

Deprecates rescinding of 1921 Resolution.

Therefore, the position remains this: that, while I receive support—substantial and general—from His Majesty's Government and from all the Dominion Prime Ministers, I have received no support from General Smuts. On the contrary, he has expressed a desire that the resolution of 1921 should be repealed. I hope, for the reputation of this Conference, for the great reputation of the Dominion Prime Ministers, and for the reputation of His Majesty's Government, that nothing of the kind will be done; and, though you may tell my countrymen that the problem is undoubtedly a difficult one, I request you also to say that you are trying to discover means of solving it. If you will do that you will change our attitude in regard to great Imperial questions.

Position of Indians already in South Africa.

There is only one more remark I will make in regard to General Smuts's speech. He referred to the desire for repatriation and to the advice of Mr. Andrews. Let me tell you that if any one understands Mr. Andrews or knows him intimately I do. There are hundreds and thousands of my countrymen in South Africa who cannot even speak their mother-tongue. They have settled there, their fathers have settled there, and it is very easy to understand how difficult they will find it to leave a land in which they and their fathers and grandfathers have lived. It is for those reasons that Mr. Andrews advised, and it is for those reasons that I should advise them not to leave that country, but to fight their battles until their position is recognized some day or other as that of equal citizens.

Meaning of Allusion to "Foreign Policy."

General Smuts said that as a British subject I could not claim that this problem would pass from the stage of a domestic problem to that of a foreign problem. He misunderstood me. It is not difficult to foresee a stage being reached when even the Government of India, whom he has attacked over its attitude in regard to Kenya, but which I must admire for the very same attitude which it did take, may find it necessary to appeal to His Majesty's Government and to say that one part of the Empire is standing against the other; and it is for you, His Majesty's Government, now to treat this problem inside your own commonwealth as you would deal with a problem of foreign policy. That is what I meant; and I do anticipate a stage like that being reached at no distant date in so far as the relation of India with South Africa is concerned.

Comment on Statements of Minister of External Affairs, Irish Free State, and of Prime Minister of Newfoundland.

Lastly I will pass on to what my friend Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald said. No one could be more happy or contented than myself if he could help me to get self-government for India to-day; but that is a matter between us and His Majesty's Government. I see no reason, however, why, until we get complete self-government in India, we should be treated on a lower footing in King George's Empire outside India. We have a strong sentiment on that point, and there can be no weakening in that sentiment so far as I am concerned and so far as my fellow-countrymen are concerned. There is no one who believes more strongly than I do, or is working harder than I am, to win self-government for India, and, God willing, I do hope to win it notwithstanding any doubts that may be entertained by members of His Majesty's Government. But I will not allow those considerations to affect my position in regard to the status of Indians overseas. Suppose we get Dominion self-government to-morrow in India, the problem will still have to be faced. Therefore let us not mix up the two. I should be very glad indeed if the Conference would endorse a resolution in favour of self-government, but I want them to endorse a resolution also in regard to Indians and their position overseas. I must also thank Mr. Warren for the support he has given me.

Wishes to press Proposal for Resolution.

There is only one word that remains for me to say. When I moved that resolution I perhaps did not make it quite clear that I was moving it. I merely said, "My resolution is as follows." I wish the Conference to understand that I definitely moved that resolution. I have already said I am open to argument in regard to the phrasology of it so long as the substance remains and so long as Kenya finds a place in it. That is a matter which is between me and the Colonial Office, and could be sent up to you later on. But I do wish to move that resolution, and I beg your support; at any rate I am entitled to ask for the support of the general idea embodied in that resolution. I do wish it to be understood that, so far as I am concerned, I stand by the resolution of 1921 and by the principle of equality. I do not wish to put any larger interpretation on the resolution than is justified or is just, but do not let me give you the impression that there is any weakening on my part so far as the resolution of 1921 is concerned, or so far as the supplementary resolution which I had the honour to put before you on Wednesday last is concerned. I thank you, Prime Minister, and all the other Prime Ministers.

31ST OCTOBER, 1923.

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA, AS HEAD OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION.

Thanks for Reception of Proposal of Indian Delegation.

Lord Peel: I desire to thank most sincerely the members of the Conference for the very cordial and sympathetic way in which they have received our proposals about the position of Indians in the Empire. I thank them also for the high place that they have assigned to this question among Empire problems. I thank them for the complete grasp that they have displayed of this difficult business, not as an isolated or local or Indian question, but in its Imperial aspect. I am grateful to them for the complete frankness and fulness with which they have explained the views of those they represent.