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THE ORIENTAL PROBLEM

Now that normal conditions prevail once more in Vancouver it is timely to renew the consideration of the Oriental problem. This cannot be disposed of by the methods of the demagogue, by platitudes, or by violence. It is easy to talk about a "race question" and there are some people who appear to think that if this is said often enough it will in some way or other lead to a solution of the whole difficulty. But the time has come when the subject must be approached with calmness and with as little prejudice as is possible, when races, antagonistic to each other in manners, religion and traditions, come into close contact. It is a many-sided question for which it is safe to say that the people of British Columbia are of one mind as to the exclusion of Orientals from the country is not correct. If it should be said that they are of one opinion as to the desirability of permitting unrestricted immigration from Asia and the opening of any and all lines of industry to Asiatic races, the claim might be admitted, but there is many a people who would be glad to see a sufficient number of Orientals of any nationality admitted to supply the demand for manual labor. Therefore, in approaching the solution of the question we have lack of unanimity at the very outset. Then the Oriental side of the case is lacking in uniformity. There are three races from which we might expect an influx of immigrants, if all restrictions were removed. The Chinese, the Japanese and the Hindus. Each of these presents the problem in a phase different from the others. The Chinese offer the least difficulty. Owing to causes into which it is not necessary to go at present, they are not a menace in the way of establishing and maintaining a law for the exclusion of Chinesemen. This is the simplest aspect of the whole subject. The Japanese present a more difficult problem, for we are under certain obligations to Japan because of the Anglo-Japanese treaty, to which Canada has become a party. On the other hand, this obligation is mutual, and the government of Japan has shown itself ready to recognize its duty to prevent Canada from being overrun by its subjects. We understand that Japan has its own immigration laws under which it is able to exclude undesirable foreigners. If the present friendly relations with Japan are to continue, there must be reciprocity in matters affecting the economic welfare of each country. As an interpretation of the treaty by which Canada would be considered open to be overrun by Japanese of all grades, would be intolerable, we have too much respect for the good sense of the Japanese government to suppose that we should expect such an interpretation to be given it. Moreover, the population of Japan is larger, and there are many open doors for the surplus, which must annually seek homes elsewhere. For these reasons, we look upon Japanese immigration as something that can be regulated without great difficulty, if only reasonable patience is exercised. As we see the matter, the greatest difficulty is presented by the Hindu movement towards Canada. In India there are many millions of people owing their allegiance to the same flag as we do, with whose welfare the interests of the British Empire are deeply bound up, and who have been taught to believe that wherever British institutions are established there liberty and fair play are to be found. It is fair to say of the Hindus, who have come to Canada, that they have been agreeably disappointed even those who knew them best. Doubtless there have been exceptions, but so far as can be judged from superficial observations, the majority of them have proved good workmen in the humble spheres of labor in which they have engaged. If it were thought desirable to encourage the settling in this country of a large number of men, who would form a mental caste, there is hardly any doubt that India would be the best place to seek the required immigrants for any other purposes than domestic service. We think that the case has been fairly stated in the foregoing observations.

We come now to the practical questions, which may be thus stated: Is it necessary or desirable that the immigration of Oriental labor should be permitted? If such immigration is neither necessary nor desirable, how is it to be prevented? The position of the Colonist on the first question is that such immigration is neither necessary nor desirable. We do not agree with those who think that the presence of Chinesemen and Japanese numbers has on the whole been an advantage to British Columbia. We do not deny that it has to a certain extent been beneficial, but we hold that any advantage has been offset by the fact that their presence here and their exclusive occupation of many lines of unskilled labor has had the effect of keeping white men out of the country. After the adoption of the policy of Chinese exclusion there never was any serious difficulty in the Pacific Coast states in securing all the white labor that was needed. For a time while the exclusion law was new, there was a shortage, but it was soon remedied. Our view of the case is that if Oriental labor were wholly restricted, the Oriental laborer would come in and supply the demands of the country, although we admit that there might be a period of greater or less shortage. In the end business would gain by the substitution of white labor for Oriental, and the advantage would be worthy the temporary sacrifice.

