

Abstract

This thesis is focused on the analysis of constitutional relations between the mother country and its Dominions. The constitutional problems along with foreign and economic policy formed one of the most significant and interesting chapters in British imperial history. The thesis analysed the formation of the first Dominions, the question of the constitutional position of the Dominions, a gradual change of the then used imperial terminology (the term British Empire vs. the term Commonwealth), and a working of system of Colonial (Imperial) Conferences in connection with the significance of the second influential imperial institution – the Imperial Defence Committee. The thesis deals with establishment of the Imperial War Cabinet, and organising the Imperial War Conference. A constitutional resolution was adopted that once and for all rejected the vision of the federalisation of the Empire and launched post-war discussions on the modification of constitutional relations between individual autonomous countries of the Commonwealth, which culminated during the Imperial Conference of 1921. The circumstances and discussions that accompanied the Chanak Incident, the Lausanne Conference, the British-Japanese alliance, the Imperial Conference of 1923, the Geneva Protocol and the Locarno Pact, all were reflected to a large extent in a clearer definition of the constitutional status of the Dominions. A new phase of constitutional relations between the Dominions and their mother countries began with the Imperial Conference of 1926. During the conference, a crucial constitutional statement (known also as the Balfour Declaration) defining the status of the dominions within the Empire was adopted. The whole procedure was completed by the issuance of the Statute of Westminster which upheld constitutional equality between the Dominions and their mother country.