

To accompany letter Hopkinson to Zurbach 30 Sept 1914

US Immigrants

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BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION

JAN 5 - 1914

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

at Meeting of H i n d u s,

Held in O'Brien Hall, Vancouver, B.C., on September 29th 1913.

With Reference to 73 Hindus, held by United States Immigration
Authorities at Seattle, Wash.

RAJAH SINGH addressed the meeting:-

Brothers, it is past eight o'clock and as there
do not appear to be any more men coming in, it is about time
we began the meeting. Will you please elect a Chairman.

BHAGWAN SINGH stood up and said that Mr. RAHIM
should be elected Chairman.

RAHIM appointed Chairman stood up and said there
should be a Recording Secretary.

Proposed by MOHOMED AKBAR that RAJAH SINGH be
appointed Secretary. Accepted by acclamation.
(By RAHIM.)

Ladies and Gentlemen: This meeting, as you know,
is called under the auspices of the Kholso Diwan Society and
the United Indian League. The object of this meeting has
been set forth in the papers and bills that have been cir-
culated and we have sent out notices to the local papers, also
as to the meeting being called. I do not know whether these
have been delivered or not. Dr. Hall is a speaker at this
meeting; you need no introduction to Dr. Hall; he is known
to be sympathetic with us at this time. He has been work-
ing for our interests here for the past three years. You
all remember this is the very Dr. Hall who has been trying
to proceed to Ottawa to represent our brothers before the
Canadian authorities and in several smaller matters he is
rendering his services to this community and has been treated
unjustly. This Dr. Hall has been engaged in this Seattle

File 11014
Dr. Hall

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affairs for the past few months. You know a contingent of some 200 arrived at the port of Seattle some months ago. Now before I tell anything at all the Chairman must have his hint that he must be brief. I do not want to talk at all until Mr. Hall has spoken, but to introduce Mr. Hall I must tell you that he has been taking pains over this matter for several months, and he is familiar with all the circumstances in connection with this case, and being very sympathetic he is looking at this thing through very sympathetic eyes. We can have no other man so familiar with the matter as our brother. I now call upon Mr. Hall.

(Rev. DR. HALL.)

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: As the Chairman has so kindly introduced me to you this evening, and as there is a good deal of business to be transacted, I will not trespass upon much of your time.

The matter has been brought before you very often lately, and I think you know the principal facts. The facts are that in Seattle some months ago, the ss MINNESOTA brought in something over 200 Hindus into the United States. Now this case differs from many of the immigration cases before us that we have had to deal with in the past. In Canada the immigration laws, as you know, have been so firm that while they allowed you to enter as it were in so many words, yet the laws are practically against your entry, and I will not go into detail in relation to that, you know that better than I do, in as much as most of you have come through that narrow door.

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Now in relation to these men in Seattle: They came from Manila and had been residents there for two or three years; most of them had been there more than six months. They had entered on American soil,- at least soil governed by the United States Government. They had complied with the laws. They had been quite satisfied and they had paid the taxes required. They were employed in Manila and the different Cities adjoining that Port. Some as policemen for Banks, some were employed as watchmen. All of them had certificates from their previous employers. None of them had certificates reading otherwise than that they had left of their own free will. It was proved without any doubt whatsoever, that they were well thought of, ablebodied, industrious people. In Manila itself or in the adjoining towns, they had never been public charges or in any other trouble. When they left Manila they complied with the regulations of the American Government. They did everything that men could do in good faith in leaving Manila, that they might come to Seattle without fear of let or hinderance. But while they were on the way, after they had left the Port of Manila, the Secretary of Labor issued a new regulation, so that when these men landed at Seattle they were treated as though they were never on American soil before. Just as though they had come from India, or Hong Kong or Japan. They had already had one examination. They were each examined by the medical representative of the Immigration authorities and were passed by them. Some of them were detained for a few days, but after being certified by the doctor they were allowed to enter, but none had in any way violated the immigration laws.

Now this is the first thing I wish to draw your attention to: - There has been a ruling by the immigration authorities at Washington, that a man who entered within the

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precincts or territory of the United States, having been examined once, he may not be examined a second time. Now this is the first point: Right from the beginning they were treated as when they left India, and were re-examined and out of the 200 there were 84 rejected. Seven of these were rejected because of a disease called hookworm, or an eye disease. The balance of 73 were rejected on the grounds of Section 20, which says that "if once unlawfully entered the United States, or if he becomes a public charge within one year, he may be deported." It was proved beyond a doubt that they did not try to enter the United States unlawfully.

