfil the increased Dominion demands.

By the late 1940s the machinery for Commonwealth collaboration extended through the whole range of ministerial and official positions. The meetings between the Prime Ministers occurred more frequently and in a more businesslike atmosphere. More contacts were established between other specialist Ministries. The one omission to the system was meetings between Ministers responsible for foreign affairs. Foreign policy had always been discussed by the leaders, sometimes accompanied by colleague or officials specialising in external affairs, at the Prime Ministers' meetings. One reason for this was the tendency of Dominion leaders to assume the portfolio for foreign policy in addition to their other duties. King did so until September 1946 when St. Laurent became External Affairs Minister and even then King kept a

firm rein on Canadian foreign policy. Smuts and Fraser also acted as their own foreign ministers; though under Curtin, and later Chifley,

Evatt assumed responsibility for Australian foreign policy. Churchill's dominance over all aspects of policy during the war had tended to perpetuate the practice of confining foreign affairs to Prime Ministers' meetings. Cranborne had intended suggesting this at the 1944 Prime Ministers' Meeting, and while he might have mentioned the idea to Dominion representatives, the Minutes of the Meeting only record his proposals for defence collaboration. At the 1948 meeting of Commonwealth leaders there were moves to change this situation. A proposal for annual or twice yearly meetings of Ministers responsible for foreign policy was put forward.⁶ Australia was keenly in favour⁷ but Canada and India both had doubts. The Canadian government told the U.K. that while it was not opposed to the principle of such meetings, it did not want the association to fix definite times for them, as that could give the impression that the Commonwealth was being organised

in order that some one of them might speak for the others. Such a situation would be as unacceptable as it would be unworkable.

It concluded by repeating a long held view that it saw

only danger ahead in any effort either to formalise or to change substantially procedures which are already working satisfactorily.⁸

The Indian Government held a similar attitude, and told the U.K. that while it welcomed improvements to Commonwealth collaboration, it could not accept any formalisation of the machinery.⁹

The C.R.O. proposed that meetings should be held annually, "or

6. 1948 Prime Ministers' Meetings, CAB133/88.

7. Minutes of meeting between the Lord Chancellor, Noel-Baker, Evatt, Fraser and Pearson, 15th December 1948, D0121/72.

8. Memorandum of the Canadian Government, November 1948, D0121/72. See also meeting between Noel-Baker and Pearson, 8th November 1948, D0121/18.

9. Indian Government to C.R.O., 27th November 1948 (extract) D0121/72.

more frequently if "occasion requires".¹⁰ This produced the response from the South African government that meetings between Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers should only take place when necessary or desirable and that no fixed time should be set.¹¹ There was a meeting of External Affairs Ministers with the U.K. Foreign Secretary in Colombo in 1950, when they discussed recognition of Communist China and aspects of international economic aid. But this event was not repeated and discussions at the political level continued to be conducted at Prime Ministers' Meetings.¹² This was possibly due to the strength of past practice and the importance of the subject, rather than to objections about set intervals between meetings. The unique organisation of Commonwealth relations within the British government and the closeness of all aspects of Commonwealth collaboration also had a bearing upon this arrangement. Attlee's decision in 1948 to uphold the responsibility of the C.R.O. for collaboration with the Dominions in all spheres of policy and not to give the F.O. the principal role in foreign policy collaboration, reaffirmed the special nature of Commonwealth relations and the need for the U.K. to treat the partners as particularly intimate associates whose relations with the U.K. had to be nurtured and considered in a broad perspective. This did not in itself prevent Meetings of Foreign Ministers; but the continuation of direct Prime Ministerial contact combined with the special position the U.K. accorded to its Commonwealth partners by keeping a separate Ministry to oversee its relations with them, perpetuated the practice of dealing with most issues at the highest level and within the general scope of the association. Thus, while the F.O. and the Foreign Secretary would always play a substantial role in collaboration on foreign affairs, it would be achieved in

10. Minute by C. G. L. Syers, 5th January 1949, ibid.

11. South African Government to C.R.O. 27th January 1949, ibid.

12. Garner, op.cit., p. 298.

conjunction with the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and the Prime Minister, by replacing them.

