

Ed. 7. *Evening Post* London

A very important question has been forced to the front by the attempt of the Hindu emigrants who have arrived at Vancouver on a Japanese ship to establish their claim to be allowed to settle in Canada. The status of the people of British India—and, indeed, of all coloured races in the Empire—is involved in the issue now raised. Does the fact of British citizenship entitle all subjects of the King, without distinction of race or colour, to travel at will and seek their livelihood within the limits of his MAJESTY'S Dominions? In South Africa, of course, public opinion has given an emphatic verdict against this claim. The measure recently promoted by the Government of the Union has gone a long way towards satisfying the grievances of British Indians already domiciled in the country. But at the same time it is clearly understood that no further immigration on the part of Asiatics will be permitted. There is no doubt that the same standpoint will be maintained by the people of British Columbia, and that in this matter they will be supported by their countrymen in every part of the Dominion. Against this determination the efforts of the Hindu emigrants on the *Komagata Maru* to prosecute their claim to land on Canadian soil cannot possibly prevail. The vessel was chartered by a rich contractor in India, who desires to fight the case for the Hindus through the Courts, even up to the Privy Council. But he is not likely to find a loophole in the regulations expressly framed to prevent a movement of this kind. There is, in the first place, an Order in Council, passed last year, and renewed in April, prohibiting the immigration of all artisans and labourers into British Columbia by ocean ports or from the United States. A second regulation forbids the entry of all Asiatics who have not made a continuous journey from the country of their birth. This was at first declared inoperative on technical grounds by Chief Justice HUNTER, but has been reintroduced in an amended form. Since the Japanese vessel came to Vancouver not from India but from Shanghai, her passengers could be excluded under this Ordinance, even if they could show that they were not artisans and labourers. Finally, it is provided that every immigrant of Asiatic origin must have at least \$200 in his possession, a condition which few Hindu coolies could satisfy. Armed with these stringent regulations, the immigration officials have refused to allow any of the passengers to land or even to communicate with the shore until their claims have been investigated. And if it appeared that the immigrants were able by some means or other to evade the existing barriers it is certain that public opinion would compel the Government to establish some more effective system of exclusion.

At first sight the claims of the British Indians seem to deserve considerable sympathy. The impact of the forces of Western civilisation has created unrest among the teeming masses who once faced the difficulties of life with fatalistic apathy. They are no longer content with the conditions that satisfied their forefathers. They seek new openings for their industry and thrift. Through the growth of trade and the development of communications they have learned something of the wealth and progress of other countries, and know that the black waters of the ocean can be easily crossed. From those of their kinsmen who have settled in British Columbia they have heard wonderful tales of its resources and of the high rates of wages commanded by labour, and they naturally want to seek their fortunes in this land of riches and plenty. In recent years they have also been told much of the privileges of British citizenship. They have been led to believe that it entitles them to share in all the rights and advantages enjoyed by other communities within the Empire. And, of course, the educated classes in India are anxious to assert the claims of their humbler brethren. They are up in arms against the imputation of racial inferiority which seems to be implied in the attitude taken up by the self-governing Dominions towards the question of Asiatic immigration. They demand absolute equality of treatment within the Empire for all British subjects. To this claim Canadians, like South Africans and Australasians, oppose the most uncompromising hostility. They are not concerned

gress of other countries, and know that the black waters of the ocean can be easily crossed. From those of their kinsmen who have settled in British Columbia they have heard wonderful tales of its resources and of the high rates of wages commanded by labour, and they naturally want to seek their fortunes in this land of riches and plenty. In recent years they have also been told much of the privileges of British citizenship. They have been led to believe that it entitles them to share in all the rights and advantages enjoyed by other communities within the Empire. And, of course, the educated classes in India are anxious to assert the claims of their humbler brethren. They are up in arms against the imputation of racial inferiority which seems to be implied in the attitude taken up by the self-governing Dominions towards the question of Asiatic immigration. They demand absolute equality of treatment within the Empire for all British subjects. To this claim Canadians, like South Africans and Australasians, oppose the most uncompromising hostility. They are not concerned to argue the question on abstract grounds. It is sufficient for them that they have strong practical reasons for excluding Orientals from their midst, and they are determined at whatever cost to enforce their will in this matter. The people of British Columbia, like their kinsmen in the other Dominions, are resolved to keep their country a white man's country. Nothing will persuade them to surrender this ideal or to refrain from taking any measures that may be required to safeguard it. Nor can anyone who studies the question doubt that they are justified in their attitude by the supreme law of self-preservation.

