

HINDU SNAPSHOTS LATEST ARRIVALS

TALKS TO COUNTRYMEN.

Addressed Fifty of Them on Board Steamship Tartar--
Conditions of Life in British Columbia Impressed on
the Immigrants--Civic Sanitary Requirements

Explained.

By Saint N. Sing.

“When I stood on Wednesday at a quarter-to five o’clock in the afternoon on the Canadian Pacific wharf, seeing the steamship Tartar slowly docked, it was raining: the perspective was enveloped in a thick hazy fog, and the sky looked gloomy and forecast. The rain could hardly be described in a drizzle, neither was it pouring hard.

“Enveloped in a thick topcoat, as I mused standing at the landing-place, I endeavored to survey the thoughts of the three hundred and twenty-eight kindred folk of mine on board the steamer. After a very rough, uncomfortable voyage of twenty-nine days, in a stuffy hole, living on meagre, miserable fare, the city of Vancouver, British Columbia, to which they were bound, hardly presented to them a bright, sunny appearance, and a cordial welcome.

“Promptly at five o’clock the Dominion immigration officer boarded the steamer, the saloon passengers were examined, and allowed to enter the town. The Asiatic steerage passengers learned to their gratification, I understand, that they would have to remain on board the ship all night.

“Thursday dawned, and the morning though windy and cold, looked bright and cheerful. The mountaintops in the distance appeared charming in their streaks of snowy garments.

THE DAILY PROVINCE

NOVEMBER 16, 1906

p.14

"Can I go in?" I asked of the Canadian Pacific Railway constable stationed at the wicket guarding the approaches to the steamer Tartar. A little bit of a paper from the immigration officer came handy at this juncture, and I was allowed to board the steamer."

Dr. Monro's Examination.

"Dr. Alexander S. Monro, the immigration officer, was there. Confronted by a row of a hundred and twenty-seven men, with his usual genial smile on his lips and the merry, intelligent beam in his eyes, with perhaps a trifling knitting of his brows to lend an additional charm to his personality, he was busy patiently examining the eyes of the immigrants.

"Makes you bustle, does it?" I hurriedly remarked to him. He vouched no reply, deeming an answer to be superfluous.

"On medical grounds he consigned forty-six of the Hindu immigrants to the local detention hospital, all to be doctored--and some, who after patient and careful treatment were found to be physically unfit, to be deported.

Financial Qualifications.

"The medical examination over, the doctor had to test their financial conditions. Careful investigation showed that all but two possessed more than enough money to be allowed in the country. Every one of these had from three to twelve sovereigns. The two who were found "destitute" have relations in the town who later on will place enough money in their hands to entitle them to debark.

Addressed New Arrivals.

"I was then privileged to address an assemblage of the representative immigrants. The first saloon served as a handy lecture-hall, and for my audience I had a group of over fifty of the more intelligent of the Hindu, Sikh and Mohammedan immigrants, all coming from different villages. Messrs. E. G. Coyle, assistant passenger agent of the Canadian Pacific Railroad company, Dr.

THE DAILY PROVINCE

NOVEMBER 16, 1906

p.14

Monro, W. Snee, C. P. R. Hindustani interpreter, and a couple of the officers of the steamer, were present.

“In a few words I told the immigrants in their native language that they were coming to a new land, in which the conditions were very different from the country they were transplanted from. The climate here was wet and cold (there I was interrupted by a number of voices saying that the climate in the Punjab in winter-time was very severely cold, and that some of them had been in the cold parts of China), therefore they required warm underclothing, socks, thick-soled, heavy shoes, rubbers and waterproof slickers to keep the wet and cold out, and make them comfortable at work.

Health Requirements.

“Then I explained to them that the city of Vancouver had grown very fast and that the house accommodation available in the town for them was accordingly very poor. I referred to a house that has already been rented by some Hindus and is being repaired. I said this house would be worked on a co-operative basis and would supply much-felt want. If they were not to make the streets of the city of Vancouver their “home,” I impressed upon them that they ought to subscribe the funds amongst themselves to do something similar.

“Here I casually alluded to the complaints which the city health authorities were making in regard to the Hindus in the city living insanitary lives. I assured them that the city officials would make a real effort to disseminate correct information amongst them. I winded up my talk by telling them that I trusted they would find no difficulty to get work, and adjust themselves to the new conditions.

“They listened attentively and were well impressed. The result of this effort is that these people will be properly clothed and will find it easy to secure house accommodation for themselves.

Came Direct from India.

THE DAILY PROVINCE

NOVEMBER 16, 1906

p.14

“This batch of immigrants come directly from India, all without exception being from Jallmedhar and Hoshinopore districts of Punjab. Amongst them are, however, twelve from Shanghai, and six or seven who have already been to Australia and Cape Colony. The number of ex-soldiers and ex-watchmen in this crowd is very small, most all of them being from the farms. They are Sikhs, Hindus and Mohammedans, and impressed me as honest, hardy and willing workers.”