EAST INDIAN IMMIGRATION INTO CANADA
1905 - 1973

Thesis presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Surrey

by

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1974
The migration of East Indians to the Dominions was an unorganised exercise. Indian membership in the British Empire gave them the status of British subjects and Imperial citizens but the Dominions were opposed to coloured migrants. By 1900 Australia and New Zealand had established their immigration policies for 'Whites only'. Canada experienced the East Indian migration after 1900. It coincided with that of other Orientals, namely Chinese and Japanese. Meanwhile ideas of social Darwinism prevailed in the North American continent. There arose an organised labour movement on the Pacific Coast. These factors reinforced the anti-Oriental feeling which resulted in the outbreak of anti-Asiatic riots at Vancouver. Exclusion of East Indians was the basic policy of Imperial and Canadian leaders. But an open ban on Indians could create a difficult situation with the possibility of its exploitation by anti-British elements in India. Therefore, effective but indirect restrictions were imposed on East Indian immigration. However, at times, such prohibitory immigration regulations could not sustain the test in the law courts. The migration question reached its climax with the arrival of the Komagata Maru in Vancouver but the failure of this enterprise completely reversed the migration trend. In its repercussions it contributed to the eruption of anti-British unrest and a revolutionary movement in the Punjab. Demands for equal treatment of Indians echoed all over India.

After the First World War restrictions on Indian wives and
children to join their husbands and fathers in Canada became a focal point. This matter was settled under the arrangement of Reciprocity of Treatment made in the Imperial War Conference (1918). Restrictions on further migration from India remained in practice.

With the granting of independence to India and Pakistan, Canada sensed the urgency of coming to an understanding and arrangement with them. India could use this excuse for leaving the Commonwealth. Canada agreed to accept a small fixed number of South Asian immigrants. By the 1960s Canadian economic needs for skilled manpower increased tremendously while ideas of social Darwinism waned. The arrival of a large number of Europeans from various parts of Europe changed the Canadian outlook. Economic prosperity and radical changes in Canadian commercial and industrial life set aside the Asiatic take-over fear. Characteristics of South Asian migrants changed to a very great extent. Worldwide development of rapid transportation and communication helped to create a better understanding. Canada decided to apply her immigration regulations without racial regard. This transformation of the Canadian immigration policy from complete exclusion to equal acceptance has economic and social reasons. It is a paradox of history to find East Indians being excluded when India was part of the British Empire and now being accepted when the Empire is part of history.

Chapter 2  Beginning of Indian immigration into Canada and its coincidence with the influx of other Orientals - Chinese and Japanese. Migration of Indians into the United States and its result. Asiatic Exclusion League and the factors leading to the Vancouver riots of September 1907.

Chapter 3  The increase of Japanese immigration into Canada. The reaction of (a) British Columbia and (b) the Dominion Government. The control of immigration by agreement with Japan.

Chapter 4  Solution of remaining problem of Japanese immigration from Hawaii. Incidental effect of "continuous passage" Order in Council on the position of Indian immigrants. Mission of Mackenzie King to confer with British authorities on the subject.

Chapter 5  Proposal to move the Indian immigrants to British Honduras and its results; Mackenzie King's visit to India; the indifference of the Government of India towards this problem.
Chapter 6  Immigration Act, 1910; protests of Indian immigrants; exclusion of Indian wives and children. Petition to the Imperial Conference 1911; India Office Memorandum on the position of Indians in the Dominions; Pleas for Temporary Admission of non-immigrant classes; and question of Wives and Children. Indian delegation in Ottawa, interview with Robert Rogers; Dr. Sunder Singh's tour of Ontario and its opposition. Indian delegation in England; protests in India and Canada; interview with Hardinge. Imperial government's proposals of passport system, Indian government's rejection. ........................................ 126

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Views of Indian National Congress. Dr. Sunder Singh and his appeals to Ontario public.
Formation of India Canada League. Representation of Presbyterian Church. Lionel Curtis and his meeting with Borden and Roche. His tour of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and India. Chelmsford and Curtis and the question of Indian participation in the Imperial War Conference 1917. Indian migration question in Imperial War Conferences of 1917 and 1918. Agreement on the Policy of Reciprocity of Treatment. Permission for Indian families and visitors. Canadian press reaction. Indians' exclusion from Canada.


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Bibliography
I must first acknowledge the assistance which was forthcoming from the Public Archives of Canada, the Dominion Manpower and Immigration Department, Statistics Canada, and the Department of the Secretary of State. I am especially thankful to Mr. James L.D. Cleary, Chief Information Officer, Canadian Immigration, London; Dr. E. Ziegler, Director Manpower and Immigration Department, Mr. D.R. Bradley, Chief, Demographic and Social Characteristics Section, Statistics Canada; Mr. Bryan Corbett, Archivist, Public Records Division, Public Archives, Canada; and Mrs. J.M. White, Dominion Archives Representative in London.

I am also indebted to Professor Henry F. Angus, Mr. H.H. Stevens, former M.P., Dr. Freda Hawkins of the University of Toronto, Professor Michael Ames and Dr. Harry Hawthorn, University of British Columbia for granting me interviews. I must express my thanks to Mr. Ranjit S. Hall, Chief, Immigrant Services Operations Division, Manpower and Immigration Department and his friends, for long and inspiring discussions on the subject of Canadian immigration. My thanks go to the members of staff of the many university and specialised libraries in Britain and Canada who unstintingly helped me throughout my research and put their resources at my disposal. I am thankful to Dr. David Taylor and Professor Adrian Mayer of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London for their help and encouragement. I must express appreciation of the guidance offered by Mr. Brian Scott of the S.O.A.S. Library, in the preparation of the graphs which figure in this thesis.

I am very grateful to Professor Bruce McFarlane of Carleton University for his assistance and guidance and valuable introductions to Canadian officials during my periods of research in Canada. Above all I am highly indebted to my supervisor, Professor A. Tropp for his constant and generous help and inspiring guidance throughout the years during which this thesis was in preparation.
CHAPTER I

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries British merchants and adventurers went to India in the enterprising spirit of the times. Exploration and expansion of commercial opportunities were the prime motives in their initial overtures. They were not aiming to establish a vast political power; instead, their main purpose seemed to be to engage themselves in normal trade. However, the prevailing anarchy in India and the danger of piracy at sea compelled them to arm themselves and to solicit the backing of the British government. Rivalries among European traders, jealousies among Indian rulers, and a decaying feudal system in the Indian society had created volatile conditions in India. The East India Company (British traders) therefore sought protection of their established posts (settlements and factories) by the use of armed and trained soldiers. Through the years, with the scientific use of their armed power and diplomacy, the East India Company became the master of the Indian sub-continent.

At that time the majority of Indians lived in villages which were almost self-sufficient units. Each village grew most of its own food and provided, from its resources, for the simple wants of its inhabitants. All the cloth and often the raw material for it, sugar, dyes, oil for food or lighting, household vessels, and agricultural implements were manufactured or produced by members of the village community who were remunerated by a share of the village produce.¹

The money needed to pay government dues and to purchase outside goods was acquired by the sale of surplus food grains or agricultural

¹ See A.R. Desai, Rural Sociology in India (Bombay, 1929).
products required by neighbouring villages. These business transactions were effected by traders who lived in large villages and travelled to smaller communities. The system worked well and for the most part villagers were able to maintain not only their self-sufficiency but also a high degree of artistic and industrial development as well. The Industrial Commission appointed by the British Government of India acknowledged this in its report:

At a time when the west of Europe, the birthplace of the modern industrial system, was inhabited by uncivilised tribes, India was famous for the wealth of her rulers and for the high artistic skill of her craftsmen. And, even at a much later period, when merchant adventurers from the West made their first appearance in India, the industrial development of this country was at any rate not inferior to that of the more advanced European nations.\(^1\)

India was a great manufacturing and agricultural country. Her products found their way to European and Asian markets.\(^2\) According to Professor Vera Anstey, Indian methods of production and of industrial and commercial organization could stand comparison with those in vogue in any other part of the world.\(^3\) However, the establishment of British rule did bring about some changes. For example the government introduced new and efficient systems of communication in India by the construction of railways and roads. Also the opening of the Suez Canal\(^4\) in 1869 brought about a trade revolution. It saved time and shortened distance, diminished risks and brought greater certainty to traders. Thus the new system of communications plus the increased trade through the canal provided

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a direct link between the Indian towns and the manufacturing centres in Britain. Since Britain was then the world's foremost economic and industrial power the Indian economy soon became tightly bound to that of Britain.

The increase in land revenue and the linking up of Indian villages with coastal towns through railroads and to Britain by speedy ships changed the agrarian economy of India. There was a marked increase in the quantity of grain and produce available for sale to distant towns and overseas markets. Yet production of crops for local consumption steadily decreased. This commercialization of agriculture resulted in far-reaching social and economic changes in India. The same railroads which carried away crops brought back machine-made industrial products to villages. Cheaply manufactured British goods began to descend like an avalanche upon the markets of more accessible Indian towns. The first wave of British machine-made imports had a devastating effect upon the working future of Indian craftsmen and artisans. Villagers no longer depended on the skills of others for goods they needed. The new economic system was a buy and sell arrangement and this changed the self-sufficient nature of the Indian village. The result was that masses of peasantry formed what was to become a vast permanent army of unemployed and underemployed, and this army was continuously reinforced from the ranks of the impoverished craftsmen. However there were benefits that were to be realized from the new arrangements. The establishment of British rule had brought law and order to India. Measures were

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also taken to control such hazards as famine and epidemic. Yet nothing could be done about the relentless growth of population. The census figure rose from 206,162,360 in 1872 to 352,837,778 in 1931. But this demographic increase was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in economic opportunities. The loss of traditional methods of livelihood threw increasing numbers of artisans back upon agriculture, and the land could not adequately support a continually rising quantity of people. The Government of India was informed by its own team of investigators that:

There have been and are hard times for hand weavers and such like handicraftsmen whose employment is reduced by competition of machine made goods. The landless labourers in the thickly populated rural tracts ... live poorly now, as they have done in generations past and their wages or earnings are in some districts still very small.

And twenty-two years later the Royal Commission on Labour in India reported:

Over large parts of India, the number of persons on the land is much greater than the number required to cultivate it appreciably in excess of the number it can comfortably support. In most areas, pressure on the land has been increasing steadily for a long time .... There has always been a substantial class of landless labourers earning a meagre living in good seasons and apt to be reduced to penury in bad ones.

The employment of such a large amount of manpower continued to be a difficult and pressing problem that made the Indian labourers vulnerable to exploitation.

During the period that Britain became master of India slavery and the slave trade were abolished in the British empire. The

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2 Census of India 1872, and 1931.
3 Cd. 4956 Memorandum on Some of the Results of Indian Administration during the Past Fifty Years of British Rule in India (1909), p. 27.
emancipated slaves refused to work on any condition except of their own free will for their European masters. This resulted in a serious dislocation of work on plantations in the Colonies, and in some cases, in the utter ruin of the proprietors. This was followed by an unprecedented industrial depression on the plantations. Two parliamentary committees were appointed in 1842 and 1848 to report on the economic situation of the different Colonies in the West Indies. These committees recommended the exploration of new sources of labour. The Colonies of the East Indies and West Indies at first tried Chinese labour but after a short experience found it to be unsatisfactory.

India, however, had a disciplined culture adapted to tropical agriculture and Indians were willing to work. The huge Indian population with its vast number of unemployed provided an inexhaustible reservoir of manpower, sufficiently advanced to be ready to migrate but sufficiently backward to accept less favourable terms of employment. At this time India was under British control as were most of the tropical colonies where plantation agriculture was practised. Because of this, when planters approached the Indian government they were allowed to recruit Indians to work on plantations. For a time the importation of indentured labour from India provided a substitute for slave labour in many parts of the tropical colonies of the British Empire. In poverty-stricken India it was not difficult to recruit workers who were willing to accept a period of hard labour in a distant land at a low wage as an alternative to starvation in India. However, there were abuses of the contract labour system and soon a stress situation developed between Indian migrants and native workers. The distinction between slaves and contract labourers was not always empirically clear since both did the same type of work for the same type of masters. The legal or analytical differences between the two might be important but in
practice the contract labourers ran the gamut from enforced servitude without chattel ownership to carefully stipulated intervals of work obligation terminated abruptly when contracts ended. As such this contract labour system or indenture system was virtually another form of slavery. At the expiry of their indentures or contract some Indians returned home while others stayed on either as free petty traders or farm workers. With this new development of a competitive situation for European small businessmen, labourers and farmers, the European planters resorted to imposing restrictions on the immigration of Indians who were not under indenture. Eventually the Indians' position as a slave-substitute and the restrictions placed upon free Indians in the Colonies became the subject of criticism by Indian leaders. Indians were emphatic about their claim for equal treatment as subjects of the British Empire. Soon the question of their treatment abroad gained importance out of all proportion. Thus, even though the system of indenture was abolished in the early part of the twentieth century the repercussions of the restrictions on their emigration and their treatment as less favoured subjects during this period were recalled by Indians in immigration disputes in later years.

The population of India was the largest in the British Empire, and the average increase over the period of one decade was about 25 million people. The Indian situation seemed to be proof of the famous theory of Malthus who described man's capacity to increase

1 For a detailed account of Indians' emigration as indentured labourers see Hugh Tinker, A New System of Slavery. The Export of Indian Labour Overseas 1850-1920 (London, 1974).

2 According to the first Census of India (1872) the population was 205,162,360.

3 Malthus believed that the power of population was infinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man. The ratios Malthus had in mind were:

Population: 1 - 2 - 4 - 8 - 16 - 32 - 64.
Subsistence: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7.

his means of subsistence as less than his capacity to multiply his numbers. Malthus asserted that man was able to increase his subsistence only in arithmetical progression whereas his numbers tended to increase in geometrical progression. He further argued that fertile land was limited and not capable of sufficient improvement to support man's increasing population. Thus the relationship between level of living and population can be expressed:

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\text{Level of Living} = \frac{\text{Material Resources}}{\text{Population}}
\]

Material Sources = National Resources of various kinds + Industrial Products + Related Capital Resources.

It was impossible, therefore, for any economic development to produce substantial results in face of the increasing population. Observing the pressure of population and its problems and being keenly aware that British rule with its technological advances had only increased the seriousness of the situation, Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India, had proposed a scheme of emigration to the Government of India in 1875:

Having regard to the greatness of our Indian population and to the probability that, under the protection which the British Government affords from depopulation by war, and, as far as possible, from famine and other evils, that population must continue very greatly to increase, especially in the healthier and more densely peopled parts of the country where the numbers already press on the means of subsistence, and the lowest classes are at all times little removed from want, it appears to me that, from an Indian point of view, it is desirable to afford an outlet from these redundant regions to the tropical and sub-tropical dominions of Her Majesty, where people who can hardly earn a decent subsistence in their own country may obtain more lucrative employment and better homes.

While, then, from an Indian point of view, emigration

2 Vera Anstey, op. cit., p. 474.
properly regulated and accompanied by sufficient assurance of profitable employment and fair treatment seems a thing to be encouraged on grounds of humanity, with a view to promote the well-being of the poorer classes, we may also consider, from an Imperial point of view, the great advantage which must result from peopling the warmer British possessions, which are rich in natural resources and only want population, by an intelligent and industrious race to whom the climate of these countries is well suited, and to whom the culture of the staples suited to the soil, and the modes of labour and settlement, are adapted. In this view, also, it seems proper to encourage emigration from India to Colonies well fitted for an Indian population.

Influenced by the above considerations, I would ask your Lordship in Council to consider whether there might not properly be a considerable change in the attitude of the Indian Government towards emigration: whether the Government and its officers might not more directly encourage emigration and superintend the system under which it is conducted - provided it is fully satisfied on all points with regard to each Colony which avails itself of such a system.1

But in a carefully drawn up reply the Indian government pointed out:

... we do not believe that any amount of emigration that is likely to take place will have more than an infinitesimal effect on the population,...

Our objections have reference to the effect which the direct and active interposition of the Government in this matter would be likely to have on the minds of a people prone to regard with the utmost suspicion the acts and motives of their foreign rulers, and especially on the minds of the uneducated classes from which the emigrants are drawn; and to the difficulty and embarrassment in which the Government would become involved by undertaking responsibilities towards the Colonies on the one hand, and towards the emigrants on the other, which it would be practically impossible for it to discharge in a satisfactory manner.2

The Indian government turned down the scheme of emigration. Its main argument rested on an undetermined fear of some type of political trouble and the creation of suspicion among Indians regarding the government's motives if it would encourage emigration. Of course the decision to emigrate is based on a number of motives which differ

1 Lord Salisbury, Secretary of State for India to Viceroy of India, March 24, 1875, quoted in Cd. 5192 Report ... on Emigration from India, p. 7.

2 Govt. of India to Secretary of State for India, May 3, 1877, quoted in ibid., pp. 8-9.
in individual cases. However, the desire to become better off has always been a dominant factor in migration movements. In India, agricultural over-population provided a major incentive for emigration. This push factor was so strong that Indians were willing to migrate for the sake of employment at very low remunerative conditions. Migrants in such circumstances are drawn to areas where economic opportunities are abundant and where they will receive relatively high remuneration for their work.

The push mechanism of acute pressure of one kind or another such as compelling poverty was always present in India and therefore the desire to emigrate was strong. The British Empire offered other migration opportunities besides the plantation colonies, namely such self-governing colonies as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These colonies had small populations of European origin and vast unpopulated areas. The indigenous population in these Dominions was not important any more in their economic development. The climatic conditions were different from those colonies in the tropics and had seasonal changes somewhat like Europe. Each colony had a democratic system of government based on the British form and each enjoyed self-governing status. Culturally, these Dominions appeared to be an extension of European civilization. But there were different working conditions in these colonies. The question of the difference between indigenous and imported labour forces versus European masters

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4 Speaking about the dynamics of interaction in migration, Brinley Thomas remarked in his analysis that in the migration process there are always "push" and "pull" elements. The former corresponds to the interests of the emigrating country and the second to the immigrating country. According to his conclusion the pull element is normally stronger than the push element. But in the case of emigration from India the push factor seems stronger than the pull element. See Brinley Thomas, *Migration and Economic Growth* (Cambridge, 1954).
did not exist. The social structures of these Dominions were radically different from those of other British colonies. They needed migrants to populate their large empty areas and to aid in their economic development. Since India was the most congested part of the British Empire she could most easily provide the required manpower. Such movement of peoples was facilitated, in theory at least, by the fact that they were all British subjects and members of the same Empire. But membership of the British Empire could not give India and the Dominions a common social and cultural denominator and it was the difference in social and cultural backgrounds that made the Indian seem so alien to western civilization.

Migration is one of the most obvious instances of complete disorganization of an individual's role system, hence some disturbance of social identity and self image tied to the system is to be expected. Viewed from this aspect migration has a desocializing effect. Immigrants coming into the new societies miss the access to the elementary mechanisms of a stable social structure. They are ignorant of the proper definition of the situations in which they have to participate and have no clear idea about either the roles they are expected to fulfil or the opportunities for entering the roles they desire.¹ The process of migration entails not only a shrinkage in the number of roles and groups in which the immigrant is active but also, perhaps, principally, some degree of shrinkage and transformation of his whole status, image and set of values.² In every migratory movement economic, social and cultural differences as well as new working conditions among receiving countries do present problems and can result in the success or failure of the migrant's absorption into

¹ See J. Ben-David, "Ethnic Differences or Social Change?" in Between Past and Future edited by C. Franskenstein (Jerusalem, 1953).
the host country.\textsuperscript{1} In India the need for migration was everywhere evident and the government should have facilitated the movement of peoples from India to the less populated colonies. However, any mass movement of Indian people was unthinkable under British rule.\textsuperscript{2}

The British were afraid of the effect that the racial bias of the colonies towards Indians would have on the continued existence of British domination in India and this fear was entirely justified, as I will attempt to point out in this thesis. The Indian government, however, admitted that the advantages of migration to individual Indian migrants would be "unquestionably great".\textsuperscript{3}

Emigration, unlike water, flows wherever possible from countries of a low standard of living to countries with better opportunities and a higher standard of living. But this pull mechanism, though it existed in the Dominions, did not work for Indians. The Government of India did not initiate or encourage any such movement. Rather, in its fear of consequences to its own well-being, it adopted a 'do nothing' policy and justified it by saying that government action could not relieve the pressure of population. This "laissez-faire" attitude contributed not only to the lack of any clear emigration policy for Indians wishing to leave their country but also the harsh treatment of Indians in the colonies whose governments initiated immigration policies to exclude them. The British government in India was caught between its obligation to Indians and the desires of the colonies and unfortunately never solved the dilemma.

Sir Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders, a renowned authority on world

\begin{enumerate}
  \item See Raghavan Iyer, "Utilitarianism and all that", \textit{South Asian Affairs}, Number One, pp. 16-22.
  \item Cd. 5192 Report of the Committee on Emigration from India to the Crown Colonies and Protectorates (1910), p. 12.
\end{enumerate}
population, pointed out that 85 million British people lived outside the British Isles and similarly there were about 200 million Europeans living outside Europe.¹ The European countries were helped by overseas emigration during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because of this they escaped from some of the economic difficulties to which the rapid growth of their population might otherwise have led.² However, no such mass movement of Indians was planned to alleviate the population explosion in the sub-continent and only a small number of Indian migrants found their way to the predominantly white Dominions of Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Such movement was only an individual and adventurous exercise. Australia and New Zealand managed to keep the Indians out by various effective methods. By the turn of the century, therefore, these two Dominions did not face any Indian migration problem. Canada, on the other hand, admitted a small number of Indians and her attempt to exclude others without insulting their British citizenship was an exercise in diplomatic racism that this thesis attempts to trace.

In the later part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, the idea of the superiority and supremacy of the white race over coloured peoples on biological bases was quite popular in studies in North America and Britain. Evolutionary theories about the development of human beings, as propounded by Darwin, were accepted. The subjugation of colonial people was held to be justified by the natural superiority of the colonizers. An authority on the history of the period concluded that though economic factors were important in the growth of imperialism, the prevalence

of evolutionary teaching was perhaps crucial. It is not only justified competition and struggle but introduced an element of ruthlessness and immorality that was most characteristic of the whole movement. Social Darwinism preached separation of races. It was elegantly expounded by Sir Arthur Keith in his booklet Ethnos. In America the leading spokesmen of the idea of Social Darwinism were H.F. Osborn, Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard.

The popular image of the United States of America with regard to its ability to absorb various migrant groups had been that of a melting pot. This image implied the necessity of "melting", of becoming Americanized, and this carried the suggestion that ethnic differences were undesirable and that efforts to maintain them were un-American. Since all newcomers must be assimilated there was always the fear that if America were admitting immigrants of poor stock it would lead to a general deterioration of the American population. It was argued that through struggle and conflict certain societies and groups came out on top, therefore certain migrant groups were preferred over others. Any interference with this process of struggle was thought to have an adverse effect on social development by encouraging poor quality stock to increase at the expense of the superior. Superior races and groups, in fact, could become polluted by mixing with inferior races and groups or by social

policies which did anything to alleviate the struggle between the two. Through such theories racism and aggression could be viewed as serving a principle of general social evolution.

By the end of the First World War, these aggressive and racist theories were to become an important operating principle in the immigration policies of North America. In the U.S. they found expression in such books as Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*. Grant and other writers denounced open immigration policies which encouraged poor stock. Even eastern and southern Europeans were thought to be diluting the superior breeds from Western Europe and Britain. The melting pot was supposed to be receiving too many ingredients. Eventually in response to such doctrines and the public attitudes which the doctrines had created in the U.S., certain formal discriminatory restrictions were imposed upon immigration. Canada, with her close geographic, economic and cultural proximity with the U.S. was naturally affected by such theories.

It was during this time and under these circumstances that East Indian migration to Canada began at the turn of the century. For the most part such migration was the adventurous activity of a few Indian (mostly Sikh) soldiers and servicemen who reached the province of British Columbia on the Pacific Coast of Canada. This initial movement consisted of migrants mainly from the Punjab.

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1 Pierre L. Van den Berghe in his well-known work, *Race and Racism: A Comparative Perspective* (New York, 1967) described America as a socially pluralistic society along racial lines despite its cultural homogeneity. He viewed racial cleavage and conflict as inherent in the nature of competitive society and saw racism as a control to the preservation of the Western cultural tradition. Karl Marx had also linked racism to the total structure of the society of which it was a part and insisted that the race problem had determinants in the economic institutions and struggle for power and privilege in the society. See also Lydio F. Tomasi, *The Ethnic Factor in the Future of Inequality* (New York, 1973).

2 The Punjab was strategically located on India's north-west frontier and was known to be a military province. The loyalty of the population was of paramount importance to the British for their control over India. See William W. Reinhardt, *The Legislative Council of the Punjab 1897-1912* (Duke University, 1972).
These Sikh soldiers, in spite of their small number as a group in India, were renowned for their military and political service to the British rulers in India. Their loyalty and devotion to the Crown was a matter of some pride to these men. But if the Sikhs were the most loyal British subjects they were also the most unusual-looking and conspicuous in India. Their unshaven beards, long hair and turbans plus their strange manners and customs were decidedly a shock to the American-influenced west coast province of Canada. In addition, British Columbia's attitude to the Sikhs was an important consideration for Ottawa because the Dominion government was afraid to lose this distant province to the U.S. Thus the immigration status of East Indians was fraught with prejudice and political manoeuvering right from the start.

At this time British Columbia had only a small population. Its geographical location placed it furthest from Europe and its high mountain chain seemed to isolate it from the rest of Canada. It was the last choice for settlement of migrants from Europe; indeed those migrants from the north of England who had settled there considered that they lived in a special province whose pioneering conditions called for special consideration from the federal government at Ottawa. The problems and insecurities facing workers in British Columbia were enormous. The entire economy of the province was based on specialized resources responsive to and dependent upon the vagaries of external markets. A much larger percentage of the wage income of British Columbians as compared to Canada as a whole derived directly from the export of goods and services and as such was dependent upon the rise and fall of world prices. Since large

1 See Martin Robin, Canadian Provincial Politics (Scarborough, 1972).
sections of British Columbian industries were prone to the conflict and the frontier conditions which obtained in the American Pacific North-west and mountain states¹ the Canadian province felt that its economic future and even the present understanding of its special problems were more closely linked with the United States. Large numbers of workers were employed in industries such as lumber, mining, long shoring and maritime trades which were plagued by harsh surroundings, a high accident rate, geographical and social isolation, a continuous turnover of manpower and unstable family conditions. Workers in these outlying communities developed an intense group consciousness, and a cohesive isolation. Gradually the western province developed large-scale industries and out of this grew a new capitalist class. At this time, however, this industrialism produced a virile labour movement intent on maintaining its right through a strong organization of workers. Unfortunately this precarious labour situation was beset by waves of Oriental, Eastern European and American immigration of workers who were ready to give their services for relatively low wages and this created an unstable labour market² in the eyes of organized labour.

Asian migrants in particular with their coloured skins, different modes of dress and willingness to work more cheaply as labourers seemed to the Canadian workers in British Columbia a threat to their economic future. Organised workers began to unite against this invasion and soon labour unions had their grip on all working classes. Labour leaders were immediately interested in acquiring political importance. They were quick to realize that the authority of the

labour unions as a strong pressure group in the working of the two democracies on either side of the border in North America could be strongly established by a well organised labour force.1 Testing the full extent of their power the labour leaders pointed out that the brunt of the impact of increased Oriental migration would not fall upon large property owners, capitalists or technical experts (who would indeed benefit) but upon the common labourer. Unions, therefore, included exclusion of Oriental workers as a part of their programme of labour welfare. Since the development of the West Coast of North America was in its early stages, it needed a large number of workers who were not easily available from the eastern parts of Canada and the United States. Canadians considered the Pacific Coast as their last choice for settlement because it was geographically remote and was known to have harsh working conditions. Only thoroughly working-class European migrants who were unable to establish themselves in the east made their way to the Pacific Coast. Such settlers felt insecure about their abilities and their job security. Any competition or even the possibility of such competition from hard-working Asians naturally made them feel threatened. Under such conditions labour union leaders desiring to establish their own political influence were not slow to make full use of Oriental immigrants as scapegoats.

On the other hand the capitalist class, desiring to establish their industries, encouraged Oriental immigration and this fact was equally cited by the unions as an example of labour exploitation. Since Orientals, particularly Indians, were unfamiliar with the working

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1 See Paul Phillips, op.cit.
of unions and hampered from learning about them by the language barrier and the hostility of the organized workers, they showed indifference to union membership and were absent from union strikes and lockouts. Because of this they were branded as blacklegs, strikebreakers and a menace. The press reaction to Asians on the Pacific Coast was equally hostile and its sensationalism contributed to the feeling against Orientals. In British Columbia the Conservative Party was able to win the election on the strength of its anti-Oriental slogans. Such was the feeling generated against the Asiatic immigrant at that time, that soon both political parties (Conservative and Liberal) professed their support of anti-Asian hysteria and the heated atmosphere resulted in anti-Oriental riots in September 1907. Demands for a complete ban on Oriental immigration were a direct result of all this political manoeuvring and emotional blackmail.

In order to win labour votes in provincial and federal elections, both political parties had to become involved in this local immigration problem. Both parties, therefore, showed their enthusiasm in convincing the labouring classes that they were aiming to achieve immigration control with the decrease and ultimately exclusion of Orientals as immigrants to Canada. The seeds of discrimination and exclusion were thus sown and fertilized and everyone - labourers, labour leaders, politicians - hoped to benefit from the harvest.

Prejudice and discrimination towards immigrants may be based on tradition or ignorance, political opportunism or fear and the hostility varies in its intensity according to the amount of emotionalism involved with the issue in question. The host country is largely responsible for setting the attitude in which general and particular classes of immigrants are to be received and to
determine whether or not they will be a threat to the economic conditions, social set-up, political system or religion of the established population. Since the benefits of increase in population are general in application and are slow in making themselves felt, the more personal and emotional issues are usually those that receive the most popular attention. Therefore, the dislocations and injuries to the interests of established groups and classes which may be the immediate consequence of an influx of newcomers are quickly felt, are resented, and often exaggerated.  

This was the case with Oriental immigration on the Pacific Coast. It quickly became the target for attack by labour leaders and this movement gained wide labour support. Politicians of both major political parties, anxious for the popular vote, jumped on the anti-Asiatic bandwagon. Thus, when the East Indian migration began the atmosphere in British Columbia was already hostile. Even though East Indians were British subjects and citizens of the British Empire, they were not welcome. The Dominion government, its own racist views strengthened by the British Columbian attitude, adopted restrictive and discriminatory policies towards Indians and tried to establish their effective exclusion. Their status as British subjects did not help them to enter Canada; rather it led to a fear of inexhaustible numbers of Indian migrants coming to Canada and changing the Western cultural atmosphere of the country. The immigration question became an insoluble issue throughout the British


2 See W.H. Chamberlain, Canada Today and Tomorrow (Boston, 1942).
Empire for it created a colour and race consciousness which had its repercussions in the politics of India, Britain and Canada. Unfortunately the effective exclusion of Indians from Canada, which was the basic policy of the Dominion, had the tacit approval of the Imperial and Indian governments. This, in turn, served as the greatest contributory factor for anti-British movements in the once loyal province of the Punjab during the First World War.

The Indians’ exclusion was officially agreed upon under a diplomatic arrangement made under the Reciprocity of Treatment resolution in the Imperial War Conference of 1918. This policy continued till 1947 when India and Pakistan became independent countries. In the post-war period after the Second World War the Dominion government replaced this policy of exclusion with an agreement to accept a small number of Indian migrants under a quota system in 1951. In 1967 Canada adopted a universal immigration policy and by 1972 Canada accepted a reasonable number of Asian expellees from Uganda.

Over a period of many years the Dominion governments’ immigration policy as it concerns Indians has moved from exclusion to acceptance. The question of colour and the assimilation of peoples of such different cultural backgrounds has no doubt been a major problem in the governments’ desire to maintain harmonious internal and external relations. Yet the migration of East Indians within the British Empire occupied a position out of all proportion to the small numbers involved, for this migration became an issue of fundamental importance in Commonwealth relations. However, Canada has managed to bring about changes in her immigration policy and subsequently has set a workable
example for other Commonwealth countries.

It is curious to note that when India was part of the British Empire, Indians were excluded from Canada. Yet after the end of British rule in India, South Asians were accepted. Similar changes in the immigration process have since been introduced into the immigration policies of Australia and New Zealand in recent years. In Canada this process of passing from complete exclusion to equal acceptance of East Indians as migrants was due to a variety of factors. These include social and cultural forces, economic realities, political expediencies and the impact of science, technology and a general wind of change blowing over the post-war world scene.

The public archives of Canada are now open to 1947; the private papers of government officials and the India Office records are also available for research purposes. These original sources have not been used so far. Dr. David Corbett’s work in 1957, Professor Anthony Richmond’s investigation in 1967, and Dr. Freda Hawkings book of 1972 describe Canadian immigration policy in general. The important question of the migration of Indians within the white Commonwealth has been uninvestigated and unreported before this dissertation. In an age when movement of peoples from under developed countries to lands that offer greater economic opportunity is a serious topic to be considered by many governments, the East Indian migration into Canada, its repercussions on intra-imperial relations and Commonwealth relationships provide a timely and interesting field for research. This dissertation, therefore, is a study of the East Indian migration question with regard to Canadian policies for the past 68 years during which time the world political order and general attitudes to race have undergone changes unknown throughout the previous two
hundred years. It is hoped that the favourable results obtained by Canada's changed immigration policy will serve as a useful example to other countries which may have to consider similar problems.
CHAPTER 2

Beginning of Indian immigration into Canada and its coincidence with the influx of other Orientals - Chinese and Japanese. Migration of Indians into the United States and its result. Asiatic Exclusion League and the factors leading to the Vancouver riots of September 1907.
Canada was practically unknown to the Indian labouring classes up to the end of the nineteenth century. The long distance between India and Canada might have been the cause for this, but an equally contributing factor was that there was no direct arrangement for sea-travel. The Indians who first came to Canada were all soldiers or policemen who had been in the service of the British government at Shanghai, Hong Kong and other parts of the Far East. During the Boxer War in China, Britain had sent a detachment of the Indian army there and she had also sought immediate assistance from Japan to order to relieve pressure on the European legations and nationals, and to safeguard her mercantile interests. In this way these Indians came into contact with other nations, and realised the importance of their service in the international struggle. Travelling abroad and crossing the ocean fostered in them a spirit of wander-lust, and either at the time of retirement from the service or while on leave of absence some of them crossed the Pacific to Canada.

Later, in 1897, Queen Victoria's Jubilee was held in London and Indian troops were sent there to participate in the celebration. Thereafter they were sent back to India via Canada. The idea was that the troops might see different parts of the Empire. The Indian soldiers were much impressed and told their colleagues and relations at home about the wealth, abundance and fertility of Canada as well as the opportunities it afforded to new settlers. Through the reports of soldiers stationed in the Far East who visited

Canada and then settled there and later from soldiers returning from the Jubilee, Canada was introduced to the Indian population as a land of tempting opportunities. But the earliest Indian immigrants came not from India proper but from Indian communities already settled in Malaya, Hong Kong and Shanghai, where Indians were generally employed as night watchmen and police constables, a large number having previously been soldiers. These men were mostly of good appearance and strong physique, but they had little knowledge of English. In the new land they steadily found employment of a far more remunerative character than could be obtained in Hong Kong and China. Their success in Canada resulted in a slow in-flow of new immigrants from India.

There is no official record to show how many Indians entered Canada before July 1904, when the system of recording the particulars of fresh immigrants was first introduced. The first arrivals got jobs and began to make a lot of money. According to a British Columbian official:

They are mostly Sikhs. They are most useful in the lumber industry and the Mayor of New Westminster told me that they helped to save the lumber people there.

Minto, the Viceroy of India, was also full of praise for the Sikhs. He wrote to Grey, the Governor General of Canada, that the Sikhs were

2 Colonial Secy. Hong Kong to Secy. to Govt. of India, March 23, 1907, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.
3 The Indian labourers could get one dollar and fifty cents a day whereas in India they could earn only fifteen rupees a month. This represented a substantial increase in income, even allowing for the difference in the respective costs of living. Memorandum by Col. Swayne, Dec. 30, 1908, File 275, L/P & J/6/1137.
the best men that India could produce and that no country could import any one better than they. The Sikhs were very fine soldiers but they also had a strongly developed money-making instinct, and being adventurous and prepared to rough it they were quite ready to cross the Pacific for better financial opportunities. In this venture they were initially encouraged. Manual labour was scarce and wages were high in British Columbia, and a supply of able-bodied Indian labourers ready to work well for a moderate wage and giving no trouble in the matter of trade unions was distinctly useful to white employers.

According to the Immigration Office, Vancouver, 45 Indians entered British Columbia between July 1, 1904 and June 30, 1905 and the figure for the next year was 587. These settlers wrote to their friends and relatives at home describing the 'enormous wealth' (by Indian standards) that could be won. The result was that more shipments of workers began to arrive from India, where wages were extremely low. The Sikhs had already thrown away the caste and religious prejudice against foreign travel and migration, and they were well-known for their allegiance to and reverence for the British Throne. As British subjects, they preferred to migrate to a country belonging to the British Empire, for their economic betterment. So before long, migration from India to Canada became considerable. A contemporary writer testified to the situation in the following manner:

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1 Minto to Grey, Jan. 23, 1907, Minto Papers M. 995.
3 Robertson to Cory, May 8, 1918, R.G. 76, File 536999, Vol. II.
4 MacInnes, who was a secret agent for the Government of Canada for the investigation of reasons for Indian immigration, also stated that Indian immigration began spontaneously as a result of Hindus' letters home saying how easy it was to make money in Canada. MacInnes to Oliver, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, Oct. 10, 1907, C.O. 886/1.
I was recently travelling through the far eastern countries and had the opportunity of observing how eagerly these letters were circulated by recipients, read with interest, and decisions were made with precipitate haste to take the earliest opportunity to go to a British country, where honest, hard work earned competence.

From the Canadian point of view there was such a scarcity of unskilled labour that the salmon canners of British Columbia petitioned for relaxation of restrictions on Chinese immigration. Similarly the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company asked for admission of an Asian labour force, and The Times carried the report that a considerable number of East Indians could be imported into the province of British Columbia to relieve the labour situation. The demand for Indian immigrants was so tremendous that almost anybody was employed; and, as a contemporary witness says, so many employers asked him to help them get these men (Indian immigrants) that if he had over a hundred, he could easily have placed them. They were a stout able-bodied group of men, of whom a large proportion were ex-soldiers. Their conduct had been exemplary. They were men of enterprise and courage and their ignorance of the English language had not deterred them from seeking work in distant countries like Canada. The condition of the main body of the Indian immigrants was more satisfactory than could have been anticipated. They were law-abiding, and their entry into Canada was quite according to the law, but ignorance of the English language was their major handicap, therefore the

2 The Times, August 10, 1906.
3 Ibid., August 13, 1906.
contemporary observers - Col. Falk Warren and N.D. Daru - suggested to the Dominion and Imperial governments the need for some official interpreter to be appointed.

Similarly another contemporary witness, Mr. Norman W. Greine, Chairman of the Ceylon Association, after paying a visit to Canada, observed that the services of Indians could be utilised in fruit-farming, and there was a need for the appointment of some officials to look after the Indians on their arrival. It would be quite in keeping with the spirit of humanitarianism and Christianity to help fellow subjects.¹

On September 20, 1906 the Ottawa Citizen published a thoughtful leading article on the matter. Therein it stated that the immigrants were a fine, high spirited class of men, and were descendants of the men who had stood by Great Britain in the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8 and had ever since been treated with honour and distinction. The article especially commended the Sikhs, and added that they were much superior to many white immigrants, such as Dukhobors, Galicians, and other Southern European races.²

The Canadian province of British Columbia had already experienced the penetration of the Chinese and Japanese long before the arrival of the Indians. The discovery of the gold mines of Cassiar and Caribou and later on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway led to the import of Asians into the province. It was practically the only province in Canada where any strong feeling against the Asians ever existed because it was the only place where Asians settled in number. The Chinese coolies were the first to come. As long as the construction work of the Canadian Pacific Railway went on, their

¹ Norman W. Greine, Chairman, Ceylon Association, London to John Morley, Secy. of State for India, Sept. 20, 1907, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.

² The Times, Sept. 21, 1906.
presence was not considered objectionable. Labour was scarce, and the speedy construction of the mountain section of the transcontinental railway required a large number of labourers. But soon after the completion of the road the coolies left their camps to become resident in the cities, towns and villages. Here they competed in the field of labour connected with various industries and a strong prejudice grew up whenever the two races - Mongolian and Caucasian - came into contact in any area of work. This led to frequent petitions to the Dominion Parliament. A Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the matter, and it presented its report in 1902. The report stated that as the standard of living among the Chinese differed widely from that prevailing in British Columbia, it was probable that a great upheaval in the economic conditions of that province would ensue, and grave injury would be inflicted on the working classes if a large influx of Chinese labourers took place. The Commission, therefore, recommended that any further immigration of Chinese labourers ought to be prohibited, and that until this prohibition became effective the capitation tax should be raised to five hundred dollars.¹

The Indians were also bracketed with the Chinese, but the problem was that the Indians were subjects of the British Empire whereas the Chinese and the Japanese were aliens. The continuous entry of Indians was vehemently opposed by white workers, who were afraid that the new immigrants would jeopardise their job prospects. A campaign of calumny and vituperation continued to be waged against them, and the politicians who sought to maintain the labour-vote were obliged to sustain it.² The Mayor of Vancouver protested to the immigration

department against the landing of a large number of indigent British Indians in that city. Similarly Mr. Templeman, Minister of Inland Revenue, stated that he favoured the policy of the 'closed door' to races whom it was impossible to assimilate. He added that he referred to Orientals, East Indians and Southern races. Organized labour unions such as the Victoria Trades and Labor Council and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners of Vancouver urged the Dominion government to stop Indian immigration into Canada. The City Council of Victoria also demanded the complete stoppage of Asiatic penetration into the province. The Ottawa Free Press expressed the fear that Oriental labourers would destroy and drive out white working classes from the Pacific Coast. R.G. McPherson, member of parliament for Vancouver, went to Ottawa in the hope of securing Federal action to prevent the Indian influx into British Columbia. The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada (the main national organ of labour unions) in its session held at Winnipeg on September 17, 1906 demanded a complete ban on Oriental immigration.

On the whole anti-Indian in its attitude, the press on the

1 The Times, Sept. 10, 1906.
2 Ibid., Sept. 14, 1906.
7 Montreal Star, Sept. 18, 1906.
Pacific Coast (Canada and the United States - West Coast) had, according to N.D. Daru, scrupled not only to publish misleading information about the Indians, but also to garble interviews with such employers of labour as were hostile to Indian immigrants.¹

The extent to which the public were misinformed can be judged from the following extract from an article published by the Canadian Magazine:

The class of Hindus that have invaded British Columbia are commonly known as Sikhs, meaning the lower class, entirely dependent upon their physical capabilities - those who have no set aim in life. They are the coolies of Calcutta.²

A similar attitude was displayed by the Vancouver World, which had been conducting a campaign against Indians and writing inflammatory articles.³ All of this was to reflect the opposition of white Canadian workers, who, according to the Toronto News, considered their interests to be threatened.⁴ At the same time the ignorance on the part of the majority of Indian immigrants about the Canadian way of life and their inflexible attitude towards one another and their environments, contributed to continued hostility. Dr. A.S. Munroe who was medical officer and immigration agent at Vancouver, observed:

They are constantly quarrelling among themselves, and are the most litigious people I ever saw. They are dirty and unsanitary in their personal habits.... In character they are in many respects like children, very ignorant and never satisfied. They are the most cringing and servile people I ever met with and for lying they have no equals.⁵

¹ N.D. Daru to Under Secretary of State for India, Nov. 19, 1906, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.
³ Guy Audrin to the Dominion Govt., Dec. 13, 1906, Minto Papers M.995; and Vancouver World, Sept. 12, 1906.
⁴ Toronto News, Jan. 10, 1907.
⁵ Munroe to Scott, August 16, 1906, R.G.76, File 536999, Vol. I.
Similarly Dr. G.L. Milne, medical officer and immigration agent at Victoria, stated:

... they are a quarrelsome and contentious race, and on the least provocation, appear in the police court.

So it is not surprising to find that Blake Robertson, assistant superintendent of immigration in Ottawa, after paying a visit to the Pacific Coast, reported to the Canadian government that Indians were not desirable as permanent inhabitants of Canada. The result of this hostile propaganda was that the official attitude became very rigid in order to discourage Indian immigration. The alarmed Mayor of Vancouver sent an urgent telegram to the Colonial Office in London:

East Indians being shipped to British Columbia in large numbers and under misrepresentations respecting the state of the labour market, feeling acute against people responsible ... please take such action as you may deem necessary to prevent further shipment.

The Colonial Office forwarded this telegram to the India Office, but the Government of India could take action in the matter only if the Indians left India under contract to work, such emigration being regulated by the Indian Emigration Act 1883, and being permitted only to certain countries with which a definite arrangement had been made. But if they left India as ordinary travellers to other lands, or if they came from the Far East and emigrated from that area under contract to work in Canada, this would not involve an infringement of the law. The Government of India had no power to control the movements of Indians sailing under such contracts from countries

1 Milne to Scott, August 16, 1906, R.G.76, File 536999, Vol. I.
4 The Act could have no bearing upon the Canadian question unless the Dominion Government itself thought of importing Indian labourers under contracts made in India. Austen Chamberlain to Hardinge, Sept. 10, 1915, Hardinge Papers, 121.
other than India.\footnote{India Office Minute No. J & P. 3330/06, Nov. 19, 1906, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.} It appeared probable that many of the Indians who had found their way to British Columbia were men who had wandered in the Far East in search of employment. The Secretary of State for India instructed the Indian government to discourage emigration to Canada and warn the intending emigrants about the bleak chances of employment in that country under whose laws, in the event of their destitution, they could be liable to deportation.\footnote{India Office Minute No. 9697-9709-112, Dec. 13, 1906, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.}

On the other hand, the Canadian immigration authorities tried to justify the proposed discouragement of Indian immigration on the grounds that the climatic conditions of British Columbia - damp and cold weather as compared to India's hot and dry climate - were unsuitable, and that Indians would find it impossible to merge with the Canadian society because of their rigid caste system; and finally, that Indians were generally unskilled for the type of work available in British Columbia.\footnote{Memo. by W.D. Scott of the Immigration Branch, Nov. 2, 1906, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.} Acting on the request of the Canadian government, the Governor of Hong Kong ordered the publication of posters in Urdu and Gurmukhi\footnote{Languages spoken by Indians from the Punjab.} bringing these facts to the notice of any Indians settled in Hong Kong who might be planning to go to Canada.\footnote{F.D. Lugard, Governor Hong Kong to the Secretary of State for Colonies, Sept. 30, 1907, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.}

The Indians do not seem to have taken much notice of the so-called "factors", which were in any case generally incorrect. For the climate of the Punjab, from where most immigrants had originally come, was very severe and British Columbia was comparatively mild. Again, most Indian immigrants were Sikhs, and the rest generally Muslims. Neither believed in the caste system, which was peculiar
to the Hindus. Finally, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the lumber industry appreciated the skill, work and ability of the Indian immigrants.

The pace and volume of Indian immigration further increased when a combination of vested interests began to work. The Canadian Pacific Railway started propaganda in India for the sale of tickets for Canada in their interests as carriers. They did this in order to replace their diminished Chinese steerage traffic which almost ceased after the imposition of the five hundred dollar head tax.¹

Witnesses Numbers 3 and 5 who gave evidence before the "Royal Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Methods by which Oriental Labourers were induced to come to Canada 1908", exhibited notices posted up in villages describing Canadian immigration requirements and stating that tickets might be bought from Jardine Matheson and Co., Calcutta, or Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot and Co., Calcutta, agents for the Canadian Pacific Railway.² Similarly Witnesses 10, 12 and 13 all came as a result of having been attracted by similar notices posted in their villages describing the opportunities in Canada, and stating where the tickets could be had.³ According to a confidential despatch of the Government of Bengal, Gillanders Arbuthnot and Co., Calcutta, acting as labour agent for the Canadian Pacific Railway, had shipped over 1200 people, chiefly Hindus, since March 1907 to Canada. They apparently went on a distinct engagement to the C.P.R.⁴ Mr. Montagu Woods, one of the Counsel acting for the Hindus⁵ in British Columbia.

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¹ MacInnes to Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, Oct. 10, 1907, C.O. 886/1.
² Royal Commission Report 1908, pp. 76-80.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Minto to Morley, Secretary of State for India, 26 Sept., 1907, Minto Papers M.1007.
⁵ The term "Hindu" has been used here rather loosely for it is not restricted to people who followed Hinduism but is applicable to all Indians.
in 1908 produced a poster, copies of which were said to be displayed throughout India. The poster described the conditions of Indian immigration to Canada:

For Hindus going to Canada:
Hindus who desire to go to Canada can have full information from the Company's Agents for the Canadian Pacific Railway Royal Mail Steamship Line No. 8, Clive Street Calcutta.¹

The Canadian Pacific Railway, a Conservative organization, had no objection to making difficulties for a Liberal government. Among these difficulties was Asiatic immigration. Therefore, by the "simple and ingenious logic of the Party", it was "expedient to fetch in as many cargoes of immigrants as possible".² The sale of tickets in India was to serve both the economic and the political purposes of the G.P.R.³

The position was also exploited by "certain individuals"⁴ whose motive was to make money by hook or by crook. The immigrants in the first instance were mostly ex-soldiers. They belonged to a lower economic group of Indians, lacking any schooling or training in Western disciplines except a few odd duties as an unskilled labour force. The majority of them were not conversant even with the language of the country (Canada). This made them vulnerable to exploitation by their less scrupulous and clever compatriots who, like Dr. Davi Chand and his relatives, worked for personal gain.

