

law, as far as it had the power to go, but also the report upon this subject of their own Commission. And if, sir, our seven members, who were elected in 1904 to represent this Province in the Dominion Parliament, had on that critical occasion done their duty, they would have risen in their places in the House and pointed out to the administration and to the members of the House generally, that it was a fatal mistake in the best interests of their constituents to pass such a treaty. (Hear, hear.)

Canada Was Exempted.

There is only one other matter, sir, to which I wish to call the attention of this House, and it is a very peculiar circumstance, and it is this, that this treaty was originally negotiated in 1894. That is to say, that the Imperial Government had entered into this binding treaty with the Government of Japan as early as the year 1894, when it became a treaty, or law, as far as the Imperial Government and the Government of Japan were concerned. But, sir, provision was carefully made in this treaty, expressly exempting this great Dominion of ours from its operation. (Hear, hear.) Canada, sir, I will repeat, was expressly exempted in this treaty, which was at that time entered into between the Imperial Government and the Empire of Japan (hear, hear), and for thirteen years no necessity was perceived, as far as Japan and this nation—for we can fairly call ourselves a nation in that sense of the word (hear, hear)—for altering the condition of affairs. And why, sir, I will ask, was a change now resolved upon? And I would particularly like hon. gentlemen opposite to explain why this change in policy was considered necessary by the administration of the day at Ottawa? For, sir, I have never yet seen—or heard given in public debate—any good and valid reason why, after thirteen years had elapsed from the making of the treaty, its terms should at that particular juncture have been made to apply to Canada, allowing the Japanese to come freely into this country, and our citizens to go into their country—Japan. Indeed, sir, there was, on the contrary, every reason why this treaty should not be brought into force. As far as the East, sir, is concerned, the people there are not interested in this class of immigration; and there was every reason in the interest of British Columbia why this treaty should not receive the approval of and be passed by the Dominion House.

Remains Dead Letter.

For thirteen years, sir, it remained a dead letter. For some good reason,

and I presume that it was on account of this very question of immigration, Canada had been expressly exempted from its provisions. We were left by the Imperial Government to decide for ourselves whether we would enter into this treaty or not. And now, after thirteen years had gone by, only last year, in 1907, the Dominion Parliament was induced by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his Liberal administration to apply the provisions of this treaty to this country—the Dominion of Canada. (Hear, hear.)

It has been suggested, sir, and I am not here to say what truth there is in the statement, in the public press, and in public speeches, and it may be a fact, that at this particular juncture the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company wanted cheap labor in this country in order to complete a portion of their road on this Coast and to the boundary of our Province, and so, after thirteen years, the Dominion Parliament, controlled or advised as it is to a great extent, by that great railway corporation, thought, perhaps, that it was in the interests of that corporation, as well as of those who wish to get cheap labor in this country, to bring about that consummation in this particular fashion, and at that particular time. (Hear, hear.)

Conservative Position.

But, sir, taking that statement for what it is worth, I hope that the House will pardon me for referring for a moment to a debate which took place in connection with this particular treaty. It has been stated, sir, in this House, that the Conservative party is quite as much to blame as the Liberals themselves for the passage of this treaty. I am not here, sir, to make excuses, either for the Conservative party or for any of the members of it in the Dominion House, for anything which they may have said or done when that treaty was before them, except to point out that members of the Conservative party were not then, as they are not now, in control of the majority in the House of Commons at Ottawa, and are consequently not responsible for its legislation. (Cheers.) And hence, so far as members of this party are concerned, no responsibility can, in my opinion, be fairly cast upon them at all. (Hear, hear.)

Sir Wilfrid's Assurance.

The excuse, however, which they give, and I do not really know how correct it may be, is that they were persuaded to acquiesce in the application of the terms of this treaty to Canada by the assurances of the first