In regard to the second question, restriction has already been put upon the Chinese, and we feel very confident that an arrangement will easily be come to with the government of Japan for the regulation of immigration from that country. We do not think there is at present need for alarm because of immigration from those sources. The Hindu question is one of tremendous difficulty, and we are not sure that the fact of its being one wholly within the Empire does not make it harder to solve. In dealing with it we have to take into account many things, which are far from being

ing local in character. It is a novel question. Until very recently no one supposed that there would ever be any considerable influx of the people from India into this country. It was in some way or other the attention of the people of the Northwest Provinces has been directed to Canada and a movement has begun, which if it cannot be checked will have a far-reaching and injurious effect upon our country. The supply of such immigrants is practically inexhaustible. If they are to be permitted to enter the Dominion as they please, they will swarm in by thousands. Nearly a thousand of these people arrived on our shores on Tuesday, and if they secure employment there will be thousands more to follow them. We do not believe that white labor will come where Hindu labor dominates the situation numerically, nor do we believe that a country is ever industrially strong when the lower ranks of labor are filled by a class which is and must remain distinct from the rest of the community. The gravity of the question cannot be disputed, and it calls for very careful treatment. Above all things it calls for diplomatic treatment. Violence must not be thought of. A blow struck at a Hindu in Canada may be felt by a white man in India.

COST OF WAR

It is estimated that a great European war would cost at least \$700,000,000 a day. In view of this one can hardly see why a Peace Conference ought to be necessary, for one would suppose that the governments and peoples would see the folly of submitting disputes to the arbitration of the cannon. But these nations are increasing their military and naval outlay on an unprecedented scale. The following table in round numbers shows the increase in the expenditures for these purposes in 1907 over 1897 in eight nations: Great Britain ..... \$116,000,000 United States ..... 124,000,000 Germany ..... 79,000,000 France ..... 26,000,000 Russia ..... 74,000,000 Italy ..... 17,000,000 Austria ..... 25,000,000 Japan ..... 23,000,000 These figures are very instructive, and perhaps what will impress most people is that the United States heads the list in amount. That country is spending \$78,000,000 more for the purpose than it did ten years ago, and the increased expenditure on its army is an astonishing figure for a country situated as it is. Let us now examine the gross military and naval expenditure of these powers during the present year, again giving round numbers only: Great Britain ..... \$316,000,000 United States ..... 198,000,000 Germany ..... 281,000,000 France ..... 205,000,000 Russia ..... 210,000,000 Italy ..... 85,000,000 Austria ..... 114,000,000 Japan ..... 101,000,000 These sums are taken from diagrams prepared by Mr. Frederick James for Mr. Stead's "Hague Conference" publications. They show that these eight nations alone are compelled by their policy to collect nearly \$5,000,000 daily in taxation for the purpose of keeping themselves ready to destroy each other in case of emergency. If the less important nations were taken into account this daily levy would be very considerably increased. It is not extravagant to say that the cost of sustaining the armies and navies of the world is as great as the daily earnings of nearly 100,000,000 men at the average wage paid throughout the civilized world. This is the consumption to which our boasted civilization and refinement has attained.

A TELEGRAM DELAYED

Colonist readers may remember that one of its references to the Quebec bridge disaster this paper pointed out that the accident seemed to have been due to a failure to transmit promptly a telegram, owing to the telegraph strike. The following account of the incident is given by the Ottawa Citizen: Those in charge of the construction of the bridge came to the conclusion that it was in a serious condition, but not wishing the information to get out, instead of telegraphing, they sent a messenger to Mr. McClure to make a verbal report to Mr. Cooper, consulting engineer. Mr. McClure arrived in New York early in the morning of the day of the disaster. As a result of the information which reached the consulting engineer by this verbal report, he immediately telegraphed to the Phoenix company not to place any more load on the bridge at present and added the significant words "better look into it at once." Mr. McClure was then shortly to Phoenix to report to the head office. Owing to the telegraph strike, the message did not reach Phoenix from New York until shortly before Mr. McClure arrived himself by train at 5.15. Mr. Deans, the chief consulting engineer at Phoenix, was out when the telegram arrived, but had returned and opened it a few minutes before McClure got there. While they were discussing the matter the disaster occurred. The consulting engineer at New York states that he had no authority to give orders as to the work on the bridge, and it is fair to presume that he was sending the message on the morning of Thursday morning as well as sending Mr. McClure on to Phoenix his intention was that immediate action should have been taken on the morning of the disaster. Had the telegram reached Phoenix it is more than likely that it would have arrived before noon that day and had it been acted on the injunction not to place any more load on the bridge would have prevented the train being run out on it at 5.35 p.m.