The second charge brought against them - they had not even left the ship when they were seized by three inspectors - was "that they may become public charges." They changed the wording of the Act which reads "If they become public charges," and they rejected those men and would have sent them back to India if your Society had not been sympathetic enough and brave enough to take the burden of this matter into your hands. Well now that they have done this, at the suggestion of the Hindustani at Victoria I was requested to go over and see these men. I went over and saw them on the ship, then I was requested to engage counsel for them. We did so and we immediately asked for a re-hearing.

Now I may say this, that every step from the very beginning shows animus. The Secretary of Labor, which is equivalent I think to the Minister of Labor like John Burns in England, he said this -

In asking that Congress might pass a law, Congress did not pass a law, he said this, - that the Hindustani coming into America were of the lowest calibre of any kind of immigrant that were coming: below the Chinese, below the Japanese

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below the Slav. He made a series of charges against the Hindustani that were untrue. In fact he could never have made those statements from where he was unless he got his information from some source. Some people say he got his information from the different labor organizations throughout the United States. Some say from the labor organizations along the Pacific Coast. Now as a matter of fact I have very great doubt of whether they meddled with this matter whatsoever. The thing was done so quickly that I doubt if he had any advice whatever. But whatever his advice was he did it without investigation. His mind was biased from the start.

Why do I bring your attention to this? To drive ~~it~~ ^{Congress} this thing home. The man who asked ~~the Secretary~~ to pass a law to reject all Hindustani is the man who is to sit in judgment upon you and his Department was to carry out every one of the examinations that were to occur and the results of those examinations were to go up to him and he was to pass judgment. He had already prejudged the thing.

I will give you an example of one case.- There was one man among the number - I am speaking of what I saw as I was present in the first instance.- This man I have reference to - a sikh - he stands about 6'1" I think, he is about as large a man as your Rajah Singh - They said this man was ~~genemic~~. They said he was not intelligent and that he was unable to cope with the climatic conditions and could not possibly earn a living in the United States. Those were the grounds upon which that man was rejected. This man, if he weighed one pound would weigh 205 or 206 lbs. He was the type of man I mentioned just now, like your President. As for his intelligence, I think he was either a Sergeant

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or some other officer in India, for some 8 or 10 years. He was a man who for agility and strength and all that sort of thing, would win all the prizes. He had medals; he had passed the regular army examination in English reading, arithmetic, writing and all. He speaks English, not so correctly as I do, but speaks English well, yet that man was written down as not reading English, ignorant and all the rest of it. It went all along the line; each of these examinations was similar to that.

At the second examination that man was not rejected; he and three others were accepted notwithstanding that they never asked or censured the man who examined them and told lies, but simply after re-examination they accepted the four. They sent photographs back themselves to show if possible that their charges were not correct. These are the things which I wish to have you understand in relation to the amount of justice that was dealt at those examinations.

As to the public charges. We offered to the Secretary of Labor, to the immigration authorities, this:-

Before the trial and after the trial a man from Victoria and a man from Vancouver - they have a branch in Seattle - we offered to do this: That we would give a bond for one year at any amount which the Secretary of Labor might name, that these men would not become public charges. The argument was brought out - that they were not idle, that they were working, that they had money and every one of them had from \$50.00 to \$70.00. There were some of them who had ~~\$20.00~~ ^{\$140.00} - none had below \$40. Besides paying their passages we showed in the examination papers where these men had saved from \$100.00 to \$200.00 and in some cases \$300.00 to send to their homes. We proved also, as far as man can prove, that these men had

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interests in farms of from \$500.00 to \$2000.00. We proved in a large number of cases that these men had brothers and friends in America who were willing to vouch for them. I had a letter from the O.R. & N. Railway, which stated they are prepared to hire every one of those men, naming the wages not below the given wages. I had from a saw mill at

Erickson, a letter which said they would hire as many men as we could supply at \$2.75 and \$3.00 per day; We had an offer from a man who had a hopfield, to pay them \$3.00 per day, and a bonus which some men made of an amount over the actual price.

We also brought to bear this fact that the Kholia Diwan Society and the Hindustani Association and United India League, were prepared to see that no one of those men should become a public charge. We had proved beyond any possible doubt that not any of these men would become in any case public charges.

It was demonstrated through the unfortunate death of one of the men who died in the immigration station. That man had enough money to pay for the cremation and for the services that are usual, which was more than the usual family could pay, which was a demonstration that this man was not a pauper. There was not a man in any of the poor houses. We proved the same for this country. This man had never been in Manila. Yet notwithstanding these things the regulation required that they went back to the same Minister of Labor who started out with a prejudiced opinion, and you know the results, - deportation.

Now gentlemen, I do not know that I need to dwell upon this. I could say some bitter things.

