

we commit ourselves that the Chairman must be any member of the British Government, and cannot be the senior Prime Minister.

CHAIRMAN : I do not wish to put that absolutely, but at the same time I must repeat my conviction that a member of the British Government would be the most convenient man to choose.

Third Day.
18 April 1907.

FUTURE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
CONFERENCE.
(Mr. Deakin.)

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : For my part, I must say that, according to the fitness of things, and according to what is accepted now, that this is a Conference between Government and Governments; the Chairman should be a member of the British Government.

CHAIRMAN : I suppose this discussion will be sufficient for your purpose, Mr. Deakin?

Mr. DEAKIN : It is sufficient.

CHAIRMAN : Have we finished with the third sentence?

Mr. DEAKIN : Would you mind taking that now?

CHAIRMAN : "The Secretary of State for the Colonies will be an *ex officio* member of the Conference, and will take the chair in the absence of the President, and will arrange for such Imperial Conferences after communication with the Prime Ministers of the respective Colonies."

Mr. DEAKIN : "Arrange" means arrange as to precise date, arrange as to agenda, arrange as to anything that may be necessary.

CHAIRMAN : Yes.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Upon that, I assume, Lord Elgin, that in arranging the agenda a similar procedure to that followed on this occasion would be carried out?

CHAIRMAN : Yes, I think so, unless the Conference suggest anything else.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : That is all. I want to see the present method followed, because we may have some suggestions to send for the agenda.

CHAIRMAN : Certainly. "In case of any emergency arising upon which a special Imperial Conference may have been deemed necessary, the next ordinary Conference to be held not sooner than three years thereafter."

Mr. DEAKIN : Is this necessary at all? You have fixed the period of meeting as every four years.

CHAIRMAN : It is in the old resolution.

Mr. DEAKIN : I believe it is, but, having fixed a definite period of four years, which, of course, is subject to some variation if necessity arises, and supposing a special Conference to be convened, is it not for that Con-