

sitting of the Council and the Assembly at Geneva, placed on record its emphatic approval of the action that had been taken by, and the support that had been given to, the representatives of the British Empire on the latter occasion. There was full accord that the League should be given the unabated support of all the British members of the League as a valuable instrument of international peace, and as the sole available organ for the harmonious regulation of many international affairs.

This Conference is a Conference of representatives of the several Governments of the Empire; its views and conclusions on foreign policy, as recorded above, are necessarily subject to the action of the Governments and Parliaments of the various portions of the Empire, and it trusts that the results of its deliberations will meet with their approval.

#### IX. NEGOTIATION, SIGNATURE, AND RATIFICATION OF TREATIES.

The principles governing the relations of the various parts of the Empire in connection with the negotiation, signature, and ratification of treaties seemed to the Conference to be of the greatest importance. Accordingly it was arranged that the subject should be fully examined by a committee, of which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was Chairman. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Prime Ministers of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and Newfoundland, the Minister of External Affairs of the Irish Free State, and the Secretary of State for India as head of the Indian Delegation, served on this committee. With the assistance of the Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, Sir C. J. B. Hurst, K.C.B., K.C., the following resolution was drawn up and agreed to:—

“The Conference recommends for the acceptance of the Governments of the Empire represented that the following procedure should be observed in the negotiation, signature, and ratification of international agreements.

“The word ‘treaty’ is used in the sense of an agreement which, in accordance with the normal practice of diplomacy, would take the form of a treaty between heads of States, signed by plenipotentiaries provided with full powers issued by the heads of the States, and authorizing the holders to conclude a treaty.

#### “I.

“1. *Negotiation.*—(a.) It is desirable that no treaty should be negotiated by any of the Governments of the Empire without due consideration of its possible effect on other parts of the Empire, or, if circumstances so demand, on the Empire as a whole.

“(b.) Before negotiations are opened with the intention of concluding a treaty, steps should be taken to ensure that any of the other Governments of the Empire likely to be interested are informed, so that if any such Government considers that its interests would be affected it may have an opportunity of expressing its views, or, when its interests are intimately involved, of participating in the negotiations.

“(c.) In all cases where more than one of the Governments of the Empire participates in the negotiations there should be the fullest possible exchange of views between those Governments before and during the negotiations. In the case of treaties negotiated at international conferences, where there is a British Empire delegation, on which, in accordance with the now established practice, the Dominions and India are separately represented, such representation should also be utilized to attain this object.

“(d.) Steps should be taken to ensure that those Governments of the Empire whose representatives are not participating in the negotiations should, during their progress, be kept informed in regard to any points arising in which they may be interested.

“2. *Signature.*—(a.) Bilateral treaties imposing obligations on one part of the Empire only should be signed by a representative of the Government of that part. The full power issued to such representative should indicate the part of the Empire in respect of which the obligations are to be undertaken, and the preamble and text of the treaty should be so worded as to make its scope clear.