

of an idea what the money is to go to but simply saying, "We are to pool it, " and until we can find something to spend it on, let it roll up"—if that is a scheme for a great commercial Empire, I think it is a scheme *pour rire*, if I may say so. It is not as if there was a definite plan, which is exactly what Mr. Asquith has asked for and very properly asked for. He said he was prepared to recommend the Treasury to find money. I go beyond that and say I am perfectly willing for my part, after consultation with the Chairman and my colleagues, to subscribe to the suggestion made by Sir Joseph Ward, and I go further than that and say we shall be in favour of some systematic consultation between the representatives of the Empire as to the best means for promoting the objects you have in view. We must have a plan before we spend money. We are spending enormous sums of money in the Empire now, and we really want to know upon what we are going to spend these further sums. We must not, first of all, resolve to spend, and then go fishing for a scheme somewhere from here to Australia. Let us, first of all, find our plan. I would not mind altering Mr. Deakin's resolution in some way just to show our *bona fides*.

Mr. DEAKIN: You are now saying more than you did before.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: Really, it was very difficult in language that would pass the chair to express my view of this 4,500,000*l.* against the 600,000*l.*

Mr. DEAKIN: It was, if I may say so, because you could not have listened to my proposal. I did not dwell on the 4,500,000*l.* I said over and over again that we can substitute anything—half per cent. or anything else. I was insisted from the first that the amount named was adopted as a mere convenience.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: It is the very thing we have to dwell upon.

Mr. DEAKIN: Certainly, when it is actually proposed, but at this stage it is a proper thing to notice and pass by, until the principle has been settled, and detail is taken in hand.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: Imperial defence is costing us something like 60,000,000*l.* at the present moment.

Mr. DEAKIN: In moving this motion, I said over and over again: "As regards this particular amount, I have taken it because I find it suggested in a scheme submitted by Sir George Sydenham Clarke." I said expressly I do not attach any special importance to that particular proportion. You are perfectly justified in saying all you did, to the effect that this particular amount will not do, and thus dismissing it; I am not in any way concerned because that is not the cardinal point.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: The cardinal point is not to raise the revenue first and find a plan afterwards.

Mr. DEAKIN: That is quite another issue; you are giving us help now. You are beginning to meet my proposal. Now you state you are prepared to accept a regular and systematic discussion of business proposals.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: Systematic consultation—stronger still.

Mr. DEAKIN: In saying that, you are coming to a positive proposal, which is just what I want. You may tear my resolution to rags and do what you please with its proportions and details if you accept the principle of united action in some definite shape.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: I would suggest the following resolution: "This Conference recommends that in order to develop trade, commerce,

Fourteenth Day.
9 May 1907.

IMPERIAL
SURTAX ON
FOREIGN
IMPORTS.

(Mr.
Lloyd George.)