

8th Day.]

NATURALISATION.

[13 June, 1911.]

Sir WILFRID LAURIER—*cont.*

and if there are we have to submit ; but I think it would be far safer if you were to say that when a man has obtained his letters of naturalisation in any of the Dominions he can put his certificate in his pocket and can travel all over the world and come to Great Britain and say : " I am a British subject." It would be much more simple, as everybody would admit, and unless there are very strong objections to the contrary, this would seem to me a far simpler solution of the whole problem. At present a man who obtains his letters of naturalisation in Great Britain comes over to Canada or Australia, or anywhere else, and he is at once recognised as a British subject ; and I would like to have the reverse position—that a man naturalised in the Dominions should be also recognised anywhere as a British subject. There are objections. One objection is perhaps the colour question. It is supposed that here you are perhaps more easy on the colour question than we would be in Canada, South Africa, or New Zealand. I, for my part, do not see any serious difficulty in that, because the colour question will never be a problem in this country. The men of the coloured races who would be naturalised in Great Britain would be of higher education and of the higher class. You would not have in this country a rush of such immigration as we would have in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, unless it is limited. That is really the true difficulty at the bottom of every mind here, that you may naturalise a class of subject generally undesirable. This is a difficulty technically, but I do not think it is a difficulty practically, and therefore I would prefer, if His Majesty's Government are able to see their way to do so, our certificates to be accepted here and their certificates to be accepted in our countries.

Mr. MALAN : Would not you stipulate for a minimum of two years' residence ?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : I would not like to interfere with the freedom or the wisdom or the preference of any Dominion on this point. For my part, I am quite willing to accept in Canada every man naturalised in New Zealand, although there is no probation at all there in point of residence. If a man comes to Canada with a certificate issued in New Zealand, for my part I would at once pass legislation in Canada to accept this man as a British subject in Canada.

The CHAIRMAN : Would every Dominion be willing to accept the individuals naturalised by every other Dominion under laws on which they had not been consulted ?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : Let me say in answer to the objection raised by Mr. Malan that a man who had been rejected in one country might go somewhere else and there get naturalised. As has been pointed out by Mr. Churchill, this is a very remote contingency ; it is a possibility.

Mr. MALAN : Under your system it would not arise at all, and under the revised scheme as laid down by Mr. Churchill now, the chances are very much less ; but in the Bill as it was sent out to us, the man could get the Imperial naturalisation in his own Dominion after he is refused naturalisation by his local Government.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : But even under those circumstances it would be easy for any Dominion to say that a man whose application had been rejected could not be recognised under any circumstances.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I think one of the questions that might possibly be answered by Mr. Churchill is that suggestion made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier as to accepting a British naturalised subject everywhere, with the system that prevails in New Zealand of no limitation of time, with three years in Canada, and with two years in Australia, and so on ; would that be acceptable to the Imperial Government in view of the fact that they have a five-years limitation ?