

terpretation put on it by the member for Kootenay, but in the meantime the letter might speak for itself. It says:

I have to give your government the renewed assurance that the Japanese government are not desirous of forcing their people into British Columbia against the wish of the province, and that they are willing to enter into an agreement with your government by which they may bind themselves if their present policy of rigid restriction is not deemed satisfactory to your government.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. Will the hon. gentleman allow me to ask him a question?

Mr. BRISTOL. Delighted.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. Is not that very letter protesting against legislation on the part of the legislature of British Columbia?

Mr. BRISTOL. I am not able to give my hon. friend the information because I am not conversant with the particular reasons why that letter was written.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. You should not discuss it then.

Mr. BRISTOL. Pardon me; I am discussing that letter as a letter telling this government that the Japanese government were prepared to enter into a binding agreement and I am commenting on it in that light.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. That is the very thing they have done under the Lemieux negotiations.

Mr. FOSTER. Where is the binding there?

Mr. BRISTOL. Is my hon. friend (Mr. D. Ross) asking a question or making a speech? The hon. gentleman says that is done under the Lemieux agreement, but I do not understand it so.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. I refer to the agreement with the Postmaster General.

Mr. BRISTOL. I do not quite so understand it. I will read this letter again for fear my hon. friend (Mr. Ross) has forgotten it.

I have to give your government the renewed assurance that the Japanese government are not desirous of forcing their people into British Columbia against the wish of the province, and that they are willing to enter into an agreement with your government by which they may bind themselves if their present policy of rigid restriction is not deemed satisfactory to your government.

That letter was dated March 30, 1903, and is as I understand part of a series of written assurances which the government rely on to say, that having these assurances it was unnecessary for them to protect themselves in the Japanese treaty. My hon. friend from Kootenay (Mr. Galliher) also referred to the report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese immigration in 1890, and I trust I may be permitted to call the attention of the House to a part

Mr. BRISTOL.

of that report which he omitted to read, and which I think is the most important part of the report and that which bears most materially on the matter under discussion. It is as follows:

Nothing further is needed to settle this most difficult question than some assurance that the action already taken by the government of Japan will not be revoked.

That, of course, is the essential thing. To say that such is the policy of a country is one thing; it is another thing to say that that policy will not be changed. Hon. gentlemen opposite, from their experience of the past fifteen years, can give some evidence as to whether policies of governments are liable to be changed from time to time, even without any reason. We will not discuss that point at any length; but it is an obvious absurdity to take from a government such a statement of policy when everybody knows that a government has a right to change its policy at any time on such an important matter as immigration or on any other matter. Therefore, the commission put the case properly by saying that if the Japanese government would agree not to revoke that policy, the interests of Canada would be protected.

Then, coming down to 1905, we find the government negotiating another treaty with Japan, for reasons which have not yet been stated to this parliament. I assume that they must have been actuated by substantial trade reasons, or by some reason, in entering into such a treaty; so that the country could compare the advantages of this treaty on the one side with the disadvantages of Japanese immigration on the other side. Assuming that the government had some reasons of a counterbalancing character in their minds, we find that on July 14, 1905, at the time the matter was under consideration, Secretary Lytton sent the following communication to the Governor General:

Referring to your confidential despatch of June 7, should Japanese government be informed that your government wishes to adhere to treaty of 1904 and supplementary convention 1895 under same terms and conditions as Queensland in 1897, which Japanese government then agreed to extend to any other colonies adhering within prescribed period, namely: (1) that stipulations contained in 1st and 3rd articles of treaty shall not in any way affect laws, ordinances and regulations with regard to trade, immigration of labourers, artisans, police and public security, which are in force or hereafter may be enacted in Japan or in colony; (2) that treaty shall cease to be binding as between Japan and colony at expiration of twelve months after notice has been given on either side of desire to terminate same. Or are your government prepared to adhere absolutely and without reserve, as would appear to be the case from speech of Minister of Agriculture in Canadian parliament, June 22?