

First Day.
15 April 1907.

ARRANGEMENT
OF BUSINESS.
(Mr. Deakin.)

mission whether for inquiry or otherwise. The difference is fundamental. First of all, this is a Conference of representatives; it is a Conference of representatives who have no power to do anything; they have only power to discuss and recommend. Anything to be done must be authorised by those whom they represent — that is their Governments, Parliaments, and ultimately the electors, and it is these who need information and conviction, if it could be imparted to them, just as much as we do. If we here succeed in convincing each other absolutely and return to our countries unanimous, that amounts to a great deal, but it leaves an immense amount to be done when we are endeavouring to convince majorities in our Legislatures in both Chambers and majorities of our colleagues. We have then to commence the work all over again. Want of knowledge delays it, impedes it, and obstructs it. Secrecy appears to me foreign to the nature of this gathering. It would be a legitimate criticism to say that if this Conference is treated as a Parliament you will have Parliamentary speeches, and it is desirable, perhaps, that our expressions here should be reconsidered and matured, and therefore that nothing should be completely published until you have had an opportunity of revision. That is a good point, but it seems to me that could be met by saying "If no verbatim report from day to day can be given, let us have a full report such as is given in the first columns of a newspaper where they are referring to the reports in the other pages. Let them say, 'Lord Elgin presided to-day when the question under discussion was the constitution of the Conference. A resolution to this effect was proposed. Sir Wilfrid Laurier followed, and in the course of his remarks he took exception to such and such parts of the resolution, and submitted such an amendment, and he was followed again by Mr. Botha (or any other Member), who proposed this. After consideration these amendments were withdrawn and something suggested by Sir Joseph Ward was introduced, who gave as his reasons so on'—something like that."

Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL: Who do you suggest should take the responsibility of making the summary?

Mr. DEAKIN: I suggest the secretaries here should prepare a summary which they ought to submit to each member as to his own remarks, and as a whole to the Chairman, or to yourself, as his active assistant in these matters. It should be looked at from the point of view of the British Government, while each man would see that the short statement submitted to him was at all events so far correct as to convey the general drift of his remarks.

Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL: You would not suggest that anything should be published in any case until after the member making the speech had had an opportunity of seeing what was to be published and attributed to him.

Mr. DEAKIN: No, but as far as I can see a great deal of our debates, even if there was a great deal of friction, might be carried on before all the Press representatives of the United Kingdom, as far as I am concerned. With regard to the précis, each member would require to see his part of it. That could be done before we left, especially if our sittings were only in the morning, as it is only a digest of no great length. What I mean is, that every word of that would be cabled to Australia and New Zealand; every morning they would know what we have been discussing; every morning