While the position of the Dominions was changing, the U.K. was also reassessing its own relative decline in power and influence. If the Dominions (and possibly some of the smaller European countries), would endorse the main principles of U.K. foreign policy, then might not the U.K. be able to match the two greatest powers? This did not necessarily mean formal agreement on common policies. But it did mean that on major issues when the U.K. wanted to negotiate on equal terms with the other two, it would have to be in a position to say with confidence that it had the backing of its partners. Could this be achieved at a time when the Dominions were keen to demonstrate their newly increased independence in world affairs?

The machinery existed for effective collaboration at every level, a system expanded to accommodate new developments and new requirements. Variations in the members' use of those procedures continued. Each member decided whether information sent was to be regarded as an invitation to respond with comment or criticism or support. Much also rested on the U.K.'s willingness to give the fullest information to its partners at the earliest moment. Despite the U.K.'s wish for support from the Dominions, there was a certain reluctance to be wholly open, especially on matters of U.K. foreign policy. The negotiations of the Russian and French treaties in 1946 provided an illustration of this and a critical point in the U.K.'s handling of Commonwealth relations. The U.K., and especially the F.O., was not keen to have its own foreign policy, modified by its partners and sometimes did not want to reveal all its aspects. Moreover, could Dominion Governments be told full details of proposed policy before that policy had been approved by the U.K. Cabinet? These questions

were raised by the two treaties in 1946 and demonstrated reservations on the part of the U.K. While the D.O. warned that Australian reactions could prejudice further collaboration with Australia, the F.O. stuck firmly to the principle that the U.K. had to be free to decide its own policy in its relations with other states, and that it could not give full details of prospective policy.

The U.K.'s policy on this issue accorded more nearly with Canada's than with the Australians'. It is perhaps not surprising that having pursued an unimpeded independent policy for so many years that the U.K. was even more reluctant than some of its partners to sacrifice that right, unless compelled by a more powerful state. So by the late 1940s despite its keenness to promote positive Dominion support for its policies, the U.K. had also clarified the extent to which it was willing to co-operate with its partners and its reluctance to be dictated to by them. The new Labour Government in the U.K. did not make any dramatic change to the U.K.'s relations with the rest of the Commonwealth. Apart from Attlee's policy towards India, which was an important departure that would not have been pursued by a government under Churchill, there was no significant change in attitude.

The interpretation of Commonwealth relations which had triumphed by the end of the 1940s was in essence the Canadian one: close contact which was not exclusive and permitted co-operation with non-members; flexibility, which meant that some or all members could co-operate in a scheme and a functional, practical approach which resulted in collaboration when necessary, but not for the sake of demonstrating unity. Such a loose-knit community seemed to have a greater chance of success than a more formal association. The future of Commonwealth collaboration would ultimately rest on the will of each to make it succeed. However, one increasingly important aspect of the machinery

was the contact between officials in all Commonwealth capitals and abroad. Informal contact between officials who knew and trusted each other could provide a way of making sure that members of the Commonwealth knew of possible policies under consideration. In such unofficial exchanges, a Dominion official might indicate any aspect about which his government felt strongly, which could then be taken into consideration during the formulation of policy. This is not to suggest that U.K. or Dominion officials deliberately or improperly organised leakages of information; but in the growing sphere of official contacts, whether in London, or Moscow or Canberra, the opportunity existed and seems increasingly to have been exploited, for official and unofficial exchanges of information which, on occasions, could do more to aid consensus than formal meetings between Ministers.

The Dominions had been of value to the U.K. in the 1930s. They formed part of the British Empire and part of the aura of British power. Their willingness to fight in a future war was regarded as important for the military and economic contributions they could make, and because it would be proof of the solidarity of purpose within the association. In peace-time the Dominions made few initiatives in the field of foreign affairs and showed a reluctance to commit themselves. The U.K. was not unduly disturbed, providing it felt confident of ultimate support. For the U.K. the Commonwealth existed, functioned reasonably well, and constituted an asset rather than a hindrance. Many of the discussions about the association were concerned with its constitutional purity and the practical applications of the Statute of Westminster, but many assumptions about the purpose and value of the Commonwealth were unspoken or even unconscious.

