

1st Day.]

AGENDA AND DAYS FOR MEETINGS.

[23 May, 1911.]

Mr. FISHER : Thank you.

General BOTHA : How about the appointment of committees for the committee work ?

The PRESIDENT : Sir Wilfrid suggests that we should postpone that, and that each of the subjects should, in the first instance, be mooted here and then the Conference will decide whether to refer it to a committee or not; because it is possible that we may find it can be disposed of at once.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : Any question it is suggested should be brought up here first, and then be referred to a committee if necessary.

The PRESIDENT : When they are obviously technical, no doubt it would be the wish of the Conference to refer them to a committee.

Sir D. DE VILLIERS GRAAFF : In connection with the Death Duties, and so on, you would require some statistics. If a committee is set up immediately, or soon, they could go into the details and get information; otherwise if we come to the discussion here on the 9th June, or on the 8th, our time might be unnecessarily occupied.

Mr. HARCOURT : That was the object of suggesting committees now which would meet the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the permanent head of the Treasury to go into technical points. Is it the wish of the Conference that the Dominions raising these particular questions should be put into communication with the Treasury over these matters at once ?

General BOTHA : Yes.

Mr. HARCOURT : And equally the other matters, I suppose, which are under the Board of Trade for June 1st and 2nd.

General BOTHA : Yes, that will satisfy us.

The PRESIDENT : It would be a great saving of time if we could thresh them out informally with the Departments in advance. That would prepare the ground.

Mr. HARCOURT : It is possible that in the discussions some of them might become eliminated and need not come before the Conference.

The PRESIDENT : If that is approved, we now come to the resolution in the name of the Government of New Zealand with regard to the Imperial Council.

IMPERIAL COUNCIL.

“ That the Empire has now reached a stage of Imperial development which renders it expedient that there should be an Imperial Council of State, with Representatives from all the constituent parts of the Empire whether self-governing or not, in theory and in fact advisory to the Imperial Government on all questions affecting the interests of His Majesty’s Dominions oversea.”

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Mr. Asquith, I wish to ask the permission of the Conference to amend the motion, by striking out the words “ or not ” after “ self-governing ” in the last line but one. I want the motion to read : “ That the