

WOMEN'S COUNCIL AND THE HINDUS

DIVERSE VIEWS AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING

Resolution Passed Protesting Against Discrimination in Favor of Chinese

The Local Council of Women met at the Y. M. C. A. at 2.30 yesterday afternoon for the discussion of the Hindu question in the more particular feature bearing on the problem of permitting the wives of those Hindus already in the province to be allowed to join their husbands.

Miss Crease Presided.

Miss Crease, president of the council, occupied the chair, and in her opening remarks said the meeting had been called for the purpose of discussing the question of the admission of the Hindu's wives into the province. Lord Grey, she said, had stated that if the women of Canada would do their duty to their country they must take an interest in the movements of the day, "and this," said Miss Crease, "is certainly a matter which concerns us greatly. It seems to me this is an Imperial subject, but more than that, it is a matter affecting the home, and I cannot think that there is anybody who is indifferent to the happiness of the home." Miss Crease here called attention to the motto of the council: "Do unto others as we would that they should do to us," and the injunction of Lord Grey in his address to the women of Canada to "keep one hand on the traditions of the past and both eyes on the stars."

Mrs. Hanington.

Mrs. Hanington was the first to rise to speak at the conclusion of the president's address, and said that at the last meeting of the Daughters of Empire a strong resolution was passed asking that the different chapters all over Canada take up the question. She spoke in defence of the Hindu, who, she said, was particularly attached to his women folk and to his children, and called attention to the lax attitude of the government in allowing alien races like the Chinese and the Japanese to bring in their families, while the Hindu, a British subject, was denied the right to have his wife and family with him. Mrs. Hanington said she had noticed how people who for years had been keen workers in support of foreign missions, refused to give them even ordinary Christian treatment when they came to this country, and would say no word in their favor.

Miss Lawson asked what reason had been given for denying the Hindus admittance for their wives.

Mrs. Andrews.

Mrs. Andrews took a very firm stand in arguing that it would be a most unwise step on the part of the government to permit any more of these people to come here, that they were polygamous, and had not the same general moral standards as the Occidentals. "It is not a matter of discrimination against the Hindu women," said Mrs. Andrews, "but rather a movement directed against both sexes and against all the Oriental people." She called attention to the transshipment of a number of Japanese who came here with a borrowed head tax which they had been discovered repaying upon landing in this country. "British citizenship," said this speaker in referring to the argument that the Hindu was unlike the Chinese and Japanese in that he was a British subject, "will not make an undesirable person any more desirable."

Mrs. Gordon.

Mrs. J. Gordon took up the argument in their favor, and said that if the economic side of the question were considered it would be found that these

less in their own country than do our own white men here. Physically, according to some of the comments, the Sikh was superior to us. Mr. Clark said that he thought if there was any question of the Hindu workman being a competitor of the white laborer it could easily be adjusted by the municipality or the state passing a law regarding a minimum wage, as this had appeared to be necessary even among white laborers. In the matter of hours, he said, the Hindus sometimes did work longer than our own laborers, partly because they did not understand the language, and could not, consequently, accomplish so much in the same time as other men. He spoke of the cleanliness and orderly behavior of the ninety or hundred Sikhs who had attended meetings to which he had spoken here in the city, and said that recently at a small meeting of thirty-five about twenty-four signed the pledge. The Sikhs were the only race which Mr. Clark claimed to have an intimate knowledge of, but these, he said, did not go in for polygamy. Reference was here made to the statement of Dr. Wilkie, the missionary who

had not been considered as it should be. She called attention to the statements of some Vancouver ladies recently visiting in this city who were very much opposed to letting the Hindus have their wives here with them, giving as their reason that the men who were here were not moral. "The argument about the crossing of races," said Mrs. Grant, "will be very much reduced rather than augmented by allowing these men to have their wives and families with them."

Miss Bromley.

Miss Constance Bromley, who spoke from the knowledge of these people which she had gained by a year's residence in India, said that the Hindu was not a desirable citizen, that he had cunning but not a sense of honor, and that his ignorance of the rudiment of knowledge of such subjects as health and sanitation would make it impossible to have healthy colonies of these people here.

Mrs. Jenkins.

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Mrs. J. Gordon took up the argument in their favor, and said that if the economic side of the question were considered it would be found that these men were not competing with the white laborer. They had proved themselves, moreover, valiant and loyal soldiers in the British service.

One speaker called attention to the intemperate habits which she had observed among the Hindu workmen employed in certain mills.

Mr. Robert Clark.

