

6th Day.]

EMIGRATION.

[9 June, 1911.]

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"That the Resolution of the Conference of 1907, which was in the following terms, be re-affirmed :—

"That it is desirable to encourage British emigrants to proceed to British Colonies rather than foreign countries."

"That the Imperial Government be requested to co-operate with any Colonies desiring immigrants in assisting suitable persons to emigrate."

"That the Secretary of State for the Colonies be requested to nominate representatives of the Dominions to the Committee of the Emigrants' Information Office."

Mr. FISHER : I have formally to move the resolution, and Mr. Batchelor will speak to it.

Mr. BATCHELOR : The resolution asks the Conference to re-affirm the resolution of the Conference of 1907, which was in the following terms : "That it is desirable to encourage British emigrants to proceed to British Colonies rather than foreign countries; that the Imperial Government be requested to co-operate with any Colonies desiring immigrants in assisting suitable persons to emigrate." And then in addition we propose to add : "That the Secretary of State for the Colonies be requested to nominate representatives of the Dominions to the Committee of the Emigrants' Information Office." Of course, every member of the Conference will, I think, agree without any discussion that it is desirable that the encouragement of emigration within the Empire should be the duty of all parts of the Empire. We are drawing upon the Mother Country for the supply of our population, and so are other nations. The United States, of the foreign countries, is the one nation that is drawing any considerable population from the United Kingdom. We feel that the Mother Country will not be able permanently for all time to supply us with the very large percentage of emigrants it is doing to-day—I am speaking generally, and not as to Australia alone—and we feel specially anxious that as large a number of those who do depart from the United Kingdom, of our own race, acquainted with our methods of government, and the most suitable of all persons to build up the British Empire, should be kept within the Empire as far as possible. I do not think I need argue that any further, because it goes without saying. What I would like to know is, whether any action at all has been taken on the part of the Secretary of State or on the part of the Department—the Local Government Board—to carry out the resolution of the last Conference. A resolution in similar terms was proposed then, and we should be glad if the President of the Local Government Board would mention if anything has been done. The only new matter in the present resolution is the nomination of representatives of the Dominions to the Committee of the Emigrants' Information Office. It was felt, upon a perusal of the Debates of the last Conference, that there appeared to be some lack of very precise information at the Emigrants' Information Office, and therefore it might be desirable if some representatives of the Dominions were nominated as members, in order that more complete and up-to-date information should always be at hand in the office of the Board. I want to say that we have no complaint to make since the last Conference as regards the information that is supplied to emigrants, but it is considered that it would be an advantage if there were some representatives of the Dominions on the Board. I do not think there is anything further I need refer to.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I desire to say that my views upon this question are similar to those I expressed to the Conference in 1907. We are not in favour of a wholesale system of emigration to New Zealand. We want to absorb those who are coming, and we wish, as far as it is possible, to have only those from Great Britain coming to New Zealand—naturally so. We apply an examination test to every one coming to our country except to those coming from Great Britain. Our system of administration is a very strict one in the direction which I have just indicated, because we are especially desirous of preventing aliens coming to our country.

The CHAIRMAN : You say you apply a test, "except to those coming from Great Britain"?