

On behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs made comprehensive statements under all these heads. He also kept the Conference informed of the current international situation. Statements as to the views of their respective Governments were made by the Prime Ministers of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, and by the Marquess of Zetland on behalf of the Indian Delegation. General appreciation of all these reviews was expressed. The statements on behalf of the delegations were followed by full and frank discussion, and it was agreed that the exchange of views, especially at the present juncture of international affairs, was of great value to the representatives gathered at the Conference. During the discussions emphasis was laid on the importance of developing the practice of communication and consultation between the respective Governments as a help to the co-ordination of policies.

The Conference recorded the results of its deliberations on the subject of foreign affairs in the following statement:—

“The representatives of the Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations gathered in the Conference, have in the course of their proceedings had an opportunity of exchanging views upon foreign affairs and the international situation as it affects their respective interests and responsibilities.”

While no attempt was made to formulate commitments, which in any event could not be made effective until approved and confirmed by the respective Parliaments, the representatives of the Governments concerned found themselves in close agreement upon a number of general propositions, which they thought it desirable to set out in the present statement.*

Thus they agreed that for each member of the Commonwealth the first objective is the preservation of peace. In their view the settlement of differences that may arise between nations and the adjustment of national needs should be sought by methods of co-operation, joint inquiry, and conciliation. It is in such methods, and not in recourse to the use of force between nation and nation, that the surest guarantee will be found for the improvement of international relations and respect for mutual engagements.

Holding these views and desiring to base their policies upon the aims and ideals of the League of Nations, they found themselves unanimous in declaring that their respective armaments will never be used for purposes of aggression or for any purpose inconsistent with the Covenant of the League of Nations or the Pact of Paris. At the same time, being impressed with the desirability of strengthening the influence of the League by the enlargement of its membership, they united in expressing the view that this object would be facilitated by the separation of the Covenant from the Treaties of Peace. Observing that in respect of certain regions in which a number of States have special interests, regional agreements of friendship and collaboration between individual members of the British Commonwealth and the other States so interested have been entered upon or may be contemplated, they welcomed all such agreements in so far as they can be made to contribute to the cause of peace, and do not conflict with the Covenant of the League of Nations.

They noted with interest the statement made on behalf of the Australian delegation at the opening plenary meeting that Australia would greatly welcome a regional understanding and pact of non-aggression by the countries of the Pacific, and would be prepared to collaborate to that end with all the peoples of the Pacific region in a spirit of understanding and sympathy. They agreed that if such an arrangement could be made it would be a desirable contribution to the cause of peace and to the continued maintenance of friendly relations in the Pacific, and that it should be the subject of further consultation between Governments.

They all desired earnestly to see as wide a measure of disarmament as could be obtained. At the same time they were agreed that the several Governments of which they are the representatives are bound to adopt such measures of defence as they may deem essential for their security, as well as for the fulfilment of such international obligations as they may respectively have assumed.

* It was understood and agreed that nothing in this statement should be held to diminish the right of His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, and the Government of India to advocate and support their statements of policy as submitted to the Assembly of the League of Nations in September, 1936.