The Under-Secretary of State for India was informed by a contemporary

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¹ Memo by MacInnes to Oliver, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, March 14, 1908, C.O.886/1.
² Morley to Minto, March 26, 1908, Minto Papers, M.1008.
³ The Canadian Pacific Railway headed by Sir William Van Horne threw its considerable weight against the Liberals and financially supported the Conservatives in the elections of 1911. See Khayyam Zev Feltiel, Political Party Financing in Canada, p. 24.
⁴ Report of W.J. Mackenzie King on his Mission to England to confer with the British authorities on the subject of Immigration to Canada from India, p. 8.
source, about Davi Chand as follows:

Dr. Davi Chand ..., who has been here nearly two years and is supposed to have been writing letters to India inviting working men to this country. He meets boats on arrival or meets the men (Indians) in the street and obtains from them sums varying from two to ten dollars on promise of securing employment which he has never been known to perform. He has been prosecuted three or four times but being witty and well-provided with funds while his prosecutors were not, always managed to escape conviction. He practises medicine in the Indian system and also tells fortunes. It is said he used to do similar things under a different alias in Australia from where he was expelled.¹

The exploitation by Davi Chand was testified to by Witness No. 4 who stated that he had received letters from his compatriots in Canada among them a brother who had been induced to come by a letter from Davi Chand. He further stated that the letter had sent tickets and altogether been responsible, he thought, for 45 persons entering Canada.² Similarly Witnesses 7 and 9 had been sent tickets and promised work by Davi Chand.

The Royal Commission of 1908 concluded that immigration from India owed its existence to:

(1) The distribution throughout certain of the rural districts of India, of glowing accounts of the opportunities of fortune-making in the province of British Columbia, visions of fields of fortune so brightly hued that many an Indian peasant farmer, to raise the money for the journey, had mortgaged to the lender of the village his home-stead and all that it contained at a rate of interest varying from fifteen to twenty percent.

(2) The activity of certain steamship agents who were desirous of selling transportation in the interest of the companies with which they were connected and of themselves profiting by the commission reaped.

(3) The activity of certain individuals in the province of British Columbia ... who were desirous of exploiting their fellow subjects ...³

¹ K.D. Daru, Indian Govt. Technical Scholar attached to the Geological Survey of Canada, to the Under-Secretary of State for India, Nov. 19, 1906, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.
² Royal Commission Report, 1908, pp. 77-80.
³ Mackenzie King, Report on ..., Immigration to Canada from India, 1908, p. 8.
Thus we find that Indian immigration in Canada started with Sikh soldiers coming from parts of the Far East\(^1\) outside India, and slowly extended to their friends and relatives in India. The rosy impression about Canada, that the Indian soldiers acquired while returning from the Queen's Jubilee celebrations or the visit by Indian soldiers to Canada, after their participation in the campaign against the Boxer Rebellion in China might have been the starting point of this movement. After 1905 it made sudden strides chiefly as a result of systematic exploitation by steamship companies for political and economic motives. Certain individuals like Davi Chand and his relatives\(^2\) tried to exploit the situation for their personal benefit. Consequently it accelerated with the letters (with money orders enclosed) sent home by fortunate first comers.

The gradual increase of Indian immigration into Canada coincided with a large influx of Japanese and Chinese. After the imposition of restrictions on Chinese immigration, the people of British Columbia did not consider their presence a threat because the Chinese did not claim a position of equality with the Europeans. They confined their activities to certain limited menial occupations, and were mostly employed as domestic servants, laundrymen, cooks and kitchen-help, labourers in clearing forest lands, inside workers at canneries and as above ground workers at collieries.\(^3\) They were reliable workers and their attitude towards the Europeans was one of peace at any price.

Similarly, the Indians were good workers and were employed in

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1 Emigrant, Indian Emigration, Oxford 1924, p. 74.
2 Governor General of Canada to the Secretary of State for Colonies, April 27, 1908, C.O. 886/1.
3 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, January, 1908, 1649.
the saw mills or clearing land. They too were inoffensive and peaceful. Their work was appreciated by their employers. Being British subjects, they were able to enter Canada without any hindrance, since until the end of 1907, there was no restriction from the Indian or Canadian governments to check their influx.

Up to 1905, emigration from Japan was regulated by the general Act which gave the government power to issue instructions from time to time as to the passage of persons who might be permitted to emigrate. Under this policy, emigration from Japan could take place only with the consent of the Japanese Government, whose Foreign Office exercised complete control over the matter. Nobody could obtain a passport without the permission of the Foreign Office and without a passport no one could emigrate. All emigration agencies were thus under government supervision.

But by the end of the nineteenth century, Japan had become a modern industrial and commercial power of the East and she aspired to enter into the 'Fellowship of Nations'. So the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty was signed on July 16, 1894. Then, in 1902, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was formed to meet the threat of Russian expansion in the Far East. Hostility to the Russians, however, declined after the war of 1904-5. By 1907 the alliance was aimed, in so far as it was aimed at any power, at Germany. The Canadian

1 Sir Edward Grey, then parliamentary under-secretary at the Foreign Office, wrote that the Government acted because "the time had come when dealings with Japan might be put on the same equal terms that exist between nations of European origin". See E. Grey (Viscount Grey of Fallodon), Twenty Five Years 1892-1916, Vol. I, p. 23.

2 For Great Britain the alliance grew steadily in importance at a time when the naval race with Germany was looming and when the Liberal government was embarking on a programme of social reforms requiring increased expenditure. The alliance permitted her to concentrate her navy increasingly in home waters and delegate the task of defending British interests in the Far East and Pacific to Japan. See Ian H. Nish, op. cit., p. 362.
government’s attitude towards Japan was not dictated by Imperial interests but solely by Canadian interests. This policy was defended by Laurier, the Liberal Canadian Prime Minister, in 1903, when he spoke on Canadian-Japanese relations in the Canadian House of Commons:

"We intend to have a trade between Japan and Canada. We intend to bring about a development of relations which exist between progressive people and our people.... We are trying to promote trade between Canada and Japan... because after all, we are neighbour nations."

So Canada followed the example of Great Britain and concluded a treaty with Japan on January 31, 1906 and this arrangement was ratified by the Canadian Parliament in 1907. According to this treaty

"The subjects of each of the two high contracting parties shall have full liberty to enter, travel or reside in any part of the Dominions and possessions of the other contracting party and shall enjoy full and perfect protection for their persons and property."

No sooner had the treaty been ratified than the Japanese immigrants began to pour into the province of British Columbia. They came from Japan directly or from the Island of Hawaii. Some of them came to Victoria and Vancouver as bearers of permits to Canada, others came with permits for the United States only, and many came with no permits at all, claiming their rights under the treaty. In this way the number of Japanese immigrants rose rapidly and the people of British Columbia believed they were threatened by the perils of an Asiatic takeover. The Japanese had started to compete with the Europeans in trade, work and employment.

2 Ibid., January 1908, 1652 and Canada Sessional Papers 74b,
3 Rodolphe Lemieux, Minister of Labour, Confidential Report of his Mission to Japan ... 1908, pp. 6-8. Lemieux Papers.
4 Ibid.
The reason why the Europeans could not work for the same wages as the Asiatists — Chinese, Japanese and Indians — was that the individual cost of living of the Asiatists did not exceed one half the amount normally spent by a Canadian of the same class. Moreover the Asiatists had no families to support in Canada.

By the end of the nineteenth century Indians had also started going to such western states as Washington, California and Oregon. But soon the growth of the Indian community was resented by the white workers, for the Indian infiltration of cheap labour had unfavourable repercussions for the U.S. labour organizations. In the year 1906-1907 the United States of America was facing an economic crisis. In order to cope with the situation the employers demanded longer hours of work with lower wages. The only group of labourers who fell into line with their demands were Indians to whom even those unpalatable terms were better than the ones obtainable at home in India. The Indians went to work when trade unions struck for higher wages and better conditions because they were not cognizant of the conflict between workers’ organizations and the employers. Thus relations between them and other workers deteriorated, and Indians became unpopular as strike breakers and blacklegs. They were ostracized by American labour groups and even subjected to intimidation and punishment. They were frequently beaten and in many cases kidnapped and put in cars which deposited them several miles away from the cities in which they lived.

As early as May 1905, an organization entitled "The Japanese and Korean Exclusion League" was formed at San Francisco. Its object

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1 "There were signs of disturbance in the New York Stock Exchange". See M.P. Fairchild, "Immigration and Crises", American Economic Review 1911, p. 757.

was the total exclusion of Japanese and Koreans from the United States and its insular territory. The American Federation of Labour had taken up the matter of exclusion of the Chinese, Japanese and Koreans at its twenty-fourth session in November 1904.¹ In 1907, when the number of Indian immigrants into Washington, Oregon and California increased, it changed its name from "The Japanese and Korean Exclusion League" to the Asiatic Exclusion League.² Its leader, Olaf A. Tveitmoe, of the San Francisco Building Trades Council started a campaign against Orientals in his paper, Organized Labor. He asserted that "the Asiatic would drag down white labor to his lower level".³ In his address at the 'Labor Day' celebrations at San Francisco on September 2 - reported in the Organized Labor of September 7 - he emphasized that the mission of unionized labour was "to guard the gateway of Occidental Civilization [West Coast] against the Oriental invasion".

Anti-Asiatic rioting occurred in a few cities including Seattle, Everett and Bellingham. In the most publicized incident at Bellingham, in September 1907, six hundred lumberjacks herded some two hundred Indians out of town with many immigrants suffering injuries.⁴ A contemporary journalist delightfully reported that the "tawny subjects of Great Britain were as docile as cattle" and in one case, "a school boy drove in three of the timorous Asians who had once served in the soldiery of Great Britain".⁵ Another

¹ Maclnnes to Oliver, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, Feb. 13, 1908, C.O. 886/1.
³ Organized Labor (San Francisco), Jan. 2, 1907.
⁵ W.D. Dodd, "Hindu in the North West", World Today XIII, 1907, pp. 1157-1160.
magazine sarcastically entitled its account as "War with Great Britain". The Asiatic Exclusion League held Indians responsible for the riots by declaring that their willingness to work for low wages, and their filthy and immodest habits invited reprisals. The U.S. administration was rather indifferent and did not take any effective measures for the protection of the Indians, as the following extract from the letter of the British Consulate of Portland, Oregon to Albert E. Mead, Governor of Washington State, Olympia will show:

...but the fact remains that, through intimidation they were driven from their lawful employment and that no apparent efforts have been made to punish those who were guilty of illegal acts, or to deter the commission of similar acts in the future.

The Mayor of Everett also confirmed that the "demonstration possibly had the effect of intimidating these people to such an extent that some four or five days later they left the city".

Thus the Indians had to leave these states and they made their way to Canada. When this news appeared in the press, Lord Grey, the Governor General of Canada, asked Laurier, the Canadian Prime Minister, to make necessary arrangements for the reception of Indian evacuees from the United States because they were British subjects in need of the protection of the British Crown.

The Asiatic Exclusion League had been very active in the important cities of British Columbia during 1907. In September Mr. Ishii, the Japanese Commissioner, arrived in Seattle, and believing that he would remain there for several days, the League

1 Outlook, LXXXVII, 1907, pp. 51-52.
2 James Laidlaw, British Consulate, Portland, Oregon to Albert E. Mead, Governor of Washington, Olympia, Nov. 19, 1907, File 4251, L/P & J/6/839.
3 Report by Newton Jones, Mayor of Everett, Nov. 2, 1907, File 4251, L/P & J/6/839.
4 Governor General of Canada to the Secretary of State for Colonies, Sept. 24, 1907, C.O.886/1.
had planned a hostile demonstration against the Asiatics in general and the Japanese in particular. But Mr. Ishii decided to leave for Vancouver before any demonstration could be carried out. However, upon learning of this the Secretary of the Seattle Exclusion League (Mr. A.E. Fowler, who had led the attacks on Indians at Bellingham) boarded the same train for Vancouver. Acting upon Mr. Fowler's instructions the Asiatic Exclusion League of Vancouver arranged for a parade to be followed by a public meeting in the City Hall on September 7, 1907. The City Hall was literally within a stone's throw of China Town and was not much removed from Powell Street where most of the Japanese resided at that time. Fowler proposed a march through the Chinese and Japanese quarters. Some boys, directed by Fowler, began to throw stones and then the crowd turned into a mob, invaded China Town and swept on to the Japanese quarters. At first the Japanese met the invading force with passive resistance, then, arming themselves with sticks, bottles and knives, they routed their persecutors. The following morning, Sunday, further trouble occurred. In the ensuing rioting the Japanese showed their fighting skill, turned upon their assailants and routed them. They patrolled the streets in their special quarters carrying revolvers and knives and did the job of the police.¹

The Indians took refuge in their Gurdawara (Sikh temple) and in the mills where they worked. They were mild-mannered and inoffensive. They did not carry any weapons as did the Japanese. They were fellow-subjects of Canadians under the British Crown and desired to live peacefully.² They were, however, equally unacceptable

¹ Colonist, Sept. 8, 1907; Seattle Post Intelligencer, Sept. 8, 1907; Canadian Annual Review, 1907 (Toronto, 1908), p. 386; and Province, Sept. 9, 1907.

because they appeared to be odd people who were unable to adapt themselves to their new situation: far less than the Chinese and Japanese did they attempt to make their customs and dress conform to Western ideas. Their turbans, their flowing beards, their dark skins gave them an unkempt appearance, however clean they actually might have been.

The news of riots shocked Ottawa officials. In the meantime the situation seemed likely to be aggravated by the arrival of the steamship Monteagle on 11 September, 1907, with 900 Indians on board. Mr. Alexander Bethune, Mayor of Vancouver, reacted promptly and sent a telegram to Sir Wilfrid Laurier:

Nine hundred Hindus arriving today, steamer Monteagle. Neither accommodation nor employment for them, nor is it possible to house them under sanitary conditions. Shall we house them in drill hall at Dominion Government's expense.

Mayor Bethune was rather outspoken on the exclusion question. But equally vocal against the Asiatics was Mr. R.C. Macpherson, M.P. (Victoria, B.C.), who voiced the heated atmosphere of the labour halls and Exclusion Leagues by telling the Montreal press the day after the riot that:

If the Federal Government does not step in and put a stop to the already humiliating state of affairs in British Columbia, with regard to the present influx of Asiatics, there is going to be another episode like the Boston tea party and something has got to be done quickly to stop this thing.

The British Columbian government headed by Conservative Premier Sir Richard McBride, had already exploited the Oriental immigration question to the full extent in the provincial election of February

1 Of course Alexander Bethune was a member of the Vancouver Asiatic Exclusion League. Report by MacInnes, Oct. 10, 1907, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.
2 Mayor A. Bethune to Laurier, Sept. 11, 1907, C.O.866/1.
3 Quoted in the Canadian Review of Public Affairs, 1907, p. 387.
1907. Seeing the popularity of anti-Asiatic elements on the Pacific Coast, it had publicized its strong opposition to Oriental immigration. Two days prior to the general election in British Columbia, the Province (a Conservative paper) printed a sensational front page article declaring that Liberals had made a secret agreement with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad that in the case of a Liberal victory in the election it would be allowed to import 50,000 Japanese workers. The Liberal party was faced with the impossibility of replying to the Conservative charges at length, because the latter were made on the eve of the election. In this way McBride very skilfully, through his criticism of the Dominion immigration policies, achieved the largest majority in the popular vote. So after the September riots McBride took up his old uncompromising stance against the so-called 'Oriental' invaders. He was a witty politician with his finger on the popular pulse. His opposition to the Oriental immigration became quite vociferous. The Governor General of Canada, however, accepted the fact that although the Indians were "excellent fruit pickers" and would be of invaluable assistance to the fruit farmers in the picking and packing seasons, they were nevertheless not wanted.

3 Province, February 1, 1907.
5 Ibid. and Martin Robin, Canadian Provincial Politics (Scarborough, 1972), p. 46.
6 New York Evening Post, October 26, 1907.
7 Grey, Governor General of Canada, to Minto, Governor General of India, November 20, 1907, Minto Papers, M. 995.
Similarly, Mr. Alex MacLaren, the lumber man, recognized and
appreciated the working ability of the Asiatics and wrote in
favour of Asiatic immigration in the Winnipeg Telegram on October 22,
1907:

We employ Chinese, Japanese and Hindus in our mills. We are forced to employ this outside labour for there is very little common white labour to be had and what there is, is little better than the hobo type.... On the other hand, we have the Oriental day in and day out. He does his work well and we have no trouble. They are living in houses that we have built for them, pay their rent regularly and usually the Chinese and Japanese are far more cleanly than the common white labourers. If any of them wants to get away for a while, they arrange to have somebody else to take their places and show some consideration for the interests of their employers. White men are holding all important and high-wage positions in our mills. These men are all right - they are skilled labourers - but it is the common white labourers that we have got that are no good.

All the violence against the Asiatics came from the labour element alone, and, according to Lord Morley, was engineered from the United States. The chief speakers at the same meeting in Vancouver which preceded the riot were E.A. Fowler of Seattle, Secretary of the Asiatic Exclusion League, and W.A. Young of Seattle, an organizer of the American Federation of Labour. The labour elements in Vancouver and in Seattle and Bellingham were very closely linked. So in spite of the shortage of unskilled labour, the Asiatic Exclusion League succeeded in filling the minds of the people with the fear of Asiatic invasion as a threat to their own economic security. Minto on the basis of his experience as Governor General of Canada, said:

British Columbia was, and no doubt still is, a terribly corrupt province, and labour questions were much run by the United States 'Boss'.
Public opinion had been turned against the Asiatics. While informing the Imperial authorities, the Governor General of Canada quoted the following headlines from the Vancouver Semi-Weekly World of 8th November, 1907 to describe the situation in British Columbia:

(1) Evidence of Chief of Police of Vancouver before Commissioner Mackenzie King re- Anti-Asiatic riots.
(2) Evidence of Inspector Mulhorn before Commissioner Mackenzie King re- anti-Asiatic riots.
(3) Return of Hindus from American territory to British Columbia, owing to mob violence at Everett, United States of America, 5th November.
(4) Close of Commissioner Mackenzie King's enquiry as to Japanese damage claims.
(5) Commissioner Mackenzie King's further Commission to enquire into the working methods of the Oriental employment agencies.
(6) Protest from Asiatic Exclusion League against employment of Asiatics on steamships receiving Canadian subsidies.
(7) Speech of Honourable Joseph Martin to Asiatic Exclusion League (Mr. Martin is a stormy petrel whose presence generally denotes an approaching storm).
(8) Letter of protest by Japanese Consul Morikawa to the Mayor of Vancouver.
(9) Interview with Mr. F.C. Wade, K.C. re- Asiatic immigration.
(10) Japanese Employment Agencies.
(11) Cable from Vladivostock - Japan said to be preparing for war with the United States.

The Canadian Government while showing a conciliatory spirit to the problem, however, represented that unchecked immigration from India would lead to anti-Asiatic rioting. The Governor General asked the British Colonial Office to regulate Indian immigration by

1 Colonial Office to India Office, Nov. 15, 1907, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780; Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, telegram, Nov. 14, 1907, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.
3 Vancouver World, Nov. 8, 1907.
4 India Office Minute, Nov. 18, 1907, L/P & J/6/780.
the introduction of a passport system under which a small number of Indians, agreed between India and Canada, should be allowed to come to Canada, further requesting that Canada should be allowed to deport all Indians coming without passports.¹

Grey, the Governor General of Canada, was strongly in favour of checking the emigration of Indians at its source and taking no action in Canada.² From the Canadian point of view it was better, if possible, to prevent Indians from starting out rather than to have them turned back on arrival after they had paid for passages. Although an Order in Council was submitted to the Canadian Governor General for approval to refuse permission to an Indian to enter Canada unless he possessed a minimum of 200 dollars, he said he would withhold his assent to such an order if the Indian government agreed to his suggestion.³ Thus, on 14 November 1907, the Canadian Government's proposals were telegraphed to Minto, the Indian Viceroy.

But for the next sixty days the Indian government remained silent about the immigration issue, no doubt because 1907 was the fiftieth anniversary of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. There was much bad feeling throughout India and Minto was aware of the real danger that might result from the resurrection of sympathy with the Sepoy Mutiny. In June 1907, he had informed the King about the existence of the danger of contamination of the Native Army through the disloyal press.⁴

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¹ Governor General of Canada to the Secretary of State for Colonies, telegram, Nov. 11, 1907, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.
² India Office Minute, Nov. 18, 1907, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.
³ Colonial Office to India Office, Nov. 15, 1907, File 3330, L/P & J/6/780.
⁴ On June 13, 1907 Minto wrote to the King: "But though the Viceroy believes things are settling down, he does not think that we are quite out of the wood yet, and so long as the disloyal Press is allowed to continue its atrocious publications which are circulated in the shape of pamphlets to the troops, though every endeavour is being made to stop or seize them, the Viceroy cannot think the danger in respect to the Native Army has ceased to exist." Minto Papers, letter to H.M. No. 23.
Indian government faced its greatest danger from terrorists and agitators bent on sowing seeds of unrest. By 1907, the Punjab was suspected as a centre of subversive activities. In May 1907, there had been a political riot in Rawalpindi; mobs wrecked the gardens and damaged the houses of the deputy commissioner, district judge, superintendent of police, and missionaries, and assaulted scattered Europeans. The Indian government might have been preoccupied with more pressing problems such as agitation against the Partition of Bengal and the rise of an extreme wing in the Indian national Congress. Agitation against the Colonisation Bill in the Punjab, the problems created by the activities of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, their arrest and deportation, demanded the immediate attention of the Indian administration. Bengal was also full of terrorists' activities.

Lady Minto noted in December 1907 how in Bengal,

... all these miserable students possess fire arms and that Hare, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, is evidently scared; he has aged considerably since his appointment.

Similarly Minto noted that on December 6, 1907 an attempt was made to wreck the train carrying the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, and on December 23, 1907, B.C. Allen, District Magistrate of Dacca, was seriously wounded by a revolver shot but his assailant escaped.

1 Diary, Minto Papers, M. 1069.
2 Bengal, the largest of British India's seven provinces, containing some 85 million people, more than a quarter of the sub-continent's total population, was divided on October 16, 1905, by the creation of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. This partition avowedly undertaken by government solely in the interests of administrative efficiency, evoked an unprecedented storm of popular (predominantly Hindu) protest when it was realized that the newly created province would have a Muslim majority of some 6 million. The scheme was denounced by politically conscious Indian nationalists as the most naked and insidious example of British government's policy of divide and rule. See Z.H. Zaidi, "Partition of Bengal 1905-1911", University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1964.
3 Diary, Minto Papers, M. 1069.
4 Ibid.
Thus the immediate situation of the British in India was extremely precarious, and over and above all this was the hostile Anglo-India\texttext{\text-_}holy opinion. There were activities of the terrorists and extremists and the moaning of moderates, who brought to Minto's notice that if nothing was done there would be grave consequences. There were also sectarian and religious differences.\texttext{\text-_}1

With all this unrest confronting him, the Viceroy had still not decided what action to take on the matter of the immigration issue when, on 13th December, he received a private letter from Arthur Godley, the Under Secretary of State for India, requesting Minto to make an effort to restrict Indian immigration by means of passports, which method, if successful, could be extended to deal with similar situations, arising out of Indian migration to South Africa and Australia. In this way the Imperial Government would be relieved from a very disagreeable difficulty. Godley wrote that the immigration question was a very touchy one.\texttext{\text-_}2

Up to the end of 1907, the Indian government did not take any action in the matter in spite of the urgency expressed in Ottawa and London, and only after a long consideration of the immigration question did the Government of India telegraph its policy decision to the Secretary of State for India on January 22, 1908.\texttext{\text-_}3 It was unwilling to place any restrictions of the kind suggested by Canada on the migration of free Indians, because it would need special legislation which was not advisable at that time in view of the state.

\text{\text-_}1\text{\text-_}See Cd. 9190 Sedition Committee Report; Sir Valentine Chirol, \textit{Indian Unrest} (London, 1910); and \textit{India Old and New} (London, 1921); Duni Chand, \textit{The Ulster of India: An Analysis of the Punjab Problems} (Lahore, 1935); and Gulshan Rai Bhatnagar, \textit{Collected Reflections on a Few Punjab Problems} (Lahore, 1921).

\text{\text-_}2\text{\text-_}Sir Arthur Godley remarked, "The whole question is one I heartily dislike - we in this country talk much cant and humbug about it." Minto Papers, M. 1007.

\text{\text-_}3\text{\text-_}Viceroy of India to Secy. of State for India, telegram, Jan. 23, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
of public feelings against the British in India. Then the Indian government also objected to the introduction of passports or to the establishment in India of an examining office to stop the migration of persons who were physically unfit and inadequately supplied with money. The Canadian government, therefore, was left with the responsibility of preventing Indians immigrating to Canada. The Government of India, however, recognized the conciliatory attitude of the Dominion government and hoped that no express discrimination would be made against Indian subjects. It was reluctant to take any action in this connection because after all India was a conquered country and whatever a foreign government might do, the very nature of that rule would make it unpopular.¹ The Indian government's inaction in the matter might be interpreted as an example of indifference and reluctance to act. The government failed to see the problem in its right perspective and did not even consider a proper travel arrangement for Indians from India to Canada. Even the state of affairs of those Indians already in Canada was absolutely ignored. The Canadian government's proposals could lead to a workable solution of the problem of the increasing influx of Indians into Canada. The Canadian government was not unsympathetic to the Indian government's problems but at the same time it wished to forestall further anti-Asiatic rioting in Canada by the adoption of some moderate means of controlling the number of Indians who should be allowed into the country in any specified time. Certainly preventing men from starting out from India by the implementation of the passport system seemed a more humane method of controlling immigration than turning Indians away after they had made the journey all the way to Canada. But the

Indian government was unwilling to make any decision about this problem for fear of jeopardizing its own position. Therefore, the Canadian government, denied any cooperation from India, was forced to implement policies of restriction of Indians at its own Canadian harbours. During this time anti-Indian feeling was somewhat aggravated by the hostile attitude towards large numbers of Japanese immigrants, and the Canadian government's method of dealing with the Japanese question had a decided bearing on the future immigration policy for Indians as well.
CHAPTER 3

The Increase of Japanese Immigration into
Canada. The Reaction of (a) British Columbia
(b) The Dominion Government. The Control of
Immigration by Agreement with Japan.
Japanese immigration into Canada was limited to a small number up to the beginning of 1906 because the two governments had a mutual understanding. Since the Japanese government had itself restricted emigration, the Canadians were not required to pass any restrictive regulation and their attitude was relaxed because there was no danger of undue inflation of the labour market by such small numbers of Japanese. But in January 1906, Canada became party to the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation made between Great Britain and Japan in 1894. By the very first paragraph of Article One of this Treaty, the Japanese were unequivocally given the same rights as those of any British subject in Canada, and the Canadian government, acting on its faith in the existing understanding between the two governments, was prepared to adhere to its terms absolutely and without any reserve. In view of this the Canadian Prime Minister was justified in using the following language when on January 15, 1907, he moved the second reading of the Bill (No. 23) respecting the treaty between Canada and Japan:

I would, however, observe that, so far as Japanese labourers are concerned ... for the last five or six years, there has been no Japanese immigration to speak of into British Columbia. Some few years ago, when we increased to $500 the poll-tax which had been in existence for many years against Chinese immigration, we persistently refused to extend the same prohibition against Japanese immigration. The reason which we gave at that time was that Japan was an ally of Great Britain and we could not treat Japanese as we had treated the Chinese population. This was actually accepted by British Columbia itself, and I may say that our task in that respect was made easy because the Japanese Government has restricted the immigration of their own people. At the present time the Japanese Government do not allow immigration from their provinces with the exception of a very few from each province. I think it is not more than
four or five from each province, that is all that the Japanese Government permit to leave the Empire of Japan and therefore practically there has been no emigration to British Columbia from the country. ¹

It was on the faith of this tacit understanding that the Japanese would continue to regulate emigration from their country that the Canadian parliament gave its sanction to the treaty and it was not, therefore, expected that Japan would avail herself of the letter of Article 1 of the treaty. However, between January and October in 1907, 8125² Japanese, 1266 Chinese and 2047 Indians arrived in Canada and though their arrival was met with hostile demonstrations, these did nothing to stop the influx of Orientals into Canada. Canadians were alarmed at this increase in numbers which in the case of the Japanese was directly attributable to the treaty. In fact the Japanese immigrants to Canada were of two types, those who entered directly from Japan, and those who came from other areas, such as the Hawaiian Islands which lay outside the jurisdiction of the Japanese government.³

Those Japanese immigrants who had come from Hawaii, had been employed in the sugar and rice fields by the planters of the Hawaiian Islands. When the Planters’ Association of Honolulu, an organization of employers formed for the protection of their mutual interests, reduced the wages of the Japanese labour force, the Japanese started to move to the Continental mainland – Canada and the United States of America – where the shortage of manpower and the comparatively higher wages were the main attractions. To counteract this loss of

³ Mackenzie King, Report of Royal Commission, On the methods by which the Orientals have been induced to come to Canada, 1908, p. 9.
manpower the Planters’ Association influenced the U.S. Administration so that the entry of the Japanese into America from the Hawaiian Islands was banned. As a result of this, large numbers of Japanese from these islands who would formerly have gone directly to the United States, now used British Columbia (Canada) as a spring-board for their entry.

Moreover, the Canadian Pacific Railway made a contract with the Canadian Nippon Supply Company of Vancouver for the supply of a labour force. Besides this there were several other companies whose agents supplied them with Japanese labour under contract from Japan. While these agencies might have increased their activities as a result of the depression and unemployment which swept Japan following the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905, their main stimulus was the shortage of labour in British Columbia. A substantial labour force was required for fruit gathering, for agricultural development and for industrial expansion. Since European workers were always on the move for better prospects while Orientals were thought to be loyal and reliable, the capitalist class of British Columbia

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2 MacInnes, the Secret Agent of the Canadian government, mentioned in his report dated October 2, 1907, the following agencies:
   i The Japanese Boarding House Keepers’ Union of Vancouver British Columbia Limited.
   ii The Canada Nippon Supply Company Limited.
   iii S. Gotch
   iv The Nitch Employment Company.

   The first, second and fifth were incorporated under the Provincial Companies Act. The Boarding House Keepers’ Union cooperated with the Japanese Boarding House Keepers’ Union of Honolulu in bringing about the recent influx from there. (MacInnes Report, Oct. 2, 1907, Grey Papers)

3 The Victoria (B.C.) Board of Trade recommended in its annual report:
   (a) The appointment of agents for procuring labourers from Britain.
   (b) A scheme of assisted passage for intending immigrants.
   (c) The relaxation of head tax on the Chinese in order to cope with the labour shortage in British Columbia.

See The Times, Nov. 30, 1907.
encouraged Asiatic immigration. The effect of this was to defeat the law imposed by the U.S. Administration on Japanese immigration. In order to counteract this, the Planters' Association of Hawaii encouraged and financed an agitation on the part of the American Asiatic Exclusion League, ostensibly to support their desire to exclude Japanese from the mainland of the North American continent but in reality to stem the outflow of cheap labour from their own islands.¹ This situation was bound to have its effect on British Columbia which lay separated from the older portions of the Canadian Dominion by vast stretches of prairies, and by four ranges of well-nigh impassable mountains while it adjoined the western portions of the United States.²

On the other hand the professional labour leaders on the Pacific Coast were keen to maintain a shortage of labour, so that with the demand greatly exceeding the supply, it would be an easy matter for them to enforce their terms and conditions of employment. Thus the over-jealous labour unions together with persistent campaigns by street orators caused the situation to deteriorate. British Columbia, though rich in resources, was hindered in development by the high price of labour.³

This situation was not clear to the Canadian people who saw the arrival of Orientals as a real threat to their social and domestic welfare and, as stated earlier, this influx was thought to be the

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on the methods by which the Orientals have been induced to come to Canada, 1908, p. 41.
² The demonstration preceding the riots in Vancouver was led by Frank Cotteril, president of the Federation of Labour of the State of Washington, A.E. Fowler, Secretary of the Anti-Japanese and Korean League of the same state, and George P. Listman, a prominent labour leader of Seattle. See The Times, Sept. 30, 1907.
³ The Times, Sept. 30, 1907.
by-product of the treaty with Japan of 1907. The Anti-Asiatic League demanded immediate abrogation of this treaty and the introduction of effective measures to stem the Asiatic immigration into British Columbia.¹ Even Robert Borden, the opposition leader, tried to confuse the situation for political ends. He blamed the Canadian government led by Sir Wilfrid Laurier for the influx of the Japanese.² He declared that the Japanese trade treaty permitted "the entire population of Japan to migrate to Canada if they desired to do so."³

The Vancouver World wrote an editorial on "the Asiatic Question" on September 30, 1907. It accused the eastern politicians – manufacturers, rail-road corporations and banking companies – of indifference towards this problem. It branded them "slave traders of the 18th century" and declared that eastern trade interests would not be allowed to sell the province for a mess of pottage. It warned that the Grand Trunk Pacific and the All Red Line might prove to have been purchased dearly if it resulted in British Columbia being handed over to Asians for settlement.⁴

The propaganda thus carried out on the West Coast of Canada made the situation quite explosive. The Japanese residents in British Columbia had armed themselves. There was a danger of riots breaking out even as a result of street fights between whites and Japanese. The secret agent to the Canadian government warned that in case of riots the position would be out of control and British Columbia would align with the United States.⁵

¹ Province, Oct. 8, 1907.
² Vancouver World, Sept. 25, 1907.
³ Cited in the Canadian Annual Review, 1907, p. 392.
⁴ Vancouver World, Sept. 30, 1907.
⁵ MacInnes to the Minister of the Interior, Oct. 2, 1907, C.O.886/1.
Numerous allegations were made against the Japanese. Kipling wrote that because they were unmarried, enterprising, thrifty, hardworking, they could underbid, undersell and out-work the European workers. They were accused of taking no interest or share in the political and social life of the section in which they lived, they had no local pride, no desire to help to make the locality better and took no interest in their neighbours. Indeed, they formed communities of their own apart from the local residents. They did not have any instinctive respect for British laws and institutions, which were regarded rather as a means of oppression.\(^1\) It was also alleged that they insisted on converting each difficulty into an international dispute. Therefore it was thought to be unwise to admit them to Canada especially in view of the fact that they had behind them a sensitive, war-like, aggressive people and a strong government, which would resent any injustice inflicted on fellow Japanese. It was feared that naturalization would follow immigration. Once let in the camel’s nose and only time would be needed to see the entire body forcing its way into the tent. There was an outburst of hysterical fear among certain classes of people in British Columbia that the country was in danger of becoming "an annex of Asia".\(^2\)

The Japanese, moreover, were keen competitors with the European working men in Canada and it made them a more serious danger. There were already 25,000 Asiatics in British Columbia and in an Anglo-Saxon community where democratic institutions prevailed, the introduction of such large numbers of alien races inherently ignorant of the most elementary principles of self-government, could not but by itself

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\(^1\) Rudyard Kipling, "Oriental Immigration", The Times, Oct. 11, 1907.  
\(^2\) See The Times, Oct. 28, 1907.
be inimical to a vast alien colony, exclusive, inscrutable, unassimilative with fewer wants and a lower standard of living than themselves, maintaining intact their customs and characteristics, their ideals of home and family life, with neither the wish nor the capacity to amalgamate. Their mere pressure of numbers would undermine the very foundations of the province. British Columbians, therefore, considered with passionate and unalterable conviction that to safeguard the future and distinctiveness of their own race and civilization, the free ingress of Orientals must be restricted. In this way there existed a deep-seated popular determination to exclude from even the sparsely-settled territories the concentrated masses of the Orient.¹

The contacts of the Japanese immigrants with the whites were virtually confined to the occupations in which they worked together and such relationship between workers is generally competitive. The whites, having lost out to the Japanese in labour competition, took their case to the community at large by means of press and protest meetings and demanded protection against foreign-born alien labourers, fishermen or businessmen whose lower standard of living and resultant low wage demands were a severe threat to Canadian workers. Many white workers felt so strongly that they insisted on publicly expressing their views with the result that public opinion in British Columbia, and indeed throughout Canada concerning Japanese, was determined by the attitudes of a vocal minority who met and dealt with the Japanese in occupational situations on conflict bases. Various interests across the border (United States) exploited the

situations to the maximum extent. It was unfortunate that the Mayor of Vancouver, Mr. A. Bethune, was not a decisive man for, had he been so, the protest and parade against the Japanese would never have been allowed and, given sufficient explanation everyone would have supported him, for even the labour union would have seen the wisdom of preventing such disgraceful action. If this had been the case the American exploitation of the situation could have been avoided.

As the situation stood, however, there was some need for federal instructions and, after considering the matter, the Dominion government decided that Rodolphe Lemieux, Minister of Labour and Postmaster-General, should proceed immediately to Japan to confer with the Japanese authorities about the largely increased influx of Oriental labourers into British Columbia. But the Asiatic Exclusion League protested against the proposed mission of Lemieux to Japan. Its packed meeting instead demanded the abrogation of the Treaty with Japan and urged remedial legislation for Asiatic immigration control. The appointment of Rodolphe Lemieux was, however, hailed by the Montreal Gazette (a Conservative journal) opposed to the Liberal Government of Canada. It appreciated the delicate and difficult mission of Lemieux and hoped that success in this matter would increase his reputation as a diplomat. The Times commented that Lemieux, tactful and suave, with many of the arts of the French diplomat, was decidedly the right person for the right job. Lord

1 The Times, Sept. 30, 1907.
2 Ibid., Oct. 10, 1907.
3 Vancouver World, Oct. 8, 1907.
4 Province, Oct. 8, 1907.
5 The Times, Oct. 2, 1907.
6 Ibid., Oct. 21, 1907.
Grey, the Governor-General of Canada, was quite pleased with the proposed mission of Lemieux.¹

In Japan, the Vancouver riots had excited little comment in the press. The gist of the few leading articles which appeared was that although anti-Japanese feeling in British Columbia was no new thing, the recent outbreak was due to the exceptionally large numbers of Japanese immigrants from Hawaii, turned back from San Francisco and other ports on the American Pacific coast by new anti-immigration legislation introduced by the United States government. The prompt action by the Canadian government and local authorities at Vancouver to seek a solution to the immigration problem and the tone of the Canadian and British press were much appreciated.² In an effort to avoid further complication in this irritating question the Japanese government decided to impose a heavy deposit requirement (50,000 yen) on emigration companies and as a result of this measure, six emigration companies had to close their businesses.³

The Japanese government seemed anxious to control its emigration and to maintain good relations with Canada. Nevertheless there was at least one note of dissension. Speaking about the post-riots agitation in British Columbia against the Japanese, the Japan Times commented:

Is it just that Japan should be asked to alter her treaties or bind herself with new stipulations, just because the unreasonable prejudice exists on the American Continent?

The position would be fairer if it were all men and organs that are in a position to guide the public opinion of Canada and America would do their utmost to reason down and stamp out the pernicious prejudice and that, therefore, Japan might be persuaded in the meantime to exercise patience.⁴

¹ Grey to Sir Claude Macdonald, Oct. 23, 1907, Grey Papers.
² Claude Macdonald, British Ambassador to Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, Oct. 2, 1907. Canadian Sessional Paper No. 74b, Vol. 18.
⁴ Japan Times, Nov. 16, 1907.
By this time Rodolphe Lemieux (accompanied by Joseph Pope, Under Secretary of State for the External Affairs of Canada) had reached Japan. He explained the purpose of his mission that he was not preparing for any change in the existing treaty but he desired to reach an agreement which would lead to the adoption of a beneficial programme for the future of both friendly nations.¹

Several meetings between the Canadian representatives and the Japanese officials took place. On behalf of the Canadian government, Lemieux presented a memorandum on the subject. He explained that the Canadian hesitation in becoming a party to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was due to the fear of Japanese immigration, and Canada accepted the treaty on the assurance given by the Japanese Consul in Canada regarding control of immigration. He further commented on the explosive situation in British Columbia resulting from the influx of the Asiatics. He pointed out the peculiar geographical position of British Columbia because of its distance from Ottawa and its nearness to the United States, with which it had a common irritating experience of Oriental immigration. The Canadian representative was equally appreciative of the benefits and implications of the treaty with Japan to the British Empire and the Dominion of Canada. He suggested firstly that Japanese immigration be restricted to 300 persons per year.²

Count Hayashi, the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, rejected the Canadian suggestion. He pointed out that the Canadian delay in accepting the treaty arrangement was due to the existence of the most favoured nations clauses in the treaties of Great Britain with Belgium

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¹ The Times, Nov. 18, 1907.
and Germany. As such the immigration question had no bearing on the delay. The Foreign Minister denied giving any assurance regarding restricting Japanese immigration into Canada and also refused to amend the treaty arrangements.¹ He told the Canadian delegation if they came with the idea of procuring an amendment to the treaty by fresh convention or otherwise, his government would not consent even to consider any proposal in that sense.²

Rodolphe Lemieux, the Canadian representative, had realized that being a proud and sensitive people, the Japanese would not admit that racial prejudice against them would continue, especially when their nation was rapidly progressing. Japanese naval and material supremacy had already been established. The Japanese system of government, their educational and industrial progress were at par with those of Western nations.³ Lemieux was of the opinion that another factor to be considered was that the natural progress and development of British Columbia was not possible without Asiatic labour because Europeans as a rule rarely reached the Pacific Coast. So the Japanese contribution in this regard should be welcomed. Therefore Lemieux could see that in the outwardly friendly and cordial atmosphere of negotiations, he could nevertheless get only a declaration from the Japanese government, that of exercising a close discretion in limiting the number of immigrants to Canada.⁴

Public opinion in Japan was evidently opposed to the conclusion of any convention restricting the movements of Japanese labour.⁵

¹ Memorandum by Count Hayashi to Lemieux, Dec. 21, 1907, pp. 29-32, Lemieux Papers.
² Joseph Pope to Laurier, Dec. 9, 1907, C.O.42/918/1525.
³ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, January 2908, 1659.
⁵ The Times, Oct. 28, 1907.
However, as earlier stated, the Japanese government was not responsible for the sudden increase of Japanese immigration into British Columbia. As a matter of fact the Japanese government opposed any such move because the area of their influence was Manchuria and Korea and any emigration from their country to North America was considered a national loss.\(^1\) The Japanese Foreign Office had already issued restrictions on the intending emigrants to the Hawaiian Islands because the government intended to exercise close supervision so that possibility of any fraud could be eliminated.\(^2\)

During the course of negotiations Lemieux was convinced that the Japanese government sincerely desired to stop any further agitation in British Columbia. For this they were willing to restrict voluntarily within reasonable limit the volume of immigration to Canada. Therefore, he asked the Japanese Foreign Minister if he could have a written assurance as to the intention of their government so that he could place it before his own government on his return to Canada.\(^3\) In reply to this Count Hayashi wrote

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\ldots \text{that although the existing treaty between Japan and Canada absolutely guarantees to Japanese subjects full liberty to enter, travel and reside in any part of Canada, yet it is not the intention of the Imperial Government to insist upon the complete enjoyment of the rights and privileges guaranteed by those stipulations when that would involve disregard of special conditions which may prevail in Canada from time to time.}
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\[
\text{Acting in this spirit and having particular regard to circumstances of recent occurrences in British Columbia, the Imperial Government have decided to take efficient measures to restrict emigration to}
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\(^1\) Canada, House of Commons, Debates, January 21, 1908, 1657.
\(^2\) The Times, Nov. 18, 1907.
In carrying out this purpose, the Imperial Government, in pursuance of the policy above stated will give careful consideration to local conditions, prevailing in Canada, with a view to meeting the desires of the Government of the Dominion as far as is compatible with the spirit of the treaty and the dignity of the State.¹

In order to implement this understanding the Japanese government intended to apply two sets of regulations. By the first set of regulations, the Japanese emigrants who might be permitted to go to Canada were the following:

(a) prior residents in Canada and wives and children.
(b) those specially engaged by Japanese residents in Canada for bona fide and domestic services.
(c) contract emigrants whose terms of contract, works to be done names and standing of the intended employers were satisfactorily specified.
(d) agricultural labourers brought in by Japanese agricultural holders in Canada.²

All these classes were obliged to have certificates issued by Japanese Consular authorities. By the second set of regulations the Japanese Consuls in Canada were instructed not to issue certificates for contract labourers unless they received the approval of the Canadian government, while for agricultural labourers, their number was to be limited to ten for each one hundred acres of land owned by the Japanese. It was also clearly stated in that letter that:

With reference to domestic and agricultural labourers mentioned in the regulations, the Japanese government do not contemplate that under existing circumstances these two classes should exceed four hundred annually.³

There were three choices before the Canadian government:

(a) The status quo.
(b) The abrogation of the treaty.

³ Hayashi to Lemieux, December 23, 1907, Enclosure (b) Lemieux Papers.
(c) The acceptance of the proposed arrangement.

The maintenance of the status quo was out of the question because the situation in British Columbia was serious. The abrogation of the treaty would require a six months' notice. What other arrangement could Canada make? Imposition of heavy poll tax leading to the practical exclusion of the Japanese would mean a serious breach in the Treaty alliance between the Mother Country (Great Britain) and Japan. Japan would resent it as a most unfriendly act. Canada could not ask Japan to brand her subjects as an inferior race. On the other hand, for Canada, the abrogation of the treaty would result in the loss of important commercial advantages with a market of fifty million people.

The proposed arrangement was a fair and convenient compromise. Recommending it to the Canadian cabinet for acceptance, Lemieux stated:

The assurance given by Count Hayashi on behalf of the Japanese Government is a solemn engagement which Canada is bound to accept in good faith. The fact that it is given of her own free will makes it more binding on Japan.

The new arrangement was called a Gentleman's Agreement and it was accepted on 13 January, 1908.

Direct emigration from Japan was thus restricted to reasonable limits and the Japanese Foreign Minister told the Diet (Japanese Parliament) on January 28, 1908 that the question was definitely settled, they had conceded no treaty rights and their prestige had not suffered.

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1 Lemieux' statement in the Canadian House of Commons. Cited in The Times, Jan. 23, 1908.
2 On being asked about the amount of trade with Japan, the Canadian Minister of Customs (Wm. Paterson) said $2,621,036 for 1907, see Canada, House of Commons Debates Jan. 8, 1908, Vol. I, p. 897.
4 Governor-General of Canada to Secy. of State for Colonies, telegram, Grey Papers.
5 Japan Gazette, Dec. 28, 1907.
6 The Times, Jan. 29, 1908.
As for the Japanese emigration from the Hawaiian Islands the Japanese government had stated that they were powerless to check it. Once Japanese were out of Japan their movements could not be controlled by the Japanese authorities. This difficulty was solved by the enforcement in Canada of the Alien Labour Act which was up to this time used against the importation of contract labour from the United States of America. Then on January 8, 1908 an Order in Council was passed by the Dominion Government prohibiting the landing of immigrants in Canada unless they came from the country of their origin or citizenship, by a continuous journey on through tickets. This order at once excluded from Canada the Japanese labourers who might come from the Hawaiian Islands or any places other than Japan.

Since the Japanese government was not responsible for the influx of Asiatics, and could not be accused of bad faith, why should the Canadian Minister of Labour go to Japan and make a hue and cry about it? The reason, of course, was to tell the people of British Columbia that there could be no diversity of interest between any part of the Dominion and the whole, that British Columbia's problem was Canada's problem. Thus the Gentleman's Agreement with Japan was made entirely to appease British Columbia. The Dominion government tried to minimize the chances of the subject of Oriental immigration being used by the U.S. labour leaders as a pretext for anti-Canadian government propaganda. A complete understanding of the problem was reached by the Canadian and Japanese governments. The exact limitation of the Japanese reaction was of course known beforehand,

1 Joseph Pope to Laurier, Dec. 9, 1907. Pope Papers.
2 The Citizen (Ottawa), Jan. 22, 1908.
4 Japan Daily Mail (Yokohama), Dec. 27, 1907.
especially its expression of inability to deal with the Japanese coming from the Hawaiian Islands. The Dominion government's solution of this kind of immigration not only stopped the indirect Japanese immigration but also made it virtually impossible for Indians to migrate to Canada.

It has been shown that in order to meet the various forms of opposition to Japanese immigration from within her own Western territories and those of the United States, Canada established a formal understanding with the Imperial Japanese Government by which direct immigration from Japan was closely controlled. However, the bulk of the immigrants came, not from Japan but from the Hawaiian Islands and since the Japanese government felt no responsibility for these the Canadians were free to deal with this aspect of the problem as they found fit. But the very steps they took to inhibit the Japanese influx, though not apparently directed against the Indians, dealt with the Indian position as effectively as with that of the Japanese, and it is with this point that the next chapter will deal.
CHAPTER 4

The Gentleman's Agreement between the Japanese and Canadian governments successfully solved one aspect of the immigration problem. There remained, however, the question of those Japanese who entered Canada from Hawaii and that of Indians from the Far Eastern countries. These questions needed delicate handling. On the first issue, the Japanese government was unwilling that any of its subjects should be explicitly barred from Canada, and therefore the problem of Japanese immigrants from Hawaii must be carefully considered; on the second issue, the Canadian government, aware of its Imperial responsibilities, was unwilling to affront so important a member of the Imperial community as India. Direct representation to India on this matter had evoked little response, for as stated earlier, the Indian government, already beset with the threat of insurrection, was unwilling to provoke domestic hostility by acting against the interests of its own people.

The problem was solved by a stroke of superb diplomatic skill.

Under Section 30 of the Immigration Act (Statutes of Canada, 1906)

The Governor General in Council may by proclamation or order, whenever he considers it necessary or expedient prohibit the landing in Canada of any specified class of immigrants.

The Canadian authorities had full power to take any action they thought fit to solve the immigration problem. On the strength of this they passed, on January 8, 1908, an Order in Council to the effect that whenever the Minister of the Interior deemed it to be necessary any immigrants might be prohibited from landing in Canada unless they came from the country of their birth or citizenship by a continuous journey, using through tickets purchased before leaving the country.

