

in Canada coming out to join them upon approval of the Japanese consul at Vancouver; third, merchants and students duly qualified. Within these bounds, even according to the most extreme views which may be entertained in British Columbia, no harm can come from Japanese immigration, because no Japanese immigration except what is here specified is possible; therefore, it is not necessary at this time to pass any legislation to prohibit that class of immigrants. For these reasons we maintain that restriction only to Chinese and not to Japanese immigrants.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I would like to ask the right hon. gentleman on what the action of the government was based in disallowing the recent acts of the British Columbia legislature? Perhaps he will be good enough to give us information as to what the acts were which were disallowed.

The PRIME MINISTER. I cannot at this moment, speaking from memory, state the nature of the Acts. Speaking in very general terms, the Acts which were disallowed were of a nature which prevented Japanese and Chinese working in the mines. We had had communication several times with the government of British Columbia to the effect that if they would restrict the operation of their Act to Chinese labourers only and exempt the Japanese labourers, we would not object and would not disallow the Act; but if they were to continue to apply these restrictions to Japanese labourers as well as to Chinese, we thought such legislation would come into conflict with our views upon the obligations which rested on Canada as part of the British empire. Japan being an ally of Great Britain, we thought it extremely inadvisable to pass any Act which might cause friction between the empire of Japan and the British empire. Of course if the Japanese government had refused to take any action and had allowed the subjects of that empire to flood the British Columbia labour market, we would have been probably induced to reconsider our own views. Representations were made by our officials, at all events, I may say that verbal representations were made by myself to the Japanese consul. In view of the fact that the Japanese government had prohibited their own people from coming to Canada, we thought that there was no necessity for enacting such legislation, and therefore we took the action that we did. I have had further communication with my friend, Mr. Prior, the present premier of British Columbia on this subject, and I hope that in future any legislation that may be passed in British Columbia will be confined to Chinese labourers, and in that view we have notified the government of British Columbia that we see no cause to interfere.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Did the disallowance take place upon the initiative

of this government or was it upon representations of the imperial government?

The PRIME MINISTER. I have not looked at the correspondence for some time, I am not aware that we have any correspondence upon the subject, but I think it was done upon our own initiative.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Does the right hon. gentleman consider that the statutes passed by the British Columbia legislature went beyond the provisions of the statutes which are now in force in other colonies, for example in the colony of Natal, and I think in some of the Australasian colonies?

The PRIME MINISTER. Beyond its legislative powers.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Mr. Chairman, is there any really good reason why the province of British Columbia should not have the same rights in regard to legislation of that kind—I am speaking from the standpoint of the empire, not from the Canadian standpoint alone—is there any good reason why British Columbia should not exercise the same rights in regard to legislation of that kind as are at present exercised by the colony of Natal? My right hon. friend is aware of course, that the Act which is enforced is printed in this report and I understand that it goes very far indeed towards the exclusion of immigration, even to the prohibition of Asiatic labour. I would like to understand, if this disallowance took place from the imperial standpoint, and I would gather that from the right hon. gentleman's remarks, why it is, that these imperial concerns more directly touch the province of British Columbia than they do the colony of Natal or the Australasian colonies, to which I have referred. I am as ready as my right hon. friend would be to give all due weight to imperial interests in regard to legislation of that kind, but I have been unable to understand why these interests would more directly concern the province of British Columbia than the colony of Natal or the Australasian colonies.

The PRIME MINISTER. The reason seems to be a very obvious one. The action taken by the Canadian government in this matter was not dictated solely from the point of view of imperial interests, but solely from the point of view of Canadian interests. The geographical relation of Canada to Japan is very different from the geographical relation of Japan to Natal. We intend to have a trade between Japan and Canada. We intend to bring about a development of the relations which exist between that progressive people and our own people. We have steamers plying to-day between this country and the orient, steamers which are subsidized by this government. We have at present in Japan exhibition commissioners who are trying to promote trade between Canada and Japan. Un-