

Of course, we may have visions a thousand years hence of a closer union, but we want no more than that at the beginning. We want no new departure. We know perfectly well how shy any one of the Anglo-Saxon race is of a new departure, and all we want in the self-governing Colonies is that this union of the Empire should gradually grow, but you must put the seed in first so that it may begin to grow. What we want is what I think the Secretary of State for the Colonies suggested—a link between the Colonies.

Second Day.
17 April 1907.

PROPOSED
IMPERIAL
COUNCIL.
(Dr. Jameson.)

General BOTHA : Lord Elgin, and gentlemen, I have read with great interest the speech made by Mr. Chamberlain at the last Conference, and there is one point that specially drew my attention, and that is this : “ It is clear that the object would not be completely secured until there had been conferred upon such a Council executive functions, and perhaps also legislative powers, and it is for you to say, gentlemen, whether you think the time has come when any progress can be made in this direction.” Now, when I read this I thought that if the word “ Council ” was to be attached, as suggested by Mr. Deakin, to the word “ Imperial,” this might make an infraction upon the rights of responsible government of the various self-governing Colonies. On this point I am conservative, and I do not see any reason for departing from the name which we have to-day. I should like to build up, but I should like to build slowly. The circumstances of South Africa to-day are such that we represent three Colonies there. The fourth Colony, will, I hope, also be represented at the following Colonial Conference. I think it is a good thing for us to discuss the point, but I do not think we should arrive as yet, at this Conference, at a final conclusion on the matter, although I am inclined to identify myself in a great measure with the suggestion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. On the question as to the Secretariat, I think the suggestion made in connection with that, with all due deference to Mr. Deakin, is not quite happy. I do not quite understand what the duties and functions of those people will be. I also fear that we might afterwards create more work for ourselves with the officials of the Secretariat than with the Colonial Office itself, and I want to maintain the bond of connection as directly as possible between the Colonial Office and the self-governing possessions. I believe each Colony has its Agent-General here, and I think we should modify the instructions to the Agents-General in this respect, that they should have authority to prepare the agenda for us, to work up the facts for us. That is all I have to say.

CHAIRMAN : Gentlemen, I am sure anyone representing the Imperial Government must have listened with great satisfaction to the discussion that has taken place, in one particular, at all events, because it is quite obvious that every word that has been spoken and every suggestion which has been made has been made in the spirit of increasing the unity and strength of the British Empire; and I feel very much, that if that is so (and I think it is so), there is no fear, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier put it on Monday, that this Conference will be a failure. We may have differences of opinion with regard to particular methods in which we ought to carry out the purposes, but if we have the same end in view, I am sure we shall endeavour to adjust our differences so as to secure that end. Therefore, I do not think it is necessary for me to go so much into detail as at one time I thought might be necessary with regard to the various resolutions which were sent in to us from the other Colonies.

We meet in the first place under the resolution of the last Conference; that, no doubt, is in the recollection of the Conference, but I have it here before me. Since that time my predecessor, Mr. Lyttelton, has sent out proposals which have been referred to in this discussion. I mention them