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REMARKS

CANADA'S REJECTION OF THE HINDU

PRECISELY OPPOSITE TREATMENT is handed out by the British and the French to their dark-skinned fellow subjects looking for work. While the Sikh tries in vain to enter British Columbia and has actually been forced, under the guns of a Canadian vessel of war, to weigh anchor and turn back to Asia, the *Kabyles* from Algeria, agricultural Berbers settled in the uplands, are invited to take up their residence anywhere in France, from the Mediterranean to the British Channel. Consequently the coal-fields of the North and the vineyards of the South are now employing several thousand African laborers. The French are handicapped in the development of their unexploited lands by the low birth-rate and high death-rate demonstrated by their annual statistics. There has recently been opened up in France a Black Country equal in extent to that of England. "The satisfaction given by African labor in France," says the *London Times*, "has drawn attention to the vast national reservoir of labor which France has at her disposal in her colonies."

A like "vast reservoir" to be found for Canada in modern Hindustan, thinks the *Toronto Courier*, and a fair field for their industry would be found in "the Middle Western provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, where they would make good husbandmen and would eventually be absorbed by the rest of the population." This idea the *Vancouver Sun*, whose readers are more nearly interested in immigration problems than those of the more densely populated East, dismisses as "an absurd suggestion." To quote from its editorial on this point:

"We should imagine that the people of the prairie provinces are entitled to be consulted in a matter of this kind before it could be seriously considered, and we are greatly mistaken if our fellow citizens east of the mountains are any more inclined than we in British Columbia are to have Hindu coolies established in their midst. Of course the idea that these Orientals could be assimilated in the Middle West any more than they can be in British Columbia is an idle one and not worth discussing. They can not be absorbed anywhere in Canada—at least not within a hundred years' time. Nor have we any assurance that they would make good farmers. In fact, there is every probability that they would be unable to adapt themselves to that occupation on the Canadian prairies, would fall behind the rest of the agricultural population, and would drift into the cities and towns, where their trading instincts and their low standards of living would result in demoralization of the labor market and the business of the small shopkeeper. Nor would the fact that the presence of this coolie population, in that part of Canada, would constitute a source of cheap labor for the railway enterprises of Mackenzie and Mann, compensate the public for the perils to which they were thus subjected."

The Eastern papers as a general rule express their anxiety about the Hindu situation. Thus we read in *The Herald and Morning Star* (Montreal):

"It is singularly unfortunate that the first engagement of the Canadian Navy should have to be directed against fellow British subjects on a vessel owned by Britain's only ally in all the world. The difficulties of the Hindu situation on the Pacific coast are fully appreciated, and the law must be upheld, whatever the consequences. Yet we can not feel that the problem has altogether been well handled, and there are many thousands in Canada who deeply sympathize with their fellow subjects from India. . . .

"These men, some of whom are retired service men, now find themselves absolutely forbidden, under any conditions, to set foot on one part of that Empire they have helped to preserve. They behold in the same country pagans from alien China admitted if they are prepared to pay the head money; nomads from southern Europe doing municipal labor in Canadian cities and working on Canadian railway construction; the debased Swahili Indians working in Canadian fisheries and Canadian factories; the lowest type of negro from the plantations of the Southern States admitted without question. They know all this, yet they, a proud race, of approved bravery and ancient and honorable lineage, are barred, under any and all conditions. . . .

"We should deal very gently with our Hindu friends. The resources of diplomacy should have been exhausted long before the present crisis. The first shot fired to-day will echo in the uttermost parts of Continental Asia, and will ring through Japan, and the troubles in Ireland may seem as a mere picnic in contrast."

The matter can only be settled, thinks the *Toronto Daily Star*, by "a conference of representative Canadians and representative Hindus," which "would very likely result in an amicable and satisfactory agreement." The next Imperial conference would be the best assembly for the discussion of the question, says the *Winnipeg Tribune*, which concludes:

"Canada might do a real service to the Empire by proposing some workable policy in regard to Hindu immigration. The question is one simply of numbers. We could not afford to allow Hindus to enter Canada in hundreds of thousands, and we do not believe that Hindus have any desire to migrate in such a way. They appear to be anxious to assert the right of freedom of movement within the Empire. The assertion of that right is quite compatible with restriction. We ought to make it plain that our restrictive measures are not offensive to the East Indian, but for our own protection. If this question is taken up at the next Imperial conference, Canada may uphold her own interests, and at the same time do a real service to the Empire."

The *French Patrie* (Montreal) regards the course taken by the Hindus as "a mere bluff" and speaks of the would-be immigrants as imitators of the English suffragettes. "They tried a hunger-strike, but if they fasted by day they feasted by night," and "when they saw a ship of war, even so insignificant as the *Rainbow*, approaching, they evidently concluded that their bluff game was up." "If other cargoes of Hindus are hereafter coming in, in spite of British Columbia, the Canadian authorities, knowing what kind of people they have to deal with, will not indulge in temporizing, but tell them plainly that they can not get in." "It is high time," declares the *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, "that some one in authority realized the gravity of the Hindu problem in British Columbia. . . . To use the little British Canadian cruiser *Rainbow* against British Indian subjects would seem to be the height of inconsistent Imperialism."

That the question of Hindu immigration is not yet settled for Canada is proved by the report that a second ship-load of 500 Hindus is heading for British Columbia and that Commander Hose, of the *Rainbow*, has been ordered to search for and "arrest the ship."

Some more serious incidents of recent occurrence seem to point to the fact that the Hindus are actually bent on an armed resistance to Canadian expulsion and are secretly plotting against British Indian as well as the Canadian authorities. We read in the *Vancouver Sun* the following details of this smoldering Hindu sedition:

"Surdah Singh has been arrested at Huntingdon by Canadian officials after he had been escorted across the international boundary-line by United States immigration officers, according to word received in this city. The charge preferred against Surdah Singh is that of carrying concealed weapons, a number of revolvers having been found on his person."

"Surdah Singh's arrest followed after an effort had been made by the East Indian to buy firearms in wholesale lots in Sumas, Washington. The United States police are now assisting the Canadian authorities in the attempt to round up five other Hindus who, it is claimed, are trying to purchase large quantities of firearms in the small border towns of Washington State."

"It is believed that the attempt to purchase, in wholesale lots, firearms and ammunition by the local Hindus is part of a well-arranged plan to ship firearms and ammunition to India, where an attempt would be made to smuggle them into the country to assist in the declared intention of some of the Hindu leaders to carry on the work of sedition and revolt against British rule, following the action of the Canadian immigration department in refusing the *Kamagata Maru*'s ship-load of East Indians to land on Canadian soil."