

Fourteenth Day.

9 May 1907.

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IMPERIAL
SURTAX ON
FOREIGN
IMPORTS.

Dr. JAMESON : I hope you have your scheme now. Mr. Deakin is now going to suggest a way to you to get the money. I hope it was not a mere general statement. We expect to get something more on the lines suggested by Sir Joseph Ward—subsidies to freights on tramp steamers, and so on. This is merely a suggestion from Mr. Deakin—not fixing himself to 1 per cent. or to 10 per cent. or a decimal percentage at all, but a suggestion by which the fighting forces might be provided.

I am really quite in accord with the general principle; but it is possible, if Sir Joseph Ward's suggestion is adopted by the Government, and that half a million is going to be put up for this purpose by the Government, and we all round the table put our proportion, it might be unnecessary to pass this, and I daresay Mr. Deakin would not then put it to the vote at all.

Mr. F. R. MOOR : Lord Elgin and gentlemen, we have been considerably edified by the sympathy that has been extended to us by the Imperial Government, and the promise of what we may expect in the furtherance of our Imperial ideas. But I think it would be greatly to our advantage in bringing about something in the shape of some fruit as regards this Conference, if the Imperial Government would be a little more candid and let us know, in some practical way, the steps they would take to bring about the object we all have in view. I am loth to vote against a proposition of this sort, which has at any rate a practical ring about it with respect to providing a common fund; but when the Government meets us and tells us they have a great deal of sympathy for what we are trying to do, and do not tell us they have anything behind which they may suggest before we break up. I think it would be in the interest of all if they would give us some indication, in a practical way, of what they do propose or would be prepared to consider. We have tried in various ways, but we have been met by refusal, certainly, again I repeat, in a very sympathetic way. But that does not help us. We are here for business and to promote our common interests, and we do want something tangible, if possible, to take back to our Colonies. I do hope before this resolution is put that Mr. Lloyd George will indicate some way.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : What have you proposed, except something that would involve a change in our fiscal system? What practical proposals have you made that we have refused?

Mr. F. R. MOOR : I am not arguing that point, but we have brought forward proposals that have not been acceptable to the Home Government, and the Government have, at the same time, told us they are very kindly disposed towards us, and that in some way they would be only too glad to meet us if it fell in with the views of the Imperial Government. Will the Imperial Government tell us how, in some practical way, we can decide on some common resolution?

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE : I thought we had done so.

Sir ROBERT BOND : Lord Elgin, and gentlemen, I am sorry I cannot support the resolution proposed by Mr. Deakin. The position of the Colony I represent in respect to imports and exports is entirely different from that of any other Colony in the Empire. For instance, our exports to the United Kingdom only amounted to 13 per cent. of our total; whereas those of Cape Colony amount to 95 per cent., New Zealand 78, Australia 70, Natal 52, British Guiana 52, and Canada 52. Our principal trade is with foreign countries. About 70 per cent. of our exports go to the Mediterranean, and to South America. I might say, further, that our average tariff taxation