

whatever authority is taken away from separate nations and their power cut down for the greater good of all, nothing will be done well or for long without the full force which will come from British and Americans working together united in their purpose. If we are together, anything is possible. In division, all will go down.

Parliamentary Committee

The Parliamentary correspondent of *The Times*, London, reported on September 8 that in his speech on receiving an honorary degree of Harvard University the Prime Minister mentioned that some months ago he "persuaded the British Cabinet to set up a Committee of Ministers to study and report upon basic English." The chairman of this Ministerial committee is Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, himself a distinguished linguist.

Other Ministers on the committee include Mr. R. A. Butler, President of the Board of Education; Mr. Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies; and Mr. Brendan Bracken, Minister of Information.

Since its appointment the committee has been collecting material and it will shortly hold its first meeting. While its procedure has not yet been decided, it is expected that the committee will be prepared to hear evidence from persons with special experience of the subject.

The committee's terms of reference are not known, but from the context of the Harvard speech the purpose would appear to be to inquire into the possibilities of extending the use of English as an international language. A similar idea was under consideration by the Government of that day just before the war began. Mr. Chamberlain, who was then Prime Minister, appointed in 1939 a committee of the Economic Advisory Council to examine methods of teaching simplified English to those who do not speak our language. This committee comprised a number of eminent educationists, and its chairman was Lord Ponsonby. The war broke out a month later, and the committee never met.

A main reason for the appointment of the former committee was that its findings might be of special value to the British Council in its work of spreading a knowledge of English in foreign countries. This work of the British Council has been continued and extended—particularly in South American countries—and it now includes the teaching of English to members of the allied services and civilian refugees in this country. The greater use of English as an auxiliary language was also envisaged in the recent recommendation of the Ministers of Education of the allied countries in Europe that English or French should be introduced into the higher forms of the elementary schools of their countries as a compulsory subject. Simplified English may also prove of great value in British colonial territories—with their population of more than 50,000,000—in developing the policy recently announced by Mr. Stanley for stimulating educational advance in preparation for responsible government. Methods of evolving a new technique of mass education in these territories to reduce illiteracy are now being investigated by the Colonial Office.

Progress in many Countries

Basic English, to which the new inquiry appears specially to relate, is a "pocket English" with a vocabulary of 850 words. Mr. Churchill mentioned that the first work on "basic"—otherwise British-American - Scientific - International - Commercial—English was written by Mr. Ivor Richards, now of Harvard University, and Mr. C. K. Ogden, of the Orthological Institute at Cambridge. It has made headway in many countries as a quick method of giving some facility of expression in English. There was recently published in this country a new translation of the New Testament into the 850 words of basic English, supplemented by only 150 additional words.