

## THE PROVINCE

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**TUESDAY DECEMBER 2, 1913**

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### **THE HINDU PROBLEM.**

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Chief Justice Hunter's written judgment supplementing an oral judgment given recently in Victoria, the result of which set at liberty thirty-nine Hindus who were under detention by the immigration department, seems to place the whole issue of immigration from India squarely before us. It appears by this judgment that the orders-in-council passed in May 1910, are not sufficient to prevent immigration from India to Canada. No one, of course, desires to bar the door to people of Asiatic origins, that is people born of white parents in an Asiatic country. But there is a very definite sentiment in British Columbia that what may be called "coolie" labor should be excluded from the province. It is obvious that nobody desires to see reproduced here the same conditions which have brought about the very serious crisis in Natal. There, of course, the system of indentured labor has been the root of the trouble.

It would seem that in order to make these orders-in-council effective they would have to be radically amended so that there can be no mistake made as to their efficacy. There is not the slightest intention on the part of Canadians to irritate the people of India. Just as economically we are unfitted to labor in India, and just as they would consider us so unfitted, so do we consider them unfitted to labor here. It is purely an economic problem. No one probably would be found to object to a native of India studying at our universities or going into business on a large scale in Canada, just as there are Indian students at the English universities and Indian merchants in London. But Hindu labor would not be tolerated on a grand scale in Great Britain and Canadians have shown themselves in entire sympathy with the citizens of the other dominions in their emphatic protest against any such immigration.

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Lord Hardinge very rightly protested against the treatment of the Hindus in Natal. He was obliged to voice the discontent of India in whatever guise it came before him. But probably he, as most others, recognizes that the crisis in Natal is only the natural result of a policy of drift. The Hindu immigration problem can not(Sic) be allowed to drift. It is far too important, far too serious to the well being(Sic) of the whole fabric on which our existence rests.

It would appear that if the problem could be considered at its inception in India rather than at its full growth in the dominions it is neither insoluble or dangerous. If it were thoroughly understood that there was no work here for the Hindus would they ever set out on such a long quest? Moreover, there are vast tracts of Empire in Africa which are climatically similar to India. If it were advertised that in these tracts while labor was barred and only Asiatic labor admitted would it not turn the tide of immigration in that direction? This would not bar development or trade. On the contrast, it would greatly stimulate it. Throughout Uganda there are tremendous undeveloped possibilities. Cotton-growing in Nigeria and East Africa is only in its infancy. Coffee, cocoa and various other valuable sub-tropical and tropical products flourish. Would it not be commercially advisable, therefore, to develop these districts with the free labor which desires to immigrate from India? In some such solution surely contentment and mutual respect can be engendered.