

through my mind, though I have not endeavoured to work it out in detail, that as this Conference was one of governments with governments its Secretariat is intended to represent all those governments. It should therefore be presided over, being in this country, by the Prime Minister of Great Britain. I think it was again my friend on the left who put that.

Second Day.
17 April 1907.

PROPOSED
IMPERIAL
COUNCIL.
(Mr. Deakin.)

Dr. JAMESON : The Conference is presided over by the Prime Minister, but the Prime Minister would not preside over the Secretariat.

Mr. DEAKIN : He must, according to my thinking, to this extent, because the Secretariat is in this country and he is the Prime Minister of this country and practically the only Prime Minister always in this country. Sir Wilfrid Laurier takes the practical point, that there must be a head, and that with us means a responsible Minister, to whom this Secretariat should look. Even if it were constituted on the plan which Dr. Jameson suggested, there must still be some person to whom constant reference may be made, and whose yes or no in the conduct of affairs is final. There must be executive authority. If an office of that kind were established, the head of it could only be the Prime Minister of Great Britain. He is the only Prime Minister available for that purpose. It would be an office of all the Governments, so to speak, but as an office under the active executive direction, so far as that is needed, of the Prime Minister himself.

Dr. JAMESON : Under him as representing all the others. You can put it that way.

Mr. DEAKIN : That is matter of discussion. I am endeavouring to reply to Sir Wilfrid Laurier's inquiry, at the same time appropriating my friend's arguments and suggestions.

Dr. JAMESON : The Prime Minister, as representing all the Prime Ministers.

Mr. DEAKIN : He represents all the Prime Ministers, but he primarily represents his own Parliament, and the Parliament of this country would require to be satisfied that their Prime Minister's authority, so far as it went, was actual and not nominal. There must be some authority over the Secretariat, and the proper authority appears to me to be the Prime Minister of England. I admit, with Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that the tasks of Prime Ministers, even in outlying countries, are great. Sir Joseph Ward, Dr. Jameson, and no doubt all round this table, would bear almost universal testimony that none of us having experience of that office find the day long enough, or our capacities for work equal to what we wish. But that is so in all communities, and is only proportionately greater in the greatest of communities. Every Prime Minister in every part of this Empire knows perfectly well that he or his successor must be prepared, as the years pass by, to take more and more responsibility. It becomes a matter of selection, putting some responsibilities aside, and adopting others in their stead. The mere fact that a proposal means more work for an already over-burdened man, if that were the final argument, would cripple our political development altogether. Lord Elgin said with perfect accuracy that there would be, and in fact there are, a great many communications passing between the self-governing colonies and any central office in London. When I said there would be only a small number I meant a small number really calling for the personal attention of the Prime Minister himself. As you, Lord Elgin, are aware, a great number of our despatches are requests for information or replies to requests for