

CHAIRMAN : No, chosen by each Government. It only meant it was not necessarily chosen under the restrictions of the Conference.

Fourth Day.
20 April 1907.

FUTURE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
CONFERENCE.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : I am quite satisfied with the Resolution as it is. If I understand Mr. Deakin aright, what he had in his mind was that the State Governments of Australia or the Provincial Governments of Canada might have the power to come within the scope of this Resolution. For my part I, with all due respect, differ altogether from this. I think we should provide here for the Governments which are here represented. There may be differences in Canada or in Australia between the Federal Governments and the State Governments. I do not think this ought to be encouraged at all; on the contrary, for my part, I believe in one respect our constitution is better than that of Australia, in that the power is in the central Government and is not in the State as with theirs. Even in the best and most satisfied countries, like Canada at present, we may have differences of opinion between the Federal and State Governments. There is one at present between us and the Government of British Columbia, and Lord Elgin has authorised the Government of British Columbia to come here as to some matter which has been in issue between them and us, that is to say, between British Columbia and Canada. This will always be done whenever a Province or State appeals to the Imperial Government here. They are always sure to have a hearing, but I would, for my part, deprecate the introduction of anything which is not here strictly relevant to, and confined to, the relation between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Governments here represented.

Mr. DEAKIN : Am I to understand, Sir Wilfrid, that education is a wholly Provincial question in Canada, or is it also a national question?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : Purely a Provincial question.

Mr. DEAKIN : Exactly. A conference may be desired in Great Britain, as there is, I understand, a meeting relating to education shortly to be held here to which representative men from the different Provinces of Canada probably, and certainly from the different States of Australia, are coming. Now if it were desired that a conference of that kind should be held, would it not be well that it should be related, although in a different way, to this branch of the Colonial Office, which is to undertake the care of the matters relating to the self-governing Colonies? I feel the force of your observation so far as it relates to a conference, if one could imagine it, at which any difference between the National Government of Canada and its Provinces were to be brought forward. I can hardly imagine such a conference, and do not see a necessity for thinking it in advance. What was in my mind was the possibility of conferences in regard, say, to education, or to methods of administration of criminal justice, or hygiene, which are partly State and partly Federal, and which can come under both, or which were held solely between our States and your Provinces, or some of them and other local bodies. If a conference were held in regard to any of those subjects, should it or should it not be associated with this branch of the Colonial Office which has to deal with the affairs of the self-governing Colonies, and therefore properly mentioned here, or should it be looked upon as something quite apart and not in relation to this part of the Colonial Office?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : I should conceive it as a conference quite apart. For my part I do not see the necessity at all for this last paragraph.