

## TESTING THE LAW.

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According to the reports in German newspapers received in London and cabled here the steamship Komagata Maru, bound from Shanghai to this port, has on board some 400 Hindus who are to be used as an experiment by a certain Curdit Singh. He wishes to test the recent court decision that Canada can not(Sic) exclude natives of India. If the experiment is successful he will organize a regular immigration service between India and Vancouver.

This news is very interesting and is none the less owing to the roundabout manner in which it has come to the notice of the people chiefly concerned. For the sake of argument it may be accepted as a fact. But facts of this kind need not raise any particular excitement in the minds of the community. It appears as if Mr. Curdit Singh has chosen to make his great experiment at altogether the wrong time. Is there not an order-in-council prohibiting the entry of artisans and laborers to Canada via this province? These Hindus may either be students or gentlemen of leisure and capital. In the latter case their money is as good as any one(Sic) else's. But as it is probable that they are artisans or laborers the law says that they can not(Sic) enter Canada via British Columbia until the expiration of that six months. If the six months expires before the ship arrives, according to Sir Richard McBride, who has just returned from the East, it can be extended for another six months.

Thus for the moment Mr. Curdit Singh seems to have undertaken a very costly experiment. Why he should multiply his liabilities by 400 in order to test a law which he could have tested just as well with one solitary man passes our understanding. Still, as he has fixed on 400, it makes no difference. AS far as we know the order-in-council holds good and therefore whether Mr. Curdit Singh brings white or colored men with him they can not(Sic) land here but must return whence they came.

But the suggestion is most interesting and it is just as well that it has been made now. Our statesmen have six months breathing space in which to

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examine this problem from every aspect. It is the most important one which has to be decided, and the sooner it is brought to an issue the better. The Province has said before and still believes the problem is capable of easy solution owing to the fact that this climate is not really suitable to the Hindu. There are millions and millions of acres in East Africa where half the population of India could thrive and make an excellent living in a climate which is eminently suitable and where white men can not labor. There these excellent and most industrious men can grow cotton, cocoa, rubber and nearly every known product, including wheat on the uplands, and by so doing will not only benefit themselves but the whole Empire. Surely the Indian and Colonial office can make arrangements for such colonizing on a large scale. There are six months in which to guard against a possible test of the kind Mr. Curdit Singh proposes to make. Let us make the best use of them, for there is no good in blinking the fact that we are playing with fire on this whole question. IF the Hindu can be eliminated from the problem of Oriental immigration at least a third of our troubles will have been settled. Let him drift along with the rest and we are only piling up a huge debt for our day of judgment.

This does not explain exactly why this news should have come from Shanghai to German newspapers first. Reuter's correspondent in Shanghai would surely be awake to the fact of its importance even if the British correspondents were asleep. Lloyd's alone would surely have "tipped it off."