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This immediately and effectively stopped the inflow of the
Japanese and (as has been previously stated) this "continuous passage
regulation", as it came to be known, chanced to be so framed as to
apply with equal force against the Indian immigrants as well. It so
happened that there was no direct steamship communication between
Indian and Canadian ports, a change of steamers being necessary at
Hong Kong, Shanghai or some other Far Eastern port. In the words
of the U.S. Commission Report, 1911, the effectiveness of Indian
exclusion has been summed up:

While Hindus are not specifically excluded or in fact,
even mentioned in the Canadian immigration act, or
orders of the Governor in Council, relative thereto
practically insurmountable barriers have been erected
against them.  

The Imperial government in London felt, too, that this measure by
the Canadian government would stop Indian immigration altogether.  

But the Canadian government was in favour of reaching some rational
understanding with the Indian authorities about this issue. There
were two precedents by which the Asiatic immigration was handled.

One was the way in which the Chinese immigration had been dealt with
by poll-tax. The other was the measures taken to meet the situation
with the Japanese i.e. the direct negotiations endeavouring to get
the other government to adopt the necessary restraints itself. The
latter method was obviously simpler and more satisfactory, it was
the one the Laurier government attempted to follow, but it had to
be modified to a certain extent because the Indian government was
not willing to restrict emigration from their country.  

The direct refusal to admit Indians might have seemed a domestic affair to

2 India Office, Minute, January 17, 1908, File 1371, L/F & J/6/864.
3 India Office to Colonial Office, January 30, 1908, File 1371,
L/F & J/6/864.
the working classes of British Columbia but the Canadian government had to consider that India was the greatest part of the Empire. Therefore, the matter needed to be handled with great care and delicacy. Ottawa and London were uncomfortably situated between Vancouver and Calcutta. Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister, who had already headed the Royal Commission on: "Methods by which the Oriental labourers have been induced to come to Canada", was chosen to confer with the British authorities on the subject of immigration from the Orient, and immigration from India in particular.

The agitation against Asiatic immigration was equally strong on the West Coast of the United States of America. When President Roosevelt came to know about King's proposed visit to England, he expressed a desire to meet him. So Mackenzie King met the U.S. president who communicated his deep concern about the Oriental immigration on the Pacific Coast. The president took up the position with characteristic vehemence that the brown and white races could not assimilate. They should keep to their respective areas. He stressed that the feeling on the Pacific Coast was so violent that unless some action was taken by the U.S. and the Canadian governments against the forcible encroachment of Asiatics, the Western States and British Columbia would take the law into their own hands. The central theme of Roosevelt's remarks was that the interests of both Great Britain and the United States called for a common approach.
to the problem of Oriental immigration. If, he said, the two
countries were insensitive to the feeling against Orientals on the
Pacific Coast, a new republic embracing British Columbia and the
Pacific States of the U.S. would be formed between the mountains
and the sea. Therefore it was thought that the U.S. and British
governments should not be indifferent to the demand for restrictions
on Oriental immigration which emanated from the Western Coast of
North America. The hostility towards Oriental labourers was too
strong to be resisted by the U.S. or Canadian governments and it
would be better if the British government knew the intensity of
this hostility. The U.S. president had emphasized to Mackenzie King
his determination to protect his working people against the Oriental
competition and to populate the West with white people. He told
Mackenzie King:

What I would like to accomplish is not merely
an understanding for today but some kind of
convention between the English speaking peoples,
whereby, in regard to this question it would be
understood on all sides that the Asiatic people
were not to come to the English speaking countries
to settle and that our people were not to go to
theirs.

Laurier agreed with him and President Roosevelt expressed his delight
at Laurier's proposal to send Mackenzie King to London in order to
explain the Dominion government's position vis-à-vis the Asiatic
immigration.

At the same time, the Asiatic Exclusion League held its

1 Roosevelt claimed that it was Mackenzie King who made this prediction.
(Morison, Roosevelt Letters VI, pp. 919-20).
2 J. Bryce, British Ambassador in the U.S.A. to Foreign Secy., Feb. 5,
1908, C.O.886/1.
3 Mackenzie King Memorandum regarding meeting with Roosevelt, Feb. 10,
4 Mackenzie King Diary, Feb. 25, 1908, King Papers.
5 Laurier to Roosevelt, Feb. 1, 1908, Morison Roosevelt Letters VI,
pp. 917-918.
international convention at the Labour Temple in the City of Seattle, Washington, on 3rd February 1908, and decided to influence, and if possible to dictate, the immigration policies of Canada, the United States of America and Mexico in regard to all Asiatics. This could be achieved by controlling the votes of the working classes. The Canadian delegate to the convention said that, in March 1908, he would organize a parade at Vancouver against the Oriental immigration. He hoped that it would "lead to something exciting". In the meantime the Provincial Legislature of British Columbia passed the Immigration Act of 1908 on 11th February. Its main feature was that it included under the head of "prohibited immigrants" any person who, when asked to do so by an officer appointed under the Act shall himself fail to write and sign in the characters of any language of Europe. The mention of any "language of Europe" showed that it was directed against Asiatics but the Act had the merit of not specifying any particular race and therefore as a choice of evils became something of a model; however, the courts of British Columbia held that it was invalid as contravening the Japanese Treaty and the Dominion Act which sanctioned that treaty. The question then arose whether (although the Act did not apply to the Japanese) it could apply to the other Orientals. The Order in Council (of January 8, 1908) kept out Indian immigrants as it required Asiatic immigrants to come to Canada by direct voyage and no ships sailed directly from India to Canada, so this restriction proved effective. But in the middle of March 1908, a new aspect to the problem arose when, at Vancouver,

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1 MacInnes to Oliver, Feb. 13, 1908, C.O. 886/1.
3 Canadian Annual Review, 1908, p. 541.
the **S.S. Monteagle** landed a shipload of some 200 Indians, most of whom had come direct from India as the **S.S. Monteagle** was a special ship.¹

At this point the provincial government of British Columbia applied its Immigration Act of 1908 and arrested the Indians. The Bench of the Province refused to support the popular cry against the Orientals, and when the application for a writ of habeas corpus was made, it was granted by Justice Morrison. An appeal was made to the British Columbia Supreme Court but Justice Morrison's order was upheld on the grounds that:

Parliament by the Immigration Act Revised Statutes of Canada 1905 Chap. 30 having provided a complete Code dealing with the immigration the British Columbia Immigration Act, 1908 is inoperative.²

The voyage of the **S.S. Monteagle** frustrated the direct passage regulations as well, and since there was no legal means of barring the Indians the Dominion government feared a strong local reaction from British Columbia.

On March 7, 1908 the House of Assembly of British Columbia passed a resolution asking the Imperial government to appoint a Royal Commission to enquire fully into the circumstances of Asiatic immigration into British Columbia. The motion was aimed against the Dominion government but it was described by McBride (British Columbia Premier) in a letter to Hopwood (Under Secretary at the Colonial Office) as in effect

... an endeavour to secure the full and impartial investigation by means of a Royal Commission into the whole question of Asiatic immigration.³

The premier was convinced that such investigation would prove

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¹ MacInnes to Minister of the Interior, March 14, 1908, C.O. 42/918/12219.
² In re Narain Singh et al., British Columbia Reports, 1907-8 13, p. 477.
³ McBride to Hopwood, March 18, 1908, C.O. 42/927/11698.
the necessity of taking strong measures to preserve the small white population from being utterly swamped by an undesirable immigration. But such a move to discuss the Asiatic question with self-governing Colonies in the form of a Royal Commission or a Conference and to arrive at agreement upon general principles of Imperial application had already been turned down by Lord Elgin, the Colonial Secretary. When questioned about this proposal in the House of Lords by Lord Ampthill on February 10, 1908, he replied that it would be difficult to initiate fresh discussion on the subject. As a matter of fact the Imperial government was well aware of the view held by the self-governing Colonies which regarded the Asiatics as a great nuisance.¹

The working classes on the Pacific Coast feared that the Asiatics would endanger the hard-won rights of the free-wage earners because they were used to something less than normal white standards. The problem of Asiatic labour was the problem of incorporating into the labour force men whose image was that of unfree men ready to undersell their labour. The acceptance of this under-class group into a rising industrial society was a complex problem. Moreover, with the growth of democracy in politics and trade unionism in industry, the manual workers began to grasp the truth that one way of raising the wages of labour was to limit the supply of labour and when their competitors were not of their own race, colour or religion and did not share their aggressive labour ideas, they demanded their exclusion. The political leaders both of the government and of the opposition had to agree with this trend in the labour movement. After all, the labour vote was of reasonable weight in elections. The Dominion government

¹ Colonial Office Minute by C.F. Lucas, Feb. 11, 1908 regarding the question by Lord Ampthill, C.O. 532/7/4233.
was thus confronted with a difficult problem when the local agitation, as inspired by the Anti-Asiatic League, was quite active. There was even the danger of anti-Asiatic riots breaking out in British Columbia. So the Canadian government could only satisfy the British Columbians if it was to announce exclusion of the Asians from Canada. But Canada could not do this while she was a constituent member of an Empire which was Asiatic in three-fourths of its population. It was of the utmost importance to Canada to maintain amicable relations with other Asiatic peoples. Open exclusion of Orientals involved India, an important portion of the British Empire, and Japan, ally and friend of Britain, Canada's mother country. With regard to this complex situation the Canadian Prime Minister Laurier stated:

(i) that the Indians having been accustomed to the condition of a tropical climate were quite unsuited to Canada.

(ii) that if their immigration to Canada were allowed to go unchecked, a serious disturbance to industrial and economic conditions in British Columbia would result.

(iii) that an effective restriction of immigration from India was desirable.¹

The Premier stated in the Order in Council that inability of Indians to adapt themselves to surroundings so entirely different inevitably brought upon them much sufferings and privation and because of this consequence complete restriction was desired not less in the interests of the Canadian people than in the interests of Indians themselves. But the restriction on Indian immigration involved the India Office and Colonial Office at London. Because of the great importance of such considerations, complete interchange of views between Imperial and Dominion governments was necessary. Mackenzie King was already familiar with the subject of Oriental

¹ Laurier, Memorandum, March 2, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
immigration and its many bearings, and therefore, the Dominion
government chose him to go to England to confer with the Imperial
authorities on this delicate subject. In the meantime the question
of Indian immigration was also discussed in the Canadian Senate
when a motion was put forward by Senator MacDonald (of British
Columbia), who said:

That it is expedient that the natives of British
India should be limited to the smallest possible
number, if not entirely prohibited. That the
Government of the Dominion should at an early date
invoke the aid and counsel of the Imperial Government
to mitigate the present prospective influx of so
undesirable a class of people.¹

But the mover was unaware that Mackenzie King had already begun work
on this subject and when informed of the fact and after various
expressions of opinion on the desirability of restriction on Indian
immigration had been made, the motion was withdrawn. However the
Asiatic Exclusion League in British Columbia had expressed its extreme
dissatisfaction with Laurier² and demanded complete exclusion of
Indians from Canada.³

Mackenzie King reached London on March 14, 1908 and stayed there
till the middle of April. He saw Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary,
John Morley, the Secretary of State for India, and Elgin, the Secretary
of State for the Colonies,⁴ together with a number of senior civil
servants - Sir Charles Hardinge, Sir Francis Hopwood, Sir Charles
Lucas. He also met Whitelaw Reid, the American Ambassador, and other
public figures such as Winston Churchill, L.S. Amery, Lord Cromer,
Austen Chamberlain, A.J. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne. The Asiatic

¹ Canada, Debates of the Senate 1907-1908, pp. 480-4.
² The Times, April 16, 1908.
³ Ibid., April 22, 1908.
⁴ Canadian Sessional Paper No. 36a, 1908, p. 6.
question was, however, mainly discussed with the Secretary of State for India, John Morley, whose appointment to the post had aroused great enthusiasm throughout India. Morley was known to be a liberal and a disciple of John Stuart Mill. He had written the biography of Gladstone, the champion of the Irish Home Rule. The Indian National Congress were enthusiastic about his appointment and looked to him to apply the same liberal attitude to their position. But they were bound to be disappointed. It was true that Morley hoped to introduce a more representative element into the Government of India but there were limits to his liberalism. He did not believe that Gladstonian principles could be applied to non-Western societies, and he deprecated as fallacies the view that by some natural law or other abstract proposition, all men were fitted for identical social and political institutions. He told his Scottish constituents on one occasion that it was absurd,

... because a fur coat in Canada at certain times of the year is a most comfortable garment, therefore a fur coat in the Deccan of India is a sort of handy garment which you might be happy to wear.\(^1\)

On another occasion he stated:

I should be guilty of criminal folly if I were to feel bound to apply the catchwords of our European liberalism as principles fit for an Asiatic congeries like India.\(^2\)

However, no matter how strongly he held these opinions, he was in no position to give them public voice in these delicate negotiations. To support openly the Canadian position, would be to cause an already

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1 Morley, Speech at Arbroath, October 21, 1907, reported in The Times, Oct. 22, 1907.

serious situation to deteriorate further. He and his colleagues in London heard with interest what Mackenzie King had to say, but the latter claimed at once that he had no proposals to make; his purpose, he stated, was to advise the British authorities of the seriousness of the position in Canada, caused by Indian immigration. He spoke of the danger of riots against the Indians and argued that by customs, ill-health and ignorance of the language, they were ill-suited to the conditions in Canada. Restrictions, he felt, were to the advantage of the Indians. Many of these had died, all had been victimized by the steamship companies, and the climate was cold compared with that of India. He was undeterred by the fact that the climate of British Columbia was more favourable than that of India and stressed in his argument that it was in the best interests of British Columbia to develop slowly with a white population holding a multiplicity of small properties in their own right, than in the hands of a few gigantic capitalist enterprises flourishing at the expense of cheap Oriental labour. The fear of an Asian ascendancy springing from this had, he felt, to be dispelled in the minds of the white population.

Mackenzie King, however, pointed out that British Columbia had considerable natural resources but the Indians lacked the initiative and skills to develop them. Moreover, this fault limited their ability to obtain highly paid jobs and made them the last people employers would willingly choose. In this way the chances of their success were quite limited. He also put forward the case of American close identity and possible intervention in the matter by stating that:

The proximity of the United States to Canada added an element which complicated the situation. I thought

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1 Mackenzie King's Memo. on his Mission to England, May 2, 1908, p.5, Lemieux Papers.

2 Ibid., p. 6.
the President [Roosevelt] and a large number of American citizens were only too glad to develop the opinion that the interests of the Canadian and American West were identical, and that the United States was the proper protector of the peoples on the shore....

There were people in British Columbia only too interested in creating the impression that because of the distance, the public men at Ottawa did not appreciate the situation on the Pacific Coast and were indifferent to it.... There were other persons who were interested in pointing out that there was no use of the people of British Columbia looking to Ottawa for help, that the Anglo-Japanese alliance made it impossible for them to take any action in the matter of Japanese, and that British connection made it impossible to do anything on account of the Hindus.... Nothing would suit the purpose of the Americans better at this moment than that some trouble should break out in Vancouver....

That there was no doubt in the world that the interests of the Pacific slope north and south of the boundary line were the same; at the same time I did not think it was necessary for us to demonstrate that to the world, and that we might, in the interests of the Empire, go ahead and make our arrangements between ourselves. That Sir Wilfrid Laurier recognized the obligations and responsibilities of Empire, as well as its advantages, and that he was the first one to take the view that all being of one household, we should endeavour to quietly settle any differences among ourselves, and make our arrangement such that the outsider need not have any thing whatever to do with it....

After listening to these representations John Morley remarked that he thought that the case as presented by Mackenzie King was very reasonable and defensible; and he enquired if an arrangement similar to a Gentleman's Agreement with Japan could be a satisfactory way of dealing with Indian immigration. But the Dominion government turned it down by saying:

Emigrants from India are absolutely unsuited to our climate and conditions of life.

Mackenzie King pointed out that the Dominion government desired

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1 Mackenzie King, Diary, March 20, 1908, King Papers.
2 Mackenzie King to Laurier, March 20, 1908, Laurier Papers.
3 Acland, Deputy Minister of Labour to Mackenzie King, March 24, 1908, Lemieux Papers.
exclusions of Indians from Canada. Canada had, of course, already made a request for making some rational arrangement with India in the latter part of 1907 but the indifference on the part of the Indian government and its fear of possible repercussions had resulted in delay and the virtual expression of a "do nothing policy". So far as the example of the "Gentleman's Agreement" was concerned, the strong position of Japan as a big power defending the South Eastern portions of the British Empire, her established supremacy over Russia and her position as a rising market for Canadian products had made her a special case for Canada, and India simply could not be compared with her. The Hindusthan (Calcutta) rightly pointed out that Canada could not afford to make strong Japan angry, whereas for weak India she did not care, and it questioned the worth of British citizenship to Indians.

Morley was persuaded by King's arguments, but was not certain how restrictions could be imposed on the Indians. He told Mackenzie King that there was already unrest in India. Although he and Minto, the Viceroy of India, had sought the cooperation of the moderate members of the Indian National Congress and new measures had been adopted to assuage the Indian Muslims, extremists still dominated the political field. Besides, the majority of immigrants were Sikhs from the Punjab, the proposed colonization bill was already causing unrest there and there was, consequent to this, the threat of disaffection

1 Mackenzie King, Memo. of his Mission to England, May 2, 1908, p. 9, Lemieux Papers.
2 Hindusthan (Calcutta), March 21, 1908, Bengal Newspaper Reports, March 1908.
4 As mentioned in chapter 2.
among the Sikh troops.\footnote{The Hindustan addressed a message to the native forces in British India: \textit{Bande Mataram}, \textit{"Seyoy mat bano - salutation to the mother land, do not join the army"} Civil and Military Gazette, July 28, 1907. Morley in a speech in Parliament, said, \textit{"In this agitation special attention, it is stated, has been paid to the Sikhs, who as the House is aware, are among the best soldiers in India."} House of Commons, Indian Debates Session, 1907, June 6, 1907, p. 177.} Further, their cause had been embraced by the Indian press and already the \textit{Tribune} and the \textit{Punjabee} had been sued for libel. As a gesture of conciliation Lord Minto had vetoed the bill, and the land and water taxes had been reduced.\footnote{C.J. O'Donnell, \textit{The Causes of Present Discontent in India} (1908), p. 94.}

So although a complete understanding was reached between Mackenzie King and Morley, no definite and clear action could be taken for any move to exclude Indians, especially the Punjabi Sikhs, from self-governing colonies, for such action was bound to be exploited by political rebels in India and trouble could be expected there.

As the Indian influx into Canada was only an adventurous affair it had never been organized or supervised by any government authority. Instead some educated people from Bengal in the eastern part of India, who had also found their way to British Columbia, had subsequently assumed the leadership of the Indian community. As such they were busy in exploiting the ignorant Punjabees. When Mackenzie King left Canada on his way to England, it was already suspected by these Indian leaders in Vancouver that the authorities contemplated restrictive and protective measures in regard to Indian migrants coming to Canada. Therefore they could foresee that the impact of any restrictive regulations might well prove to be a threat to their economic prospects. They held a protest meeting at Vancouver and wired to Morley,
Mass meeting. Natives of India protest deportation, exclusion from Canada. British subjects claim protection throughout the Empire. If our interest overlooked, brothers in India must necessarily resent your Government's neglect Udhayram

The moving spirits behind this protest were Taracknath Das, an interpreter in the United States Immigration Office, Dr. Davichand and his nephew Udhayram who were involved in it because their work as suppliers of an Indian labour force, their leadership of the Indian community, and their business of provision stores were all dependent on Indian immigration. If their source of easy income was in danger they resorted to threats of revolt in India in the event of Indians being excluded from Canada. The Dominion government took this protest as a bluff, but when Mackenzie King met John Morley in London, his attention was drawn to this protest. The Imperial government did, however, think that the repercussions from restrictive measures aiming at exclusion of Indians from Canada were bound to have serious implications. However, the Secretary of State for India, when questioned about the Indian protest meeting at Vancouver and the telegram they had sent said in the House of Commons,

I am discussing it with the Indian Government and in concert with the Colonial Office here - with an envoy of the Dominion Government of Canada with the hope of bringing to an end, if possible, this extremely difficult, intricate and possibly dangerous question.

A parallel case, that of Indians going to the United States of

1 Telegram received in India Office on March 24, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
2 MacInnes to Oliver, telegram, March 23, 1908, CIO. 42/919/14667.
3 "I sat last night next to M. Gupta, member of Council at the India Office, a native of Bengal. He thinks as we all think that the effect on Indian feeling of exclusion of East Indians from the colonies is very serious". See P.C. Lucas, Assistant Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Minute, April 30, 1908. C.O. 42/919/14667.
America, occurred in the weeks preceding Mackenzie King's visit to England, and John Morley had then requested Minto, the Viceroy of India, to issue warning to intending immigrants about the unfavourable conditions for Indians in that country. The Secretary of State was quite cautious about the repercussions of such a warning as he specifically pointed out to Minto:

The possibility of ill-treatment must not be discussed by notification, which must not go beyond the statement suggested.¹

So in spite of the broad agreement of purpose between Mackenzie King and Morley, the Secretary of State suggested to Minto that he should convince the Indians that their migration to Canada was exposed to exploitation, sufferings and privation and as such it should be stopped in their own interest. His urgent telegram to the Viceroy of India emphasized that although Canada could not be prevented from making regulations to exclude or restrict Asiatic immigration, her government, nevertheless, did not desire to sanction measures excluding British Indian subjects that would weaken the bonds of Imperial citizenship. Yet if the Dominion government were to veto British Columbia's anti-Asiatic proposals an awkward conflagration might be kindled. The Dominion government wished to stop migration at its source and searched for reasons to make such action seem beneficial to Indians. For the most part emigration from India was caused by shipping companies who wanted passengers and by private speculators. Mortality among passengers was high. Those Indians who landed in Canada were confronted by hostile climatic and working conditions and the ill-will of competitive labour. Such conditions were not those that propaganda in India had led the immigrants to

¹ Morley to Minto, telegram, March 17, 1908, Minto Papers, M.1013.
expect. Therefore to save Indians from disappointment and the danger of being turned back destitute the Canadian government requested that regulations limiting emigration should be imposed on shipping companies at Indian ports. Morley suggested to Minto that this could be achieved by the introduction of a permit system for the intending emigrants.¹

Morley explained in outlining these measures in his private correspondence with Minto, that the Anti-Asiatic League of the United States of America was confederate with the League of the same title in Canada and if the problem of East Indian immigration with resulting trouble continued and if the Dominion government for any reason threw cold water on British Columbia legislation against it, the spectre of secession would come into view. The probabilities of this had been heightened since many Americans had found their way to British Columbia. In any case, John Morley appreciated the difficult situation, and tried to make a strong case for restriction on Indian emigration to the North American Continent. He observed to Minto:

No wonder that an Exclusionist policy prevails; and I much suspect that if you and I were not Indians for the moment, we should be Exclusionists.²

But the Government of India opposed the suggestion that Indian emigration should be restricted by the introduction of a permit system. It issued warnings to the people as to the risks run in emigrating to Canada, and it expressed its understanding that the new regulations of the Canadian government requiring immigrants to come direct from the country of their birth or citizenship on through tickets would have the effect of restricting emigration and make it impossible for

¹ Morley to Minto, telegram, March 25, 1908, Minto Papers M 1013.
² Morley to Minto, March 26, 1908, Minto Papers, M. 1008.
any company other than the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to sell
tickets on their regular lines, as it was the only steamship company
having steamships running to Canada. \(^1\) So the Indian and the Dominion
governments issued a warning to the Canadian Pacific Company and
asked them to stop selling tickets to intending Indian migrants. \(^2\)
The steamship companies were clearly given to understand the Governments
of Canada, India and Great Britain would view with disfavour any
action on their part calculated to foster any further immigration
from India to Canada.

The Government of India, moreover, issued statements and warnings
to the intending Indian migrants about the difficulties that immigrants
would encounter and the strict Canadian regulations, and, in this way,
the rosy impression about Canada as a land of opportunity was offset. \(^3\)

When Mackenzie King examined the Indian Emigration Act of 1883
and discovered that emigration of contract labour from India to Canada
was illegal. \(^4\) The Act was framed for protection of Indian labourers
who might be induced to leave India and to work under indenture. Such
emigration was limited to countries mentioned in the schedule of the
Act and Canada was not in that schedule. Therefore, on the suggestion
of Mackenzie King, Morley told the Indian government that the position
would be improved were it impressed on the steamship companies that
it was unlawful under this Act for an Indian to migrate to Canada
under an agreement of hire. \(^5\) The Indian government publicized this
suggestion throughout India. \(^6\)

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\(^1\) Minto to Morley, telegram, March 31, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
\(^2\) Mackenzie King, Memorandum on his Mission to England, May 2, 1908,
pp. 12-14, Lemieux Papers.
\(^3\) Canadian Sessional Paper No. 36a, p. 7. Report of W.L. Mackenzie King
on his Mission to England, 1908.
\(^4\) Mackenzie King to Morley, April 1, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
\(^5\) Morley to Minto, telegram, April 16, 1908, C.O. 42/926/21707.
\(^6\) Minto to Morley, telegram, May 4, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
The Imperial government, the Indian Viceroy and the Canadian representative, Mackenzie King, agreed that the most effective method to restrict the emigration from the Orient in general and India in particular was by the application of the regulation issued on January 8, 1908, which as already stated empowered the Minister of the Interior to prohibit the landing in Canada of persons who came otherwise than by direct ticket and by continuous journey from the country of their birth or citizenship. It was held by the Department of the Interior that this regulation specified a class of immigrants and therefore was within the terms of section 30 and that the authority for it was contained in section 10 of the Immigration Act. But while Mackenzie King was busy in London with the imperial authorities, this regulation was applied to the Indians coming on the Canadian Pacific Railway Steamer S.S. Monteagle. It was challenged in the court, and the resulting court order stated that while the Act empowered the Governor General in Council to exclude, it did not empower the Governor General in Council to delegate that power to the Minister of the Interior as the Order purported to do, and therefore the order was not warranted by the Act and could not be enforced. In this way the continuous passage regulation was set aside and the persons were permitted to land. But as the Dominion government thought it absolutely necessary that the intent of the Order should be carried out, a new Order was passed at once. It was redrafted in a form which gave the Minister of the Interior the right of discretion in the administration

1 Canadian Sessional Papers 36a Report by Mackenzie King, p. 9.
2 Revised Statutes of Canada, 1906, Chapter 93.
of the Order. Yet even then the Dominion government was afraid that the validity of this Order might be questioned, so it was thought advisable to amend the Act so as to make express provision for the exercise of the authority taken by the Order which provision did not expressly exist in the Act as it stood. Accordingly, an amendment to the Act was prepared expressly authorizing the Governor General in Council to pass an order excluding the class of immigrants. As this measure was of immense importance in the administration of the immigration law the Canadian government thought that it should be embodied in the law itself. So while negotiations with the Imperial government were still on, this amendment of the Act was presented, debated and passed in the Canadian House of Commons. On the passage of this amendment, a new order was drawn up prohibiting the landing of any immigrants who came to Canada otherwise than by continuous journey from the country of their original citizenship. These measures reinforced the principal intention of restricting Indian immigration into Canada, without mentioning their name at all.

At the same time the Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, could say that the continuous passage regulation applied to Hindus to British subjects and to foreigners of all nationalities.... The Hindus are not in any different condition from anyone else.

However, it was true that due to the peculiar circumstances of the case, the Indians were singled out for particular restrictions by the operation of the continuous passage regulation.

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1 Governor General of Canada to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 20 May, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
2 Canada, House of Commons Debates, 8 April, 1908, pp. 6634-35.
3 P.C.932 May 27, 1908.
4 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1907-8, p. 5490.
In this way the necessity of enacting legislation either in India or in Canada which might appear to reflect on fellow British subjects in another part of the Empire was wholly avoided. At the same time Canada also avoided the creation of the impression that she was not deeply sensible of the obligations which citizenship within the Empire entailed. No wonder Dr. O.D. Skelton, contemporary observer and later biographer of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, also praised this measure:

Laurier quietly ... sought a course of action which while carefully conserving Canadian interests, would not involve complications for the imperial authorities. 1

But six years later the facts of this continuous passage regulation as applicable to Indians were substantiated in the Canadian House of Commons when H.H. Stevens, M.P., said in the House in 1914:

The honourable gentleman [referring to Mr. Lemieux, Minister in 1908 responsible for drafting the Order] knew, and his government knew that there was no steamship line direct from India to Canada and that therefore, this regulation would keep Hindus out and at the same time render the Government immune from attack on the ground that they were passing regulations against the interests of Hindus who are British subjects. 2

The basic theme, however, of Mackenzie King's mission to England was to prove the unsuitability of the Indians as migrants to Canada, to establish the Canadian desire and right over her immigration policy and to convince the Imperial authorities that Canada should remain a white man's country because of economic, social, political and national requirements. 3 A decade later, Mackenzie King explained his policy of Asiatic exclusion from Canada on the basis of an ethical proposition

2 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1914, 1233.
3 Canadian Sessional Papers No. 36a, King Report, 1908, p. 7.
of political economy. This general proposition he defined as "The Law of Competing Standards":

Assuming there is indifference in the matter of choice between competing commodities or services, but that in the case of such commodities or services the labour standards involved vary, the inferior standards, if brought in this manner into competition with a higher standard will drive it out, or drag the higher down to its level."

It was only a special case of the general proposition about competition framed by the classical political economists. It had, however, a special interest for the use that was to be made of it; for Mackenzie King decided that the state must protect higher standards and prevent lower standards from coming into competition with them. In the light of this law, he evolved his policy of Asiatic exclusion from the Canadian labour market. In this way he provided a scientific and moral justification for what the mobs of British Columbia demanded.

As a matter of fact Mackenzie King could see the emphatic demand for Asiatic exclusion coming from a strong vocal minority of U.S. born labour leaders on the Pacific Coast. Of course, the increase in population in British Columbia due to U.S. immigration could be expected to be pro-U.S. in outlook. He was, therefore, convinced that the Laurier administration at Ottawa could not go against it except at the risk of losing votes - the very basis of political power in a parliamentary democracy. So Mackenzie King accepted what the prejudice of the Anti-Asiatic League suggested, and throughout his mission to England he tried to do only one thing and this was to justify the exclusion of Asians from Canada. He could not

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2 Minto to Morley, April 15, 1908. Minto Papers M. 1008.
oppose the anti-Asiatic element in British Columbia. Therefore in his later academic work his support for the Asiatic exclusion on the basis of great truths of political economy was only a justification of political expediency based on the racial prejudice on the Pacific Coast.

On his return from England, Mackenzie King made a claim in his report to the Canadian government that a satisfactory solution of the vexed problem of emigration from India had been found. The Mail and Empire, Toronto, hailed the report and published it with due prominence. 3 The Hindustan, Lahore, Punjab, criticized it and branded it "grossly unfair" and urged all Indian people to unite in requesting the Indian government to adopt retaliatory measures against Canada and boycott the Canadians and their manufacturers. 4 It added that on the one hand British statesmen spoke of the people of India as citizens of the British Empire but on the other hand they were excluded from emigration to the Dominions. The paper criticized it as a disgraceful inconsistency. 5

The Indian leaders of the immigrant community in Vancouver had already started the publication of the Free Hindusthan (Free India) in April 1908. In the first issue they protested against restrictive measures of the Dominion government and, at the same time, they appealed to the British government to use its discretion in their interest. They felt bitter about their treatment in British Columbia and requested their leaders in India to take all possible steps to——

1 Mackenzie King had written to Lemieux when he was coming from Japan not to call or see Dunsmuir, the Lt. Governor of British Columbia, as he was not popular with the Anti-Asiatic League because of his employing Asiatic labour. Mackenzie King to Lemieux, Dec. 30, 1907. Lemieux Papers.

2 Mackenzie King, Industry and Humanity, op. cit.

3 Mail and Empire (Toronto), May 7, 1908.

4 Hindustan (Lahore), May 22, 1908. Punjab Newspaper Reports 1908.

5 Ibid., May 15, 1908. Punjab Newspaper Reports.
arouse the feelings of the masses in order to stop the Canadian restrictive measures.¹ Their paper the Free Hindusthan carried the title: "Resistance to Tyranny is obedience to God". It was an appeal for action against the Dominion government. At the same time they sought to align the sympathies of the Muslim members of the immigrant community as well. They also blamed the British government for famines in India. So substantially they were preaching sedition.

The Times of May 22, 1908 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 that Indians were subscribing money for seditious purposes and that Millside, now New Westminster (B.C.), was a centre for revolutionary agitation. The correspondent added that there was a certain school ostensibly for the instruction of English to Indians, which was actually being managed by agitators for the purpose of imbuing Indians with revolutionary ideas. The article mentioned the Free Hindusthan and its editor T.N. Das.

The Vancouver News-Advertiser of June 12, 1908 contained a reply to the despatch in The Times. It was written by Taracknath Das who signed as "Editor of the Free Hindusthan" admitting the existence of a school at Vancouver, where the Indians were taught how to read and write English as well as about their rights, and it was under these circumstances that Mackenzie King justified the exclusion of Indians on the ground that they were using a part of Canada as headquarters for seditious propaganda against the British rule in India.²

¹ Free Hindusthan (Vancouver), April 1908.
² Mackenzie King to Lemieux, July 21, 1908, C.O. 886/1.
In the light of Mackenzie King's report the Canadian government issued another Order in Council prohibiting entrance into Canada of all Asiatics other than those who had two hundred dollars in their possession at the time of their arrival. At the same time, however, the Dominion government, excluded from the operation of this Order nationals of countries with which it had special arrangements respecting immigration (which eliminated the Japanese) and those concerning whose countries special statutory regulations existed on the part of Canada (which excluded the Chinese). It justified this measure by stating that Asiatics belonged to labouring classes and their ignorance of the language and way of life in Canada made them unsuitable for settlement. Further they had no colony of their own people. Therefore the object of the Order was to keep out all immigrants who had not sufficient money to make themselves temporarily independent of unfavourable industrial conditions on arrival in Canada.

Nevertheless it was true that this Order in Council in point of fact was only applied to Indians yet again actually without mentioning them by name. When Borden, the Opposition leader, asked in the Canadian House of Commons, what was the Government's policy in regard to Japanese and Hindu immigration the Minister of the Interior, Oliver, might reply with outward truth "The same in each case".  

The attitude of the Dominion government was ostensibly one of reconciliation and of arriving at some rational understanding with the Indian government regarding Indian immigration into Canada. The

1 P.C. 1255, June 3, 1908 C.O. 42/919/22264.
2 Ibid.
3 The Times, June 22, 1908.
4 Canada, House of Commons, Debates 1907-8, 4407.
Indians were British subjects and at the same time Canada was a young self-governing Dominion. As such it showed regard for sister portions of the Empire, and in dealing with this type of problem of Imperial importance, Canada hesitated to take an independent line. But the Government of India showed its persistent indifference to solving the problem. It expressed its inability to agree to the introduction of a passport system or permit system. It seemed, indeed, to be indifferent to the plight of emigrants for there was no one to look after the Indian migrants and they could be and were exposed to oppression by anybody and everybody, yet the Indian government sought to maintain a determined silence about the whole issue. But in the end it agreed to the virtual exclusion of Indians from Canada, the result of which amounted to a poll-tax and the continuous passage regulations. When Mackenzie King visited Britain in March/April 1908 exclusion of Indians was his starting point in his negotiations with the Imperial authorities about Indian immigration problems. The outcome of the deliberations in London was the academic justification for this exclusion policy on the basis of climatic, social, economic and political conditions. His mission was successful, and on his return, the Canadian government armed itself with powerful regulations for stopping the entry of Indians into the Dominion. At this time the Indians realized the terrible truth about the futility of their British citizenship.  

With the application of these drastic administrative and legal regulations (i.e.) "continuous passage" and "$200" regulations, the Canadian government was quite successful in stamping out any chances of Indian penetration into Canada. It is not, then, to be wondered at that the number of Indians entering Canada in the next year dropped from four figures to one figure only, and that number was six.  

1 Hindusthan (Calcutta), March 21, 1908, Bengal Newspaper Report, 1908.
CHAPTER 5

Proposal to move the Indian immigrants to British Honduras and its results; Mackenzie King's visit to India; the indifference of the Government of India towards this problem.
By the end of June 1908, the Dominion government had eliminated any possible loop-hole through which Indians could enter Canada. The remaining problem concerned those who were already present in British Columbia. The Immigration Department undertook to investigate the matter and asked J.B. Harkin, the private secretary to the Minister of the Interior to report. Harkin reported that there were 3000 Indians in British Columbia and that out of this number something like 700 were out of work. He added that hundreds of them had been out of work all summer and those who had employment had been working for reduced wages. In view of the limited prospects of employment even for white workers, Indians were going to face a severe winter without money or any means of livelihood. Harkin pointed out that under such circumstances the question of deportation of unemployed Indians would arise, and in order to avoid this, he suggested that arrangements might be made for moving them to the West Indies in order to provide labour for the plantations. These proposals were passed on to the Canadian High Commissioner in London who paid a special visit to the Colonial Office with a view to induce the British authorities to send their coolie ships to Vancouver for this purpose. However, this proposed coolie indenture system required the approval of the Government of India and its supervision was necessary to any such scheme.

In the meantime the acting Governor of British Honduras submitted

2 Harkin to Scott, July 10, 1908, C.O. 886/1.
3 Scott to Canadian High Commissioner, Aug. 27, 1908, C.O. 42/921/3369.
4 Canadian High Commissioner to Colonial Office, Sept. 30, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
5 India Office to Colonial Office, Aug. 27, 1908, C.O. 323/540/31373.
an urgent request from the colonists there for the recruitment of Indian labourers.\(^1\) The colonists stated their dire need of a labour force because the only available labour in that colony was that of the Caribs and American Indians, who were either sailors or little inclined to engage themselves in agricultural labour.\(^2\) In these circumstances, the Imperial authorities decided that the Indians should go to British Honduras as free labourers, and in that way the colony would get labour without all the restrictions and disadvantages of the indenture-system.\(^3\) The Colonial Under-Secretary (Sir Francis J.S. Hopwood) pointed out that he was in favour of making use of Crown Colonies wanting labour to provide work for Indians wishing to migrate. Such migration, in fact, could not only ease the congestion in India but would also be a measure to placate Indian subjects who complained of restricting colonial immigration policies, by showing them such facts as would prove that the British Empire was open to them.\(^4\) By chance Col. E.J.C. Swayne, the Governor of British Honduras, was on leave in England\(^5\) and the Imperial authorities asked him to return to British Honduras via British Columbia and meet the Indian community there as well.\(^6\) At the same time the Dominion government was informed that it should arrange to send three or four leading Indians as delegates to report on local conditions because it was considered that such a mission would be advisable in order to obviate the possibility of misunderstanding.

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2 Colonists to Governor, British Honduras, Sept 1, 1908, C.O.123/259/34262.
3 Colonial Office Minute by A.B. Keith, Sept. 14, 1908, C.O.42/921/33369.
4 Colonial Office Minute by C.P. Lucas, Sept. 15, 1908, C.O.42/921/33369.
5 Col. Swayne was familiar with Hindustani, the common language, because he had served earlier in India.
It was further suggested that a Canadian official of standing should accompany the delegation. On October 9, 1908, the Canadian government issued an Order in Council authorizing the sending out of a delegation such as proposed by the Colonial Office and James B. Harkin was chosen as a government representative. He was to be assisted by William C. Hopkinson, an Anglo-Indian official of Calcutta Police (India) who was on leave in Vancouver, as an interpreter. The proposal was laid before the Indians in a meeting composed of Indians themselves and a number of citizens of Vancouver and the selection of two delegates was agreed upon. The Indians selected Nagar Singh (a Sikh) and Sham Singh (a Hindu) as their representatives. It was considered that such a course would be advisable in order to represent the two main groups of Indian immigrants in Canada.

The delegates left Vancouver on October 15, 1908, and arrived at Belize, British Honduras on Sunday the 25th October. The colonists of British Honduras, after holding a number of meetings, decided to offer a three year contract, for fifty hours work a week at eight dollars a month with rations and twelve dollars without rations. Rent free accommodation was also offered. The delegates were shown around the various places in the country and they also met some Indians who had been brought there from the West Indies. After about two weeks stay in the colony the delegation returned to Canada. On November 6, 1908 Harkin submitted a report that the Indian representatives after fully examining the country for themselves were

1 Colonial Secretary to Governor General, Canada, Sept. 19, 1908, File 275, L/P & J/6/1137.
2 P.C. 2389, October 9, 1908.
3 Harkin to W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, Oct. 16, 1908, File 275, L/P & J/6/1137.
4 The majority of the Indians were Sikhs, but some were Hindus and a small number of Punjabe Muslims were also there in British Columbia.
5 Harkin to the Minister of the Interior, Dec. 20, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
very much pleased with what they saw, and so favourably impressed with terms and conditions offered in British Honduras, that they hoped that the colony could accommodate 3000 Indians easily.¹

Meanwhile federal elections were to be held at the end of October 1908 and Asiatic exclusion was the main issue in British Columbia.² The British Honduras scheme was reported in the press in the middle of October, and at once a sensational atmosphere was created. The Mayor of Vancouver called a meeting to discuss the Asiatic question at the insistence of the Anti-Asiatic League. Some injudicious speeches were made. According to Col. Swayne, Governor of British Honduras, the political parties, being intent on capturing the anti-Asiatic labour votes, at once gave out in the press that it was proposed to deport 1000 Indians.³ The Globe and Traveller (London) declared that Canada was a white man's country and this being so the Canadian authorities were going to transport the Indian population to British Honduras. It commented that such a scheme was the solution to the anti-Asiatic feeling in British Columbia by entirely eliminating the source of the problem, and added that if the scheme fell through the Indians should be scattered in the West Indies.⁴ The Daily Province, Vancouver had run these front-page headlines:

WILL SEND HINDOO COLONY
TO HONDURAS
IMPERIAL AUTHORITIES WILL HELP

and it, too, commented that the entire Hindu colony would be moved to British Honduras.⁵ In an editorial the paper justified the scheme by

¹ Harkin to the Minister of the Interior, November 1908, File 275, L/P & J/6/1137.
² The New York Herald, February 8, 1909.
³ Swayne to Officer Administering British Honduras, December 20, 1908, File 275, L/P & J/6/1137.
⁴ Globe and Traveller (London), Oct. 16, 1908.
⁵ Province (Vancouver), Oct. 16, 1908.
stating that the climate of British Honduras was like that of India, warm, and labour conditions were less exacting than those in British Columbia where Indians were foredoomed to an existence devoid of all hope of comfort or advancement.¹ The Victoria Colonist opposed the Indians on the hypothesis that if Canada were thrown open to Oriental immigration, it would be Orientalized.² The Victoria Times remarked that the Canadian government had solved the Indian question so far as British Columbia was concerned; the entire Indian colony was to be moved from British Columbia to British Honduras.³ The Victoria Colonist saw Oriental immigration as the most irremediable political curse.⁴ Seeing the popularity of Asiatic exclusion, MacInnes, the Liberal candidate for parliament, had announced himself heartily in its favour.⁵ An Indian employee of a hotel in Vancouver had to be sacked when a dozen white employees threatened to strike if he was retained in service.⁶ Robert Borden, the leader of the Canadian Conservative Party (Opposition) declared:

The Conservative party stands for a white Canada, protection of White labour, and absolute exclusion of Asians.⁷

The Times commented that unquestionably British Honduras was in favour of a white Canada.⁸ In this way the press created, for the coming elections, an impression that an attempt would be made to deport the whole Indian community to British Honduras on the ground that

¹ Province (Vancouver), Oct. 20, 1908.
² Victoria Colonist (Victoria), Nov. 24, 1908.
³ Victoria Times, Oct. 16, 1908.
⁴ Victoria Colonist, Oct. 20, 1908.
⁵ The Times, Sept. 7, 1908.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid., Jan. 25, 1909.
⁸ Ibid., Feb. 9, 1909.
they were destitute, had become a public charge and were physically unfit to sustain the rigours of the Canadian climate. While the delegation was away in British Honduras, the Indian community in British Columbia could see the hostile press reports regarding their removal from Canadian soil. They held a protest meeting and sent telegrams to the Imperial and Indian governments:

Sikhs in Victoria protest against orders of being removed to British Honduras, willing to stay in Canada, if forced to vacate, would prefer to go to India.¹

Their paper, the Free Hindusthan, pointed out that the Imperial government was opposed to having a large number of retired Indian soldiers in a country with democratic political institutions, lest they might be inspired with the ideas of political freedom. Opposing the British Honduras scheme the paper stated:

We believe that Resistance to tyranny is service to Humanity and a necessity of Civilization.²

Similarly the business section of the Indian community whose trade depended on Indian customers could realize the possible setback to their business. So in order to dissuade the Indians, they contacted a Sikh scholar, Professor Teja Singh who was formerly principal of Khalsa College, Amritsar (Punjab, India) and had managed to join Columbia University, New York. When he came to visit Vancouver in October 1908³ Teja Singh soon occupied the leading position in his community and by the time the delegation returned from British Honduras he was virtually head of the Indians in Canada. So Teja Singh issued his first warning:

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1 Viceroy of India to Sec. of State for India, telegram, Oct. 28, 1908, File 275, L/F & J/6/1137.
2 Free Hindusthan (New York), November/December, 1908.
3 Col. Swayne to the Colonial Office, December 30, 1908, C.O. 886/2.
We are all said to be under the same law.... Then why is it, that we are not allowed to work even as labourers under the flag whose prestige we have maintained over half the globe at the cost of poor starving India's blood and money.¹

He branded British Honduras as a convict island like the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean where British Indian convicts were sent and warned that such a scheme would arouse a harmful reaction in India.² But the most important announcement he made was:

They informed me that the bribe was offered them by Mr. Hopkinson at a town named Tancred.... They were told that they could keep it if they made a favourable report. They took the sack and later found that it contained £3,000.... The delegates, of course, never intended to betray their countrymen in British Columbia. As soon as they found out the amount of bribe, they returned the money. On their trip, the interpreter assured them that money was no object, and that their every wish would be gratified.³

Then there was a further announcement in the Vancouver newspapers on November 23 that the Indian community held a general meeting, heard reports from the Indian members of the delegation and decided not to have anything to do with the British Honduras scheme. The Dominion government immediately sent Harkin, its representative, to Vancouver to investigate. The interpreter stated that on the return journey from Belize he was requested by Harkin to obtain a written statement from the Indian members as to their opinion of British Honduras; they however, refused to comply but he refuted the charge of attempted bribery. Then Harkin, accompanied by some prominent local people, tried to contact the Indian community in order to explain the position about the British Honduras scheme, but it resulted in lengthy

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¹ Quoted in the Vancouver World, Nov. 21, 1908.
² Ibid.
³ Quoted in Province, Nov. 23, 1908.
⁴ Hopkinson to Harkin, Nov. 23, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
arguments with Teja Singh. Ultimately Harkin wrote to the chief of the Sikh Temple at Vancouver demanding a full statement about the allegation. ¹ In reply the Sikh Temple Managing Committee submitted translations of extracts from the diaries of both the Indian delegates. Both delegates had written that while at Orange Walk in British Honduras, Hopkinson had handed a bag of money to Nagar Singh but the entries did not show any clear statement about either the amount of money or an attempt of bribery. ² However, the minutes of the Sikh Temple meeting in this connection stated:

In a way, a temptation in the way of money was also cleverly arranged. This was in the form of a money bag handed over to Nagar Singh by the interpreter. Nagar Singh who had it states that he counted about £3,000 worth of bills in it. It was apparently a clever hint, though not an offer. ³

In the light of these hazy documents, and in the absence of any clear proof, the charge against the interpreter did not contain any substance. Moreover, the affidavit of Hopkinson refuted it altogether while the other Indian delegate stated that he saw the bag but did not know the amount of money. ⁴ Furthermore, the Dominion governments' representative knew nothing about it. The charge of attempted bribery was made by the Sikhs in very guarded language. They asserted that the Dominion representative knew nothing about it, and the whole incident had been instigated by British Honduras planters. Teja Singh had given this story to the Vancouver World, and Vancouver press reporters, at the same time, but later on before publication he notified these newspapers both by telephone and by letter that

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¹ Report by Harkin on British Honduras Scheme, December 1908, pp. 19-20.
² Extracts from the diaries of Nagar Singh and Sham Singh, Nov. 3, 1908, Harkin Report, pp. 21-27.
³ Extracts from the Minutes of the Sikh Temple meeting, Vancouver, Nov. 22, 1908, Harkin Report, pp. 20-30.
the story should not be used. Thus he avoided any possibility of court action against him and at the same time convinced the Indian immigrants that the scheme was unreasonable.

In order to prevent any possible attempt by the Canadian government to deport the Indians on the grounds of being destitute, Teja Singh decided to form a society which was in fact a labour union, using as a rendezvous a Sikh Temple, built in 1906 at Fairview End Avenue, Vancouver. It was also decided to provide assistance to indigent Indians by forming a labour employment bureau in order to keep them off the street. Teja Singh formed the Guru Nanak Mining and Trust Co. Ltd., received contributions and made applications for registration from the Government. He also made arrangements to purchase a tract of land in North Vancouver to be divided into market garden lots and worked by Indian labourers. Their one common desire was to remain in British Columbia, Canada, where they believed they had a right to remain unmolested. At the same time stories were spread about that in British Honduras the condition of old Indian coolies was extremely miserable. It was reported that water was sold to those Indians, the purchase of which absorbed a considerable part of their pay, and that yellow fever and mosquitoes had possession of the country. Besides this, the distance of British Honduras from India was much greater than that of Canada from India. Teja Singh also started giving public lectures and press interviews expressing his indignation and resentment at what he thought to be unfair treatment

1 Teja Singh to the Vancouver World, Nov. 22, 1908., Harkin Report, p.18.
3 Ibid.
4 Vancouver World, Dec. 10, 1908.
5 Col. Swayne to Govt. of British Honduras, Dec. 20, 1908, File 275, L/P & J/6/1137.
of Indians as British subjects. But he was quite anxious to show the loyalty of the Sikhs to the British Empire. In this way Teja Singh tried to frustrate the Dominion government's plan of moving the Indian immigrants from British Columbia to British Honduras. It is not surprising that his efforts in this regard were praised by the Indian press.

