

BRIBES OFFERED HINDUS TO GO TO HONDURAS

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at prohibitive prices. Their countrymen long resident there have always consistently refused to use oleomargarine, because it contains fat, despite the efforts of planters to force it upon them. The effect of the contract system would be to make them nothing but slaves. The Hindus at best could only eke out a mere subsistence. There is little fresh water in the colony. The principal supply is caught and stored during the rainy season. It is sold at a price considered high by the East Indian. This affords another hardship as their religious belief prescribes frequent ablutions. Coconut oil and fruit has become the principal element of their diet. Condensed milk is out of the question as it costs 25 cents a tin.

Extremely pathetic was the story told the delegates by their aged countrymen who have not seen their native land for nearly forty years. They were induced to emigrate to Jamaica to work on the plantations. They signed for three years, with the stipulation that at the end of their term of service they would be given free passages to India. This promise was not kept.

In Alleged Oppression.

Before leaving Calcutta they were guaranteed \$9 a month, which was represented to be the equivalent of 27 rupees, Indian money. On reaching the West Indies they found that conditions had been misrepresented. The wages did not have the same purchasing power as in India. Their experience had been one of slavery. Whenever one of the bondmen broke a farming implement the cost was charged against their meagre earnings. The result was that through the oppression of their employers they were always kept in debt. In forty years not one of them had been able to save enough money to pay his passage home. When their contracts expired hundreds of them were persuaded to make similar contracts with British Honduras planters. There their hopes of finding better conditions were not realized. As soon as their terms expired they resolved never to sign another agreement. Since then they have eked out a scant living by doing odd jobs at whatever wages they could secure. The thirty Hindus the delegates met represent the survivors of hundreds who had landed in British Honduras with high hopes of being able to earn enough to bring them home. They wept for joy at meeting fellow-countrymen. They at first took them for members of the educated class, and begged them to appeal to the Imperial Government in their behalf.

Every one of them warned the visitors not to be a party to the removal of the Hindus from British Columbia to the colony. They asserted that life in a penal settlement in India was preferable to existence in British Honduras. A convict at home would at least have some associations and would not be kept in a half-starved condition.

Yesterday's decision had been regarded as a foregone conclusion for weeks as the delegates sent frequent communications to the Sikh committee here. Their report did not have one favorable reference to British Honduras. The Hindus are emphatic in their declaration that they will persist in their determination to remain here. They have formed an effective organization and are in close touch with native leaders as well as their countrymen in Hongkong.

Says Few Are Unemployed.

"We hope the Canadian Govern-

ment will listen to them."

If they want to go," she loudly interrupted one of the white men who was siring himself after the professor had concluded. "Steps are being taken by the Dominion Government with the sanction of the Imperial Government to transport 2000 Hindus from British Columbia to British Honduras. The step is apparently a legal one," said he, in one portion of his address. "At the outset I appeal to our white brethren here to help us in our efforts to prevent that movement from being carried out. It is alleged that we are to be shipped out of the country because there is no work here. Now this is quite untrue. It is a safe estimate that seventy per cent. of the Hindus in British Columbia are working at present. We live on a milk and vegetable diet and consequently are under little expense. I should say the cost of living of my countrymen is not over \$2 a week. From this it is obvious that even if a Hindu gets out of work he has saved enough money to tide him over and prevent him from becoming a charge to the community. There is virtually no begging. If any Hindu is in distress his countrymen are only willing to help him out. Of course, we have our own black sheep. If we find that they are guilty of wrongdoing we will be the first to see that they are punished."

Complain at Treatment.