After the Second World War the Commonwealth functioned in an increasingly hostile and divided world, in which the U.K. no longer had so powerful a voice. The Dominions, including the new Asian

members, appreciated that co-operative action with the U.K. and the other members would strengthen their positions and their capacity to wield some influence. The U.K. meanwhile was taking stock of its decline internationally, recognised that henceforth the Dominions were going to be active and valuable international actors, and wished to make the Commonwealth a more positive partnership in order to preserve its own position. The U.K.'s determination to keep India within the Commonwealth, because it felt that the power of the Commonwealth would be strengthened, and its willingness to change the basis of the association to accommodate a republican state, indicate the U.K.'s new pragmatism. It viewed the Commonwealth in a more realistic way, emphasising the practical advantages which could be derived because it needed them badly. Some believed that by ending the monarchical link the association would be weakened; the centripetal forces would prevail and the Commonwealth disintegrate. The fact that despite this risk, India was considered so vital to the association reflected the extent to which the U.K. regarded the Commonwealth as essential to its post-war position. The position of the Crown itself, the one aspect of Commonwealth relations hitherto considered sacrosanct, was partially dismantled as the U.K. took a realistic look at the value of the Commonwealth to itself.

Appendix IList of Principal Characters

- ADDISON, Dr. Christopher, 1st Viscount 1945: Minister of Health, 1919-21; Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1929-31; Dominions Secretary, 1945-47; Commonwealth Relations Secretary, 1947; Paymaster General, 1948-49; Lord Privy Seal, 1947-51.
- ATTLEE, Clement R., 1st Earl: Leader of the Opposition, 1935-40, 1951-55; Lord Privy Seal, 1940-42; Dominions Secretary, 1942-43; Lord President of the Council, 1943-45; Deputy Prime Minister, 1942-45; Prime Minister, 1945-51.
- BATTERBEE, Sir Harold: Senior Assistant Secretary, D.O., 1925; Assistant Under-Secretary, D.O., 1930-38; High Commissioner to New Zealand, 1939-45.
- BEASLEY, John A.: (Australian) Minister of Supply and Defence, 1941-45; Minister of Defence, 1945-46; Resident Minister, U.K., 1946; High Commissioner to U.K., 1946-49.
- BEVIN, Ernest: Minister of Labour and National Service, 1940-45; Foreign Secretary, 1945-51.
- BRIDGES, Sir Edward E. (later Lord Bridges): Entered Treasury 1919, Principal Assistant Secretary, 1937-38; Secretary of the Cabinet and Permanent Secretary to the offices of the Cabinet and to the Committee of Imperial Defence, 1938-46.
- BRUCE, Stanley M. (later Lord Bruce of Melbourne): Australian Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister, 1923-29; various Ministerial posts; High Commissioner to U.K., 1933-45.
- BUTLER, Sir Nevile M.: Entered F.O. 1920; Private Secretary to Prime Minister, 1930-35; served in Teheran, Berne and Washington; Head of F.O. North American Dept., 1941-44; Assistant Secretary of State, superintending North and South American Depts., 1944-47; Ambassador to the Netherlands, 1952-54.
- CADOGAN, Sir Alexander G. M.: Entered Diplomatic Service 1908, served various posts abroad, Ambassador to Peking, 1935-36; Deputy Under-Secretary of State, F.O., 1936-37; Permanent Under-Secretary of State, F.O., 1938-46; Permanent representative to the U.N.O., 1946-50.
- CAMPBELL, John Dee: Entered F.O. 1920, served at various posts abroad, transferred to Dominions Intelligence Dept., F.O., 1942-44; posted abroad to Brazil and Panama ending career as Minister and Consul-General to Iceland, 1950-53.
- CAMPBELL, Sir Gerald: Consular service, 1907-38; High Commissioner to Canada, 1938-41; Minister at Washington Embassy, 1941, 1942-45; Director of British Information Services, New York, 1941-42.

