

25 May, 1911.]

IMPERIAL COUNCIL.

[2nd Day.

Sir JOSEPH WARD—*cont.*

I want to take this opportunity of alluding—and doing it without offence to the people who are in the East—to the policy of New Zealand in connection with the Asiatic questions. I would like to dispel any wrong impression as to the reason why the policy of New Zealand is averse to admitting Asiatics, even including those who belong to a nation in alliance with Great Britain. The basis of the policy of New Zealand is, that all the rights of citizenship are conferred upon every adult within our shores. We are entirely governed by our own people; we have spent millions of money up to date in educating them and, to a very large extent, at the State expense, to enable them to discharge the duties of citizenship; and why we object to allowing a large number of Asiatics into our country is because, in the first place, we believe them to be entirely unfitted for the duties of our citizenship. As regards one great Eastern nation, we know in our country, and I presume it is within the knowledge of every man here, that the people of these nations are under obligations, enforced by oath, in the event of war arising, to take the side of their parent land even against the country they have made their home.

Now, in connection with this all-important matter of an Imperial State Council, I want again to emphasize the fact that, underlying the proposals I am submitting, I place the defence of the Empire as of the first consequence to all parts of it. That is why from the point of view of New Zealand I for one look forward with very great hope to the possibility, without in any way derogating from what any of the representatives of the overseas Dominions in the past have done, of naval co-ordination and co-operation, and of having a larger and more powerful overseas Navy than exists at present, with a view to preventing eventualities in the future; and also with the more important view, perhaps, of making for the peace of the whole world.

In the country I represent we regard this Asiatic question as of intense importance. We realise the fact that we are not very far away from these Eastern countries, and we also recognise that there is tremendous room in our countries, unless we are excessively careful, for the introduction of many millions of people whom we would not desire to have within our territory at all. In suggesting for the consideration of this Conference an alteration which I know is difficult to bring about, and which I realise and want to say at once cannot be done in a hurry, I do not believe myself that we can have the full benefit of a great Empire naval system under existing conditions. I recognise the very powerful condition of the British Navy; but I believe out in our own seas (and I say this in the presence of the representative of the Australian Commonwealth) that the system Australia is carrying out is not by any means the strongest one nor the cheapest one, and consequently not the most effective one, that can be established for the benefit of their country.

Mr. FISHER: Which system do you mean, the new one or the old one?

Sir JOSEPH WARD: I mean the new one, the sea one; I am not dealing at present with the land one, which I believe to be as fine as possible. My belief is that if we could only get rid of the present method of disjointed action, if we could have some recognised system to which we were all agreed, if we could lay down a comprehensive system for the purpose of defence, some of the minor difficulties which stand in the way of the respective countries, and some of the major difficulties also which stand in their way, could be overcome and a much more effective system brought into operation than at the present time exists. I believe myself that if we had a system by which the whole of our countries gave a *per capita* contribution towards the cost of naval defence (and again I say I do not refer to land defence at all) we should meet all the local conditions in the different countries by having ships built there, by having naval docks built there, by having everything excepting the armament of ships provided in our respective countries. I believe we could do it far more effectively by giving a *per capita* contribution, and so help to protect our own countries and the overseas routes, which is not being done at present, and which, in my opinion, cannot be done by the present method. If we could arrive at a decision to adopt a *per capita* contribution from the respective countries the outcome would be a British