

The Hindu As British Columbia Sees Him

By ETHEL CODY STODDARD

IT has been a decided blow to British Columbia to realize that the people of Eastern Canada want—insist on the Federal Government allowing the Hindus now resident in this country, to bring in their families. And this province cannot accept the attitude of the East as being at all neighborly. The East knows full well that British Columbia will be the dumping ground for these people, therefore, it can well advocate the granting of the request now under discussion, since it knows the trouble will not touch its own skirts.

This great western province has endured, tested, and tried the Hindu and found him wanting. The fact that he comes and goes away again is the only reason why it has not exerted its rights, and refused to have him at all. And to be asked to accept him as a permanent citizen, with his family life around him, is one burden too many to lay upon a back already stooped with an Oriental load. The patience of a province should not be pushed too far.

British Columbia is just as greedy for children as any province in the Dominion, but it begs to be allowed once in a while at least, some choice in the matter. This great province wants citizens of which it can be proud, and therefore, resents the attitude of Eastern Canada on this subject because the Hindu does not come in that class.

The Sikh is not the only East Indian who will crawl under this robe of "human desire." It is now popular for the ordinary Hindu to call himself a Sikh—it sounds better. And as he emulates the Chinaman and Japanese in understanding English when it pleases him, and going a step farther, only telling the truth when it pays, there will be absolutely no method of obtaining the facts concerning any man who emigrates from India to Canada. The fact that the Chinese and Japanese of both sexes, and the male Hindus come into Canada, is a matter which cannot with policy be changed; but the bringing in of Hindu families is something that can be prevented, and is in the hands of the government.

Dr. Sunder Singh does well to travel eastward in Canada and there work upon the sympathies of the people. He knows that his value and measure has been taken in British Columbia, and that he could not work openly in this province. As it is, a prominent women's philanthropic society in Vancouver has received a letter from the wily doctor written in his own handwriting. He therein explains that the Hindus now in Canada wish to become permanent citizens, and buy property—in the West. He also states that it can easily be seen that if the request of these men to be allowed to bring in their families is denied, that the result will have a decided moral effect upon the English-speaking people among whom these Hindus are settled. And he concludes with the suggestion that missionary work be done among these men, and advises visitations to them by the women of that society.

These Hindus maintain that they are British subjects, and as such should be allowed the rights of citizenship in Canada. It is not every Briton—even one born on the mother soil, who is allowed entrance here; hundreds of them are stopped at the Canadian border every year and sent home. The Hindu cannot therefore stir up a special grievance on that point.

The Hindu argues that he is not a polygamist. This is to a degree true, since a Hindu is expected to only have as many wives as he can keep, and as the average Hindu is poor, he cannot afford more than one. But on the other hand, his marriage laws are such that if a man's wife displeases him, he can at once write her a bill of divorce and send her away. If this woman is living in Canada, the result is obvious. She will undoubtedly have not been allowed to learn English, and consequently will be helpless. Should the law get after her husband, he can disclaim any marriage with her, and the law can do nothing. That man can then, under the plea of bringing out a female relative, import a new wife. Eastern Canadians will claim this to be impossible, but British Columbians know that the untrue tongue of the Hindu can slip around any situation, and too, that he can always claim to misunderstand.

British Columbians realize that from a human standpoint the bringing in of these families will in the end be cruel. Transplanted from a hot climate to that of Canada will mean an undermining of the Hindu constitution. Consumption is predicted for these people.

British Columbia realizes more acutely than can any other portion of Canada, because of an ever-present Oriental population in its midst, what the bringing in of Hindu women will mean. The Hindu, as this province knows him, is an irresponsible creature. He is not a strictly moral man, in his own country, and in families where poverty reigns, the daughters are frequently sold out as martyrs, for immoral purposes. In cases where this might happen in Canada, and where a Hindu who could not afford to bring out his own wife, was ready to pay, the inference can readily be grasped. British Columbia realizes to the full, every detail of the possible things that are only too certain to occur, therefore it is no wonder that it protests.

The Hindu may now come to Canada—and he usually sticks to British Columbia, and makes money. If his desire for home life is so overwhelming, there is absolutely nothing to prevent him from returning to the bosom of his family and there residing in peace. White men all over the world have had to leave home to seek their fortunes, and been compelled to remain away for years. No one ever set up a controversy because these men did not take their families with them. In due time they returned to their homes and took the separation as a matter of life's ruling.

