

has been able to do has been recognised, recognised not only by his superiors but by others who are in no way responsible for it. Therefore, so far as that is concerned, I will only say that I deeply regret if there has been the feeling which Mr. Deakin described as exasperation from the series of incidents. I deeply regret it, but at the same time I cannot altogether admit that we are to take full responsibility for that, or that we are perhaps quite so guilty as Mr. Deakin's eloquence would make us appear.

I must say a word or two, I think, as Mr. Deakin has put aside the details of the convention, not with regard to the details of the convention, but to what he has said with regard to the manner in which that convention was negotiated. He referred to a despatch signed by himself on the 29th August, which he quoted, and I will not repeat the quotation in the second paragraph, but I should like to draw attention to this: that he went on to mention (it occurs in paragraph 3) certain conditions under which the Joint Protectorate might be appointed, and he said this: "It would be most acceptable, if the conditions upon which the Protectorate is to be established, or any amendment of them afterwards, in addition to receiving the approval of His Majesty's Government and the Republic of France, were submitted for the consent of the Commonwealth and of New Zealand prior to their adoption by His Majesty's Government." That was the request which he made in August 1905. Now, Mr. Deakin said, or rather implied, I think, that there was some cause of complaint as to delay in dealing with these matters. I was not responsible, of course, for the first part of it, but I should say for my predecessor that this letter was dated August 29th. That letter of August 29th would not arrive until a month or five weeks afterwards—that was a time when Parliament was not sitting; but on November 4th a telegram was sent to New Zealand. The New Zealand Government replied; that reply was not received till December 5th; and on December 9th steps were taken to proceed with the arrangement.

Fourteenth Day.
9 May 1907.

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BRITISH
INTERESTS IN
THE PACIFIC.
(Chairman.)

Sir JOSEPH WARD: What year was that?

CHAIRMAN: 1905.

Mr. DEAKIN: I beg your pardon; the delay was not in the procedure, but in informing us of the procedure and its meaning.

CHAIRMAN: I am coming to that, I think you also thought there was delay there.

Mr. DEAKIN: No.

CHAIRMAN: So far so good. It went on and, of course, we came into office soon after that, and at once proceeded with the commission which our predecessors had started, and it went on without any delay. But Mr. Deakin makes two complaints against us in that respect. In the first place that the Commission was not announced to him—I cannot explain that without further inquiry—I do not know how it happened. If it was my inadvertence I apologise, but on a change of Governments sometimes these things may occur. Anyhow on the second complaint I should like to say a word or two, and that is that the characteristics of the Commission appeared first in the newspapers and first reached Australia through the newspapers. Now I