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British Columbia.

Under control of the Medical Council of the Province of British Columbia.

DR. MCGUIGAN, Associate Editor for British Columbia.

AN ADVERSE DECISION.

The case of some Chinese passengers *versus* Dr. John Duncan, Health Officer, of Victoria, has excited a considerable amount of attention amongst those interested in quarantine matters throughout the whole of the province, and the judgment of Mr. Justice Crease in favor of the plaintiffs, legal though it may be, cannot fail to work injury, and be a menace to the future health of British Columbia and the adjoining territories. The cause of complaint on the part of the Chinese passengers against Dr. Duncan was that, in the interests of the public health of the City of Victoria, he subjected those of them who were landing there to an extra inspection after they were passed by the Dominion and Provincial quarantine officers, and had them sent to the city suspect station and detained there till they underwent a thorough overhauling in the shape of a scrubbing, washing, etc., which no doubt they needed very badly, and did them a great amount of good on general principles, not to speak of the beneficial effect it had in removing any germs of disease which might be lurking about their persons. Their baggage, too, was thoroughly fumigated and aired, and after a few hours' detention they were allowed to depart in peace, to mingle among the citizens of the capital, bright and clean as a new pin.

For bestowing these little attentions, an action for damages was brought against the Health Officer, with the result that a judgment to the amount of five dollars and costs was given against him, on the ground that no one class of passengers can be

specially dealt with in the circumstances just stated, and that, if Chinese have to undergo extra quarantine treatment, the other passengers will have to be treated similarly. At the time we speak of, smallpox was reported to be prevalent in Hong Kong; and the Victorians having suffered an epidemic of that disease, which cost \$75,000 to get rid of, they were only acting as prudent citizens in doing all they could to protect themselves from a fresh introduction of the pest, which had done so much injury to them and the people of Vancouver a couple of years ago. It is to be regretted that the law does not permit us to protect ourselves, in the face of so much danger as always exists from Chinese coolies coming into the Dominion from Canton and the country surrounding it; for it is almost entirely from Tuang-Tung, the province in which that populous city is situated, that we obtain most of our Asiatic immigrants, with the exception of a few Japanese, who are comparatively a civilized race. Although the Chinese are in the washing business almost to the entire exclusion of the whites on the Pacific coast, they are very far from being a clean people so far as their dwellings and surroundings are concerned, even when living in Canada under the jurisdiction of boards of health, whose officers are continually looking after them. But at home, under a Government which allows them to follow their own sweet will, their filthiness is somewhat appalling to a European. Even in Hong Kong, under the fostering care of the British Government, the reeking alleys and narrow streets of that city are so foul-smelling that one has to hold the nose in passing through them. When any extra cleaning-up has to be done, as during the recent bubonic plague, the work has to be done by the soldiery at the point of the bayonet, for not only will the Chinese not do it themselves, but they will not permit others to do it for them, except by force. Is it any wonder, then, that we on this coast, who know all these things about them, wish to take all the precautions in our power to protect ourselves against the introduction of disease amongst our inhabitants from that source? Is it not natural that we should be inclined to wrest the law a little in order to reach these people, who are thrusting their yellow visages into the faces of the men and women of the Caucasian race, and bringing pestilence in their train?