

2 June, 1911.]

DECLARATION OF LONDON.

[4th Day.

Mr. FISHER—*cont.*

possible be used when preparing instructions for the negotiation of other international agreements affecting the Dominions." It is not necessary to say any more about that. We think, as I have said publicly and here, that the matter is of far too great consequence to the Dominions to be made a controversial party matter at all. It is for that reason that we desire to have this Conference unanimous in coming to any conclusion, and with the permission of the Conference we would ask leave, after the statement made yesterday by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to withdraw our resolution and substitute this one.

General BOTHA : Will you read it again ?

The PRESIDENT : I will read it again : " That this Conference, after hearing the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, cordially concurs in the proposals of the Imperial Government, viz. : (a) That the Dominions shall be afforded an opportunity of consultation when framing the instructions to be given to British Delegates at future meetings of the Hague Conference, and that Conventions affecting the Dominions provisionally assented to at that Conference shall be circulated among the Dominion Governments for their consideration before any such Convention is signed "—that deals with matters like the Hague Conference and such things as the Declaration of London. Then, "(b) that a similar procedure, where time and opportunity"—those are limitations which you will remember were suggested—"and the subject-matter permit, shall as far as possible be used when preparing instructions for the negotiation of other international agreements affecting the Dominions." This is proposed by the Australian Government, but I think it does carry out exactly what Sir Edward Grey yesterday undertook to be the procedure of the future.

Sir EDWARD MORRIS : It has occurred to me whether the word "concurs" should be used, because there is no question of concurrence in such a statement as that. I think some word in the nature of "welcomes" should be used. It would be unlikely we would do anything but concur in a matter of that kind.

The PRESIDENT : "Cordially welcomes," shall we say ?

Mr. FISHER : I agree with the word "welcomes."

Sir EDWARD MORRIS : Anything that expresses that idea.

The PRESIDENT : If Mr. Fisher approves I will substitute the word "welcomes."

Mr. FISHER : Yes, it softens it.

The PRESIDENT : I do not know that it wants softening.

General BOTHA : Do I understand you think this will not handicap in any way the British Government ?

The PRESIDENT : In order to prevent the possibility of that, and Mr. Fisher very fairly acknowledged yesterday that we must be careful in these matters, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier pointed out many important considerations—in the second branch here the words used are rather carefully chosen : "a similar procedure where time and opportunity and the subject-matter permit."

General BOTHA : I want it clear. I do not want to handicap the British Government. I want them to undertake the full responsibility.