

7. W.L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour to Rudolph
Lemieux, Minister of Labour for Transmission to
The Governor General

Confidential Memorandum.

July 1908

While in Vancouver during the months of May and June of the present year, I was informed by Dr. A. S. Monroe, Medical Inspector and Immigration agent of the Dominion Government, that he was strongly of the opinion that a number of the East Indians who have come to Canada within the past year or two years, are at the present time co-operating with some of the natives in India who are interested in sowing seeds of sedition in India. At Dr. Monroe's office I met Mr. W. G. Hopkinson, who has lived some twenty-five years in India, and who, for a good portion of that time, has been connected with the Indian Police (in Calcutta, I think). He knows a number of the Indians well, and is able to converse freely with most of those who have come to this country. He informed me that he was of the opinion that money was being raised in Vancouver and the United States to send to India to help along the nationalist association there. He went so far as to say that he had reason for believing that instructions as to the method of manufacturing bombs had been sent from Indians residing at Seattle to some of their fellow-countrymen in India. The person whose movements he thought should receive special attention, is one Taracknath Das, the editor of a paper published in Vancouver, called "The Free Hindustan". This man makes his headquarters at Vancouver, and then for a time at Seattle, going to and fro considerably between these places. Mr. Hopkinson was of the opinion that if the mail coming to Taracknath Das and to some of the Indians living at Port Moody, were seized and opened, it would show that his impressions were correct. As far as I was able to learn, Taracknath Das was for a time a student at Berkeley University, California, and was employed by the United States Immigration

Office in Vancouver as an interpreter. I was informed that he had been suspended, pending some investigation of his actions.

I also met, in Dr. Monroe's office, Mr. C. J. Brooke, who for many years resided in Calcutta, and who acted as an interpreter for me in connection with the enquiry conducted last fall, into the methods by which Oriental labourers have been induced to come to Canada. Mr. Brooke gave it as his opinion that Taracknath Das was one of a band of conspirators, who were sending to India both money and seditious literature to help along a revolution in that country.

Dr. F. T. Underhill, Medical Health Officer of the City of Vancouver, shared the opinions of Mr. Hopkinson and Mr. Brooke. He secured for me a copy of the first number of "The Free Hindusthan", and with him I visited the quarters of the Hindus residing in the City of Vancouver. Dr. Underhill was of the opinion that Uday Ram, who was a foreman in the lumber mills at Millside, was a person whose operations would stand a little looking into. He virtually controls the employment of Hindus at the mills at Millside, and all payments of money made to them pass through his hands. Dr. Underhill did not say that Uday Ram was in any way connected with seditious movements, but I understood from him, as well as from Mr. Brooke and Mr. Hopkinson, that he was one of a group of men at Millside who were associated with Taracknath Das. It was Uday Ram who sent to the Right Honourable the Viscount Morley, Secretary of State for India a cablegram which was received at the India Office while I was in England, and which was as follows:

"Vancouver, March 22, 1908.

"Mass meeting Natives of India protest deportation. exclusion from Canada. British subjects claim Government protection throughout the Empire. If our interest overlooked, brothers in India must necessarily resent your Government's neglect."

My own personal opinion is that Uday Ram and his uncle,

Davichand, a Brahmin, who was in British Columbia for some little time prior to the large influx of Indians last year, have been responsible for a good deal of the immigration from India. Davichand, from all I can learn of him, is a good deal of an adventurer. He has been some years in Australia, as well as two years in Canada. The impression he created among the authorities in British Columbia was anything but favourable.

The London Times of May 22 contained an article from its special correspondent at Vancouver, in which it was stated that there were good reasons for believing that a seditious movement in India was being directed from the Pacific Coast.

The correspondent said: *[Quoted to article]*

"I have positive information that Indians here are subscribing money for seditious purposes, and I have other information which indicates that Millside, near New Westminster, is a centre of revolutionary agitation. There is a certain 'school' there, ostensibly for the instruction of Indians in English, which is actually being managed by agitators for the purpose of imbuing Sikhs with revolutionary ideas. The treatment which Indians are receiving here naturally makes them receptive of such doctrines. The 'school' is under the direction of three Indians, one from the Punjab and two from Bengal, who are well educated. The movement has spread to Seattle, which town the most dangerous of the three agitators is now visiting. This man is a Bengali, and recently started a paper called 'Free Hindustan.' A grocer's shop on Granville Street Vancouver, is being used for the exchange of letters between the agitators here and their friends in India. I am informed that directions for making bombs were recently sent from the Pacific Coast to India."

Mr.L.W.Grippen is the correspondent of The Times in the City of Vancouver, and is living at the Hotel Vancouver in that city. He informed me that he himself had sent this despatch.

The Vancouver News-Advertiser of June 12 contains a reply to the despatch to The London Times, written by Taraknath Das, who signs himself as 'Editor of The Free Hindusthan.' It begins by asserting that the London Times "is ever notorious for misrepresenting facts, especially where the interests of bureaucracy is supreme, and the rights of men are most abuseively ignored." In his letter Das freely admits the publication of The Free Hindusthan, saying that it "advocates the liberal principle of rights of man and puts forth undeniable facts and figures about the exploiting principles of the British Government in Hindusthan." Referring to the sending of directions for making bombs from the Pacific Coast it says: "I shall say that there is no lack of eminent chemists in India, and if we could be successful in sending a formula for making bombs, it would be a great credit to us, that notwithstanding the opening of letters sent from this country, we managed to send the abnoxious message to India."

