

In this connection I want to draw attention to a remark of the leader of the opposition and of the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), in reference to a letter written by Mr. Nossé, in which he undertakes to bind the Japanese government. As this letter was written in connection with a protest from the Japanese government with regard to proposed legislation against its subjects, how can it be construed as an undertaking on the part of Mr. Nossé to agree to any legislation by this government to restrict such immigration when the very letter itself was in reference to the objectionable legislation?

Mr. SPROULE. It seems to me it makes no difference whatever in discussing that question. Did he not agree to enter into an agreement?

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. If the hon. member will carefully read Mr. Nossé's letter he will find that, though couched in very polite and diplomatic language, he is not writing with the same ease and accuracy that he would use in writing his mother tongue. I think it was scarcely fair on the part of the leader of the opposition and the hon. member for East Grey to put a meaning into the word 'blind' which all the surrounding circumstances show was never intended. Mr. Nossé has at all times assured this government that the government of Japan was willing voluntarily to restrict emigration to this country, and therefore he objected to any hostile legislation on the part of the British Columbia government or of this government. If that is the tenor of all his letters, how can you read the meaning into Mr. Nossé's letter that he is willing to bind his government?

Mr. SPROULE. I have read it carefully, but I do not see how you can come to any other conclusion. It says:

I have received a cable instruction to the effect that 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.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. I am sorry I cannot convince the hon. member for East Grey, I did not expect I would be able to do so. But at the risk of being tedious, I will repeat my argument. Mr. Nossé is writing to this government—I have not the correspondence before me, but I remember it well—in connection with the proposed legislation against the Japanese. He is also writing to this government protesting against the legislation proposed in the province of British Columbia. That is his reason for writing to the government, and he points out that Japan has voluntarily restricted immigration into this country, that it will continue this policy of voluntary re-

striction, and that therefore there is no necessity for any legislation of that kind being passed. If that is the reason for Mr. Nossé's letter how could any reasonable man read into that letter such a meaning as the hon. member for East Grey wants to convey unless he is anxious to take advantage of the peculiar wording of that letter written by a gentleman not using his own mother tongue? Let us go a little further. Mr. Speaker, when this government took steps to secure the ratification of the Japanese treaty they did not do so without being urged by hon. gentlemen opposite to secure the ratification of this treaty. The hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. S. Barker) spoke in this House about the disadvantages under which people doing business in this country were placed by reason of the fact that this treaty had not been entered into. In May 29, 1905, he refers to difficulties that certain constituents of his had in getting goods into Japan. There was considerable discussion in the House at the time and the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) confirmed a statement which I recently made in reference to the causes which induced the government not to ratify the treaty. A question was asked by the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) which is as follows:

Does my hon. friend recollect what was the chief factor in causing this action of the government, what possibilities they would have let themselves in for had they accepted the treaty and at about what time this occurred?

The hon. Minister of Finance replied:

Some years ago. It relates to the operation of the favoured nation clause, and also my recollection is that it affected our freedom of action on the labour question.

When the government decided to ratify this treaty as they were bound to do, they intimated to the imperial government that they were anxious to secure its ratification. The first thing the imperial government did, through its Secretary of State for the Colonies, was to ask this government if they wanted the treaty absolutely and without reserve or with the clause which had been granted to Queensland. Hon. gentlemen make a point of this; as far as the correspondence originally brought down is concerned, it does show that such a suggestion had been made by Mr. Lyttelton, but the correspondence now shows that in the interval between the receipt of this telegram from Mr. Lyttelton and his reply, Mr. Nossé, the Japanese Consul, sent a letter to the government in which he said that he understands that the government is going to ask for this reservation, that he hopes they will not ask for it because Japan will not now grant it and that he is still willing to undertake on the part of his government to carry out the restrictions which have been satisfactorily working up to that time, and that notwithstanding the