

Thirteenth Day.
8 May 1907.

RECIPROcity AS
TO BARRISTERS.
(Chairman.)

have worded your resolution so as to meet Sir William Robson's view it would have been convenient.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I would be very happy to do so and to put it in such a way as to invite a suggestion from them. I do not desire to hurry it. Perhaps it may stand until to-morrow and then in a few minutes we might be able to deal with it.

Sir WILLIAM ROBSON : Yes, I am quite sure that the English Bar would be desirous of doing what they can. I think I may say for the Bar that we have not behaved ungenerously to those who have sought admission to our ranks. Of course the privilege is a very valuable one and we have accorded it very freely to Scotch and Irish barristers. The limitations stand against them as much as against our brethren across the seas. There is no differentiation between one who lives in these Islands and one who lives beyond them under the same flag as far as we are concerned, but we have been obliged in order to maintain the peculiar status of the English Bar to be very strict indeed about our regulations as to admission, because it is a very singular status. It means that we have to give up many classes of work that solicitors enjoy; we are restricted in many somewhat singular and peculiar ways and in return we have very exceptional privileges. The Bar is very jealous both of its privileges and of its limitations. It is as keen about its limitations as about its privileges and it would not be in any sectional or purely national spirit that the thing would be considered; it would be considered on very broad grounds. That is why, as far as I am concerned, I would like to see precisely what it is we were invited to do before we took any definite step. I would certainly ask the Conference not to pass a resolution which might bring the Government into conflict with the Bar upon a matter of this kind.

Mr. DEAKIN : I suppose you speak now as a member of the Government.

Sir WILLIAM ROBSON : As a Member of the Government and as a barrister. I desire to see the Bar and the Government in continual accord.

Mr. DEAKIN : May I suggest as pertinent to this subject a matter which on one of its sides at all events may appeal even to the English Bar. It is rather anomalous that English barristers who have gone to the Outer Dominions, and while there have reached a position which has qualified them to receive silk, some of them receiving it in consequence of having held for some years the highest position obtainable in their States, that of Attorney-General, and adviser to the Governor. They advise him not only as Attorney-General but in an independent capacity in times when he does not desire ministerial but professional advice on matters of serious import to himself. It seems anomalous that those who have been honoured by being made King's Counsel, who are English barristers on their return to this country should find that there is one King in Great Britain and another King in the Commonwealth, and that they have ceased to be His Majesty's Counsel or entitled to that recognition here.

Of course the circumstances are so various that I must not be understood as endeavouring to lay down the doctrine that everyone who is made a K.C. in any part of the Dominions should be qualified here, but would venture to put it as far as this, that unless some disability could be shown, some want of qualification or standing or some particular cause which should deprive a professional man of standing of the honour he has enjoyed in one of the great communities beyond the seas, he should retain his professional rank. I take