Robert Clark, who had been invited especially to the meeting to speak on a subject in which he is known to be keenly interested, said that his apology for being at the meeting was that he took such an intense interest in not only the Hindus but all the colored races of the world. He said he thought it not only strange, but unfair, that Hindus should be debarred from having their wives and families with them here when Chinamen in the city were known to have three, four and even five wives with them. "The first point which I should like to bring up," said Mr. Clark, "is the Christian aspect of the question, and I cannot help thinking that if we take the Bible as our guide we are not living up to its principles when we pass laws to keep out our British sisters from the country. From an economic standpoint there are certain things to be said against Hindu women coming in here. There are no less than 50,000 Japanese and Chinese in this country who are competing with the white laborer far more than the Hindu. The Hindu is a Britisher, and from that standpoint alone we should regard them in quite a different way from the Chinese and Japanese. I have not come here to speak about allowing the Hindu to come in here; they have been let in already, and I do not know if those people who talk of deporting them realize what would happen if they were to be sent back." The speaker asked if it could be expected of the Hindu that he should live the sort of life he should do if debarred from having his home life which was so essential to even our own men. Referring to the remarks about drunkenness alluded to by a previous speaker, Mr. Clark said that Hindus drank much

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less in their own country than do our own white men here. Physically, according to some of the comments, the Sikh was superior to us. Mr. Clark said that he thought if there was any question of the Hindu workman being a competitor of the white laborer it could easily be adjusted by the municipality or the state passing a law regarding a minimum wage, as this had appeared to be necessary even among white laborers. In the matter of hours, he said, the Hindus sometimes did work longer than our own laborers, partly because they did not understand the language, and could not, consequently, accomplish so much in the same time as other men. He spoke of the cleanliness and orderly behavior of the ninety or hundred Sikhs who had attended meetings to which he had spoken here in the city, and said that recently at a small meeting of thirty-five about twenty-four signed the pledge. The Sikhs were the only race which Mr. Clark claimed to have an intimate knowledge of, but these, he said, did not go in for polygamy. Reference was here made to the statement of Dr. Wilkie, the missionary who spoke recently to an audience in Toronto, that "we are to-day playing on top of a powder magazine," when speaking of the big standing army of 200,000 Hindus and Sikhs in India who had to be considered in whatever was done regarding their countrymen in this Dominion.

Mrs. Wm. Grant.

Mrs. William Grant said that she thought the subject was too large a one to deal with at a meeting of the kind. "Two races," she said, "cannot live together, nor can they amalgamate." Even though the Sikhs were good in their own country, she thought they would be usurping the white man's place in this country. The question she thought too serious a one to be decided lightly or without much consideration.

Mrs. Spofford.

Mrs. Spofford said that she agreed with the last speaker that, taken as a whole, the question was too large a one for them to deal with; she deplored, she said, the ever-growing number of Orientals who were settling this country. The only question, it seemed to her, that the meeting was called upon to decide was the feeling of indignation which had been aroused by the discrimination which had been made between the different Oriental races, but on this point she thought the meeting should give strong expression.

Mrs. Hanington asked what was the use of a Christianity which was going to sweep aside the very fundamentals of the Christian faith by discriminating against a race on account of its color.

Mrs. Andrews read a letter by Frank Andrews in reply to an article in the Montreal Star, in which he strongly supported the policy of exclusion and said that eastern Canada had no conception of the real meaning of the problem to the people in British Columbia.

Mrs. Gordon Grant.

Mrs. Gordon Grant said that the commercial and industrial side of the question had been debated at length, but that the moral side of the problem

had not been considered as it should be. She called attention to the statements of some Vancouver ladies recently visiting in this city who were very much opposed to letting the Hindus have their wives here with them, giving as their reason that the men who were here were not moral. "The argument about the crossing of races," said Mrs. Grant, "will be very much reduced rather than augmented by allowing these men to have their wives and families with them."

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Mrs. Jenkins.

Mrs. Jenkins reiterated the statement made by Mrs. Grant, that the question was not a political but a moral one, and that from that point alone she thought that these people should be allowed to bring in their wives. On the highest grounds of morality, she said, the Women's Council could not oppose the admission of the women.

Mrs. Hay expressed the opinion that it would be unwise to take a vote on the question at that time.

Mrs. Mitchell.

Mrs. Mitchell said that although without deliberation she would a few days previously have prepared to say that the Hindus' wives should be admitted, after consideration she saw the other side of the question. "These men," she said, "knew quite well when they came here that they would not be allowed to bring their wives here with them." More than this, Mrs. Mitchell said that she thought it a great mistake for loyal Canadians to employ a multitude of alien laborers rather than help the army of poor in England.

After some further discussion Mrs. Spofford, seconded by Mrs. Gordon, made the following substitution for the motion by Mrs. Graves that the council declare in favor of the admission of the wives of the Hindus: "Inasmuch as this country has opened its doors to restricted Oriental immigration, this Council of Women desires to express its disapproval of laws which discriminate against the entrance of the wives and families of one Oriental race while it grants the privilege to others."

The resolution was passed by the unanimous vote of the council.

Moving Pictures.

Further business followed the reading by Mrs. Hanington of the advertisement in a newspaper of the intention of a theatre to show moving pictures illustrating the McNamara story.

After some discussion a motion was put and passed that a committee should be appointed to direct what pictures should appear at moving picture shows, and that, further, the federal government should be empowered to prohibit the importation of objectional films. The committee appointed were: Mrs. Hanington, Mrs. Willisroft, Dr.