

ask that the Government should throw open the doors to the Hindus. What is the meaning of that? It means that a religious sect numbering 2,200,000 out of 340,000,000 people was asking this Government to extend a special privilege to them, and to shut out the other 338,000,000. That was the basis of their demand, and that was the basis of the whole argument. They are beginning to find out the weakness and fallacy of it, and are now including others, but that was the demand made of the hon. Minister of the Interior at that time. It shows clearly the selfishness of these people; they are asking for this right not as British subjects, but as a class or peculiar religious sect.

In speaking of this subject, we are constantly confusing the issue. My hon. friend was repeatedly saying 'Sikh' this afternoon, whereas the most ordinary Hindu coolie of India has the same rights under the British flag as a Sikh doctor has. The assertion has been made that we could admit the Hindu into Canada for agricultural purposes. Our experience up to the present time is that the Hindus hive themselves into the large business centers of our provinces and of our country; they have absolutely no tendency to pioneer on the land. I may point out that if these men are serious in their desire to pioneer on behalf of the empire, there is a vast hinterland in India, very sparsely settled; they can go into Thibet, Egypt, or northern Africa, where climatic, social and labour conditions, and economic and industrial conditions are peculiarly suited to their race. They can go into these countries and pioneer and build up the British Empire. But they do not do that, and never have exhibited any tendency along that line; they simply wish to enter those countries where they can pluck the plums of civilization with the greatest ease. That is the basis of their whole idea.

A question has been raised about the admission of Hindu wives. We have been berated, those of us who are opposed to any relaxation of the regulations, for cruelty because we have not seen fit to give way on this point. It is not a question of admitting the wives of Hindus, but whether you are going to open the door to let them all come in. Consider for a moment the wife question: I ask, which wife are you going to admit? The answer is that the Hindus are not all polygamists; but quite

[Mr. Stevens.]

a number are. Supposing a man has five wives and goes to the Government and says: I want you to admit my wife. Which wife are you going to admit?

Mr. NESBITT: All of them.

Mr. STEVENS: The hon. member says all of them. That may be a joke, but are you prepared to introduce or allow to be introduced any such institution in this country? There is the danger of the whole question. We may say: Admit all of them. But by so doing we introduce immediately an institution that we cannot tolerate, because the most sacred institutions we have in our civilization are our domestic institutions as they exist to-day.

But that is not all. Do you know that 25 per cent of the women in India die prematurely because of physical crimes committed on account of child wifehood? When I tell you that there are nine million wives in India to-day under fifteen years of age, two millions under eleven years of age, are you prepared to allow an institution of that kind to be established in Canada? Are we prepared to accept these people with these institutions? Because if you admit them you must admit them with their institutions. You cannot say. We admit you, but you must be immediately transformed into a different being from what you are. We know that these things are so deeply ingrained in the Hindu nature that they are more than his very life. The nine million girl wives are married to men of from twenty-five to forty years of age. A man fifty or sixty years of age may have a wife of ten years of age. This is no joking matter. It simply means that if we allow these people to come in here we must allow them to bring in these institutions.

In 1907 five thousand Hindus came in within a few months. Had the Government of the day not passed that Order in Council—which we welcomed such as it was at the time and weak as it has proven to be and a veritable mine of trouble—had they not passed that order, there would have been one hundred thousand Hindus in Canada. We can say what we like on the subject, but there are 340,000,000 of them, and there was a movement of immigration towards Canada, and that movement exists to-day, the minute you open the doors. I ask, had there been 50,000 or 100,000 of these men admitted into Canada in the years between 1907 and the present, what would have been the condition to-day? We would have established in the moderate climate of the Pacific coast a people dis-