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911 Nicola Street,

Vancouver, B.C.,

Novr. 22nd. 1906.

Under Secretary of State for India,

Whitehall, London, S.W.

3. Falk Warren, retired Colonel (Royal Artillery) to Under Secretary  
of State for India, Vancouver, 22 November, 1906

Sir,

I desire to bring to your notice the condition of a considerable number of the immigrants who have arrived in British Columbia from the Presidency of Bengal (India). The number of these has steadily increased during the year ; the S.S. Tarter on the last voyage brought no less than 729. There are now between 2200 and 2500 in the Provinces of British Columbia all come from the Punjaub, they are mostly Sikhs. None are allowed to land who are destitute, so all have some ready money in hand, some as much as thirty pounds or more. They arrive here clad in cotton clothes such as are used in India, quite unprepared for the rigors of a Canadian winter. Hundreds are now wandering about in clothes quite unsuitable for the climate. They are a stout, able-bodied set of men. A large proportion are ex-soldiers. Their conduct has been exemplary. I am not aware that a single one has been convicted of any crime, however slight, but they find a difficulty in obtaining employment owing to the different class of work that is carried on here, their ignorance of the tools and machinery used in logging and agriculture and also to their almost entire ignorance of the English language.

The fact of their coming to this country shows

the



the enterprise and daring of the men as also their trust in seeking work in countries under the British flag at such a distance from their own homes.

The advent of these men has, as may be expected, been vehemently opposed by the whole labour element of this country, whose hostility to these immigrants has sensibly affected their chances of employment. A campaign of calumny and vituperation has been, and continues to be engineered against them, to which the politicians who seek to maintain the labour vote are forced to submit. This action bars the Punjabis from much employment. At the present time, some 400 are out of work. These suffer from insufficient shelter, food and clothing. The cold adds to the distress, and illness will certainly ensue. This means that the local Government will probably be called upon to render them assistance, which can only be supplied by an addition to the supplementary estimates.

Under these circumstances, I venture to suggest that some provision be made to meet the circumstances of the case. There is a strong effort being made by one party in British Columbia to prohibit the entrance of these men to the country but it is very improbable that such a discrimination against British subjects can be adopted. It is more likely, so it appears to me, that immigration of this kind from British India might be restricted and regulated. Whatever steps may be taken in the end, it would appear advisable for the present to discourage the present flow, and to do so it would be well to warn the communities in the Punjab from whom these men come, of the true condition of affairs in British

Columbia,



Columbia, namely

That the labour market is limited.

That the climate is rigorous in winter, far colder than the Punjaub.

That a good outfit of clothes and some ready money is necessary.

That the quality of labour is different from that in India, and that not more than half wages can be earned at first.

That a large proportion of labour is laid off during the winter months.

That a certain knowledge of English is advisable if not necessary.

I would further recommend that some one with a thorough knowledge of the Punjabi district be appointed to receive, look after and secure labour for the immigrants at Vancouver, to take charge of such as become incapable of supporting themselves, and carry out their repatriation to India when necessary ; also to act as an interpreter in the Courts.

I attach a cutting from a local newspaper which will sufficiently explain the condition of affairs at the present time.

I have, etc.,

(sd.) Falk Warren.

Colonel, late R.A.