

SHARPLY CRITICAL OF BRITISH RULE

Hindu Lecturer Looks for Native Who Will Force Open Warfare in India.

"India will act constitutionally in this agitation. If her just rights are not granted her a leader as prophesied by an English officer years ago will arise to direct the cause in open warfare."

This was the concluding sentence of a rather sensational and brilliant address by Professor Te Ja Singh, M. A., LL. D., in O'Brien hall on Saturday night. Many of his sentiments couched in perfect English were warmly applauded by an audience comprising white people and Hindus. Standing room was at a premium. The East Indians in attendance were mainly Sikhs whose neat attire would indicate that they are far from being in destitute circumstances. Not understanding the plea of their countryman they sat in silence throughout the long address.

Professor Singh made a strong protest against the proposition to transport the Hindus resident in British Columbia to British Honduras. He declared the Central American colony to be unsuitable for them for climatic and economic reasons. He quoted the report of the two Hindu delegates in support of his contention and asked the co-operation of their "white brethren" in preventing such a measure from being carried out.

The meeting ended rather abruptly because several white workingmen sought to precipitate a discussion. There were hoots and jeers as the audience made for the door. The Hindus looked on in silence. They meekly brought up the rear. No insult or violence was offered them although a number of small boys did a little shouting on the street. An interested listener during the lecture was the white wife of a Hindu. With her little white child she sat alongside her swarthy lord on whom she frequently gazed with fond admiration.

Send Them Back to India.

"Don't send the Hindus to British Honduras. Send them back to India if they want to go," she loudly interrupted one of the white men who was airing himself after the professor had concluded.

"Steps are being taken by the Dominion Government with the sanction of the Imperial Government to transport 2000 Hindus from British Columbia to British Honduras. The step is apparently a legal one," said he in one portion of his address. "At the outset I appeal to our white brethren here to help us in our efforts to prevent that movement from being carried out. It is alleged that we are to be shipped out of the country because there is no work here. Now this is quite untrue. It is a safe estimate that seventy per cent of the Hindus in British Columbia are working at present. We live on a milk and vegetable diet and consequently are under little expense. I should say the cost of living of my countrymen is not over \$2 a week. From this it is obvious that even if a Hindu gets out of work he has saved enough money to tide him over and prevent him from becoming a charge to the community. There is virtually no begging. If any Hindu is in distress his countrymen are only willing to help him out. Of course, we have our own black sheep. If we find that they are guilty of wrongdoing we will be the first to see that they are punished.

Complain at Treatment.

"The Hindus will strenuously object to the project of sending them to British Honduras to work at an average wage of \$16 per month under an indenture system covering a period of three years and which is a system closely akin to slavery. The two delegates who recently returned from that colony were not favorably impressed with what they saw. They liken the conditions to those prevailing on the Andaman islands, a British penal settlement in the Bay of Bengal. During their stay in British Honduras they met a number of Hindus who had not seen any of their fellow countrymen for a period of forty years. 'Take us back to India. We have never been able all these years to save enough money to pay our passage home,' they pleaded with the Hindu delegates from British Columbia. The helpless men I refer to had been originally shipped to the West Indies where the contracts with them were shamefully broken. Then they drifted one by one to British Honduras. I trust that all loyal Canadians will back us up and stand by us in our refusal to be shipped out of this country to a colony where bad economic conditions as well as mosquitoes and malaria prevail. I hope the government will see the folly of its step.

Tempted the Delegates.

"I am glad to tell you that the two delegates, uneducated as they are and although tempted in various ways, brought back truthful reports in the spirit of Buddha and Guitama.

"Thank God that the old spirit has re-appeared in these two humble men. God ever protects the weak," continued the professor with warmth, after declaring that his arrival here at this juncture was a providential one. Then he devoted several minutes to chiding the white people here for their lack of sympathy with their darker brethren.

Professor Singh was very effective and emphatic in dealing with present day problems in India.

"There is still a great deal of vitality in Indian civilization, Mahatmas are still appearing according as the hour and necessity arise," said he before reviewing the great debt Britain owed the Sikhs for fighting her battles all the way from China and Thibet to South Africa.

"These warriors in these late campaigns were paid \$2 to \$3 per month, out of which they had to provide their own food and uniforms. On the other hand the British Tommy Atkins received \$15 a month with everything provided. The Sikhs were loyal because they never forgot a favor, and there was formerly a parental bond between white officer and the Indian soldiers. They never hesitated about shedding their blood on the battlefield.