It is understood that there is to be a very thorough investigation into this matter, and if it shall appear that the death of so many people, which is attributable to the telegraphers' strike, the importance of steps being taken that will make a recurrence of such a calamity an event possible will require no further demonstration. The telegraph has become a part of our adequate substitute, and the ingenuity of legislators ought to be put to work to discover some means, whereby an interruption of the service by preventable causes can be rendered impossible.

BLATANT DEMAGOGUERY

Mr. Robert Macpherson, M. P. for Vancouver, has been giving an exhibition of cheap demagoguery in Montreal. His statements that British Columbia will secede from the Dominion unless Japanese immigration is stopped is senseless tommy-rot. What does this belligerent gentleman propose? Are we going to set ourselves up as an independent nationality? If we remain in the British Empire we will be bound by British treaties. If we should leave the Empire, and declare ourselves independent, Japan would make short work of us, if we tried to drive out her subjects. The only al-

ternative would be annexation to the United States, and the people of this province are hardly prepared for that. Mr. Macpherson will not be taken seriously here. He has no commission to speak on this subject for the people of British Columbia, but he wants this to be a white man's country, but few of us happily are as absurd as Mr. Macpherson has shown himself to be. The cause is a good one; but it may be defeated. Many people would like to know why Mr. Macpherson was unable to find words to express his determined views, when the Anglo-Japanese treaty was before Parliament.

A CONSTITUTIONAL POINT

A question has been raised as to whether or not Mr. McBride has to assume the responsibility for the failure of what for convenience may be called the Bowser Bill to become a law. As was stated in these columns yesterday, in the absence of both the lieutenant-governor and Mr. McBride the facts of the case cannot be ascertained, but the constitutional point involved may perhaps be explained with advantage. At the outset we may mention that responsible government in the provinces is qualified by the fact that under the British North American Act, the lieutenant-governor is a Dominion officer, and in exercising the power of the Crown to suspend Bills from coming into operation, he acts as a Dominion officer, and hence, unless in so acting he has been expressly advised by his ministers, they cannot be held responsible for what he does. There is no necessary assumption that a lieutenant-governor acts in such matters on the advice of his ministers. In this respect the analogy between the system of ministerial responsibility as we have it in the provinces of Canada and that which exists in the United Kingdom falls. If a lieutenant-governor informs his advisors that he proposes as a Dominion Bill, they do not have to assume the responsibility of his so doing, for it would be unreasonable to hold that ministers should accept the responsibility for something that they were powerless to prevent.

There have been three instances since the first was entered upon by the British Columbia lieutenant-governor when the lieutenant-governor has withheld his assent from a Bill. The first was in 1877, when by an amendment to the Gold Mining Amendment Act it was sought by the legislature to invest gold commissioners with judicial power. Lieutenant-Governor Richards withheld his assent from this Bill, because he was of the opinion that it entrophied upon the functions of the federal government, in which he invested the right to appoint judges. The second was in 1897, when Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney withheld his assent from a Bill prohibiting the employment of Chinese by companies incorporated by the provincial legislature. The third was the case of the Bowser Bill. In commenting upon Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney's action, Mr. Bourinot said: "It is to be remarked that in withholding his assent from a Bill for the purposes of reserving it for the action of the Governor-General, the Lieutenant-Governor does not act as a provincial executive officer, but as a representative of the federal authority. He does not withhold his assent by the advice of his ministers, but presumably because of objections received from the federal authorities." Later in the same article, which appeared in the Colonist of May 9th, 1897, the views of Mr. Bourinot, the great Canadian authority on constitutional questions, were given, and he was shown to take precisely the same position as is above indicated, namely that this power vested in the lieutenant-governor "cannot be explained in accordance with the principle of responsibility that governs a ministry." 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