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SHIP FULL OF INDIANS FOR CANADA.

EN ROUTE FROM HONGKONG TO TEST CANADA'S LAWS.

There arrived at Shanghai at the end of last week, and was to sail on Tuesday last for Canada, via Japan ports, the *Komagata-maru*, with 175 Indians from Hongkong. The ship was to gather up 200 at Shanghai; at Nagasaki, she was to take fifty from Manila; and will gather thirty others in Japan. She was to stop at Moji to take on coal for sale in Canada, and after touching here is to sail for Vancouver direct.

The charterer of the ship is one Gurdit Singh, who to a *China Press* reporter told the story of his venture.

He goes, according to his own story, to test the justness of the British authorities toward all their people. Chief Justice Hunter of Canada made a decision on November 24th last that Canada under present laws must leave the door open to all British subjects. Since that time there have been violations of that ruling, and Indians who have sought to make British Columbia their home have been deported contrary to law.

"Now," said Gurdit Singh, "we will see whether the law will be violated. If we are admitted we will know that the Canadian Government is just. If we are deported we will sue the Government, and if we cannot obtain redress we will go back and take up the matter with the Indian Government."

"And what then?" interposed the reporter.

"I cannot answer," was the response, and a laugh went around the circle of dark faces.

"They stopped us in Hongkong," stated the interpreter, "by holding back our passenger certificate. That is why we are a week late, and we have been put to great inconvenience. The Governor of Hongkong would not let us go until he had cabled to the Governor-General of Canada. The Governor-General of Canada communicated them with the Imperial Government, and word came back to Hongkong to let us on as we had planned. We have our own medical officer aboard, and each of the passengers must have a certain sum of money with which to start out in Canada. We have merchants, farmers, machinists, men who can work in the saw-mills and men of many trades among our number."

PLANS MANY VOYAGES.

The charterer explained also that this was only the initial voyage. He plans to follow it with others from Calcutta to Vancouver, carrying cargo and passengers, and is contemplating two ships on the run, depending on the treatment that he gets at the hands of the Canadian Government. On this trip he desires to get a cargo of lumber to take back to Calcutta from Vancouver.

There were other expressions from the Indians standing about which showed that the idea possessed them all that a British subject was a British subject whether he lived in India or South Africa or Canada, and was to be treated on terms of equality, permitted to live and go where he chose in the British Empire.

That the feeling of this ship-load of Indians is one that will make an issue in the near future is amply evidenced from other sources. "If the British Imperial Government endorses the policy of Hindu exclusion from the colonies it will precipitate the fiercest revolution in the history of the world," declared Professor Sudhindra Bose, of Iowa University, on February 14th before a committee of the Congress of United States met to discuss the question of Hindu exclusion from the United States. He was appearing to oppose such exclusion on the ground that the Hindus were a kindred Aryan people who were entitled to the rights of British subjects.

CANADIANS OPPOSE PLAN.

And just as the Indians are growing more persistent on the proposition as they see it, Canada and the Canadians become more emphatic in the matter of exclusion. The Royal Commission appointed to investigate the question of immigration to the country last month advised the total exclusion of the Asiatic races—a conclusion reached as a result of the conviction that the Asiatic peoples cannot be absorbed into the western communities even though they become Canadians by legal process. Still more recently it has been reported as coming from a member of the Canadian Parliament for British Columbia that the people of British Columbia would go to the last lengths in resisting Asiatic immigration.

Whatever is the outcome of the issue which is becoming vital, the *Komagata-maru's* voyage will be followed with interest by the world as she steams to the Canadian shores.