British Columbia has proved that to give the Hindu an inch means that he will push himself forward till he gains a

yard. No other Oriental race will take advantage of a kindness or tolerance as will a Hindu. This province has suffered more or less under the government's ruling of allowing the Chinese, Japanese and Hindu men to come into its midst. Upon the question of allowing the wives of the latter to come in, rests a grave responsibility, and one which British Columbia does not wish to shoulder. It is a prevention that can be effected. The remedy lies in the hands of the country. This province does not want the Hindu as a permanent citizen, and the government that demands its obedience in this respect, will undoubtedly have cause to regret its decision.

The Sikh in Canada

By DR. SUNDER SINGH

THE problem of Hindu, or rather Sikh immigration is so interesting that I shall try to give a brief resume of the facts regarding these, my fellow citizens of the British Empire, says this writer in the *Toronto World*.

The Sikhs are members of a religious sect founded by Guru Nanak, who was born in 1469 in the Punjab, a province in the north-west part of India.

He preached a belief in One God the Almighty, abolition of caste, idol worship and superstition. He also taught that God could only be attained by service to our fellow-men and helping the poor, the weak, and the fallen.

The first Sikhs to see Canada were the soldiers who were passing through the Dominion on their way home to India after taking part in the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the late Queen Victoria. They saw the vast prairies of the West, which naturally reminded them of their homes in the Punjab. They saw waving fields of wheat.

Some of these hardy Jats of agriculturists found their way to British Columbia in the year 1905, but the great majority of the 4000 Sikhs who are at present settled in Canada came here during the three years following, and while on this point let me mention the fact that during the winter 1907-8 a financial panic visited the United States and Canada, when even white men were walking the streets of Vancouver without work.

In the same year 5,000 Japs came over from Honolulu. This added fuel to the fire, and the politicians raised the cry of a "white" British Columbia. It was not a clean, a more sober, a more truthful, or more honest British Columbia, but simply a "white" British Columbia. And the people who had to bear the brunt of all this agitation, were our own fellow subjects, the loyal Sikhs, men who were not only lip-loyal, but most of whom had fought for the Union Jack, the flag which stands for liberty, equality and justice to all the various peoples and races over whom it waves.

Many of the Sikhs in British Columbia wear medals for service to the King, and this was their first reception. Our people naturally bowed to Christian civilization of the Occident in a somewhat hesitating manner. They could not understand why the Canadian people sent missionaries to India to preach the Ten Commandments whilst the very same Commandments were not practised nearer at home. Most of these Sikh settlers have bought land and stock. They have already invested about two millions of dollars in this country. They are physically and morally strong men, and do the hardest and roughest work, which no other man can do. The Sikhs are engaged in dairy farming, market gardening, as farmers' helpers, and clearing land. And most of them will eventually settle on land. They are a steady, temperate, law-abiding and thrifty people, and there is proportionately less crime amongst them than among any other community in Canada.

The question nearest the Sikh's heart is his inability to get his wife admitted to this country, caused by the present immigration restrictions. There exists an order-in-council, passed two years ago, requiring a Sikh woman to come to Canada by "a continuous journey," and as there is no steamer running direct to Canada, the Sikh here cannot get their wives admitted into this country, and out of the 4,000 Sikhs in Canada there are only two women. They might as well have a law requiring the wife of a Sikh settler coming to this country to come via the moon or something similar before she will be allowed to land here.

The law as it stands is a physical impossibility, and it was meant to shut out the Japanese who were coming over from Honolulu. Even the alien Greeks Italians, Galicians, Doukhobors, and the Chinese and Japanese can get their families here if they can afford it, but this is not so with our fellow British subject, the Sikh. A Japanese has to show only \$50 on landing here, whilst a Sikh has to show \$200, and so on. As a matter of fact, the Sikh has no status in Canada, neither as a British citizen nor as an immigrant, for even the citizens of the most unfavored nations get better treatment than a citizen of our own empire. Why there should be an agitation against the loyal Sikh, and nothing said about the alien Chinese and Japanese is difficult to understand.

I regret to say there are politicians in this country who want to use this question as a cat's paw for their political ambitions. These worthy gentlemen seem to think that by abusing and misrepresenting the Sikhs they can rise to power, but I am afraid they are mistaken. The right of a husband living with his wife is the most sacred human institution, and anything done to impair it goes at the very root of all elementary principles of humanity and moral and social welfare.