I went back to Ottawa some time ago and I listened to the authorities there and they gave the delegation that went to Ottawa many soft words; they told many things

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they would do and would not do. They told the delegation that the time for their entry was ripe. We had the promise of the representative of the Government, Mr. Rogers, that he thought from the beginning when he listened to us he stated that these women had to come in. Of course my views were somewhat lessened, but there was no question but the wives should come in, and brother Sunder Singh asked this question: "May we telegraph to India that they may come in? Now is it time to gladden the hearts of the friends of these men?" and he said, "Send it." He asked him twice to make sure and he said "Yes." He said also that while there was no doubt about the Government's attitude with regard to your wives, they are still in doubt as to your coming here. He had to examine into the way of your coming here, to make the door straight.

I want to draw your attention to this other rule, Section 20, the section under which they wanted to deport these men in Seattle, and San Francisco. They are infamous, heinous, untrue; not justice. Both represent the lie on their faces.

Now what is behind this thing? You are an integral part of this Empire. As you know, you are bearing the burden of this great Empire. You are male citizens of the Empire. You have served, some of you have served your Queen and proved yourselves to be loyal subjects. The question is, What means this? Some of your brothers are in South Africa, in this country, in every colony of the British Empire, How is it that these things are so? And are our people across the way - in America, as they are over there on the other side, they take up the same question and they treat it in the same way. Simply because they have no status.

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Tonight now we have come here for the purpose of first of all out of our great love for your country. Looking across the line there, we see your brothers. You see them in the detention shed. As a matter of fact as far as sanitary conditions are concerned and with regard to ventilation and air, they are worse than any prisoners on this continent. Now I ask you tonight why are you reaching out your hands to them? Because first you love them ~~and this~~ do you try to help them and stand between them and ~~this~~ deportation, so are you standing and doing and acting for yourselves.; as you wish to make it plain to the authorities over there that you are not what they say you are, but that you are British subjects, that you are veritably a part of this Empire, while these people should speak for you, and you have to do these things yourselves, and that you are going to show these people of the United States that you people are not in Canada living ^{well} while one of you lives in this country a pauper. And I have this to say, I have a letter ~~sent~~ upon letter sent to that man. Letters from one of the Contractors in Oregon, who state the Hindus were excellent, industrious labourers. They put it on their printed paper, they signed their names to that, and I am sure of this that the men were encouraging the Hindus coming to this country and have seen them in comparison with other people and they say with me tonight that they are good, and in some cases I am afraid they think too good, and tonight I ask you to help them and see this thing through.

Next order of business, a Resolution moved by Mr. Rajah Singh himself.

(RAJAH SINGH)

Ladies, and gentlemen, before moving the Resolution,

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I have to say a few words: My brothers here all have heard that a delegation was sent to Ottawa by our Hindustani Committee, and the principal burden of their commission was that our wives and children will be allowed to enter into this country. Some of the people in this City do not believe that the Minister did promise at all, but you have heard from Mr. Hall that he did promise.

All Hindustani, Mhhomedans, Sikhs should speak up for your rights, and I have to say this, that when these Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders do not allow us to enter into their country, why should we not drive them from India? We should take those steps and we could start a struggle and exclude those people from our India, and I have great hope with our friends and our people that this work can be done. How long shall we be treated in this way?

This is the resolution that I have to move:-

WHEREAS 73 Hindus are kept in custody by the United States immigration ~~authorities~~ authorities at Seattle, on the allegation that they are liable to become public charges, we, the Hindustani of Canada, hereby testify that the said allegations are untrue for the following facts:

1.- That the Khalsa Diwan Society and the United India League and the Hindustani Associations of Canada and the United States will find funds in aid of the immigrants if they arrive.

2.- That no cases of public charges are known to exist or to have occurred in the United States of America.

The Chairman calls on Dr. Sunder Singh to second the Resolution.

(Dr. SUNDER SINGH).

Whatever Mr. Hall has told you and what this Resolution is, the American Government who have kept men locked up

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for three months because they are likely to become public charges, it is up to you to see that these are not likely to become public charges. It is up to the Khalsa Diwan Society and other Societies to see that justice is done. The matter was taken into the Court and the ruling has been given against us with no appeal, and this matter has been going on for three months. When we were told that there was no appeal, we are bent upon getting the matter into the Courts no matter what happens, so that we can get justice. How can it be true when the speakers have already told you that no Hindus have ever been public charges, that they can say these men are likely to become public charges, as the United States immigration authorities allege.

(RESOLUTION.)

