

Fourteenth Day.
9 May 1907.

IMPERIAL
SURTAX ON
FOREIGN
IMPORTS.
(Mr. Deakin.)

of their portions of this fund as they are now. These portions would be earmarked as the total fund would be earmarked. No one else could poach upon it. But they would have the impulse of a common Imperial movement and the control individually of a collective Imperial fund, if such can be raised, and then the responsibility first of sending their representatives to consider business propositions in a business-like way, and then of adopting, rejecting, or amending these propositions. What is there unfair or unconstitutional in that? May I once more say that the whole criticism of the President of the Board of Trade assumes the most unbusiness-like propositions to be considered in the most unbusiness-like way, and voted for by the several legislatures affected to their own undoing and for their own loss?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Lord Elgin and gentlemen, this proposition to me is not new at all. It is quite familiar. It is the old Hofmeyr proposal with a new suit of clothes on, and the modification which has been introduced by Mr. Deakin does not alter at all the fact that this proposition has been now for some 15 years before the British Empire and has not commended itself, so far as I know, to any one of the component parts of it.

If I understand the meaning of this resolution aright, it would simply mean this—Mr. Deakin will correct me if I am wrong—and this seems to be the logical consequence of it, that it would imply that the British Government would have to pay a duty of 1 per cent. upon their imports, and that it would be left to the other legislatures to supply the same amount if they please.

Mr. DEAKIN: No, the intention is that any member, the United Kingdom, or any other, could make an equivalent contribution.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Exactly, but what is to determine the equivalent contribution if it be not the contribution of the United Kingdom?

Mr. DEAKIN: A calculation of 1 per cent. upon the foreign trade of each.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Exactly, but it is not a calculation. This resolution is: "This Conference recommends that in order to provide funds "for developing trade, commerce, the means of communication, and those of "transport within the Empire, a duty of 1 per cent. upon all foreign imports "shall be levied or an equivalent contribution made by each of its Legisla- "tures. After consultation between their representatives in Conference the "common fund shall be devoted to co-operative projects approved by the "Legislatures affected with the general purpose of fostering the industrial "forces of the Empire so as to promote its growth and unity." What is to determine this equivalent to be contributed by the different Legislatures, if it be not implied by the contribution of the 1 per cent. levied by the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom would levy 1 per cent. upon its imports which would produce so many millions—10,000,000£., 12,000,000£., or 20,000,000£.—and then the Legislatures would contribute an equivalent to that. That seems to me a very serious objection to this scheme.

I pass from this consideration and say that in its shape I do not think it could be acceptable to anybody here. But I look now to the purpose which Mr. Deakin has in view of creating a general fund. I objected the other day when the matter was brought to our attention that in Canada we would not touch our tariff at all. We have just spent considerable labour upon it, and would leave it as it is. But Mr. Deakin says: "Then contribute as you please." There is objection to it, as I pointed out. I do not see what amount we are to contribute to this matter unless we take the contribution of 1 per cent. by the British Treasury by means of this imposition.