

III. MESSAGE TO THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN.

As the first official act of the Conference a message of greeting to Their Majesties the King and Queen was moved by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, seconded by the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, and passed unanimously by the Conference.

The message was in the following terms :—

“ The Prime Ministers and other representatives of the Governments of the British Commonwealth assembled in Conference, at their first meeting and as their first official act, desire to present their respectful duty to the King. They join in thankfulness for Your Majesty’s restoration to health, and earnestly hope that Your Majesty and Her Majesty the Queen may be spared for many years to inspire the feelings of love and affection which unite all the peoples of the British Commonwealth of Nations under the Crown.”

The following gracious reply, signed by His Majesty, was received during the meeting and was read to the Conference by the Chairman :—

“ Please convey to the Prime Ministers and other representatives of the Governments of the British Commonwealth the sincere thanks of the Queen and myself for the message of loyalty and affection which they have addressed to us as the first official act of the Imperial Conference, and I am especially touched by its kind allusions to my restoration to health.

“ Realizing the all-important questions which will be considered, I shall follow with close attention the progress of your deliberations.

“ GEORGE, R.I.”

IV. LOSS OF AIRSHIP R 101.

A meeting of heads of delegations, held on the 6th October, passed the following resolution of sympathy in the loss of airship R 101, which was destroyed near Beauvais, in France, in the initial stage of a journey to India on the 5th October, 1930, with the loss of forty-eight lives, including that of Lord Thomson, the Secretary of State for Air in the United Kingdom :—

“ We, the members of the Imperial Conference, desire to place on record our great sorrow at the disaster to airship R 101 and the loss of so many brave and valuable lives. On behalf of all parts of the British Commonwealth we pay homage to the gallant men who have given their lives as pioneers in the cause of human progress, and we wish to express our heartfelt grief for their bereaved families.

“ To our Chairman, personally, we offer our deep sympathy at the loss of a distinguished colleague and well-loved friend.”

V. PUBLICITY.

It was agreed that the procedure and arrangements for publicity should follow those adopted at previous Conferences.

The Right Hon. J. H. Thomas, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, was asked to undertake responsibility for the general supervision of the publicity arrangements. He was assisted in this work by Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, M.P., and by Mr. D. Caird, formerly Director of Information, Dominions Office, who had acted in a similar capacity at previous Conferences. In order to enable contact to be maintained with the current work of the various committees and sub-committees of the Conference, further assistance was given by Mr. C. Beckett Platt, Publicity Officer, Dominions Office, Mr. G. F. Steward, News Department, Foreign Office, and Mr. A. Ryan, Publicity Officer, Empire Marketing Board.

VI. INTER-IMPERIAL RELATIONS.

It was found convenient, after preliminary discussion by the heads of delegations on the various points involved, to refer many of the questions on the agenda affecting inter-Imperial relations to a committee under the chairmanship of the Right Honourable Lord Sankey, G.B.E., Lord Chancellor. This committee did most valuable work in exploring the various issues, and the following section is based largely on its work. Lord Sankey’s committee was in turn aided by special sub-committees that were set up to deal with particular aspects of the questions involved, and by a drafting sub-committee under the chairmanship of Sir Robert Garran, K.C.M.G., Solicitor-General, Commonwealth of Australia.