

unenviable position. He was the one who, according to his own statement, devised the defective arrangement which was made in connection with this matter, and handed down to this Government and to this country the problem which has now grown to such dimensions that it affects not only British Columbia, but the whole empire. I lay the blame for this absolutely at the door of the hon. gentleman who trifled with this matter when it was first brought to the attention of the country in a very strong manner in 1907.

Mr. KNOWLES: Does my hon. friend know that last year we had five times as many Hindu immigrants as we had in the last year of the Laurier Administration?

Mr. STEVENS: The hon. member for Moosejaw is quibbling.

Mr. KNOWLES: Order.

Mr. STEVENS: I submit that the hon. gentleman is quibbling, and I will point out the grounds upon which I think he is doing so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Such an assertion is not permissible.

Mr. STEVENS: I submit to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I submit, however, that the assertion of my hon. friend which throws out the inference that this Government is lax in its duties with regard to immigration, is not founded on fact. Hindu immigration into Canada was limited for a number of years to two, three, four or five a year. In 1913, through the manipulation of the courts, a bunch of Hindus managed to get in—38, I think.

Mr. KNOWLES: Eighty-eight.

Mr. STEVENS: Call it eighty-eight if you wish, but I do not think that is the right figure. A large number of these were Hindus who had been visiting in India, and who were entitled to return to Canada. I think the newcomers were limited to a very small number, and these, as I say, got in during a little confusion caused by the court's upsetting the Order in Council. So that the hon. member for Moosejaw has not made any very great point by his assertion. I repeat that the blame, if there is any, is entirely at the door of the hon. gentlemen who failed to deal with this question when it was fairly before the country. During the last twenty years the people of British Columbia have been urging upon the Canadian Government to pass such legislation or put in

force such regulations as would effectively keep the Asiatics out of Canada. What was done? An Order in Council, drafted by the hon. member for Rouville, was passed, and the strength of that Order in Council lay in the provision that no emigrant could come to Canada unless he came by a direct route. The hon. gentleman knew, and the Government of which he was a member knew, that there was no steamship line running direct from India to Canada, and that, therefore, this regulation would keep the Hindu out and at the same time render the Government immune from attack upon the ground that they were passing regulations against the interests of the Hindus, who are supposed to be subjects of the British Empire. I say that that regulation, which was nothing more or less than a farce in so far as its dealing with the question was concerned, was the cause of the whole trouble. If my hon. friend will read the memorials that have been submitted to this Government, to the British Government and to the Government of India, they will find that in every case this particular regulation has been cited as an iniquitous procedure on the part of the Government. It is now up to this Government to rectify the muddle, shall I say, in which the whole problem has been placed by the action of hon. gentlemen opposite.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. STEVENS: When the House rose at six o'clock, I had pointed out that if there is a problem at the present time of an imperial character in connection with the Asiatic question, the responsibility for the existence of that problem rests with hon. gentlemen opposite, and that had it not been for the loose manner in which this question was dealt with when it was in a critical stage about 1911, the question would not have been in the condition it is in to-day, and the problem would not have been as acute. I hold that it was the duty of the Government of that day, and it is the duty of the present Government, to place the immigration laws in such a condition that no question can arise as to their validity or intention, such as we experienced in the months of November and December last. I recognize fully that this is a very important question. I realize the significance of its international aspect, and I appreciate the difficulties which face any Government which undertakes to deal with