Their objections to Asiatic immigration rest first on economic but also on social and political grounds. It does not matter whether the standards of life of the Hindus and of other Oriental races are higher or lower than those of Europeans. The fact that they are simpler gives them an overwhelming advantage in the struggle of life against men bred to familiarity with the complex needs of Western civilisation. The Asiatic coolie or artisan has few wants. He is content with accommodation which no European could endure. He eats the plainest and simplest food; he spends little on clothes; he will work

all his waking hours; he seeks few relaxations or amusements. Thus he is ready to accept wages and profits on which the white workman or shopkeeper cannot exist, and he sets up an intolerable competition in the labour market and in the sphere of retail trade. Thus there is no doubt that a large incursion of Asiatics into such a country as British Columbia would involve the economic displacement of the European population. That is a development which the white race does not intend to permit. After all they have a right to insist that they shall reap the harvest sown by their enterprise and energy. They colonised the country. They cleared the land, prepared the soil for cultivation, built roads, bridges, and railways, and established the industries which constitute its wealth. Why should others enjoy the fruits of their labour? It is not as if the would-be immigrants were likely to amalgamate easily with the white population. The Hindus have their own civilisation, and it has many excellent features. But a wide gulf separates it from the civilisation of Europe. The difference of colour covers such wide differences of creed, of social custom, of mental and moral outlook, that no fusion between the two races can be possible. And it is easy to see that endless trouble and embarrassment would result from the establishment in the country of a separate and alien community, living its own life, maintaining its own habits, and cherishing its own ideals. Moreover, from the political point of view, serious difficulties would arise. Orientals have not been brought up to appreciate the traditions of democratic rule. If they were deprived of the right to vote and to enter public life a new complication would be added to the problems of Government. On the other hand, if they were given full political privileges it would be impossible to know how they would employ their powers, since their motives and interests would be utterly different from those of the white population. Thus the opposition to Oriental immigration rests not on mere racial prejudice but on instincts that lie deep in the heart of man and on a clear recognition of the fact that the civilisation of the East

grounds. It does not matter whether the standards of life of the Hindus and of other Oriental races are higher or lower than those of Europeans. The fact that they are simpler gives them an overwhelming advantage in the struggle of life against men bred to familiarity with the complex needs of Western civilisation. The Asiatic coolie or artisan has few wants. He is content with accommodation which no European could endure. He eats the plainest and simplest food; he spends little on clothes; he will work

all his waking hours; he seeks few relaxations or amusements. Thus he is ready to accept wages and profits on which the white workman or shopkeeper cannot exist, and he sets up an intolerable competition in the labour market and in the sphere of retail trade. Thus there is no doubt that a large incursion of Asiatics into such a country as British Columbia would involve the economic displacement of the European population. That is a development which the white race does not intend to permit. After all they have a right to insist that they shall reap the harvest sown by their enterprise and energy. They colonised the country. They cleared the land, prepared the soil for cultivation, built roads, bridges, and railways, and established the industries which constitute its wealth. Why should others enjoy the fruits of their labour? It is not as if the would-be immigrants were likely to amalgamate easily with the white population. The Hindus have their own civilisation, and it has many excellent features. But a wide gulf separates it from the civilisation of Europe. The difference of colour covers such wide differences of creed, of social custom, of mental and moral outlook, that no fusion between the two races can be possible. And it is easy to see that endless trouble and embarrassment would result from the establishment in the country of a separate and alien community, living its own life, maintaining its own habits, and cherishing its own ideals. Moreover, from the political point of view, serious difficulties would arise. Orientals have not been brought up to appreciate the traditions of democratic rule. If they were deprived of the right to vote and to enter public life a new complication would be added to the problems of Government. On the other hand, if they were given full political privileges it would be impossible to know how they would employ their powers, since their motives and interests would be utterly different from those of the white population. Thus the opposition to Oriental immigration rests not on mere racial prejudice but on instincts that lie deep in the heart of man and on a clear recognition of the fact that the civilisation of the East cannot blend with the civilisation of the West. It is said that the attitude of the Dominions will excite the utmost resentment in India. No doubt the enemies of British rule will do their best to excite passion and prejudice on the question. But no agitation can serve to weaken the force of Lord CURZON's dictum "that the common rights of British citizenship cannot be held to override the rights of self-protection conferred on the self-governing colonies." After all, these rights are sometimes exercised to the detriment of immigrants from the Mother Country herself. It is to be hoped that the leaders of opinion in India will ultimately realise this and direct the aspirations of their countrymen into another channel. As the first number of the *Britannic Review* points out, uniformity of British citizenship is an impracticable ideal. What the people of India may legitimately claim through their Government is the right exercised by all the autonomous States of the Empire to regulate without external interference the economic system of the country for their own material benefit.