

der such circumstances I ask my hon. friend (Mr. Borden, Halifax) whether it is not good policy to try and promote friendly relations between Canada and Japan. The conditions would have been very much different if the Japanese government had not undertaken to act in a friendly manner towards the government of Canada. The Japanese government went out of their way to prohibit their own people coming to Canada. They did this as a friendly act towards Canada. They wanted to preserve the good relations that existed between us. Under these circumstances was it not good Canadian policy, not from considerations of imperial interest, but from considerations of Canadian interest, to take such action as was calculated to promote the best interests of Canada and not to irritate people who wanted to have friendly relations with us. What was the cause of irritation between us and Japan? It was that there were Japanese subjects coming to Canada who were settling in British Columbia and working in competition with our own workmen, where their presence is not welcome. They have undertaken to remove that cause of irritation by preventing their own people from coming into competition with our workmen, and under such circumstances, it seems to me that the action of the British Columbia legislature was, to say the least, ill-advised, that it was not calculated to promote the best interests of Canada, or those friendly relations that ought to obtain between two neighbouring nations, such as Canada and Japan are, because, after all, we are neighbouring nations. For this reason we represented to the legislature of British Columbia that if they were to restrict their action to Chinese immigration, that if they were to except Japanese immigrants from their legislation, we would not interfere, leaving them to exercise their own will in regard to Chinese immigration. It did seem to us that it was an ill-advised action to still persist in giving a slap in the face to the imperial government of Japan by including Japanese labourers in their legislation. The action which we took was dictated not only from considerations of imperial interest but from considerations of Canadian interest.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). It almost seems to me that the right hon. gentleman, in the attitude which he has taken, was constituting this government as a court of appeal from the British Columbia legislature. Assuming as we have right to assume, that this legislation was within the competence of the legislature of the province of British Columbia, my right hon. friend, nevertheless, suggests that because they did not really understand their own affairs, this government has the right to reverse their legislation. Upon what ground? Because Japan is a neighbouring nation, and because we may expect to have some trade with that country in the future. Well, I thought

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that my hon. friend was a more pronounced champion of provincial rights than to adopt an attitude of that kind. Here is the province of British Columbia acting admittedly within its legislative rights.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. That is not admitted.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I am dealing with the question in the light in which the Prime Minister has placed the matter before the committee. The ground that has been placed before the committee is that this legislation was properly disallowed, because it is ill-advised and not in the interests of Canada. I respectfully submit that the legislature of British Columbia is the judge of that, when it is acting within its jurisdiction. If we are to have another ground put forward, we will deal with that when it comes, but I am now dealing with the ground that has been taken up to the present time. If it is a good reason for disallowing such legislation that we are to have a trade with Japan that circumstance might also be a reason for asking the Japanese to revoke the restriction which they have made, and if the probability of trade is made a good ground for disallowing this legislation, why is it not a good ground for rejecting the legislation which the right hon. gentleman is introducing now, because, I suppose we have as good reason for supposing that we will have a trade with China as with Japan? I do not profess to be very familiar with trade questions in reference to these two countries, but I should imagine that perhaps we have as much trade with China as with Japan and possibly more. It does not seem, when looking at the question of the disallowance of the British Columbia legislation, that very valid reasons have been put forward by my right hon. friend. I would think that the considerations, if they are purely Canadian considerations, which he has put forward, are not a sufficient justification for the action which he has taken, and if there are more than Canadian considerations, in questions, if there are imperial considerations in question, then, I repeat again, as I said before, that I know of no imperial interest which touches this legislation emanating from the province of British Columbia which does not equally touch the legislation which has been enacted in the colony of Natal and in certain of the Australasian colonies.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE. I would like to draw the attention of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden, Halifax) to the fact that the first disallowance of British Columbia legislation of this character, as far as I recollect, took place in 1884, and I would like to read an extract from the report made at that time by Sir Alexander Campbell, then Minister of Justice.