



TOPICS OF THE TIME

Drawn by J. W. Bengough.

Something About the Japanese

THE protest of British Columbia against the immigration of the Japanese is based upon sound economic and political reasons. Messrs. Macpherson and Galliher have the sympathy of most Canadians in the protest which they entered in their interview with Sir Wilfrid Laurier last week, but their cause will not be strengthened by mob violence.

There are doubtless employers in British Columbia who do not look with unfavourable eyes upon an influx of cheap and fairly efficient yellow labour, especially as in the Pacific Provinces white labour has proven anything but tractable. There are employees who oppose Japanese labour on no broader principle than they oppose the immigration of all labour that is liable to compete with them and to lower wages. But independent of both views, there is a provincial sentiment, deep and irresistible, that the tide of Japanese means, economically, the driving out of the white population, not through superior skill and industry, but through ability to work for lower wages; and means, politically, that the Province is securing a population incapable and unwilling to perform the duties of citizenship and maintain the political standard set by the rest of the Dominion.

A large proportion of the present incoming Japanese are from Hawaii, and, fortunately, statistics are at hand to show what kind of people they are. Their low standard of living may be taken as the primary objection to the Japanese. In Hawaii the Japanese plantation labourer pays from \$6.00 to \$7.00 per month for board. It costs about \$10.00 a month to provide a Japanese man, wife and two children with eatables. They would use every month one or two bags of rice—probably Japanese rice which they prefer to that grown in Hawaii—which would cost \$4.75 one month and \$9.50 the next. In addition they buy soy, dried fish, a little of the cheaper cuts of fresh meat which they stew, a good many beans, canned goods and preserved provisions. (Note:—Bul-

letin of the Bureau of Labour of the United States, No. 66, Page 475.)

In Honolulu the scale of living is more expensive. There are numerous Japanese hotels that have charges ranging as high as fifty cents a day, but these are for the aristocrats. There are Oriental labourers in Honolulu who do not spend more than a dollar a month for lodgings. With these schemes of living it is very difficult, if not impossible, for the white labourer to maintain a struggle for existence.

The Japanese are not content to remain common labourers. In Hawaii they have entered the skilled and semi-skilled trades. In Honolulu the making of men's garments and boots and shoes is almost entirely in their hands. White labour is being driven from the building industries and the Japanese are generally engaging in all-skilled employments. Nor are they content as employees, but as entrepreneurs and merchants are successfully engaged in manufacturing and mercantile pursuits. As a consequence, much white labour and capital has been driven from Hawaii and the Islands have failed to make the economic and political progress expected from their annexation to the United States.

A large number of Japanese are now leaving Hawaii for British Columbia because they expect to better themselves. They have no love for Hawaii. They have taken no direct part in its political life. The history of Hawaii will be the future of British Columbia unless—

We all recognise the difficulties of the situation. No one better than Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Honourable Frank Oliver has a keener appreciation of the requisites of citizenship. We imagine the plain, unvarnished language with which Frank Oliver of the "Edmonton Bulletin" would express his views if he had not become a Privy Councillor of his Majesty—the ruler of an empire pledged to a strong alliance with the realm of the Mikado. It is one thing to diagnose the disease and an-