The War Cabinet was in practically continuous session. The members remained in London. They denied themselves pleasant, leisurely week-ends in the country. Sometimes meetings were held twice daily; always they were held once, except on Sunday. Lord Curzon said on June 19, 1918, that in four hundred and seventy-four days there had been five hundred and fifty-five meetings; that two rules were steadily kept in view, one to summon to the Cabinet the ministers, the generals, admirals and other experts who could give desired information and advice, the other to postpone nothing until to-morrow which could be decided to-day. The old Cabinet, pressed for time, divided by various views, unable to bring collected and prolonged attention to a problem, was likely to find refuge in delay. The War Cabinet, knowing the mischief of delay, was true to the policy of prompt decision. So fully had they carried it out, Lord Curzon added, that sometimes on Saturday there was no need to meet. All the business of the week had been despatched. He added, with perhaps a touch of humour, that the Irish question could not be settled in this summary way. But what could be settled was settled promptly by the War Cabinet. If departments differed the Cabinet at once decided the issue.

IV. THE SUMMONING OF THE IMPERIAL WAR CABINET

Britain's part in the war was not, however, the affair only of Great Britain. On this vast problem the whole British Empire was united. The Empire justly prides itself on the diversity of its interests and the variety of its governments. There are few questions in relation to which a common policy for the whole is even desirable. In war, however, unity of direction is the condition of success. Four great nations, Britain, the United States, France and Italy found, in the end, that to defeat Germany they must be united under a single lead. The armed forces of the British Empire were, from the first, under one supreme command and a War Cabinet which directed the efforts of Great Britain alone would not meet the realities of the war. On assuming office, Mr. Lloyd George had this in mind. He became Prime Minister on December 7, 1916. A week later, on December 14, he issued a call to the whole British Empire, including India, to send representatives to London for a conference on the war.
Canada and the Imperial War Cabinet

He did more, however, than summon this Imperial War Conference. War brings prompt and sometimes high-handed decisions. The War Cabinet had just been formed in England. Mr. Lloyd George did not ask the other Prime Ministers whether they would sit in a War Cabinet. He simply cabled to the Governments concerned: "Your Prime Minister will be a member of the War Cabinet." The war had reached perhaps its most critical point. The year 1917 brought a terrible crisis and its early days were full of throning hopes, anxieties and fears. The United States had not yet entered the war. Russia was on the verge of collapse. The allies were preparing for the mighty effort which resulted in the stupendous sacrifices and the apparently meagre gains of that year. In such circumstances for Canada to have disregarded the call to united counsel and action would have been criminal. Sir Robert Borden and the Prime Ministers of other Dominions, with the exception of Mr. Hughes, detained in Australia by an election, hastened to London and there on March 20, 1917, was brought into actual being the Imperial War Cabinet.

On March 21, the day after the first meeting, The Times had a glowing article: "Imperial Rome, or Modern Germany for the matter of that, would have stage-managed such an event very differently. There would have been triumphant processions and elaborate banquets to mark it . . . The new world is to redress the balance of the old. . . . The great European problems which fall to be settled by the verdict of war . . . are henceforth problems for Canada and New Zealand and the other Dominions as well as Great Britain. . . . The War Cabinet which is now meeting is an executive cabinet for the Empire [sic]. It is invested with full responsibility for the prosecution of the war, including questions of Foreign Policy, of the provisioning of troops and munitions and of war finance. It will settle Imperial policy as to the time of peace." Mr. Lloyd George declared that the meeting of this "Imperial War Cabinet" marked "the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the Empire." On one thing every one concerned laid special emphasis. The old colonial relation between Great Britain and the other free states of the Empire was definitely ended. The Prime Minister of the parent state, of course, took precedence of all others. He was, however, only primus inter pares. Next to him ranked the Prime Minister of Canada, the most populous self-governing state in the Empire after Great Britain. When the Prime Minister of Great Britain was absent the Prime Minister of Canada was to preside. Mr.