

*Oriental Aliens*

the Government should consider very carefully the advantages which might thereby be lost, and whether it is really necessary to sacrifice those advantages in order to attain the object which hon. gentlemen who have spoken have in view. We are asked to make appropriations for facilities of trade with the Orient for the ports of Vancouver, Victoria and Prince Rupert. We are asked to do a great deal for the cities on our western coasts. For what reason? Because they claim that the trade with the Orient is a growing trade, and they hope to see it expand even more and more. Is it advisable, if it can be avoided, that the Government should take any step which may prove a barrier to the development of trade between Canada and the Orient? I submit that Parliament should consider very carefully the effect upon the possible development or commercial relations between this country and the Orient, of every act that it may enact or propose.

In the present treaty I find the following clause, which has already been mentioned by the hon. member for Centre Vancouver (Mr. Stevens):

Nothing in the said treaty or in this Act shall be deemed to repeal or affect any of the provisions of the Immigration Act.

Now, that may refer to the Immigration Act as amended up to date, or it may refer only to the Immigration Act as it existed at the time this agreement was adhered to on behalf of Canada in 1913. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that by negotiation with the Japanese government it will be possible to ascertain whether the Japanese government have any objection to that clause being construed as applicable to the immigration laws of this country as they may be amended at any time. I am inclined to think they will take that view, but if they should not do so, then I think it would be time to consider whether in the national interest that treaty should be abrogated.

But the further step that is suggested is that we should abolish what is called the Gentleman's Agreement now existing between Japan and this country. I am somewhat surprised at the statements which have fallen from the lips of some of the speakers this afternoon to the effect that the Japanese government have not lived up to that agreement. In this matter we have to consider very carefully the source from which the Japanese immigration into British Columbia has come, and to what extent the prevention of further immigration is likely to be effectively

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

brought about through the abolition of an agreement to which at the present time the Japanese government is a party, and which I believe the Japanese government have adhered to loyally.

One hon. member mentioned that a few years ago there were a very large number of Japanese in Mexico and that today they had dwindled down to a very few. He asked where they had gone, and the assumption was that they had gone into the United States. If that be true, it cannot be suggested that these Japanese went into the United States in violation of any agreement existing between that country and Japan for which the Japanese government were responsible. They got in through evasions of the immigration laws, apart altogether from the agreement between the United States and Japan. May it not be equally true in regard to British Columbia that the Japanese have been coming in there from the United States, apart altogether from any attempt on the part of the Japanese government to stimulate immigration to this country from Japan?

When I investigated the causes of immigration from the Orient some years ago, under royal commission, I found that practically all the immigration that had come to Canada from Japan had been at the instance of private companies, apart altogether from any action on the part of the Japanese government. I think we should be careful in a discussion of this kind and of this importance to discriminate between immigration that may owe its origin to evasions, which would not be affected at all by any change in an existing agreement, and to immigration that can be put down to some deliberate effort on the part of the Japanese government to ignore an agreement to which it is a party. I wish to say that I think the Japanese government has been wholly honourable in the manner in which it has carried out the terms of that agreement, and I do not think unless we are very, very sure of our ground, that we will help to solve this question by attributing any false step or imputing any wrong motive to the government of another country, particularly a country which has been our ally for years, and which, as was mentioned by one or two of the speakers this afternoon, rendered our country vast service at a very critical moment in the course of the last few years. We will gain more in the long run by recognizing the difficulties and endeavours of other gov-