

1914

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1914.

HINDU IMMIGRATION.

According to the Sydney (Australia) correspondent of the London Morning Post the Rt. Hon. L. V. Harcourt, secretary of state for the Colonies, has communicated with the Australian Government with regard to the entrance of Indians into the British Dominions and "indicates" that the embargo against the Indians should be raised. The word "indicates" is capable of many interpretations, one of which is that the correspondent of the Morning Post has not the faintest notion of what the despatches contain beyond some information given to him by one of the ministers but believes that Mr. Harcourt has suggested something of the sort. In fact it is all extremely vague but may serve to stir up trouble for Mr. Harcourt whose politics are not liked by the Morning Post.

It is quite possible that Mr. Harcourt has sent to the governments concerned copies of despatches from Lord Hardinge, which set forth the Indian view of the situation and has asked for the views of the Dominions so that he can convey them to the Indian Government. The Indian Government would not negotiate direct with the Dominions in any case and Mr. Harcourt would be the go-between. But it is not very likely that Mr. Harcourt would make any definite statement that as the Indians have fought so well and shown such loyalty they should be admitted without hindrance into the Dominions. There are large tracts of land in Northern Australia which are said to be very sparsely settled by white people and to be impossible of development except by Indian coolie labor. The climate is altogether against the white man. It may be that Mr. Harcourt has asked whether the Australian government could make any arrangement with regard to these lands.

There is therefore no need to jump to conclusions with regard to these despatches. The whole Empire is deeply grateful to India and for the magnificent way she has responded to the call to arms. We still read with real envy of the manner in which the native rulers are sending more money and more equipment, and how they are fitting up the Empress of India as a hospital ship entirely at their own expense.

But this does not alter the situation in British Columbia, for instance, with regard to the free immigration of the Hindu laborer. It is not a racial prejudice but a completely different code of civilization which is at the bottom of the trouble. Our workmen can not live as the East Indian lives any more than he can live as the Chinese lives. That is all there is to it from the economic point of view.

The Province has contended that in British East Africa and in all our tropical Empire there is immense scope for Hindu immigration. Uganda is specially suited for it and those lands which are between the same latitudes as India. We joyfully admit and welcome the co-operation of the Indians in developing our common heritage but we think that climatic conditions alone make a definite line of demarcation inevitable. White labor can not compete with the Indian in his own country or in any tropical climate. The Indian is climatically

not at home in the colder northern countries. Our destiny in the up-building of civilization may be shared in common but from the mere business point of view it is stupid to attempt to use the machinery for such development where it will not be efficient.

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