

SUMMARY

Australian Federation and Naturalization Policy Inclusion and Exclusion of Immigrants

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This article reveals Australian immigration and naturalization policy mainly by examining the law-making process of *Naturalization Act 1903*, which established federal naturalization system and also by examining each colonies' naturalization policy before the Act.

Before the Act, each state had the authority to naturalize aliens to British subject. As rigid immigration and naturalization systems were not established at this stage, criteria and procedures were not so systematic and there were many differences among colonies. In this situation, each colony, especially South Australia, tried to facilitate naturalization of German migrants by reducing the naturalization fee. At the same time, some colonies, especially where there was large population of Chinese migrants tried to restrict their settlement by prohibiting them from applying for naturalization. In this early stage of Australian development, there was desperate need for migrants for development of Australia, but at the same time, the government of the day tried to restrict "unwanted" migrants such as Chinese. These two contradictory elements were symbolically found at each colony's naturalization policy.

At the establishment of federal naturalization system, the parliamentary debate on the *Naturalization Act 1903* shows that these two contradictory elements were the main reason of contentious debates. One of them was on whether the Commonwealth Government should automatically recognize those who were naturalized under states' legislation as naturalized under the federal legislation. There were two forces in the parliament on this: one was those who, mainly from South Australia, supported the automatic recognition to ensure the legal status of German migrants even though already naturalized Chinese were also recognized. The other force was those, mainly Labor parliamentarians, who supported unconditional application of "White Australia Policy" to use whatever means to restrict legal status of colored aliens and opposed to automatic recognition. As the result of fierce debate between these forces, automatic recognition was legislated and colored immigrants who have already been naturalized under the states' legislation could secure their legal status. However, there was also a contentious debate on prohibition of naturalization of colored aliens and this was eventually legislated.

These historical facts at the establishment of federal naturalization policy shows that it might seem that the principle of "White Australia Policy" was confirmed, there were a lot of variables in the actual process and its principle was never unconditionally supported. Rather, the principle itself was mainly derived from economic and political reasons, such as immigration settlement and regional development, not at all from racial hatred or discrimination.