On the other side Col. Swayne, the Governor of British Honduras, who had served in India and was familiar with the languages spoken by the Indian community, reached Canada to look into this problem. He was already briefed at the Colonial Office in London. He met Laurier, Canadian Prime Minister, Lord Grey, the Governor General of Canada, and a large number of officials and prominent people who were familiar with the problem of Asians in British Columbia. During his stay he particularly toured the towns where Indian immigrants were at work. He undertook this mission with two objects in mind: (a) to help Canada in solving this Indian immigration problem and (b) to procure an agricultural labour force for his colony, British Honduras. The Indians with their amenity to discipline were thought to be entirely suitable for agricultural work in British Honduras, and Col. Swayne expected that he could get them 1,500 Indians who were thought to be out of work in British Columbia to agree to go to British Honduras. He requested the Canadian authorities to put him in touch with any unemployed Indians. But even his private efforts discovered only three Indians who were at that time in

1 Vancouver World, Dec. 11, 1908.
2 Tribune (Lahore), March 14, 1909.
3 Colonial Office Minute by C.P. Lucas, Assistant Under Secretary of State, Oct. 21 and 23, 1908, C.O.42/921/38417, Nov. 11, 1908, and Colonel Swayne to Colonial Office Nov. 10 and 30, 1908, C.O.42/921/41172.
4 Ottawa Citizen, January 4, 1909.
receipt of allowances from their employed brethren. Despite his knowledge of Indian languages and his intensive search, he could not discover any Indian labour force and ultimately he came to the conclusion that there was no justification for the view that "a large number of Indians there were unemployed and in distress". It was entirely the contrary. So far as the question of deporting unemployed Indians was concerned, it seemed solved for there were none unemployed and therefore none to deport.

In the meantime the Government of India expressed its serious doubts about the ultimate result of the proposed transfer of Indians from British Columbia to British Honduras because they were mostly Punjabees and many of them had been soldiers who were not likely to settle quietly as settlers or labourers. They looked rather for employment as policemen, messengers or industrial workers. Col. Swayne, while addressing the Canadian Club at Ottawa, gave the opinion that the Indians were well fitted for the industrial work in which they were engaged in British Columbia. They were saving an average of thirty-five dollars a month whereas the wages in British Honduras were only eight to twelve dollars a month. They had come to Canada, leaving their families behind in India, with the object of saving enough in five years to return and release their farms from mortgages and buy others. Therefore the British Honduras scheme had no attraction for them. He pointed out to the Dominion government that the climatic conditions in British Columbia were

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1 Swayne to Officer Administering British Honduras, Dec. 20, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/364.
2 Minto, Summary of the Admn. of Earl of Minto, p. 110, Minto Papers M 859.
3 Viceroy of India to Secretary of State for India, telegram, Dec. 6, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
4 Ottawa Citizen, January 4, 1909.
not so severe as the Indians were accustomed to in their native country, and it would be impossible in future to urge climatic considerations as a reason for discouraging the emigration of Indians to British Columbia on humanitarian grounds.\(^1\) It was considered by a medical authority that in the severe winter of 1907-1908, a smaller number of Asians were admitted into hospitals or suffered from pulmonary infections, than would have been the case with an equal number of white men under similar trying conditions.\(^2\)

The mill owners in British Columbia preferred to employ Indians rather than white men, because Indians could be relied upon to give continuous employment; however, a rising demand for their labour could encourage their immigration. Another point to be considered was that those who were already in Canada might return to India with a large sum of money and this would have a disquieting effect on the native population. Though Col. Swayne could not discover any strong feeling against the Indians on the part of the majority of the white population, he nevertheless opposed the large scale migration of Indians to Canada. The hostile reception from the local labour element and the policy of exclusion on the Pacific Coast could serve as an instrument of propaganda for those undesirable socialist lecturers coming from the United States of America. The Imperial authorities could foresee the reaction in India, caused by the return of immigrants who were infected with new ill-digested socialist ideas.\(^3\) Such a situation could contaminate the Indians, especially

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1 Col. Swayne to Governor General, Canada, Memorandum on Matters affecting the East Indian Community in British Columbia, Dec. 30, 1908, File 1371, L/F & J/6/864.

2 Dr. Munroe, attached to the General Hospital and Emigration Department at Vancouver, B.C., made these observations: Memo. of Col. Swayne, Dec. 30, 1908, File 275, L/F & J/6/1137.

the Punjabi soldier class. At the same time, the extreme element in India could easily discover in this an excuse for their violence and crime against British rule.

The British Honduras scheme, then, was based on political consideration. In the summer of 1908, when the Dominion government expressed its concern about the poor employment situation in British Columbia and its adverse effect on the Indian immigrant community, the position was really quite otherwise. The Dominion government requested the Colonial Office in London to bring to the notice of various authorities interested in emigration to Canada the demand for farm labourers. But at the same time the Imperial authorities in London pointed out to the Government of India that it would be most undesirable to publish for general information in India a notice which might give the impression that Indian agricultural labourers were wanted in Canada. The Dominion government wanted to show to the influential anti-Asiatic element in British Columbia that it was doing something positive to get rid of the Indian immigrants and in this way it could combat the Asiatic exclusion propaganda from the Conservative opposition for the coming election. The Conservative Party exploited the situation by a clear declaration in favour of Asiatic exclusion and at the same time by blaming the Liberal administration for its mild stand on the Oriental problem in British Columbia. The Conservative newspapers openly propagated exclusion. But with the announcement of the British Honduras scheme the Conservatives in their election enthusiasm created an impression that the Dominion government was

1 High Commissioner for Canada to Colonial Office, May 12, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
2 Colonial Office to India Office, May 15, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
3 Province, October 15, 1908.
contemplating a forcible deportation of the entire Indian community.
On the other hand the well-off section of Indians, being highly
dependent on continued immigration for its economic and political
survival, made a determined effort to ruin the scheme. Their paper,
the Free Hindusthan, pointed out that the Imperial government was
opposed to having a large number of retired Indian soldiers in a
country with democratic political institutions, lest they might
be inspired with the idea of political freedom, and in this way
the very foundation of British rule might be in danger.

The maintenance of the Sikh Temples, their priests, and their
religious leadership were also dependent on the Indian immigrant
community and on their cooperation, subscription and attendance.
The moving of a fair section of Indians from British Columbia could
be evidently foreseen by the Sikh priests as a great danger to
their very basis of existence on Canadian soil. Obviously then,
the Sikh temples with their religious leaders played a great part
in defeating the Dominion government's efforts in this regard. Of
course the Sikh priests and well-off section of the community made
their concerted efforts to wreck the scheme and succeeded in
inviting, and later on hiring, Professor Teja Singh, to help them
realize their aims. The latter happened to come from an insignificant
origin and desired for some kind of authority leading to publicity;
and his former service in Khalsa College, Amritsar and his knowledge
of Gurmukhi (the language in which the Sikh Holy Book is written),
helped him to attract the Sikhs. So within a short time Teja Singh

1 Free Hindusthan (New York), November/December 1908.
2 C.J. Stevenson Moore, Director of Criminal Intelligence to Government
of India, history sheet of Teja Singh, June 10, 1909, File 1309,
L/F & J/6/930.
utilized his training as Professor of English literature and qualified pleader; he succeeded in occupying the position of unchallenged leadership of the Sikhs in Canada. Thus the British Honduras scheme was attacked from the Sikh temple with full force.

The native press in India, especially in the Punjab, expressed doubts about the rewards for Indian loyalty to the British government. It cited the example of the Sikhs, the most loyal section of the Indian population, and pointed out that their loyalty to the Crown was rewarded by being turned out of Canada. Thus the scheme provided the hostile press with ammunition to attack the British government.¹

But the most important factor for the failure of the scheme was economic. The amount of money which each Indian could save in British Columbia was at least thirty-five dollars a month after paying his entire living expenses, whereas in British Honduras an Indian could only hope to gross twelve dollars a month out of which he was to pay for his boarding. Further, the mild and comfortable living conditions in British Columbia were far better than the inclement weather and hard life in British Honduras. The scheme thus had no attraction for the Indian community in Canada. In spite of the fact that the Government of British Honduras made an open offer for future Indian migration from British Columbia, no one was willing to go to British Honduras because the Indian immigrants considered the terms offered there humiliating and en bloc declined the offer. In addition to this the Colonial Office, which encouraged the scheme in the first instance, subsequently regretted its initial association with the proposal, stating:

¹ Sheri-Babar, Lahore, Dec. 12, 1908, Punjab Newspaper Reports, 1908.
... the proposal to take the Indians to British Honduras was a stupid one.... We were misled by the theory that the Indians were badly off but Governor Swayne discovered that they were making a comfortable livelihood.¹

In this way the British Honduras scheme ended without any significant result. But the Oriental problem had made its impact in the election of 1908. Though the Liberal Party increased its majority elsewhere, it lost three seats in British Columbia including its Minister, Templeman.²

Mackenzie King was appointed to represent Canada in the international Opium Commission in China early in 1909. The British Honduras scheme for moving the Indian immigrants from the Canadian Pacific Coast and the loss of the federal election by the Liberal Party in British Columbia kept the Indian immigration question very much alive. The election speeches in autumn, 1908, created an atmosphere which could lead to some misunderstanding between the Dominion and Indian authorities. As the arrangement with Japan was working well, the Canadian government suggested that Mackenzie King should go to China via England and India and should discuss the issue with the Imperial and Indian governments³ in order to negotiate an arrangement on the lines of the Gentleman's Agreement that had been made with Japan. Mackenzie King reached London on December 22, 1908 and spent the Christmas vacation with Morley, the Secretary of State for India, who however, regarded the emigration question between India and Canada as virtually settled and gave more importance to the opium traffic and political unrest in India. He considered Mackenzie King's visit to India "to be worth silver and gold" and

¹ Colonial Office Minute, A.B. Keith, May 9, 1913, C.O. 42/975/14653.
² Province, Vancouver, October 27, 1908.
³ Grey to Laurier, December 2, 7, 14, 1908; Grey to Crewe, December 8, 1908, Grey Papers; and Laurier to Crewe, December 11, 1908, File 1371, L/F & J/6/864.
requested him to discuss these matters with the Indian government officials and political leaders.¹

Lord Minto, Viceroy of India, was informed by telegraph that Mackenzie King was coming to discuss the emigration question and would also like to meet some Indian representatives.² But the Viceroy was dubious about the outcome of any meeting between Mackenzie King and Indian leaders on this issue and expressed his fear that the discussion would be guided by circumstances. He, however, agreed that he would arrange discussion with the officials of the Government of India.³ So on arrival in India in the middle of January, 1909 Mackenzie King met the Viceroy, Lord Minto, together with two members of the Viceroy's council and heads of several departments and other people whom it was thought advisable to see.⁴ He found that the Indian government was not at all desirous to raise the emigration question in the minds of anyone by inviting discussion which might precipitate criticism. He observed that the agitation in India was more or less acute against the treatment of Indians in South Africa and Australia because Australia denied any form of admission to Indians on the policy of complete Asiatic exclusion. South Africa, on the other hand, having invited the Indian workers, was then unwilling to concede the privileges which the Indians claimed as subjects of the Empire. The Canadian attitude was, surprisingly, appreciated by the British officials in India.⁵ So as such Canada could not be brought into any controversy aligned with South Africa or Australia. Under these circumstances Mackenzie King realized

¹ Mackenzie King to EarlyGrey, January 1, 1909, King Papers.
² Morley to Minto, telegram, December 23, 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
³ Minto to Morley, telegram, December 24, 1908, Minto Papers M 1013.
⁴ Mackenzie King to Laurier, January 31, 1909, King Papers.
⁵ Mackenzie King to Earl Grey, January 31, 1909, King Papers.
that any formal agreement was neither feasible nor expedient. Moreover, the official attitude of the Government of India was that:

(a) India must be entirely passive, and would do nothing, not even object to legislation which prevented Indians going to Canada so long as it was not aimed specifically at Indians, and (b) the trouble having originated with the shipping companies, which had been subsequently controlled, and with only a very remote possibility of emigration taking place from any other source, matters were better left as they were. Mackenzie King then asked a direct question about the deportation of destitute Indians from Canada. The Indian government replied that no feeling was likely to be excited in India if deportation of destitute Indians was resorted to, but they would not advise the appearance of anything like wholesale deportation. In these circumstances Mackenzie King advised the Dominion government to let sleeping dogs lie: an attempt to formalize the system of exclusion would only start them barking at Canada. Therefore, when he was interviewed by Hirstman, The Times correspondent in India, he said that he had explained the Canadian attitude to the Indian government and that the arrangement in existence was working satisfactorily for "it was decided best not to raise the subject in the press lest it might provoke queries". Consequently no news appeared in the Indian press about Mackenzie King's visit to India. During his visit to India Mackenzie King saw a number of British officials in the Government of India and asked their opinion about

1 Minto to Morley, March 11, 1909, Documents on Canadian External Relations, pp. 596-7, and B. Robertson, Secretary to Govt. of India Department of Commerce and Industry, Memorandum, January 21, 1909, King Papers.
2 Mackenzie King to Laurier, January 31, 1909, King Papers.
3 Mackenzie King, Memorandum re: Emigration from India to Canada, February 5, 1909, King Papers.
Indian emigration to Canada. He reported to Laurier that the answer was that Indians were entirely unsuited to the Dominion and that "it is in every way desirable that Canada should be kept for the white races and India for the blacks as Nature appears to have decreed". 1 Mackenzie King was fully convinced that the exclusion of Indians was not only approved by the Indian government but was also the natural course to be adopted and he duly advised the Dominion government to this effect. 2 But how did he come to this conclusion?

The people he saw were British officials who were not very happy with a considerable section of the Indian population. Only over a month before his arrival in India the situation was reported in this way:

White India prepares for war. British in India send families home. Alarming conditions....

The racial discriminatory attitude of the British officials in India could be observed by any visitor at gatherings of minor officials. Concerning this Mackenzie King noted in his diary:

We had an example at dinner tonight of the kind of thing which I believe works most injury. The Indian gentlemen who had been showing us about, who had been unfailing in their courtesies, were neither of them present at dinner with us, though the elder of the two sat through the whole of the dinner on a chair apart, looking on at the guests enjoying themselves. Later in the evening, when the dance was taking place, he was not seated within the circle, but moved about explaining the different dances. There was no excuse for this thing in India. Where men are refined, educated and noble in purpose there should be no distinctions between them. To do so is to place a badge of inferiority by the one on the other. 4

Besides Mackenzie King could see that:

The traditional attitude of the English towards ... the brown man (Indian) has been one of making him feel his inferiority.

1 Mackenzie King to Laurier, January 31, 1909, King Papers.
2 Mackenzie King, Memorandum re: Emigration from India to Canada, February 5, 1909, King Papers.
3 Vancouver World, Dec. 10, 1908 (the main headline)
4 Mackenzie King, Diary, January 25, 1909, King Papers.
5 Mackenzie King to Lord Grey, June 7, 1909, King Papers.
However, Mackenzie King's own prejudicial views on the Oriental question in Canada were well known before his mission to India. In his election speeches in autumn 1908 he attacked his opponent, Col. Joseph Seagram, for employing Orientals for his racing stable and raised the Asiatic exclusion slogan in Ontario. Therefore, Mackenzie King's mission to India quite naively justified his prior convictions (or political expediencies) on this matter. So the Indian government's position was that it expressed its satisfaction and appreciation of the arrangement that quietly excluded most Indians from Canada, and it raised no objection against the restrictive measures. At least for the time being, the Indian officials could put this issue under the carpet. Of course the matter should receive no publicity lest it should cause embarrassment to the British rulers in India. Lord Minto expressed his gratitude to the Dominion government for not doing anything which might increase his administrative difficulties. But it should not be supposed that Canada's action appealed in quite the same way to the Indian people. A case was recalled in 1926 by Bourassa, the French-Canadian member of the Dominion Parliament, who said that he remembered being in London in 1911, at the time when Canada's naval policies were being so anxiously discussed. What was really the best contribution Canada could render to the Imperial cause, Bourassa had asked a high official of the India Office. "If you could bring British Columbia to open her door to Hindu immigration", was the reply. "That would be worth all the dreadnoughts you could build in ten years."

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1 Globe (Toronto), October 21, 1908.
2 Minto to Laurier, March 1, 1909, Minto Papers M. 996.
3 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1926, 1804.
CHAPTER 6

Immigration Act, 1910; protests of Indian immigrants, exclusion of Indian wives and children. Petition to the Imperial Conference 1911; India Office Memorandum on the position of Indians in the Dominions; Pleas for Temporary Admission of non-immigrant classes; and question of Wives and Children. Indian deputation in Ottawa, interview with Robert Rogers; Dr. Sunder Singh's tour of Ontario and its opposition. Indian delegation in England; protests in India and Canada; interview with Hardinge. Imperial government's proposals of passport system, Indian government's rejection.
Though the scheme of moving Indians from Canada to British Honduras failed, the Government of India had accepted the *de facto* exclusion of Indians from the Canadian labour market. At the same time it had repeated its inability to restrict Indian emigration by legislative or administrative order in India. However, Col. Swayne had reported in 1908 that the demand for Indian labourers in Canadian industries, and the returning home of the Indian immigrants with large sums of money could create a large-scale scheme of Indian migration to Canada.\(^{1}\) Therefore the Dominion government thought there was need to arm itself with a more powerful weapon for restriction. For this purpose in 1910 a new Immigration Act was passed, in which "continuous passage" and "$200" regulations were both included. This act went even further in attempting to exclude Indians. By section 38 sub-sections (b) and (c) it enacted that the Governor General in Council might, by proclamation or order in council whenever he deemed it necessary or expedient,

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...\text{prohibit the landing in Canada of passengers brought by any transportation company which refuses or neglects to comply with the provisions of this Act}...\text{. And might prohibit for a stated period or permanently the landing in Canada of immigrants of any specified class, occupation or character.}^{2}\]

Under the new Immigration Act fresh Orders in Council were put through for the "continuous passage" regulation\(^{3}\) and "$200 regulation".\(^{4}\) But as the case had been in the past, these regulations, in point of fact, were only applicable to Indians. In addition, the Dominion government then acquired the authority to use specific restrictions

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1 Col. Swayne's Memorandum on British Honduras scheme, December 1908, File 1371, L/P & J/6/864.
2 Immigration Act, 1910.
3 P.C. 920, 1910.
4 P.C. 926, 1910.
if it should be necessary. But on the other hand, in spite of these restrictive regulations, there was definitely a need for immigrants in Canada. The Canadian government spent over a quarter of a million dollars a year in bringing the advantages of Canada before the British public and in facilitating the movement of British people to Canada.\(^1\) However, the Dominion authorities became quite nervous when they came to know about a scheme by which the Indians could bring immigrants from Calcutta to Vancouver, fulfilling the continuous passage and $\geq 200$ regulations.\(^2\) The scheme did not materialize\(^3\) and the Canadian administration felt relieved of the possible Indian influx.

Indian immigration had almost stopped in 1909, yet in spite of strict regulations the Indians continued some encroachment on British Columbia. The period from 1909 to 1914 was the time of protests, litigation, deputations and representations to the Canadian, Imperial and Indian authorities against the Canadian immigration regulations as applied to Indian migrants. There were, however, during this time, two successful attempts made to enter Canada by educated and clever Indians who later became spokesmen for the Indian immigrants. The first was Dr. Sunder Singh (a Punjabi Sikh) who was trained at Glasgow, Scotland. He managed to reach Halifax on the S.S. Virginian early in 1909 and from there he made his way to Victoria.\(^4\) He engaged himself in commercial activities, started a paper for the Indians and became an active champion of the Indian

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1 Oliver (Canadian) Minister of the Interior to Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Colonies, October 3, 1910. C.O. 42/939/34254.
2 Immigration Inspector, Vancouver to Deputy Minister of the Interior, October 14, 1910, C.O. 42/939/35682.
3 Immigration Agent, Vancouver, to Deputy Minister of the Interior, November 28, 1910, C.O. 42/939/39342.
4 J.O. Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Emigration, London to J.H. MacGill, Immigration Agent, Vancouver, April 12, 1912; and Hopkinson to Scott, April 26, 1912, File 275, L/P & J/6/1197.
cause. The second was one Hussain Rahim. His real name was Chagan Lal and he was born in Porbander State in Kathiwar (Western India). He went to Japan and became a partner in business with Jamsheedji Maneckji Nanporia. Seven years later, being left in sole charge of the business, Chagan Lal began to speculate and involved the business in difficulties. He then fled to Honolulu with a large sum of money under the assumed name of Hussain Rahim. In January, 1910 Chagan Lal arrived in Vancouver under the name of Hussain Rahim and obtained admission to Canada by representing himself as a tourist desiring to visit Montreal. In April, he began to interest himself in the Indian immigration question and a month or two later the immigration authorities, finding that he intended to settle in Vancouver and had assumed management of a company trading in real estate, warned him that he was liable to deportation. In October, 1912, he was arrested, but the Dominion government failed to deport him because he had arrived in Canada before the passing of the new Immigration Act. But he was quite indignant at the treatment he received at the hands of the immigration authorities. Soon his criticism of the Canadian immigration policy, and his successful attempt to stay in Canada brought him considerable publicity and subsequently he styled himself as one of the spokesmen and champions of the Indian community in Canada.

The new Immigration Act of 1910 made it virtually impossible for an Indian to enter Canada and by this act even the wives and children of the Indians already in Canada were excluded from

1 Hopkinson to Cory, March 26, 1912, File 275, L/P & J/6/1137.
2 Hopkinson to Cory, May 9, 1912, File 275, L/P & J/6/1137.
3 The New Immigration Act was passed later.
4 Hopkinson to Scott, July 11, 1911, C.O.42/948/25235.
admission. Of course, the words "wives and children" did not appear in the Orders in Council and similarly there was no Order in Council issued under the Immigration Act which was specifically passed forbidding a certain class of citizens in Canada to import their wives and children. But the application of the continuous passage regulation made it extremely unlikely that any Indian man, woman or child could gain entry into Canada. The exclusion of Indian women and children does appear to be a legal accident, but it was a fact that the Dominion government failed to make a special regulation in spite of a flood of protests, memorials and press statements from the Indians, and it is, therefore, understandable that in the period 1910-1919, Indian immigrants in Canada were mainly concerned with the gaining of permission for the admission of wives and children. At the same time permission for entry was also sought for Indian tourists, visitors, students and businessmen for a temporary stay. By these means, the Indians who wanted to come to Canada organized attempts to force their way into Canada.

Many protests against the Canadian immigration policy were already aired by the Indians even before the passing of the new Immigration Act. The Indians held their meeting at Vancouver on April 24, 1910 and listed their grievances against the immigration regulations. They especially complained that the Canadian immigration laws were inconsistent with the Imperial policy because they discriminated against the people of India, who were, of course, British subjects. Indians were required to produce a sum of two hundred dollars before landing and they were ineligible for Canadian citizenship after six months of residence; whereas these regulations were not applicable to other British subjects who wished to come.
to Canada. Furthermore, Indians especially protested about the continuous passage regulation which was, in point of fact, applicable to Indians only and therefore made their entry into Canada impossible. They also cited specific examples of Indian residents and Indian students who were refused admission to Canada. Copies of these protest resolutions were sent to the Indian press and to the India Office, London. Then the Dominion government was approached by the Imperial authorities in this matter. In reply, the Canadian administration sent a copy of an Order in Council justifying the stand. It stated that the law did not absolutely debar Indian immigrants and Indians would be admitted if they complied with the "continuous passage regulation" and passed the medical examination at the time of entry. It further stated that these regulations were applicable to all Asians alike. But this justification on the part of the Canadian government was not communicated to the Indians until April 1911, when the Indians submitted another petition regretting the silence on the part of the authorities regarding their previous request. The document went on to say that:

Our petition to the Canadian Government did not succeed in securing any assurance of any kind ... and our rights of British citizenship are completely ignored... In the meantime the immigration laws are being applied with increased harshness and injustice against us ... and all the harshest regulations seem to be made especially against the people of India.

Concurrently about 300 Indian residents in the United States of

1 The Indians sent a memorial to the Viceroy of India and the India Office in London: India Office to Colonial Office, June 2, 1910, C.O. 886/4.
2 P.C. 1489, August 1, 1910; India Office Minute, Sept. 12, 1910; and India Office to Governor General of India, Sept. 30, 1910, File 568, L/P & J/6/1064.
3 Indians in British Columbia to Crewe, April 1911, File 568, L/P & J/6/1064.
4 Daily News-Advertiser, Vancouver, April 18, 1911.
America sent a memorial to the Secretary of State for India through the British Consul at San Francisco. In that memorial stress was laid upon the difficulty experienced by Indians owning extensive property in British Columbia in visiting that province in order to protect their interests. They cited specific cases in which entry to Canada was refused though they were ready to abide by the conditions imposed on other British subjects. Furthermore, they referred to other Orientals – Chinese and Japanese – who were allowed to enter Canada.¹ Thereupon the India Office, London, forwarded this memorial through the Colonial Office to the Canadian government with a request for a report as to whether the existing legislation involved any real hardship in the case of persons wishing only to make temporary visits for business purposes.² In reply the Canadian government confined itself to the defence of its policy of restrictions and gave little satisfaction on the particular points requested. The difficulty with the immigration policy for these Indians in the United States, it explained, arose from the existence of the continuous passage regulation. It added that the United States authorities were very strict, and if an Indian, after being admitted to Canada for a visit, were found to be undesirable, there was no legal means (since he was not a citizen of the United States) of shipping him back there. This being the case, the Dominion government explained that it had no alternative but to apply the restrictive provision of the immigration laws. Furthermore it did accept that the Chinese and Japanese were exempted from such regulations.³ The Imperial

¹ Petition to Secretary of State for India from the Secretary, Friends of Hindustan, received in India Office with a forwarding letter from the British Consul General, San Francisco, on June 2, 1910, C.O. 886/4.
² Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor General of Canada, February 9, 1911, C.O. 886/4.
³ P.C. 704, April 6, 1911.
government termed this a "very poor reply" and observed that the Canadian government "did not grapple with the problem at all". The authorities in London and Calcutta were of the opinion that the greater facilities should be extended to persons to visit Canada for temporary and bona fide business purposes. They believed that a special permit could be issued under section 4 of the Immigration Act 1910, for temporary visits.

In India the political situation was taking a serious turn. Lord Hardinge of Penshurst was appointed Viceroy in 1910. The Minto-Morley reforms began to work and the Muslim League, a Muslim political party formed in 1906, had come into the field as a counterpart of the Indian National Congress. The policy of 'let sleeping dogs lie' as practised by Minto was replaced by Hardinge's more positive alignment with Indian sentiments. King George V, who had visited India as Prince of Wales, decided to revisit India at the end of 1911. Before the King arrived the Viceroy wanted to remove all the possible difficulties which could be exploited by Indian agitators. The King was equally anxious at this time to make a gesture of kindness and good will towards Indians. The Viceroy (Hardinge) could foresee the importance of India as a supplier of soldiers for the British army and as a shield of protection in case of world war. It is not difficult to understand, then, that the Government of India during this period, was very sympathetic to the cause of Indians outside India. Canada was not the only country having Indian immigration

1 Colonial Office Minute, by A.B. Keith, April 23, 1911, C.O.42/947/13198.
2 Government of India to Secretary of State for India, May 5, 1911, C.O. 886/5A.
problems. South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius and the West Indies had already a large number of Indians coming to their territories as indentured labourers in place of the slave labour force after the abolition of slavery. In South Africa, the Indian indentured labourers had extended their stay after expiry of their terms of indentures; they used to do petty trading and started competition with the Europeans. The presence of natives, coloured people, Indians and Europeans had created a rather complicated situation there. British East Africa had brought in a large number of Indians to build and run the railways. The Dominions in the Pacific - Australia and New Zealand - had experienced Indian penetration as freelance workers, as Canada had done. In short, the Europeans in the Dominions, numerically few in themselves with large lands needing development, had a dire need for a labour force and when they could not find it in the indigenous native races, they welcomed or tolerated the Indian migrants. But eventually they were obliged to compete with them, and the white Australian policy and the Natal Act of South Africa were already known to be measures designed against Indian entry there. So the Government of India was confronted with the problem of looking after the Indians abroad, who were in a complicated position of competition and were no longer welcome.

The Muslim League, which had heretofore been branded by the Indian National Congress as a narrow-minded organization working for the interests of a small pro-British minority in India, now became a champion for the cause of the Indians abroad. It submitted memorials and proposals on the subject of Indian migration policies to the Imperial authorities. It sent a comprehensive memorandum about the

1 The Times, May 24, 1911.
problems, difficulties and disabilities of Indians in the Dominions.

In asking for redress for Indians abroad the Muslim League emphatically stated the importance of India as a great contributor to the Imperial defence force and reminded the authorities of India's three-fourth population under British rule. It also stressed the geographical importance of India as a halfway house between Britain and Australia.

The Muslim League regretted the ill-treatment of Indians and their exclusion from those Dominions under the British flag, which was supposed to be an emblem of equality and justice par excellence.

The Muslim League warned that such disabilities and indignities imposed on Indians could be used by the enemies of the British rule in India to ferment disaffection amongst the most loyal section of the Indian community. Furthermore, it expressed the fear that such a situation could damage Indian bonds with the Empire. Therefore the League made the plea that exclusion of Indians should be based on Imperial considerations and the condition of Indians already in the Dominions should be ameliorated. For this purpose the Muslim League requested that the whole Indian migration question should be discussed in the forthcoming Imperial Conference in which Indian participation should be of a more representative character.¹

In the meantime New Zealand had already proposed to include the Asiatic migration question on the agenda of the Imperial Conference² and it had severely opposed the employment of Indians on ships coming to New Zealand.³ For the most part, the Dominions did not seem to realize the wide bearings of the Indian migration question.

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¹ The London All India Moslem League to the Colonial Office, Nov. 11, 1910, G.O. 886/3.

² Governor, New Zealand, to Secretary of State for Colonies, Nov. 29, 1910, File 509, I/P & J/6/1062.

The India Office expressed its concern that it foresaw serious trouble if anti-Indian resolutions were passed or moved at the Imperial Conference.\(^1\) Similarly the Colonial Secretary (Harcourt) was impressed with the gravity of the general situation. Therefore the Imperial authorities decided to make absolutely clear the seriousness of the question to the Dominions. This could be very effectively and frankly done through full interchange of views at the forthcoming Imperial Conference, 1911.\(^2\)

But in the Colonial Merchant Shipping Conference of 1907, the grievances of Indians were discussed only with reference to the Navigation laws of Australia and New Zealand. The disabilities imposed by the Australian colonies on Indian seamen were warmly debated. A resolution was moved that the Conference was "opposed to the employment of lascars, coolies, Chinamen, or persons of any other race on any vessel owned, registered or chartered to trade in the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand". This resolution was opposed by the Colonial Office and at last it was withdrawn.\(^3\) Judging by the attitude of the Australian delegates on that occasion, the chances of any useful result being attained by discussion of Indian grievances in the Imperial Conference were slight.\(^4\) Nevertheless the Imperial government decided to form an Interdepartmental Committee and to prepare a memorandum for informal but confidential discussion of the most general aspect of this question in the forthcoming Conference.\(^5\) There was a fear of agitation and criticism in India in case of the publication of proceedings of the Conference,\(^6\) but the Imperial

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1 India Office, Minute by E.S. Montagu, Under Secretary of State, Dec. 20, 1910, File 509, L/P & J/6/1062.
3 Cd./Colonial Merchant Shipping Conference, 1907, p. 316.
4 India Office Minute by Holderness, Secretary India Office, Dec. 17, 1910, File 509, L/P & J/6/1062.
6 Viceroy of India to India Office, telegram, May 5, 1911, File 509, L/P & J/6/1062.
authorities thought that it should be known that they had taken a
sympathetic view of the Indians' grievances and had endeavoured to
secure them a fair and considerate treatment. Therefore the India
Office prepared a detailed memorandum on the migration of Indians
and its implications in all the Dominions.

The memorandum contained emphatic statements about the cultural,
political and numerical importance of India for the British Empire.
It regretted the policy of exclusion of Indians from the Dominions
under the British crown and it especially pointed out the privileges
allowed to Indians by foreign countries while the British Dominions
denied them. Moreover the India Office deplored the misunderstanding
that all Indians were either illiterate labourers or petty traders.
It stated that India, with a population of some three hundred million
inhabitants, possessed an ancient civilization of a very high order
and offered the finest military material in the world for the Imperial
forces. Furthermore the memorandum severely criticized the restrictions
imposed by the Dominions on Indian visitors of distinguished position,
who could move freely in the best society of any European capital.
It pointed out that while under the new reforms introduced in India,
the Indians were associated with the British administration,
unfortunately the discriminatory treatment of Indians in the
Dominions would undermine all efforts on the part of the Imperial
government for co-operation and pacification of Indians in India.

Though the Government of India accepted the right of the
Dominions to control immigration, it denounced the discriminatory
treatment of Indians and advocated their fair treatment. However,

1 India Office Minute by H. Risley, June 9, 1911, File 509, L/P & J/6/1062.
2 Cd. 5746-1. Papers laid before the Imperial Conference, 1911, pp. 273-278.
the Viceroy (Hardinge) and the Secretary of State (Crewe) agreed that the matter should be discussed as a confidential subject.¹

The Hindu Friend Society of Victoria, British Columbia, also submitted a petition to the Imperial Conference and they cited specific examples of hardships meted out to Indians living in the United States, who owned property in Canada. They requested a change in Canadian immigration regulations to facilitate the entry of Indian visitors and the families of those who were already in Canada — entry at least on the same terms as the Chinese and Japanese or even Negroes.² Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, also urgently requested the granting of easy admission facilities to Indian students, tourists and traders as non-immigrant classes and without any immigration restrictions.³

Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State for India, spoke to the Imperial Conference about the general principles upon which the question of Indian emigration and immigration into the Dominions was founded. He had observed the question from different standpoints; first as Colonial Secretary, and secondly as Secretary of State for India, and in both offices had concluded that no more difficult, nor in some of its aspects more critical, question could be discussed at the Conference than the one regarding Indian immigration and the treatment of Indians within the various self-governing colonies. Indeed, this difficulty between white and coloured races had seemed to him, even when he was Colonial Secretary, to threaten not only the well-being but the actual existence of the Empire as an Empire

¹ Viceroy of India to Secretary of State for India, telegram, May 5, 1911, File 509, L/P & J/6/1062, and Crewe to Hardinge, telegram, May 15, 1911, Hardinge Papers 95.
² Cd. 5746-1, Papers laid before the Imperial Conference, 1911, pp.279-281.
³ Hardinge to Crewe, telegram, May 24, 1911, Hardinge Papers 95.
because there was no complete and perfect solution of the problem as it manifested itself in labour competition and/or objections to close intercourse between races in the various colonies.

Yet while he recognized that Indians had a claim for consideration both as loyal subjects of the British Crown and as men whose intellectual and historical heritage was as impressive as that of Englishmen, he realized that mere adoption of heroic legislation was no short cut to the solution of the question of Indian immigration into the self-governing Dominions, who had the liberty to lay down the rules of their citizenship. He confidently submitted, however, that the relations between India and the rest of the Empire might be much improved by the cultivation of mutual understanding, and, speaking on behalf of the India Office and the Government of India, he said they would do their best to explain to the people of India how the position stood in the Dominions. In return he thought they were entitled to ask the prime ministers of the self-governing Dominions to make known in their respective areas how deep and widespread the feeling on this subject was in India.

On the question of the distressing problem of Indian disability in any part of the British Empire, all political factions in India, all castes and creeds, drew together. The problem of immigration within the Dominions, therefore, was a valuable weapon for those in India who wished to attack British rule there. He suggested that to ease the political situation in India, the Dominion governments might, within the limits which they had laid down for the admission of Indians, make the entrance of Indians more easy and more pleasant than it had been in the past. If it became known that within those limits the Indian subjects of the Crown would receive a genuine
welcome in the Dominions and would not be looked upon with suspicion, this should greatly improve relations between India and the Dominions.

With regard to the treatment of Indians already living in the Dominions he suggested to the Dominion ministers to do all they could to inform public opinion of the general claim of Indians to considerate and friendly treatment as fellow subjects and as loyal subjects of the British Crown. Although concerned about the general problem of the treatment of Indians in the Dominions, he believed that the Mother Country should not be implicated in difficulties between various parts of the Empire, and need not be if a genuine understanding existed between the Governments of the Dominions and the Government of India.

Since the major problem of Indian immigration lay specifically with the separate Dominions, he urged the governments of these Dominions to make every effort to show an accommodating and friendly spirit towards India, for until pleasant terms existed between India and the Dominions there could not be, nor could there be maintained, a United Empire.¹

But the representatives of the Dominions were unanimous in their determination for restrictive immigration policies against Indians.² They advocated the policy of Indian exclusion and asserted their right to do so as Dominions. In spite of this long discussion at the Imperial Conference and the presentation of petitions and memoranda, the endeavours of the India Office, London, did not bear any fruit. The whole matter amounted to nothing more than an academic debate.³ Opposition to Indians on the Pacific Coast continued to be

¹ Cd. 5745, Imperial Conference, 1911, Minutes of Proceedings. Full text of Lord Crewe's speech, pp. 394-399.
² Cd. 5741, Imperial Conference, 1911, Precis of the Proceedings, pp. 73-77.
³ Ibid.
echoed in the British Columbian press. ¹

A new development in the Indian immigration problem occurred in the middle of 1911 when one Indian immigrant, Hira Singh, visited India and returned to Canada with his wife and child. The Canadian immigration officials refused to let his wife and child enter the country on the grounds that they had not complied with the "continuous passage regulation". The matter was taken to the law courts. The case aroused much interest among the Indian community in British Columbia. Before the case could come up for hearing in the court, the Indians appealed to the Dominion government to exercise its discretion in the matter. H.H. Stevens, the member of the Canadian Parliament from British Columbia, paid a special visit to Ottawa and briefed the Minister of the Interior on the implications and interests of the situation. The result was that the Canadian government ordered that Hira Singh's family could remain in Canada but this case was not to establish any precedent for the future. ²

The Indian immigrants decided to send a deputation to Ottawa to see the new government ministers who came to power after the Liberal party was defeated in the general elections of 1911. They thought that the Conservative government led by Sir Robert Borden might take a different and more sympathetic look at their problems. A delegation composed of Dr. Sunder Singh, Professor Teja Singh, Raja Singh, and the Rev. L.W. Hall (who had been a missionary for some years in India) went to Ottawa and sought an interview with Robert Rogers, the Minister of the Interior. ³ They submitted a

¹ Vancouver World, June 14, 1911.
² News Advertiser (Vancouver), August 6, 1911.
³ Ibid., October 28, 1911.
petition to the Minister, based on the fact that Indians were loyal British subjects who had willingly served the Crown and who had been promised equal treatment by reigning monarchs of the Empire. Because of this they did not wish to be discriminated against nor classed as aliens by the Canadian government. They found the immigration restrictions imposed upon them excessively harsh and degrading. In particular they objected to those regulations that destroyed normal family life by forbidding Indian women to join husbands living in Canada. Such compulsory separation of families was legally imposed upon incarcerated criminals but should not, in a civilized country, be practised against Indians who were British subjects especially when other Oriental immigrants - Chinese and Japanese - who were not British subjects were permitted to bring their wives. They also objected to the continuous journey restrictions and defined it as unreasonable and requested that it should be either modified or repealed. The petitioners repeatedly stressed the point of their being British subjects with a subsequent right to travel to or reside in any part of the Empire. Furthermore the delegation stated that Indians in Canada were good and law-abiding citizens and were economically stable. Nevertheless, as a safeguard against any Indian in Canada becoming a public charge, the delegation expressed their willingness to give security bonds with the immigration authorities, but at the same time they desired that the amount required for an Indian to enter Canada be the same as that for other nationalities and not the specially prescribed amount of two hundred dollars. The deputation also desired that restrictions on Indian students, merchants and tourists entering Canada be removed. The main point stressed by the Indian representatives was the desirability
of one standard immigration policy within the Empire for all British subjects, including Indians.  

In reply to this representation by the Indians, Robert Rogers, the Minister of the Interior, stated that the Indians already in Canada were allowed to bring their families provided they conformed to such existing regulations as the direct passage from India and possession of the amount of two hundred dollars per person. The Minister also told the Indian deputation that he would send an officer to British Columbia to make a study of the whole problem of Indian immigration and grievances. The deputation was well satisfied with the treatment at the hands of the Canadian government and was confident that the promised investigation would result in the restrictions being still further eased. The Indian community in Vancouver rejoiced at this news of their success. The Minister of the Interior appointed F.C. Blair of the immigration department to proceed to British Columbia and investigate the subject of Indian immigration and settlement in connection with their request to be allowed to bring their wives and children. But soon the Indians realized that their achievement was nothing concrete and that they had been only temporarily appeased. The Globe (Toronto) flashed the news that the government had handed over to the Indians in British Columbia a large sized gold-brick. However, nothing was stated clearly in the official communique published in this regard. At this time three members of the delegation, Professor Teja Singh,  

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1 Full text of the Petition of the delegates of the United India League and the Khalsa Diwan Society, Vancouver, B.C. is in the P.R.O. File, C.O. 42/985/5277.
2 The Times, Dec. 16, 1911.
3 Globe (Toronto), Dec. 16, 1911.
4 Evening Citizen (Ottawa), Dec. 15, 1911.
5 Ottawa Citizen, Dec. 18, 1911.
6 Globe (Toronto), Dec. 16, 1911.
7 Ibid.
Raja Singh and the Rev. W.L. Hall returned to British Columbia but Dr. Sunder Singh (who was a Glasgow trained doctor and held an M.D. degree from that University and who was also editor of the Indian newspaper Sansar) stayed in Ontario. Dr. Sunder Singh decided to try to persuade the eastern sections of Canada to his point of view. He felt the Easterners would not be biased because they were geographically removed from British Columbia and remote from its problems and could have no fear, as the British Columbians had, of an Oriental take-over. He decided to present his case before the Canadian public. At Ottawa he addressed the Empire Club¹ on December 28, 1911; later he spoke before the Canadian Club at Toronto.² In these speeches and many others he explained about the Sikh religion and the contribution of the Sikhs to the British Empire, especially emphasizing their loyalty as soldiers and their fine qualities as citizens and family men. He regretted the exclusion of Indians from Canada, and presented a convincing case on their behalf. It was quite amazing for the people in eastern Canada to know about the presence of Indians in British Columbia and certainly they were surprised to hear about the restrictive measures against them. So, Dr. Sunder Singh's presentation was warmly received. He succeeded in enlisting the support of quite a few important public figures and a committee was formed to work for the cause of the Indian community in Canada. At a public meeting held on December 29, 1911 at Toronto, a resolution was passed that:

... this meeting believes that injustice to fellow British subjects as well as the highest interest of

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¹ Empire Club of Ottawa, Speeches 1911-12, pp. 112-116.
² I.R. Broad, Sikhs in Canada, pp. 3-8.
the British Empire demands immediate action to relieve conditions; and hereby appoint a committee composed of Mr. J.K. Macdonald, President, R.A. Falconer, Dr. Sunder Singh, Rev. Dr. T. Wilkie, J.A. Paterson K.C., H.E. Irvine K.C., Mr. John Firstbrook (Mover), and Mr. Thomas West (Seconder) to bring these matters to public attention and to take such steps as they deem advisable to the end that injustice may be moved.  

Dr. Sunder Singh in this way was able to arouse considerable interest in the Indian problem. The Canadian Missionary Boards especially were impressed and decided to represent the Indian case before the Dominion government. Mr. J.K. Macdonald and Sir Robert Falconer paid a visit to Ottawa to place their pro-Indian point of view before H.H. Stevens, the member of the Canadian parliament who was a staunch supporter of Indian exclusion. No real understanding was reached however and an academic and propaganda exercise undertaken by Dr. Sunder Singh did not finally bring any fruit, for the immigration policy of the Dominion government was not at all altered. Dr. Sunder Singh's tour of Ontario went on well but a note of disquiet was already there before his arrival in Toronto. The local leading newspaper, The Globe, wrote a lengthy editorial on "The Orientals in Canada", in which it did accept the loyalty and sacrifices of the Sikhs for the British supremacy in India. But it added that the Oriental difficulty was fundamentally a complicated problem of Canadian democracy. It opposed the Indian immigrants because they were not suitable for the working of democracy. Furthermore it stated that British Columbia with its small population had enough complications, and there was not any need for another complicated addition in the form of Indians.  

The labour element in Ontario was equally concerned about the

1 Mail and Empire, Dec. 30, 1911.
2 Ibid.
possible effects of amendment in the immigration laws, so it was
not surprising to find that on January 4, 1912, the District Labour
Council met at Toronto and passed a strongly worded resolution which
condemned any relaxation of immigration laws in favour of any
particular group of Indians. ¹ The Labour Council expressed its
utter surprise that a religious body such as the church organizations
should ally itself with the parties that were agitating in favour
of the admission of Indians into Canada simply because they were
British subjects. The labouring classes were fighting for the
uplifting of humanity and the betterment of social conditions. The
introduction of the Asiatic races into the Dominion of Canada meant
the lowering of moral and social standards, they believed. The
churches were warned that if they continued their support for the
admission of Indians, then the organized labour would sever its
relations with the churches and fight them to the finish.²

In the Labour Council meeting John W. Bruce, from the Organisation
of the Plumbers' Union, who had lived in Australia and South Africa
and had recently returned from a trip to British Columbia, painted
a lurid picture of the Indian immigration question in South Africa.
He said that the lowering of the immigration barriers in favour of
these people was a menace to the wage workers of the Dominion. He
understood that Dr. Sunder Singh had been in the city raising an
agitation for the admittance of Sikhs to Canada and had secured the
co-operation of the Manufacturers' Association and several missionary
bodies. He accused the Manufacturers' Association that their support
for the Indian cause was only based on their dire need to obtain a
large number of labourers at a cheap wage. Mr. Bruce made a special

¹ Mail and Empire, Toronto, Jan. 5, 1912.
² Ibid.
point that if the Indians were allowed to bring their wives and children, they would claim the right to attend the public schools, which meant that the Canadian young generation would become contaminated by all the vices of the Orient.¹

At this point Dr. Sunder Singh proceeded to attack organized labour in its own stronghold. On January 26, 1912 he addressed a representative gathering of labour men at the Labour Temple. He pointed out that the presence of the Sikhs caused little labour competition as they were doing work which few, if any, white men would undertake. He asked why the Dominion government should discriminate against the Sikhs when it admitted Japanese and Polish women.² But in the same meeting Dr. Sunder Singh was strongly opposed by the labour bodies. One labour leader (James Simpson) spoke, attacking the Ministerial Association for having backed Dr. Sunder Singh’s appeal. Just because Canada was a part of the Empire there was no reason why she should have the burden of some other parts cast upon her. The whole movement for the admission of Sikh women was but a prelude to the introduction of cheap labour and lessened wages.³ J.W. Bruce concurred and advocated continual exclusion as the only policy to safeguard the wage earners. He made the point that if the admission of Indian women was accepted, an agitation would soon follow for admission of all classes of Indians.⁴

The missionaries of the Pacific Coast were equally concerned about the possible relaxation of immigration laws in favour of Indians. So the Ministerial Association of Vancouver wired their protest to the Dominion government against any proposed admission of Indian

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¹ Mail and Empire, Toronto, Jan. 5, 1912.
² Ibid., Jan. 27, 1912.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
women into Canada. Unlike the religious bodies in eastern Canada, the West Coast clergymen did not support the view that Indian immigration into Canada should be made easier. Their telegram further warned that admission of people who were incapable of assimilation was injurious to the national life of Canada. Consequently any support which Dr. Sunder Singh had anticipated from the church organizations was shattered by the clergymen on the Pacific Coast.

Relaxation of immigration restrictions on Indians was opposed throughout Canada. The Victoria City Council had decided not to employ Indians in any civic work. The Ottawa Free Press warned that Indians could underwork, undersell, and underlive the white Canadians and therefore, they must be kept out. The Victoria Trades and Labor Council strongly requested the Dominion government not to relax the restrictions on Indian immigration into Canada. Even the Building Trades Council of Ottawa vigorously requested against the admission of Asiatic races into the country. The District Trades and Labor Council of St. Catherines emphatically condemned any attempt to lessen restrictions governing immigration that would allow Indians to settle in Canada with a plurality of wives. H.H. Stevens, the Member of Parliament from Vancouver wrote a long article in The Manitoba Free Press opposing the relaxation and analyzed the character and doings of the Indian delegation which went to Ottawa. The M.P. stated:

1 Extracts from Vancouver Papers in File 536999, Vol. 4.
2 Mail and Empire, Toronto, Jan. 28, 1912.
3 Victoria Colonist, July 12, 1911.
4 Ottawa Free Press, Jan. 6, 1912.
This Sunder Singh is one of the cleverest rascals in Canada. He is a professional agitator and trouble monger, instead of being a philanthropist, he is an unscrupulous exploiter of his more ignorant fellow-countrymen, living on his wits. He ... handles business matters for other Hindus at handsome profit to himself. He is altogether undesirable, and unreliable and a menace to the community.

The health authorities in Vancouver branded the Indians as undesirable because they were filthy and the immigration authorities were also not in favour of Indian immigration. W.D. Scott, the Superintendent of Immigration at Ottawa, stated clearly:

Personally I do not look with favour upon the immigration of Hindoos. I am convinced that they are not a good class of people to encourage to come to Canada, and I would greatly regret any alteration of the law or regulations which would result in an increased number of the people arriving.

Similarly the premier of British Columbia had clearly informed Borden that he was determined to oppose any Oriental immigration into his province.