"But times are changing," he declared with rising warmth, before indicating the alleged handwriting on the wall. "The spirit of unchecked power is giving us in India a class of white officers who don't understand the people. This in brief is one of the causes of the present troubles there. The Sikhs are getting their eyes opened. India wants justice. Col. Cunningham years ago predicted the advent of a native leader who would sweep everything before him unless England did her duty. No empire can exist if held together by ties of mistrust. Unless the machinery of state is oiled by the lubricant of sympathy it will get out of gear, and the mechanism will break down.

Cause of Unrest.

“Another cause of the unrest is a sense of the degradation at the treatment of Indians in other portions of the empire. I refer to what has been done in Australia, South Africa and in Canada. We have come to realize that the proclamation of Queen Victoria that all her subjects irrespective of color or creed, would receive equal treatment is not being maintained in the same spirit by her successor. Why cannot the Hindus be permitted to work as laborers in the colonies? Many of them emigrated to earn enough to pay off their debts at home. They have shed their blood in preserving and maintaining the British empire.”

Before getting back to the thread of his narrative, the professor took a bypath and digressed on true and false political economy. He quoted from John Ruskin to show that national greatness did not consist wholly of material welfare, and that there was such a thing as a moderate profit in commercial affairs. He scored the alleged rapacity of English manufacturers, and their desire to monopolize the Indian market.

“The recent boycott of British goods was partially a protest against unjust competition, especially in cotton goods. It came about after Lord Curzon has turned a deaf ear to our just rights. I regret that bomb-throwing has occurred. I have no sympathy with such measures. Let the agitation be conducted in a constitutional way. The unity of India is more real than westerners imagine, despite the great number of races. The imprisonment of the native political leaders was regarded as a national calamity from one end of India to the other. British officers act offensively to the people. The recent prosecutions of editors is proving a blessing in disguise. In a spirit of despair some hotheads resorted to bomb-throwing. The real leaders of the people are against that sort of thing. They act in a spirit of unselfishness, and always give tyrants warning before appealing to arms. India is now doing its duty by warning England and asking her to act in a spirit of righteousness.”

The professor denounced the recent partition of Bengal, declaring that it was carried out in order to silence the aspirations of the people. He did not express a high opinion of the statesmanship of Lord Minto, the present viceroy.

The Underlying Selfishness.

The first portion of his address was a scholarly effort. He expounded the principle of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. He

deprecated any spirit of selfishness animating mankind in the relations of races or individuals. He quoted from the teachings of Christ and Buddha to show that selfishness is the cause of human misery and all international disturbances. There were many touches of oriental philosophy in the lecture. He laid great stress on the fact that the western races like East Indians had sprung from Aryan stock.

"We believe that a great period is about to be ushered in in the world's history," said he at the outset. "This movement will tend to bring together and unite in closer bonds all races, classes and creeds. We are all brothers and sisters and spring from the same divine source, although the various types have been modified by soil and climatic conditions. Canada and the United States will play a great role in this movement."

Spread of Buddhism.

He then traced the rise and fall of the Indian empire from the dawn of antiquity. He described the Sikhs as a race that had only been conquered by the British through the treachery of an ally.

"Bigotry and prejudice are the causes of all our troubles. Let Canada and the United States co-operate in developing a world-wide spirit of righteousness. It was selfishness that caused the downfall of India, whose spirit has been kept alive for ages by a few noble minds that appear at the psychological moment. Buddha freed India from caste, which was originally based on intelligence, but which in later centuries became hidebound. The same danger confronts the western nations. Unless they take warning from the example of India they will share the same fate. The teachings of Buddha have spread to China and Japan, and today are revered by millions.

"The trouble with the world is the selfishness inherent in man, and his failure to rise to his true possibilities. As Christ and Buddha have declared righteousness comes to all who lead unselfish lives and place themselves in accord with the divine will. The commercial spirit is not enduring. Already in the west many people are disgusted with its selfish excesses. Its greatness is ephemeral and evanescent. True greatness is an affair of the spirit in a broader sense. Unless we realize that Socialism or the division of land will never be a panacea for social evils. Work in harmony with the divine movement. It is no myth or vision, for it will be realized some day. It depends

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upon the human race whether it comes in one day, one year, a century, a thousand or a million years."

Back to Socialism.

"Do you believe in the profit system," asked Mr. Valentine, an ardent Socialist, who sat at the back of the hall.

"In honest profit," replied the professor.

Mr. Valentine then pointed out that England could not find employment for scores of her own white people at home or in the colonies. His remarks were cheered by sympathizers.

"Although a poor man I am willing to contribute money to help the Hindus to get home to fight their own battles over there. We will fight ours here," concluded Mr. Valentine after quoting various authorities as to the iniquities that follow the existence of a dominant and subject class in any nation.

As other white men in the audience sought to speak and confusion resulted, the chairman, Mr. T. E. Knapp, declared the meeting closed amidst noisy shouts of disapproval.