- CAVENDISH-BENTINCK, Victor F. W.: Entered F.O. 1918, served various posts abroad, transferred to Egyptian Dept. F.O., 1937-39; Head of Dominions Intelligence Dept., 1940-43; Head of Services Liaison Dept., 1943-45; Ambassador to Poland, 1945-47.
- CHAMBERLAIN, Neville: Various Ministerial offices, 1922-29; Chancellor of Exchequer, 1931-37; Prime Minister, 1937-40; Lord President of the Council, 1940.
- CLARK, William A. W.: Temporary Principal D.O., 1941; Principal, D.O., 1943; Private Secretary to Dominions Secretary, 1945.
- CLUTTERBUCK, Sir P. Alexander: Principal in D.O., 1929; Deputy High Commissioner to South Africa, 1939-40; Assistant Secretary D.O., 1940; Assistant Under-Secretary D.O., 1942-46; High Commissioner to Canada, 1946-52; High Commissioner to India, 1952-55; Ambassador to Ireland, 1955-59; Permanent Under-Secretary C.R.O., 1959-61.
- COCKRAM, Ben: Principal D.O., 1934-39; Political Secretary to High Commission South Africa, 1939-44; Counsellor at Washington Embassy, 1944-49; Assistant Secretary, C.R.O., 1949-51; Deputy High Commissioner to Australia, 1952-54; Director of Information C.R.O. 1954-57; Director of Information Services, C.R.O., 1957-62.
- CRANBORNE, Viscount (later Marquess of Salisbury): Parliamentary Under-Secretary, F.O., 1935-38; Dominions Secretary, 1940-42, 1943-45; Colonial Secretary, 1942; Lord Privy Seal, 1942-43; Leader of the House of Lords, 1942-45, 1951-57; Lord President of the Council, 1951-57.
- CROSS, Sir Ronald: Parliamentary Secretary Board of Trade, 1936-39; Minister of Economic Warfare, 1939-40; Minister of Shipping, 1940-41; High Commissioner to Australia, 1941-46; Chairman of Public Accounts Committee, 1950-51; Governor of Tasmania, 1951-58.
- CURTIN, John: (Australian) Leader of the Opposition, 1935-41; Prime Minister, 1941-45.
- DENING, Sir M. Esler: Entered F.O. 1938, Far Eastern Dept., 1938-42; Chief Political Adviser to Supreme Commander S. E. Asia, 1943-46; Assistant Under-Secretary, F.O., 1946-50; Special Mission to Asia, 1950-51; Ambassador to Japan, 1951-57; Head of Delegation to Antarctic Treaty Conference, 1959.
- DIXON, Sir Charles: Assistant Secretary at D.O., 1925-30; Assistant Under-Secretary, D.O., 1940-48; retired, but retained as Constitutional Adviser to C.R.O., 1948-68.
- DUFF, Sir Patrick: Private Secretary to successive Prime Ministers, 1923-33; Permanent Secretary, Minister of Works and Public Buildings, 1933-41; Deputy High Commissioner to Canada, 1941-44; High Commissioner in New Zealand, 1945-49; Church Commissioner for England, 1949-54.

- EDEN, R. Anthony, 1st Earl of Avon: Parliamentary Under-Secretary, F.O., 1931-33; Lord Privy Seal, 1934-35; Minister without Portfolio, 1935; Foreign Secretary, 1935-38; Dominions Secretary, 1939-40; Secretary for War, 1940; Foreign Secretary, 1940-45, 1951-55; Leader of the House of Commons, 1942-45; Prime Minister, 1955-57.
- EMRYS-EVANS, Paul V.: Parliamentary Private Secretary to Dominions Secretary, 1940-41; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, D.O., 1942-43.
- EVATT, Dr. Herbert V.: Australian Justice of High Court, 1930-40; External Affairs Minister and Attorney General, 1941-49; Deputy Prime Minister, 1946-49.
- FINCH, John P. G.: Consular Service, 1923-44; served temporarily in F.O., 1944; appointed to F.O., Head of the Commonwealth Liaison Department, 1947-52.
- FLOUD, Sir Francis L. C.: Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1920-27; Chairman Board of Customs and Excise, 1927-30; Permanent Secretary, Minister of Labour, 1930-34; High Commissioner to Canada, 1935-38; various other public offices.
- FRASER, Peter: New Zealand Minister for Education, Health, Marine, 1935-40; Minister in charge of Police, 1935-49; Prime Minister, 1940-49.
- GARNER, J. J. S., Sir Saville, later Lord: Entered D.O., 1930, rank of Principal, 1940; Private Secretary to successive Dominions Secretaries, 1941-43; Senior Secretary at High Commission to Canada, 1943-45; Deputy High Commissioner to Canada, 1946-48; Assistant Under-Secretary, D.O., 1948-51; Deputy High Commissioner to India, 1951-53; High Commissioner to Canada, 1956-61; Permanent Under-Secretary, D.O., 1962-68.
- GREENWAY, John D.: Entered F.O. 1920, various foreign postings, 1920-42; transferred to F.O. as Counsellor, 1942; Acting Head of D.I.D., 1943-44; Acting Head of Economic and Reconstruction Department, 1944 (with H. M. G. Jebb); Minister to Rio de Janeiro, 1944; Minister to Panama, 1946-50; Minister and Consul-General to Iceland, 1950-53.
- GORDON WALKER, Sir Patrick: Parliamentary Private Secretary to H. Morrison, 1946; Under-Secretary of State, C.R.O., 1947-50; Commonwealth Relations Secretary, 1950-51; Foreign Secretary, 1964-65; Education Secretary, 1967-68.
- HALIFAX, Viscount, later 1st Earl: Viceroy of India, 1926-31; Lord Privy Seal, 1935-37; Lord President, 1937-38; Foreign Secretary, 1938-40; Ambassador to U.S.A., 1941-46.
- HANKEY, Sir Maurice, later Lord: Secretary to the Cabinet and the Committee of Imperial Defence, 1916-38; Minister without Portfolio in the War Cabinet, 1939-40; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1940-41; Paymaster-General, 1941-42.

