

19 June, 1911.]

INDIAN EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

[11th Day.

EARL OF CREWE—*cont.*

and friendly treatment as fellow-subjects and, as we hope in most cases, loyal subjects of the Crown. I think it cannot be disputed that until fairly pleasant terms exist between the self-governing Dominions and India, within, of course, I repeat once more, the necessary limitations which arise from the fact that you are self-governing Dominions, it cannot be denied that we are far from being a united Empire; however close the connection and however perfect the understanding between the Mother Country and the self-governing Dominions, we are not a united Empire unless that understanding spreads to some considerable extent also to that vast part of the Empire of which, of course, India is the most prominent division, but which also includes all the Crown Colonies which are inhabited by the various native races. We cannot be a united Empire for two reasons: in the first place, you cannot properly speak of a united Empire so long as acute and active difficulties exist between the different parts composing that Empire; and secondly—this, I am sure, will appeal to Ministers here—it is a distinct misfortune and a derogation from the unity of the Empire if the Mother Country continually finds itself implicated in difficulties between various parts of the Empire. I think it is one of the least agreeable functions which Mr. Harcourt and the members of the Government generally can have to fulfil, to be appealed to from one part of the Empire to another on matters of the kind which I have indicated; and it is for that reason that we should like to institute, if possible, a first-hand understanding between the Dominions and India—a direct understanding between your Governments and the Government of India—without the necessity for our acting either as advocates on the one side or the other, or being called in to give an opinion.

I think that is all I have to trouble you with. I have confined myself purposely to general propositions, because this is really a matter very much more of the spirit and attitude which you can take up than of an attempt to deal with the question by a series of legislative propositions. I do not pretend, as I repeat once more, that the question is really a soluble one in the full sense—I do not think it is, but I am quite certain that if the Dominions will agree all through to show an accommodating and friendly spirit towards India, although there will be, I have no doubt, plenty of unreasonable people in India as there are everywhere, yet at the same time the best public opinion in India will recognise your efforts and will endeavour to play its part in a peaceful solution of any difficulties as they may arise.

CHAIRMAN: As this arises on your Resolution, Sir Joseph, perhaps you would like to speak now.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: I am sure we are all very much indebted to Lord Crewe for the very full and interesting statement he has made concerning the high Imperial position in the relationship of Great Britain and her Dependencies to that portion of the British Dominions known as the Indian Empire; and I want to say at once, to remove any misconception that may follow from a portion of the very lucid statement made by Lord Crewe, that so far as New Zealand is concerned we not only have no unfriendliness to the Indian Empire, but we regard it as a great portion of the British possessions that is invaluable to the British Empire, and to which we have the most loyal and friendly feeling as a part of the British possessions. Nor does the question, to my mind, arise in connection with this subject of whether the oversea Dominions are troubled by an accession of people from India to our countries. As a matter of fact we are not troubled in that respect at all, and that aspect of the issue does not arise and, from my point of view, does not concern the very important matter that does deeply affect the Dominion of New Zealand and, I believe, the other Dominions too, in connection with the work in which some of the Indians are engaged in competition by British-owned ships against British-owned ships, where in the case of the oversea Dominions our ships are compelled by custom to employ white crews, and, moreover, they are compelled by law to conform to the conditions of pay, rates of hours, and all the other matters that are essential for the carrying on in a satisfactory way the business under the laws which, in the opinion of the people of New Zealand, should apply to seamen on board their ships.