

I came to the conclusion that we were common partners in the scheme, and, without nicely weighing the relative interest of the different parts of the empire in it, it is a scheme that so concerns the empire that, whether Canada is more or less concerned in it, if we are to take an interest in what concerns the empire, we should give this scheme our unqualified allegiance. I concur with the hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Tupper) that if anything should interfere with this scheme, it would be both a commercial and political calamity to the empire. And believing that other parts of the empire are quite as much alive to the interest of the whole empire as Canada is, the Canadian government and the Canadian people may safely assume that no party to the scheme will permit an enterprise such as the construction of a cable from South Africa to Australia to be carried out under such conditions as will imperil the cable scheme. It would be a great accomplishment to the empire to girdle the earth with a cable touching only British soil in its circle of the globe. It may be realized sooner than we expect to-day. Once this cable to Australia is completed, we practically have then a British cable from Australia to Great Britain, and but a small portion remains to be done to complete a British state-owned cable around the globe. I think we may confidently look forward to such a result. Whether the government, under the circumstances, having no official intimation of the concessions that are supposed to be granted, would feel warranted in making representations to the Imperial government as to what they should or should not do, is a matter that the government will seriously consider. It might be regarded as an unfriendly act by the Australian colony. It is to be borne in mind that the three colonies referred to are not parties to the Pacific cable scheme. There are four colonies which joined with Canada and Great Britain in that scheme, Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand. With them there are obligations that are perhaps not binding upon other parts of Australasia. It might be by them regarded as an unfriendly act on the part of Canada were we to interfere with a purpose they regard as of supreme importance to themselves. Therefore, we should approach that subject with great caution. Perhaps it would do more harm than good, and even defeat instead of advancing the object we all have in view, if we were to approach the subject in an unskilful way. However, I can tell the House that the views presented here to-day will be carefully considered by the government, and the government will continue, until the scheme is either successfully launched or defeated, to take a lively and active interest in its advancement.

Mr. MULOCK.

CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

Mr. E. G. PRIOR (Victoria, B.C.) I know that hon. gentlemen are anxious to get into supply, but I must claim the indulgence of the House for a few moments to make some remarks with regard to what I consider is a most important matter, in fact one of the most important matters before the Canadian House of Commons to-day, I refer to the immigration of Chinese and Japanese into this country. The hon. member for Burrard (Mr. Maxwell), when he brought up the same question on a previous occasion, said that members of parliament had many disagreeable duties to perform. It is a disagreeable duty for me to perform to have to get up every year in this House and bring this matter before hon. members; but I do so in common with all the other members from British Columbia, because we feel so strongly on the subject, and we know our constituents look upon it as a burning question. Last session when I was speaking on this subject I was constantly interrupted by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, and I believe by one or two on this side, asking me to stop, as they were tired of hearing it. Well, Mr. Speaker, if they are tired of hearing about it now, they would be still more tired if they had the same influx of Chinese and Japanese as we have in British Columbia to-day. I cannot find words properly to express the intense feeling that there is on this subject, especially among the working classes of British Columbia. As hon. gentlemen know, it is on the Pacific coast that all these undesirable immigrants land, and it is the working classes of British Columbia who are brought into competition with them in the various lines of industry they undertake. I may say that the people of British Columbia have a right to expect that the government should take some stand in this matter to try and stop the influx of these men; they have a right to expect it, because the right hon. gentleman who leads the government has promised that action would be taken. I remember very well when, just before the election of 1896, a telegram was sent, of which I have a copy here, from Vancouver. It was as follows:

Vancouver, May 23, 1896.

Hon. Wilfrid Laurier,
Windsor Hotel, Montreal.

Do you favour restriction of Chinese immigration and reserving Canada for Canadians, and not the Mongolian race?

(Sgd.) J. C. McLAGAN,
Editor Vancouver 'World.'

The answer came back as follows:

Montreal, May 25, 1896.

J. C. McLagan, Vancouver, B.C.

Chinese immigration restriction not a question in the east. Views of the Liberals in the west will prevail with me.

(Sgd.) WILFRID LAURIER.