

to and proposals approved by the Conference which has now been held, must be taken, so far as the delegates of the Dominions are concerned, to be *ad referendum*, and of no binding force unless and until submitted to their various Parliaments.

I should add, in special reference to the delegates from South Africa, that they did not feel themselves in a position, in regard to their naval or military defence, to submit or to approve positive proposals until the Union of South Africa was an accomplished fact. With this preface I will briefly summarise the main conclusions of the Conference in regard, first to Military, and next to Naval Defence.

MILITARY DEFENCE.

After the main Conference at the Foreign Office, a Military Conference took place at the War Office, and resulted in an agreement on the fundamental principles set out in Papers which had been prepared by the General Staff for consideration by the Delegates. The substance of these Papers (which will be included among the Papers to be published) was a recommendation that, without impairing the complete control of the Government of each Dominion over the military forces raised within it, these forces should be standardised, the formation of units, the arrangements for transport, the patterns of weapons, &c., being as far as possible assimilated to those which have recently been worked out for the British Army. Thus, while the Dominion troops would in each case be raised for the defence of the Dominion concerned, it would be made readily practicable in case of need for that Dominion to mobilise and use them for the defence of the Empire as a whole.

The Military Conference then entrusted to a Sub-Conference, consisting of military experts at headquarters and from the various Dominions, and presided over by Sir W. Nicholson, acting for the first time in the capacity of Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the duty of working out the detailed application of these principles.

I may point out here that the creation early this year of an Imperial General Staff, thus brought into active working, is a result of the discussions and resolutions of the Conference of 1907. Complete agreement was reached by the members of the Sub-Conference, and their conclusions were finally approved by the Main Conference and by the Committee of Imperial Defence, which sat for the purpose under the presidency of the Prime Minister. The result is a plan for so organizing the forces of the Crown wherever they are that, while preserving the complete autonomy of each Dominion, should the Dominions desire to assist in the defence of the Empire in a real emergency, their forces could be rapidly combined into one homogeneous Imperial Army.

NAVAL DEFENCE.

Naval defence was discussed at meetings of the Conference held at the Foreign Office on the 3rd, 5th, and 6th August. The Admiralty memorandum, which had been circulated to the Dominion representatives, formed the basis of the preliminary conferences.

The alternative methods which might be adopted by Dominion Governments in co-operating in Imperial Naval Defence was discussed. New Zealand preferred to adhere to her present policy of contribution; Canada and Australia preferred to lay the foundation of fleets of their own. It was recognised that in building up a fleet a number of conditions should be conformed to. The fleet must be of a certain size, in order to offer a permanent career to the officers and men engaged in the service; the *personnel* should be trained and disciplined under regulations similar to those established in the Royal Navy, in order to allow of both interchange and union between the British and the Dominion Services; and with the same object, the standard of vessels and armaments should be uniform.