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CANADA INDIA COMMITTEE

THE COMMITTEE'S OBJECT
To Promote a Wider Appreciation of Canada's Relation to India and to Secure Its Equitable Adjustment.

TORONTO, CANADA 191

Dear Friend,

Mr. Ernest W. Jackson the bearer of this letter is going to India for the purpose of enlisting the help, cooperation and guidance of India's sons who are interested in the great cause to which we are devoted.

We believe he will receive a courteous and sympathetic hearing when his mission is made known. We bespeak for him your assistance.

The Canada India Committee has been at work for about a year and comprises nearly one hundred associate members. It originated through the persistent efforts and the devotion to his work of Dr. Sunder Singh who you may remember was the central figure in the great struggle by the Sikhs in British Columbia up to the summer of 1914 when the "Komagata Maru" passengers were refused entrance into Canada.

The declared objects of this Committee are stated above. Based as these are on the fundamental principle of a common brotherhood and One Father, we have to contend at every point with the intense individualism which prevails among the people of Canada. Perhaps nowhere is materialism so strong within the British Empire, and so unaffected by the lessons now being learnt nearer the war zone.

Under the direction of Dr. Sunder Singh we have worked incessantly to bring about something reaembling an organization. We have conducted many small meetings throughout this City to explain the work and to secure members. It is safe to say that each member represents much time, energy and money, and even now few members have any real vision of the cause. We also have a paper for enlightening people here on India. But the opposition is strong and well organized. It turns up everywhere and at present effectually keeps us from getting a hearing in the churches and the representative societies. The voice of slander and the suspicious word makes great havoc, constantly upsetting the minds even of our own workers.

We know what we want. We should spend about Rs 300/ per month on a strong well managed and well written monthly magazine, paid stenographer and typist, (our own volunteers have worked themselves almost to nervous wrecks) and all located in a central house. We have been spending nearly this amount during the winter but the strain is too great on the very few who contribute their money and time. Our present members can cheerfully provide one half this sum and we think it probable that our Indian friends will see that we have the other half.

This is as much your work as ours. If you recognize the pitiable condition of the Hindustanis in this country, please do what you can to help Mr. E. W. Jackson's mission.

We also see the need of an experienced and well known worker or workers from India to come to Canada and address meetings in the Dominion thus promoting a better feeling.

A few Indian Students of both sexes at Canadian Colleges who would come to Canada and will take to some field work, will help in making India understood in this country. We realize that nothing but educational work can be done during the war, although if we had a strong organization and more experienced workers, the Government might be induced to allow the wives and families of Indians now resident in Canada, to enter. This surely could not be made a political question and is a simple act of justice.

Realizing our situation and knowing how hard it is at present to communicate by mail, we decided that we must send a representative to you to show you our needs and to plead for help, where we believe it is needed more than anywhere in the Empire. The people of Canada are ignorant of the whole question and such a little well directed work might win for India's cause a very generous and justice loving people.

So we raised $500.00 It was no easy matter although Toronto has raised millions this winter for the more popular patriotic purposes. We have all tried to sacrifice a good deal for this effort, one friend even giving jewelry and all her spare time in lieu of the money she lacked.

When the mantle fell on our friend Mr. E. W. Jackson, he at once assented and has thrown up his position in the Royal Bank and his immediate future prospects here to carry out this arduous and noble mission.

We believe he will not appeal to you in vain after his mission is made known.

He was not selected because of his wide practical experience of the racial questions in Canada, but rather because he was the more fitted to go on such a trip both in an economic sense and that he seems to have the spirit whereby he will faithfully devote himself to the Cause and effect that contact with you people that seems so vital to our work.

In conclusion we trust he will be treated by you as Dr. Sunder Singh and other Indian friends are by us, as one of your own and we trust he will live up to the high trust we have imposed on him, so that much practical good may result from this contact between the East and the West, which we verily believe are one in spirit and will become one in body, when the present mists of ignorance and prejudice have cleared away and left our sight free to see the vision.

Yours truly,

L. A. Davis

Sunder Singh

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Despatches: 1916 May 16-June 30. May 16-June 30, 1916. MS War and Colonial Department and Colonial Office: Hong Kong, Original Correspondence CO 129/433. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). China and the Modern World, link.gale.com/apps/doc/VPLPVX360385591/GDCS?u=gale&sid=bookmark-GDCS&pg=625. Accessed 5 July 2023.