

GENERAL BOTHA'S FAREWELL.

Fourteenth Day.
9 May 1907.

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General BOTHA : Lord Elgin and gentlemen, my time is over now. I unfortunately have to leave before you resume again. I must go on Saturday to South Africa, and probably this morning is my last attendance, but I hope I shall again have the opportunity of attending later Conferences. I cannot leave without saying good-bye to you all, expressing my gratitude to the Chairman for the able way in which he has led us and conducted the proceedings. It has been one of the greatest pleasures of my life to meet the representatives of the various Possessions here, and to shake hands with them, and I want to give you all this assurance that the friendships which I have formed here in person will always be strengthened as far as I am concerned.

CHAIRMAN : I think I may say on behalf of the Conference that I am sure we entirely respond to the sentiments expressed by General Botha. It has been a great pleasure to us to see him here. We know he has come at considerable inconvenience to himself, but I venture to think that the Conference of this year would have suffered very much had he not been able to attend. We, I am sure, also reciprocate entirely the feeling of the advantages which we gain by mutual intercourse, and though I do not know which of us will be here to meet him, we shall hope that he, at any rate, will attend another Conference.

After a short adjournment :

BRITISH INTERESTS IN THE PACIFIC.

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The Conference sat in private. On resuming :

Mr. DEAKIN : Lord Elgin, with the permission of the Conference I propose to invite their attention to this question from a general point of view because without reference to the past, I doubt if the attention of the Commonwealth Government can be made clear. There was a time—and that not so far distant—when this ocean was ignored and these Islands were little visited because they presented small opportunities of trade or settlement—a time at which Great Britain was so much the predominating power that almost anything desired in the way of possession or suzerainty could have been acquired without difficulty. Of course the dead past must be left to bury its dead, but some reference is necessary to the indifferent attitude of statesmen in this country, a not unnatural attitude because, to the United Kingdom, the Pacific is remote, and not over the greater part of it even a highway of much traffic. On the other hand, to Australia and New Zealand in particular, and also to Canada, the future of the Pacific is extremely important, and may become more so at any time, now that attention is directed to its great spaces where rival nations have found a footing, and are if anything disposed to strengthen their hold. This difference of situation led from the first to a different attitude of mind on the part of the people of the Commonwealth and New Zealand, the people of Australasia, as compared with that of the people of the Mother Country. As a consequence, the course that has been followed and consistently followed in Australasia has neither been understood nor appreciated here. I do not wish to dwell once more upon the