

Clipping from China Press of Shanghai
12 April 1914

Gurdit Singh sails on Tuesday with 400
whose entry Dominion Opposes

IT IS ONLY A TEST VOYAGE

If Successful Two Ships Will Be Employed
to Transport Natives.

Anchored in the river at the outlet of the Yangtzeppoo Creek is a ship about to start on a long journey which is likely to be fraught with interesting consequences. The steamer is the Komagata Maru, chartered by a wealthy Indian, Gurdit Singh, and bears four hundred Indians, who propose to test once and for all the right of British subjects in India to emigrate to Canada.

The Komagata Maru arrived from Hongkong a few days ago, as stated in THE CHINA PRESS, a week overdue and sails on Tuesday. She has on board 175 Indians from Hongkong, will gather up 200 here at Shanghai and go on to Nagasaki where there are over 50 from Manila waiting and 30 others in Japan. The ship will stop at Meji, where it will take on coal for sale in Canada, and after touching at Yokohama, will sail direct for Vancouver.

Yesterday afternoon a reporter of THE CHINA PRESS climbed up the gangway of the vessel and among the crowd of tall, turbaned voyagers, he succeeded in arousing the charterer, Gurdit Singh, from an afternoon nap and in the cabin, with a score of others interested and curious about, talked with the grey-whiskered, kindly-eyed patriarch who is leading his people to what he hopes to be the open door of opportunity in Canada. With the aid of a voluble interpreter Gurdit Singh told the story of his venture.

IT IS A TEST VOYAGE

He goes, according to his own story, to test the justness of the British toward all its people. Chief Justice Hunter of Canada made a decision in November 24 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 have been deported contrary to law who have sought to make British Columbia their home.

"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 certificates. That is why we are

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SHIP FULL OF INDIANS HERE CANADA PROBLEM (Continued)

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 then with the Imperial Government and word came back to Hongkong to let us go 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 ~~him~~ *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 Sudrindra Bose of Iowa University on February 14 before a committee of the Congress of the 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 *Kanagata Maru's* voyage will be followed with interest by the world as she steams to the Canadian shores.

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