The Dominion government remained quiet on this issue. The matter of admission of Indian wives came up in the Canadian House of Commons on February 5, 1912 when Lemieux (Opposition) asked Prime Minister Robert Borden whether the Indians in future would be allowed to import their wives. He replied that the matter was receiving consideration. But about three weeks later the position was quite clear. The Minister of the Interior was asked whether or not it

1 Manitoba Free Press, Winnipeg, Jan. 27, 1912.
2 Extracts from Vancouver Press in File 536999, Vol. 4.
4 McBride to Borden, Nov. 6, 1911, Borden Papers, Vol. 19.
6 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, February 1912, 2457.
was the intention of the Dominion government to relax the immigration restriction with regard to Indian women. His reply was in the negative. \(^1\) Thus the efforts of the Indian deputation to Ottawa and subsequent endeavours of Dr. Sunder Singh were not successful. When he reached British Columbia his countrymen felt disgusted and lost faith in their leaders. They demanded that the deputationists should refund \(\frac{\$1500}{2}\) which they had spent on their journey to the Canadian capital. \(^2\) But Dr. Sunder Singh called a public meeting of Indians and advised them to continue their agitation and in this way the matter would go before the Government of India and the Indian masses. Then the Indian administration would be forced to take action as agitation against the Partition of Bengal had succeeded. \(^3\)

Dr. Sunder Singh continued his campaign in the press. In April 1912, at his insistence, the *Saturday Sunset* wrote an article on "Hindu Immigration". It discussed the economic success of the Indians in British Columbia and their status as citizens of the British Empire and made a strong plea to the Canadian government to allow them to bring their families to Canada. \(^4\) Concurrently with the campaign in Canada, the agitation was also carried out in the Punjab press, the *Punjabee* (Lahore), which carried a long letter from a "Hindu" in Canada preaching unity among various sections of the Indian community in Canada, and seeking an able and intelligent leader to fight their cause. It added that there were enormous opportunities for economic

\(^1\) Canada, House of Commons, Debates, February 1912, 4004.


\(^3\) Hopkinson to Cory, March 16, 1912 and Governor General, Canada to Colonial Secretary, March 27, 1912, C.O. 42/958/10745. (The agitation against Partition of Bengal was carried on for six years and ultimately Bengal was reunited in 1911).

\(^4\) *Saturday Sunset*, April 27, 1912.
success for Indians in Canada, and for that a well organized attempt for Indian migration should be made. A second newspaper, the Tribune (Lahore), while pleading the cause of admission of Indian women into Canada, branded the Canadian immigration laws as "cruel and inhuman".

In January 1912, two Indian immigrants, Bhag Singh and Balwant Singh, both residents of Vancouver, came back from India with their wives and children and claimed admission for their families. The immigration officials at Vancouver refused their admission because they had not complied with the continuous passage regulation. They were to be deported on February 6, 1912 but the time was extended in order to ascertain whether they came by direct passage or otherwise. The Indians appealed to the courts. However, the case failed, and in April 1912 the Canadian government, by a special Order in Council, ordered the families of these men to be deported. They were arrested on April 30, 1912 and were to be deported on the S.S. Monteagle. But the Indians filed a writ of habeas corpus in the British Columbia Supreme Court and the case aroused a great deal of controversy in the press. The Indian immigrant leaders Husain Rahim and Dr. Sunder Singh thought that it was the most suitable opportunity to consolidate their position and to regain their falling support and confidence with their fellow countrymen. Therefore they arranged to hold protest meetings and sent a cable to the Secretary of State for India in London to stop the deportation of their women and children from Canada. They declared such action was a gross breach of Imperial

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1 Punjabee (Lahore), March 30, 1912. Punjab Native Newspaper Reports, 1912.
2 Tribune (Lahore), April 19, 1912.
4 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, February 27, 1912, 4004.
5 Tribune (Lahore), April 19, 1912.
6 Hindu (Lahore), May 30, 1912 and the Loyal Gazette (Lahore), May 12, 1912, Punjab Newspaper Reports 1912.
unity by attacking Indian homes.\(^1\) The India Office immediately forwarded this telegram to the Colonial Office. By chance the British Columbian premier, Sir Richard McBride, was in England, so the Colonial Secretary (Harcourt) spoke to him.\(^2\) On May 25, 1912 the Dominion government instructed the immigration officer in Vancouver to allow the Indian women and children to remain in Canada. This action was, however, not to be taken as a precedent for any subsequent ones that might arise.\(^3\)

The Indians interpreted this decision of the Canadian government as a victory for their cause, achieved through protests, agitation and litigation. They kept up their fervour with their protest meetings. On June 16, they assembled in the Sikh temple at Vancouver and passed a hot-worded resolution condemning the quiet attitude of the Dominion government and asking for the fulfilment of the pledge given last December by the Minister of the Interior to their delegation.\(^4\) Then in August, 1912 they held another meeting and decided to cable G.K. Gokhale, member of the Legislative Council of India who was in England at that time, to visit British Columbia and take up the question of immigration and better treatment of Indians. They subscribed $400 in the meeting for this purpose.\(^5\) But Gokhale expressed his inability to undertake this mission because he was already committed to go to South Africa on a similar mission.\(^6\)

The agitation about Indian grievances was carried on in India as well. A large public meeting was held at Bombay in which a full account of difficulties and disabilities of Indians in the

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1 Khalsa Diwan and Indian League, Vancouver, telegram to India Office, May 6, 1912, C.O. 42/966/14134.
2 Colonial Office Minute by Harcourt, May 10, 1912, C.O. 42/966/14134.
4 Vancouver Province, June 17, 1912.
British Dominions was discussed, and a memorial was sent to the Imperial and Indian governments repeating earlier representations made to the Canadian authorities and particularly requesting the fulfilment of the "promise" regarding the admission of women and children.\(^1\) But it is rather interesting to note that the so-called "promised pledge of a responsible Canadian minister" was only a misrepresentation on the part of the Indian delegates.\(^2\) In this way a year passed and there was no definite settlement regarding the permission of entry for the wives and children of Indian immigrants. The Indians were then convinced that the Canadian government was not ready to amend the immigration laws.\(^3\) However, they continued their agitation. Through press statements they endeavoured to claim their right of admission into Canada on the basis of their Aryan blood and membership in the British Empire. They also claimed that even if they were not accepted as British subjects, they should be treated on a par with other Asiatics.\(^4\) But the Dominion government was determined not to allow any Indian immigration into its territory.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Memorial of Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Esq., Chairman of a Public Meeting held in Bombay on Wednesday, the 31st day of July, 1912, C.O. 886/6.

\(^2\) Colonial Office to India Office, Jan. 17, 1913, C.O. 886/6.

\(^3\) Vancouver Sun, March 7, 1913.

\(^4\) Ibid., March 22, 1913.

\(^5\) An unusual event occurred in April 1913 when the Deputy Commissioner Ferozepur (Punjab, India) wired the superintendent of Immigration Vancouver, inquiring about the chances of Indian emigration and citing successful cases. The Dominion government was taken aback and immediately wired to the Colonial Office, London: "It is extremely undesirable for Indians to come to Canada and strongly advise that you use your utmost endeavours to effectively stop contemplated movement by so advising Government of India." Deputy Commissioner Ferozepur to Supdt., Immigration, Vancouver, March 5, 1913, C.O. 886/6 and Deputy Minister of the Interior to Governor General's Secretary, April 23, 1913, C.O. 42/969/16276.
At this time the Indians decided to send Balwant Singh, the Sikh Temple Priest at Vancouver, and his assistant Narain Singh, to the Colonial Office, London to present their grievance before the Imperial government. They were to be assisted by Nand Singh Sehra, (an Indian student from the United States) as an interpreter. At the end of April 1913 this three-man delegation sought an interview with Harcourt, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. But the arrival of this delegation with an idea of appealing to the Imperial government against the self-governing Dominion of Canada had a sharp reaction in the Canadian press. However, the Colonial Secretary refused their request on the grounds that the delegation should approach him through the proper channel, i.e. through the Governor General of Canada. This action of the Colonial Office had a hostile reception in the Punjab press. The refusal could stir very serious mischief in the Punjab and would enable it to be said in India that the Imperial and Indian governments were so indifferent to Indian grievances that they would not even take the trouble to see the delegates who had travelled from British Columbia to London. Even if the Imperial government were to justify its refusal on the basis of constitutional practice in the Dominions, it could not off-set the bitter feelings in the Punjab. So the India Office suggested that the delegation should be invited to have an informal chat with the permanent officials of the Colonial and India Offices and in this way an interview with the Minister should be avoided. Thus

1 Khalsa Diwan to Governor General of India, January 9, 1913, C.O. 886/6.
2 Crewe to Hardinge, April 16, 1913, Hardinge Papers 119, and Vancouver Sun, March 17, 1913.
3 Colonial Office to India Office, April 25, 1913, C.O. 886/6.
4 Tribune (Lahore), June 3, 1913.
5 India Office Minute (Personal note of Seton to Lambert), April 22, 1913, C.O. 42/975/13055.
the Imperial government officials arranged to meet the delegation.¹
The Indian deputation related their representations made to Ottawa in December 1911, and regretted the Dominion governments' silence and inaction in the matter of Indian immigration.² The delegation further stated that as they were on their way to India, they thought it worthwhile to bring their grievances to the notice of the Imperial government. In reply, the officials (of the India Office and Colonial Office) explained to them that they had acted wrongly in going past the Dominion government and coming to London to approach the Imperial authorities without seeking an interview with the Canadian minister concerned. Again it was pointed out that immigration was entirely in the jurisdiction of the Dominion government and the interference of the Imperial government in such matters would be unconstitutional. So the officials expressed their reluctance to take any action in the matter.

The Indian press severely condemned the attitude of the Imperial authorities. The Desh (Lahore) commented that British statesmen were never tired of calling India the brightest and most precious jewel in the British Crown and Indians respectable citizens of the British Empire, but when they were called upon to do practical good to Indians, they did nothing.³ The Tribune of Lahore regretted the refusal of the Colonial Secretary to see the deputation.⁴

¹ The Imperial government officials met only Balwant Singh and Narain Singh. Nand Singh Sehra, the interpreter, was not allowed to participate because he did not belong to the Indian immigrant community in Canada. Besides the officials spoke to the deputation in Punjabi, and no translation was necessary. Note by Dunlop-Smith, Political A.D.C. to Secretary of State for India, May 14, 1913, Folio 2151, L/P & J/6/1245.
² Colonial Office Minute, May 15, 1913, C.O. 42/975/14653.
³ Desh (Lahore), May 4, 1913, Punjab Newspaper Reports 1913.
⁴ Tribune (Lahore), June 3, 1913.
Observer (Lahore) called it:

Red-tapism and policy of non-interference in the 'domestic affairs' of a colony could hardly go further.¹

The Kesari of Bombay lamented that the Indians had to go from Vancouver to London to India in search of justice.² The Phoenix of Karachi³ and the Gujrati (Bombay)⁴ regretted the inaction of the British authorities in the matter.

The Indian community in British Columbia, when they came to know about the treatment of their representatives in London, held a mass meeting and strongly protested against the refusal of the Colonial Secretary to grant a personal audience to their deputation.⁵ However, the delegation itself held a meeting with the Canadian Indian Immigration Society in London, voiced their grievances⁶ and then proceeded to India. In the meantime the Indians in Victoria (B.C.) were equally active and they too continued their protest meetings and requested their fellow countrymen to bring their complaints to the notice of the Viceroy of India.⁷

The Ottawa Citizen flashed the news that an Indian delegation was going to India to lay before their fellow countrymen a statement of their inhospitable treatment in Canada. Before leaving England the leader of the delegation was reported to have said that

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¹ The Observer (Lahore), June 18, 1913, Punjab Native Newspaper Reports, 1913.
² Kesari (Bombay), July 22, 1913, Bombay Native Newspaper Report 1913.
³ Phoenix (Karachi), Sept. 6, 1913, Bombay Native Newspaper Report 1913.
⁴ Gujrati (Bombay), Sept. 21, 1913, Bombay Native Newspaper Report 1913.
⁵ Hopkinson to Cory, June 16, 1913, C.O. 42/970/24478.
⁷ Victoria Times, August 3, 1913.
Canada's treatment of the Sikhs will do more harm to injure the British Empire than the gift of six dreadnoughts would have helped.1

Thereupon the Canadian Senate held a debate on June 2, 1913, when Senator Bostock inquired if the Canadian government proposed taking any action to deal with this matter. He blamed the government for refusing permission to Indians to bring their wives to Canada for as a result, this agitators in India had stirred up feelings against the British government.2 Senator Douglas remarked that the action of British Columbia towards the Indians was unChristian, unBritish, and ungrateful.3 Senator Power said that he hoped the Canadian government would do something which would prevail upon the Indians and prevent them returning to India boiling with indignation against Canada and the Empire. Senator Cloran remarked that:

The Government were afraid to treat them fairly, afraid they would lose a little political influence in British Columbia. They were afraid that McBride, the Premier of British Columbia would lose support if the present Government dealt honourably and fairly with these people. No greater crime could be committed by any individual or community, and especially by a Government supposed to be Christian than to prevent a man living with his wife and children – no greater crime against the human race.4

Senator Lougheed (leader of the Government) blamed the late Liberal government (led by Laurier) for Canada's unfortunate position. He pointed out that public opinion in British Columbia was almost unanimous on the question of Asiatic exclusion. However, in closing the debate he assured the Senate that the matter was under consideration before the Dominion government, but he was unable to say anything about the outcome.5 On the whole the members were quite sympathetic

1 Citizen, May 30, 1913.
2 Montreal Gazette, June 3, 1913.
3 Canada, Debates of the Senate, 1913, p. 932.
4 Ibid., p. 935.
5 Ibid., pp. 937-8.
to the Indians.

In the meantime the three man delegation from Canada reached India in the beginning of July, 1913 and by the middle of August they had arrived at Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. There they held a well attended protest meeting on August 18, 1913 and a long memorial on the subject of 'Indians in Canada' was adopted. This was followed by similar meetings at Ambala, Ludhiana, Jullunder and Ferozepur. These gatherings were not only well attended but thoroughly representative of all classes and creeds. Men of all faiths and persuasions, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike took interest in the initiation and conduct of these meetings and they were presided over by the loyal section of the Indian population.

Then this delegation from Canada approached the Khalsa Diwan (a Sikh religious society) at Amritsar and with their help they managed to have an interview with Hardinge, the Viceroy of India. They placed before him the copies of their representations made earlier to the Canadian government and the Imperial government. The Viceroy expressed his sympathy and promised that he would continue his endeavours to remove the disabilities imposed on Indians in Canada. He added that the Government of India had been in correspondence with London and Ottawa on the subject and as a result the Canadian government had agreed to waive the Order requiring possession of two hundred dollars in the case of wives and minor children of Indian residents in Canada. However, the Viceroy regretted that the "continuous passage regulation" was still in force. As a matter of fact the Government of India had

1 Punjabe (Lahore), August 26, 1913, Punjab Native Newspaper Report 1913.
2 Tribune (Lahore), Sept. 7, 1913.
3 Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar to the Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government, Nov. 20, 1913; Government of the Punjab to Government of India, Dec. 10, 1913, C.O. 42/985/5277.
expressed, as far back as December 1912, its strong disapproval of the immigration restrictions imposed on wives and children of Indians domiciled in Canada and had urged the Dominion government to grant them exemption from the general provisions of the Immigration Act.¹ But the Canadian authorities turned down the request on the ground that such an amendment would result in the admission of physically and mentally unfit persons.² However, the Indian government was not content with the Canadian reply, therefore it repeated its request in July 1913.³ This time the Canadian government issued an Order in Council stating:

Asiatic immigration as a whole is not suited to this country and, under the circumstances it is not felt that the "Continuous Journey" regulation could be replaced.⁴

On the other side, the Colonial Office and India Office in London were quite keen to find some solution of this difficulty regarding the admission into Canada of wives and children of Indian immigrants. The imperial government was concerned that if Canada were to consider any further restrictive measures it would be difficult to get any solution to the problem. Therefore the Colonial Office came up with a proposal that if the Indian government should accept the responsibility of introducing the passport system for those intending to go to Canada, the Dominion government could be persuaded to work out a plan similar to the "Gentleman's Agreement" established with Japan. Then about four hundred Indians would annually enter Canada and with a population

¹ Government of India to Secretary of State for India, Dec. 19, 1912, File 568, L/P & J/6/1064.
² Secretary of State for External Affairs to Governor General of Canada, April 12, 1913, C.O. 886/6.
³ Government of India to Secretary of State for India, July 3, 1913, C.O. 886/6.
⁴ P.C. 2448, Sept. 27, 1913.
of $2\frac{1}{2}$ million Canada could easily absorb this small number. In this way the problem of women and children could also be solved and at the same time the preferential position of Japanese in Canada as compared to Indians would also disappear.\textsuperscript{1} But the Indian government declined this offer saying:

Peeling in India is, owing to the Immigration Act of South Africa, at present particularly high, and our acceptance of a passport system or any similar system with restriction of free emigration as its object would, we are convinced, raise a storm of indignation throughout the country.\textsuperscript{2}

The Viceroy (Hardinge) in his private correspondence with Crewe, explained that the introduction of a passport system for the intending migrants needed new legislation and such a measure would be opposed bitterly in his own Legislative Council.\textsuperscript{3}

The attitude of the Indian government was quite strange. On the one hand it refused to consider any proposal on the lines of the Japanese agreement and on the other it continued to champion the cause of Indian women and children desiring admission to join Indians domiciled in Canada. But at the same time the Canadian government was equally responsible for that confused situation. The continuous journey regulation at that time, due to the absence of a direct steamship service, affected the Indians primarily and directly, and did not affect Europeans at all. In these circumstances no Indian could enter Canada at all. When there was a real grievance, as was the case with regard to the position of those Indians who had been allowed to enter Canada, and who could not bring their wives

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\item \textsuperscript{1} Colonial Office Minute, April 23, 1913, C.O. 42/969; India Office to Colonial Office, July 11, 1913, C.O. 42/975/23958; Colonial Office Minute, August 16, 1913, C.O. 42/970/28896; and Crewe to Hardinge, telegram, Sept. 17, 1913, Hardinge Papers 97.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Viceroy of India to Secretary of State for India, telegram, Sept. 24, 1913, C.O. 42/975/37073.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Hardinge to Crewe, telegram, Sept. 24, 1913, Hardinge Papers 97.
\end{itemize}
and children to live with them, the Dominion government was not willing to make any concession. Sir Richard McBride, the British Columbian premier, had already indicated that he was determined to have no more Indians in his province.¹ So the question of families of Indians remained as difficult as it was in 1908 when restrictions were first imposed. Another aspect of the Indian immigration problem was admission of tourists, students and businessmen. The representations of the Indian government at last succeeded in this regard. The Canadian government expressed its willingness to issue permits under section four of the Immigration Act 1910 to intending visitors. But although the Indian government would be at liberty to announce this decision in answer to specific enquiries in this regard, this decision should be regarded as confidential.²

The problem of Indian immigration into Canada was difficult to solve. As has been noted at the beginning of this chapter, the Canadian government sought to restrict Indian entry into Canada first by the continuous passage clause, the $200 head tax and the authority of the Governor General in Council to prohibit the landing in Canada of any immigrant for any reason at all. Although these regulations were generally applicable to all immigrants, the continuous passage clause made them prohibitory only to Indians while Britons were definitely encouraged to come to Canada. Since Indians were also British subjects they believed the Act discriminated against them.

Although Indian immigration had virtually stopped by 1909, the period from 1910-1914 was one of continuous protest by the Indians to

¹ Colonial Office Minute by Harcourt, Oct. 25, 1913, C.O. 42/970/36272.
British, Canadian and Indian authorities against Canadian immigration regulations as they were applied to Indians. The Indians further objected to the Immigration Act because it effectively stopped Indian men already living in Canada from sending to India for their wives and children and also prevented Indian businessmen living in the United States from visiting Vancouver to protect business interests there.

During this time, however, the Imperial government was anxious to maintain good will in India. Britain did not wish hard feelings and discrimination against Indians by the Dominions to be used as a political weapon against British rule in India; nor did she wish to undermine the fact that India offered fine military material for Imperial forces; therefore, at the Imperial Conference, the Imperial government urged these Dominions to adopt a more liberal attitude towards Indian immigration. However, the representatives of the Dominions were unanimous in their determination to restrict Indian immigration.

After the defeat of the Liberal Party in 1911 Indians in Canada decided to approach the new Conservative government to seek some answer to their problems. An Indian delegation was sent to Ottawa from Vancouver to plead the Indian case before the Minister of the Interior. The mission was not successful and while the other delegates returned to Vancouver, Dr. Sunder Singh remained in Ottawa and appealed to the Canadian public for sympathy with the Indian plight. Although many people supported him, the Labour Organizations united against him and advocated continued exclusion of Indians as the only safeguard for Canadian wage earners. By the end of February, 1912 the Canadian government stated definitely that there would be
no relaxation of the immigration laws to allow Indian women into Canada.

Even press editorials in Indian newspapers about the unfair treatment of Indians could not help the cause of Indian immigration in the colonies. Therefore the Indians in Vancouver decided to send a new delegation to the Colonial Office in London but the sought-after meeting with the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Harcourt), failed to materialize and great bitterness was aroused with Indians in India and Canada. The Indian delegation then went to India to lay their complaints before the Viceroy of India (Hardinge) and the Indian government's correspondence with London and Ottawa resulted in the agreement of the Canadian government to waive the $200 clause in the Immigration Act in the case of Indian wives and minor children. But since they did not agree to modify the continuous passage clause it was still virtually impossible for any Indian to be acceptable by immigration authorities. Anxious to find some solution for the problem the Colonial Office proposed a passport system but this was turned down by the Indian government and the question of permission for Indian men in Canada to send for their wives and children from India remained unsettled.

From 1909 to 1914 the Canadian government was faced on one side with the demand of Indians for a fairer and more lenient immigration policy, on the other side with the refusal of the Canadian labour organizations to consider Indian claims for freer admission into Canada, and on still another side with the urgent requests of the British and Indian governments to reconsider the whole Indian immigration question. The labour organizations believed that the presence of Indian labourers in Canada would seriously jeopardise
the wage scale and working opportunities for Canadian workers. The Imperial government believed that discrimination against Indian immigration by the Dominions would cause unrest in India and pose a serious threat to the continuation of the Empire as an Empire.

And the Indians, as British subjects, considered themselves justified in seeking, if not equal, immigration status with the British people, at least a more liberal and humane policy than the Immigration Act of 1910 permitted. A workable solution to such varied problems was not readily apparent and the Canadian government was obliged to give the matter particular consideration.
CHAPTER 7

The Indian immigrant leaders in Canada failed in their attempts to amend Canadian immigration laws in those particular aspects where they pertained to Indians, and their representations to the Canadian and Imperial authorities proved quite unavailing. However, one thing was definitely accomplished by the continued agitation and the resulting publicity, and this was that the average Indian living in Canada was much more aware of and sympathetic to the cause for which the leaders fought. With this renewed support the leaders carried their complaints to the Canadian courts. As I have mentioned earlier, the Canadian authorities granted exemption from the application of strict immigration regulations; and in such instances the Dominion government always made it clear that these would not be taken as precedents for the future. However, the Indian immigrant leaders, highly dependent for their political and economic survival on the continuation of Indian immigration or at least on Indian immigration as an active problem, convinced their illiterate countrymen in Canada and India that those isolated instances of the government's acquiescence were examples of their victories over the Canadian government.

Yet despite their boastful claims, Indians were not even able to buy tickets to Canada because the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company was the only steamship company that offered passages and they had agreed not to sell any tickets to the Indians. The Governments of Canada and Great Britain had given stern warnings to this effect to all steamship companies\(^1\) which could possibly convey passengers from

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1 As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3.
India to Canada. Then the New Immigration Act of 1910 especially empowered the Dominion government to deal with any steamship companies ignoring Canadian immigration regulations. Yet these steps on the part of the Canadian authorities did not completely stop the Indians from trying to force their way into Canada, for they then took legal action against the steamship companies which refused to sell tickets for their families. However, they lost their case.

In 1913, a Japanese company, the Nippon Yusen Kaisha, owners of the Maru Line of steamships, agreed to sell tickets to sixteen Indians and they arrived at Victoria in the fall of 1913. They had not complied with the "continuous journey" and "2 200" regulations. They were arrested and ordered to be deported. But before deportation could be carried out, there was before the Canadian courts the case of another thirty-nine Indians, and this case severely rocked the very basis of the Canadian laws under which the deportation was ordered.

The case of these thirty-nine Indians became a landmark in the troubled and stormy narrative of Indians' attempts to force their entrance through the barred, bolted and locked gates of Western Canada. Originally there were forty-six Indians who came to Canada in October 1913 aboard the S.S. Panama Maru. They were determined to get admission by any means. Seven of them somehow proved their previous residence in the Dominion and accordingly were admitted as resident returnees. The other thirty-nine had neither been in Canada

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1 Immigration Act, 1910.
2 Hindu Canadian, India's Appeal to Canada, p. 8; and Hopkinson to Cory, Oct. 13, 1911, File 275, L/P & J/6/1137.
3 The Times, Oct. 29, 1913.
before, nor complied with the "continuous passage" regulation. Therefore the immigration officials in British Columbia ordered their deportation.\footnote{Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1914, p. 1257.} Pending deportation, they were confined in the detention house. The Indian community was outraged and their leaders resorted to protests, meetings and representations. The Sikh religious body, the Khalsa Diwan, held a meeting in the Dominion hall and protested against the action of Immigration Superintendent Reid in proposing to deport the thirty-nine Indians held at Victoria.\footnote{Sun (Vancouver), Nov. 10, 1913.}

Another Indian protest meeting was held at Victoria and they sent an urgent telegram to Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State for India, requesting him to stop the deportation of their detained countrymen.\footnote{Telegram received in the India Office and Colonial Office on Nov. 22, 1913, C.O. 886/6.}

In the meantime, Dr. Sunder Singh published a long article in his paper, the Sansar (Victoria), urging the Canadian government to release the thirty-nine Indians; and he put forward the new contention that the transshipment at Hong Kong did not in substance constitute a break in the continuous journey, therefore these thirty-nine Indians had complied with the "continuous passage" regulations.\footnote{Sansar (Victoria), November 1913.} However, the Canadian authorities did not accept this interpretation.

The protest meetings, the agitation and the telegraphic representations to London on the part of the Indian immigrant community in British Columbia provoked a very sharp reaction from the Canadian press on the Pacific Coast. The \textit{Sun} declared that Canadians governed their own country and decided their immigration policy free from any dictation from Downing Street. It added that it was for the
Dominion government at Ottawa and for no other power to say what peoples of what classes should be admitted into Canada. Similarly, in an earlier issue, the Sun had commented that the migration of Indians to British Columbia was a menace to its economic problems and advocated a complete stop of such immigration. The Progressive Club of Vancouver decided to approach the Dominion government in favour of white British Columbia and white Canada. It is quite possible that the people on the Pacific Coast of Canada were influenced by the Indian immigration problems in South Africa, which received wide press coverage at that time. While Indians agitated against maltreatment in South Africa the press voiced the attitudes of the white races. The Sun was quite outspoken and questioned the reasons why Canada should allow Indian immigration merely because India was a part of the British Empire. Condemning the Imperial authorities, it observed that British statesmen were anxious to spread to the uttermost ends of the earth ideals of Imperial citizenship which originated in the house of English shopkeepers.

But Indians felt that their claims to citizenship were valid, and they continued to petition to the Canadian courts for the redress of their grievances. The immigration question was thus moved from the administrative field to the legal arena. Indians filed an application in the court asking for the issue of a writ of habeas corpus. In response to the court's process, the detaining authorities contended that the impugned detention was under Orders in Council No. 920 and

1 Sun (Vancouver), Nov. 13, 1913.
2 Ibid., Nov. 10, 1913.
3 Ibid., Nov. 13, 1913.
4 Province (Vancouver), Nov. 20, 1913.
5 Sun (Vancouver), Nov. 13, 1913.
926 of Canada. Order No. 920, made under the Immigration Act of 9 and 10 Edward VII, said:

From and after the date hereof, the landing in Canada shall be and the same is hereby prohibited, of any immigrants who have come to Canada otherwise than by continuous journey from the country of which they are natives or citizens and upon through tickets purchased in that country or purchased or repaid in Canada.

Order No. 926, also made under the Immigration Act of 9 and 10 Edward VII, had declared,

No immigrant of Asiatic origin shall be permitted to enter Canada unless in actual and personal possession in his or her own right of two hundred dollars, unless such person is a native or subject of an Asiatic country in regard to which special statutory regulations are in force or with which the Government of Canada has a special treaty, agreement or convention.

None of the persons under deportation process complied with the law of Canada given in the Orders in Council. On the other hand, it was contended on behalf of the detenus that the parliament which enacted the Immigration Act 9 and 10 of Edward VII only used the words "Asiatic race" in the Act. Thus the words "Asiatic origin" used in the Order No. 926 were in excess of the powers conferred on the Council which made the Order. The words "Asiatic origin" have wider meaning than the words "Asiatic race". The word "Origin" would include persons born in India of British parents who had been domiciled there. Chief Justice Hunter, giving this situation as an example, held that the Order in Council No. 926 was ultra vires, hence invalid. The Order No. 926 also required an immigrant to have two hundred dollars in his own right in actual or personal possession. But the statute,

1 Section 38.
2 Section 37.
3 Re Narain Singh et al., British Columbia Reports Vol. XVIII (1912-13), p. 506.
under which the Order No. 926 was made, did not so require. Under
the Statute it would be sufficient for an immigrant to have the
money in a bank at Victoria. In this way the Order in question was
bad in law.

The impugned Order in Council No. 926 had already been held
invalid on the grounds that it omitted the qualifying word "naturalized"
before the word "citizen" as required by the Amending Act. The word
"native" used as a noun in the Order No. 920 also had a wide meaning,
which could include a person of British race born in India. The
Parliament had used the word "native" as an adjective, qualifying
the word "citizen". But it is clear that the word "native" includes
more than native citizens. It cannot be supposed that parliament,
which enacted the Act, intended that the persons of British race
could be affected this way. Hence such a wide power contained in
the Order No. 920 under the word "native" could not be upheld. The
court concluded that the persons under detention should be released,
but it was then contended by the counsel acting on behalf of the
Canadian government that the persons were held for misrepresentations. 2
As the order of deportation did not disclose that misrepresentations
were the grounds for detention, Chief Justice Hunter remarked:

Common justice requires, and I think Parliament
intended, that when a person is ordered to be
deported out of the country, the reason for so
doing should be clearly stated in order that he might
at least know what was the reason, and in any event,
a reason stated in such fashion would not constitute
a good return to writ of habeas corpus. 3

As a last resort, the Counsel acting on behalf of the Dominion

1 Re Rahim, British Columbia Reports Vol. XVI (1921), p. 471.
2 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1914, p. 1223.
3 Re Narain Singh et al., British Columbia Report XVIII (1912-13),
p. 510.
government objected against the interference of the court with deportation proceedings. Section 23 of the Immigration Act of 9 and 10 Edward VII was cited. Section 23 provided that:

No court of any officer shall have power to review, quash, reverse or restrain, or otherwise interfere with any proceedings, decision or order of the minister, or any board of inquiry, or any officer thereof, had or made in accordance with the provisions of the statute relating to the detention or rejection of any immigrant.

It was held that such restriction with respect to jurisdiction of the court only applied to proceedings which had been taken under the authority of and in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Chief Justice Hunter observed that:

... it would, indeed, be strange to find that the doors of the Court were shut against any person of any nationality, no matter what the act complained of might be.¹

So Chief Justice Hunter gave a decision on November 28, 1913 condemning as illegal all the Federal Orders in Council which had hitherto kept the Indians out of British Columbia.² The Chief Justice observed that the Canadian government's action exceeded the powers conferred by the Canadian Parliament relative to Asiatic immigration.³ The only grounds on which an Indian could be excluded were those of idiocy, disease, crime or mendicancy, the same grounds which applied against British-born citizens entering Canadian eastern ports.

This decision of Justice Hunter created a wave of sensation and panic up and down the country. The Vancouver World commented that the Canadian government should have the power to refuse admission

² Governor General of Canada to Secretary of State for Colonies, Dec. 13, 1913, C.O. 42/971; Daily News-Advertiser, Nov. 30, 1913.
³ The Times, Nov. 26, 1913.
to undesirable persons. The Globe (Toronto) remarked that the issue was between those who wanted cheap labour and desired to establish a society in which a different race would serve the part of a peasantry in making fortunes of their employers, and those who wished for an approach towards equality in opportunity, in racial stamina, and in material comforts. It added that Canadians should decide between a white man's country and a country of racial exploitation. The Sun demanded immediate legislation for the exclusion of Indians. It warned that a large number of Asiatics would swarm to Canada and would defeat for ever all hopes of making Canada a white man's country. It further commented:

They are vicious, untruthful and seditious people whom we could not assimilate, if we desired to, but whom we should not wish if we could as they would destroy the Canadian type mentally and physically.

The Gaelic American (a United States newspaper from New York) stated that the whole contention was a legal quibble. It warned that the cheap labour of Indian immigrants and their lower scale of living were a menace to the Colonial working classes. It observed further that:

Were the political and economic conditions of the people of India on the same plane as those of the Colonies, there would be little need, if any, for the Hindu to emigrate, but in his own country he is a political slave and economic helot, held down by the sword and liable to be slaughtered ... for political and economic reasons. The intrusion of such in the self-governing Colonies is a distinct danger to their self-government and independence for the reason that it gives the Imperial Government in London the opportunity to interfere in the internal affairs, and insensibly to filch from them some of their self-governing rights and powers.

1 Vancouver World, Nov. 27, 1913.
2 Globe (Toronto), Dec. 3, 1913.
3 Sun (Vancouver), Nov. 26, 1913.
4 Gaelic American (New York), Nov. 29, 1913.
The Province considered that Indians were welcome as tourists and students, but they were unsuitable as workers in Canada. However, it suggested that Indians could be a great success in the African parts of the Empire.¹ The Vancouver News termed the decision of Chief Justice Hunter a "radical one".² The Sun predicted serious trouble and Sir Richard McBride, the British Columbian premier, warned that trouble would occupy the courts for a long time.³

Commenting on Chief Justice Hunter's decision on the Indian immigration question and the possibility of an influx from India, the Globe (Toronto) said:

The Hindu may be a good British subject, but he is not a desirable settler for Canada.⁴

So the decision of Chief Justice Hunter created a legal crisis in the policy of Indian exclusion from Canada. The Chief Justice had declared the most effective but indirect regulation as invalid and at the same time the old tacit understanding between the governments of Canada and India about keeping the Indian exclusion question under the carpet as Mackenzie King had realized in 1909 during his visit to India, came out in the open in Indo-Canadian politics.⁵

The British Columbian Premier, Sir Richard McBride, was not slow to plunge into the debate. Even before the decision of the court had been reached, he had declared proudly that he had discussed the question of Indian migration with Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary.⁶ Then on December 1, 1913 he stated that the

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1 Province (Vancouver), Dec. 2, 1913.
2 Vancouver News, Nov. 30, 1913.
3 Sun (Vancouver), Dec. 2, 1913.
5 See Chapter 5 for my discussion of Mackenzie King's visit to India.
6 The Times, Oct. 24, 1913.
judgment had brought about a critical state of affairs and one which would be given every possible consideration by the provincial government in order to protect the interest of the province. He added that he opposed the Indians, not on racial but on economic and social grounds. The City Council of Vancouver also urged the Dominion government to take the necessary steps immediately.

The United States Commissioner of Immigration, A. Caminnetti, paid a hurried visit to Victoria (British Columbia) and discussed the implications of the court decision with Sir Richard McBride. He expressed his satisfaction about the results of his interview with the provincial premier. He subsequently disclosed, however, that in the previous year United States officials had unearthed and frustrated secret arrangements made by Indians for dumping a...large number of the dusky turbanned undesirables at different points along the Pacific Coast.

Then Caminnetti met H.H. Stevens, the Conservative Member of the Canadian House of Commons and discussed the various phases of the Oriental immigration problem. Both appreciated the other's point of view and expressed their deep concern about the possible Indian influx on the Pacific Coast. However the U.S. Immigration Commissioner added that he had no personal prejudice against the Indians but that he was opposed to them on the grounds that they were a menace to the Occidental population because 60 to 80 percent of the population of 300,000,000 natives of India were carriers of infectious diseases.

H.H. Stevens added to this complaint and repeated his strong opposition

1 Cited in Province, Dec. 1, 1913.
2 City Clerk of Vancouver to Borden, telegram, Dec. 5, 1913, Borden Papers, Vol. 30.
3 Cited in Province, Dec. 3, 1913.
4 Province, Dec. 4, 1913.
to the admission of Indians because (according to him) Indians were either infected by or susceptible to a certain chronic disease which, while resembling tuberculosis, differed in many respects from the dreaded scourge. He explained further:

A peculiar feature of the insidious disease is that every Oriental even if not actually affected has a tendency to act as a carrier and thus the danger of transmission is quite greatly accentuated. The deductions made by the U.S. health scientists show that the introduction of men afflicted with a chronic ailment of this nature tends to deteriorate the white races with whom they associate the same way as negroes in the southern states who brought the hook-worm into that country lowered the standard of vitality among the Occidentals there.¹

The labour leaders in Ontario were equally concerned about the Chief Justice's judgment. They argued that if the ship-load of Indians could be dumped into Canada on the same terms as the immigrants from Britain, then the laws should be changed immediately.² The Vancouver World warned that the immigration trouble in South Africa could ferment discontent and rebellion among India's millions, which could spread to other countries. Indians, therefore, were quite unsuitable as elements in the Canadian population; Canada should learn a lesson from the South African example.³

In India, the Indian National Congress was in its annual session in December 1913. The Canadian court's decision was welcomed,

Happily for us the Chief Justice of British Columbia has condemned as illegal all the Federal Orders in Council which have hitherto restricted the entrance of Indians into the Province.⁴

Just a few days before, Chief Justice Hunter's decision had been given in the case of thirty-nine Indians, there happened an incident involving Bhagwan Singh, an Indian Sikh priest, in November 1913;

¹ Cited in Province, Dec. 2, 1913.
² Province, Dec. 1, 1913.
³ Vancouver World, Dec. 1, 1913.
⁴ Indian National Congress Report, 1913, p. 87.
and it occupied the public attention in Canada for the next half year. Bhagwan Singh came to Canada under the name of Natha Singh on June 8, 1913. He claimed to be an Indian returning to Canada and to have first arrived at Vancouver in 1906, remaining in British Columbia until October 23, 1912 when he sailed from Victoria to visit India. He gave the names of several Indians resident in Vancouver who came forward and gave evidence that they knew Natha Singh to be a previous resident of Canada. He appeared to be quite familiar with the names of local roads and streets. He stated that he was a labourer and had already worked in certain mills at Vancouver. But later it came to the notice of the immigration officials at Vancouver that Natha Singh was not his correct name and that he had never been in Canada prior to his entry in June 1913.

According to the intelligence reports of the Indian government Bhagwan Singh had to leave his home in the Punjab in 1910 because he got into trouble through abducting another man's daughter. He stayed in Malaya in the local Sikh temple at Perak as a granthi (reader of the Sikh scripture and preacher) but soon was dismissed on account of his seditious views. Then he managed to occupy a similar position in Hong Kong where he was largely responsible for frequent disputes amongst the Sikh community which eventually led to serious litigation. As a result he was dismissed. Then he made his way to Canada. When these facts came to the notice of the Dominion government Bhagwan Singh was arrested on the charge of attempting to gain admission into Canada by misrepresentation.

1 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1914, p. 1239.
2 This information was published in the local Indian newspaper, the Sansar, Victoria, Aug. 5, 1913.
3 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1914, p. 1255.
4 Slattery and Iremonger, An Account of Ghadr Conspiracy, p. 35.
However, he represented to the Canadian authorities that he was a priest, a holy man and a teacher\(^1\) of the Sikhs. He applied for a writ of habeas corpus against the immigration officers. It was granted by Justice Morrison but was ignored by the immigration officials. A second application was made and a second writ was issued. It was notified by telegram to Malcolm Reid, the Immigration Agent. But he ordered his arrest and deportation. On November 19, 1913, the vessel S.S. *Empress* was leaving for Hong Kong and the immigration officials thrust Bhagwan Singh aboard.\(^2\) The immigration authorities claimed their jurisdiction and overrode the British Columbian judge from whom the habeas corpus writ had been obtained to prevent the deportation of Bhagwan Singh.\(^3\)

The incident (because Bhagwan was supposed to be a Sikh priest) aroused bitter indignation among Indians in Canada, and it did great harm in helping to spread sedition among these Indians. Protest meetings were immediately held at Victoria and Vancouver. The forcible deportation of Bhagwan Singh was also denounced by the local press at Victoria for it would do more damage to British prestige than a thousand "political speeches".\(^4\) Many Indians threatened to leave Canada. A telegram was despatched to Borden, the Prime Minister of Canada, saying that Indians as a result of this felt it useless to appeal to the Canadian government for fair treatment.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Bhagwan Singh was responsible for quite a few fights and disputes among the Sikh community at Vancouver. The magistrate of Vancouver issued a severe warning to Indians to refrain from disturbances in and about the temple. It was alleged in the court that Bhagwan Singh assaulted Dr. Sunder Singh (a prominent Sikh leader) in the temple. Inspector David Scott declared that almost every Sunday he had to turn out his reserves to quell fights and disputes at the Sikh temple. The inspector wished to warn the Sikhs that the patience of the authorities was becoming exhausted. See *Province*, Nov. 28, 1913.

\(^2\) Hugh Matier to *Ottawa Citizen*, Dec. 7, 1913.

\(^3\) *The Times*, Nov. 22, 1913.

\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) *Ottawa Citizen*, Dec. 7, 1913.
The United India League in Vancouver depicted Bhagwan Singh as a social reformer of high intellectual order, who was greatly respected among the Indians. Rodolphe Lemaieux, the Opposition spokesman on immigration in the Canadian House of Commons, criticized the action of Immigration Agent Malcolm Reid. He quoted McNeill, the counsel for Bhagwan Singh, as saying:

> When the writ was served on Reid, he said in terms of the greatest contempt that he would not obey an order of the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Counsel said that Bhagwan Singh was bundled on to the ship and that he was brutally treated after being aboard the ship.²

The Opposition party further condemned the Canadian government:

> ... the whole trouble is caused by giving government officials judicial powers which they could not be trusted to exercise. Particularly in Oriental affairs one might as well set a blacksmith to repair a watch as entrust the ordinary Canadian immigration officer with handling of Oriental immigration situation in British Columbia.³

Rudolphe Lemaieux warned that the Bhagwan Singh affair would be talked about, brooded over, and deplored in every household in India.⁴

But H.H. Stevens,⁵ the Member of the Canadian Parliament from British Columbia, defended the action of the Canadian government. He stated that Bhagwan Singh was a rascal and had committed a deliberate perjury in order to enter Canada. He further stated that Bhagwan Singh was a political and social agitator of a violent type.⁶ The Minister of Justice (Doherty) justified the Dominion government's handling of the Bhagwan Singh case:

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1 Hindustanee, Jan. 1, 1914.
2 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1914, p. 1228.
3 Ibid., p. 1229.
4 Ibid.
5 H.H. Stevens (for his opposition to Indian immigration into Canada) was branded as the "most misinformed, prevaricating, narrow-minded, inconsistent and perverse critic" by the local Indian newspaper at Vancouver. See Hindustanee, January, 1914.
6 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1914, p. 1239.
... because he had falsely and fraudulently got into this country by misrepresenting himself as being somebody who he was not; and Bhagwan Singh before any valid writ of habeas corpus was served upon anybody at all with regard to him, was put upon a steamship and taken away.\(^1\)

However, the deportation of Bhagwan Singh was termed as a martyrdom throughout India and added a fresh count against British rule.\(^2\) The Desh (Lahore) commented that the white population of Canada was bent upon securing the expulsion of Indians even though such conduct might be against justice and morality. The paper demanded retaliation against the Colonials from the Indian government.\(^3\)

There was another instance when the Indian question of forced entry into Canada once again became hot news for the local press. In December 1913 one Sikh, Hernam Singh, secured his admission into Canada on the basis of his previous domicile there and he produced four Indians as witnesses to prove his claim. But later on the immigration authorities discovered that it was all a device to obtain entry into the Dominion. He was arrested, and the four Indians who testified to his being a Canadian resident at the time of his arrival were also detained and charged with perjury.\(^4\) Then after an enquiry by the board of immigration, Hernam Singh's deportation was ordered. The immigration officials gave the reason that Hernam Singh entered Canada stating that he had been previously in the Dominion, while it was contended on the other hand that such was not the case. As such, Hernam Singh came to Canada in contravention of section 33, sub-section 7 of the Canadian Immigration Act, i.e. by misrepresentation.\(^5\)

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1 Canada, House of Commons Debates, 1914, p. 1258.
2 P.C. Isemonger and J. Slattery (of the Indian Police Service), An Account of Ghadr Conspiracy, p. 35.
5 Full text of the proceedings of the immigration board of enquiry is available in the file C.O. 42/971/1450.
A writ for habeas corpus was taken out by MacNeill, the counsel for Hernam Singh, in the Court of Justice Macdonald. It was contended by the counsel that as the full board of immigration had not pronounced in this case, the decision was not binding. Only seven out of eight members of the board sat in this case. The Immigration Agent (Reid), tried to convince the court by saying:

Under the Act, the Minister has the right to appoint three or more officers of whom the inspecting officer in charge may be one, to sit as a board of enquiry. When the board was appointed every inspector on the staff - numbering eight were appointed. Inspector Hopkinson is away on special work and in his absence only seven sat at the Hernam Singh investigation.¹

But Justice Macdonald upheld the contention and ordered the immigration authorities to give up the man.

However, Malcolm Reid gave orders to his men in the court to have Hernam Singh arrested before he left the chamber. MacNeill protested about these new orders of the immigration agent and the judge issued another order that the man was not to be arrested within the precincts of the court house. The immigration authorities therefore, posted a party of forty constables outside the premises of the court and after a long watch of many hours, Hernam Singh was arrested when he was forced to leave the court premises.² Later, when a full board of inquiry was held, the Canadian immigration authorities ordered his deportation from Canada. But Hernam Singh filed a second application of habeas corpus. However, he admitted the fact that Indians used

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¹ Cited in Vancouver News, Dec. 11, 1913.

² The whole drama of the Hernam Singh case involving court proceedings, sitting in the court, his 'game of hide and seek' and finally the immigration officials' and police constables' attempt to arrest him were vividly reported in the local press. See Sun or Vancouver News, Dec. 11, 1913.
false photographs for the purpose of supporting bogus claims of seeking admission into Canada and that he lied to the Canadian government authorities.\(^1\) Justice Macdonald in his judgment observed:

... that this time the man had been properly found guilty of misrepresentation by a properly constituted board of enquiry and he must pay the penalty by being deported.\(^2\)

The decision of Chief Justice Hunter allowing thirty-nine Indians to enter Canada and the Bhagwan Singh and Hernam Singh incidents had aroused a wave of sensation among British Columbians. The local press and the politicians were quite concerned. In the meantime some Indians came and had to be admitted in the light of Chief Justice Hunter's decision.\(^3\) This made a total of 88 for the months of April to November, 1913.\(^4\) The Dominion government had shown serious apprehension about the Indian immigration as far back as August 1913. At that time it became known that an arrangement of direct steamship communication from Calcutta to Vancouver was being contemplated by the Indians. As a result of these persistent statements about the possible special steamship link between India and Canada, Robert Borden, the Prime Minister of Canada, and Sir Richard McBride, the Premier of British Columbia, held a special meeting at Ottawa.\(^5\) The Governor General of Canada informed the Colonial Secretary that it would be necessary to make drastic amendments to immigration regulations.\(^6\) The Dominion government viewed with grave concern the prospect of such a contemplated influx of Indians and warned that

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1 Province, Dec. 19, 1913; and News Advertiser, Dec. 20, 1913.
2 Sun, Dec. 18, 1913.
3 Tien Fang Cheng, Oriental Immigration into Canada, p. 151.
4 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1914, p. 1254.
5 Victoria Times, Aug. 18, 1913.
6 Governor General, Canada to Secretary of State for Colonies, telegram, August 16, 1913; and Colonial Office to India Office, August 19, 1913, C.O. 886/6.
it would arouse and even inflame public opinion in Canada. The Indian community in British Columbia protested against the possible restrictive measures and resolved to approach the Indian government for redress. The Government of Canada then proposed to amend the existing immigration regulations and to ban the landing at any point of entry in British Columbia of any immigrants of the artisan classification and of general or unskilled labour classification.

Upon learning this the Indian government issued a notification warning the Indian people that the Canadian government in anticipation of a very congested labour market in British Columbia had proposed new restrictions on immigration. Because most of the Indian immigrants were from the Punjab, the Government of the Punjab later issued a special communique warning intending migrants to British Columbia.

After the decision of Chief Justice Hunter, H.H. Stevens, the member of parliament from British Columbia, suggested the imposition of an educational test on all applicants from India seeking admission to Canada. The question of Indian immigration was under the constant consideration of the Canadian cabinet. The Minister of Justice (C.J. Doherty) and his deputy, E.L. Newcombe, compiled a comprehensive report for the consideration of the Canadian government. Urgent communications passed between Ottawa and Victoria. The general opinion

1 P.C. 2218, August 25, 1913.
2 Victoria Times, Aug. 18, 1913.
3 Governor General, Canada, to Secretary of State for Colonies, telegram, Oct. 17, 1913, L/P & J/6/1245.
4 Notification No. 9469-9461-3, November 7, 1913, L/P & J/6/1245.
5 The Times, Dec. 4, 1913.
6 Province, Dec. 2, 1913.
7 Ibid., Dec. 1, 1913.
was that if immediate action was not taken, a ship-load of Indians would arrive at Victoria or Vancouver and that with the present feeling on the Pacific Coast, it might precipitate a riot with possibly serious results.\(^1\) Therefore the provincial and federal governments inevitably desired to take some prompt action. However, the Indian immigrants could foresee the introduction of further restrictions. They were quite active in their constant protests and immediate telegraphic appeals were sent to Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State for India, and Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India:

\begin{quote}
Hindustanis of Vancouver island as a body desire that your Government protect our rights from new immigration regulations. Economic expediency in lieu of fundamental justice and fair play to Hindustani subjects of His Majesty virtually conceived in these regulations will not tend to cement India more closely to the Empire....