- HANKINSON, Sir Walter C.: Entered D.O. 1925; Acting representative to Australia, 1931-32, 1935-36; Principal Private Secretary to successive Dominions Secretaries, 1937-39; Assistant Under-Secretary, D.O., 1940; Deputy High Commissioner to Australia, 1943-47; High Commissioner to Ceylon, 1948-51; Ambassador to Ireland, 1951-55.
- HARLECH, Lord (formerly W. Ormsby-Gore): Postmaster General, 1931; 1st Commissioner of Works, 1931-36; Colonial Secretary, 1936-38; North East Region Commissioner for Civil Defence, 1939-40; High Commissioner to South Africa, 1941-44.
- HARDING, Sir Edward J.: Assistant Under-Secretary, D.O., 1925-30; Permanent Under-Secretary, D.O., 1930-40; High Commissioner to South Africa, 1940-41.
- HOLMES, Stephen: Principal, D.O., 1928; Senior Secretary, High Commission in Canada, 1936-39; D.O. representative, Washington, 1943-44; Deputy High Commissioner to Canada, 1944-46; Under-Secretary at Board of Trade, 1946; Second Secretary at Board of Trade, 1947-51; Deputy Under-Secretary, C.R.O., 1951-52; High Commissioner to Australia, 1952-56.
- INSKIP, Sir Thomas, later Lord Caldecote: Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, 1937-39; Dominions Secretary, 1939 Jan.-Sept.; Lord Chancellor, 1939 - May 1940; Leader of the House of Lords, May - Oct. 1940; Dominions Secretary, May - Oct. 1940; Lord Chief Justice, 1940-46.
- ISMAY, General Sir H. L., later Lord: Deputy Secretary to Committee of Imperial Defence, 1936-38; Secretary to Committee of Imperial Defence, 1938; Chief of Staff to Minister of Defence, 1940-46; Deputy Secretary to War Cabinet, 1940-45; Chief of Staff to Viceroy, 1947; Commonwealth Relations Secretary, 1951-52; Secretary General to N.A.T.O., 1952-57.
- JAMES, J. Morris: Entered D.O. 1939; Private Secretary to Permanent Under-Secretary, 1940; Assistant Secretary at High Commission to South Africa, 1946-47; Head of Defence Dept., C.R.O., 1949-51; Head of Estab. Dept., C.R.O., 1951-52; Deputy High Commissioner to Pakistan, 1955-56; Adviser to Prime Minister, Jan.-Feb. 1958; Deputy High Commissioner India, 1958-61; High Commissioner to Pakistan, 1961-1966; Deputy Under-Secretary at C.O., 1966-68; Permanent Under Secretary at C.O., Mar. - Oct. 1968; High Commissioner to India, 1968-71; High Commissioner to Australia, 1971-73.
- JEBB, Gladwyn, later 1st Baron Gladwyn: Private Secretary to Permanent Under-Secretaries of State, 1937-40; Ministry of Economic Warfare with temporary rank of Assistant Under-Secretary, Aug. 1940; Acting Counsellor, F.O., 1941; Head of Economic and Reconstruction Dept., F.O., 1942-44; Head of Reconstruction Dept., F.O., 1945; Assistant Secretary-General, 1946; Deputy Under-Secretary, F.O., 1949-50; Permanent representative at U.N.O., 1950-54; Ambassador to France, 1954-60.

