

IV. MESSAGE TO JAPAN.

It was also resolved at the first meeting of the Conference to send the following message of sympathy to Japan :—

“The Prime Ministers and representatives of Great Britain, the British Dominions, and India assembled at the Imperial Conference desire at their opening session to send to their old and faithful ally, Japan, an expression of their profound sympathy in the terrible calamity by which she has been assailed ; their admiration of the patriotic energy and unconquerable spirit with which the Japanese nation have met the blow ; and their confident expectation that Japan will rapidly recover from a shock that might have overwhelmed any less courageous people, and will pursue, undismayed, the great part that she is destined to fill in the social and economic progress of the world.”

In reply to this message a note was received from the Japanese Ambassador in London. This note, which was read aloud by the Prime Minister of Great Britain at the meeting on 11th October, was as follows :—

“Under instructions from the Japanese Premier, I have the honour to request Your Lordship to convey to the Right Honourable Stanley Baldwin, Prime Minister, and his eminent colleagues on the Imperial Conference, the Japanese Premier’s sincere thanks for the touching message of sympathy in the calamity which has befallen Japan. Count Yamamoto desires to assure Mr. Baldwin that the manifestation of cordial sentiment, coming as it did so promptly from the representative statesmen of the British Empire, the old and never-failing ally of Japan, has deeply moved the Japanese nation in their great distress, and will give them encouragement and reassurance in taking up the tremendous task of reconstruction.—I have, &c., HAYASHI.”

V. DEATH OF MR. BONAR LAW.

The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, Prime Minister of Great Britain from 24th October, 1922, to 21st May, 1923, died on 31st October. One of his first acts on assuming office had been to have a message of invitation sent to the Dominions and India, which resulted in the calling of the Imperial Conference and of the Imperial Economic Conference this year.

The following resolution was passed by the Conference at its meeting on the afternoon of 31st October :—

“The members of the Imperial Conference have learnt with the most profound regret of the death of the Right Hon. Andrew Bonar Law, at whose invitation, issued on his assuming office last year, the present Conference is now meeting. They desire to express to the members of the late Prime Minister’s family their deep sympathy in the irreparable loss which they and the Empire have sustained by his death.”

VI. PUBLICITY.

The Conference gave special attention to the question of publicity for its proceedings. There was general agreement that at meetings of this nature, where questions of high policy and of the greatest consequence to all parts of the British Commonwealth are surveyed and dealt with, it was of the first importance that the representatives present should feel able to speak among themselves with the utmost freedom and in a spirit of complete confidence. Hence it was considered essential that nothing should be published without the approval of the Conference as a whole and under its directions. At the same time it was felt that the proceedings of the Conference would cause wide interest among the peoples of the countries represented, and consequently that, as opportunity offered, information regarding its deliberations should be made public.

It was decided to place the general arrangements as to publicity in charge of a British Minister, and, at the unanimous wish of the Conference, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Mr. J. C. C. Davidson, C.H., C.B., M.P., was asked to be present at the meetings and to undertake the necessary work.

This procedure, though of an experimental character, turned out to be of much value, and at the conclusion of the meetings the Conference expressed to Mr. Davidson its great indebtedness for his valuable help.