

Sixth Day.
25 April 1907.

EMIGRATION.
(Mr. Burns.)

This brings me to the point as to what the form of the co-operation can be. The settled policy of Parliament, it is well I should inform the Conference, has been not to vote State money for emigration. Although local bodies, boards of guardians, distress committees, and others, have power and exercise it, as I have indicated, to vote public and voluntary money to emigration and settlement, Parliament has always been against a State subsidy for emigration to any or to all of the Colonies. I may give an instance of the kind of thing that is done. Under the Unemployed Workmen's Act the distress committees in the year 1906 sent out 3,875 persons at a cost of 7*l.* per head, part State, part local, part private money. In 1907 that will be considerably more. The boards of guardians in the last ten years have sent out 3,588 children, and if I may say so, these, in my judgment, are perhaps the best form of emigrants and settlers, looking ahead, that the Colonies could possibly have. Dr. Barnardo's agency has sent out 18,000, and nothing pleased me more when I was last in Canada than to hear that of these 18,000 children that had been sent out, 95 per cent. were not only doing well, but were doing first-rate in many cases and more than satisfied those with whom they were settled. It is interesting for us at this moment to know that even only last year there were 19,000 people in Canada who wrote to the Canadian Board of Emigration for children, boys and girls, from the Mother Country. On that some of the gentlemen of this Conference might say: "But what about their condition?" On that I think this Conference ought to be assured of this fact that the people who have charge of them here, whether they be guardians or private or public agencies, do everything within their power not only to see that the children are physically fit, but that they are trained and equipped for their new life, and I know no form of diversion of population that would be productive of so much good to the Colonies and to the Mother Country as an increase in the number of children going to the new settlements beyond the seas.

I can only say in conclusion that Canada, which has recently given no assistance towards the cost of passages, has perhaps shown the Mother Country and some of the other Colonies the way of handling this particular question. Nothing could be better than the way in which the Canadian Emigration Authorities, by information, by circular and by literature, have done their work, and in so far as the Old Country can live up to Canada in this particular regard, the Board of Emigration will be disposed to do so. The Colonies represented here to-day can rest assured that if they care in any form to make any representation to the Home Government as to what should be done, the Board of Emigration, the Local Government Board, and the Board of Trade, will be only too ready to respond to any suggestions or information they may give. The re-organisation of the Emigration Board itself is under the consideration of the Government. The recommendation by the Settlements Committee that a State grant for five years should be passed by the Imperial Parliament, is under the consideration of His Majesty's Government at the present time, and my last word is that if the Colonies think that any of the work done by any of the home agencies is of such a character that it may be improved upon, the Government will be only too pleased to respond to such advice, suggestion, or information, always relying upon this cardinal fact that the Old Country cannot be expected to show a preference in the matter of emigration to any of the Colonies, and will do her best to treat all of them fairly and to bring before intending settlers and emigrants the real facts of what the Colonies offer them. For the moment beyond that the Home Government is not disposed to go.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: When this resolution of the Commonwealth of Australia was first brought to our attention I read here: "That it is desirable to encourage British emigrants to proceed to British Colonies rather than foreign countries. That the Imperial Government be requested