In this article Das has a reference which is evidently intended for Mr. Hopkinson, and is as follows: "The informant is an Anglo-Indian, and he was in India over 20 years, and to him, as it is to mostly all Anglo-Indians, all educational movement is a red rag to a bull, because it is the policy of the British Government in India to keep the people in ignorance and exploit the country, and the informant is quite aware of the policy, owing to his long stay in India and secret connection with the Bureaucracy."

Das admits the existence of a school in Vancouver, and says in reference to it: "Canada as a free country makes every Hindusthanu understand how he is oppressed at home. We teach not only how to read and write English, but tell them about

their rights, and shall do, as far as I am concerned, right along. It is my duty and shall stick to it till the last. It is an open secret that I cherish, that the Government of India must be a Government of the people of India, by the people of India, and for the people of India, and 'Free Hindusthan' represents this idea."

The concluding paragraphs of this letter are as follows:

"Our contemporary also mentioned that we are attempting to make the Sikhs embittered with revolutionary ideas. We think it will not be out of place to mention that there was a serious riot at Punjab last year, and it was the retired Sikh soldiers who were more concerned in it, and the riot took place when the land tax was heavily increased. If the British Government in India is all right, then there is no danger of the people taking action. If it is not, then the people will assert their rights.

"Lastly I may say that the national movement in India will not be checked by threatening remarks of him or any of his co-workers.

"The repression of the British Government in India will make the people more aggressive in their efforts to secure self-government. That is all India wants. She is not revolutionary, and when she is accorded the privilege of governing herself there will be no friction with the head of the Empire of which she forms a part."

The first number of "The Free Hindusthan" was published in April of the present year. It is described as "An organ of freedom, and of political, social and religious reform, and its motto. "Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." In the first number is contained the cable sent to the Right Honourable

Lord Morley, before quoted, and says that Uday Ram at Millside bore the expense of sending the cable. The nature of this publication may be judged from the following headings of the chief articles which it contains:

"A Strong Protest against British Injustice."

"Our National Life is at Stake."

"Famine in Hindusthan and the Only Remedy."

"The Russian Measures in Hindusthan."

"A Lesson from the German Revolution of 1849."

The following are passages from among the articles which "The Free Hindusthan" contains:

"Today our national life is at stake. The British Government in India has already adopted all possible repressive measures to crush our national aspirations; and a new measure is going to be adopted which will lead our national life to stagnation. We are slaves in our country and have no voice in the government of our country far from having any representation of our own. We are treated worse than cats and dogs of Englishmen in the British Colonies. Today the door of Hindusthan is open to the hungry Britishers and other colonists who are wrongfully robbing our nation while millions are yearly starving to death.

* * *

"Let us tell, in an active way, to the British Government, that if we are not allowed to enter British Colonies, Britishers will sooner or later be excluded from Hindusthan. The treatment we get in British Columbia is heart-rending. We cannot get houses to rent. They say 'we will rent houses to the Chinese, Japanese, Negroes, but not to the Hindus, though they fought for the British flag.'"

"We fear another act of injustice may bring the news of an upheaval which will rend the Empire into pieces."

* * *

..."Then how many millions are there out of relief, and how many thousands are daily dying of starvation! The civilized world knows very little of it, because Hindusthan is represented by the British bureaucracy which can shamelessly trumpet that Great Britain is uplifting a population of three hundred millions, nearly one-fifth of the population of the world, to the highest standard of civilization and prosperity while she is really using all her power to devitalize the nation by all means possible. The interested English papers do not want to let the civilized world know the dark stains of the murderous commercial policy of Great Britain, which caused a mortality of over nineteen millions of people in famines alone during the last twenty-five years, while the British merchants exported hundreds of tons of rice, wheat and other kinds of staple food daily during the very days of famine in the country.

"Famine in Hindusthan is mechanically created by the British Government and capitalists in their greediness to rob the natives under a hundred and one pretexts.

* * *

"What is the true cause of famine in Hindusthan is the question, and to answer it I should say that the poverty of the Indian peasantry, which is 85 per cent of the total population, is the true and only cause. And this poverty is created by the British Government

by her unjust and merciless taxation, wilful destruction of native industries, exorbitant military expenditure. and many other mechanical processes of draining away an incredibly large sum of money from our beloved mother country every year without giving back a cent in return."

* * *

"To stop famines in Hindusthan we have to stop the draining of the wealth of the country by the British government and her commercial policy. This can only be done by taking the reins of the government of our own country in our hands.

* * *

"The repressive measures adopted by the British Government in Hindusthan to curb the national aspiration of the people is daily revolutionizing the people. The civilized world hates the Russian measures, but it is really unknown to the world that the British Government has adopted measures in Hindusthan in no way inferior to those of the Russian bureaucracy."

The following passage referring to immigration from India to Canada is significant as showing wherein, in the opinion of the leaders of the nationalist movement, immigration from India to Canada will assist their cause. It suggests that there may be an even deeper significance to part of the movement than the authorities have hitherto supposed:

"We ask our leaders at home to take all possible steps to arouse the feeling of the masses so that the proposed step to stop immigration to Canada may not be passed. This act, once passed, will serve as a cause of stagnation of our national life."

It will be fully apparent that persons desiring to use any city or part of Canada as headquarters for seditious propaganda in India, are not a desirable class of immigrants to have in this country. It supplies an additional reason for the careful supervision of all immigration from India to Canada.

W L Mackenzie King
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Respectfully Submitted J. H. Brown