

8 June, 1911.]

STANDING COMMITTEE.

[5th Day.]

Mr. MALAN—*cont.*

minions; all the Ministers here feel the importance of that. That is not the case with the official; he thinks that it should be pressed and he presses it home, and by doing so he does an immense amount of harm.

Under all those circumstances, seeing that the system we have had up to the present has worked well, so as to avoid all the difficulties I have stated, we have distinctly come to the conclusion that matters must be left as they are now. I agree with Sir Edward Morris that the day may come when we shall have to look in a different direction than our present Conference. I do not know whether that day is coming soon or is far off, but when a change does come it must be on the sound British principle of giving the people representation and getting government through representatives elected by the people, and not government by officials or government by men who nominate themselves. To a large extent we are here now because we represent only a majority in our own Dominions, but whatever we do, if an alteration is made in the future, it must be representatives elected by the people who will be responsible to the people, and not otherwise.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, I need, I think, only say one word as to Mr. Malan's statement. I would like, first of all, to clear up the impression that the Committee, in being made advisory to the Secretary of State, was in some way derogatory to the position of the Dominion Governments. That was certainly not the intention. It was desirable that it should be an advisory and not an executive committee. That, I felt, was the view of all the Dominions.

Mr. MALAN: That is our view.

The CHAIRMAN: I also felt that they would be willing that it should be advisory to me, but that they would not be willing that it should be advisory to them; and therefore I offered myself up for the purpose of being advised in order to relieve them from a situation which I was sure they would not tolerate. It was entirely to meet what I believe to be their views of the situation that those words were there inserted. I have never contemplated that the people who would have formed this Committee would have ultimately been members of the Conference. I quite see the point Mr. Malan has made as to the grievance they might have suffered from not being able to take part in the final deliberations on work which they had prepared.

Mr. FISHER: I confess I do not see that point.

The CHAIRMAN: Of course on that point no complaint has arisen; but the absence of people who have done the work has arisen in copyright and other subsidiary conferences; there was no question that they should join this Conference afterwards, and it certainly was very far from my mind to attempt any enlargement of this Conference, the composition of which has been settled by itself in the past, and which I see no desire to change for the future.

Gentlemen, I think from our discussion it is quite clear that there is not sufficient unanimity for the proposal which I have put forward to make it worth my while to move any resolution on the subject. I should like the Conference to be quite clear that this offer was made by me on behalf of the Government only in order to meet what we believed to be a desire on the part of some of the Dominions. It does not represent any conscious want on the part of the Home Government. We have felt that the communications which we keep up directly with the Dominions through myself, and the continuity of work which is so admirably carried on by Mr. Just and the Secretariat of the Conference, has been sufficient for all Imperial purposes. This was only an offer to meet what we believed was a desire which we might find more widely spread when the discussion came. After this discussion I think it is quite clear that there is not unanimity of wish for a further enlargement and co-operation at present, and therefore I do not propose to go any further with the memorandum which I have circulated.