

25 May, 1911.]

IMPERIAL COUNCIL.

[2nd Day.]

Mr. FISHER : He would like to say he has not heard anything about it.

The PRESIDENT : After all, we have been discussing a concrete proposal put forward by Sir Joseph Ward, which we must assume is the manner in which he interprets his resolution.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : To make my own position clear, I do not want on the matter of the wording of the resolution, as against what I have been urging in the course of the speech I have made, to put anybody in a wrong position. In view of the expression of opinion of the members of the Conference against the resolution, I think it would be less embarrassing for the whole of them, and certainly quite in accord with my own desire, that I should ask that the resolution, having been discussed, should be withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT : I think that is much the better course, and I am sure the Conference would agree with that.

After a short adjournment.

RECONSTITUTION OF THE COLONIAL OFFICE.

New Zealand :—

“ 1. That it is essential that the Department of the Dominions be separated from that of the Crown Colonies, and that each Department be placed under a separate Permanent Under-Secretary.

“ 2. That, in order to give due effect to modern Imperial development, it has now become advisable to change the title of Secretary of State for the Colonies to that of ‘Secretary of State for Imperial Affairs.’

“ 3. That the staff of the Secretariat be incorporated with the Dominions Department under the new Under-Secretary, and that all questions relating to the self-governing Dominions be referred to that Department ; the High Commissioners to be informed of matters affecting the Dominions, with a view to their Governments expressing their opinion on the same.

“ 4. That the High Commissioners be invited to attend meetings of the Committee of Defence when questions on naval or military Imperial defence affecting the oversea Dominions are under discussion.

“ 5. That the High Commissioners be invited to consult with the Foreign Minister on matters of foreign, industrial, commercial, and social affairs in which the oversea Dominions are interested, and inform their respective Governments.

“ 6. That the High Commissioners should become the sole channel of communication between Imperial and Dominion Governments, Governors-General, and Governors on all occasions—being given identical and simultaneous information.”

Union of South Africa :—

“ That it is desirable that all matters relating to self-governing Dominions, as well as permanent Secretariat of the Imperial Conference, be placed directly under the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.”

The PRESIDENT : The next item on the Agenda is a series of resolutions proposed by the Government of New Zealand on the reconstitution of the Colonial Office and cognate matters. I do not know whether it would suit Sir Joseph Ward's convenience, and it might perhaps abbreviate and concentrate the discussion, if before he speaks to these resolutions he would allow Mr. Harcourt, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, to put forward certain suggestions of our own with regard to these matters.