

the east, so far as I know, cares whether we have in the western provinces of British Columbia a Chinese immigration or not. I repeat what I said in 1896 that Chinese immigration is not a question with us here in the east and upon that point I was quite willing to allow the views of my friends in the west to prevail and be my guide. But with regard to Japanese immigration I will insist that the conditions are altogether different from Chinese immigration, and this is what I reproach my hon. friend with, that he should not have made the distinction—and there is a wide distinction—between Chinese and Japanese immigration. He himself this afternoon has given the reason: Japan is no longer a nation that we can treat with contempt or indifference. Oriental nations have been long dormant but they are now wakening; Japan indeed is fully awake, and Japan insists on being treated as one of the civilized countries of the world. That is not all: Japan is an ally of His Majesty the King. This alliance was completed some fifteen years ago after due deliberation, and if to-day, which God forbid, there was to be a war in the orient or in the Pacific ocean in which it would be the fortune of Britain to be engaged, the heroic Japanese fleet would be by the side of the British fleet. This is not all: we have a commercial treaty with Japan, that treaty was urged upon us from all sides, it was approved in this House without a word of dissent. To-day we are enjoying the advantages of this treaty, we are selling goods to the Japanese, we are selling flour, we are selling lumber, we are selling cattle; and these goods do not come from British Columbia alone, they come from the province of Ontario, and all other provinces of the Dominion. At this moment Ontario is sending cattle to Japan. Under these circumstances I say that this question is not at all a question for British Columbia alone, it is a question which interests the whole people of Canada whether in the east, west or centre. It is a Canadian question, nay it is an imperial question. It is with this that I charge my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) that he ignored all these things and put the Japanese question on the same level as the Chinese question. Sir, I do nothing of the kind. I say we cannot ignore the situation which has arisen, we cannot to-day treat Japan as we might have done 25 years ago or even less. But whilst I recognize that we must treat Japan with all respect, whilst I recognize Japan as an ally of our country, whilst I recognize Japan as a friendly nation with whom we have friendly and commercial relations, at the same time I am well aware that race prejudices are slow to die and that there are race prejudices in the west against the Japanese population. I do not share them, I say to my friends from British Columbia—I say it openly—I do not share those prejudices. But I know they exist and we must take full account of them.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

If we take no account of them, if we allow Japanese immigration to go unchecked, we are liable to have disorders as we unfortunately had some time ago, disorders which might create irritation between ourselves and Japan.

What then is our duty? Our duty is to pursue the course that we adopted some six or seven years ago when we passed the last Chinese Immigration Exclusion Act, I think in 1900. By that Act we put a capitation tax on Chinese immigrants. We were urged by some of our friends to apply the same rule to Japanese immigrants and to impose a capitation tax on them also. We refused to do so, for the reasons I have just given, that Japan to-day is one of the civilized countries of the earth, that it is an ally of the King, that it is a country with which we could have large and increasing trade relations; but at the same time we asked the Japanese authorities themselves to restrict their immigration to this country, so that we could avoid the clashing which might take place and, indeed, has taken place recently. This understanding was come to in 1900 and it has been preserved. I shall some day give, confidentially, communication of the correspondence on this subject to my hon. friend. This understanding has been kept up to this year; I do not think it has been violated. Few immigrants have come from Japan to this country since 1900, perhaps 500 or 600 per year, but this year there has been a sudden influx of several thousand which unfortunately has caused a ripple, nay, a great deal of agitation in British Columbia. I do not believe the position taken by my hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) was logical or was anything but an appeal to passion and prejudice. What did he say? He repeated to-day the language he used in British Columbia. He said either the government deceived the House or they should ask the repeal of the treaty.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Should be in a position to ask for it.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. In a position to ask for repeal—I say nothing of the kind. My hon. friend had no reason to suppose that we had deceived the House, and he should not have hinted that the treaty should have been withdrawn. Why, Sir, is that treaty of no use? What is the position of British Columbia to-day? British Columbia has no neighbour except the orient. It has several growing cities—Vancouver, Victoria, Prince Rupert within a few years, all with magnificent harbours, all hoping to develop a large trade. With what country are they going to trade? Where is their trade coming from to-day? I venture to say that the greater part of that trade, the imports at all events, comes from the orient. This is a good reason why we should retain good relations with Japan, and the suggestion that we should repeal