

Assimilability of Orientals in Canada

(By F. W. Cassillis-Kennedy)

Is such a thing possible? In attempting to answer this question it is advisable to point out that the Immigration laws prohibit the coming to Canada of any more Chinese immigrants, and that immigrants from Japan come in at the rate of only 150 annually. Should it be thought wise to ask Japan to close her doors more closely, for a time, a request along the lines of a "Gentleman's Agreement" would satisfactorily settle the matter.

The word "Exclusion" is frequently used by the man in the street, and its meaning is not generally understood. It does not mean "Expulsion." Orientals are entirely in agreement with us when we declare that, as Canadians, we deem it inadvisable to receive into Canada more people of any other nationality than we can properly assimilate. So when we close our doors to Orientals of the labour-type we are living up to the meaning of the word "Exclusion."

"Expulsion" of those Orientals legally domiciled in this country is something no right-minded Britisher will agree to have carried out, for it is against all traditions of British fair play and British justice.

Obligations to Resident Orientals

The question to be decided, then, is what should be our attitude towards a people who have fulfilled the requirements demanded of them during the period our laws allowed them to enter and make homes in Canada.

The Oriental population within our borders is a large and growing one. The legal status of the children is that of Canadian citizens; hundreds of them are passing through our Public Schools and are imbued with Canadian ideals; they, therefore, have no keen desire to go to China or Japan, which to them are foreign countries; their hopes and desires are centred in the country of their birth; their future lies with us, but that future brings them little hope of the franchise.

Are we Canadians looking sufficiently far into the future to see what time will bring about in this highly important matter? Are these children to be allowed to grow up as citizens of no country? If so, we are laying ourselves open to be severely censured by our progeny, perhaps more than that, to be cursed by them for foolishly allowing, on account of race prejudice, no opportunity for the Orientals born here to fully participate in the national life of our country.

Not only are we withholding the full privileges of citizenship, but by placing

obstacles in their way, that are within the border of persecution, forcing them to segregate themselves in little Chinas and Japans within our borders.

Ostracism of these peoples is neither good for them nor for us. Living in Canada removes them from the uplifting influence of their own religions, and our treatment of them militates against their embracing ours. They are, also, to a great extent, cut off from the help of their own national habits and customs, many of which are excellent, and the freedom they have here, under existing circumstances, tends to injure instead of benefitting them.

Educational Laws

We insist upon the children being educated in our Public Schools, and when they have passed through our High School and completed the University course, are any of the professions open to them? According to the British Columbia Elections Act, on reaching the age of twenty-one, both Chinese and Japanese are not entitled to have their names inserted in any list of voters. And the by-laws of the Law Society and the Pharmaceutical Association of British Columbia, if they have no right to vote, barr them from becoming members in these Societies, and they are neither able to practice as lawyers, nor become pharmacists. Is it right to deprive people, who are citizens by birth, and British subjects, of a respectable future in the land in which they are legally domiciled?

Because of this Occidental attitude toward them the parents, naturally anxious about their children's future, are trying to remedy matters by adding a couple of hours a day, to those already spent in the Public Schools, in Chinese and Japanese language schools, which to the thinking mind is detri-

mental to the health of the children.

If the knowledge of their parents' language gained in this way would fit them to fill some place of average importance in China or Japan, there might be some sense in it, but it does not, it only adds to the burden of the child and nothing of real value is gained.

A visit to a Japanese community, close to Vancouver, provided me with the following information:— There were ten families; the parents were all naturalized Canadians, and there were twenty-six children, all born in British Columbia. The children of school age attend the local Public School, but none of them can read Japanese. The oldest child has been recommended for entry to the High School, and the questions put to me were, "What are we parents to do? Our children will all remain in Canada, if they are not properly educated the labour market will be closed against them; if we put them through the High School and University what positions are open to them?" This is not an isolated case, there are many such communities in the Province.

No Permanent Chinese Pastor

Some of us say the Oriental is unas-similable, but is it his fault? Let us glance at the amended Chinese Immigration Act of 1923. This provides for the admission to Canada of persons of Chinese origin such as members of the Diplomatic Corps and other Government representatives, also *bona fide* merchants and students. Seeing that we have a large Chinese population already in this country of a permanent nature, one would have thought that provision would have been made in the Act, as formerly allowed, for the entry of ministers of the Christian religion to help teach Christianity to

POETRY CONTEST: \$25.00 CASH And Book Prizes

The BRITISH COLUMBIA MONTHLY offers a first prize of \$25 in cash, and other prizes in books, for the best poems appearing in the Magazine. The books will be those of Canadian Authors.

Poems may be from sonnet length to seventy-two lines. Only one poem may be sent in by each contestant, and it must not have been previously published.

Only subscribers (or those sending in new subscriptions) to the British Columbia Monthly may enter. The editor cannot undertake to return poems.

Address poems to: Editor, Poetry Page, B. C. Monthly, 1100 Bute Street, Vancouver, B. C., and mark envelope "Poetry Contest."

Write name and address at the upper left-hand corner of MSS.

(The Magazine subscription is ONE DOLLAR A YEAR throughout Canada, and to any address in the United States or British Empire.)