"The Hindus will strenuously object to the project of sending them to British Honduras to work at an average wage of \$16 per month under an indenture system covering a period of three years and which is a system closely akin to slavery. The two delegates who recently returned from that colony were not favorably impressed with what they saw. They liken the conditions to those prevailing on the Andaman Islands, a British penal settlement in the Bay of Bengal. During their stay in British Honduras they met a number of Hindus who had not seen any of their fellow countrymen for a period of forty years. 'Take us back to India. We have never been able all these years to save enough money to pay our passage home,' they pleaded with the Hindu delegates from British Columbia. The helpless men I refer to had been originally shipped to the West Indies where the contracts with them were shamefully broken. Then they drifted one by one to British Honduras. I trust that all loyal Canadians will back us up and stand by us in our refusal to be shipped out of this country to a colony where bad economic conditions as well as mosquitoes and malaria prevail. I hope the government will see the folly of its step."

Tempted the Delegates.

"I am glad to tell you that the two delegates, uneducated as they are and although tempted in various ways brought back truthful reports in the spirit of Buddha and Guitama."

"Thank God that the old spirit has re-appeared in these two humble men. God ever protects the weak," continued the professor with warmth, after declaring that his arrival here at this juncture was a providential one. Then he devoted several minutes to chiding the white people here for their lack of sympathy with their darker brethren.

Professor Singh was very effective and emphatic in dealing with present-day problems in India.

"There is still a great deal of vitality in Indian civilization. Mahatmas are still appearing according to the hour and necessity arise," said he before reviewing the great debt Britain owed the Sikhs for fighting her battles all the way from China and Tibet to South Africa.

"These warriors in these late campaigns were paid \$2 to \$3 per month, out of which they had to provide their own food and uniforms."

the teachings of Christ and Buddha to show that selfishness is the cause of human misery and all international disturbances. There were many touches of oriental philosophy in the lecture. He laid great stress on the fact that the western races, like East Indians had sprung from Aryan stock.

"We believe that a great period is about to be ushered in in the world's history," said he at the outset. "This movement will tend to bring together and unite in closer bonds all races, classes and creeds. We are all brothers and sisters, and spring from the same divine source, although the various types have been modified by soil and climatic conditions. Canada and the United States will play a great role in this movement."

Spread of Buddhism.

He then traced the rise and fall of the Indian empire from the dawn of antiquity. He described the Sikhs as a race that had only been conquered by the British through the treachery of an ally.

"Bigotry and prejudice are the causes of all our troubles. Let Canada and the United States co-operate in developing a world-wide spirit of righteousness. It was selfishness that caused the downfall of India, whose spirit has been kept alive for ages by a few noble minds that appear at the psychological moment. Buddha freed India from caste, which was originally based on intelligence, but which in later centuries became hide-bound. The same danger confronts the western nations. Unless they take warning from the example of India they will share the same fate. The teachings of Buddha have spread to China and Japan, and today are revered by millions."

"The trouble with the world is the selfishness inherent in man, and his failure to rise to his true possibilities. As Christ and Buddha have declared righteousness comes to all who lead unselfish lives and place themselves in accord with the divine will. The commercial spirit is not enduring. Already in the west many people are disgusted with its selfish excesses. Its greatness is ephemeral and evanescent. True greatness is an affair of the spirit in a broader sense. Unless we realize that Socialism or the division of land will never be a panacea for social evils. Work in harmony with the divine movement. It is no myth or vision, for it will be realized some day. It depends upon the human race whether it comes in one day, one year, a century, a thousand or a million years."

Back to Socialism.

"Do you believe in the profit system," asked Mr. Valentine, an ardent Socialist, who sat at the back of the hall.

"In honest profit," replied the professor.

Mr. Valentine then pointed out that England could not find employment for scores of her own white people at home or in the colonies. His remarks were cheered by sympathizers.

"Although a poor man I am willing to contribute money to help the Hindus to get home to fight their own battles over there. We will fight ours here," concluded Mr. Valentine after quoting various authorities as to the iniquities that follow the existence of a dominant and subject class in any nation.

As other white men in the audience sought to speak and confusion resulted, the chairman, Mr. T. E. Knapp, declared the meeting closed amidst noisy shouts of disapproval.

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