

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : The matter of cost can easily be decided. The question is, whether such a body as is contemplated would really be conducive to efficiency for the carrying out of the objects we have in mind.

Second Day.
17 April 1907.

PROPOSED
IMPERIAL
COUNCIL

Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL : Supposing a secretariat were established you would utilise that as a machine for inter-colonial communications passing between one colony and another in which the Imperial Government were not directly involved?

Mr. DEAKIN : Yes.

Dr. JAMESON : And also where the Imperial Government is involved.

Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL : Quite so; but that would be one of the functions of such body.

Mr. DEAKIN : Yes, a sort of *nexus*.

Mr. F. R. MOOR : I have listened very patiently this morning, and it seems to me that there is a considerable amount of dissatisfaction as regards the want of continuity of the interest which obtains with respect to these Conferences every four years. It is exceedingly interesting to have listened to all the tentative proposals made here this morning, and I think we should, perhaps, get a better purview of the whole position if Lord Elgin would give us his idea of the machinery that he would suggest. We would then get a general view of the whole position, and I think we could come to a conclusion more intelligently after having all the proposals laid before us.

Dr. JAMESON : I was going to suggest the same thing. Some of us have adumbrated a scheme of our own which certainly has not met with universal approval all round. You, my Lord, have not a scheme yourself, but you have practically indicated to us that His Majesty's Government is in favour of doing something to bring about continuity and making a link between the Conferences. We are not talking about a link between the Imperial Government and the Governments of the self-governing colonies, but a link between the Conferences. You have indicated that the Imperial Government would be inclined to do that, and we have indicated a link—at least Mr. Deakin, Sir Joseph Ward, and I have—by means of the secretariat which we have ventured to sketch out. Certainly that has not met with approval from Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and only a qualified approval from General Botha. If you will help us with some idea of how the Colonial Office will be able to link up the Conferences, we will be able to get on further.

CHAIRMAN : I said at the beginning that I supposed after the discussion, following the practice of other Conferences, some attempt would be made to arrive at a resolution, and, therefore, I thought it my duty to draft—purely for consideration, of course—a resolution which I am prepared to read. I may say that we base this on a resolution of the last Conference with the necessary alterations. This is the draft which has been prepared :
“ That it will be to the advantage of the Empire if (Imperial) Conferences
“ are held every four (or five) years at which questions of common interest
“ affecting the relations of the Mother Country and His Majesty's Dominions
“ over the seas may be discussed and considered as between the Government
“ of the United Kingdom and the Prime Ministers and Governments of the