

### Preference for British Settlers.

There is always a danger under our parliamentary system in every part of the Empire that when some unsuitable person gets in or something happens that is not altogether desirable it is brought to the notice of Parliament, and some general restrictive regulation is then passed which keeps out a hundred desirable immigrants for one bad one. I do hope that, at any rate, as regards British subjects there should be substantial preference as far as possible in making those regulations. Canada has done a good deal within the last few months to give that sort of preference in its restrictive regulations—for instance, as to the sum of money required on entry for British subjects as against aliens; and I do hope that we may be able to explore the possibility of going further in that respect.

### Need for Proper Selection.

Then, of course, there is another side of the question, coupled with the removal of obstacles, and that is the great importance of proper selection and proper direction when the settler gets out there, and the proper protection and help to him when he is arriving. There is no doubt that bad selection has a very unfortunate reaction on the whole movement afterwards. A few people go out who are thoroughly unsuitable. They are failures; they discredit the English migrant in the Dominion they go to, and the letters they send home, the bad remarks they make when they come home, discredit the Dominions over here. It is very important to get good selection. We have made great progress, between ourselves and the Dominion authorities, within the last few years on that; but there is, of course, still substantial room for improvement, both in the system of selection itself and the expedition of seeing it through. There is great importance in seeing that the people go to the right place, that they are given the right initial training, whether they go to carefully selected farms or whether it is possible to establish training-grounds away from the cities where they can get the rudiments of agricultural knowledge before they are placed with farmers. That and what Mr. Graham called the "follow-up" policy afterwards are very essential.

What I think it is very important to remember is that the indiscriminate system of migration without care does involve tremendous waste. There is an appalling waste of human capital and of actual capital when people cross the oceans, spend some years there, fail, and come back again: spend years in trying to make something out of a farm which is too far away from the railway to make it profitable. That farm ought never to have been occupied until the railway was within ten or fifteen miles of it. In all those ways there is a tremendously important field for guidance and for careful planting. After all, you may dump people in the cities, as the Americans have done, I think, with not too happy results. But when you are considering a policy which is mainly one of settlement on the land you have got to remember that a man can only be planted on the land like any other plant, and that great care has got to be taken that he is helped to take root properly.

### The Group System.

In that connection I should like to say a word endorsing what Colonel Buckley and the Minister of Labour said about the importance of the group system, meaning by that nothing in the nature of a communistic or a joint-stock system, but that of settling close together people who have got a common interest, whether they come from the same part of the United Kingdom or are united by other ties—say, belonging to the same service or the same regiment, or something of that sort. It is so essential in settlement to recognize the importance of the social and gregarious side of people. When you want people to contend with a wholly new and very difficult environment it is a great help that, at any rate, socially they should not feel too much among strangers. I do not mean they should not be well mixed up with the inhabitants of the Dominion to which they go, but that they should also be in sufficiently close touch with a sufficient number of people akin to them, and perhaps already old acquaintances, to feel at home socially when they have to struggle with the other new and unfamiliar problems. That is specially important in the case of the women. It is the friendly intercourse among women, the gossip about old associations even, that may see a colony through, and overcome difficulties which it would not otherwise face.

Then there is the other important aspect about the group system to which Mr. Bruce referred in connection with irrigation—namely, that closer settlement is very economical; it means a greater amount of production for the same amount of capital put into railways, and the same amount of capital put into schools and for every other purpose; you can get more out of the same scheme in the long-run, though it does undoubtedly require more Government care and supervision than any scheme of simply letting people take their chance and peppering them over the vast surface of the country. I think, too, that the group system lends itself more particularly to the settlement of those people who have got a little capital of their own and who have got considerable enterprise, and are not, except quite temporarily, content to work under others. Of course, as you know, in this country to-day, what with ex-officers and the great output of our public schools and the limited openings for the professional classes, we do turn out a very large surplus of young men of character, ability, good education, and energy, and if not with substantial capital at any rate in most cases just a little, which with some financial assistance will see them through a long way. I feel in that way, given its peculiar circumstances, South Africa has followed a very wise policy, and I am delighted to hear from Mr. Burton that she means to expand it still further, because she has gone in for the policy of attracting that very class of people with a small amount of capital, and in that way, without having to raise Government capital, she has in fact brought in something like two and a half millions of capital from this country with several hundred settlers into South Africa during the past twelve months.