

A CALL FOR CANADIAN JUSTICE

STATEMENT OF CASE.

About 4,500 Hindustanis are now resident in British Columbia, the great majority of whom are Sikhs. Almost all of these came to Canada between 1904 and 1908, and consequently have fulfilled the conditions of Canadian citizenship—they are British subjects who have had their domicile in Canada for three years.

These Sikhs have been asking for years the right, freely accorded to every European immigrant, to bring their wives and families from India, so that they may have the enjoyment of home life, with its attendant safeguards, in their adopted country. So far they have asked in vain, only five wives have been admitted, and these after much effort and litigation. Heavily as this enforced division of families presses on the husbands and fathers in Canada, it presses still more heavily on the weaker ones concerned, the wives and children in India.

THE SIKHS IN INDIA.

There are about 2,000,000 Sikhs in India. They had their origin in the Punjab in the 15th century. Their first leader and teacher, Nanak, was a reformer. He taught there is one God, the unity of mankind and the equality of the sexes. He put aside caste exclusiveness, idol worship and superstition, prohibited the use of wine and other intoxicating liquors, and insisted upon physical and moral purity. The Sikh religion, in the words of Mr. Macauliffe's recent standard work on the subject, "Inculcates loyalty, gratitude, philanthropy, justice, truth, honesty and all the moral and domestic virtues known to the holiest citizens of any country."

Under later leaders the Sikhs became a political as well as a religious power and were noted for their prowess in battle.

Since the annexation of the Punjab in 1849 they have remained ever loyal to Great Britain and have formed a distinguished part of the British Army in India. They saved the British Empire in India at the time of the Mutiny, they have since fought with honour with British troops in Asia and Africa, and now hold an important place among the Indian regiments in active warfare in Europe and the East.

The Sikhs are monogamous and have their own State marriage law in India. Child marriage is not countenanced among them.

They are active in promoting education among their own people. They have a College, Primary and High Schools for both boys and girls and hold an annual Educational Conference. They especially encourage the education of girls. In one at least of their Native States free and compulsory elementary education has been recently introduced.

The Sikhs are noted for their fine physique and independence of spirit. At present their leading occupation is agriculture.