

THE PROVINCE

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AN ABSURD MEASURE

When the Dominion Government passed the Order of Council ordering the exclusion of all would be immigrants who did not come from the land of their birth, or of their adoption the Liberal politicians cried, "There, now, is your measure of restriction against the Japanese influx." The order was directed against the Japanese and against no others, the so-called Hindu invasion counting for very little, counting, in fact, for nothing, in comparison with the invasion from Japan. Despite the rapture expressed by the party hacks, however, the people here regarded this plan of affording relief with unconcealed suspicion. They had no experience of such remedial measures. They knew exactly how the Natal Act would work, but how this Order in Council would operate they could not tell. Some were bold enough to say that it would not work at all, except against those to whom it was not intended to apply and that its whole result would be to keep out settlers whom we are anxious to have as citizens.

And this is exactly the result it is having. Against the Japanese it is proving, and must prove, entirely non-effective. But against any other people than the Japanese, always excepting the Chinese who came in under the \$500 heavy tax, it is an insurmountable barrier. We had an instance of that here no later than the day before yesterday when a German who came from Sydney was refused admittance, and when he stated that it was his intention to go to the United States was handed over to the American Immigration Department. Now what class of people, unless it be our own yellow subjects of Great Britain could we more reasonably desire to have as settlers in Canada than Germans? They are among the best people we have got in the Dominion, and it is such

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citizens that we have been establishing immigration agencies in the Old World to secure. And what possible difference can it make to a German's acceptableness as a settler whether he comes directly from Berlin or San Francisco? That he has spent six months or six years in Australia or the United States does not make him any less desirable a citizen of Canada. Has not his value as a citizen rather been enhanced by his residence in countries where the conditions are more nearly akin to those to be found here than the conditions in Germany yet? Yet a German or a Frenchman or a Sweden or a Dane, every one of them, no matter how desirable he might be as a citizen of Canada, is to be excluded simply because he does not come directly from the country in which he was born or of which subsequent to his birth he became citizen. And the law which thus forbids the entry of the very class of settlers whom we desire was framed with the intention of keeping out on particular people, and that particular people is the only people whom it does not keep out. That is the most extraordinary kind of legislation of which the government could be guilty, and it very clearly and completely shows the panic which had seized the authorities in Ottawa when they resorted to such an absurd regulation.

Again it not only excludes Asiatics, other than Japanese and Chinese, who are undesirable because they are Coolie order, but it also excludes those who are not of the Coolie order, who would be no burden upon the community under any circumstances, and whom we might very reasonably welcome whether they come as residents or as visitors passing through the country. We had an instance of that also on Wednesday, in the herding of the Hindu scholar Behmai Lal Verma, who is on his way to study law in England, with the Hindus laborers in the detention shed. He demonstrated the distinction between himself and the other men from India and, by easily passing the Natal Act test, proved his fitness for admission in accordance with British Columbia laws. But the Dominion Order in council steps in and applies to him a rule which was never intended for him or his class and mixes him up with the lowest and most ignorant of his race. To such a man, an act like that on the part of the authorities is not only an injury, but it is the worst kind of an insult. In fact, the whole operation of this Order in Council is an abominable outrage upon this

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province and upon the people coming here. It does not apply to those whom we quite properly wish to keep out, and it excludes those whom we are quite willing, many of whom, in fact, we are anxious should come in. This is Dominion legislation in the interest of the province with a vengeance.

We are told that I lies with the immigration authorities at the port to exercise his judgement; that he can admit or exclude as he sees fit. This we regard as an added defect in the operation of the measure. It is possible that the majority of the officers at the port may be men to whom such power might safely be entrusted. We have no doubt that Dr. Monro, the officer here, could be given a large measure of jurisdiction in this respect. But that is not the question. As a matter of principle, the immigration officers should be there to carry out the law, and there should be no doubt of its interpretation. It should not lie with them to say who shall come into the country and who shall not. It is the people trough their legislators and not a handful of civil ... (sentence missing) ... judgement in passing of exercising the migrants shows to what straits the Government was reduced in this matter.

Absurd legislation of this kind reflects upon the intelligence of the whole people. The Natal Act, passed by the provincial authorities, was a same and reasonable measure of protection. It demanded that those applying for admission itno the country should show that they were, in some degree, at least, fit for the citizenship which they sought; that they would not be incapable of understanding and obeys the laws and might be good and useful members of society. But this Order in Council shows no discrimination, or, if there is any discrimination shown, it is against the people who are likely to make the best class of citizens, against those who have enterprise and courage, and have seen and known something of the world beyond place in which they lived in the country of their birth. The measure is an annoyance instead of an advantage to this province. It cannot keep out one Japanese subject no matter where that Japanese comes from if he cares to dispute the legality of its operation. At best, it is a contemptible trick, simply a political subterfuge adopted by an administration which was at his wits and to get out of a nasty muddle in which its own felly and weakness had involved it.