

Third Day.
18 April 1907.

FUTURE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
CONFERENCE.
(Sir
Joseph Ward.)

to do the best he could with the difficult and intricate matters affecting the various Departments that his different Ministers control.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I see the force of what you say and I realise, that in this respect, Canada has an advantage over all the other Colonies; we are so near England; we are next neighbours while you are far away, and I see the force of your objection. I put it before the Conference for reflection; I do not want to have it disposed of to-day. These are matters upon which I do not want to put anybody to inconvenience. I have put the matter before the Conference and I would like you to think it over and perhaps we can take it up at a later stage.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: I quite agree.

Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL: It does not affect the substantive of the Resolution.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Not at all. The new draft proposed by Lord Elgin, so far as this part of the subject goes, satisfies me completely. It meets, I think, to a large extent, the views of Mr. Deakin also.

Mr. DEAKIN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Then we might pass it on the understanding that with regard to the position and number of members outside the Prime Ministers we reserve that point for later definition. I should wish just to say, as I think I said before, that as far as His Majesty's Government is concerned, we are delighted to see Ministers from the different Colonies and to have the advantage of the knowledge which they bring, but I did feel the point which Sir Joseph Ward has put, although I did not think it was for me to raise it; I felt that it probably would be raised and that is one of the reasons why I did not attempt to deal with it in this draft.

Dr. JAMESON: Before we pass it, should we not define the number of years; this four or five seems rather loose.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: This is only tentative, but since Dr. Jameson has brought that point forward it has seemed to me that even five years is a very short period. You cannot meet here except at great inconvenience to some of us, and it is difficult to find a date, but if the Conference think differently then let the word stand. I suggested myself six years at the last Conference.

CHAIRMAN: Three was also suggested, and four was taken as a compromise.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Exactly.

CHAIRMAN: I understand one objection to the three or six is that it might interfere with the elections in certain cases; there are triennial Parliaments as was mentioned by Mr. Seddon.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: Ours is triennial.

CHAIRMAN: Therefore taking it by threes might interfere with the elections and be an inconvenience.