

mentary procedure, thought was not of sufficient importance. But I hope the hon. gentleman will not accuse me of doing the same when he has heard the subject I am bringing up. On the 26th of last month I asked the question in this House:

1. Is the Government aware that fourteen statutes, viz., chapters 39, 44, 46, 73, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88 and 89 passed by the local legislature of British Columbia on the 27th February last, and received by the hon. the Secretary of State on the 27th April last, contain a clause prohibiting the employment of Chinese and Japanese in connection with the undertakings referred to in said statutes?

2. What is the policy of the Government in regard to the disallowance or otherwise of said Acts?

The PRIME MINISTER (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). The Government is aware that a number of statutes of British Columbia passed in the present year contain clauses prohibiting the employment of Chinese and Japanese. These statutes are now under the consideration of the Department of Justice, but no report has yet been made.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to impress upon the right hon. gentleman the necessity that exists for an early opinion on that question of disallowance. The uncertainty that is engendered by Acts being passed and left in suspense, neither allowed or disallowed by the Dominion, is of great consequence to a large number of employers of labour in British Columbia. The fact that under some of their charters they were not allowed to employ Japanese and Chinese, makes it impossible for them to get capital in the old country until this matter is settled. I should like the right hon. gentleman to get from the Minister of Justice as soon as possible his opinion, or the opinion of the Council of his own Government, as to the advisability of allowing or disallowing these Bills. I will say that I myself am strongly in favour of restricting this immigration of Japanese. Now, the Japanese are, I may say at the outset, very much superior to the Chinaman in many ways. They are better men to come into the country, if there is any better about it, because they are a superior class. They use more of our eastern goods, they dress more in our way, they assimilate with our people a great deal better than the Chinese. But the trouble is that they come into the country as paupers, if not as serfs and slaves, and they are willing to work for a mere pittance in competing with white workmen in all sorts of labour. Now, in my opinion, and in the opinion of seven-eighths, at least, of the people of British Columbia, that is a great menace to the welfare and the well-being of, at all events, the working classes in the Dominion of Canada. Of course, I am aware that the Imperial Government has seen fit to put its foot down on any restrictive measures, and I suppose their action precludes the possibility of excluding these Japanese. I am sorry myself to see that the Government were obliged to veto these Acts. I know, as

good British subjects, as members of the British Empire, we should bow to the superior authority of Great Britain; and I suppose that the Imperial authorities know what is best for the Empire in doing as they have done. But I must say that I sincerely hope that means will still be found whereby the tide of these men, a tide that is bound, I believe, to increase very largely and very rapidly with the means of communication we have across the Pacific—I say I hope means will still be found to keep that tide back. Not only do I believe that the workmen of the Dominion are menaced by this kind of immigration, but the manufacturers and merchants of this country are also menaced. The two Asiatic races across the Pacific, China, and especially Japan, have, in the last two or three years, awakened fully to the necessity there is for them to compete with the older countries; and with their ability, for there is no doubt these men have ability, with the cheap wages, the starvation wages they are willing to work for, they will certainly become dreadful competitors of the white race on this continent, unless some means are taken to offset that competition.

But, Sir, there is another, and, to my mind, a still greater danger than from the Japanese, that is from the "yellow spectre," as it has been called, or the Chinese race, of which there are over 400,000,000 living across the Pacific from our coast. For years a cloud of them have been coming across to our country. They come here and take the places that, in my estimation, should be held by men of our own flesh and blood. Now, perhaps, the House is tired of hearing about this Chinese question.

Mr. GIBSON. Hear, hear.

Mr. PRIOR. I think hon. gentlemen who say "hear, hear," do not know as much about it as I do myself, or as other members who come from British Columbia.

An hon. MEMBER. We are tired of hearing it.

Mr. PRIOR. The fact that you are tired will not stop the British Columbia members from bringing this matter up year after year.

Mr. SUTHERLAND. You were not so active when you were in the Government.

Mr. PRIOR. I beg your pardon. If the hon. gentleman will look up "Hansard" he will find that I have spoken exactly as I am going to speak now, not, perhaps, in the same words, but to the same intent, when our party was on the other side of the House, and as I have spoken on every hustings in British Columbia where I have spoken at all. Now, Sir, this subject has been before the House for at least twenty-five years. It has been brought up by every member of Parliament that British Columbia has sent to represent her in this House. Mr. DeCosmos, Mr. Roscoe, Mr. Bunster, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Shakespeare, Mr. Baker—every one of us