

ordinary course the instructions to the Secretary are to invite the following Ministers and officials to attend the meetings: The Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary of State for India, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for Air, the Chiefs of Staff of the three Fighting Services, the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. But other Ministers, officers, officials, or experts of the Home Government, the Dominions, and India, are invited as the occasion offers. This elasticity of organization has proved of the greatest value, and is made use of extensively, particularly in the case of the sub-committees to which questions are referred for detailed examination and report. This is proved by the fact that in the year ended the 31st March, 1926, the committee and its sub-committees were attended by no less than 430 different persons, including nineteen Ministers of the Crown, six representatives of the overseas Empire, 142 Service officers, 157 Civil servants, and forty-eight outside experts.

It will be seen that this elasticity of membership enables the Dominions and India to take advantage of the facilities of this advisory and consultative committee to any extent which they may desire. They can refer particular questions for advice—as they have done up to the most recent times; they can be represented to such degree as they may themselves desire by Ministers, officers, or officials on the main committee or on its sub-committees, as to a limited extent they have done and are doing. They can accept, modify, or reject its advice.

Connection of the Dominions and India with the Committee.

I will now touch briefly on the question of how far the Dominions and India have used the Committee of Imperial Defence. India, let me say at once, has always been closely associated with the committee. The Secretary of State is, and from almost the earliest days has been, one of those regularly summoned to its meetings, and the Military Secretary and other officials of the India Office are also frequently present. One of the Assistant Secretaries of the committee has always been an officer of the Indian Army. Officers of the Indian Army and officials of the Indian Government have been associated in many of its large inquiries into questions affecting the defence of India, in which the Indian and Home Governments are both concerned.

The first instance of the presence of a Dominion representative was in December, 1903, when Sir Frederick Borden, the Canadian Minister of Militia, attended a meeting to discuss various questions connected with the defence of Canada. In 1909 the representatives of the Dominions at the Imperial Conference on Defence attended a meeting. In 1911, during the Imperial Conference, representatives of all the Dominions attended a series of very important meetings, to which I referred in my opening speech.

Among the conclusions reached at these meetings were the following:—

- “(1) That one or more representatives appointed by the respective Governments of the Dominions should be invited to attend meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence when questions of naval and military defence affecting the oversea Dominions are under consideration.
- “(2) The proposal that a Defence Committee should be established in each Dominion is accepted in principle. The constitution of these Defence Committees is a matter for each Dominion to decide.”

Considerable effect was given to both these resolutions before the war.

In 1912 meetings of the committee were attended by Sir Robert Borden (who had succeeded Sir Wilfrid Laurier as Prime Minister) and a number of his colleagues who had come to England for purposes of consultation.

Between that time and the outbreak of war meetings were attended in 1913 by Sir James Allen on behalf of New Zealand, and later in the same year by Mr. (now Sir Thomas) White and Mr. Burrell on behalf of Canada, and in 1914 by Sir Edward (now Lord) Morris, representing Newfoundland, and later by Sir George Perley. Just before the outbreak of war Sir George Perley, a Minister of the Canadian Government without portfolio, had become High Commissioner for Canada, with authority to attend meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

The war, of course, involved considerable changes in our defensive system, and I need only mention that the machinery of the Committee of Imperial Defence, tuned up and intensified, was adapted successively to the purposes of the War Committee, the War Cabinet, and the Imperial War Cabinet.

Since the war the opportunities of personal association of representatives of the Dominions with the Committee of Imperial Defence have not been numerous. Owing, perhaps, to the more frequent meetings of the Imperial Conference, there have been very few, if any, visits from individual Dominion Ministers concerned in defence matters. At the meetings of the Imperial Conference, however, the question of imperial defence has been discussed in the greatest detail, and the material prepared as the basis of those discussions, as well as the technical memoranda on defence prepared for the use of the British Empire Delegation at the Washington Conference, has been organized by the Committee of Imperial Defence. The Imperial Conferences have, indeed, provided an opportunity for a stocktaking of the work of the committee.

Apart from the personal attendance of Ministers, however, the association of the Dominions with the Committee since the war has been considerable. For example, several of the Dominions are represented on its Sub-Committee on Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. During the last year or two one of its sub-committees has been engaged on a review of coast defences under post-war conditions. The late Prime Minister of Australia (Mr. Hughes) invited the committee to advise at the same time on the defences of Australian ports, and other Dominions subsequently invited