

9 June, 1911.]

EMIGRATION.

[6th Day.

The CHAIRMAN : I will read it once more : “ Having heard the interesting and explanatory statement from Mr Burns, resolved, That the present policy of encouraging British emigrants to proceed to British Dominions rather than foreign countries be continued on the present lines, and that full co-operation be accorded to any Dominion desiring immigrants.”

Mr. FISHER : I agree, if you stop at the words “ be continued.”

Mr. BATCHELOR : And leave out “ on present lines.”

Mr. FISHER : Leave out the words after “ continued.”

The CHAIRMAN : Leave out “ on the present lines.”

Mr. FISHER : Yes, because you might develop on some other lines, and you might feel tied to go on on those lines if you saw something better, and it is complete without it.

The CHAIRMAN : Yes.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Lest any misconception should exist in the mind of Mr. Fisher, or anybody else, regarding my remarks about New Zealand's position, I desire to state that I have not at any time taken exception to the Australian policy, and I am not doing so now. In referring to the New Zealand system all I wish to convey is the fact that we require everybody, except those from Great Britain or of British origin, to send in an application in writing in English. That does not apply to Asiatics; they require to go through an education test, and also to pay a poll tax, similar to what they have in Australia, I think. Our reason for that is a very clear one. In regard to those men who come from foreign countries to New Zealand, if they are to have the rights of citizenship on similar lines to our own people and those who come from Great Britain, we want to avoid having any people in our country who in any sense of the term may be illiterate, or people who cannot conform to the laws in operation there, and in some cases cause considerable cost to the people of our Dominion for whose benefit those laws have been put on the Statute Book. We want to insure that those coming from other countries, and wanting the rights of citizenship, should be able to conform, not only to the examination we call upon them to pass, but to the requirements of our country, and that such an examination is intended to insure.

I do not want to say anything about New Zealand as a field for emigration, because we are getting what we require by degrees, but it is not a matter of policy to have more people coming than we can legitimately absorb, and from our point of view we are quite satisfied with what Mr. Burns's important Department is doing.

Mr. FISHER : I only embraced a suitable opportunity to make an explanation regarding our position, so that Australia might not be misrepresented in future by any good citizen.

Mr. BATCHELOR : The only distinction we make as regards British and foreign other than Asiatic immigrants is with regard to contract immigrants.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : We do that too.

The CHAIRMAN : May I take it that the resolution as I have read it is acceptable to the Conference?

[AGREED.]