

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the wording of the resolution moved by the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. McQuarrie) is as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the immigration of oriental aliens and their rapid multiplication is becoming a serious menace to living conditions, particularly on the Pacific coast, and to the future of the country in general, and the Government should take immediate action with a view to securing the exclusion of future immigration of this type.

I read the resolution in order to emphasize its limitations rather than its extent. The resolution contemplates the exclusion of immigrants of a certain class—the limitation of immigration. Immigration has a well-known meaning, it has a defined meaning in our statutes. Within the confines of that definition there would not be included many of those referred to by the Prime Minister, in the address that he has just finished, as of the class who should not, in the common interest, and in the common international interest particularly, be forbidden from our shores. The resolution does throw into the arena of this House the question of restriction as against the question of exclusion, and the House must decide between the two. I am not here to argue for a moment that a question of this sort should be a matter of party controversy. The Government of which I was the head maintained a policy of restriction. That has been the policy of Canada up till now—that is to say it has been as respects the Japanese. At the same time we had, in the development of our nation, reached the stage when we must come to a conclusion as to whether we are going to have the exclusion as permanent residents of oriental aliens or not. We have to decide it. If we are going to pass a resolution in favour of effective restriction we really pass a resolution in favour of just what we are asked to do. We pass a resolution against taking further steps, by such means as the Government may devise, of going farther and stopping immigration, as such, from oriental alien lands.

Now I know it is a serious step to take; it would have been taken years ago had it not been a serious step. If this House decides that there has transpired in these years sufficient to convince us that we must in our own defence take this action then it is for the House of Commons to say so—not in terms of offence to any land but

in terms of firmness and terms of decision. I propose to inquire very briefly whether we have reached that stage or not, and I propose to state my views in language that will be, I think, clear, in language that certainly will not be offensive, and I hope in language that will be very brief. In discussing this question it is needless to affirm that we must use the utmost care that no language be adopted that is unjust, and that offends the susceptibilities of any nation or any people in the world.

The resolution has to do with the relations between the British Empire and two great nations, China and Japan. There is a special reason as to both of them why we must be careful that the good relations now existing may continue. As to China because we have been parties at the recent disarmament conferences, to action there looking to the rehabilitation of that country, and its elevation again to the front rank of nations. Canada has taken a leading part in that work. Our relations with China have always been friendly. We pray that they may always be so.

As to Japan, there is perhaps still greater reason, not at all because she is a stronger power, but because the intimacy between the Empire of which we are a part and the Empire of Japan has been greater than it has been between that Empire and China. We have been historically—that is looking back over two or three decades—allies of Japan. We were allies under the Anglo-Japanese treaty until the winter that we have just passed through, and under the ægis of that alliance we joined hands together in the greatest war in history. Under the terms of that alliance, Japan stood at a great price true to her obligation and assisted magnificently our own Empire and all the allies in the struggle. Japan particularly took part in that measure of defence that had to do most directly with our own safety as a dominion here. Japan lived true and stood square with all the burdens of the Anglo-Japanese alliance: that is to say, in so far as they particularly related to our country, at least.

Nor have I any complaint to make at all as to the manner in which Japan has conducted herself as bearing on what is known as the Gentleman's Agreement conducted by yourself or rather arranged by yourself, Mr. Speaker, back in the year 1907. I had not heard before that there was any cause of complaint over Japan's fidelity to that treaty. I believe with the Prime Minister that Japan stood true to