The color bar which discriminates against us puts a stigma on all the Hindustanis and which needs to be removed.\(^2\)
\end{quote}

The main problem before the Dominion government was the acute situation developed on the Pacific Coast of Canada as a result of the judgment of Chief Justice Hunter. The government could avail itself of clause 38 of the Immigration Act, 1910, which gave power to exclude for a specified period any class of immigrants who were considered unsuitable to the climate or were thought undesirable. Under that class the Government of Canada could temporarily issue an Order in Council forbidding the landing of all labourers and artisans at any port of British Columbia. That would not be an open discrimination against Indians, but would apply equally to all races and colours. The Indians then would not have any basis

\(1\) The Times, Dec. 3, 1913.

\(2\) Hindustanis to Crewe, telegram, Dec. 3, 1913, File 2151, L/P & J/6/1245.
for an appeal to the Imperial or Indian authorities against such action on the part of the Dominion government. The Indians would not be able to condemn such measures because they were not singled out for any particular restrictive legislation. Such an order would apply to the Pacific Coast but not to the Atlantic ports and there would be no prohibition of labourers or artisans entering British Columbia from Alberta. But in spite of all these possibilities available under the Immigration Act, the only difficulty was the special treatment arrangement with Japan. This difficulty, however, was solved when an understanding was reached between Baron Makino, the Japanese Foreign Minister and the British Ambassador at Tokyo. The Dominion government had expressed its intention to amend the immigration regulations so as to prohibit the landing of any immigrant of either the artisan or the general or unskilled labour classification and had said that the regulation would necessarily be couched in general terms and that it would consequently not be possible to make any exception in favour of Japanese immigrants. But at the same time the existing arrangement between the Japanese and Canadian governments would not be modified.¹

So on December 8, 1913 the Governor General of Canada, in Council, under and in virtue of the provisions of Sub-Section 3 of Section 38 of the Immigration Act 9 - 10 Edward VII made an order to prohibit

From and after the date hereof and until the 51st day of March, 1914, the landing at any port of entry in British Columbia, hereinafter specified, of any immigrant of any of the following classes or occupation viz.:-

   Artisans;
   Labourers skilled or unskilled.

This Order in Council specified the forty-three ports of British

¹ Baron Makino to Conyngham Greene, British Ambassador in Japan, November 6, 1913; and Greene to Foreign Office, telegram, November 6, 1913, C.O. 886/6.
Columbia where entry of any immigrant in the above classes was prohibited. So the actual appearance of this Order in Council was of the most undiscriminating nature. All artisans and labourers were to be excluded from British Columbia and not even the word "Asiatic" was mentioned. However, in its practical application, the new order was to apply with full force to Indians only because the Europeans did not need the Pacific door for entry into Canada and the Japanese had a special arrangement. Moreover the decision to determine who belonged to the artisan and labouring classes was to be made not by the courts, but by the local immigration board, where, apparently, there was no need to support such decision with satisfactory reasons. There was also no appeal from the board's decision except to the Minister of the Interior. To make the restrictions quite severe and permanent the "continuous passage" and "200" regulations were reimposed by new Orders in Council. This time the Dominion government's legal department was careful to leave no loopholes and lacunae which could be exposed to legal attack in the law courts. The new Orders in Council were phrased in close proximity with the clauses of the Immigration Act. The passage was then to be "continuous from the country of origin of which the immigrant was a native or naturalized citizen"; the two hundred dollars must be possessed in "his own right" (but not necessarily in his personal possession) by any immigrant of Asiatic race. In these ways, Canadian authorities attempted to cope with the situation on the Pacific Coast and they felt satisfied that with the application of these three new Orders in Council Indians would

1 P.C. 2642, December 8, 1913.
2 Bound Table 1923, 50, p. 399.
3 P.Cs. 23 and 24, 1914.
be kept out of Canada even without mentioning any word about India anywhere in the statute books. The Dominion government justified these prohibitory regulations by stating the prevailing unemployment and poor working opportunities in British Columbia at that time.

The Globe (Toronto) remarked that the decision of Chief Justice Hunter had exposed the Pacific Coast of Canada to invasion by natives of India in a large scale. The Government of Canada, recognizing the serious lack of employment at the moment in British Columbia, had therefore, passed this order P.C.2642, Dec. 8, 1913 suspending the admission of all immigrants of the artisan and labouring classes irrespective of their colour, by way of the Pacific or other British Columbian ports.¹ The Times (London), while suggesting some restrictive measures, observed that there was considerable unemployment in British Columbia and towns like Vancouver and Victoria were glutted with labourers and artisans.²

In India, especially in the Punjab, strong feeling arose against Canada because of the new regulations. The Khalsa Advocate (Amritsar) called it an unconstitutional measure resorted to by the Canadian authorities in defiance of the decision pronounced by the Canadian judiciary.³ The Parsi (Bombay) asked if Christianity had disappeared from the West and religion had been crushed under the weight of other things. The paper further questioned

... how the Indians prove a burden in Canada.... If the Indians cannot enjoy the right of freedom in the British Empire, they will hardly enjoy it elsewhere.

In another long editorial on January 21, 1914, the paper observed

1 Globe (Toronto), Dec. 12, 1913.
2 The Times, Dec. 9, 1913.
that Canada had finally banged, barred and bolted her door against Indian immigrants and lamented that the new regulations marred the effect of many an honest effort of British statesmen to win the loyalty of Indians. It further championed the Indian cause:

They do not like to be labelled as undesirables anywhere and cannot remain such in the British Empire.

The Ittehad (Bombay) called the new Canadian immigration measures "quite unreasonable". It questioned:

Is it not an insult to the British Government that the Canadians should object to the immigration of Indians who were the most loyal among the subjects of the British Empire?2

The new immigration regulations of Canada and the action of South Africa towards Indians excited public opinion in India and caused a deep feeling of indignation among all classes, Hindus and Muslims alike. They could not understand why the civil and political rights enjoyed by them so fully in India and in England should be denied to them in other parts of the Empire, or why the British government they had been accustomed to regard as all-powerful should tolerate a policy so opposed to its own principles.3

Yet the Canadian government continued to justify the new Order in Council by pointing out the high unemployment in British Columbia. This may have been true; but it was also true that Canada would need more immigrants. According to J. Bruce Walker, Immigration Commissioner at Winnipeg, the Canadian immigration figure for 1913 was 412,955, the highest number of immigrants on record.4

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1 Farsi (Bombay), Jan. 21, 1914.
2 Ittehad (Bombay), Jan. 23, 1914, Bombay Newspaper Report 1914.
3 Sir Charles Roe, Chief Justice of the Chief Court of the Punjab in the Annual Register 1913, p. 301.
4 Canadian Annual Review, 1913, p. 98.
charge of the Canadian immigration service in London, was proud to state that over three million pieces of literature were given away in 1913 for the purpose of attracting British migrants to Canada. He further stated that in 34,000 schools in Britain large maps of Canada were exhibited also for this purpose.¹ As far as British Columbia was concerned, the new restrictions on the Pacific ports of entry did not hinder European immigrants who travelled via the Atlantic and entered British Columbia from Alberta. The question of unemployment in British Columbia looked like an academic justification of a political expediency. Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, explained the Indian migration question to the Indian National Congress deputation on December 20, 1913. He stated that

... there is a very strong feeling among classes wielding considerable influence in Canada against any relaxation of restriction ... the Chief Court Order has produced forcible protests and a demand for more stringent legislation.²

The demands for restrictions on Asiatic immigration were not really made because of unemployment in Canada. On the contrary, Asiatıcs would have been hired. But a number of working class Europeans on the Pacific Coast feared for their own job security and wage standard. The leaders of these men, therefore, missed no opportunity to use the immigration question in order to further their own political cause. At this time there was very little difference of opinion between the Conservative and Liberal parties of Canada on this issue. The European and Asiatic civilizations did differ radically and the majority of the people in British Columbia were from European stock, and naturally their idea was to people

¹ Canadian Annual Review, 1913, p. 103.
² Cited in the Indian National Congress Report, 1913, p. 87.
the Pacific Coast with Europeans. The possibility of the unrestricted arrival of Indians in large numbers, as Justice Hunter's decision would have permitted, created a fear that Indian or Asiatic civilizations would dominate at the expense of the European civilization.

On the other side of the Pacific, Canadians envisaged the hundreds of millions of people crowded into Japan, China and India who might seek a better life in a new country. For the Pacific Coast and the country beyond it were only sparsely settled and therefore seemed to beckon whoever came first. If hundreds of millions of people from India were looking for an outlet, as was feared, they might find that outlet on the Canadian West Coast.

The danger of a sudden irruption of Asiatic peoples on the white man's country has haunted the minds of Europeans since the days of Attila and Genghis Khan. Naturally the wave of fear, panic and propaganda had revived the old fears and the Dominion government had to take action. But direct exclusion of Indians from Canada needed strong justification because India was the largest portion (in terms of population) of the British Empire. At the same time Indians could not realise how delicate and difficult was the task of the Imperial government of interfering in the action of a self-governing Dominion like Canada. Even on the most urgent problem of contributions to the Royal Navy, Canada had consistently turned down suggestions from Imperial authorities. It could not be expected that the British government would pursue the case of Indian grievances to the extent

1 Entienne Dennery, Asia's Teeming Millions, p. 229.
2 The question of contributions to the Royal Navy was the main topic discussed in the Colonial and Imperial Conferences before the First World War. See Donald C. Gordon, The Dominion partnership in imperial defence 1870-1914.
of forcing the Dominion government to do its bidding. Canada was
the mistress of her own affairs in her own house. As far back
as 1906, Justice Lord Aitkinson of the Supreme Court of Canada,
while upholding the government's order of deportation in "Attorney
General for Canada versus Cain", had quoted from Vattels, Law of
Nations, Book 1 (page 231) the following passage:

One of the rights possessed by a supreme power in
every State is the right to refuse to permit an
alien to enter that State, to annex what conditions
it pleases to the permission to enter it, and to
expel or to deport from the State, at pleasure,
even a friendly alien, especially if it considers
his presence in the State opposed to its peace,
order and good government, or its social and
material interest.  

In spite of these legal rights enjoyed by the Dominions the
Canadian government avoided direct declaration of open exclusion of
Indians. On the other side of the border the United States
administration was equally concerned about the possibility of an
Indian influx and they proposed a strict physical test to check
this possibility. One paper in fact commented that the Indian was
"like a nightmare" to the Americans.

However, the legal activities by Indians in the Canadian courts
brought into the open that the "continuous passage regulation" was
really intended only to apply to Indians and not to Indian-born
Europeans, and in the meeting of the Indian National Congress held
at Karachi in December 1913, one congressman, Krishna Kumar Mitra,
condemning the Canadian action, said,

We ask the Canadian Government, "Why this unnecessary
law? Why not tell the world that you would not allow
Indians to go to your country?"

1 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1914, p. 4562.
3 Vancouver Province, Jan. 23, 1914.
4 Indian National Congress Report, 1913, p. 89.
Indian immigrants continued their efforts to bring in their countrymen. The decision of Justice Hunter showed the fickle nature of the Canadian immigration regulations which could not sustain the test when challenged in law courts. Meanwhile press comments and political speeches on the Pacific Coast were full of sensation and fear. The panicky Dominion government resorted to rearming itself with new regulations. It continued to refuse entry even to Indian wives and children whose husbands and fathers were already in Canada. The grievances of Indian immigrants were thus ignored. The political parties in India and anti-British elements found this a ready made weapon for convenient use. Neither the methods used by Bhagwan Singh and Hernam Singh for entry into Canada nor the high handedness of the Dominion administration could be justified.
—And always the black cloud hangs lowering in the West

CHAPTER 8

The question of Indian immigration into Canada reached its most dramatic and climactic stage in 1914. The outstanding event was the voyage of the *Komagata Maru* from Hong Kong to Vancouver, with 376 Indians aboard; the journey and subsequent docking occupied front space in newspapers of many countries of the world. This *Komagata Maru* affair, as it came to be known, gained its widespread publicity in spite of the outbreak of the First World War in that same year. It was a crucial event, and the circumstances surrounding it, therefore, must be carefully considered.

The decision of Chief Justice Hunter in the case of 39 Indians handed down in 1913, had been interpreted as a great legal victory for prospective Indian immigrants into Canada. Though the decision was based on a highly technical legal flaw (which was, of course, immediately rectified by the Dominion authorities) rumours were started in the Far East as well as in India that restrictions on immigration into Canada had been removed or at least rendered ineffective. Consequently many Indian residents in South East Asian and Far Eastern ports renewed their efforts to obtain passage to Canada. But steamship companies refused Indian immigrants on the ground that they were not likely to be admitted and that steamship companies would have to carry back and maintain such persons when they were refused admission. Shipping companies had already been strongly warned about the serious consequences of carrying illegal immigrants to Canada. In spite of this warning, however, Indian migrant leaders were planning to procure the special services of a ship which would be used solely for the conveyance of Indians to Canada. A young Hindu named Behari Lal Varma put himself forward as

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1 *Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, Report, 1915, p. 5.*
an agent for this purpose and he started enquiries among shipping 
companies with regard to chartering a ship, but as he was a Hindu 
and a young man who carried no influence among the Sikhs, he could 
not gain popular support and therefore, he did not succeed in his 
venture.¹

By January 1914, there were about 150 Sikhs gathered in the 
Sikh temple at Hong Kong awaiting passage to Vancouver when Gurdit 
Singh arrived there.² He showed himself at the Gurdwara where he 
delivered addresses to the people ostensibly on Sikh religious topics 
that carried Indian political overtones. He was a man of some age 
and experience; he posed as wealthy, and he had a gift of rhetoric. 
During his three week stay at Hong Kong, Gurdit Singh acquired the 
reputation of being devout, especially since he attended the Gurdwara 
regularly and lectured there. The intending Indian passengers for 
Canada were convinced that Gurdit Singh was a thoroughly reliable man 
and they were prepared to put their trust in his leadership. They 
appealed to him to assist them in obtaining passage to British Columbia.³

The Sikhs who desired to go to Vancouver were poor men with 
little formal education, who thought they needed a more influential 
and imposing man to represent them and make their arrangements. 
However, their choice seems to have been ill-advised. Gurdit Singh 
had left his home at Sirhali, District Amritsar in the Punjab, India 
many years before and had carried on business as a contractor in

¹ F. Slocock, Officer on Special Duty, Directorate of Criminal 
Investigation, Govt. of India, Memorandum, Nov. 3, 1914, Exhibit 100, 
File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.

² Ssemonger of the Punjab Police, Evidence, Confidential Proceedings 
of Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, Vol. II, p. 163, File 5028, 
L/P & J/6/1338.

³ Bhan Singh, passenger, Komagata Maru, Statement, Exhibit 28, File 
5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
Malaaya and Singapore, yet when he came to Hong Kong in January 1914 he appeared to have no money. Largely because of this fact requests of the great number of Sikhs in the temple attracted Gurdit Singh's pecuniary attention and he offered to make arrangements for their transportation to Canada. He asked them how much they could afford to pay for the journey, and when they told him they could manage £20 to £25 each he promised to make every effort to obtain a ship for their journey across the Pacific. Towards the end of January 1914 he returned to Singapore where he tried to purchase or hire a vessel. At the same time a notice litho-printed in English, Gurmukhi and Urdu announced the formation of Sri-Guru Nanak Steamship Company and that Gurdit Singh had chartered a steamer to take emigrants directly from India to Vancouver. He sent many letters and notices to zaildars (notables) in the Punjab representing that immigration restrictions in Canada had been removed, and that any one who liked, could go there easily, that he was coming to Calcutta with a steamer, and that those who wanted to go to North America should come with money and assemble at Calcutta. He signed the notice as Director of the Sri Guru Nanak Steamship Company, invited correspondence at the Howrah Gurdwara, Calcutta, and employed one individual, Sadāra Singh, to collect passengers. Concurrently he communicated to the

1 Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong to Colonial Office, London, April 14, 1914, R.O.76, File 879745, Vol. I.
6 Dr. Raghumath Singh, Medical Officer, Komagata Maru, Statement, Exhibit 107, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
7 Isemonger, Memorandum, Exhibit 27, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
Sikh Temple Committee at Hong Kong the details of his project. But the intending emigrants at Hong Kong urged him to come direct and not to go to Calcutta because they wanted to reach Vancouver before the end of March 1914. They expressed their deep gratitude to Gurdit Singh, saying

... we see you are benefiting us a lot by doing this public good. You have done a great deal for your country ....

Brother, we are really very much indebted to you for all this work which you have been good enough to do for us - poor fellows.

Realising the desperate position of his fellow countrymen Gurdit Singh asked them to deposit £10,000 in his account at Hong Kong. But he could neither hire a ship at Singapore nor could he get any deposit from the Sikhs. Besides this he could not sell any shares of his newly formed company. In the third week of March, he returned to Hong Kong without any vessel, but he was, nevertheless, still able to convince his fellow countrymen about his prospective arrangements for chartering a boat and leaving for Vancouver before the end of March 1914. He further erroneously explained to them that the law regarding continuous passage to Canada had already been repealed - that the Canadian government had not made any new laws - and that he had plenty of money and could show to Canadian authorities a sum of two hundred dollars on behalf of each of the Sikh migrants. The poor men were completely deceived by their unscrupulous countryman.

1 Committee, Sikh Temple Hong Kong to Gurdit Singh, telegram, Jan. 29, 1914, Exhibit 31, File 5028, L/F & J/6/1338.
2 Ibid.
3 Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 5.
5 Ibid.
6 Dr. Raghunath Singh, Statement, Exhibit 117, File 5028, L/F & J/6/1338.
Gurdit Singh then began enquiries for hiring a ship from Hong Kong and in this connection he met a shipping agent named A. Bune who was of German origin and a member of a small Japanese Company, Shinli Kishen Go Shi Kaisha. This company consisted of four or five persons, but owned only one ship, the Komagata Maru. Even before the negotiations could be finalised Gurdit Singh started selling tickets at £20 per person. The Hong Kong police became suspicious about Gurdit Singh’s sale of tickets of a vessel which did not exist, at least in his name or under his jurisdiction, and therefore they arrested him. But he was set free because on March 24, 1914 the Komagata Maru was chartered by him for six months for $6,000 Hong Kong dollars. The main terms of the charter were that Gurdit Singh was to pay for the cost of the ship and all miscellaneous charges, such as harbour dues, pilotage and so forth. Besides these he was to supply all food to the passengers. One month’s charter money, $11,000 as down payment was required immediately from Gurdit Singh and the second month’s charter money was to be furnished within one week before he sailed from Hong Kong.

At this time Gurdit Singh hurried the sale of tickets and began to assign various duties to prominent passengers. He appointed Daljit Singh, an educated person who had already worked as assistant editor of the Punjabee Bhain (a monthly publication devoted to the subject

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1 Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 6.
2 At that time the fare from Hong Kong to Vancouver was only £10 or less but Gurdit Singh asked for £20 on the ground that it was necessary that he should receive payment in full not only for the single voyage but also for the return journey, in case the emigrants should be refused admission to Canada. See F. Slocock, Memorandum, Exhibit 100, File 5028, L/F & J/6/1338.
3 Dr. Raghunath Singh, Statement, Exhibit 107, File 5028, L/F & J/6/1338.
4 Slocock, Memorandum, Exhibit 100, File 5028, L/F & J/6/1338.
of female education at Ferozepore\textsuperscript{1}) as his secretary and he authorized Pohlo Ram to bring passengers from Manila to Nagasaki. Bir Singh was appointed as Assistant Secretary and was sent in advance to Shanghai to collect passengers.\textsuperscript{2}

Gurdit Singh applied to the Government of Hong Kong to grant "Passenger Certificate" to his passengers. Before complying with the request the Hong Kong authorities, however, confidentially enquired from the Canadian government if the passengers on the Komagata Maru would be admitted. But the Dominion government maintained its silence in spite of repeated telegraphic reminders.\textsuperscript{3} Faced with what he considered to be the delaying tactics used by the Hong Kong authorities, Gurdit Singh issued legal notices through his solicitors, Messrs. Wilkinson and Grist, that he would sue the Government of Hong Kong for damages.\textsuperscript{4} The Hong Kong authorities, ultimately on April 4, 1914, issued the requisite Passenger Certificate for legally they had no authority to refuse it.\textsuperscript{5} However, the Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong stated the situation clearly to Gurdit Singh's solicitors:

\begin{quote}
... I am directed to inform you that the passenger certificate has now been signed, but that does not mean that passengers will be allowed to land in Canada.\textsuperscript{6}
\end{quote}

Under these circumstances the Komagata Maru started from Hong Kong on April 4, 1914 at 5.30 p.m. displaying the Sikh religious slogan

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} J. Slattery and Isemonger, An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy, 1913-15, p. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Isemonger, Memorandum, Exhibit 27, File 5028, L/F & J/6/1338.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Governor Hong Kong to Secretary of State for Colonies, April 8, 1914, C.O. 129/410/15846.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Dr. Raghunath Singh, Statement, Exhibit 107, File 5028, L/F & J/6/1338.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Governor Hong Kong to Secretary of State for Colonies, April 8, 1914, C.O. 129/410/15846.
\item \textsuperscript{6} Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong to Messrs. Wilkinson and Grist, April 4, 1914, C.O. 129/410/15846.
\end{itemize}
of 'Sat Sri A-kal'\(^1\) meaning God is True and Great. Afterwards, on April 8, the Governor General of Canada did inform the Hong Kong government\(^2\) about Canadian immigration restrictions and these were conveyed to Gurdit Singh's solicitors\(^3\) in Hong Kong but no fruitful action was taken. In the meantime the vessel arrived in Shanghai on April 8 with 165 passengers aboard. Here 111 passengers joined the party and the boat left Shanghai on April 14 arriving at Moji on April 18.\(^4\) At that time an urgent demand was made by the owners of the vessel for the payment of 22,000 dollars charter money which they had not received. There were other problems as well. The Komagata Maru was a light ship, so additional cargo was needed to give her stability. For this Gurdit Singh decided to buy a greater quantity of coal than was needed for the entire voyage and he hoped to realize some financial return by selling the surplus quantity at Vancouver.\(^5\) But at the time in Moji, Gurdit Singh was required to pay 22,000 dollars charter money, 10,500 dollars for the coal and 2,000 dollars for miscellaneous expenses.\(^6\) He called an urgent meeting of the passengers in his Sikh temple in the ship, a cabin in the Komagata Maru was reserved for Sikh prayers and congregational meetings\(^7\) and made a long speech. He said that he had only 17,000 dollars and the ship could not go until the balance, i.e. 17,500 dollars,

\(^1\) Dr. Raghunath Singh, Statement, Exhibit 107, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
\(^2\) Governor General, Canada to Governor, Hong Kong, telegram, April 8, 1914, C.O. 129/410/15846.
\(^3\) Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong, Notification No. 249, April 9, 1914, C.O. 129/410/15846.
\(^5\) Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 10.
\(^6\) Slocock, Memorandum, Exhibit 100, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
was raised. He reminded them about the great sacrifices of Sikhs in the past and stressed the importance of sacrifice at that very time as well. He appealed to them to give him all the money they had and he made a solemn promise to return the money at Vancouver. Gurdit Singh appealed to the Sikhs through their religious beliefs and managed to extract from them everything they had. The deluded passengers therefore, contributed a further sum of 12,000 dollars.\(^1\) The charter money and port dues were paid; but the coal merchant agreed to accept 2,500 dollars as part payment and the balance of 8,000 dollars stood over the security of the vessel.\(^2\) In this way Gurdit Singh solved his immediate financial difficulty. Another contingent of 86 passengers joined the group and the boat reached Yokohama on May 2, 1914. The stay at Yokohama was only a short one, nevertheless Gurdit Singh managed to recruit another group of 14 passengers. There were 376 passengers on board when the boat left Yokohama on May 3, 1914 for the Pacific Coast of Canada. All the passengers were from the Punjab; 25 were Muslims but the others were all Sikhs.\(^3\)

News about the prospective historic voyage of the Komagata Maru appeared in the various press reports from the Far East. The China Press of Shanghai commented that the passengers of the Komagata Maru proposed to "test once and for all the right of British subjects in India to emigrate to Canada." It further quoted Gurdit Singh as saying:

> If the British Imperial Government endorses the publicity of Hindu exclusion from the colonies it will precipitate the fiercest revolution in history.

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1 Dr. Raghunath Singh, Statement, Exhibit 107, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
2 M. Paske Smith, British Consul at Shimonoseki to Conyngham Greene, British Ambassador in Japan, May 2, 1914, File 1799, L/P & J/6/1310.
4 China Press (Shanghai), May 12, 1914.
The *Osaka Mainichi* (Osaka) reported that the Indian party included all sorts of people, statesmen, teachers and ministers, and it seemed that they were going to do something about their complete exclusion from Canada.¹ The *Manila Times* had already reported that a hundred Sikhs would take their holy book and present themselves for admission into British Columbia as a Sikh religious mission like Christian priests.² The *Hindu* (Lahore) fleshed the news that if these Sikh gentlemen were permitted to land they would then arrange themselves in procession and pay a visit to the Gurdwaras there. It further commented:

> If however they are not allowed to land they will compel the Canadian authorities to accord a similar treatment to Christian missionaries also. This we think is a very reasonable treatment to the British Columbian authorities' regard for law and equity.³

The British Consul at Manila also informed the Canadian government that Indians planned their admission in the guise of a religious party.⁴ Therefore, the Dominion government knew that the Sikh religious mission was nothing more than a fraudulent attempt to evade Canadian immigration laws.⁵ However, the Dominion authorities had decided on their course of action. Although according to section 2(g)VI of the Immigration Act, 1910, "Priests and Ministers of Religion" were permitted to enter Canada as non-immigrants nevertheless the burden of proof rested upon immigrants claiming such right.⁶ With this in mind the Dominion

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¹ *Osaka Mainichi* (Osaka), April 21, 1914.
² *Manila Times*, April 6, 1914.
³ *Hindu* (Lahore), May 5, 1914, Punjab Newspaper Report 1914.
⁵ Malcolm Reid to Scott, May 5, 1914, File 1799, L/P & J/6/1310.
government had already instructed the immigration officials in British
Columbia not to allow the Komagata Maru passengers to land.¹

Malcolm Reid, Chief of the Canadian Immigration Department at
Vancouver, was alarmed to know about the voyage of the Komagata Maru
via press reports which appeared in London through German sources and
he hurriedly informed the Canadian authorities at Ottawa:

... if this party is allowed to land, Gurdit Singh
intends to organise a regular emigration service
between India and Canada.²

He then took all precautionary steps to make sure that the Komagata Maru
passengers should not be able to land. He made enquiries from the crew
and passengers³ of boats coming from and going to the Far East and he
sent an urgent wireless message to the captain of the Komagata Maru
on May 5, 1914:

Kindly wire me expected time arrival. Necessary you
secure clearance immigration office before Customs
Department can enter your vessel.⁴

The Komagata Maru was expected to arrive at Vancouver Island on May 21
and the Canadian immigration officials were alerted in this regard.

Meanwhile the Indian community in British Columbia was delighted
to hear the news of the expected arrival. The Vancouver Sun flashed
the news:

Furore among the Hindus about ship. Vancouver East
Indians are excited over news of coming immigrant steamer.
Yesterday the Sikh temple which is vortex of Hindu whirlpool
here, gyrated with some unusual effervescence.⁵

¹ Canada, House of Commons Debate, April 17, 1914, p. 2739.
² Malcolm Reid to Cory, telegram, April 16, 1914, File 1799 L/P & J/6/1310.
³ Malcolm Reid especially went to Victoria in order to see W. H. Royds,
the British Vice Consul at Manila, who was on his way to England. See
Malcolm Reid to Scott, May 5, 1914, File 1799, L/P & J/6/1310.
⁴ Malcolm Reid to Captain S.S. Komagata Maru, wireless message, May 5, 1914,
File 1799, L/P & J/6/1310.
⁵ Vancouver Sun, May 11, 1914.
The more excited part of the Indian community represented by H. Rahim and Raja Singh, with the help of their socialist solicitor, James Edward Bird, immediately hired a strong launch, Sitara Queen. Their intention was to intercept the Komagata Maru and advise her to come to Port Alberni. In this way they desired to offset the effect of Order in Council (PC. 2642) which prohibited the landing of artisans and labourers at 43 ports of entry in British Columbia.

However Malcolm Reid and his colleagues at Vancouver suspected that the Komagata Maru might be in a position to land her passengers in some unfrequented bay of the West Coast and they were careful to guard against such an occurrence. The custom officials at Port Alberni were equally cautioned and they too took the necessary steps to make sure that none of the passengers should land. But the local Indians were quite prepared to deal with any obstacle that was put in the way of the ship’s docking, and much of this unfortunate affair might have been prevented had they been successful in their attempt to contact the Komagata Maru which arrived instead at William Head on May 21, 1914. The port authorities there put the boat under immediate quarantine, and the quarantine officer, Dr. Nelson, examined the papers of the vessel and raised the first objection.

1 James Edward Bird acted as defence counsel in the Bhagwan Sing case.
2 Colonist, May 21, 1914.
3 Hopkinson to Cory, May 27, 1914, C.O. 42/979/22190.
4 Fort Alberni was not mentioned in PC. 2642 and the Dominion government realising it as possible point of entry hurriedly issued an Order in Council banning the entry of skilled artisans, skilled and unskilled labourers through Port of Alberni and Port of New Port. See PC. 1389, May 29, 1914.
5 Province, May 22, 1914.
that the boat had no bill of health from the last Japanese port from which she had been cleared. He then appealed to Ottawa for further instructions in this matter and the Dominion authorities ordered that the boat should be moved to Vancouver and on the way the quarantine officer should administer any necessary vaccinations to the passengers. In this way the Komagata Maru with her variety of Punjabi passengers reached Vancouver on May 23, 1914. A correspondent of the *Victoria Times* who managed to go on board at Victoria observed:

They presented a very brilliant spectacle as the many different coloured turbans moved quickly and silently about. The men were dressed in complete European out-fits, others wearing riding breeches and helmets, numbers with Mohammedan red caps passed tightly down on their thick black hair, still others in native costumes and a few wearing khaki uniforms which they had used when serving in the army. The majority of men had served in the British army, and they are a tall, handsome lot. They seem superior to the class of Hindus which have already come to this province. They stand erect, and move with an alert action. All their suits are well pressed, and their turbans spotlessly clean. The most of them know a little of the English language and some of them converse in it remarkably well.

The *Komagata Maru* was ordered by the immigration authorities to anchor in Vancouver harbour and the Japanese owners of the ship immediately requested legal representatives from Messrs. C. Gardner Johnson and Company of Vancouver who were to act as the owner's agents. The harbour authorities had already set up a patrol to make sure that none of the Indians on board would gain surreptitious entry into Canada.

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1 *Province*, May 22, 1914.
3 Hopkinson to Cory, May 27, 1914, C.O.42/979/22190.
4 *Victoria Times*, May 23, 1914.
5 *World*, May 22, 1914.
6 Superintendent of Immigration, Statement of Incidents connected with the arrival of *Komagata Maru* at Vancouver, C.O.42/980/31476.
and the ultimate fate of the ship and its passengers was now to become a subject of great controversy.

There were, of course, several points on which the Canadian government could refuse to allow the admission of Indians into British Columbia. The first was the medical examination. If this proved to be unsuccessful the authorities could apply the Order in Council which prohibited the entry of artisans and labourers. The third point was the Order in Council requiring every Asian coming to Canada to travel by direct and continuous passage from the country of nativity, and to have $200 in his possession at the time of his arrival. With all of these possibilities before him, the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Roche, could simply declare: "We are going to enforce the law", and have no doubt that the Indians would indeed be kept out. When the passengers were medically examined a number of them were rejected on medical grounds. Following this there was a civil examination where it was necessary that the Board of Enquiry should sit in judgment in each individual case.

The passengers, by this time anxious and confused about their rights, decided to have legal counsel and hired Messrs. McNeill, Bird, McDonald and Darling, Barristers of Vancouver, who immediately wrote to the immigration authorities in Vancouver:

Please take notice that we are acting for 376 Hindus on board ship and require and claim the privilege and right of being present on all examinations and boards of inquiry in regard to their right to enter Canada.

Barrister Bird further requested the immigration officials to permit him to go to the boat to consult Gurdit Singh and his passengers,

but this was refused. The event was fully publicised in the press
and James Edward Bird was quoted as saying:

This tyranny is more like Russian tyranny, than any
I have yet come across. Here is Gurdit Singh with
almost 100,000 at stake on this trip, kept out in
the harbor along with his fellows, and I am not allowed
to see him to get instructions from him, to give him
legal advice and assistance in his difficulty. He
is even more a prisoner than if he were in the peni-
tentiary.¹

H. Rahim (one of the Indian immigrants at Vancouver) deploring
the action of the immigration authorities, said:

To seek admission to Canada is in no sense a crime,
and yet the Hindus on board the ship are not given
an opportunity of seeing their counsel which privilege
is not denied the worst of felons or criminals.²

Gurdit Singh demanded the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire
into the whole question of migration within the British Empire,³ but
this demand was bluntly refused by the Dominion government.⁴ The
immigration officials continued their board of inquiries and Gurdit
Singh made continued complaints and threats about the delaying
devices of immigration authorities and their involving him in
financial loss.⁵ He then demanded the immediate supply of provisions
as well⁶ and if these were denied he threatened that he would be
compelled to wire to the Governor General of Canada and His Majesty
the King⁷ to complain about this wrong treatment. He refused in

¹ Province, May 27, 1914.
² Hindustanee (Vancouver), June 1, 1914.
⁴ Gujarati (Bombay), June 17, 1914, Bombay Newspaper Report, 1914.
every way to cooperate with the immigration board of enquiry and they were finally obliged to make some concession. The immigration authorities then permitted the counsel for Indians to interview Gurdit Singh and his secretary Daljit Singh, in their launch. 1 In consequence of this meeting Barrister Bird submitted a proposal to the immigration officials that Gurdit Singh would provide a proper detention shed to house his passengers on shore while the question of their entry was being determined. He also promised to furnish the immigration department with a boat for all passengers ordered to be deported. He himself wished to immediately return to India. 2 But the immigration officials thought that such proposals would show the government's weakness and might lead to riots in British Columbia. The authorities also observed that to find a building to house 376 persons and to guard them during the course of complicated and lengthy litigation proceedings would be difficult, dangerous and expensive. And they further expressed their reluctance to accept a proposal which might give the detenus a chance to go on bail or otherwise frustrate the immigration laws. Besides, the immigration authorities could foresee that if at that time Gurdit Singh was allowed to return to India alone, it would cause a hostile storm against the Indian, British and Canadian governments. 3 Accordingly the immigration authorities refused to accept Gurdit Singh's proposal. But Gurdit Singh was not so easily subdued, and he sent the following telegram to the King:

No provision since four days. Reid refuses supply. 4 Charterer and passengers starving. Kept prisoners.

2 Malcolm Reid to Scott, telegram, June 5, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 3.
3 Ibid.
4 Gurdit Singh to H.M. the King, telegram, June 5, 1914, File 3601 L/P & J/6/1325.
He sent another telegram to the Governor General of Canada saying:

Reid disallowed my landing, have coal to sell. Can't take more cargo - suffering heavy losses and starvation. Charter money eleven thousand bound to pay before 11th. Can't arrange unless go ashore, otherwise lose ship. Government responsible for damages. Reid disallows conversation with any body. Given many notices. No response.¹

The immigration authorities, however, were under no obligation to feed the passengers; it was entirely the responsibility of Gurdit Singh. According to the conditions of the charter:

Charterers shall pay all charges and expenses arising through taking steerage passengers, and shall supply all provisions, water, galleys, and cooks, fittings and medicines, medical stores and also doctor .²

But because of the peculiar nature of the situation, the Canadian government did decide to furnish the provisions.³ Gurdit Singh then demanded the additional supply of 100 bags of flour, ginger, cabbage, purified butter, milk, and even fifty live sheep or goats, one hundred live fowls, two hundred boxes of cigarettes, red pepper, spices, etc.; and crates of eggs.⁴ The immigration officers refused to comply with this demand. Gurdit Singh and his passengers protested against this refusal and declared they would go on a hunger strike. They pretended to occupy themselves completely in their religious singing and dancing led by their holy men.⁵ But the authorities soon discovered that the passengers were fasting during the day and feasting at night⁶ and therefore their threat did not work. On

¹ Charterer of Komagata Maru to Governor General, Canada, telegram, June 7, 1914, Documents on Canadian External Relations 1909-18, p.647.
² Cited in Hopkinson to Cory, June 6, 1914, C.O. 42/979/23512.
³ Governor General, Canada to Secretary of State for Colonies, telegram, June 10, 1914, C.O. 886/7.
⁴ Malcolm Reid to Scott, telegram, June 5, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol.3.
⁵ The Times, June 6, 1914.
June 8 when the passengers requested food it seemed that Gurdit Singh had changed his mind and had decided to be more reasonable in his demand.

In the meantime the charter money to be paid to the Vancouver agents of the owners of the Komagata Maru were due, and the balance of the money owing for the coal had to be paid immediately. Since Gurdit Singh was unable to meet either obligation he appealed to the Indian immigrants in British Columbia to help him. They, in turn, formed a special committee and H. Rahim, one of the Indian immigrant leaders with socialist sympathies, was elected chairman. In order to raise money to pay for the overdue charter of the Komagata Maru they held a meeting which was addressed by H. Rahim, Bhag Singh, the local Sikh priest and president of the Khalsa Diwan Society, and Balwant Singh, another Sikh priest. The speakers condemned British policy towards Indians, especially their exclusion from the self-governing colonies. They earnestly appealed for money so that the boat might be retained and resolved that the 376 passengers should be helped in their efforts to get into Canada. H. Rahim spoke with a good deal of exasperation about the Vancouver newspapers and branded them as the "dirty lying press of the city". He stated that the Komagata Maru was not chartered by Gurdit Singh but by all her passengers in cooperation. Therefore, he emphasized that the Indian immigrants should raise money to help the passengers because they had used all their money in the additional expense caused by the delaying devices of the immigration authorities. At the end of the meeting a resolution condemning Canadian injustice was passed and copies of the resolution were sent to the Indian National Congress.

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1 Sun, June 9, 1914.
2 Sun, June 1, 1914.
and the rulers of Patiala and Habhah. 1 By the second week of June Bhag Singh and R. Rehman got the chart of the Komagata Maru transferred to them after paying the due charter money.

The other immigrant leader, Dr. Sunder Singh from Victoria, paid a hurried visit to the Canadian capital to appeal to the Dominion government to allow the passengers of the Komagata Maru to land. 2 He was interviewed by Dr. Roche, the Minister of the Interior, and Blair, a senior official of the Dominion Immigration Department, on May 29, 1914. In addition to his verbal representation, Dr. Sunder Singh presented a two-page memorandum making the point that the Indians on board the Komagata Maru had left Hong Kong unaware of the Canadian Order in Council debarring artisans and labourers. He said that the Order did not really apply to them in any case, since they were mostly ex-servicemen or men of independent means and all were British subjects. He further stated that they should be granted bail and allowed to join their friends ashore. He deplored the fact that Indians as immigrants were discriminated against by the Dominion government despite their British status and the rights it conferred. In this way he tried to prove that Indian immigration should be made a subject of full enquiry. The purpose of such enquiry should be the establishment of the Indians' right to enter and to move about in Canada freely. 3

But Dr. Sunder Singh did not make a favourable impression on either the Minister of the Interior (Dr. Roche) or the Immigration Departmental representative (Blair). They found his statements

1 For a full account of the meeting, see Hopkinson to Cory, June 1, 1914, C.O. 42/973/23137.
2 World, May 27, 1914.
3 Full text of Dr. Sunder Singh's Memorandum, May 29, 1914 is available in Department of External Affairs, Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations 1909-18, p. 646.
inexplicit, his manner evasive, and his credentials, as a spokesman for the Indians detained on board the Komagata Maru, at the best very dubious. Blair in particular was convinced that Sunder Singh represented no one but himself and that his officiousness on behalf of the detainees was a means of regaining favour with those religious purists of the Sikh community whom he had offended by shaving off his beard. His first plea was that the detainees should be admitted to bail because they were put to expense in staying on board ship; because they wished to be with their friends ashore; and because they deserved better treatment, as British army ex-servicemen, than detention.

His second main plea was that in the matter of immigration generally, a specific policy should be enunciated in respect of Hindus' entry, that might be worked out in some general conference of interested parties, and that would replace the unsatisfactory sequence of ad-hoc decisions made by the Canadian authorities.

These plans did not impress Blair or Roche. They suspected that Sunder Singh's real objective was the Immigration Act itself, and that he hoped for some court finding which would declare the Act to be invalid through the attack on British subjects; therefore they could only infer that what Singh ultimately hoped for and was even then working towards was the freedom for all Hindus to come and go in Canada as they pleased. 1

Having been unsuccessful with the Department of the Interior at Ottawa, Dr. Sunder Singh approached newspaper men, politicians, ministers of various churches and all those to whom he had access and who he believed might have some influence in forming public

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1 Full text of Dr. Roche's and Blair's Memorandum, May 29, 1914, re conversation with Dr. Sunder Singh is available in Borden Papers, Vol. 40.
opinion for or against the case of Indians in Canada. He toured Toronto and Montreal and addressed church groups and the press. His main appeal was in the name of Christianity for support to fellow human beings, and his argument was that Canada needed farmers and there were fine Sikh farmers present on the Komagata Maru trying hard to enter Canada. However Dr. Sunder Singh did not succeed in securing any support either from the church or the press in Eastern Canada.

The Indian migration question was debated in the Canadian Senate on May 26, 1914 when Senator Casgrain asked what steps had been taken with regard to Indians on the Komagata Maru. The senator expressed his fears of retaliation in India where the English population was only 200,000 and he felt that when all sorts of people were coming to Canada from eastern ports, it was awkward to refuse admission to Indians. The leader of the government (Senator Lougheed) replied that the government was quite concerned about the situation and the subject could not be overlooked.¹

The subject of Indian immigration was discussed on June 1 in the Canadian House of Commons when Oliver (Opposition spokesman on immigration) stated that Canada was mistress of her own house and took her own authority and responsibility of deciding who would be admitted to the privileges and rights² of citizenship within her borders. He blamed the Dominion government for its inability to enforce its regulations against Indians at the end of 1913.³ Dr. Roche replied that it was the faulty nature of Orders in Council passed by himself (Oliver) which resulted in the Courts' decision

¹ Debates of the Senate, May 26, 1914, pp. 506-507.
² Canada, House of Commons Debates, June 1, 1914, p. 4562.
³ Ibid., p. 4564.
against the government. He added that the faulty Order in Council of the late government had since been revised and strengthened. Sir Wilfrid Laurier (leader of the opposition) replied by suggesting an entirely different course of action:

The only way in which the difficulty is to be overcome is, so far as possible, by diplomacy; the law should be the last resort to be taken advantage of. We have an arrangement with the Japanese Government that has worked well. Last year my hon. friend the member for Vancouver suggested that we should have some similar arrangement with the Chinese Government. I wish that we had some arrangement also, with the Government of India. It would be well if the Governments of China and India would undertake to do so as has been done in the case of Japan; that is, restrict their own emigration.

The view was supported on June 8 by the Montreal Star. But before this on June 6, the opposition spokesman on immigration (Oliver) enquired if the Canadian government was enforcing the Order in Council passed some time ago, which absolutely prohibited the entry of even white people from the Pacific Coast ports of Canada; and if so, there should not be any delay in deciding the Indians' case. Dr. Roche replied that the Order in Council was being enforced against Indians just as it would be against any other class of people. He added, however, that the proceedings of the Boards of Enquiry in each case were resulting in long delays about the final decisions. But the Minister of the Interior (Dr. Roche) could find no reply when the opposition spokesman (Oliver) further observed:

I saw it mentioned in the papers that while this vessel (Komagata Maru) was lying at anchor, a shipload of Chinese were admitted into British Canada.

1 Canada, House of Commons Debates, June 1, 1914, p. 4564.
2 Ibid., p. 4565.
3 Montreal Star, June 8, 1914.
4 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, June 6, 1914, p. 4955.
Columbia. If this Order in Council is effective only against white men and Hindus, and not effective against Chinamen, and if it is in accordance with the law as it stands, I wish to repeat the suggestion I made before that while the House is in session, means should be taken to alter the law so that an anomaly shall not be continued.¹

On the other hand, the Indian press not only justified but praised Gurdit Singh's efforts. The Tribune (Lahore) commented:

... by undertaking the expensive continuous journey the Indians only sought fair-play even in an apparently unfair game. To deny fair-play would be to further expose the weakness of the British policy.²

The Hindu (Lahore) while writing an editorial on "the question of the honour of our Indians in Canada" observed:

It must also be remembered that it is this humiliating treatment accorded to Indians by colonies which is largely instrumental in causing unrest in this country.³

The Punjabee (Lahore) criticised the Canadian claim for excluding Englishmen as well as Indians. It branded this statement as hypocritical and observed:

... no English man has been excluded because he was an English man. The fact that Indians are excluded not for the reasons for which English men and other Europeans are excluded, but because they are Indians, is the crux of the matter.⁴

Comparing the right of admission of the Chinese and Japanese the Tribune asked:

... why a faithful, loyal and enterprising body of British subjects are restricted and humiliated in the British Empire while aliens enjoy better privileges.⁵

The weekly Desabhi-Mani clearly warned Indians that

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¹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, June 6, 1914, p. 4955.
² Tribune, May 16, 1914.
⁵ Tribune, June 6, 1914.
The Canadians will not rest satisfied until they do all that lies in their power to drive Indians out.† The Desh (Lahore) reminded Indian masses of their duty to protest against Canadian injustice and oppression and invited them to hold public meetings to bring this to the notice of the government. The Hindu (Lahore) denounced the conduct of the Canadian government as disgusting and the devices adopted by it to shut out Indians from Canada as unstatesmanlike and a disgrace to a civilized government. The Leader observed that the question of rights and status of His Majesty's subjects in different parts of the Empire was an Imperial one which had now assumed a serious aspect. So it supported Gurdit Singh's demand for the appointment of a Royal Commission to settle the question of Indian migration once and for all in a satisfactory manner. The weekly Gujrati Punch (Ahmadabad) stated that Indians were asked to be proud of the British Empire and to discharge their imperial responsibilities but it questioned whether or not the Imperial authorities by their present policies would allow Indians to exercise their imperial rights and privileges. However, one weekly paper Shifa (Bijnor) took exception to these views. It told the Indians they were mistaken in their belief that because they were British subjects they had equal rights with Canadians. It added that Canada was a self-governing white colony and it was not likely that the British government would offend millions of white Canadian people for the sake of those four hundred Indians on the Komagata Maru.

† Desabhi-Mani (Madras), June 2, 1914, Madras Newspaper Report, 1914.
Similarly the biweekly *West Coast Spectator* (Calicut) thought that the Imperial government could not take any action against Canada in favour of Indians because "blood is thicker than water". It further put this question to Indians:

... is it not time for us to consider whether it is not derogatory to our self-respect to thrust ourselves on a country which has no kindly feelings towards us and to whom our presence is as unwelcome as that of a wild beast.¹

The *Indu Prakash* (Bombay) commented:

The name of Mr. Gurdit Singh will have to be bracketed with that of Mr. Gandhi when the history of the struggle of British Indian citizens to secure from the Colonies a recognition of their elementary rights of British citizenship comes to be written.²

It further remarked that Gurdit Singh had imposed on India a deep debt of gratitude by putting British Indian citizenship before civilization and justice.³ The daily *Hindu* (Madras) remarked that the *Komagata Maru* incident had brought into prominence the intense racial prejudice and hatred entertained by British Columbians.⁴

The monthly magazine, *Indian Emigrant*, refuted the Canadian fear of riot or bloodshed in case the Indians were allowed to land in British Columbia. Such action, it maintained, could not take place unless the stage was purposely set for those demonstrations. It further remarked that if there were any disturbance the police could cope with it as usual.⁵

These editorial comments, together with the news of the incident itself, instigated a wave of public protests throughout the Punjab

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¹ *West Coast Spectator*, June 17, 1914, Madras Newspaper Report, 1914.
³ Ibid.
⁵ *Indian Emigrant* (Madras), August 1914, p. 25.
in the summer of 1914. Citizens of Lahore held a public meeting and registered their strong opposition to the Canadian government's refusal to admit the Komagata Maru passengers.¹ On June 13, 1914, another public meeting was held at Tarn Taran (a Sikh holy place in Amritsar district) to sympathise with Gurdit Singh and his passengers, and the Indian government was requested to press the Dominion government to allow admission to those unfortunate men confined aboard ship in Vancouver harbour.² Similar public meetings expressing sympathy with the Komagata Maru passengers and indignation against the Canadian government's refusal to allow them to land were held at Sargodha, Farukha, Bannu, Peshawar, Gandaespur, Ambala and Delhi in June and July; and the Viceroy of India was requested to endorse the cause of these men. The meetings were large and charged with emotion. People of all political views forgot their particular interests and more and more became united to voice a common and deeply felt grievance against white supremacy and discrimination.³

The Indian immigrant community were equally active. Their monthly paper, The Hindustanee, carried a lengthy editorial welcoming Gurdit Singh and his passengers on board the Komagata Maru and deplored the attitude of the Canadian immigration authorities.⁴ The paper also published a lengthy article (supposed to have been sent by a law firm in Eastern Canada to James Edward Bird, the counsel for Indians on "Exclusion of Hindus"). The writer tried to justify the Indian immigration on legal, social, economic and ethical bases.⁵

¹ Chairman, Public Meeting of Citizens of Lahore to Private Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy, telegram, June 9, 1914, C.O.42/985/27935.
² Chairman, Public Meeting at Tarn Taran to H.E. the Viceroy, telegram, June 13, 1914, C.O.42/985/37636.
³ Details of these public meetings, their nature, resolutions with the reports of the Government of the Punjab and Government of India are available in F.R.O. C.O.42/985/23337; 27893; 31402; 32242; 40135.
⁴ Hindustanee (Vancouver), June 1914, p. 2.
⁵ Ibid., pp. 12-14.
The London branch of the All India Moslem League took up the matter with the Colonial Office in London. It warned that the illiberal treatment of Indians aboard the Komagata Maru would give rise to an intense feeling of indignation against Canada, and Indians would blame the Imperial government for failing to protect them in the colonies under the British flag.¹

Clearly the issues arising from this situation were of vital concern to Britain's continued presence and wellbeing in India yet the Indian government maintained its old policy of inaction and indifference. When the Komagata Maru was still on her way to Canada official opinion seemed to prevail in Simla² that the Indians were deliberately courting trouble and should not have left Hong Kong in view of the restrictive Canadian immigration policies.³ At this time the Government of India, through its gazette notification, issued instructions to all provincial and local governments to warn all intending immigrants to Canada about restrictive measures and the possible risks involved in any efforts to land on Canadian soil.⁴

Although the Viceroy of India (Lord Hardinge) could sympathize with the plight of Gurdit Singh and his passengers, nevertheless he expressed his reluctance to be of any assistance to them.⁵ On the one hand he accepted the absolute right of the self-governing colonies over their immigration policy which aimed at the exclusion of Indians. Yet on the other hand he found it difficult to reconcile these principles with the position of Indian subjects of the British

¹ London All-India Moslem League to Colonial Office, June 19, 1914, C.O. 886/7.
² Simla was the summer capital of India during that period.
³ Tribune, April 29, 1914.
⁴ Gazette of India, May 9, 1914, File 1739, I/F & J/5/1310.
⁵ Province, June 2, 1914.
Empire. Indians claimed a right to be let in; Canada claimed the right to keep them out. Such strongly opposing views must of necessity lead to conflict; and Lord Hardinge expressed his fear that serious trouble might erupt as a result of the Komagata Maru affair. Even among those educated Indians who had no desire to emigrate to self-governing colonies the feeling was that of strong resentment towards restrictions put on their less educated countrymen, which they interpreted as an indication of an Indian's position of inequality with other subjects of the Crown. Lord Hardinge observed these attitudes, and on July 9 informed the Secretary of State for India (Lord Crewe) that this issue had caused a good deal of agitation in India. In his urgent telegraphic correspondence the Viceroy expressed his concern about possible repercussions connected with this event:

... there is no doubt a very strong desire among less educated people, more especially of the Punjab, to have the right of emigration to Canada and its refusal must produce bitter feelings among the Sikhs and other martial races of that great Province ....

