

CHINA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS CANADA'S RESTRICTIONS

ON THE ENTRY OF HER PEOPLE

By John M. Imrie

Chairman, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Trade Mission to the Orient (1930); Chairman, Edmonton Branch, Canadian Institute of International Affairs; Managing Director, Edmonton Journal.

---

China has today a sense of injury at the hands of Canada. She has been hurt at a point of great sensitivity in Oriental countries, viz. "face" or prestige. The resultant feeling is an obstacle to the full development of mutual and reciprocal friendship, confidence and trade.

The occasion of offence is an Act of the Parliament of Canada called "The Chinese Immigration Act, 1923". Its alleged incidence was explained in great detail to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Trade Mission on their visit to China in November, 1930. This expression took the form of very frank addresses at public functions and equally frank editorials in newspapers and magazines. These, it is believed, had the approval of the Nanking government.

Significance of "Face".

In order to appreciate fully the objections raised some measure of understanding of the Chinese attitude towards "face" or prestige is necessary. "Face" has a significance in the Orient that is without parallel or approximation in Canada. The saving of "face" is essential to the maintenance of self-respect and the respect of others. Those nations or individuals whose actions towards China or a national of China have endangered "face" have caused a grievous injury quite apart from any monetary or other consideration that may be involved. In many cases this has been done unintentionally and unnecessarily, simply through ignorance of Chinese psychology.