- JOY, Michael, G. L.: Entered F.O., 1947, Commonwealth Liaison Department, 1947-48; Private Secretary to Permanent Under-Secretary, 1948-50; served at various posts abroad, 1950-64; seconded to the Cabinet Offices 1964-66; returned to F.O., 1966-68.
- KING, W. L. Mackenzie: Canadian Minister of Labour, 1909-11; Leader of Canadian Liberal Party, 1919-48; Prime Minister, 1921-26, 1926-30, 1935-48; External Affairs Minister, 1921-30, 1935-46.
- LAW, Richard K., later Lord Coleraine: Financial Secretary to the War Office, 1940-41; Parliamentary Under-Secretary at F.O., 1941-43; Minister of State, F.O., 1943-45; Minister of Education, 1945.
- LIESCHING, Sir Percivale: Staff of High Commission to Canada, 1928-32; Political Secretary, High Commission to South Africa, 1933-35; official Secretary High Commission to Australia, 1936-38; Assistant Under-Secretary, D.O., 1939-42; seconded to Board of Trade, 1942-46; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Food, 1946-48; Permanent Under Secretary, C.R.O., 1949-55; High Commissioner to South Africa, 1955-58.
- MACDONALD, Malcolm J.: Dominions Secretary, 1935-38; 1938-39; Colonial Secretary, 1938-40; Minister of Health, 1940-41; High Commissioner to Canada, 1941-46; various posts abroad, including High Commissioner to India, Governor-General and Commissioner General to S. E. Asia, and many posts in Africa.
- MACHTIG, Sir Eric G.: Assistant Under-Secretary, D.O., 1936-39; Deputy Under-Secretary, D.O., 1939; Permanent Under-Secretary, D.O., 1940-49.
- MASSEY, Vincent: Canadian Minister to Washington, 1926-30; High Commissioner to U.K., 1935-46; Governor-General Canada, 1952-59.
- NASH, Sir Walter: Secretary to New Zealand Labour Party, 1922-32; Minister of Finance, 1935-49; Prime Minister, 1957-60.
- NEWTON, Sir Basil C.: served in Peking, 1925-29; Berlin, 1930-37; Prague, 1937-39; Ambassador to Iraq, 1939-41; Assistant Under-Secretary supervising Dominions Intelligence Department, F.O., 1943-46; with position of Liaison Officer to Dominion High Commissioner.
- PAGE, Sir Earle C. G.: Leader of Australian Country Party, 1919-39; Minister of Commerce and Deputy Prime Minister, 1934-39; Prime Minister, 1939; Special representative to U.K., 1940-41; Accredited representative to U.K. War Cabinet, 1941.
- PEARSON, Lester B.: Entered Canadian External Affairs Dept, 1928; Counsellor to High Commission in London, 1935-40; External Affairs, Ottawa, 1940-42; Minister in Washington, 1942-45; Ambassador in Washington, 1945-46; Under-Secretary of State, External Affairs, 1946-48; Minister for External Affairs, 1948-57; Prime Minister, 1963-68.

PRICE, C. R.: Assistant Secretary, D.O., 1940-48.

ROBERTSON, Norman A: Entered Canadian External Affairs Dept., 1930; Under Secretary of State, 1941-46; High Commissioner in London, 1946-49, 1952-57; Secretary to the Cabinet, 1949-52; Ambassador to the U.S.A., 1957-58; Under-Secretary of State, External Affairs, 1958-64.

SARGENT, Sir Orme G.: Entered F.O., 1906; Assistant Under-Secretary of State, 1938-39; Deputy Under-Secretary, 1939-46; Permanent Under-Secretary, 1946-49.

SHANNON, G. E. Boyd: Entered D.O., 1930; official Secretary in High Commission to New Zealand, 1939-41; Assistant Secretary and Head of Foreign Affairs Department, D.O., 1945-48. Deputy High Commissioner to Canada, 1948-50; Deputy High Commissioner to Calcutta, 1952-56; Assistant Under-Secretary, C.R.O., 1956-68.

SMUTS, Field Marshal J. C.: Member of U.K. Imperial War Cabinet, 1917-18; South African Prime Minister, 1919-24, 1939-48.

STEPHENSON, Sir John: ~~Assistant~~^{Deputy} Under-Secretary, D.O., 1940-48.

St. LAURENT, Louis: Canadian Minister of Justice, 1941-1946; External affairs Secretary, 1946-48; Prime Minister, 1948-57.

