

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 1914

A HINDU EXCURSION.

The Komagata Maru has come, has been seen, and is likely to go away without having conquered. Her human freight need not be very vexed thereat. It is Mr. Gurdit Singh, the promoter of the excursion who should be blamed by the excursionists. He persuaded these men to take part in an adventure which at the outset was foredoomed to failure. In the first place the vessel did not pick up her tourists in India but mostly in China. IN the second, there is the little matter of the order-in-council.

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But aside from the law which governs the human freight of the Komagata Maru, where is the Imperial aspect of this question and it is not the law but the rights of British subjects which Mr. Gurdit Singh wishes to test. British citizenship is a different thing to being a British subject. While all Britishers(Sic) are subjects of the crown they are not all citizens. The inhabitants of India are not citizens but subjects being governed by the King thorough(Sic) his viceroy and council and not by a parliament, Mr. Gurdit Singh evidently believes that his excursion is going to rouse all India to demand the same rights as the citizens of the Empire. The labor classes of India desire not so much to travel freely within the Empire but to sell their labor within it. The two things are vitally different. There is one law for the tourist and another for the settler. Possibly Indian students will be welcomed at the British Columbia university(Sic). A baseball or lacrosse Ranjitainghi(Sic) would be a great draw. But though the present excursionists may be magnificent citizens of India, surely it is easy for them to understand that the fact may not make them splendid citizens for Canada. Canadians probably would not make very excellent citizens in India.

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The Province has dealt very fully with this question on more than one occasion. It believes the excursion of the Komagata Maru is likely to be of great educative value. It will awaken the Empire to the dangers of the situation and surely it will serve to remind the Indian office and other Imperial authorities that this is a subject which can not(Sic) be allowed to dreg along without a definite understanding. The Province contends that there are vast tracts of land throughout Africa, especially in Uganda and the southern Soudan which are admirable for Hindu colonization and capable of enormous tracts of the earth's surface as a preserve for white labor. White labor is not desirable in tropical countries in any case. Uganda can produce anything. Its agricultural wealth is simply amazing. Coffee, cotton, rubber and other extremely valuable products can be grown by native or East Indian labor. It is not necessary to indenture such labor. It should be free as air so long as it did not stray outside certain limits and once more compete with the white. In Natal the Hindu has become the trader, merchant and laborer. Might it not be possible to attract all these men to Uganda and there establish millions of the overflowing population of India. Wealth and freedom can be theirs. Wages would be good and they would serve the excellent purposes of introducing among the black races of what used to be known as "Darkest Africa" their splendid civilization and religion.

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We urge this point of view most strongly upon the Imperial authorities. We believe that with some such outlet for their natural energies and ambitions the native races of India would find in the development of these portions of Africa a stimulant to their pride and sentiment. They are far too good men to waste in a country such as this. They are highly intelligent, brave and capable of great endurance. But they are not fitted to this civilization or perhaps the other way bout. It is just as well to be quite honest about it and not make all kinds of excuses. They can live far too cheaply for our comfort

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and consequently can accept a far smaller wage. They must inevitably lower the standard of our living. This should not be charged as a crime against either us or them. It is merely incompatibility of temperament. In East Africa they would find themselves the superior race. They would very possibly assimilate with the native races.

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Under the guidance of the white men and with plenty of capital pouring into Uganda, as it has been doing lately, there should be a magnificent opportunity in the arrival of the Komagata Maru in British Columbian water to thoroughly discuss the whole problem. It must be settled. Opportunism may be a good thing at times but it is not practical in a question of this magnitude. Canada is quite ready to do all she can to promote and encourage good feeling in India. But she can not(Sic) and will not allow hordes of Hindu laborers to settle on her Pacific coast, and destroy the civilization which has been built up there. If the Imperial authorities will take up and discuss this problem it may be quite possible for Canada to offer to pay the fare back to India of every Hindu within her borders. This need not be considered as an insult to the race. But it is impossible for Canada to allow their women folk here and we do not want the Eurasian problem added to the one already in existence.

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Thus Mr. Gurdit Singh may unconsciously be doing a fine piece of Imperial work. He wants to test the case and everyone will admit that he is making an excellent test of it. Two...(illegible words) Hindus would not satisfy him. He had to bring a shipload to make his test. But it is just as well to call attention to one small fact. It is a shipload of Hindus. If it had been a shipload of Japanese coolies and a Japanese man-o'-war were accidentally on the coast on a polite visit, matters might have been extremely awkward(Sic). So many people are apt to jump to the conclusion that the Monroe doctrine would protect Canada in a case of that nature, even if Great Britain could not. Under present circumstances the Monroe doctrine would not be very effective as it is

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otherwise engaged in Mexico. It is sometimes valuable to be able to rely on Great Britain and her sea power when cases similar to this arise. When a Hindu gentleman of wealth makes a test of this nature there seems nothing very much to prevent a Japanese gentleman of leisure making a similar experiment, except of course, Great Britain.