

Two Views of the Hindu

Below we give two views of the Hindu immigrants who have recently arrived in British Columbia. Both have been written especially for THE CANADIAN COURIER. The first is an attempt to translate B.C. opinion into words, and is made by a well-informed newspaper man. The second is written by a Hindu journalist who is now visiting this country.—EDITOR.

THE HINDU PROBLEM

BY "JOURNALIST"

YOU coast people don't seem to take very kindly to the poor benighted Hindu," said the Man From Ontario to the Westerner, as they sat in the rotunda of the Hotel Vancouver and discussed the present most pressing problem of British Columbia. The Province has new problems every few weeks. "You're rather hard to understand, sometimes," he went on. "Last summer you were complaining of a dearth of labour. It seems to me you're never happy without something to grumble about."

The Westerner looked gently at the visitor from beyond the mountains and smiled; not grimly, not even genially—he just smiled.

"My dear fellow," he said, "stay out here a few weeks, visit our sawmills, take a trip to the canneries, note the section men, observe the cooks in the hotels, remember the nationality of the bell boys, see who runs most of the laundries, ponder upon the birthplace of the 'boy' who brings you a drink at the club, don't fail to notice the particularly Asiatic product who opens the door to you when you call at the homes of Eastern friends who have settled here, and see who waits at his table. When you have completed the census of the Japanese and Chinese in Vancouver—and don't forget there are just as many more in Victoria, New Westminster and other places—ask yourself if this young province wants any more Asiatics. I'm not going to talk any 'yellow peril' guff, but—oh, come and have a drink."

"The Hindu, my boy," continued the Westerner, as he poured himself out some of the best, that came all the way round the Horn, "can find no place in this country. His home is not here; it never can be. Come with me and listen to what white men of brawn and muscle have to say about the latest invasion from the Orient."

The two boarded an interurban car at 6 p.m. It was crowded with whites returning to the little suburban homes they had hewn out of the mighty forest. Some of the white men had to stand because several seats were occupied by Chinese, Japanese and Hindus.

"You've got to stand, Jack, while yer betters sits," cheerily cried a Central Park wit to a man hanging onto the back of his seat.

"White men don't get much chance in this country when blessed Mongolians will take their jobs for half the pay," growled Jack.

"It's time the Government stepped in and sent these fellers home, where they belong," chipped in another workingman.

"My dear boy, can't do it; imperial reasons, you know," laughed the wit.

"Imperial reasons be blanked," was the retort, "It makes me tired to read all that rot and the cheap talk about cheap labour. This isn't a cheap country, and it will be the worse for Canada when it is. Those Eastern chaps who talk that way don't know what it is to see Chinese, Japs and Hindus working where they should work, drawing their pay and sending the most of it across the Pacific, where hundreds of thousands of dollars of good Canadian money have gone and more is to follow. The Hindus don't take the jobs of the people who say we are needlessly raising a scare; if they did we wouldn't hear nonsense like that."

The Easterner and the Westerner returned to town.

"Now you've touched the fringe of the matter," said the Westerner. "I could tell you a great deal about the harm these Orientals are doing here. I should dislike to take you to their disease-breeding, morals-polluting homes, but you could learn much there and, afterwards, would, I think, agree with me that they are a curse to British Columbia. We want this to be a white Province."

IN DEFENCE OF THE HINDU

BY SAINT N. SING

"MEN who have been joined by the ties of danger, suffering and death are now bid to be strangers and enemies." These words of Colonel Falkland Warren, C.M.G., late R.A., appropriately describe the manner in which the India immigrants into British Columbia have been received.

But it is not Canada, or even British Columbia, which is responsible for the spirit of extreme and frenzied hostility which characterises the treatment accorded to the India immigrants in the Canadian west. The opposition has been and is merely sectional. Sensible, far-sighted and large-hearted British Columbians have not only not participated in the iniquitous crusade but emphatically denounced those who are villifying the character of the India Immigrants.

That labour unions in British Columbia should be leagued against the India Immigrants is regrettable. In opposing the India Immigrants they are running counter to their real aims and objects and to the true spirit of unionism. If the average workingman in British Columbia knew things better, he would doubtless be the first to champion the cause of the India Immigrants. While in the American continent starvation wages are a myth; in India, these very men who are now on the Pacific Coast of this country, have suffered indescribable pain from starvation wages and their poignant experience realised their banefulness. They will not cheapen wages; and they have already shown sufficient evidence of their spirit to keep up the wages. Those who are in touch with the newspapers of British Columbia have noticed that in several instances they refused to do work at wages lower than those received by the British Columbian working men.

Coming, as all of these men do, from the Punjab and the Northwest frontier provinces, where freer institutions prevail, and a large majority of them having rambled through one or more Far Eastern countries, they have very few caste distinctions; and the few they have are such which would not jar against the people with whom they are living. Any oddities or idiosyncracies they may possess now will die out fast. Sure indications of this are not wanting. There are scores of men amongst them who have adopted the Canadian methods and standards of dressing and living.

Most of the immigrants come from those districts of Northwestern India where the winters are cold and there is a long and regular rainy season in addition. Besides they belong to the races which possess wonderful "vitality" and "elasticity" which have been tried and proven many a time. These men and their tribesmen have fought for the imperial interests in the rigorous winters of Tibet and China and in the scorching summers of Somaliland and Egypt. Not one of these men professes Christianity. But they live moral and sober lives. Not one of these 2,500 immigrants has been convicted of any crime. Not one of them is polygamist. In cleanliness of person they can hardly be excelled.

While they are fast adopting the Western standards of living, it is the earnest prayer of the writer that they may not learn to indulge in drinking or other vices, which may be prevalent amongst the people with whom they come in contact.