The efforts of Indians to migrate to Canada continued to have a hostile reception in British Columbia. In March 1914, the Saturday Sunset published pictures of some northern Indians, principally the labouring classes, goat-herds, tea pickers, curio-sellers, shoe makers, coolie women and children, grain merchants and even the Indian Goddess Siva. The headlines accompanying these pictures posed this question to the Canadian public: "Do we need them in British Columbia?" This seemed to express the mood of the public on the Canadian Pacific
Coast which was becoming increasingly more bitter against Indian immigration. Speaking of the Komagata Maru's adventure a Canadian who had lived in India remarked that if the ship and her passengers were sent back from whence they came, the result of such an action would have great effect in checking further immigration efforts on the part of Indians. In this way the failure of this scheme would serve as a blessing in disguise. The British Columbian premier, Sir Richard McBride, also favoured such action and he was quoted as insisting on Canada's right to exclude Indians. He expressed his desire to strengthen the hands of the Dominion government in its efforts to oppose further Asiatic immigration. The Victoria Times expressed its opposition to Indian immigration for economic reasons and warned that the presence of Indians in large numbers would create a disturbance of a most dangerous character. Thus when the provincial premier (McBride) demanded that policy be set for the complete exclusion of Asiatics, he had the unanimous support of the provincial legislature. One could indeed observe that the people of British Columbia presented an absolutely united front against the landing of Indians.

While the passengers of the ill-fated Komagata Maru remained calm and continued their determined and systematic efforts to break down the existing immigration laws the hostility of Canadians against the Indians continued to rise and the Indians' cause seemed more and more hopeless. The Dominion government stated that it had no

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1 Sir Cecil Spring Rice, British Ambassador at Washington (D.C.) to Borden, February 2, 1914, Borden Papers, Vol. 32.
2 Quoted in World, May 27, 1914.
3 News Advertiser, May 28, 1914.
4 The Times, May 23, 1914.
5 Victoria Times, May 23, 1914.
6 The Times, May 25, 1914.
7 Ibid., May 29, 1914.
intention of permitting violation of its own Orders in Council by Gurdit Singh,¹ and the newspapers of British Columbia were flooded with letters protesting against the admission of the Komagata Maru passengers.² The Sun³ summed up the prevailing mood of fear on the Canadian Pacific Coast in a front page cartoon:

Oriental Labor: If you don't let me ashore I'll refuse to take anything to eat.

White Labor: And if we let you ashore, I won't be able to get anything to eat anyway.

A doctor from Moose Jaw (Dr. H.G. Sutherland) suggested that the immigration officers at Vancouver might be able to solve the question. He was quoted as saying:

In investigation of the hookworm question it was found that 60 to 80 per cent of the total population of India showed infection with the worm .... Investigation at the port of San Francisco showed that 10,777 out of 22,555 Oriental immigrants were harbouring this infection. If this ship-load of Hindus showed as widespread infection as it is quite evident from the experience of other nations, then they could be turned back as undesirable without further question.⁴

Such widespread adverse publicity which reflected the Canadian people's angry attitude towards immigrating Asians made it practically impossible for any Canadian government to relax restrictions concerning the admission of Komagata Maru Indians. Even the Indians' demand for the appointment of a Royal Commission to review the whole question was totally unacceptable to the Dominion government.⁵ It was simple and natural enough that British subjects from India should have equal rights and privileges with other British subjects in Canada.

¹ World, May 27, 1914.
² The Times, May 29, 1914.
³ Sun, June 5, 1914.
⁴ Ibid., May 29, 1914; and Daily News-Advertiser, May 29, 1914.
⁵ Gurati, June 16, 1914, Bombay Newspaper Report, 1915; and The Times, May 28, 1914.
But the problem was that no pressure from London or Delhi could wisely be exerted upon the Dominion government to enforce these rights. As long as there had been no crucial incident to deal with, all governments had been able to make pretence that the question of rights was being adequately dealt with. The arrival of the Komagata Maru, however, brought the whole problem into focus and authorities were faced with finding a practical solution to a potentially explosive situation. One the one hand they had to consider the British citizenship of the Indians and the threat to the Empire that their harsh treatment would cause. On the other hand they could not ignore the prejudice of Canadians against the Indians and Canada's insistence that Indians be kept out. What could be done to solve such an awkward problem?

One writer in The Times advanced the unique argument that:

... it is conceivable that the time has come when Great Britain would welcome the annexation of Canada to the United States, as this course would enable Great Britain to save the fall of India, and the loss of Canada would be immaterial considering the great benefits of preserving the Empire.1

Though such a preposterous proposition could not be worth considering by the Dominion or Imperial governments, nonetheless it showed what a complicated and serious situation the Komagata Maru with her 376 Indian passengers had created.

The Vancouver Sun blamed the Canadian administration for the entire immigration crisis. It deplored the ambiguity of the Orders in Council and particularly the way in which the continuous passage and artisans and labourers clauses were applied to Indians. In its editorial under the caption, "AN ASTONISHING POSITION", it stated:

Everybody knows that this order in council is intended for exclusion only of the Hindus and everybody must

1 The Times, May 29, 1914.
recognise it is a cheap shoddy attempt in an undignified way to accomplish an end which the government should have the courage and vigor to secure openly and by a frank and unmistakable statute.\textsuperscript{1}

But The Times, Morning Post and other leading journals in Britain asserted that the matter of emigration and immigration from and into the self-governing colonies rested with the Dominions affected, who were fully entitled to act under the supreme law of self-preservation to keep their lands white men's countries.\textsuperscript{2}

The editor of The World (Louis D. Taylor) wrote a front page editorial under the caption: "Shall the Camel's Head be allowed in the Tent". He stated that the admission of three or four hundred Indians yearly would do nothing to relieve the problem of overpopulation in India and he went on to ask why British Columbia was asked to bear a part of the burden of the British Empire and why it should be saddled with Indians when their presence was bound to create an ugly situation on the Pacific Coast without making any difference to India.\textsuperscript{3}

The News-Advertiser (Vancouver), backing the anti-Indian standpoint, suggested that if the immigration regulations were not adequate, the Canadian government should lose no time in amending them suitably so that Indian immigration could be effectively stopped.\textsuperscript{4} The Times commented:

Free peoples have a right to say whom they will admit into their country, just as free men have a right to say whom they will admit into their house.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{1} Sun, May 27, 1914.
\textsuperscript{2} Windermere, special London Correspondent, Province and Montreal Star, to Province, June 2, 1914.
\textsuperscript{3} World, June 20, 1914.
\textsuperscript{4} Daily News-Advertiser, June 20, 1914.
\textsuperscript{5} The Times, June 4, 1914.
The Winnipeg Free Press also opposed the entry of Indians from the Komagata Maru and stated they were... a non-fusing human material in this country and they are not assimilable and therefore not wanted.

The Montreal Mail observed that if an honest effort was being made to provide an entrance for Indians who wished to come to Canada, the attempt to force in a group of two hundred at one time was no way to accomplish the desired end. The Ottawa Journal expressed strong fears about the consequences of allowing the Komagata Maru passengers to enter. While backing the Canadian government's policy of Indian exclusion, its editorial under the caption "Supply Greater than Demand", explained:

But with three hundred millions and more constituting the available visible supply the transportation companies eager for the passage fee to ferry them across the Pacific and with employers in Canada willing to make use of them for services which most men think should be performed by whites, the government is justified in taking extreme measures to exclude this small lot.

Thus the newspapers throughout the Dominion gave their unanimous support to the government's refusal to allow the entry of the Komagata Maru passengers. It was the general opinion of the press that the Indians had deliberately challenged the authority of Canada and therefore, it was urged that Canada should exercise full control over its immigration and should protect Western Canada from this peaceful Asiatic invasion.

The labour organisations and local authorities in British Columbia

1 Cited in the Tribune (Lahore), June 29, 1914.
2 Cited in the Saturday Sunset (Vancouver), June 13, 1914.
3 Ibid.
4 The Times, June 6, 1914.
bombarded the Dominion government with strong resolutions against Indian immigration. The Board of Trade in Vancouver held a meeting which was addressed by Malcolm Reid, the Dominion Immigration Agent in Vancouver. He outlined the various steps which his department had taken to stop the entry of Indians on the Komagata Maru. Subsequently the Board passed a resolution appreciating the steps already taken by the local immigration officials in retarding the proposed entry of the Indians. It strongly urged the Dominion government to take every possible means of preventing their landing. 1 The Trade and Labor Council at New Westminster held a very spirited discussion opposing Indian immigration and a mass meeting of residents of New Westminster was held to voice the protests. 2 The Mayor of Vancouver (T.S. Baxter) telegraphed Borden, the Prime Minister of Canada, that

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\text{... this council desires to place itself on record}\n\]

as unalterably opposed to the admission of Hindus and other Asiatic races into the country. 3

The Ratepayers' Association of Vancouver and the South Vancouver Board of Trade went on record as appreciating the work of H.H. Stevens, the Member of the Canadian House of Commons, in opposing the Indians' immigration into Canada. 4 The South Vancouver Conservative Association informed the Canadian Prime Minister that it commended the government's action in connection with the Indians. It further stated:

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\text{It was unanimously agreed that Hindoo immigration would work not alone to the disadvantage of British Columbia but to Canada as a whole.}\n\]

4 Ratepayers' Association, Ward 7 to Borden, July 2, 1914, and South Vancouver Board of Trade to Borden, July 6, 1914, Borden Papers Vol. 40.
5 McGibbon-Hodgson, Secretary, South Vancouver Conservative Association to: Borden, July 8, 1914, Borden Papers, Vol. 40.
The Vancouver County Orange Lodge No. 1, representing twenty-six primary lodges and 15,000 voters in Vancouver District, commended the action of the immigration officials and the Dominion government in their dealing with the Komagata Maru passengers,¹ and the Premier of British Columbia, Sir Richard McBride, strongly favoured the exclusion of Indians on religious grounds. While opposing the Indian immigration he wrote to Malcolm Reid:

> Canada is a Christian Government and no one is wanted in the country except for temporary purposes, who is not likely to amalgamate and settle down as a God-fearing and law-abiding citizen.²

The Dominion administration did not intend to allow the Indians to land. It had enacted various regulations one after another to guard against any possible attempt by Indians to force their entry. But the Indians were British subjects, so their entry had to be very carefully banned. Mention of such terms as "Indian", "Sikhs", "Hindu" or any reference to race or nationality was avoided in the wording of the regulations. Instead the law required that any applicant for admission had to have $200 in his possession upon landing in Canada,³ and a further condition was that all immigrants must have come to Canada by continuous journey and on through tickets from the country of their birth or citizenship.⁴ Since there was no steamship line between India and Canada these regulations could serve the purpose of the Canadian government in their wish to exclude Indians. There was also a third regulation which prohibited the landing of artisans, skilled and unskilled labourers through the 45 ports of British

¹ D.L. Dence, County-Secretary, Loyal Orange Lodge No. 1 to Borden, July 6, 1914, Borden Papers, Vol. 40.
³ P.C. 24, January 7, 1914.
⁴ P.C. 23, January 7, 1914.
In spite of these rulings, however, the Dominion government could expect appeals to the Courts against its decisions to exclude immigrants whom it did not wish to admit. It was to prevent such an occurrence that the Canadian government had also inserted, in the Immigration Act of 1910, the clause which took from the Courts the right to interfere with the decisions of immigration authorities. The only recourse allowed by the Immigration Act of 1910 was that the aggrieved person could appeal to the Minister in charge of the Department. It was hoped that the Immigration Act, reinforced with these three Orders in Council, should prove an invincible fort if any undesirable immigrant entered into a litigious battle with the Department of Immigration. But according to English law there was another possibility open to the injured party. This was a writ of habeas corpus, an old proceeding which has as its object the protection of the liberty of the subject. To obtain this writ an application is made to a judge of a superior court. If the judge is shown proper cause, he orders the applicant to be brought before him. Then the applicant or his counsel is heard and if the applicant can show that his detention is illegal the judge issues the writ, and he is freed. But if the application of writ is refused by one judge, the applicant may apply to each judge on the bench one after another. If any one judge on the bench issues a writ the applicant is freed in spite of the fact that a similar request might have been turned down by other judges. In a case where the writ was granted the Crown could not appeal to the Court of Appeal because there was no appeal from the decision of a Supreme Court justice.

1 F.C. 897, March 31, 1914.
2 Immigration Act, 1910, sect. 23.
granting a writ of habeas corpus, although there was an appeal from an order refusing it. A court would not waste its time in hearing a case where its action was to end in futility. In immigration cases, if a writ was granted, the applicant was free, and there was no authority to rearrest him should the Court of Appeal set aside the decision of the judge in the court appealed from. Habeas corpus is a civil remedy, even if the alleged wrongful detention arises out of criminal proceedings or other matters which are peculiarly within the jurisdiction of the Dominion parliament.¹

But as I have mentioned in Chapter Seven, there was already one example when thirty-nine Indians had applied to Justice Murphy of the Supreme Court of British Columbia for a writ of habeas corpus claiming that they were illegally detained. When they were refused the writ on the grounds that the Justice had no jurisdiction under section 23 of the Immigration Act, 1910, they applied to Chief Justice Hunter who held that he was not debarred by section 23 from hearing and deciding the matter. He also held that both the Orders in Council² passed in 1910 were ultra vires, that is they were not strictly complying with the language of the section of the Immigration Act under which they were purported to be made. Therefore he granted the writ. There was no appeal against the Chief Justice's decision and the thirty-nine Indians gained admission into Canada. Because of this embarrassing situation the Canadian government had redrawn the Orders in Council³ to meet the criticism of the Chief Justice and had also passed another Order in Council prohibiting the entry

¹ R. v. Yuen Yick Jun, 54, 1940, British Columbia Reports, p. 541.
² As mentioned in Chapter 7.
³ Ibid.
of artisans, labourers, skilled and unskilled workers at that specified period of time through the forty-three ports of British Columbia.

At this time the passengers of the Komagata Maru presented two important and serious points of consideration for the Canadian government. The first was that they were British subjects and they were therefore entitled to enter Canada if the law permitted them to do so. Secondly, they could apply for the writ of habeas corpus and in this regard the previous year's case of the thirty-nine Indians still haunted the Dominion administration as a point of danger. Canadian authorities were obliged to act cautiously. The legal experts of the Department of the Interior discussed the matter with James Edward Bird, the counsel for the Komagata Maru passengers, and hoped for a quick and favourable solution to the problem. Their proposition to him was that one of his clients was to be designated as a test case and brought before the Board of Enquiry of the Immigration Department for examination and hearing. If on such hearing the Board of Inquiry ordered the designated passenger to be deported, James Bird should apply to a judge of the Supreme Court for a writ of habeas corpus. He should then allow it to be dismissed without argument. After this he should appeal to the Court of Appeal and the whole matter would be argued and settled in that Court. In their proposals the legal experts of the Immigration Department carefully reduced the chances of writ application to the minimum extent by limiting the appeal to only one court. However the Komagata Maru passengers did not accept the Immigration Department's proposal and following this the Canadian government allowed very


2 Sun, May 29, 1914; and Daily News-Advertiser, May 29, 1914.
little communication between the Komagata Maru passengers and their counsel. Even as late as June 23, James Bird wired to Borden: "Was refused right to go on board Komagata Maru this morning to take instructions ..." The Immigration Board of Inquiry continued their examination but did not give any decision at the end of each case so that the Indians were prevented from approaching the court to make an appeal. In the meantime the passengers remained imprisoned on board the Komagata Maru in the middle of the harbour and were on very short rations. The situation was growing more tense each day.

On June 19, James Bird made an application to the Supreme Court for a writ of mandamus calling on immigration officials (comprising the Board of Inquiry) to come to court to show cause why they did not give decision. He drew attention to section 33 sub-section of the Immigration Act, 1910, which stated that immediately at the conclusion of the Board of Inquiry, the inquirers should either admit the applicant or reject him for deportation. At this stage there was a feeling that once the Indians got their case before the court some flaw would be found in the regulations which might allow their entry and the Immigration Agent (Malcolm Reid) expressed his doubts that his department could maintain its position in the legal battle against the Indians. He told the Province:

All I know is that once these Indians get their cases before the courts no man can tell how the matter will end ... it will mean an interminable fight in courts with the issue in doubt for a long time, and the Hindus will beat the regulations and get in.

But the immigration officials were at fault in their failure to hand

2 Province, June 20, 1914.
3 Daily News-Advertiser, June 20, 1914.
4 Province, June 20, 1914.
down decisions and under these circumstances, they were required to answer the writ in the Supreme Court. In order to delay the matter, Malcolm Reid and his Assistant Immigration Agent (Howard) spent the day in hiding and in this way managed to evade being served with the court notice.¹ The result was that the case had to be adjourned for another day.

Meanwhile H.H. Stevens, M.P., warned the Canadian government at Ottawa that if Indians were allowed to land there would be riots in Vancouver.² He tried to get some Japanese boats to force the Komagata Maru well out of the three mile limit so that the Canadian courts should not have any territorial jurisdiction for their case. He said:

I am trying to get the government to strengthen Malcolm Reid's hand in getting them out before the courts have time to deal with them.³

The Daily News-Advertiser commented in an editorial that for the Canadian government, success of Indians in law courts would mean

... abandonment of right to exclude, restrict, control or regulate immigration from India or, for that matter, from other countries; and would be an invitation to another and another similar expedition.⁴

These statements aroused the Indian community in Vancouver and they held a mass meeting at the Dominion Hall where James Edward Bird, counsel on behalf of Indians, addressed an audience of about 525 people. He protested against the treatment of those on board the Komagata Maru and stated that the Komagata Maru passengers had not come to Canada in opposition to the terms of the immigration act but indeed wished to enter Canada by perfectly legal means. The Canadian government,

¹ Province, June 20, 1914.
² Ibid., June 22, 1914.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Daily News-Advertiser, June 20, 1914.
however, was attempting to send them back without a fair hearing. The meeting was addressed by three other socialists from British Columbia and by leading Indian immigrants. At the end of the meeting a resolution deploring the high-handed attitude and harsh treatment meted out by the immigration authorities was passed.¹ As one could expect, the Indians' protests found their usual prominence in press reports in the Punjab. The Tribune (Lahore) published a telegram sent by Umrao Singh on behalf of the protest meeting to the Khalsa Akhbar (Lyallpur), which said:

Komagata Maru passengers unlawfully imprisoned on board. Provisions, water, legal advisers, friends prevented. Mass meeting protest such brutal unlawful treatment. Hindustanis can never forget, nor forgive; give wide publicity.²

To counter the public meeting of the Indians, H.H. Stevens, M.P. and the Mayor of Vancouver (Baxter) called their own public meeting on June 23 again at Dominion Hall, Vancouver. The hall was crowded with people and there was an overflow in the streets as well. The principal speaker was H.H. Stevens, and Ralph Smith, ex-M.P. and Alderman Woodside also addressed the gathering. Stevens related the history of Oriental immigration in Canada and mentioned the orders in council passed from time to time to deal with it. He expressed his strong fear that to allow an increasing number of Indian immigrants to enter Canada would result in Asiatics taking over the country and destroying economic security.³ Consequently the meeting passed a resolution saying that the influx of Asiatics was detrimental and hurtful to the best interests of the Dominion from the standpoint of citizenship, public morals and labour conditions. The meeting strongly

¹ Sun, June 22, 1914.
² Tribune, June 26, 1914.
³ Full text of the proceedings of the meeting is available in 15-page letter of Hopkinson to Cory, June 24, 1914, Borden Papers, Vol. 40.
urged upon the Canadian government the necessity of supporting the
efforts of the immigration authorities who had undertaken immediate
steps for the rejection and deportation of the immigrants aboard the
steamer Komagata Maru. The meeting further requested the Canadian
government to enact stringent legislation whereby such immigration
in the future would be entirely restricted.¹

The Dominion government, however, was still unable to make up
its mind about its complicated immigration problem and the Canadian
Prime Minister wired to Malcolm Reid:

> You should take no step which in any way admits the
jurisdiction of the Court to interfere, but if the
immigrants initiate proceedings, it is important to
secure a hearing before the court which will give a
reasonable consideration to the Act and regulations.²

By June 25, the Komagata Maru passengers were being threatened with
forcible deportation without being allowed a hearing in the courts.
They were left with no water supply on the vessel, with the result
that they wired to the Governor General of Canada:

> Many requests to Immigration Department for water,
but useless. Better order to shoot than this
miserable death.³

And at the same time the local Member of Parliament (H.H. Stevens)
hurriedly negotiated with the Canadian Pacific Railway to deport the
Indians to some other steamship instead of the Komagata Maru. But
the Canadian Pacific Railway refused to do so.⁴

The Dominion government was now being faced with the Mandamus
writ but it was doubtful of its success if the writ proceedings were
started in the usual way. As a compromise therefore, a test case, as

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¹ Malcolm Reid to Scott, telegram, June 23, 1914, File 3601 L/P & J/6/1325.
³ Passengers, Komagata Maru to Governor General, Canada, telegram,
⁴ Daily News-Advertiser, June 26, 1914.
suggested by the Dominion legal experts earlier in the end of May, was agreed upon. It was a tactical victory for the Canadian government because James Edward Bird, counsel for the Indians, agreed to argue the whole question in one final court which was, of course, the Court of Appeal, Canada. A test case of Munshi Singh was selected and the hearing was to go forward.

It was alleged by the immigration authorities and confirmed by the Board of Inquiry which enquired into the matter, that the petitioner, Munshi Singh was a person of Asiatic race who did not have the sum of 200 dollars as laid down in the Order in Council and that he belonged to a class of immigrants prohibited by Section 38(C) and (3) of the Immigration Act. Furthermore he had come to Canada otherwise than by a continuous journey from the country of origin, thus violating Section 38(a) of the Act and the Governor General's Order (P.C.23) dated 8th January, 1914. It appeared that he boarded his ship at Hong Kong. The Board of Enquiry served him with a deportation order.

Since Munshi Singh was chosen as a test case, his counsel, James Edward Bird, made an application to Justice Murphy for a writ of habeas corpus, but no evidence was given or argument made thereon. Justice Murphy dismissed the application, but reminded the petitioner that he had the right of taking the matter before the Court of Appeal which was in session at that time.

The case came before the Court of Appeal on June 29, 1914. On behalf of the appellant Barristers Cassidy and Bird appeared and the Immigration Department was represented by Barristers Ritchie and Ladner.

1 P.C.24, January 7, 1914.
2 P.C.897, March 31, 1914.
3 E.B. Robertson, Assistant Superintendent of Immigration to Doherty, July 30, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 5.
On behalf of the petitioner (Munshi Singh) the following arguments were raised:

(a) The constitutionality of the Immigration Act was challenged because the Parliament of Canada was not competent to order the deportation of British subjects but had such power only with regard to aliens. Such a law providing for detention and deportation of an immigrant was an interference with 'Civil rights within the Province', which all immigrants possessed as soon as they entered into the provincial waters.

(b) Not only had the petitioner been rejected as an immigrant but had also been imprisoned in the ship in which he arrived. This was illegal since he had not committed any offence.

(c) The Orders in Council issued by the Governor General under Sections 37 and 38 of the Immigration Act were in excess of the powers conferred on him by those sections. The Governor General could not pick out and discriminate against a particular race:

Nothing had occasioned so much international jealousy, friction and ill-feeling, as laws discriminating against a particular race or nation in the matter of immigration. ¹

(d) The manner in which the Board of Enquiry ascertained that the petitioner was an unskilled labourer in the face of his denial and assertion that he was a farmer, did not conform to principles of "Natural Justice".

(e) Notwithstanding Section 23 of the Immigration Act, the Court of Appeal must review the decision of the Board of Enquiry. ²

(f) The expression 'Asiatic Race' was too indefinite and it could be said that the petitioner belonged to the Caucasian race to which Europeans generally belonged.

¹ Re Munshi Singh, British Columbia Reports XX, 1914, p. 231.
² Under Section 23 of the Immigration Act 1910, no court could review the decision of the Board of Enquiry.
The bench of six judges in the Court of Appeal rejected all the arguments and confirmed the order of deportation passed by the Board of Enquiry. The Court held that the Parliament of Canada was clothed with sovereign power in matters relating to immigration into any part of the Dominion. The right of the Dominion parliament to legislate regarding what classes of immigrants should not enter Canada carried with it the right and power to impose all things necessary to fulfil the prohibition or expulsion of such immigrants. Any entrenchment into provincial jurisdiction affecting civil rights, was also permissible.

Secondly the Court of Appeal held that the manifest intention of the framers of the Act meant discrimination in the matter of monetary tests according to race, occupation or destination of immigrants. That the policy under which the monetary test was regulated was not a matter with which the courts had a right to deal, and that P.C.24 (of January 7, 1914) was intra vires.

Thirdly, the Court held that the meaning attached by the Parliament of Canada to the term "native citizen" did not contemplate that a British subject born in one part of the King's possessions was to be considered a native citizen of every other part, but rather that the expression "country of which he is native" was used in a geographical and not in a racial or national sense. The court held that P.C.23 (of January 7, 1914) was intra vires and its entrenchment debarred Munshi Singh from legal right of entry into Canada.

Fourthly the Court of Appeal held that P.C.897 (of March 31, 1914) was intra vires; that the Board of Enquiry acted within its jurisdiction; that the onus of proof of occupation rested upon the immigrant; that he failed to convince the Board of the correctness of his contention; that subject to an appeal to the Minister of the Interior, the decision of the Board of Enquiry was final, and as the decision was not impeached
on the ground of fraud, the Court of Appeal had no right to review the
evidence, nor did have the jurisdiction to investigate the correctness
of the decision. While taking this attitude the Court nevertheless
expressed the opinion that the Board of Enquiry appeared to have ample
reason for reaching the conclusion that Munshi Singh would, if allowed
to land, be an unskilled labourer in Canada.

Fifthly, the Court of Appeal held that section 23 of the
Immigration Act of 1910 was within the power of the Canadian government
to enact, and that no court could interfere with the decision of a
Board of Enquiry, unless it had acted under Orders in Council which
were not in accordance with the powers given by the Immigration Act
of 1910. In this case it was held that the Orders in Council under
which the Board had acted were within the powers given by the Act,
and so the Court of Appeal had no jurisdiction to interfere.

The writ of habeas corpus was refused.¹

During this crisis period in July the Reuter's correspondent
for India (Edward J. Buck) toured Canada and met and talked with
various persons about the Komagata Maru adventure. He summed up
his observation in an urgent cable to Hardinge:

Carefully felt pulse, Toronto, Winnipeg, Komagata
Maru question tour through Canada, press public
adamant matter, Vancouver citizens threaten violence
if Hindus land. Visited ship, conversed Gurdit Singh.
Suggest best solution, arrange immediate return ship
India. Patience Vancouver City unlikely last indefinitely.²

On July 6, 1914, the decision of the Court of Appeal was announced.
The court decided that the immigration authorities were perfectly
justified in deporting the one man, Munshi Singh, who was brought
before it as a sample of the whole party aboard the Komagata Maru.³

¹ See Re Munshi Singh, British Columbia Reports XX, 1914, pp. 243-292.
² Cited by Malcolm Reid to Scott, July 7, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545,
Vol. 3; and Hopkinson to Cory, July 7, 1914, C.O.42/980/28325.
³ Province, July 7, 1914.
Following this favourable decision the immigration officials decided to examine all the other passengers on the vessel. They went on board the ship on July 10, 1914, and explained the matter to Gurdit Singh and his passengers that the Canadian government wished to give each an opportunity of being heard. However, the authorities found the passengers restive and the situation looked very serious because they had not had any food or water for at least two days. At that time complicated negotiations were going on among the various interested parties - Gurdit Singh, the owners, H. Rahim and Bhag Singh and the immigration officials - to fix the responsibility for feeding the passengers. Now observing the situation at first hand the immigration authorities provided the passengers with food and water but only enough for the next 36 hours. But the question of who was to assume responsibility to supply food and water to the passengers was by no means settled and seemed to shift among the various parties with no one wishing to take on the obligation. The responsibility for the ship was also difficult to decide. While the Komagata Maru had been lying at Vancouver, Gurdit Singh assigned the charter to H. Rahim and Bhag Singh who represented the Hindu Committee ashore. The assignment took place because Gurdit Singh was unable to pay £14,000 as a condition of the charter obligation. On his appeal this money was subscribed by the local Indian immigrants.

When the passengers were rejected for admission into Canada, the solicitors for the owners of the vessel claimed that the responsibility for deportation of the rejected Indians did not rest upon the owners of the ship, but upon the charterers. The ship, her captain, and

1 Hopkinson to Cory, July 10, 1914, File 3601 L/P & J/6/1325.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., July 8, 1914, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
the crew, they said, were all under the charge of the charterers. But Gurdit Singh refused to have anything to do with either provisioning the ship or deporting the passengers. And the new assignees of the charter, H. Rahim and Bhag Singh, claimed that they had not brought these passengers to British Columbia and therefore were not obliged to deport them. H. Rahim and Bhag Singh demanded over and over again that the immigration authorities remove these passengers from the vessel and deport them or do as they pleased with them, so long as they gave over the use of the ship to the assignees of the charter. However, the immigration authorities refused such demands and under Section 44 of the Immigration Act, 1910, demanded that the captain of the vessel take the deported passengers to the parts from whence he had brought them. But the captain declined to do so because there were no provisions for such a long voyage. Thus the position was that the charterers were either unable or unwilling to furnish any provisions and the owners disclaimed any responsibility. Since Singh had no property in Canada it was a difficult matter for the Canadian government to try to force him to assume responsibility for expenses incurred in connection with the deportation of these rejected persons. At the same time the Dominion authorities did not wish to establish a precedent for paying the expenses of deportation for all those intending immigrants who had been rejected. Such an action would be likely to encourage other charterers to engage in similar expectations. The Canadian Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) saw the political difficulties in trying to force the charterers to take the passengers back to Asia. But he could

3 Robertson, Assistant Supt. Immigration to Doherty, Minister of Justice, July 30, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 5.
4 Governor General, Canada to Secretary of State for Colonies, telegram, July 18, 1914, C.O. 886/7.
also foresee that provisioning the Komagata Maru for the return voyage would relieve the Canadian government from the dangerous situation that the ship's presence provoked. Such a gesture on the part of the government might reduce the chances of political exploitation by agitators in India and in this way it would prove to be very helpful for the governments of Great Britain and India.\textsuperscript{1} Therefore the Immigration Agent at Vancouver (Malcolm Reid) was authorised to incur the necessary expense to furnish supplies of food to be used on the return journey with the provision that the Komagata Maru should agree to sail with all rejected passengers on board.\textsuperscript{2}

In spite of the rejection of their appeal by the Canadian Court of Appeal, the Komagata Maru passengers continued their quest to enter Canada on the grounds that they were British subjects and farmers of India not labourers. They urgently wrote to the Governor General of Canada requesting him to allow their landing and grant them a tract of land in Alberta. They offered a further condition that if any of their number was to fail to cultivate the land, the Canadian government would have the right to deport that person.\textsuperscript{3}

At the same time Gurdit Singh himself, in an effort to save face for his own reputation, appeared to be suggesting a threatening compromise to the Canadian Governor General. His telegram stated:

\begin{center}
Returning passengers will be cause of bad impression to native Indian armies. Better bestow some tracts of land in any part of Canada for their cultivation to save India from troubles.\textsuperscript{4}
\end{center}

\begin{itemize}
\item [1] Scott to Malcolm Reid, telegram, July 14, 1914, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
\item [2] Borden to Perley (High Commissioner for Canada in London), July 17, 1914, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
\end{itemize}
Through all these efforts the passengers were insisting that they could prove and establish their status as farmers if the Dominion government were ready to give them a chance and Gurdit Singh was determined to advance his own schemes by advocating the greater danger to the Empire forces. The Department of the Interior, however, continued to oppose the request of the Komagata Maru passengers and justified its restrictive immigration by stating that

... the Government has made certain restrictive immigration regulations, under the authority granted by Parliament, and if the passengers of the Komagata Maru are unable to comply with these regulations, their admission to Canada would be illegal.¹

Concerning the subject of setting aside tracts of land for the passengers of the Komagata Maru, the Governor General of Canada was advised to express his reluctance. It was pointed out that such practice had been discontinued some years ago because by experience it was found to be 'inadvisable'.² However, Gurdit Singh and his passengers continued to try to prove that their exclusion from British Columbia on account of their being branded as labourers was unreasonable and wrong.

While this matter of granting tracts of land to the Komagata Maru passengers was a subject of official procedure whose end was lost sight of in the maze of discussion and correspondence within the various departments of the Dominion government at Ottawa, the passengers became bitterly disappointed and filled with sorrow. They were resentful and bitter because of their unfair treatment, and their protests, grievances and pitiful conditions were again expressed in their urgent wire to the Governor General of Canada:

² Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to Governor General's Secretary, July 17, 1914, R.G.7, G.21, File 332, Vol. 205.
Sent many telegrams, answered matter under consideration, afterwards no final definite answer, being shut in ship from four months; becoming sick, no good food, water and exercise, dying, decide immediately. We, ignorant, either you don't answer decision or immigration not tell us.

But the Canadian government was still trying to implement the court's order of their deportation. On July 18 the passengers made another telegraphic appeal to the Governor General to grant their landing and this telegram presented a good argument for their case. The passengers pleaded for mercy, they repeated their right as British subjects to enter Canada, and they stated that the continuous passage journey was meaningless for a chartered ship. If the law was such that they were to be kept out of Canada they asked why the Hong Kong authorities had not stopped them from leaving for Canada. They insisted again that they were farmers and if given an opportunity to cultivate in Canada, they would prove it. Finally they expressed their inability to bear the rigours of a return journey to India which meant imprisonment for another four months aboard ship.

In the meantime Indian immigrant leaders on the Pacific Coast, faced with the failure of all their attempts to secure admission for their countrymen, tried unsuccessfully to purchase revolvers at different shops at Victoria and Vancouver. An enquiry for the purchase of a bomb was also made. On July 17 four Sikhs - Harnam Singh, Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh and Mewa Singh - crossed the border into the State of Washington and met Tarak Nath Das at Suma where they bought some revolvers and ammunition. Mewa Singh returned to Canada but

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2 Malcolm Reid to Robertson, July 20, 1914, C.O.42/980/28333.
4 Bhag-Singh was also one of the new charterers of the Komagata Maru.
5 Tarak Nath Das was dismissed from his job as interpreter in the U.S. immigration office at Vancouver due to his anti-British activities in 1908. See Chapter 2.
was arrested and found to have two automatic pistols and 500 rounds of ammunition on his person.\(^1\) When they received this information the U.S. authorities arrested the other three Sikhs who were still in U.S. territory. Each Sikh was found to be armed with automatic pistols and ammunition.\(^2\) Subsequently Newa Singh gave a statement to the effect that the object of the party in purchasing revolvers was to smuggle them on board the *Komagata Maru*. Tarak Nath Das had gone to Suma with the deliberate intention of buying arms for the *Komagata Maru* passengers. In a letter Tarak Nath Das had described these Sikhs as his best friends and true leaders of the Hindus.\(^3\) But the authorities seized all the pistols and the attempts to arm the *Komagata Maru* passengers failed.

The immigration officials in Vancouver, realising the possible complications if the *Komagata Maru* stayed on, went on board in the company of C. Johnson, agent for the Japanese shipowners. They notified Captain Yamamoto to sail at once with his passengers,\(^4\) but the captain refused to depart claiming that he was prevented by the passengers from moving the boat.\(^5\) The immigration officials pointed out to him if he had control over the ship he was liable to a penalty not exceeding five hundred dollars in respect of each passenger on board for failure to depart and that, if he did not have control of his ship, he was in duty bound to call upon the civil authorities to assist him in procuring such control of his ship as would enable him to obey the orders of the immigration authorities. Under these circumstances the captain formally requested the civil authorities

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\(^1\) Hopkinson to Samuel Backus, Commissioner, U.S. Immigration, San Francisco, July 20, 1914, C.0.42/980/29650.


\(^3\) Scott to Cory, March 20, 1919, R.G.76, File 536999, Vol. 11.

\(^4\) Robie L. Reid, "The Inside Story of the Komagata Maru", *B.C. Historical Quarterly* January 1941, p. 15.

to help him obtain control of the boat.\(^1\)

In response to the captain's appeal the police and immigration authorities chartered a tug, the *Sea Lion*, and planned to restore control to the captain at midnight on July 18, 1914. The police chief at Vancouver, Malcolm McLennan, accompanied by 125 police officers, 40 special immigration officers, legal adviser Ladner and Member of Parliament H.H. Stevens, participated in the operation.\(^2\) Before taking any action Hopkinson, the interpreter and immigration inspector, went to the *Komagata Maru* and tried to explain to the passengers that in preventing the captain of the ship from sailing they had committed a criminal offence. But the passengers refused to hand over control of the boat without the written permission of H. Rahim and Bhag Singh.\(^3\) Thus Hopkinson was unsuccessful in his last-minute effort to avert the crisis.\(^4\) As the tug, *Sea Lion*, came near the *Komagata Maru*, the matter reached its serious climax. Indian passengers started to hurl down coal, iron bars, pieces of machinery, hatchets and clubs on the officers in the *Sea Lion*.\(^5\) The officials on the sea tug used cold water to hold back the specifically aggressive crowd.\(^6\) In the confrontation all the windows of the tug were broken\(^7\) and several officials were injured. The Dominion government while giving the details of the event to the press remarked:

> Some shots were fired by the Hindus, but the officers, although armed in their anxiety to prevent bloodshed if possible, did not return the fire....

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2 Malcolm Reid to Robertson, telegram, July 19, 1914, C.O.42/980/28333.
3 Malcolm Reid to Scott, telegram, July 19, 1914, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
4 Hopkinson to Wallinger, July 20, 1914, C.O.42/980/29650.
5 Malcolm Reid to Scott, telegram, July 19, 1914, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
7 Robertson to Doherty, July 30, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 5.
The boarding party retired and returned to the shore with their twenty injured among whom was the captain of the tug suffering from two broken ribs.

Hopkinson telegraphed to the India Office that "Komagata Maru Hindus and Canadian Police and Immigration Officers came to blows at one thirty a.m." Malcolm Reid urged the Dominion government to take firm action immediately for he feared that when these facts became known to the public there was the possibility of an anti-Oriental riot.

In his telegraphic message to Ottawa he described the situation:

The men aboard undoubtedly in desperate and fanatical condition. Utterly impossible to reason with them or to handle in ordinary manner. The peculiar situation of this riot occurring on board a ship anchored in the stream makes ordinary police method useless as police and guards do not wish to use fire arms to retaliate and can do no effective service without.

H.H. Stevens informed the Canadian Prime Minister, Borden, that Indians on the Komagata Maru were desperate revolutionaries determined to defy the law. He urgently requested the Dominion government to take a strong stand and authorize a naval boat, the Rainbow, to take charge of the situation.

The police and immigration officials attempted to take possession of the Komagata Maru but failed because the deck of the Sea Lion was 15 feet lower than the deck of the Komagata Maru and this gave the Indians a tremendous advantage. The only chance the police had was to use their rifles, but though McLennan, the police chief, was wounded, he would not permit his men to use the guns. Besides,

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1 Robertson, press statement, July 20, 1914, C.O.42/980/28333.
4 Stevens confirmed his views in this regard in an interview, August 24, 1972, with the author.
7 Ibid., p. 17.
Imperial government foreseeing the complications of the situation and the sudden turn it might take, had already emphasised to the Governor General of Canada that:

Possibility of rioting which would necessitate use of force on board Komagata Maru mentioned by press telegrams. While vessel is in British waters of course very desirable to avoid use of force which would have extremely bad effect in the Punjab.¹

But the Indian passengers had a different interpretation of the event. Many felt, no doubt, that they could boast about their success and this idea was reflected even forty years later in the words of one Sikh writer when he observed: "The police were beaten back by unarmed, semistarved Sikhs."²

Gurdit Singh and his passengers continued their telegraphic protests and requests to the Dominion government now complaining about police brutality. Regarding the attempts made by the police the passengers' telegram to the Canadian Governor General read:

Last night Immigration attacked steamer with four hundred policemen, many Hindus are wounded severely, none hears, hungry since three days, order for provision otherwise great trouble. Wire results soon, your silence proves that you wish us to die, ready to die if not arranged by appointing Commission to investigate matters, take statement in steamer, yesterday appealed by telegram but no information as yet, Immigration forces to return but wait your answer.³

The next day, they wired the Minister of the Interior:

Many telegrams to Governor General. He answers transferred to you for consideration. No consideration as yet, police attacks daily duly armed. No provisions, immigration returning forcibly without your decision. If not decided within two days all passengers will be killed by police and volunteers, and you are responsible for so many lives. Will not return forcibly, prefer death to cruelty. What would be the use of consideration after death.⁴

¹ Harcourt to Governor General, Canada, telegram June 24, 1914, R.G.7, G.21, File 232, Vol. 205.
² Khushwant Singh, The Sikhs, p. 128.
The Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, came to know about the violent action of the Indians aboard the Komagata Maru on Sunday morning, July 19, 1914 and he immediately requested Martin Burrell, the Canadian Minister of Agriculture, who was at Grand Forks in British Columbia to proceed to Vancouver and to make sure that the Komagata Maru should depart with the least possible delay and without any further violence. At the same time the Canadian Prime Minister communicated with the naval authorities and arranged to place the naval boat, Rainbow, at the disposal of the immigration authorities at Vancouver. So by July 20, before the arrival of Burrell in Vancouver, the Rainbow, under the command of Admiral Hose, had already made her way to within a short distance from the Komagata Maru in the Burrard Inlet. The Dominion government issued specific instructions to deal with the situation:

Naval Service authorities are being instructed to have Rainbow cooperate in securing landing on Komagata Maru. Suggest that high pressure stream of water from fire engine placed upon large boat available might be useful in keeping back resisting the police and officers desiring to reach decks of the Komagata Maru. Violent actions of Hindus last night amply justify hand-cuffing full number if control of ship and passengers cannot otherwise be secured and maintained ....

It is desired that no unnecessary violence shall be used but that law shall without fail be effectively enforced .... Consult legal advisers as to taking proceedings ... against master and assignees of Charter ....

The Canadian government instructed the Vancouver military officials to supply the commander of the Rainbow with all the assistance he:

1 Borden to Governor General Canada, July 21, 1914, C.O.42/980/28333.
might need for securing control of the Komagata Maru. Fearful that violence might break out in the city itself, the Mayor of Vancouver (T.S. Baxter) went a step further and called in the army to maintain law and order in Vancouver. The Dominion government was rather surprised and expressed its concern about this extreme measure by the civic chief especially since it was under constant pressure from the British government to keep the incident from becoming violent. But the mayor was anxious to justify his summons to the army and used the pretext of the possibility of riots in the city. Regardless of this, however, the Governor General of Canada assured the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

> It is the intention of the Government ... to carry out enforcement of law. Authorities fully recognizant of situation and no unnecessary force will be used.

The Indian immigrants still continued their telegraphic complaints against the immigration officials at Vancouver and made urgent appeals to the Dominion government to grant them permission to land. The campaign against Indians also continued in the press. The situation needed urgent and immediate action. Therefore the immigration officials in Vancouver requested the Minister of the Interior to rush the final answer to the telegraphic appeals of the Indians against the deportation

1 Robertson to Malcolm Reid, telegram, July 20, 1914, C.O.42/980/28333.
2 Mayor of Vancouver to District Commanding Officer, Vancouver, July 20, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 5.
4 Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor General, Canada, telegram, July 20, 1914, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
6 Governor General, Canada, to Secretary of State for Colonies, telegram, July 22, 1914, C.O. 886/7.
8 Daily News-Advertiser, July 21, 1914.
order.\textsuperscript{1} The immigration officials had delayed their reply because they wanted to eliminate any possible excuse or justification which could be put forward by the Indians for their non-compliance with the deportation order. At this time, however, the Dominion government not only turned down the Indians' appeal but also demanded immediate compliance with the deportation order. The Government of Canada, however, expressed its willingness to furnish provisions for the return journey. The authorities also hinted that they were anxious to avoid the use of force in that situation.\textsuperscript{2}

The immigration officials, H.H. Stevens, M.P., the Vancouver police chief, and Commander Hose held a conference aboard the Rainbow and decided to deliver a final ultimatum to the passengers of the Komagata Maru.\textsuperscript{3} Hopkinson (interpreter and immigration inspector) was chosen to carry out this plan. The ultimatum urged that the passengers submit to the law peacefully and restore the command of the ship to the captain. It further stated that their case was exhaustively and ably argued in the courts and they had been lawfully ordered to be deported. The ultimatum also contained a severe warning to the Indians for their unlawful behaviour and it reminded them that if they continued their reluctance, steps would have to be taken to enforce the law.\textsuperscript{4} While all these threats, warnings and allegations were being exchanged between officials and passengers, Martin Burrell, Minister of Agriculture in the Borden cabinet, was sent to make his assessment of the situation. He reached Vancouver on the afternoon

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Malcolm Reid to Doherty, telegram, July 20, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 5.
\item Minister of the Interior to Passengers, Komagata Maru, telegram, July 21, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 5.
\item Malcolm Reid to Scott, telegram, July 21, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 5.
\item Ultimatum was read by Hopkinson to Passengers, Komagata Maru, July 21, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 5.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
of July 21, 1914,¹ and after a hurried investigation, he came to the conclusion that the principal difficulty in getting the Komagata Maru and her passengers to sail was the fact that their fellow countrymen² who were residents of Canada had subscribed³ certain monies which they feared were not likely to be refunded. Burrell, as a member of the Dominion government and as a special representative of the Prime Minister of Canada, was in a better position to make a positive decision on a course of action regarding this matter than any of the officials of Vancouver and he held a conference with MacNeill, the counsel for the Indians,⁴ to try to arrange a settlement. He repeated the Dominion government's previous offer to provision the ship for the return voyage and he gave assurances to MacNeill that if the passengers would at once restore the control of the boat to the captain and leave the port he would recommend to the government that the financial claims of the local Indians be thoroughly looked into by an impartial commissioner and that full and sympathetic consideration would be given to those who deserved it.⁵ Burrell made this offer to MacNeill in a formal letter which proved to be a turning point in the solution of the immediate crisis and the focal point of later controversy after the Komagata Maru had sailed away.

The terms of the Minister of Agriculture's offer were these:

¹ Robie L. Reid, Agent of Minister of Justice, "The Inside Story of the Komagata Maru", B.C. Historical Quarterly, January 1941, p. 19.
² Gurdit Singh had assigned his charter to H. Rahim and Bhag Singh, who represented the Hindu Committee ashore. This transfer took place on the understanding that the sum of $14,000 would be paid by these men to fulfil the charter obligations and they had the control of the ship till September 27, 1914. This money was subscribed by the Indian community in Vancouver. See Hopkinson to Cory, July 8, 1914, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
⁴ Eric Morse, "Some Aspects of the Komagata Maru", The Canadian Historical Association, 1939, p. 106.
⁵ Burrell to Borden, telegram, July 21, 1914, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
I understand from you that one of the difficulties in the way of the Komagata Maru at once leaving this port is that the assignees of the charter and others believe they are entitled to a repayment of the money advanced by them in good faith to the owners in the belief that they would be repaid by the value of the cargoes. As a member of the Government, I shall wire to the Prime Minister asking that these claims should be thoroughly looked into by an impartial Commissioner, and will urge that full and sympathetic consideration be given to those who deserve generous treatment. I must point out, however, that this is conditional on the passengers now on the Komagata Maru adopting a peaceable attitude refraining from violence and conforming to the law by giving to the captain control of his ship immediately, and agreeing to peaceably return to the port whence they came. May I add that it is necessary that a decision should be reached at once.

