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8 June, 1911.]

STANDING COMMITTEE.

[5th Day.

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The CHAIRMAN : I would agree at once to the alteration in the memorandum, and to leave out "High Commissioner or other," and put in "a representative."

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I think that puts it all right.

The CHAIRMAN : Then we should omit condition 8, of course.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Yes, that would require to be omitted.

Dr. FINDLAY : And there is a consequential change in condition 5—"the High Commissioners or" to be omitted.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : "A representative" it should be. I want to say that, upon the whole, I think this is a step in the right direction, and I am quite ready to accept the proposal which you make here as an evidence of the desire of His Majesty's Government to have some machinery that will enable practical decisions to be come to upon points, even where we have not arrived at resolutions, that may be required to be rediscussed, which could only be done, as suggested in your memorandum, in consultation with the respective Governments through the Governor or Governor-General; and that keeps the power entirely, so far as the decision is concerned, in the hands of the Governments of the oversea Dominions, as it ought to be.

I do not want to take up the time of the Conference by going again over the various reasons, but I believe we ought to go a step forward to improve the present position. I think it is very important that we should have something in the interval, without expecting men to come over the seas too frequently to sub-conferences here, by means of which we should have the opportunity of having matters discussed, considered, and reported upon to the respective Governments. With another important alteration that has already been made on the Defence Committee, to which I cannot refer here, I think the machinery suggested, with what has already been done in another direction, would be very valuable.

The CHAIRMAN : May I ask, Sir Joseph, whether you contemplate the probability of having a representative of New Zealand permanently resident here for this purpose?

Sir JOSEPH WARD : No, I do not contemplate that; but my impression is that it is not a desirable thing to say that it should be, "The High Commissioner or other representative." It is far better to say that it should be "a representative" definitely; but it is quite possible that at times—and this does not apply to any of the existing High Commissioners—through no fault of our own, perhaps, the High Commissioner might not be in every way qualified to take up the work. Such a thing might occur with some of the oversea Dominions; so that I think it better to have it as "a representative" only.

Dr. FINDLAY : I might ask a question about this. Condition 3 says : "Being a Committee of the Imperial Conference, it must deal only with matters which concern the past Conference, or have to do with the preparations for the approaching one, or for any other matters which seem to be appropriate questions between both." That would cover all the matters upon the Agenda Paper at this Conference?

The CHAIRMAN : Yes.

Dr. FINDLAY : So that all those minor matters, such as the currency of awards, uniformity of Patent Law, Copyright Law, Company Law, Shipping, Civil Service, Exchange, and so on, would be threshed out before this Standing Committee between this and the next meeting of the Conference?

The CHAIRMAN : Certainly.