

9th Day.]

IMPERIAL POSTAL ORDER SCHEME.

[15 June, 1911.]

Mr. SAMUEL—*cont.*

Also it is of great value to have a single medium circulating through all parts of the Empire, because it not only facilitates the distribution of small sums of money between the United Kingdom and each separate Dominion, but also between the Dominions and Colonies themselves. For example, I may suggest it would be a great advantage to Canada to have a postal order which would enable small sums to be remitted to and from the West Indies to facilitate trade transactions of a small character; and similarly between Canada and Australia, and so forth. It is found exceedingly convenient to be able to transmit these very small sums at a very cheap rate for the purchase of a book or for the payment of a newspaper subscription, or for buying small presents and other purposes. The scheme is self-supporting. The poundage on the postal order covers the cost of it. It is true the charge is lower than on money-orders, but on the other hand the issuing of postal orders involves less work to the officials than the issuing of money-orders. In those circumstances I trust one of the outcomes of this Conference might perhaps be the completion of the system now so nearly complete, by the acceptance by Canada and Australia of this scheme. Since the scheme is already in operation in South Africa and New Zealand, it might perhaps be to the advantage of the Conference to have the experience of those two Dominions as to the working of the British postal order system in their territories.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: I can say in reply to Mr. Samuel's question that in New Zealand it works most satisfactorily. If we had not a system of this kind in operation the ordinary rates for the conveyance of money under the money-order system would not be available at all, or would only be availed of very slightly. This has provided a system as between the remission by a bank draft and by a money-order, and it is exceedingly useful to the people, and from the postal point of view the reports, as will be seen, which are here, as far as New Zealand is concerned, show results which are highly satisfactory. So far as the experience of the country I represent is concerned we look upon it as a very useful reform which has been made, and one which I believe would work just as well with other countries, and I should like to see it established throughout the whole Empire.

Sir D. DE VILLIERS GRAAFF: I am glad that I can recount a similar experience in South Africa. When the suggestion was first made to the South African Colonies they were somewhat sceptical about going in for this system, but to-day there is nothing but praise for it, and I may, perhaps, relate what experience has proved in South Africa. The experience South Africa has had since 1905 has demonstrated very clearly the advantages of the system, affording as it does a cheap and convenient method of remitting small sums of money between the several Dominions and Colonies of the British Empire, and there can be no doubt that a class of business previously untouched has been and is being developed by its means. The South African Postal Administrations when approached on the subject all took into consideration objections to the Imperial scheme similar to those raised by Canada and Australia, but were ultimately satisfied that the benefits to be gained far outweighed the anticipated difficulties, and the success which has attended the working of the scheme has amply justified their decision. No complications arose while separate local issues of orders were maintained. These have all been worked off, and only the Imperial order is now used in the Union. No administrative or accounting difficulties have arisen so far, and while it is true that, owing to the concentration of the audit work in London, some time, according to distance, must necessarily elapse in connection with the answering of questions respecting paid orders, this may be regarded as a very minor difficulty. London replies most promptly to inquiries and there has been no public complaint. There can be no question that the usefulness of the system depends entirely upon the availability for circulation throughout the Empire of one class of order, and if the principle underlying the scheme is recognised as an Imperial one it would seem but right and proper that the postal orders of the Mother Country should be adopted for the purpose. Apart from the facilities provided for the interchange of small remittances and from what might be termed the sentimental aspect of an Imperial scheme, the postal order system is financially