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From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Commerce and
Industry Department, 25th March, 1908.

P. Asiatic Immigration into Canada. Mr Mackenzie King
is now here, deputed by the Dominion Government. Sir
Edward Grey, Lord Elgin, and I agree that a self-govern-
ing colony like Canada cannot be prevented from making
regulations to exclude or restrict Asiatic immigration.
Sir Wilfrid Laurier assures His Majesty's Government of
his sincere desire to sanction no measure excluding
British Indian subjects that would weaken the bonds of
Imperial citizenship. While he fully realises the dis-
tinction between Chinese or Japanese and Indians, still
an extremely awkward conflagration might be kindled were
the Dominion Government to veto British Columbia's anti-
Asiatic proposals. Apart from the danger of this poli-
tical and constitutional kind, the case is made urgent
by the daily necessities of common order in Vancouver.
The Dominion Government, having come to terms with Japan
as to restriction, strongly desires us to take steps
to restrict emigration from India. In the case of
Japanese, the Dominion admits contract labour only where
it has approved contractor and contract. It restricts
Chinese immigration by a poll-tax. It is represented
that emigration from India is caused chiefly by ship-
ping companies which want passengers and by private
speculators. The state of the Indians in Vancouver
has been carefully examined on the spot by Mr King.
There is high mortality. We reports their condition as
necessarily unhappy and unhelpful on account of climate,
nature of work, and surroundings, quite apart from ill-
will of competitive labour. They have been brought from
India

From Secretary of State to Mr. King, 1894

India by the active propagation in various districts of entirely delusive ideas about prospects in Canada both by circulars and agents. Whatever our political difficulties may be in accepting or aiding the principle of restriction, Mr King goes far to convince me that the active discouragement of emigration to Canada under such unfavourable circumstances is unquestionably to the interest of the Indians themselves. You have rejected the passport proposal; is there any check that you can suggest? Could you make regulations at the ports for the shipping companies, making permits necessary for immigrants to Canada and limiting the number of permits? You might represent to Indians that such regulations are made entirely in their own interests, in order to save them from the danger of being turned back destitute. We take precautions in regulating the movements of pilgrims; it would seem a duty to take equal precautions in the case of people going to distant parts of the Empire of which they know nothing. Is it not possible in districts worked by emigration agents to find means of warning? I intend to write to you regarding strong political reasons of more general bearing which exist. Please send me a telegram as soon as possible, since the matter is important and pressing.