

Before we go further it will be as well to understand how their Round Table Conference was "jockeyed" by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, M.P., the son of the Prime Minister, wrote some letters to the "*Retford Times*." Mr. Malcolm MacDonald was behind the scenes during the Conference. He knows what went on in the Prime Minister's circle, all unknown to the public and to the delegates to the Conference and what he tells the readers of the "*Retford Times*" will certainly startle those of us who believe in straight dealing. We learn that at the outset *Lord Peel* and *Lord Reading* wished the Indian delegates to be clearly informed that there was no prospect of Dominion Status in the near future. That was fair and proper. This was refused by the Government on the ground that it would have "smashed the Conference" and that it would have made impossible the large concessions to the Indians which, before the Commission ever sat, the Government had decided to allow!

On the other hand, the Indian delegates pressed for an immediate promise of Dominion Status; they were also refused because "any such statement so early would have wrecked the Conference by dragging the Liberals and the Conservatives into open opposition before they had been converted to so radical an idea." In this way every one was successfully deceived.

All this time be it noted, the Government was pretending to have a completely open mind, though, in fact, their mind was made up. Mr. Malcolm MacDonald asserts, with evident pride, that the drafting of the Prime Minister's concluding statement of Government policy was completed at the Prime Minister's house on December 27th and 28th. "This," he adds significantly, "was several days before the Conference itself began to consider the all-important question."

For three weeks then, this Conference dealing with Indian affairs solemnly went on deliberating what the Government had already decided. The delegates, in ignorance of the "ramp," were merely acting as the tame confederates of the Government. "So much," writes Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, "for the tactics of the Government."

It would be amusing to see how this trick was "given away" to the public by the Prime Minister's own son, who, presumably thought that he was offering a great tribute to his father when he revealed the dishonourable trick played by the Government in this matter.

It would be amusing to note all this, were the consequences not so grave; but Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is still Prime Minister and, in the circumstances, it is disheartening for us to know that the direction of affairs is still in the hands of a man who will stoop to anything in order to force upon the country a policy which, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge of Indians and Indian affairs, will entail the loss of India and the disruption of the Empire.

It is only necessary to add that, when questions were asked in the House, Mr. Malcolm MacDonald apologised for a great indiscretion, and nothing more was done. Were he not the son of the Prime Minister, and if the chief actor in this business were not the Prime Minister himself, more would have been heard of this discreditable affair.

As matters stand, the Simon Commission has been deliberately set aside by the Prime Minister, who :—

1. Instructed the Viceroy to tell India that the Government would grant Dominion Status.
2. Arranged a Round Table Conference and wrote a decision and statement of Government policy on this Conference's report before ever it began to grapple with the main issue ! !