

The Hon. Mr. REEVES: I vote for that. Of course I may receive some instructions about it during the morning from my Government, but I take the responsibility meantime of voting for it.

The resolution was carried.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: May I ask—it is not much difference—instead of “on behalf of his Government,” put (in yesterday’s resolution) that “Dr. Cockburn be invited to make a proposition embodying the terms on which South Australia would be prepared to join the other Colonies.” It expresses as much as I can do. I do not want to appear to be doing more. This was agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: Now, there is the question of delegates—two have been asked for.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Well, I have instructions from my Government to ask for the appointment of a delegate to represent the position of the Western Colonies, not with a view of influencing the voting, but simply to secure the position of these Colonies being brought before the Commissioners, and I am requested, as you all know, by Sir John Forrest, to press this matter on behalf of Western Australia, which I am prepared to do to the utmost. I also make the same request from Tasmania. The interests of Canada and Great Britain in this matter are homogeneous. They are one Government each. Here we have a number of Governments; and it seems to me that there will be a difficulty in selecting two Commissioners who will be expected to speak from the various points of view of all the parties concerned. I therefore respectfully ask the Conference to take this request into consideration—which I am deputed by South Australia as well as the other two Governments to make—and grant it.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: I am afraid it would look awkward if Australia is about to federate and cannot agree upon the appointment of delegates.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: The reason given for the special representation of South Australia is, their special interests—the same would apply to all the others—therefore, I don’t think he should press that matter any further under the circumstances. There is no reason for getting a special representative.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: I am very sensible of the manner in which the Colonies have viewed the interests and claims of South Australia, and I am very anxious to see the Conference unanimous. Has any proposal as to representation been made?

The Hon. Mr. COOK: I am glad to say we did talk this matter over, and Mr. Duffy and I are strongly of opinion that since the matter is a federal one, representatives of the two large Colonies should sit on the Commission, stipulating that on all important matters they should consult with all the Agents-General.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: That is, that the Commissioners representing Australia should, as far as possible, be the mouthpiece of the combined Agents-General. That, of course, to a great extent provides for unanimous action.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: I take it we are settling up all our differences here beforehand.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES: Do you mean that this Conference should suggest to the Commissioners—should send a kind of suggestive mandate—that they should consult the combined Agents-General in London?

The Hons. Messrs. COOK and DUFFY: Yes.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: I may say when Messrs. Duffy and Cook met me here before I suggested the names of two gentlemen, not Agents-General,—Lord Jersey, who is well acquainted with Australia, and Sir Edwyn Dawes, the latter a well-known financier, and a gentleman of great experience in large undertakings, such as the Suez Canal, of which he is Chairman.

The Hon. Dr. COCKBURN: Four names have been mentioned. Let it be distinctly understood before the personnel is agreed upon that they are to act in conjunction with the Agents-General, and to consult with them in reference to matters brought before the Commission.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES: I am indifferent on that point.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: Apparently my proposition is not received.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES: I would say at once it would suit our Colony perfectly—Lord Jersey and Sir Edwyn Dawes. I am prepared to support that.

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: Men are wanted with special training in the management of large undertakings such as they have had. Those are the views of my Government.

The Hon. Mr. DUFFY: My Government is very strong on the point of the two Agents-General. They are capable men, in full touch with the Colonies, and if they are directed to consult with the Agents-General of Australasia, these would have control over them, which could not be in the case of Lord Jersey or Sir Edwyn Dawes. As regards Lord Jersey, he is an admirable man, but probably the Home Government will appoint him as one of their own Commissioners. Sir Saul Samuel and Mr. Duncan Gillies are familiar with the affairs of the Colonies, and the Parliaments of the Colonies have after all to be consulted over these things. It would facilitate matters if, when things are discussed, our interests are looked after by men in touch with ourselves. My Government is very strong about that.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES: Do we wish to interfere with the Commissioners after they are appointed, other than by general directions? They go in to probe matters to the bottom and give their own opinion.

The Hon. Mr. COOK: There will still be the acceptance or rejection after a scheme has been prepared. Supposing you have your own Agents-General to consult, you could say to them what you could not say to an outsider—“If this is carried in a certain way, we cannot join the undertaking.” If you had independent Commissioners who would be disposed to take an Imperial as against a Colonial view of a matter, it would be very much more difficult. That is the feeling. Imperial considerations may conflict with Colonial, and as the policies in that respect of England and the Colonies differ very materially on some points, it would be an advantage to have people directly under our own control to whom we can talk freely. Here is another reason—I put it to you in all candour: Sir Saul Samuel is now old; he has been there thirteen or fourteen years; he has done our business so splendidly that he has acquired a sort of proprietary right in his office;—it might be that younger men would have more energy, but it would not be a gracious action in his old age to snub him in any way, or to make an invidious distinction. We feel that if the matter were referred to the Agents-General themselves, Mr. Gillies and Sir Saul Samuel would be selected as being the senior.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES: The question is, are we called upon to decide on the ground of seniority? I would much sooner be in a position to talk on this matter without my remarks being taken down.

[*Shorthand writer requested to stop note-taking.*]

After a time,—

The Hon. Mr. THYNNE: To bring the matter to a point, I formally move, “That Lord Jersey and Sir Edwyn Dawes be nominated as the representatives.”

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