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Extract from a despatch to the Times of London

Vancouver, March 20th, 1908.

The present deplorable situation in regard to Asiatic immigration makes plain speaking necessary. Talk about racial ideals and racial antagonisms, philosophic dissertations on the differences between Orient and Occident, judicial summings up of the arguments for and against "coolie" labour on the Pacific Coast - all this is very well, but the danger has become too acute, the peril too real for anything but facts. I will admit that I am writing this while I am in a condition of extreme indignation. I have taken the trouble (it was very easy) to find out what Canadians and Americans should have found out months ago. I have learned something of what the Asiatics are thinking and saying and writing about the treatment to which they are being subjected. The knowledge is startling. Most of the intelligent people of the Pacific Coast, when they desire to justify the anti-Asiatic agitation, declare that they want the Coast to remain a "white man's country" for their children and their children's children. But what is the real legacy which they are preparing for those children, and for the British Empire, and for the world?

It is a legacy of hate. At a time when Japan has taken a place among the great powers, when China is beginning to realize her strength, when there is increasing unrest in India, the white inhabitants of British Columbia and of California are treating the Asiatics, collectively and individually, in a manner that may lead in the not distant future to a terrible reckoning. How the Japanese regard the insults which their countrymen have suffered here and in the United States we know, but not enough attention has been paid to the effect in India and in China of the treatment to which Indians and Chinese have been and are being subjected.

All, of course, in the ultimate analysis, depends on the treatment of the individual. Here is a typical case. Narain Singh served for thirteen and a half years in the Indian army. He has the Malakand and Somali medals. He sailed for British Columbia before the passage of the "Natal Act." He arrived with his papers all in order, and on landing with seventeen other Indians he was held in the detention pen. Then, on being admitted by the Dominion Immigration Officer, he was arrested by the Provincial officials, taken before a magistrate, and sentenced to pay a fine of \$500 or to undergo a year's imprisonment. He went to prison and, on the Courts declaring the Natal Act unconstitutional, was released on sufferance. That is to say, if the Province wins its appeal he will again be arrested and have to serve his sentence. In the meanwhile he is kept under supervision. Narain Singh has one brother who served in the army, and who retired on full pension. Two brothers have served five and six years respectively in a foot regiment, and a fourth brother has served four years in a cavalry regiment. What sort of letters does one suppose Narain Singh is writing to those brothers, and what is likely to be the effect of the letters on the brothers and the brothers' companions?

Sohon Lal, an educated Indian, formerly a teacher in a Middle School, is now in the detention shed here. He came, with 182 of his countrymen, on the steamer Monteagle. A few of the 183 Indians were found to be suffering from trachoma, while a few others did not possess \$25 apiece. These were deported on the Empress of Japan, which sailed last Wednesday. The others are in the detention shed. About half of them were not allowed to embark on the first steamer from Hong Kong after arriving there from Calcutta, and had to wait in Hong Kong for a month.

The Dominion authorities construe this accident as making the Indians liable for deportation, as they did not come "direct from the land of their citizenship." The other half came direct from Calcutta, and the Federal authorities have ordered their deportation because neither they nor the Canadian Pacific Company have been able to supply positive proof that the Indians arriving here are the same Indians who bought the tickets in Calcutta. It would probably puzzle the average traveller, not provided with a letter of credit, to obtain "positive proof" on short notice that he is the person whom he claims to be. Sohon Lal is one of those who came here direct, spending only four days in Hong Kong. He and the others at the detention shed are almost starved. The facilities for cooking there are primitive, and not intended for any large number of persons, and Sohon Lal is lucky if he gets a single meal a day. What sort of letters is Sohon Lal writing to his friends and relatives at home?

Behari Lal, a young and ambitious Indian, well educated, desires to go to London to study law. He was in the police force at Suva. He has been in the detention shed here for the last ten days and, under the Order-in-Council, his deportation has been ordered. If he has to go back Behari Lal is hardly likely to be an enthusiastic worker in the cause of order and loyalty.

I watched the Dominion Immigration Officer examine the 183 Indians from the Monteagle last Sunday. He is a kindly man, and the struggle between his humane impulses and the orders he has received from his superiors makes his work very painful to him. The Indians were placed in a long line and marched in. If a man passed the examination for trachoma and had shown \$25 he was sent away in one direction; if he had trachoma he was put into a separate pen; and if his resources did not amount to \$25 he went in a still different direction. The first man examined was a splendid specimen of the Sikh soldier, straight as an arrow, with three medals on his breast, his beard twisted and wound about his ears. He saluted like a piece of machinery, and passed the tests with no trouble. Of those who followed him it was easy to distinguish the old soldiers on account of their correct salutes. The others tried to imitate them, but the effect was grotesque. It was, however, surprising to find what a large number were actually old soldiers. None of these were suffering from trachoma, but a few did not have \$25. It made no difference - out they had to go into the deportation pen. Half a dozen medals gained in the service of the Emperor did not weigh against the lack of even a dollar of the required amount.

The rest were passed by the Immigration Officer, and he had made up his mind to allow them to enter the country when he received a telegram from Ottawa instructing him to deport all of them. He ordered the Canadian Pacific Company to ship them on the Empress of Japan, but the Company obtained a preliminary order nisi from the Chief Justice, and another battle over immigrants is now being fought in the Courts. The opinion among lawyers is that the Indians will be allowed to land. After two or three weeks here will they feel any more gratitude and loyalty to the British Empire than if they were sent back?

