

*Immigration Act*

similar to that which has been enforced for thirty years in New Zealand and Australia. It is ridiculous to say that we shall offend anyone by exercising the provisions which have been applicable to orientals for many years so far as Australia and New Zealand are concerned. When the bill was up the other day I moved the second reading and there was no discussion as a point of order was taken. I shall say no more at this time, reserving my right to close the debate should any debate take place.

Hon. IAN MACKENZIE (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I desire to say immediately that whatever merits the previous bill which we have just discussed may have had, and I believe it has many, this bill has nothing by way of merit. In the first place, it would bring about the very opposite to what the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill) seeks to attain. The implied inference of this bill is to achieve a measure of exclusion by means of a language test. Any one who compares this bill with the legislation in force in Australia will realize immediately that there is a great difference between the two. The prohibition brought about by the legislation in Australia is well known to everyone here. This bill names the two languages which must be known, and it would be the simplest thing in the world for an oriental nation to train its intending migrants in the use of either one of the two languages mentioned here. Instead of having only 130 immigrants a year from the nation not named but designed to be named, we might have thousands and thousands coming into British Columbia under the provisions of the bill now before the house for consideration.

I was prevented from speaking on the previous bill because a point of order was raised the other night, but I desire to say now that after twenty years in public life in British Columbia I yield to no one in my realization of the gravity of this oriental problem. I desire to say further that this problem cannot be solved by the present measure of exclusion. It is a deep economic problem affecting the life and welfare of the people of British Columbia. I may say that I am charged with certain responsibilities as a minister of the crown, particularly with reference to the province of British Columbia, and there are certain aspects of the work of my department which at the moment I do not care to emphasize. It was with a full consciousness of those responsibilities that I took the somewhat difficult step of opposing the measure introduced by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni. Considering the problems that face us at the

[Mr. Neill.]

present time in this dominion, I am convinced that I have done the best thing for British Columbia and for the Dominion of Canada.

I shall go even further than that. We heard a most glowing and eloquent appeal this afternoon by the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Bennett) in connection with the responsibilities that must be ours as Canadians for the preservation of the interests of the British Empire. He quoted with emphasis some of the words of the declaration of 1926 with reference to the evolution of responsibility in connection with that famous declaration known as the Balfour formula, the reference to free association within the British Empire. My right hon. friend might have gone further and read the preamble to the constitution of the Dominion of Canada. The preamble of the British North America Act contains these words:

And whereas such a union would conduce to the welfare of the provinces and promote the interests of the British Empire.

We have two great duties to perform to-day in Canada. First, we must preserve the welfare of the union of confederation, the British North America Act itself. Then we have another duty, and in this I agree largely with what my right hon. friend has said, to preserve and maintain the interests of the British Empire. After twenty years of public life, I feel confident that the people of British Columbia know my feelings with reference to this matter. I feel confident I have taken the right position with reference to my province, with reference to my country and with reference to the interests of the British Empire. I feel I have taken the right stand in connection with this important but delicate, difficult and complex situation.

At the same time I desire to make this further observation. No government of the Dominion of Canada can afford to ignore this problem. If this problem cannot be solved by the means offered by the hon. member at the present time, it must be solved by other methods by whatever government is charged with the responsibility of the administration of the affairs of this country. I agree with my hon. friend in what he desires to achieve, but I believe that conditions are too grave and too serious at the present time to achieve the objective he has at heart by the method he has offered. From the point of view of British Columbia in particular this bill would make our position many times worse than it is to-day. This is a long range economic problem, and I hope that those of us who represent British Columbia in this house, regardless of our political persuasions or associations, will