

1st Day.]

IMPERIAL COUNCIL.

[23 May, 1911.]

The PRESIDENT : That is not true, is it ? There are not as many Chinamen as that, are there ?

Sir JOSEPH WARD : That is the last estimate I was furnished with.

The PRESIDENT : I understood the general opinion now was that all those estimates were very much exaggerated, and that the tendency was rather to diminish all the Chinese totals.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : That may be so, Mr. Asquith, but the last estimate I received was from one of the Chinese representatives, who in conversation with me a short time ago told me that they estimated their population at between 450 and 500 millions, and that was within the last six months. I have, however, for the purposes of my argument no objection whatever to reducing the numbers by 100 millions, or even more if necessary. It is the oversea Dominions to which I am alluding particularly, and I want it to be understood that I am specially referring to New Zealand. In making allusion to the other oversea Dominions, I am sure there are no representatives here who will do otherwise than recognise that in speaking of a matter of this kind one may without in any way derogating from the work they have to perform, make allusions in a general discussion upon this matter to any of the British Dominions without in any way attempting to put oneself in the position of speaking for any other country than one's own. But in dealing with this general question of the population in the oversea Dominions, I want to re-emphasize the fact that to-day our populations in all those countries are very small. If, with 13 millions of white people in countries that are so huge, so capacious, which present such fields for the settlement of people in the years to come, we were to deal with the matter upon the basis of the population of to-day, we would be misleading ourselves, and we would not be in a position to estimate whether it is right or necessary, either now or in the years to come, to have some different organization for the protection of the general interests of the whole of them in matters that are of Imperial concern, or of Empire concern.

We have to judge of the position partly on a population basis. We have also necessarily to take into consideration the intelligence of the people who occupy the territories; and we also have to be guided by the areas available for expansion. Now, Australia to-day is the size of Europe, nearly; and South Africa is nearly as great. Canada is much larger than the United States of America. And all these areas are governed by men who are inspired with the very strongest British instincts and with a great desire to see their countries carried on in the general interests of the people whom they represent; but all the time with an attachment to the Empire as a whole. We are all in that happy position. I am speaking from the standpoint of those here representing British countries with British sentiments, with British ambitions, and with the desire to see the future, as they evolve from their present state, as far as population and defence are concerned, strengthened and not weakened owing to the absence of some organized system of co-operation upon Imperial matters. I am anxious to see some system in operation that will enable all over-riding important Imperial questions to be dealt with in the general interests of all without interfering locally with any of the ambitions or wishes of our free people.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : May I interrupt you ?

Sir JOSEPH WARD : Certainly.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER : I did not catch exactly what argument you are endeavouring to draw from the fact that in Canada as well as the United States of America the population will be recruited from foreign elements.

Sir JOSEPH WARD : I did not say exactly that. I do not apply the argument specially to Canada, but to all the oversea Dominions. What I say is