In the first place, they will be herded together in quarters not fit for animals - the people of Vancouver will not let them have any better living place, and then complain that the Indians are dirty, and that their unsanitary habits are a menace to the community. If an Indian goes into a barber shop the proprietor is as likely as not to tell him with an oath to get out. They will not, in all probability, be insulted in the streets but they will be made to feel in a thousand small incidents

that they are pariahs - unfit to breath the same air as the white man. The people of British Columbia are by no means naturally cruel, but, "We must harden our hearts," they say, "else this Province will become an annex of Asia." Even insults in the streets are not uncommon. A Sikh priest, for instance, was assailed to-day by some ruffianly telegraph linemen, who made his white turban a target, while Prof. Kumar who has come to America to study the educational system of Canada and the United States, was recently pelted by some hoodlums.

I talked to-day with three or four Indians whom I found on Hastings Street. Their gratitude towards me for showing some little interest in them was pitiful. "Sahib", one of them said, "they are treating us like dogs. What have we done? Are we not under the British flag?" Another of them showed me a letter he had written to a Vancouver newspaper, which promptly refused to publish it. The little mistakes in construction and spelling cannot take from its pathos. The writer tells how eighteen of his countrymen "had to spend over \$200 in lawyer's fees to get release from the gaol." He speaks of the Indian's "birth right in British Empire", and declares that the condition of his countrymen in the detention shed is terrible. He shows, with the mastery of logic that the natives of India possess, how absurd a thing is the Order-in-Council, but, as its absurdity is now admitted even by advocates of exclusion, it is hardly worth while to quote his argument.

The Indians spoke of their countrymen who were sent back on the Empress of Japan. "They will all be homeless men when they reach India," they said. "They mortgaged all their land in order to get enough money to come here." And one Indian added fiercely: "I tell you if we are not good enough for the white man's country the white man is not good enough for our country." The man who said this was no Bengali agitator, but a Sikh. There are however two or three Bengali Nationalists here. One man in particular I have in mind, a dangerous and able person, who finds the Indians here, angry and suffering, very ready to listen to him. "The average white man is sadly deluded if he imagines that he has any monopoly of fine feelings," said a well-known Indian administrator who passed through Vancouver a couple of days ago on his way to Asia. "As a matter of fact," he added, "these Indians are proudly sensitive." He had been talking to a number of Sikhs whom he found in the streets, and had been shocked by what they told him. Before he sailed he saw the reporters of the local newspapers, and said to them: "Let me warn British Columbians to show respect to these proud old Sikh pensioners. Do not give them the impression that they are exiles in a foreign country. Both races revere the same flag. Do not aid the cause of the disloyal agitator in India. By doing so the whites our here may be the cause of starting a conflagration that might sweep India."

All this of course has nothing to do with the question whether the immigration of Indians to this country is of benefit to the country or the Indians. That question has been discussed before. I will only repeat what I said after making first enquiries last October - that so far as climate is concerned British Columbia is perfectly suitable to the Indians who have come here.

It is even harder to make out what a Chinese really thinks than it is to learn the sentiments of an Indian, but a certain little incident appeals to me as being suggestive. Your New York correspondent recently described the sale by auction of the "Conger loot". In this part of the world we know a good deal about the Congers and their affairs, as when

the late Mr. E. H. Conger retired from the diplomatic service he made his home in California. The splendid collection sold in New York did not comprise the whole of the treasures which the Congers obtained in China. There was for instance a certain rug which Mrs. Conger sold some years ago and which, it is said, provided her with enough money to buy a house in Pasadena. In those days the family of the ex-Minister to China were more careful about talking of their proceedings in Peking, and the word "loot" was not used. Even now it is always carefully explained that the Minister himself had nothing to do with the purchase of the loot. It is a beautiful picture - the diplomatic representative of a great Power virtuously refusing to give way to temptation, but looking on with a benevolent smile while his family grab all the stolen property they can get.

But this is a digression. The point is, the Chinese here know all about the Conger loot and the auction sale in New York. There is a little Occidentalized Chinaman in Vancouver whom I will call Ah Lee. His hair is cut in Western style, he dresses in the neatest of serge suits, and speaks perfect English with no trace of accent. He lives in an apartment furnished with mahogany chairs and tables, excellent silver and cut glass, whisky and soda, the works of Herbert Spencer and the Court records of British Columbia. With it all he remains an unmistakable Chinese.

I dined one day last week with my friend Ah Lee and half a dozen Chinese merchants. We were talking of porcelain, and I mentioned the Conger collection. Ah Lee himself had not heard of it, but he translated what I said to other Chinese and one of them, beaming amiably, described two or three of the objects in the collection. ~~Another of the guests, then another, then a third, took up the conversation, displaying knowledge of the subject. I remembered that, with the exception of a bell from the Temple of Agriculture in Peking, none of the objects in the Conger collection had been of surpassing interest or importance, and I could not understand, until suddenly one of the Chinese (there had been a good many "yom poys") dropped the mask. It appears that the whole subject had been discussed at length in the local Chinese newspapers, and I learned that China has not forgotten and will not forget.~~ Another of the guests, then another, then a third, took up the conversation, displaying knowledge of the subject. I remembered that, with the exception of a bell from the Temple of Agriculture in Peking, none of the objects in the Conger collection had been of surpassing interest or importance, and I could not understand, until suddenly one of the Chinese (there had been a good many "yom poys") dropped the mask. It appears that the whole subject had been discussed at length in the local Chinese newspapers, and I learned that China has not forgotten and will not forget.

A strange circumstance in this connection is that the Chinese seem to be all the more infuriated against the United States because that country after the boxer outbreak made great profession of being China's only friend. "To be robbed: that is nothing" said one of the guests at the dinner; "but for the robber to come next day and say he is your friend ----"

I wonder if I am right in thinking that this incident was significant - and alarming.

(The above is a copy of a despatch mailed by L. W. Crippen, special representative of the London Times, to that paper on Saturday the 21st. March/08 from Vancouver, B.C.)

W. B. Jones
March 22nd/08