

XI. BRITISH POLICY IN THE ANTARCTIC.

The question of Antarctic exploration was discussed between representatives of the Governments interested. There are certain areas in these regions to which a British title already exists by virtue of discovery. These areas include—(i) The outlying part of Coats Land—viz., the portion not comprised within the Falkland Islands Dependencies; (ii) Enderby Land; (iii) Kemp Land; (iv) Queen Mary Land; (v) The area which lies to the west of Adélie Land and which on its discovery by the Australian Antarctic Expedition in 1912 was denominated Wilkes Land; (vi) King George V Land; (vii) Oates Land. The representatives of the Governments concerned studied the information available concerning these areas with special reference to their possible utilization for further developing exploration and scientific research in the Antarctic regions.

XII. DEFENCE.

The Conference gave much consideration to the question of defence, and to the methods by which the defence arrangements of each part of the Empire could be most effectively co-ordinated.

The Prime Minister of Great Britain initiated the discussions on the 26th October by a review of the work and organization of the Committee of Imperial Defence, in the course of which he emphasized the purely advisory and consultative character of this body. He also outlined the chief developments which had taken place since the last Conference, notably the creation of the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee and the decision to establish an Imperial Defence College.

After a reference to the progress already made and to the further steps to be taken in the development of the Naval Base at Singapore, Mr. Baldwin mentioned that the pursuance of this policy had been greatly facilitated by the contributions of the Federated Malay States, Hong Kong, and the Straits Settlements.

Mr. Baldwin was followed by the Senior Officer of the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee (Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty) in a survey of the general strategic situation, and by the Secretary of State for India in a summary of the special problems of Indian defence.

The discussions were renewed on the 15th November, when statements were made by the Prime Ministers of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and Newfoundland, by Mr. Havenga for the Union of South Africa, by Mr. O'Higgins for the Irish Free State, and by the Maharaja of Burdwan for India.*

Meetings also took place at the Admiralty, the War Office, and the Air Ministry, at which the situation from the standpoint of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain was presented in greater detail, and other phases of common interest were considered at a meeting held at the offices of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

Much interest attached to the opportunities afforded for observation of the various arms of the service in operation, notably the naval review off Portland, the Army mechanical display at Camberley, and the air demonstrations at Croydon and Cardington. Apart from their interest from the point of view of defence, these displays revealed technical developments in mechanical traction and in aviation which may prove of importance in their application for civilian purposes.

The information thus obtained and the opinions exchanged will, it is believed, prove of much practical value in aiding the several Governments of the Empire in the determination of their policies of defence, and are commended to their most careful consideration.

The conclusions reached by the Imperial Conference on the subject of defence may be summarized as follows:—

1. The resolutions on defence adopted at the last session of the Conference† are reaffirmed.

* Extracts from the speeches made on 26th October and 15th November will be found in Appendix IV.

† For resolutions of the Imperial Conference of 1923 on Defence see A.-6, 1924, p. 10.