WHISKARD, Sir Geoffrey: Home Office, 1911-22; Colonial Office, 1922-25; joined D.O., 1925, Assistant Under-Secretary, 1931-36; High Commissioner to Australia, 1936-41; Permanent Under-Secretary Ministry of Works, 1942-46.

Appendix IIUnited Kingdom MinistersPrime Minister

May 1937 - May 1940	Neville Chamberlain
May 1940 - July 1945	Winston S. Churchill
July 1945 - October 1951	Clement R. Attlee

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

December 1935 - February 1938	R. Anthony Eden
February 1938 - December 1940	Viscount Halifax
December 1940 - July 1945	R. Anthony Eden
July 1945 - March 1951	Ernest Bevin

Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

November 1935 - May 1938	Malcolm MacDonald
May 1938 - October 1938	Lord Stanley
October 1938 - January 1939	Malcolm MacDonald
January 1939 - September 1939	Sir Thomas Inskip
September 1939 - May 1940	R. Anthony Eden
May 1940 - October 1940	Lord Caldecote
October 1940 - February 1942	Viscount Cranborne
February 1942 - September 1943	Clement R. Attlee
September 1943 - August 1945	Viscount Cranborne
August 1945 - July 1947	Viscount Addison

Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations

July 1947 - October 1947	Viscount Addison
October 1947 - February 1950	Philip J. Noel-Baker

Appendix IIIDominion Prime MinistersCanada

1921-1926, 1926-1930	W. L. M. King
1930-1935	R. B. Bennett
1935-1948	W. L. M. King
1948-1957	L. St. Laurent

South Africa

1924-1939	J. B. M. Hertzog
1939-1948	J. C. Smuts
1948-1954	D. F. Malan

Australia

1932-1939	J. A. Lyons
1939-1941	R. G. Menzies
1941, Aug.-Oct.	A. Fadden
1941-1945	J. Curtin
1945-1949	J. B. Chifley

New Zealand

1935-1940	M. J. Savage
1940-1949	P. Fraser

India

1947-1964	J. Nehru
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Pakistan

1947-1951	L. A. Khan
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Appendix IVUnited Kingdom High Commissioners in the DominionsCanada

1935-1938	Sir Francis L. C. Floud
1938-1941	Sir Gerald Campbell
1941-1946	Malcolm MacDonald
1946-1952	Sir Alexander Clutterbuck

Australia

1936-1941	Sir Geoffrey Whiskard
1941-1946	Sir Ronald Cross
1946-1952	Edward J. Williams

South Africa

1935-1940	Sir William Clark
1940-1941	Sir Edward Harding
1941-1944	Lord Harlech
1944-1951	Sir Evelyn Baring

New Zealand

1939-1945	Sir Harold Batterbee
1945-1949	Sir Patrick Duff

India

1946-1949	Terence H. Shone
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Pakistan

1947-1951	Sir Laurence Grafftey-Smith
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Appendix VDominion Governors-GeneralCanada

1935-1940 Lord Tweedsmuir of Elsfield
 1940-1946 Major General the Earl of Athlone
 1946-1952 Field Marshal, Viscount Alexander of Tunis

Australia

1936-1944 Brig.-General Lord Gowrie
 1944-1945 Major-General Sir Winston J. Dugan (Acting)
 1945-1947 H. R. H. the Duke of Gloucester
 1947-1952 W. J. Mckell

South Africa

1937-1943 Sir Patrick Duncan
 1943-1946 N. J. de Wet (Officer Administering the Government)
 1946-1951 Major G. Brank van Zyl

New Zealand

1935-1941 Viscount Galway
 1941-1946 Lord Newall, Marshal of the Royal Air Force
 1946-1952 Lieut.-General Sir Bernard Freyberg

India

1947-1948 The Earl Mountbatten of Burma

Pakistan

1947 M. A. Jinnah
 1947-1951 Khaja Nazimuddin

Appendix VIDominion High Commissioners in the United KingdomCanada

1935-1946 Vincent Massey
1946-1949 Norman A. Robertson

Australia

1933-1945 Stanley M. Bruce
1946-1949 John A. Beasley

South Africa

1929-1939 C. T. te Water
1939-1942 S. F. Waterson
1942-1944 Colonel Deneys Reitz
1944-1948 C. Heaton Nicolls

New Zealand

1936-1951 William J. Jordan

India

1947-1952 V. K. Krishna Menon

Pakistan

1947-1952 Habib I. Rahimtoola

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