

Sir WILLIAM ROBSON : I do not know whether Sir Joseph could tell us what are the qualifications in New Zealand for admission to the New Zealand Bar.

Thirteenth Day.
8 May 1907.

RECIPROCITY AS
TO BARRISTERS.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I cannot tell you with complete accuracy, but I know that it involves a number of years being articled to a barrister and solicitor's office, and passing an examination before a Judge of the Supreme Court.

Sir WILLIAM ROBSON : This is not merely a question of general reciprocity, but any advantage of this kind given to those who live, say in New Zealand, or Australia, or Canada, or anywhere else, might, if the qualification in New Zealand were not as severe as that in England, be made the means of securing admission to the English Bar by what one might call a Colonial avenue.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Very well, make it a condition that the reciprocity should be contingent on their complying with the same conditions as exist for admission to the Bar in England.

Sir WILLIAM ROBSON : The same conditions would not be quite as easily applied. We have very special and rather strict qualifications for admission to the Bar. Admission to the roll as solicitors is a different matter; there you have a five years' apprenticeship (I do not know whether in New Zealand the apprenticeship is so long), followed by a somewhat strict examination, and we have many men in England who would be very glad indeed to avail themselves of any avenue by which that strict condition could be evaded.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I think it is five years in New Zealand.

Sir WILLIAM ROBSON : Then with regard to the Bar, we have somewhat different qualifications, perhaps not apparently quite so severe as those which hedge round the profession of solicitors, but still we have qualifications of residence in England, which are generally accompanied, I think, although not necessarily part of the condition, by study in a barrister's chambers. These qualifications I am afraid the English Bar would not be content to surrender. It is not an easy matter for us to maintain an even balance between barristers and solicitors with respect to qualifications but we have given special facilities to solicitors to procure admission to the Bar, and I am sure the English Inns of Court, who govern the Bar, would very favourably consider any proposal to give to solicitors from New Zealand or Canada, or the other Colonies, the same kind of special facilities as it already gives to solicitors here. They let in English solicitors upon slightly more favourable terms than they apply to one who is coming to the Bar merely as a student without having become a solicitor, and I have no doubt that the Inns of Court would favourably consider proposals to give that kind of facility to Colonial barristers; but I would urge the Conference not to adopt a resolution which it might be afterwards found difficult for us to give effect to, because we certainly would not be likely to force this upon the Inns of Court without carefully considering the views of those especially concerned. We should have to consider the views of the Inns of Court, and I am bound to say that I am not able to speak with authority as to their opinion, because I have taken no means of finding out what their opinion would be.

Mr. DEAKIN : They are expressed in the document before us.