

Sir WILFRID LAURIER—*cont.*

tained as matters of municipal and local legislation, and that is what is objected to. I am sure we can all say to Lord Crewe that there is no disposition in any of our countries to treat our fellow subjects of India in any other manner than as belonging to the British Empire and as fellow subjects of ours, but they must recognise the difficulties there are in the matter which can only be overcome as civilisation goes on. When the man from India comes to Canada or to Australia, and is prepared to ask for the same wage, and is exactly on the same level as the white working man, there will be no trouble. So long as they are different I am afraid there will be some trouble, and, therefore, it is better to provide at once, as we have in all the respective countries we represent, against such a trouble.

Mr. BATCHELOR: The Australian view is very much in sympathy with the view put forward by Sir Joseph Ward as regards the Resolution that he has moved, and I will ask Mr. Pearce to refer to that particular point.

On the general question raised by Lord Crewe with regard to a United Empire, the mixture of black and white races, or a freer admission of them into the countries now inhabited by the separate races, I think any suggestion that would work towards that would tend to a disunited Empire rather than a united Empire. I feel that very strongly. I think we recognise that there are localities in which both black and white can live separately, and that we should have the best possible and most harmonious relations with the two races. In that way we shall maintain the unity of the Empire. I would like also to put it in this way: Taking the case of the Commonwealth—there was some years ago a very strong feeling, much stronger than there is to-day, of prejudice against Asiatics. That prejudice is very largely going. I think one of the reasons why it is very much less to-day than it used to be is because there is a better understanding, on the part of the statesmen in this country, of the position which we have taken up. There is not the same irritation caused by a wrong understanding on the part of our statesmen, or a wrong statement of the case by them of our position.

Irritating statements used to be made in the Press with regard to the position the self-governing Dominions take up on this matter. We have to-day a very much better feeling in that respect. We have been enabled so far to relax portions of Statutes in which any difference was shown with regard to the treatment of Asiatics and others. We have in two or three cases been able to carry Resolutions removing the disabilities which Asiatics were formerly under. So far has this been extended that we got a resolution through the House of Representatives to give Asiatics exactly the same privileges in Old Age Pensions as white persons. It was defeated ultimately, and it was not finally passed into law, but that was owing to accidental circumstances which I do not think will occur again. In every possible way we seek to place those who are resident in Australia in precisely the same position as other races. We aim at that. We are not able to bring it about all at once. Any attempt by resolution which we may carry here or any suggestions which might come from any extraneous source would not be helping that matter; it has to be the growth of public spirit in each of the self-governing Dominions.

There are some statements in the General Considerations which appear in the Memorandum which one could canvass and challenge; but I may say, speaking for Australia on this matter, that this policy of exclusion of certain races has come to stay absolutely, and has to be recognised; but, subject to that, we are anxious to assist in the way of free entry to visitors, and to remove any obnoxious restrictions or regulations which are referred to here. There is one reference on page 6: "If the question were not so grave, it would be seen to be ludicrous that regulations framed with an eye to coolies should affect ruling princes who are in subordinate alliance with His Majesty, and have placed their troops at his disposal," and so on. "But these Indian gentlemen are known to entertain very strongly the feeling that, while they can move freely in the best society of any European capital, they could not set foot in some of the Dominions without undergoing vexatious catechisms from petty officials. At the same time the highest posts in the Imperial services in India are open to subjects of His Majesty from the Dominions." I want to say in reference