

RG76 vol 384 file 536 999 pt 1

Vancouver, B.C.,

Jan. 2nd. 1907.

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The Under Secretary of State to the India House,  
Whitehall, S.W., London.

*Falk Warren to the Under Secretary of State for India  
Vancouver, 2 Jan. 1907*

Sir,

In continuation of my letter of 22nd. of November last, I beg to inform you that the condition of the main body of Hindustani immigrants who have come into British Columbia is more satisfactory than could have been anticipated. Of the 2200 men there are not more than 50 or 60 out of work. Some of these have already earned some money but many of them are doubtless living on the charity of their fellows. The public funds have not been called upon to expend anything upon any of these men, but private charity has done somewhat to meet exceptional cases of sickness. The men have found work mostly in the timber mills, in a cement work, cutting wood and clearing land for contractors. As they get accustomed to the new classes of labour upon which they are placed they are reported to give every satisfaction. The wages earned vary from five shillings to six shillings a day. The men who appear most steady and adaptable are the Sikhs and Mahomedans who have been in the service of the Government, and such others as come direct from India. These are cleanly, obedient and respectful, three valuable characteristics in men employed to work in bodies.

A subject I would desire to draw particular attention to is the position of such of these men as have

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of necessity to be housed in this City when they first arrive here and are out of work.

It is almost impossible for such to find lodging, partly owing to the hostility shown against them by the whole labouring class, to their own caste prejudices which require separate diet and cooking, and to their total ignorance of the English language. To meet this want, there has up to the present been made use of a large wooden house which can hold about 60 men. When this was found insufficient a large tent was pitched for further accommodation. Fittings and stoves had to be put in and arrangements made for cooking and washing, latrines had besides to be erected and connections made with the drainage and sewer system of the City.

These arrangements had to be carried out at short notice to meet the requirements of a Municipality hostile to the reception and retention of the immigrants, backed by a large and clamorous element of the Labour Party, who opposed any assistance whatever to this immigration. There was no official to take charge there were no funds, and the first burst of a Canadian winter rendered the situation a most trying one to the strangers who had reached these shores. These very considerable difficulties have been overcome by the enterprise of private individuals and by the good conduct of the Hindustani immigrants themselves, but not without sufferings to the latter, and some ~~sufferings~~ bitterness between opposing parties.

At the present time there are some forty men in

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the "Hindughur" or rent-house ; some of these are ill. These lodgers pay 15 cents a day or \$3.00 a month which includes heating and lighting. The place is in charge of one, Herman Singh, a sikh, who receives a small salary, much less than he could earn if otherwise employed. Want of funds to maintain a necessary establishment is the cause of the building and its environments not being kept in a perfectly satisfactory state of cleanliness, and indeed, no systematic control has been exercised. This state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue, as it must result in action being taken by the Municipal Sanitary authorities. Should the "Hindughur" be closed the position of the Punjabis who are ill or out of work would become very serious if not critical.

It is under these circumstances that I venture to again address you. It seems to me that these Punjabis are entitled to official recognition and protection. Hundreds of these men have been soldiers in our Army and wear medals for their services in the field. They are subjects of our Empire, and are yet denied the rights of citizenship by a large proportion of their fellow subjects. They are orderly and law abiding ; the laws of the country permit their entry and yet their ignorance of the English language precludes their equality of treatment in courts of law owing to the absence of adequate interpretation. The very landing of these men from the steamer which carried them here was officially prohibited by the Mayor of Vancouver. Food and fuel was refused to be sold then on another occasion.

I cannot but think that these British subjects who are called upon to pay taxes have a legal claim for protection and assistance. If they have not, then steps should be taken between the Governments of Canada and India which will prevent possible troubles and unfortunate contingencies. I appeal in an earnest manner, that the present situation is one which is deserving of special consideration. It is not right to throw the burdens which Governments should bear upon the shoulder of a few private individuals.

I venture to suggest that the subject of the restriction and regulation of this particular class of immigration be taken up. It seems to me not only desirable but necessary that no more should come to British Columbia than there is work for, and that only such men should enter this country as are certain not to become charges upon public funds or upon private charity. The numbers should be restricted to such as can produce certificates of employment and the class of men be regulated as to physical fitness to work, capability to withstand the cold climate of winter, and possession of sufficient funds to clothe and maintain themselves in an adequate manner for a defined period of time.

When the present rate of wages becomes known throughout the Punjab, and the Spring comes, a flow of emigration may reasonably be expected; such will probably not be short of 500 per month at the least, that is if no restriction is put upon the limit. As several railway lines will be in course of construction these numbers will be easily absorbed, but the difficulties of accommodating the men on landing will increase, and the hostility of the labouring classes

classes against the Hindustanis will be accentuated. The rates of wages will most undoubtedly fall as the population of this great Province of British Columbia is only about 250,000 in all. The labouring class form a large proportion of the voters, and trouble is certain to ensue if there is not some limit placed to maintain a fair standard of "living" wage, such trouble as is now existing in California.

The situation will have to be faced some time or other and <sup>the</sup> sooner it is taken in hand the more easily the lines of settlement can be drawn.

I have, etc.,

FALK WARREN.

Colonel late R.A.