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13 June, 1911.]

NATURALISATION.

[8th Day.

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Mr. CHURCHILL : I think the method we are proposing would be very simple and fair. Take the case of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's 100,000 American citizens that have come into Canada this year ; in the third year they would become Canadian citizens, but in the fifth year, if they wished, they could become Imperial citizens. There would be no difficulty, no extra inquiry, but simply an endorsement.

Dr. FINDLAY : That would, of course, be a matter of machinery, but we require a person to first apply for Colonial naturalisation, and then by a separate process, which might be simple, to apply for Imperial naturalisation. Why not unify the processes ?

Mr. CHURCHILL : If he had all the qualifications there is no reason why he should not apply for the full Imperial naturalisation if he had been there for five years.

Dr. FINDLAY : The Bill before us contemplates the two processes ; first local, and then Imperial naturalisation.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : The suggestions of Mr. Churchill go very far towards remedying the condition of things which now exists, and which everybody admits is a source of danger, and which ought to be remedied in some way. His remedy is that any man who has obtained letters of naturalisation in any of the Dominions may come here to England and obtain upon presentation of an application a further letter of naturalisation which would make him an Imperial citizen.

Mr. CHURCHILL : He may obtain it in the Dominions.

The CHAIRMAN : He need not come here.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : Very well ; it may be obtained in the Dominions themselves. I hoped that the Imperial Government would have been able to go further, and to recognise the letter of naturalisation which has been given as carrying its effect everywhere. That can be done, I think, with the diversity of legislation which exists to-day. In England you require a probation of five years. Very well, a man cannot obtain letters of naturalisation unless he has been a resident in this country for five years. After that he can become a British subject. These are conditions which are applicable to the United Kingdom. In the case of Australia, the same man, if he is located in Australia and not in Great Britain, can have his letters of naturalisation after a probation of two years. Can there be any reason at all, from a practical point of view, why this alien, who has become a British subject in Australia should not travel anywhere, and put his letter of naturalisation in his pocket, and claim he has the right of a British citizen, even if he comes to England ? I see no objection. There may be objections, but I see them not. In the same way, suppose he goes to New Zealand. New Zealand is very careful also in the selection of its own citizens, but in New Zealand the main question which they have in mind when granting letters of naturalisation is not the period of residence but the character of the man.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : And his education.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : And his education. A man goes to New Zealand one day and applies for naturalisation on the following day. They do not attach any importance to how long he has been there, but they ask him what is his education and what is his character, and they go carefully into it, and they come to the conclusion that he is a fit person to be a British subject. What objection is there, if that man comes to Great Britain, to his being recognised as a British subject as well ? I repeat what I said a moment ago, that I see no objection. There may be objections from the point of view of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain,