

be as one in a desire to arrive at a real remedy that will be in the best interests of British Columbia, of the Dominion of Canada and of the British Empire.

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago I voted in favour of a bill to exclude, but I shall have to vote against this bill. Perhaps it is only fair to give my viewpoint and reason for taking an action that may seem to be not quite consistent. In the first place, I do not think the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill) has been quite candid in presenting his bill. He says that there has been no attempt to discriminate against any one nation. We all know that the Chinese are excluded; we all know that there is an arrangement under which the people from India do not reach Canada; we all know that in practice the only people from the orient who are coming in are the Japanese. I believe if I had the hon. member for Comox-Alberni by himself he would admit quite frankly that this is an attempt to exclude the entry of Japanese.

Mr. NEILL: That would be incidental.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Yes. I shall leave the hon. member to put that in his own way. Perhaps I could use the phrase used a good deal by my legal friends and say that this bill comes close to being colourable legislation. It is an attempt to achieve something which could not be accomplished by more direct action. I do not like the idea of rigid exclusion, but knowing British Columbia as I do, and as I have known it for some years, I realize that a feeling exists there at the present time that makes it unwise to allow any more Japanese to enter that province. We have to be realists in this matter; we have to recognize that there are a considerable number of Japanese already in the province who have not been assimilated. Under these conditions I do not think it would be in the public interests to admit more orientals to British Columbia.

I believe, and I have long urged, that those who are there should be admitted to the full rights of citizenship. I do not think we ought to allow people to come to this country, and become naturalized here, and have children born here and then deny them and their children the full rights of citizenship. As we in this corner have said again and again, we do not think there should be a law by which those people should be placed in an inferior position. But that is a different matter from allowing any large number of orientals, or any number, I think, at the present time, to come to Canada.

I agree with the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Mackenzie) that this bill would not in effect accomplish the purpose for which it is designed. Several years ago I spent some time visiting Japan, and in the larger cities I did not find any great difficulty in getting around by myself because such a large number of the people spoke English. If I recollect aright, English was a second language in the high schools, at least it was very commonly taught in the schools. As the minister suggested, it would be comparatively easy to train people in a knowledge of the English language; in fact, I do not think they would need to be trained, and hence there might be a much larger influx than under the present arrangement.

It seems to me that we have in this bill a great many undesirable features. If there is likely to be any criticism from Japan of our actions that might be dangerous in these critical times, undoubtedly the same criticism would apply to this type of legislation.

Under these circumstances I personally feel that I shall have to vote against this measure.

Mr. NEILL: Will the hon. member allow me a question? Does he not realize that the bill would not take the place of a quota agreement; it would be extra?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I do not know whether I quite catch the import of the hon. member's question.

Mr. J. S. TAYLOR (Nanaimo): I feel that before this bill goes to a vote I should say a few words. On a former occasion I took the very definite stand that no people should be allowed in Canada as citizens of this country who were not assimilable; and I cannot find in ethnological history any definite instance of Asiatics being fused with Europeans. I think that should be very carefully borne in mind, because the two continents are juxtaposed; and if the peoples, in thousands of years of association with each other have not produced a definite fusion, how can we expect orientals to fuse with our own European peoples? On these larger issues I very definitely pronounce myself opposed to the idea of introducing into Canada Asiatics to become citizens with ourselves. But if Japan, China or any other country having nationals in this country will forsake them, and if they will be prepared to qualify for citizenship in our country and be prepared to be assimilated into the citizenship of Canada, then I have nothing to say against them. But on principle I shall vote against this bill.

Mr. A. W. NEILL (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker,—