WHEREAS 73 Hindus are kept in custody by the United States immigration authorities at Seattle, on the allegation that they are likely to become public charges, we, the Hindustani of Canada, hereby testify that the allegations are untrue, on the following facts: That the Khalsa Diwan Society for Canada and the United States can find funds to meet the needs of immigrants arriving in Canada and the United States.

That up to the present time there have never been any public charges in Canada or the United States.

(Resolution carried unanimously.)

(Resolution proposed by Bhai Bhag Singh.)

The Secretary will read the resolution and call on Bhai Bhag Singh to move this resolution.

You have all got together here this evening to look into the case of the struggle through which the Hindus are passing. That you must appeal to the Government that

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this injustice shall not be allowed to proceed. This is a case of man to man. This has been your chance where you have been able to leave India and come to this country to make some money.

(Mr. Bhagwan Singh spoke in Hindustani, but too quickly to interpret for Stenographer.)
(MR. RAHIM)

You have heard Mr. Bhagwan Singh in Hindustani, but I presume few of our English friends have understood. I have always explained to the Hindustani public that the most unfortunate thing is that there are comparatively few men in Canada who understand the language. We can count them on the tips of our fingers, and these few men become the exponents of the Hindustani, which is very deplorable. They are comparatively misrepresented all the time, and if this state of things continues it will have disastrous effects.

These few things are necessary to point out:-

Mr. Bhagwan Singh has spoken in the Hindustani language. He has gone into the political and other relations with India. He has gone to the root of the matter. I have not the opportunity of expressing it fully but there are English speaking men who understand him. He has represented most thoroughly in such a logical - in such a thorough proper way, giving statistics and figures and all the particulars that I tell you if this lecture were given out verbatim it would be a lecture that would enlighten the public. I tell you there is a difficulty of a few who understand our language misleading the blind public.

When I arrived here four years ago, I encountered the Immigration authorities. I have been constantly fighting these immigration authorities. They were given a disgraceful hiding in the Supreme Court and the history of the case has

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proven that so far the ~~immig~~ immigration authorities are high handed and without any proper consideration of the Hindustani. The judge made the remark in the first case that the immigration authorities had committed a high handed act by deporting without any investigation. All the time this case was going on, the corrupted press of this country were all the time inspired by this man. They said that I was an agitator, that I was incompetent and that I was instrumental in harboring some schemes, storing ammunition and other things in my boxes, also nitroglycerine and bombs. When I sent any replies to the papers they never took any notice of them or published them. Finally after three years of fighting and expending thousands of dollars I won the thing out, and while the press objected, they gave me an opportunity of explaining myself. Twice my letter appeared. There were three columns each; I pointed out that the few facts found in my notes about nitroglycerine were nothing else but a cutting from the WORLD, published at that particular time, and which gave the history of explosives. There were a few facts about dynamite. The bomb was such a scare to the authorities in India. If a word was found in a leaf or book of a Hindustani, they have a fit altogether. Such a scare, and such an attitude as the idea of nitroglycerine and all that, was the very reason why I put it in my book.

(SECOND RESOLUTION)

RESOLVED that we open a cash and real property fund for the release of the 73 Hindustani immigrants with a view to appealing the case to the Supreme Court.

(This Resolution is being moved by Bhagwan Singh)

We want \$35,000. Dr. Hall has given us a full account of what terrible treatment they are receiving at the

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hands of the immigration authorities in Seattle. They cannot even get proper food.

I now call upon Mr. Bhag Singh.

(MR. BHAG SINGH)

Hindustani Brothers, for what reason are we being deported? I went to India to bring my wife and children. They could not come here so we went to San Francisco. When we got there my wife was supposed to have hookworm, and we were not allowed to land, and I went to the United States authorities for admission to Seattle, with one of the brothers of this Society with \$2000. While there they asked us if we had been stopped and we had to say yes, and they stated because we were likely to become public charges they would not let us enter. Because of this charge we are going to render assistance to the men in Seattle. It has never been explained to us the meaning of "likely to become public charges" and if being permitted to proceed to Seattle is the reason, why I am making this motion that we collect money to render assistance to the men in Seattle. All in favor of this motion clap your hands.

It is all very well for you to clap your hands; It is now for you to subscribe the money. You have made a lot of money in this country and now is the time to spend some to assist your brothers in Seattle. What is the reason you have never done anything? You are always fighting one with the other @ Mahomedan, Hindustani and Sikh. To show you the difference between your attitude here and in Seattle: Our three delegates arrived there, Mahomedans, Hindustani and Sikhs took up their case to put the matter before the Indian Government. Our position is now so strong in India that we are going to force the Indian Government to recognize our status.
(\$24,000) collected by subscription at meeting.