

THE DAILY PROVINCE

SEPTEMBER 6, 1910

HINDOO IMMIGRATION.

If the Bombay despatch that 400 Hindoo and Punjab coolies are on their way to the United States as immigrants is confirmed, a question of some magnitude will be raised. The United States has no legislation prohibiting the immigration of Hindoo coolies. AS the Bureau of Immigration reports, if they meet the requisites of United States immigration acts they must be admitted.

The Anglo-Indian Government has, however, for nearly sixty-years prohibited any coolie emigration from India, unless the Indian Emigration Commission knows that arrangements have been made for employment, fair wages and freedom of return from their destination. The entire emigration of coolies from India is, therefore, on the contract basis. Every man is "indentured." He serves for a certain number of years at a fixed wage and at the end of that time he must be permitted to return.

This is contract labor and can be excluded by American laws as such. Traders large and small, and Hindoos above the coolie class are, however, allowed to leave freely. If these or any large emigration from India to the United States is permitted it may be prohibited. It will be similar to Chinese immigration and is certain to work the same evils.

With all its population, 300,000,000, nearly equal to China, India has never sent abroad any large emigration. In the last ten years this has averaged 18,000 a year. In the decade before about 11,000 annually.

Small as this emigration is, it has caused trouble wherever it has met a white population. Nearly all these emigrants have gone to the tropics to work on sugar plantations. In Trinidad there are 85,000, in British Guiana 105,000, and in Jamaica 10,000. The last is the only colony in which this emigration has diminished. Coolies appeared in our own province of British Columbia in 1808, the local legislature excluding them, the act was thrown out by the courts as beyond the powers of a provincial legislature and the Dominion later secured the exclusion of all this immigration.

In Australia and New Zealand Hindoos, though by law citizens of the British Empire, are flatly(?) excluded. In Fuji there are 17,000 of these

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immigrants. In Mauritius, out of 375,283 inhabitants 261,191 are Hindoo immigrants, or of Hindoo descent. There the Hindoo coolie has found his best home.

The South African colonies are one by one, excluding them. The Transvaal, when independent, tried to exclude them. Great Britain interfered, but when the Transvaal became a British colony more onerous laws were passed affecting Hindoos than had existed before, and 13,000 were deported and 2500 sent to jail. Coolies are all excluded and Hindoo merchants are under an irritating inspection. Natal, with 105,000 Hindoos, has taken the same course. These British colonies prohibit the Indians as they do colored people, from even walking on the sidewalks. The conditions are so serious that when, at the close of the Boer war, Lord Milner as head of the rule of Transvaal, tried to get 10,000 coolies to rebuild railroads, they were refused by the Indian Government.