

Chinese Immigration

posed by the member for New Westminster. I want to say, as far as I am concerned, that I am not offering this position in the way of captious criticism or in order to add to the minister's perplexities, but with a genuine desire to try and solve this point—for I think this is really the main point in the whole bill, if we could solve it. Then the bill would probably be a step forward in the handling of this problem. I still maintain together with no doubt many others—I think all the other members from British Columbia—that the position Canada must come to sooner or later—and I believe it is long past due—is the position of exclusion. I cannot see any other way of surmounting this difficulty. But the government is offering this bill with assurances that it is doing its utmost, and we are desirous of meeting them, for the time being, half way without abandoning our principles in the matter. But we do wish to make this a fully effective measure—that is, that the intent in the minister's mind and the intent, I think, in the minds of most members of the House, shall be carried out. Now, unless the minister has something more effective to give us in connection with this sub-clause C it will be necessary, I think, to find some amendment during the consideration of this bill by the committee.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I might take advantage of this moment to say just a word as to the point of view from which the government has introduced this legislation. In dealing with the subject of immigration from the Orient there are two aspects which it seems to me, the committee will do well to keep more or less continuously in mind. First there is the aspect of our international relations with the great countries that lie on the other side of the Pacific. There is the other aspect, which perhaps appeals more immediately to us, of our own economic conditions and the problems in this country that arise therefrom, particularly where certain classes of our labour are brought into competition with labour from countries which have standards different from our own. As long as we keep these two points of view clearly in mind and distinguish between them—as my hon. friend who has just taken his seat has in the main distinguished—I think there should be little difficulty in solving the problem as between the Orient and ourselves. If, however, we lose sight of the international aspect and use expressions—either unguardedly or for other reasons—which are certain to be repugnant to peoples of another part of the world. I am afraid that instead of helping to relieve a very serious situation we shall only be cre-

[Mr. Stevens.]

ating—perhaps not for ourselves but for others—a situation which will be infinitely worse.

For years past it has been recognized that it is not in the interest of Canada to admit to this country large numbers of persons from the Orient. Different methods have been attempted to restrict immigration. One method adopted in the case of the Chinese was that of imposing a poll tax, not of a very large amount at the outset, but which has amounted to something like \$500 in recent years. That was found to be an ineffective method. So far as that method is concerned I would like to say to the committee it has always seemed to me it was objectionable from a point of view altogether apart from any economic consideration. It was objectionable that a country calling itself a Christian nation, should attempt in such a manner to deal with a problem which immediately affects oriental civilization. I could never see how Canada, from any self respecting point of view, could impose a poll tax on working people coming from another country, and at the same time have its population subscribe to funds for missionary purposes to teach the heathen the most elementary principles of Christianity. The government has shared that view, and has felt that any indignity of the character of the imposition of a poll tax upon a people in any other part of the world was something to which we, as a Christian community, should not lend our approval. So we have decided to abolish the head tax for that reason if for no other.

However, from the economic point of view, the position we have taken is that the head tax is ineffective as a method of restriction, and that some more effective method should be adopted. The question has mainly to do with industrial problems; with the classes of oriental labour that come into competition with our labour. Hon. members will perhaps recall that when the Chinese Minister resident at Washington recently visited Ottawa, he gave an address in these buildings in which he announced that speaking for China, he was prepared to say, that China would forego the privilege of sending a single coolie or wroking man into Canada rather than sacrifice the friendship of this country, if the sending of any labour whatever into Canada was liable to be at the cost of that friendship. He took the broad view that what the Chinese were anxious for was the good-will of other countries with whom they hoped to have dealings of different kinds. He recognized the immigration problem, and he said quite frankly that the Chinese people would not take offence at a law which was