

Third Day.
18 April 1907.

FUTURE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
CONFERENCE.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : What I say is, supposing the Secretary of State for the Colonies (I am speaking in quite an impersonal sense) and the Prime Minister of England after we adjourn decide amongst themselves who was to be the Secretary, who was to compose the secretarial staff, what office he is to be in, that is a matter for the control of the Imperial Government. I leave it an open question; I do not say it should be deferred because the secretarial staff is essential to connect these Conferences after we adjourn; but I wish to leave it an open question so that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Colonies may, as they think proper, select the staff for the purpose of carrying on the business; in other words, I think it is all important in a matter of the kind that there should be unanimity upon a decision of this character and if we could get it at present I think that it is a desirable thing to do.

Dr. JAMESON : Lord Elgin, I quite agree with what Sir Joseph Ward has said that this sentence ought to be left out : “under the direction of the Secretary of State for the Colonies,” not with the purpose of leaving it an open question how the secretariat is to be formed, but with a view to forming the secretariat on a perfectly different basis. I am in absolute sympathy with what Mr. Deakin has said on this subject. I think he used the words : “I look upon this secretariat as machinery really to make the Conference “itself more efficient besides the linking up between the two Conferences,” and Mr. Deakin said he felt that if it was under the Colonial Office, perhaps they would not get those preparations for the Conferences done in such a sympathetic manner. I think he meant really in an “informed” rather more than in a sympathetic manner; “informed” would be the better word to be used. In the country we come from, I think my colleagues will bear me out, that we have unfortunately been under the eye of the public for some years and what we find is—I am not talking now really of Government Departments, but of the public—that the difference between the opinion of the man who goes out to a Colony on Colonial matters after he has had the local colour and lived amongst them, and the opinion—and the acts, for that matter—of the man who has been at home here and never visited the Colonies, is enormous; and, therefore, in the preparation of the material for the discussion at these Conferences we think we want somebody who is conversant with the Colony and with the affairs of the Colony, and that is the reason for our original proposal that the secretariat should be composed of people at all events approved, if not appointed, by the several Colonies and, of course, by the United Kingdom. Of course, whoever was appointed by the United Kingdom would only, as in the Conference itself, take the position of the Chairman, if wanted, or the local management of it, but what we feel is that that secretarial staff should consist of people conversant with our affairs, appointed by the Colonies and paid for by the Colonies themselves so that they feel practically it is their own official at work at home. So that I would support what Sir Joseph Ward says, that after the words “secretarial staff charged” the words “under the direction of the Secretary of State for the Colonies” should be left out. Then it would read “charged with the duty of obtaining information for the use of the Conference.” Then I hope we would go into the constitution of that secretarial staff on the lines I have sketched out.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : Do I understand you to mean that the secretarial Staff or secretariat should not be under direct ministerial responsibility here?

Dr. JAMESON : It should be, as Mr. Deakin suggested, under the Prime Minister. He, being *ex officio* the President of the Conference, would