

I visited the chief employment agents in Vancouver to ascertain the general and prospective labour conditions. The result of our enquiries showed that there were several hundred white men out of work then, and that unless there was an unexpected improvement in conditions, there would be several thousand white men in Vancouver without work during the winter.

HINDUS CAPABILITIES.

Enquiries were next made to ascertain to what extent the East Indian could compete successfully with the white man. General enquiries always brought out the statement that physically and mentally, the East Indian was not suited to the conditions in British Columbia. Enquiries were made among employers known to have employed some Hindu labour, and though a private employer picks and chooses those he considers most likely to make good, the replies on the whole indicated that while the Hindu might in most cases earn the comparatively low wage paid him, he could not class with white labour.

From this it seemed reasonable to suppose that if there were several thousand unemployed white men in Vancouver during the winter—in addition to large numbers of Japanese and Chinese—the chances of any considerable number of East Indians being able to retain work would be very slight.

Enquiries among white men familiar with the language and with the East Indians themselves indicated that there were then (July) from 600 to 900 unemployed East Indians in the Vancouver district, and that many had had nothing but occasional odd jobs to do since the previous winter.

Mr. W. C. Hopkinson (Inspector Indian Police, Calcutta) on leave in Canada, wrote from Vancouver to Sir Wilfrid Laurier under date of Sept. 6, 1908, regarding the Hindu situation. His letter summarized the conditions as follows:—

“To put the whole situation concisely, the facts stand as follows:—

“(1) There are about 3,000 Hindus in British Columbia.

“(2) From 700 to 1,000 of them are out of work, and in the winter the number is likely to be about 2,000.

“(3) The kind of work they are at present engaged in is as follows:—

(a) Labourers in sawmills and railway construction.

(b) Clearing land on contracts.

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