

19 June, 1911.]

INDIAN EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

[11th Day.

EARL OF CREWE—*cont.*

however, venture perhaps to remind you that, on the point of the national claims of Indians grounded on their past history—on their long descent—and other questions of the kind, this at any rate is not a moment when we desire to ignore those considerations. The ceremony of Thursday next, to which we are all looking forward, depends to a great extent for its meaning upon the long line of British sovereigns, through the Stuart, Tudor, and Plantagenet dynasties back to the time of the Norman Conquest and the dim ages of the Saxon Monarchy; and yet there are to be found in India those whose pride of descent is no less well founded and no less real than that of the King of England himself. Then, again, as regards history, we must never forget that not merely has India produced a great number of remarkable men both in the public service, and, to go back further, notable in ancient literature, but that she is most closely linked to a great number of the most famous men of our own race—statesmen, soldiers, and others. Now, of course, these considerations do not appeal to everybody. We know very well there is a large number of persons to whom the particular appeal of history and tradition does not come home; but on the eve of the Coronation I can hardly help alluding to this particular aspect of the question. But when you pass on to personal qualities in order to decide whether a man possesses a claim for consideration, really I think the case for those who object to Indians as Indians is worse still. If “A man’s a man for a’ that” is to be our motto, the claim of a large number of Indians is a real and solid claim indeed. Whether we value intellectual culture, whether—apart from questions of creed—we value the religious mind, whether we value that remarkable devotion to and understanding of the things which are not seen which is so exceptionally deep in India and which, I think, appeals to many people in these harder and material days—whether, again, we value simple intellectual force, uncertain in its exercise in some directions I admit, but which in others produces as keen and fine an instrument as you can find in any part of the world—whether we value all of those things or any of them, it is undoubtedly the fact that India and Indians can establish a high and real claim for our consideration, apart from all others.

I may again venture to remind the Conference, in spite of certain facts and certain difficulties which have arisen within the last few years, of the undoubted and signal loyalty of the Indian races as a whole to the British connection and especially to the British Crown. As things are, I fully admit that there is no short cut to the solution, so far as I know, in any part of the self-governing Dominions, of this question of Indian immigration by the adoption of heroic legislation—that I fully admit. But I do submit with confidence to the Conference that the relations between India and the rest of the Empire may be most materially improved by the cultivation of a mutual understanding. So far as the Indian standpoint is concerned, I quite admit that India must admit the main postulates with which I opened these observations—that is to say, the undoubted liberty of the self-governing Dominions to lay down the rules of their own citizenship—and I can say cheerfully on behalf of the India Office and the Government of India that we will always do our best to explain to the people of India how the position stands in this matter. We will not encourage India in any way to develop what, as circumstances are, can only be called extravagant claims for entrance into the self-governing Dominions, and we will do our best to explain to them what the conditions of the Empire really are. In turn I think we are entitled, and indeed it is our duty, to ask the Ministers of the self-governing Dominions to spread within their own area in each case a realisation of how deep and how widespread feeling on this subject in India is. As I think the memorandum point out, the question is an almost unique one in this: that it combines all sections and shades of Indian opinion—all classes and all creeds and political schools—those who are most devoted to the British Crown, and those—few in number, as I hope and believe, but sometimes noisy and sometimes in their way even formidable—who desire to see the end of British rule in India—all these combine when it is a question of Indian disability in any part of the British Empire. It cannot be denied that this difficulty is a very real asset, and a valuable asset, in India to those who are opposed to our rule there. This is an aspect which I venture to impress strongly on