

Judgment of the Lords of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on the Appeal of Rani Pirthi Pal Kunwar v. Rani Guman Kunwar and Another from the Court of the Judicial Commissioner of Oudh, Lucknow, delivered March 13th, 1890.

Present :

LORD MACNAGHTEN.

SIR BARNES PEACOCK.

SIR RICHARD COUCH.

[Delivered by Sir Barnes Peacock.]

THE circumstances of this case are very fully stated by the Judicial Commissioner in his Judgment, and their Lordships have very few remarks to make beyond those which the Judicial Commissioner made when he delivered that Judgment. He referred to the case of *Sri Narain Mitter v. Sri Mutty Kishen Soondery Dasse*, reported in the 11th Bengal Law Reports, page 190, and read the remarks which had been made by the Judicial Committee in that case. Amongst those remarks it was said, "It is
" not a matter of absolute right to obtain a
" Declaratory Decree. It is discretionary with
" the Court to grant it or not, and in every case
" the Court must exercise a sound judgment as
" to whether it is reasonable or not under the
" circumstances of the case to grant the relief
" prayed for. There is so much more danger
" than here of harassing and vexatious litigation
" that the Courts in India ought to be most
" careful that mere declaratory suits be not
" converted into a new and mischievous source
" of litigation."

" 62084. 125.—4, 90. Wt. 1260.

The Judicial Commissioner in exercising that judgment which the Judicial Committee had suggested ought to be adopted by the Courts in India thought that this was not a case in which in the exercise of a sound judicial discretion he ought to grant a Declaratory Decree, or that a Declaratory Decree ought to have been granted by the Court of First Instance, and he therefore reversed the decision of that Court and refused a Declaratory Decree. It appears to their Lordships that the Judicial Commissioner exercised a very sound judgment in what he did. All that is suggested by the learned Counsel on the part of the Appellant in support of a Declaratory Decree is this: that at some time or another after the death of the present Plaintiff, the person who according to the Plaintiff's contention is not an adopted son may by some means, either by an act of the Government or otherwise, obtain possession as an adopted son. The only object therefore of having a Declaratory Decree is to prevent him being put into possession. Their Lordships cannot assume that the Government, if petitioned to put the person claiming to be an adopted son into possession, would do so unless they saw that he had a right to that possession. The Officers of Government would in ordinary course, if there were any doubt as to the title, refer the parties to the Civil Court.

If the person claiming to have been adopted brings an action to enforce his title, the question will be investigated whether he was validly adopted or not.

Under these circumstances their Lordships think that there was no ground for this Appeal, and they will humbly advise Her Majesty that the Judgment of the Judicial Commissioner be affirmed.