

23 May, 1911.]

IMPERIAL COUNCIL.

[1st Day.

Sir JOSEPH WARD—*cont.*

Empire has now reached a stage of Imperial development which renders it expedient that there should be an Imperial Council of State, with representatives from all the constituent parts of the Empire"—I desire that the words "whether self-governing or not" come out.

Mr. FISHER : The words "whether or not."

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I want to put "self-governing" in before "parts," and to strike out the words "whether self-governing or not." So that it will read "with representatives from all the constituent self-governing parts of the Empire in theory and in fact advisory to the Imperial Government on all questions affecting the interests of His Majesty's Dominions oversea."

The PRESIDENT : "From all the constituent self-governing parts of the Empire."

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Yes.

Sir D. DE VILLIERS GRAAFF : You want "self-governing" before "parts"?

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Yes.

The PRESIDENT : You do not want that word "constituent"—"from all the self-governing parts of the Empire."

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Perhaps that would be better.

The PRESIDENT : The effect of it is to omit from the scope of your proposed motion what we call the Crown Colonies and India.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : That is so. Mr. Asquith and Gentlemen, in submitting this resolution to the Conference I would like to say that I am not going to pause for a moment to consider whether England or her Colonies should attempt to devise a scheme. The matter is of too intense importance to stand over on any such ground as that; but I want to remind the Conference of the fact that a former Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, invited suggestions from the oversea Dominions, with a view to evolving some scheme that might be satisfactory to the Empire as a whole in connection with the subject I have now the honour to deal with. It is the duty of every part of the Empire to assist in devising some method for closer unity, and it is not necessary for me, as I have already said, to make the least apology for endeavouring to do my best to suggest lines which, if properly shaped, would in my opinion effect the purpose of a greater Imperial solidarity.

Now, what I propose to ask the Conference to deal with is : 1st, Imperial Unity; 2nd, Organized Imperial Defence; 3rd, the Equitable Distribution of the Burdens of Defence throughout the Empire; and, 4th, the representation of self-governing oversea Dominions in an Imperial Parliament of Defence for the purpose of determining Peace or War, Contributions to Imperial Defence, Foreign Policy so far as it affects the Empire, International Treaties so far as they affect the Empire, and such other Imperial matters as may by agreement be transferred to such Parliament.

I feel persuaded that it is recognised by every representative at this Conference that to-day there is need for better organization, and I propose to make it as clear as I can that the necessity for greater organization to enable such matters as I have just indicated to be dealt with by the Conference can be borne