

Mr. Acland : I think the Chairman of the Conference should be an independent person, the nominee of the Government. We want a person to conduct the Conference on behalf of the Government ; I think the recommendation of a Chairman should come from them. I entirely agree that we should have a Chairman for the whole of the Conference.

Right Hon. the Prime Minister : I can only intimate to you that the Parliamentary Committee, after giving a good deal of thought to the matter, finally decided that it was a question for the Conference to elect its own Chairman. It is a self-contained body, and as far as the Parliamentary Committee are concerned, they considered that once the Conference started we would not take any part at all. I consider myself bound by the resolutions passed by the Parliamentary Committee. I think it must come back to the Conference to decide as to how it shall proceed in connection with the election of its Chairman.

Mr. Roberts : I would suggest that a committee of three delegates from each side should meet and select a Chairman, and bring down a recommendation to this Conference. The Prime Minister could occupy the chair in the meantime. We think that such a committee could agree upon a Chairman. That would be the best way. The gentlemen here do not know our opinions yet, and we have some names to suggest, to one of whom they might agree. They also might have names to suggest, with one of whom we might agree. I am sure that we could agree upon a man to be Chairman of this Conference. I think that would be the best way out of the difficulty. I move in that direction.

Right Hon. the Prime Minister : Does that meet the views of the employers' side ?

Mr. Henderson : That would meet with the approval of most of us here, because we are rather in the dark as to the proposal of Mr. Roberts. The Chairman of the Conference will only have to observe the recognized rules and maintain peace in the Conference. But why there should be any argument as to the question of a Chairman when we have a perfectly competent man available passes our comprehension.

Mr. Roberts : I think that the gentlemen represented by the last speaker have selected Mr. Barr, and the members on this side have selected Mr. McCullough. It is just a matter of opinion. It is essential that there should be co-operation between the two parties. We ask for the co-operation of three men from their side to meet three representatives from this side. I think that that method would overcome the difficulty quite easily. It may be Mr. Barr or Mr. McCullough, or any member of the Conference, that may be chosen, but we think that neither side should be able to say, "We selected the Chairman this morning." Mutual consideration should be given to the question, and when that has been given I believe there will be a mutual understanding and an agreement upon a Chairman.

Hon. Mr. Weston : We can try Mr. Roberts's suggestion, and appoint three men from each side to confer in regard to the matter. In suggesting the Hon. Mr. Barr, Mr. Polson and others of us thought that he would be just the man for the job. We take it that the duties of Chairman will be to collate the reports, arrange the agenda paper, and attend to the administrative work of the Conference. Personally, I think Mr. Barr is the best man we could select in the room. He is a neutral man, and, above all things, fair. However, if Mr. Roberts would like the matter to be referred to a committee consisting of three representatives from each side, we will agree.

Mr. Polson : It seems to me an extraordinary thing that we should have any difficulty in selecting a Chairman for a gathering of this sort. You, sir, have told us that we were to have an absolutely free hand, and that there was no suggestion from the Government as to how this Conference should be conducted. Mr. Barr would, I am sure, give everybody a square deal : I am sure any Chairman would do that, but he is a man whom we know so well and who I believed would be acceptable to the other side. However, if it is going to hold us up, I am agreeable to the suggestion of Mr. Roberts, although it is an extraordinary method of selecting a Chairman.

Right Hon. the Prime Minister : The motion is that a committee of six be appointed—three from the employers and three from the employees—to confer with regard to the appointment of a Chairman, and to report to this Conference later.

Mr. Jessep : Is the committee's decision to be final ?

Mr. Roberts : Oh, no. I suggest on our behalf the names of Mr. Nash, Mr. Semple, and Mr. Bromley.

Hon. Mr. Weston : On behalf of the employers I propose Mr. Polson, Mr. Bishop, and Mr. Acland.

Mr. Bishop : I would like to be excused.

Hon. Mr. Weston : Then I will substitute Mr. Brechin.

The committee, as amended, was agreed to.

Admission of Press.

On the motion of *Mr. D. J. McGowan*, seconded by *Mr. R. A. Brooks*, it was decided that the press be allowed to attend and report the proceedings of the open Conference.

Admission of Visitors.

Right Hon. the Prime Minister : The Parliamentary Committee considered that members of Parliament should be allowed to be present at all times if they wish. They will not take any part in the Conference.

Mr. Bishop : I propose that the issue of visitors' tickets be left to the Chairman, when appointed. Members can then apply to him for any tickets they want.

Mr. Roberts : The Chairman might give tickets to gentlemen we do not want in. I suggest that the secretary issue the tickets to persons recommended by members of the Conference.