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229 W.L. Macrae to W.D. Scott

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VICTORIA

1324 Johnson Street,

Victoria, B. C.,

Victoria 15 March 15th, 1918.

Dear Sir:-

About a year ago I was one of a deputation of Clergymen and others interested in the moral and social reform of the City, that waited on the Government here, respectfully but earnestly urging that the grievance, under which the East Indians in this Province are suffering, be removed, by permitting in limited numbers the wives and children of those now resident here, coming into the country. A few days after this I was informed through your office here, that there is absolutely nothing in the statute books to prevent the women any more than the men coming here, and the reason why there are none of them here is that the men have not come forward to request their admission.

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When I communicated this fact to the men, some of them promptly said, "It is not true, the Government is not sincere in saying that, for even if our wives were able to obtain transportation they would not likely be allowed to land, and would in all probability be turned back as was done on a former occasion."

ⓐ Some time after this, however, a few of the more reasonable men made application through me for the admission of their wives, among them Amarsingh, a trusted and highly respected workman in the Victoria Steam Laundry. All who know Amarsingh can testify that he is now a much better citizen than many white men in this City. Today I am informed through the Immigration office here that Amarsingh's application cannot be further considered. Why I do not know, unless it be that on the ship on which Amarsingh

came to this country there were two others of the same name, and it cannot be determined with certainty which of the three the Amarsingh in question is. If this is the ground on which the application is declined they cannot be blamed if they interpret this as a subterfuge. I now feel positively unable to communicate this fact to him without a blush of shame on my face.

In this city, as in all large cities, there is a class of low down immoral women, who knowing the condition of these men, set all kinds of traps, in order to get their money. They have tried their hands on Amarsingh, but so far he has kept himself above reproach. I know however, of six men in this city -- and goodness knows how many others there may be throughout the Province-- who were good, upright, clean living men, when they came to this country some nine or ten years ago, but are now reduced to the lowest depths of vice and sin through these wretched conditions. This I regard as the direct and legitimate fruit of the Government Policy, for had these men been allowed to have their own wives with them here, this condition of things would be impossible. Only two weeks ago I learned that the wife of one of these six men died of a broken heart in India, when she learned of the degradation of her husband.

It should be remembered that many of these men have brothers and relatives fighting our battles at the Front. One man carries about on his person a picture of his younger brother who was recently killed in action in Mesopotamia. Can you blame these men on seeing Chinese and Japs with their wives and children on the streets indignantly asking "Why is it that these people who have no claim on the British Government enjoy privileges in this country

that are denied to us?" You also may remember that the Court, in the Punjab, India, in pronouncing judgment on some eight or nine men, who were convicted of conspiracy, said in substance, "This conspiracy was hatched in California under German influence and that the cause of it was very largely the unfortunate condition of things in Canada." ⊕

Where is the wisdom of keeping a power magazine under the relations existing between the Mother Country and her largest and fairest Colony, especially in these trying times? Had this conspiracy succeeded, Canada would now be under the heel of the merciless "Hun." As I know how much it means morally and politically, on the ground also of common decency and British fair play, I beg, I entreat, I implore you to reconsider Amarsingh's application, and to give more sympathetic consideration to the other applications now in your hands as they are all worthy men and not one of them has had anything to do with any phase of sdition in this Province.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. D. Scott, Esq.,
Supt. Immigration,
Ottawa, Canada

W. L. Macrae

P.S. I enclose a brief editorial from the Montreal Witness, Jan. 8th, 1918.