

6th Day.]

EMIGRATION.

[9 June, 1911.]

Mr. BURNS—*cont.*

kindly care they take of the child emigration that comes directly through my Department. Here and there there may be opportunities, as the Dominions themselves may decide, of providing hostels to an increasing extent for women immigrants, who, I am glad to say, are going to the Dominions in greater numbers than they previously did. There may here and there be an opportunity, as the Dominions may decide, for perfecting the organization by which children and women particularly may be protected during the short interval they are in the receiving homes or hostels before getting the work to which they are going.

I do not know that I have anything further to add, except this: that the Dominions will ultimately lose, and the Empire will not gain, if there is too much emigration or more than we can replace by births. Britain must not export more than she breeds and rears. If she does she must needlessly import herself from Continental populations, and with 9,000 to 10,000 Polish miners in Scotland, I do not think that we should be either encouraged or persuaded to invoke that kind of industrial help. I think if emigration is over-organized favouritism may ensue. The nearest Dominions now have a great advantage. Manitoba sometimes complains of Ontario; Australia sometimes may complain of all Canada. To open all the Dominions to the emigrants that want to go from this country, I think the Dominions must be left to themselves to offer what attractions they can in their own particular way. It is for the Mother Country to give its own people and its own emigrants that guidance, information, and protection which they are entitled to receive from the Government, and to hold the balance as between all the Colonies, and, generally speaking, to do in the future as we have been able to show you since the last Conference we have done in the immediate past.

I have one word to say to all the Dominions, if I may, and it is this: Here and there there have been complaints that the standard of rejection of some of our emigrants has been a bit too rigorous. I am glad to say that in the last two or three years that rigour has not been continued, and there is a generosity all round in the treatment of emigrants from the United Kingdom which personally I, as one responsible for its direction and diversion from foreign countries to Dominions beyond the seas, am pleased to see.

In conclusion, I may say that I have set out for the Conference a series of diagrams which are reproduced in the small memorandum which I have circulated for your perusal, and I trust that the statement I have made will be satisfactory to the Conference; if not, I shall be pleased to answer any questions that may be put.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: It is extremely satisfactory, as far as we are concerned.

Mr. BATCHELOR: I would like to say that we have had a most interesting statement from Mr. Burns, and the tendency of the emigration movement is certainly very satisfactory to the Dominions; 20 per cent. now go to foreign countries, and we hope before long that that 20 per cent. will be considerably reduced. I have no complaint whatever to make, and I think the Emigration Office is assisting us as far as it possibly can; but I would like to say that we hold the view that it is the duty of the Emigration Office not only to assist, but also to hold the balance as between States and as between Dominions; and while I cannot say that you should take any definite action to prevent people going outside the Empire, still every active help that can be given to further reduce that 20 per cent. which goes outside the Empire would be appreciated by the Dominions.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: After the very interesting speech we have heard from Mr. Burns, I really believe this motion ought to be altered, if I may suggest it. As far as I am concerned, I am thoroughly in accord with what Mr. Burns has stated as to the importance, in regard to the future, of England itself not stressing this question of excess of British emigrants beyond the figures that Mr. Burns himself has suggested. If we are getting 300,000 a year of British emigrants to the oversea Dominions, or 80 per cent. of them at all events, that