These terms were readily accepted by the Indians on the coast and at once they went to the Komagata Maru to persuade the passengers to allow the captain to prepare for his departure. They also agreed to permit the provisions to be loaded in the ship. This sudden change in position revealed the unmistakeable fact that the passengers had been under the influence of the Indians on shore. The passengers were also afraid that even if they reached India, H. Rahim and others would demand from them the money they paid as an instalment of the charter. Therefore, once the Minister of Agriculture gave assurance to the local Indians that they would be reimbursed, the root cause of the dissension was eliminated and the passengers gave in. Burrell's compromising attitude and his importance as a cabinet minister changed the scene. The show of force by the immigration authorities, the anti-Indian attitude of the press which reflected the hostile public mood, and the financial involvement of local Indians in the

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enterprise had created the deadlock. Burrell explained this in his letter to Borden:

It may seem that I went a little far in concessions; and indeed I fear that Stevens and Immigration people may have felt, that I was advising and giving way unnecessarily ... I was, however, so profoundly convinced of tremendous gravity of using force, that I felt that you would wish me to go very far before running the risk. In a confidential talk with Commander Hose, he frankly stated to me, that if he had to board the vessel and forcibly take control, he would not be surprised if one hundred lives were lost. And as in addition to the Hindus, there would probably have been Japanese sailors killed the complications would have been endless.

Facing this possibility, I felt that you would justify me in not quibbling at a few thousand dollars worth of provisions more or less, or in writing the enclosed letter which indeed was the turning point in securing peaceable control of the ship. I gathered that the views of those in charge when I got there were not specially sympathetic towards payment of any claims, but again I say that the point might well be stretched and deserving and moral claims be well considered, rather than have run the appalling risk of converting the Komagata Maru into a shambles.

The public impression was that the Indians resisted the law so long as they knew that force would not be used, but as soon as the show of force in the form of the arrival of the Rainbow, was introduced, the situation immediately changed. Explaining this point the Province commented:

The Asiatic is a diplomate of the first order. He loves a parley and a bargain. He will play that game with the greatest good nature until his opponent shows that he has come to his limit and then he will tamely surrender.2

Similarly H.H. Stevens was quite convinced that a "display of force" brought the Indians to their senses and without it they would not have agreed3 to leave. But if the control of the Komagata Maru had to be taken by force there was every possibility of bloodshed not

2 Province, July 22, 1914.
3 Stevens to Borden, telegram, July 21, 1914, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
only of Indians but also of Japanese. Such a serious incident could rock the British Empire and have serious repercussions on vital Anglo-Japanese relations as well. Up to this point the attitude of the immigration authorities had been not "to admit any negotiation or settlement on any terms",¹ and under these circumstances and without Burrell's intervention no peaceable settlement would have been possible.²

After the settlement the work of provisioning the ship for her voyage was carried on with all possible speed. H. Rahim, as a charterer of the boat, formally authorised Captain Yamamoto to get up steam at once in preparation to leave Vancouver Harbour.³ The immigration authorities allowed Indians on shore to meet their friends aboard the vessel.⁴ The ship was well provisioned for the journey to India,⁵ and she left Vancouver on July 23, 1914, at 5 a.m., the Rainbow accompanying her for a short distance.⁶ The people of Vancouver were happily surprised that the Komagata Maru had quietly disappeared from their shores⁷ and the Governor General of Canada was satisfied that the difficult situation was handled without resort to violence.⁸

In fulfilling Burrell's promise, the Canadian government appointed H.C. Clogston of Victoria, who had served for many years in the Indian Civil Service, to investigate and report on the whole

¹ MacNeill to Borden, July 22, 1914, Borden Papers, Vol. 40.
² Ibid.
⁷ Province, July 23, 1914.
⁸ Governor General, Canada to Secretary of State for Colonies, telegram, July 22, 1914, C.O. 886/7.
The Special Commissioner (Clogstoun) examined the situation met the various people involved and on November 4, 1914, sent his first 32-page report of his findings to the Dominion government. He was of the opinion that the main motive for the contributions of money that the Indian community had made to protect Gurdit Singh's charter rights was not made for the purpose of realizing any economic gain from the sale of the ship's cargo but rather to assist their countrymen on board the Komagata Maru to evade Canadian immigration regulations. The investigation showed that the coal that Gurdit Singh hoped to sell was of poor quality and that the small quantity that was on the ship was used for the voyage back to India. If, therefore, the Indian community had received any promise of repayment in the form of receipts or securities from the Komagata Maru Committee in Vancouver headed by H. Rahim and Sohan Lal and others the matter was a simple and reasonable business transaction. Compensation to the subscriber, it was concluded, was only possible through the Komagata Maru Committee. But the Special Commissioner seemed determined to discredit these Indian leaders as he observed while writing to Martin Burrell:

The committee are a mixed lot of ruffians - Rahim a pseudo Mohammadan and Sohan Lal one of the meanest types ... always seditious. Both probably would be in jail if in India .... They have been making their living and demoralizing the general body of the Indian immigrants; to give them anything directly would establish a dangerous precedent .... The general body however were to some extent deceived and in my recommendation I suggested a means of helping them against those who have been robbing them for years while also demoralizing them. It seemed wise to make them work out their own salvation to some extent and if possible encourage a split between them and the worse half.

The Special Commissioner justifiably recommended, therefore, that the contributors to the charter fund should be induced to initiate legal

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1 P.C. 2432, September 26, 1914.
proceedings against their own leading and active members of the Komagata Maru Committee on shore. He thought that in this way the anti-government elements would be condemned, and the united hostility against the Dominion government would automatically subside. With regard to Burrell's written assurances of compensation for losses, Clogstoun put forward the recommendation that the Indians' motives were sinister and foul and since there was no reliable account of the financial transactions, therefore no payment should be made. He stressed that the Canadian government should be firm and should not entertain the idea of any concession even by implication.  

For the Indian immigrant community, however, there was a prevailing feeling that the money was actually their due from the Dominion government and the Komagata Maru Committee was the only agency through which such compensation could be made to them. In the meantime Martin Burrell had sent a carefully worded communique to the Daily News-Advertiser which stressed the tentative nature of his previous year's promise at the time of the departure of the Komagata Maru. Special Commissioner Clogstoun was reappointed to implement the decision of the Canadian government on his earlier report and to give the Dominion authorities the current appraisal of the Indian immigrants' situation. However, the Dominion government had decided that it would not make any repayment but would assist those who desired to sue the Komagata Maru Committee. So Clogstoun's job was to help the plaintiffs with legal expenses if they wanted to sue the Komagata Maru Committee for the recovery of their

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2 H.C. Clogstoun to Roche, November 1915, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
4 P.C. 1263, June 2, 1915.
subscription.¹

During this time some Indians who had been inspired by the recommendations of the Canadian authorities had already entered into litigation with the Komagata Maru Committee for the recovery of their subscription and successfully won their cases.² But unfortunately for them the actual recovery of the money could not be made possible and the result of the action was that the leading Indians were discredited. In one of these cases the Indians frankly admitted that practically all the money subscribed had either been given or lent to help their countrymen overcome the immigration restrictions. So Clogstoun was happy to observe in his second report:

So far as suits go, the net result of my endeavours to carry out the instructions of the Government is small, nevertheless Sikhs are realising that they will not be compensated for conspiring to defeat orders of Government, that they have been misled by those forming the Komagata Maru Committee, and they must work out their own salvation in part, if not altogether.³

His observation was that the Indian community was now split and their solicitor James Edward Bird was also condemned by them. He recommended strict control over Indian immigration⁴ and said no compensation should be paid to them for their loss of money in the Komagata Maru affair. The immigration officials, in their evidence, quoted examples of the Indians' wild behaviour⁵ and so Clogstoun found another cause for Indian exclusion. Concerning the admission of wives and families, the Special Commissioner stated:

¹ India Office, Minute by Seton, Secretary, March 21, 1916, File 1217, L/P & J/6/1325.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid., p. 9.
In a conversation lately with these people I was given two answers to the question - Why do you not bring your wives and families? These were - "Sahib we only come to make money; what should we do with them?" Another said - "It would be a great expense." 

Clogstoun further recommended strict control and vigilance over them because some of them were inclined to seditious activities. He was of the opinion that

Under reasonable control the native of India is amenable and capable of much good. In its absence he is as troublesome as an undisciplined child, with the capacity for mischief of a man.

To guarantee this control, therefore, the Special Commissioner recommended the appointment of an official on special duty with headquarters at Vancouver, but who should be independent of the immigration department. Clogstoun did not think that efforts of Canadian sympathisers of Indians would pose much of a problem.

Of course, Dr. K.J. Grant and John Knox Wright (missionaries) had made representation to him for the granting of compensation to Indians for their financial losses and also for permission for Indian wives and families to enter Canada. But Clogstoun's answer was in the negative.

During the Komagata Maru crisis the Canadian Immigration Department had received assistance in their enquiries from a small number of Indians loyal to Canada and one of them was Bela Singh who was employed as an interpreter. The failure of the Komagata Maru

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 K.J. Grant and John Knox Wright to Clogstoun, September 21, 1915, File 3601, L/P & J/6/1325.
enterprise had embittered a number of Indians and their frustration was directed not only against the Canadian immigration officials but also against their own countrymen who collaborated with the Dominion government. So Bela Singh was assaulted and another loyal Sikh, Harnam Singh, disappeared on August 17, 1914. After two weeks he was found dead. Then another loyal Sikh, Arjan Singh, a friend of Harnam Singh, was also shot dead on September 3, 1914, by Ram Singh, a member of the Sikh Temple Committee in Vancouver. And on September 5, in a battle between Sikh rival factions, a Sikh priest, Bhag Singh, was killed by Bela Singh.² This case came before the court on October 21 and Inspector Hopkinson was a witness for the defence of Bela Singh. But as Hopkinson was about to enter the court house, Mewa Singh shot him dead.³ As mentioned earlier Mewa Singh was one of the members of the party arrested while trying to smuggle arms from the U.S. during the Komagata Maru crisis. Afterwards he had apparently become a personal friend of Hopkinson and was not expected to commit such an offence. But he was influenced by the local Sikh Temple Committee.⁴ When he was arrested he said that he had killed Hopkinson in revenge for the profanation of the Sikh temple by the murder of Bhag Singh, which he alleged was instigated by Malcolm Reid and Hopkinson.⁵ The murder of Hopkinson alarmed H.H. Stevens, M.P., who informed Canadian Prime Minister Borden that the situation was

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¹ Scott to Cory, March 20, 1919, R.G. 76, File 536999, Vol. 11.
² Province, September 6, 1915.
³ Province, October 22, 1914.
⁴ Malcolm Reid to Scott, October 23, 1914, C.O. 42/981/43730.
⁵ Scott to Cory, March 20, 1919, R.G. 76, File 536999, Vol. 11.
serious and called for drastic action. He lamented the government's past leniency in the affair which he said had resulted in the fatal shootings. He therefore requested:

Would urge that local officers be instructed to arrest and deport every Hindu known to be connected with recent meeting Sikh temple where murder was committed also connection with other questionable section. Threats to assassinate all connected with government have been made ....

But the Canadian government's answer was that such a course was not permitted under Canadian law. The government stated that the whole matter was to be dealt with by the provincial police of British Columbia since the matter did not warrant intervention by immigration officials. The government further pointed out that it was necessary to avoid any possible suggestion that any action by the immigration officials was inspired by a general animosity towards Indians.

The matter of dealing with the Indians and specifically meting out punishment for wrongdoers had become very delicate. Nevertheless when the case of Hopkinson's death came to trial it was decided by the local court in Vancouver and Mewa Singh was sentenced to death. This sentence was carried out on January 11, 1915.

The whole unfortunate Komagata Maru affair and its serious aftermath seems to have been precipitated by the unscrupulous conduct of a man who thought he saw an opportunity to make easy money. This man, Gurdit Singh, hid his mercenary aims under the cloak of religious principles. His arrival, stay and sermon in the Sikh temple at Hong Kong were only incidental events. He was a Sikh from Amritsar district and was quite familiar with Sikh holy places which made it easy for

1 Stevens to Borden, telegram, October 21, 1914, R.G.76, File 536999, Vol. 9.
3 Province, January 11, 1915.
him to pose as a great Sikh preacher. The sight of over one hundred simple people in the temple with the desire and money to emigrate to Canada offered him an excellent opportunity to exploit them for his gain. His alleged reasons, however, for undertaking such a project were stated in his advertisement:

... when I went to Hong Kong for some business in the temple, there were some people waiting to go to Vancouver, whom I was unable to face, as they were so poor and downcast. It is the work of tyranny and oppression, that year after year men have to live in Hong Kong on their money enduring great pain and distress. This state of affairs made me mad. I could not remain. Anyway I decided that these men would be taken wherever they wanted to go.

Similarly he told the Colonial Secretary in Hong Kong that he was motivated solely by a desire to assist his fellow countrymen and co-religionists and that if they were refused entrance to Canada it was his intention to fight the case in the courts. But by the time he reached Vancouver his pronouncements were more directed against the British government in India and his tone was threatening to them also. He was quoted as saying:

The main object of our coming is to let the British Government know how they can maintain their rule in India, as the Indian Government is in danger nowadays.

But the real incentive of his project was the easy and quick economic gains he hoped to make. According to Dr. Raghunath Singh, medical officer of the Komagata Maru, Gurdit Singh said on several occasions that he intended to become a millionaire within six months and it was towards this goal that he worked with great zeal. He was an

1 Translation of an advertisement (poster) which was hung up in the Sikh Temple in Vancouver, C.O. 42/979/19808.

2 Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong to Colonial Office, April 14, 1914, R.G.76, File 879545, Vol. 1.

3 The Times, May 25, 1914.

4 Dr. Raghunath Singh, Statement, Exhibit 107, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
opportunist who wanted to make money by whatever means presented themselves whether fair or foul. This was the observation of a judge when Gurdit Singh was involved in a civil suit in 1913:

My main ground for decision in this suit was that on the whole case I considered the plaintiff [Gurdit Singh] ... is entirely unworthy of credence .... The plaintiff admitted numerous transactions involving trickery and deceit .... [The] Plaintiff has been guilty of every deceit and impropriety in this matter ...."¹

But Gurdit Singh easily hid his economic scheme from the passengers and led them to believe they were engaged in a Sikh religious cause or a cause of great importance to the Indian nation. The name "Guru Nanak"² for his steamship company was meant to appeal to the religious Sikhs and for the same reason he had especially chosen Sikh temples for the conduct of affairs for this expedition. The ship set out with the Sikh slogan of salutation, Sat Sri Akal, and regular Sikh sermons were held on the vessel for the passengers, 300 of whom were Sikhs. The Sikh sermon was a religious prayer, but Gurdit Singh made it also serve to establish him as a great Sikh religious leader and a pious and sincere man. The various methods he used to collect money from the passengers while on the vessel, however, reflect his real purpose which was to gain money.

During this time the political situation in the world was overshadowed with the clouds of the First World War. Since Gurdit Singh obtained the charter for the Komagata Maru through a German agent, A. Bune, the expedition at one time was thought to be a German plot against Britain. There were no grounds for this suspicion. The charter arrangement was finished as a commercial deal only

¹ Civil Suit No. 170-13, Exhibit 53, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
2 Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikh religion and he was the first Guru.
without any link with the German government\textsuperscript{1} and A. Bune was paid his commission for arranging the deal.\textsuperscript{2}

In British Columbia there had been growing resentment in the Indian community towards restrictive Canadian immigration measures which effectively barred their countrymen. The settled Indians were also unhappy about restrictions which denied admission to their wives and families. It was for these reasons that they tried to assist Gurdit Singh. But in addition to this there was a small merchant class of Indians in Vancouver who foresaw large economic gains for themselves if the immigration project should increase the size of their community. So naturally they encouraged the scheme. Similarly the Sikh temple, being the centre of meetings of migrant Indians in Canada, could expect better prospects of membership, attendance and money subscriptions. When the Sikh clergymen could also foresee the importance of their own office being enhanced by the rising number of new arrivals from India, they, too, gave their support to the project.

At the same time an unhappy section of Indian students in North America tried to make the implication of the \textit{Komagata Maru} affair a national cause, and the aggrieved Indian migrants were exposed to the anti-British propaganda carried out by some Indians in Canada and the United States and finally the socialist element on the Pacific Coast encouraged it because they believed it to be a good way to create trouble for the British, Canadian and Indian governments.

The entire incident could have been stopped at its starting point had the Canadian government been prompt to state its immigration

\textsuperscript{1} Governor General, Canada, to Viceroy of India, telegram, December 15, 1914, Borden Papers, Vol. 47.
\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Komagata Maru} Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 11.
policy clearly to the Colonial Secretary in Hong Kong but in spite of urgent and repeated telegraphic messages the bureaucratic process in the Dominion administration at Ottawa resulted in nothing but delay and indecision. When at last the reply was sent the Komagata Maru had left Hong Kong. The Canadian immigration policy with regard to Indians was a complete ban on their entry, but this was not specifically mentioned in any rule, regulation, order in council or law. The regulations were moulded in a complicated fashion to achieve vagueness without actually admitting complete exclusion of Indians as a policy. Yet in spite of these legal safeguards the Dominion officials were not sure whether their laws would sustain the test of litigation if challenged in courts of law and the legal experts and immigration officials were faced with the solution of this delicate matter. For this reason the immigration authorities used various delaying devices and attempted to maintain secrecy about the findings of their board of enquiry. The long stay of the boat with her passengers on board in the quarantine station with little food, water and exercise facilities forced the Indians to agree to a test case proposal which the government wished. The sensational atmosphere created by politicians complicated the situation further until both sides became so confused and emotional that no fair or logical action could be expected to emerge. This biased and unreasonable attitude was evident even in the pronouncements of judges of the Court of Appeal in the Indians' test case:

... the Asiatic races ... who become immigrants are ... undesirables in Canada where a very different civilization exists. The laws of this country are unsuited to them and their ways and ideas may be a menace to the wellbeing of the Canadian people .... The Parliament of Canada - the nation's Parliament - may be well said to be safeguarding the people of Canada from an influx which it is no chimera to conjure up might annihilate the nation and change its whole
potential complexity, introduce Oriental ways as against European ways, eastern civilization for western civilization and all the dire results that would naturally flow therefrom .... In their own interests, their proper place of residence is within the confines of their respective countries in the continent of Asia, not in Canada, where their customs are not in vogue and their adhesion to them here only gives rise to disturbances destructive to the wellbeing of the society and against the maintenance of peace, order and good government.

The government's policy consisted of nothing but delay, evasion and double dealing and by the time the decision of the court was announced the passengers were in a fanatical state of mind. The unsuccessful midnight attempt by the authorities to force the Komagata Maru to depart was rather an ill-judged method of implementation of genuine court decision and the show of force in the form of the Rainbow was found not to be the remedy. But the arrival of Martin Burrell in the afternoon of July 21, his diplomatic skill, his position as a member and representative of the Canadian cabinet took the heat out of the situation, and the Komagata Maru departed without any serious incident.

The Dominion government had always expressed its deep concern about the use of force because of possible political and other consequences in the broader context of the British Empire and this position was known to Gurdit Singh and his passengers. It was in this hypocritical and diplomatic drama that the police, navy and immigration authorities of Canada were required to play their serious and highly dangerous role.

After the departure of the Komagata Maru from Vancouver the report and recommendations of Special Commissioner H.C. Clogstoun

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were simply a negation of the promise given to the Indian migrants in British Columbia by Burrell. The way in which dissension, litigation and factional conflict were created among Indians with the aid of the administration was a sad reflection of racism prevailing on the Pacific Coast. The death of Inspector Hopkinson and quite a few Indian immigrants was the direct repercussion of the Komagata Maru affair.

No doubt, the whole project was ill-conceived, unfortunate and most certainly fraudulent, for which only Gurdit Singh was responsible. But the high-handed and childish tactics of the Dominion administration cannot be justified. The government's reluctance to honour the promise of Martin Burrell to refund the contributions of common Indians, their lame pretexts of excuse while at the same time encouraging litigation among Indians at the government's expense of $3,000 were equally unfortunate exhibitions of the reactionary spirit of that age.
CHAPTER 9

On July 23 at 5 a.m. the Komagata Maru with her passengers left Vancouver and the Dominion government was relieved because it had got rid of these immigrants without the use of force and without any other serious incident. The Canadian authorities congratulated themselves on their show of generosity and compassion in furnishing the provisions for the ship's return journey. This gesture was a vital tactical manoeuvre aimed at enhancing the government's image of fairness and benevolence as well as placating the Indians on board the Komagata Maru. Unfortunately, however, it did not have any beneficial effect on the passengers with regard to their feelings towards the Canadian government. Any idea of the gesture being interpreted as the government's magnanimity was quashed by the Indian leader, Gurdit Singh, who said that the granting of provisions was the result of the Indians' threatening behaviour. To this false impression of their own position and what they felt were their rightful demands, was now added the realization of their present desperate condition. The majority of them had forfeited all their possessions and had joined the expedition in the first place believing that admission to Canada was certain. Now, after suffering the hardships of nearly four months' detention in unhealthy, boring and often deprived conditions aboard the Komagata Maru, the Indians were forced to return to India. The sacrifice had been in vain. Someone should be blamed and Gurdit Singh saw to it that the bitter feelings against Canada were given an opportunity to magnify. Besides it suited Gurdit Singh's purpose to fan those sparks of disaffection among

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the Indians against the Dominion in order to distract attention from
his own misdeeds and the resulting failure of his immigration plan.
Therefore, daily lectures against the British and Canadian governments
were a popular routine in the boat and generally these were combined
with Sikh sermons.\textsuperscript{1} As a result of this propaganda the majority of
the passengers sympathised with Gurdit Singh and regarded him as
the brave and heroic leader of Indians against the tyranny of
British administration.

Other complications were soon added to the Indians' frustration.
The Government of Hong Kong did not want any trouble with the arrival
of these passengers who had been rejected from Canada and therefore
it warned that there was no employment for them and they should not
even call at Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{2} When the Komagata Maru reached Yokohama
the Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong further threatened Gurdit Singh
that in case his passengers attempted to land there, the local Vagrancy
Ordinance would be used against them.\textsuperscript{3} Gurdit Singh then approached
the British Consul at Yokohama stating that the passengers were willing
to go to any port of India provided they were supplied with the necessary
provisions of food. But the British Consul declined this request.\textsuperscript{4}
As the Komagata Maru proceeded on her way she anchored at Kobe and
here the coal merchants who had supplied the coal to Gurdit Singh
at Moji on the outward journey demanded eight thousand dollars still
due for the coal.\textsuperscript{5} Gurdit Singh visited the British consulate at
Kobe and explained his plight. He made it clear that the boat could

\begin{enumerate}
\item Slocok, Officer on Special Duty, C.I.D., Memorandum, Nov. 3, 1914,
Exhibit 100, p.208, L/P & J/6/1338.
\item Governor, Hong Kong to Colonial Office, July 25, 1914, File 3949,
L/P & J/6/1325; and Harcourt to Viceroy of India, telegram, July 29,
1914, C.O. 129/417/27979.
\item Komagata Maru, Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 15.
\item Ibid.
\item British Consul General, Kobe to Govt. of India, September 2, 1914,
\end{enumerate}
not proceed until the bill for the coal was paid and that he himself was absolutely penniless and unable to pay for it. The supply of provisions on board had been exhausted, he said, and there was no means of purchasing more provisions for the remainder of the voyage. The British consulate building at Kobe was almost besieged by more than one hundred Komagata Maru passengers and the Consul General was intimidated by their threatened violence. The ship remained at Kobe while negotiations with regard to those matters were proceeding and while telegraphic communications were being exchanged with the Government of India. At last the Indian government conceded and agreed to bear the expenditure of 19,000 yen. The British Consul General at Kobe was able to pay the coal bill of 8000 yen and also paid 9000 yen in cash for buying provisions for the Komagata Maru passengers. The ship was now able to continue on her way, but before leaving, Gurdit Singh decided to take two new Indian passengers – Jawahir Mal and Narain Das – on the boat in spite of the opposition of the British consular authorities at Kobe. He also sent two men with money to Shanghai and Hong Kong in order to organise agitation against the British authorities in India.

The boat left Kobe on September 3, 1914 and when she arrived in Singapore Gurdit Singh made fresh demands for money from the British authorities there. Not only were these demands denied but no passenger

1 Komagata Maru, Committee of Enquiry, Report, pp. 16-17.
3 Consul General, Kobe to Govt. of India, telegrams August 28 and 30, 1914, Home Proceedings 213A and 214A, September 1914, Vol. 9460.
4 Govt. of India to Consul General, Kobe, telegram, August 31, 1914, Home Proceedings 215A, September 1914, Vol. 9460.
5 Amir Muhammad Khan, Receipt on behalf of Gurdit Singh, Exhibit 48, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
6 Isemonger and Slattery (of the Punjab Police), An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy, p. 40.
7 Ibid.
was allowed off the boat at Singapore and the Komagata Maru continued on her way to India. But before leaving Singapore Gurdit Singh managed to send telegrams to the Editor of the Bengalee in Calcutta intimating the probable time of the arrival of the Komagata Maru in Calcutta on September 28, and requesting that arrangements be made for a deputation on the subject of grievances of the Komagata Maru passengers. His idea was to stage a large demonstration against the British at the time of their arrival in Calcutta. Unfortunately for Gurdit Singh's plan these telegrams were intercepted by the police in India and nothing came of the projected demonstration. In the Punjab where nearly all the passengers belonged, the developments of the Komagata Maru affair were closely watched by the provincial government. The Punjab Lieutenant Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, stated that although everything was peaceful in the province he would not ignore the arrival of a large number of emigrants returning from beyond the seas. Therefore, he requested the Government of India to take measures under which all emigrants should be required to give to the authorities an account of themselves and their antecedents. Those who were able to give a satisfactory account of themselves were allowed to proceed to their destination. The lieutenant governor further suggested that the local authorities should be given full particulars of each emigrant in case some further surveillance was necessary. If there was any suspicion surrounding the investigated party then the movements of such emigrants were to be restricted. However, the Indian government pointed out that any special indication or reference to the returning emigrants would excite undesirable comments; and for this reason it desired

1 Komagata Maru, Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 17.
2 Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India, telegram, September 22, 1914, Home Proceedings 98A, November 1914, vol. 9461.
that all such references should be avoided. The Government of the
Punjab, however, anticipated trouble and they wished to take immediate
and efficient steps to deal with the expected unpleasant serious and
possibly dangerous situation.¹

During this time, on August 4, 1914, the First World War had
broken out.² The Government of India, however, was mindful of the
expected arrival of the Komagata Maru with her three hundred and more
discontented passengers, who harboured bitter grievances and who had
been indoctrinated with anti-government feelings. At that time it
seemed wise to heed the Punjab government's advice and subsequently
the Indian Government decided to arm itself with extra powers. It
was decided to issue an ordinance on the subject providing control
of all persons entering India. The urgency of the matter would not
permit the delay of waiting for a meeting of the Legislative Council
of India for general legislation.³ Immediately, on September 5, 1914
the Government of India took powers under an ordinance known as the
Ingress into India Ordinance to provide for the control of persons
entering India, whether by sea or land, in order to protect the state
from any prejudicial threats and designs to its safety, interests or
tranquillity. Under this ordinance, power was given to the Governor
General in Council in the interests of the state to regulate and
restrict the entry of any persons whether by land or by sea into India;
and at the same time the Government of India was armed fully to
restrict the liberty⁴ of such persons within India itself. On
September 12 powers under this ordinance were delegated to all the

¹ Punjab Govt. to Govt. of India, August 25, 1914, Home Proceedings 212A,
September 1914, Vol. 9460.
² Edward Grey to German Ambassador, August 4, 1914, British Documents
³ Govt. of India: Home Department to Legislative Department, September 4,
⁴ Gazette of India Extraordinary, September 12, 1914.
local governments. In an urgent confidential letter the Government of India instructed the local governments that:

Arrangements should at once be made at all the ports of ordinary entry from abroad for all vessels, which are likely to carry undesirables to be met on arrival.

In this way Indian authorities were well equipped with sufficient legal powers to deal with the emergency which could be expected on the arrival of the Komagata Maru. The Government of India had also been informed by the British government that Komagata Maru passengers were going to induce military desertions in the Punjabi regiments stationed in the Far East. In order to investigate these reports and also to attempt to establish good relations with the Komagata Maru passengers the Indian authorities proposed to send its officers to Singapore. The idea was to meet the Komagata Maru and to return with her to India. During the return journey the officers hoped to ease the strained relations developing between these passengers and the British government, but owing to the sudden change in the scheduled departure of the Komagata Maru from Singapore the plans could not be put into operation.

The concern about the expected docking continued to grow and a special meeting of senior officials of the Punjab government and the Government of India was held at Simla where the Komagata Maru issue was discussed, and a line of action was decided. The official view was that most of the passengers on the Komagata Maru had been deprived of their savings by Gurdit Singh and he had thrown the entire blame for the failure of his venture on the shoulders of the Government of India and its policy.

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1 Calcutta Gazette Extraordinary, September 16, 1914.
2 Govt. of India to all Local Govts. in India, September 11, 1914, Home Proceedings 220A, September 1914, Vol. 9460.
3 Viceroy of India to Secretary of State for India, telegram, October 2, 1914, Home Proceedings 105A, November 1914, Vol. 9461.
4 D. Petrie (Criminal Investigation Department), Note on Budge Budge Riot, Exhibit 116, File 5028, L/F & J/6/1338.
of inaction with regard to the welfare and rights of Indians in the British Empire. Because of these observations and in the knowledge that the whole shipload of emigrants were without any money and had been confined in the boat for the past five months the Indian government expected that these passengers would constitute a serious danger to public peace and tranquillity if they were allowed to land and disperse without some means of aid. The Indian government, therefore, considered it not only politic but in fact inevitable to offer assistance to the returning Komagata Maru passengers as evidence of the government's goodwill.\(^1\) The Government of India then made use of the Ingress into India Ordinance and arranged to provide special trains for the passengers of the Komagata Maru to go to their homes in the Punjab. Only their leaders were to be arrested and taken to Ludhiana.\(^2\) The Punjab police especially requested the detention of Gurdit Singh\(^3\) and to carry out this line of action the Punjab government dispatched R. Humphreys, a senior and experienced district magistrate, as its representative with four experienced Sikh police officers and D. Petrie, an official of the Criminal Investigation Department to meet the Komagata Maru as soon as she arrived in Calcutta harbour.\(^4\) The Bengal government was represented by Sir William Duke, Member of the Executive Council of Bengal with Cummings the Provincial Chief Secretary, Donald the District Magistrate 24 Parganas, Frederick Halliday the Police Commissioner in Calcutta, Eastwood the Superintendent of Police in Calcutta, and a number of other officials. The Punjab government had

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1 Hardinge to Crewe, telegram, October 2, 1914, Hardinge Papers 93.
3 Superintendent Police, Amritsar to Police Commissioner Calcutta, telegram, September 17, 1914, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
4 R. Humphreys, Report to Punjab govt., Exhibit 20, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
sent a twenty-five-man police contingent to help in the arrangements. ¹
The authorities decided that the boat should dock at Budge Budge
because this port had a landing stage alongside which a sea-going
steamer could moor and also because this landing side was only 200
yards from the railway station. The alternative port, Diamond Harbour,
had no landing stage and the railway station was some distance away.
The most important factor for the authorities was to avoid a demonstration
against the government. It was also noted that Diamond Harbour was
near the Sikh temple at Howrah and if the Komagata Maru passengers
were to land in the vicinity of Howrah ² some excitement would be
expected which might lead to violence.

When the Komagata Maru reached Kalpi, seven miles from Diamond
Harbour, government officials went down the river Hughli and met the
passengers. They explained to the emigrants that they had been
authorised by the Punjab government to take them home to the Punjab
and for this purpose free special trains were being provided. The
officials expressed their sympathy with the emigrants for their troubles.
They also explained to them that under the new law (recently enacted)
their luggage was to be examined before they could leave the boat.
Gurdit Singh, however, did not want to submit to such examination and
he asked the reasons for their delay and detention and demanded the
immediate appointment of a commission of enquiry to investigate the
whole question. The Punjab government's representative (R. Humphreys)
replied that the appointment of such a commission of enquiry was futile
and out of the question in Calcutta but that the necessary enquiry would
be held later in the Punjab. ³ The preliminary search of luggage was

¹ Komagata Maru, Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 18.
² Bengal govt. to Govt. of India, October 12, 1914, File 5028,
L/P & J/6/138.
³ R. Humphreys to Punjab govt., Report, Exhibit 20, File 5028,
L/P & J/6/138.
continued and went on well for two days during which time the authorities could not discover any arms on the ship. But officials noticed that the passengers were in an ugly mood and they were surprised to find the absence of traditional submissive and respectful behaviour which was common among Punjabis. It was thought that the long and unsuccessful voyage combined with anti-government preachings might be responsible for this aggressive attitude among the passengers. It was evident that there was severe resentment when the emigrants were asked to land at Budge Budge since Howrah was their declared and desired destination; and furthermore there was a rumour that Budge Budge was not the right station for trains to the Punjab. As suspicions and speculations grew Gurdit Singh added to the unrest by his unrelentingly uncooperative attitude. The authorities, meanwhile, lost no time in completing the arrangements for special trains to transport the Komagata Maru passengers away from this area. On September 29, 1914, the emigrants were told to disembark and get into the special trains going to the Punjab. But Gurdit Singh told Humphreys (Punjab government's representative) in a loud voice that if they (the emigrants) had done anything wrong, a judge should be sent for to take statements after which the government could shoot them or do what it chose. His passengers would prefer dying together, he mentioned. These dramatic pronouncements of Gurdit Singh resulted in a complete deadlock between passengers and authorities. The only dissenters were 17 Muslims from Shahpur district and 42 Sikhs led by Bhan Singh who gladly landed.

1 D. Petrie, Note on the Budge Budge Riot, Exhibit 116, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
2 Slocock, Memorandum on the Voyage of the Komagata Maru, Exhibit 100, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
4 D. Petrie, Note on the Budge Budge Riot, Exhibit 116, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
and got on the train for the Punjab.¹

The next point of contention was that the passengers wanted to land only after their religious book the Granth Sahib had been taken ashore.² After long arguments and repeated warnings the holy book was taken ashore and the passengers began to land.³ The authorities hoped that all threat of violence was over, but they did not realise the full extent of Gurdit Singh's scheming.

Gurdit Singh had purchased two boxes of pistols from Japan while on the return journey and even on the outward journey there were four or five pistols on the boat⁴ although these were carefully hidden. After the preliminary search was over and the passengers had reached Calcutta, Gurdit Singh secretly distributed these pistols to his friends.⁵ Some of the men were now armed and a dangerous situation was becoming explosive. All the incidents that were incriminating to Gurdit Singh were turned, by that wily fellow, upon the government as he seized every opportunity not only to cover his own guilt but also to arouse hatred toward the British government in India. One more example of his cunning is offered as evidence during the search of the cabins of Gurdit Singh and his secretaries. The official found some money and quite a few papers relating to the voyage. These were sealed and it was pointed out that all the papers would be investigated, at a later date. Gurdit Singh, of course, owed money to most of the passengers and they demanded it back as they were to leave the boat,⁶

¹ Bhan Singh, Statement, Exhibit 28, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
² Bengal govt. to Govt. of India, Oct. 12, 1914, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
³ Jawahir Mal, Evidence, pp. 94-97, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Komagata Maru, Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 29.
but he replied that there was some difficulty since all books and papers had been taken away by the government. He therefore requested every passenger to follow him to the Sikh temple at Howrah where he intended to deposit the Granth Sahib. He declared that he would ask each claimant on his faith in the Sikh temple before the Sikh holy book about his demand and then he would refund the money. The passengers, who by this time would likely have boarded the trains and been dispersed, were thus manoeuvred towards a mass meeting.

The men wanted their money. They were tired from their journey and angry at their treatment. It was under these adverse psychological conditions that the passengers landed at Budge Budge. After landing they marched slowly in procession beating drums and singing Sikh hymns and soon reached the railway crossing only a few yards outside the station. There again long arguments were exchanged between Gurdit Singh and the officials, and when finally the men stood up, instead of going to Budge Budge Railway Station, they started to walk on Calcutta Road. At this point the District Magistrate of 2nd Parganas (Donald) requested help from the army but the procession had advanced about four or five miles before the army contingent (all Europeans) reached the spot. The procession was first halted and later forced to march back to Budge Budge Railway Station although some passengers tried unsuccessfully to drift into nearby shops along the way. Again the railway crossing near the railway station was the stopping point. Donald tried to explain the arrangements that had been made for the men and called to Gurdit Singh who refused to come forward. Deciding

1 Nand Singh, statement, Exhibit 25, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
2 R. Humphreys, Report to Punjab govt., Exhibit 20, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
3 Bengal govt. to Govt. of India, Oct. 2, 1914, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
that Gurdit Singh, as spokesman and trouble-maker, should openly negotiate with officials and thereby avoid any incident. Eastwood, Superintendent of Calcutta Police, went into the crowd of emigrants to bring Gurdit Singh out, but the emigrants surrounded him and a revolver shot was fired. In return Frederick Halliday ordered the police and the army to fire also. The emigrants made two more rushes but they could not withstand the army's fire and therefore were forced to disperse. The result of this riot was that 19 emigrants, one European police official (Superintendent Eastwood), two Indian police officials, one railway official (Lomax) and two local spectators were killed while 33 were injured. The injured included two senior police officials, Frederick Halliday, Petrie and the Punjab government's representative, Humphreys. The position of the emigrants was that 62 were sent to the Punjab by train, 211 were arrested, 20 were killed and 28 (including Gurdit Singh) remained at large. At the suggestion of the Punjab government the arrested emigrants were interned at Alipore central jail in Calcutta.

The loss of life was deplored by the government. Lord Hardinge (Viceroy of India) believed that the uprising was the result of Gurdit Singh's attempt to organise a demonstration against the government in Calcutta. Newspapers in Calcutta, however, did not take much notice

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1 Komagata Maru, Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 20.
4 Bengal govt. to Govt. of India, Oct. 12, 1914, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
6 Komagata Maru, Committee of Enquiry, Report, Appendix IV, p. 5.
7 Bengal govt. to Govt. of India, Oct. 8, 1914, Home Proceedings 129A, November 1914, Vol. 9461.
of the Budge Budge riot. Because of local holidays there were no papers published on that day. Only one paper, the Bengalee, argued that if the passengers had been allowed to land and consult their friends in Calcutta this riot would have been avoided.\(^1\) However the Pioneer Mail (Allahabad), an English owned daily, strongly condemned the Komagata Maru passengers and judged that from observations of the behaviour in India the Canadian government was justified in refusing their admission to Canada. Deploiring their attack on civil and military officials the paper further stated:

This is the reward that Government gets for bringing this batch of anarchists home at public expense. It is to be hoped that no time will be lost in expatriating the whole gang again to the Andamans or elsewhere. This is not the time when a batch of fanatics infected with nihilist doctrines can be allowed to go at large about the villages spreading poison among the untravelled natives.\(^2\)

In England the Budge Budge riot was not reported in the press but the Secretary of State for India (Lord Crewe) expressed his anger about the affair especially with the manner in which the police handled the matter:

Here was a large body of men who had been through an extraordinary and hostile experience among the white races of the Empire; there were indications that some of them were of rather desperate or at any rate turbulent character, the bulk being probably dupes for a few unscrupulous exploiters. It might be assumed that arriving in this way they would be thoroughly sullen or suspicious and frightened - both of them dangerous states of mind for an Indian crowd. It looks to me therefore that the absence "of the smallest suspicion" that some of them might be armed and violent was rather stupid and conventional on the part of the police. Those Punjabis had been about the world, and it was not to be supposed that they would pursue the conduct of simple cultivators .... I confess, therefore, to being not over well satisfied with the proceedings ....\(^3\)

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3 Crewe to Charmichael, Governor Bengal, Oct. 9, 1914, Crewe Papers C.61.
The Viceroy of India too passed a share of the blame to the police and the Bengal government:

There was great bungling in my opinion on the part of the Bengal Government, since every Sikh ought to have been searched for firearms before being allowed to leave the ship. As it is, we all know, that over 100 revolvers were bought by passengers between Vancouver and Calcutta.¹

The Viceroy of India and the Secretary of State for India both agreed that the major blunder in the matter was committed by the Government of Bengal.²

But the Bengal government did not wish to assume guilt and expressed its naive view about this fatal event. It pointed out that its action was taken with the full concurrence of the Punjab government and arrangements had been made for the prompt and direct return of the emigrants. The Bengal government's press communiqué pointed out that though it knew that the emigrants had suffered and were politically discontented nonetheless no one had the slightest suspicion that the passengers were armed for this desperate and unprovoked attack on British officers.³

In a detailed report the Bengal government explained that government officials had put forth their best efforts to get the passengers off the boat without incident. The officials displayed good intentions and behaved with kindness and sympathy towards the emigrants some of whom, however, were deluded fools. The officials always showed maximum patience rather than creating a situation that invited retaliation. Furthermore, the Bengal authorities suspected that misunderstandings and rumours about the existence of some sinister motive on the part

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¹ Hardinge to Crewe, Oct. 8, 1914, Crewe Papers C19 - C22.
² Crewe to Hardinge, Nov. 4, 1914, Hardinge Papers 120.
of the government to choose Budge Budge especially for their landing were the cause of emigrants' misgivings. The Bengal government also observed that the calling out of Gurdit Singh by Donald was interpreted as a sign of his possible arrest and this action immediately sparked the pent-up feelings of the passengers.¹

The view of the police was that the confrontation was inevitable and there had been no way to prevent the passengers from carrying arms. In his report Petrie stated that the search aboard ship was ineffective because the passengers were easily able to transfer pistols to other kits already searched or hide them on their own person. To demand complete disrobing or the removal of turbans and the taking down of hair would have invoked great personal indignity and added to the ill-feeling already present. The Sikh's Granth Sahib also afforded every facility for the concealment of weapons and it would have been an extremely delicate matter to dismantle and search it. It was Petrie's opinion that the passengers had been organized by Gurdit Singh and were eager to follow his direction. Gurdit Singh's deliberate resolve to pursue his own way in defiance of authority certainly had to lead to violence sooner or later.²

The report of the police representative, R. Humphreys, also agreed with the police report about the incident and his conclusion was:

Reviewing the whole case now it seems certain that though Government interfered in the matter with the most benevolent and generous motives (that is apart from the political motive which rendered it absolutely necessary to interfere to prevent a dangerous agitation), the interference was bound, in the end to end in trouble ....³

¹ Bengal govt. to Govt. of India, Oct. 12, 1914, File 5028, L/P & J/6/1338.
The Sikh and Punjabi communities in Calcutta held a public meeting on October 8, 1914 and passed resolutions appreciating the magnanimous and generous offer of the government to the emigrants and strongly condemned the riotous action of some of the emigrants. The resolution further stated that

... they (Sikh and Punjabi communities in Calcutta) and their brothers ... are still loyal and faithful subjects of the British Crown and are always ready to shed their best blood for the honour and prestige of the British Flag under which they are enjoying peace and contentment.

Only Gurdit Singh, who had managed to escape arrest, expressed his strong reaction against the authorities and continued to remain adamant in his feelings of hostility. Condemning the government for mishandling the whole affair, he wrote to Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal:

Thanks to that inane policy that could not suffer the already outraged immigrant passengers of the Komagata Maru be landed free at Calcutta, as free men to go at their convenience, after a little rest on first setting their foot even in their own mother country; that policy must see that these innocent men on whose clan rest the foundation props of your British rule, the men, many of whom carried war medals from you, must be treated like political suspects and criminals, must be under military guard and sent home by compulsion; and if they want a day's tarrying at Calcutta, the military must fire and subdue these or their dead and wounded and fugitives to comply with Ordinance V; what brutal carnage was committed by Sirs Duke, Donald and Halliday and what inhuman stupid brutality is still hunting the fugitives. In spite of the Sikh Sabha expressions of fidelity you have set a mighty revulsion of sentiments and feelings which cannot find expression in words, the grief being too deep for words or noisy outbursts on public platform. The white washing process by organising Sikh Sabhas through slavishly-minded Sikhs would not palliate the guilt that the above policy fastens upon British domination with brutal fury. Upon the children of the soil what

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incalculable wrongs are not being practised by the civilian craze for display of power and by their nonsensical zid /"obstination/ to comply with so-called laws and sections; Cawnpur, Ajodhya and lately this Budge Budge affairs show to the popular view with fierce search-light glare that the British rule without popular control in its laws and methods of administration with Houses of Commons as you have cannot be tolerated any longer. Your Civilian rule with stupid C.I.Ds and blunt police, is a curse and is doomed.**

The Budge Budge riots did create a sense of fear among the wealthy business community of Calcutta and because of this the European population was rounded up and strongly guarded. The Viceroy of India (Lord Hardinge) and Governor of Bengal (Lord Carmichael) were very concerned and were contemplating a course of action to alleviate the strained situation. Realising the enormous importance of the case and its relation to the Indian Empire the Government of India told the Bengal government not to take any step without their prior consultation and suggested the appointment of a committee of enquiry for the whole matter. In his private letter to Carmichael, the Viceroy of India stated that Indian public opinion would be satisfied by such an enquiry. The Viceroy, however, was not in favour of the prosecution of this large number of accused persons because the government doubted if any conviction was possible under such circumstances and the resulting publicity could only aggravate the whole situation. Explaining his difficulties in the confused and riotous Budge Budge incident, the Viceroy wrote to the Governor of Bengal:

5 Govt. of India to Bengal govt. telegram, October 7, 1914, Home Proceedings, 123A, November 1914, Vol. 9461.
7 Hardinge to Valentine Chirol, Oct. 15, 1914, Hardinge Papers 93.
We shall never be able to get convictions against individual Sikhs for murder and armed attack upon the police, since it would be impossible to prove their identity.\footnote{1}

But at the same time the Budge Budge incident was an all-absorbing topic of interest in the Punjab and the Viceroy was bombarded with telegrams and letters in this regard.\footnote{2} So Hardinge decided to appoint the Committee of Enquiry to be composed of William Vincent as Chairman with H. Walmsley as representative of the Bengal government, P.J. Fagan as representative of the Punjab government and Bijoy Chand Mahtab and Daljit Singh as public members.\footnote{3} He was satisfied that the Indian public had much confidence in Vincent and after talking to him the Viceroy decided to give freedom of action to the Committee of Enquiry.\footnote{4}

The real purpose of the government for the appointment of such a Committee of Enquiry was to convince the Indian public that everything possible was being done for the emigrants\footnote{5} and that the government was being fair and benevolent in their handling of the situation. The Viceroy hoped that when the findings of this mixed Committee of Enquiry proved that the emigrants' attack upon the police was unprovoked, the Sikhs would turn against Gurdit Singh\footnote{6} and in this way his dangerous sedition would be brought to an end. The Secretary of State for India (Lord Crewe) considered such an enquiry as reasonable expediency.\footnote{7}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Hardinge to Carmichael, Oct. 15, 1914, Hardinge Papers 88.
\item Ibid.
\item Govt. of India to Bengal govt. Oct. 15, 1914, Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry Report, p. 3.
\item Hardinge to Carmichael, Oct. 15, 1914, Hardinge Papers 88.
\item Hardinge to Crewe, Oct. 15, 1914, Crewe Papers C19-C22.
\item Hardinge to Carmichael, Oct. 15, 1914, Hardinge Papers 88.
\item Crewe to Carmichael, Nov. 5, 1914, Crewe Papers C61.
\end{enumerate}
one". Thus all parties in power agreed on what they considered a sensible course of action.

The Viceroy was interested to get the investigation completed as soon as possible because the Bengal government was anxious to be relieved of its share of the responsibility. As far as Hardinge was concerned the matter was settled, for he had already formed somewhat naïve conclusions about the outcome of the entire investigation. In his private letter to Sir Valentine Chirol he stated:

Consequently at the conclusion of the enquiry I shall probably send them all back to the Punjab and have them kept under surveillance for some time. In the meantime they are enjoying the delights of a Bengal prison, and this, together with the fact that 16 of them were shot down by troops will be sufficient lesson to them.  

Similarly in another letter Hardinge told Crewe that:

My idea is at the conclusion of the enquiry, to bring all the Sikhs to the Punjab and put them under surveillance. At present moment they are all in prison in Calcutta, and they will remain there for at least another month until the conclusion of the enquiry. This together with the fact that 16 of them were shot down will be sufficient punishment for them.

In dealing with Gurdit Singh, however, the Viceroy seemed determined to take strong action as he indicated to Carmichael:

... when we have caught Gurdit Singh I think there are several charges upon which we could safely take action against him ....

And again the Viceroy exhibited his naïvety about the nature of the entire affair. He thought that after the enquiry when

... the drastic and unprovoked nature of attack upon the police is proved, and Gurdit Singh's methods are known, there will be a strong feeling among the Sikhs against this scoundrel.

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1 Crewe to Hardinge, Nov. 5, 1914, Hardinge Papers 120.
2 Hardinge to Valentine Chirol, Oct. 15, 1914, Hardinge Papers 93.
3 Hardinge to Crewe, Oct. 15, 1914, Crewe Papers C19-C22.
5 Ibid.
The Committee of Enquiry began its work in October 1914 and held its meetings at Calcutta, Budge Budge and Jullunder. It had 27 sittings and examined 201 witnesses. The Committee also paid a visit to the steamship Komagata Maru and the actual scene of occurrence of the incident near Budge Budge Station. After going through the brief history of the Komagata Maru project the Committee of Enquiry came to the conclusion that the action of the Bengal government was justified and the provision of special trains was equally desirable for the safe home journey of the emigrants. It was concluded that in the light of their activities in Vancouver and in the Far East, the emigrants might be a danger to the peace if allowed to linger at large in Calcutta.

The Governments of India and Bengal believed that there were two factions on the boat and therefore the authorities hoped to find a considerable number of people on their side. Unfortunately they were mistaken. By the time the ship reached Calcutta, Gurdit Singh had managed to establish his leadership among the emigrants by pointing out his success in extracting large amounts of provisions from the Canadian government and money from the British Consul at Kobe. His promise to get a similar compensation from the British Government in India plus his daily preaching in the Sikh temple on the boat against the Government had made the emigrants very bitter against the government, and that feeling still remained. The Committee's investigation revealed the importance of this fact. They were also critical of the inadequate search of the ship and blamed the authorities in charge of the operation at Calcutta for their confused arrangements in this regard. The Committee also strongly criticised the way in

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1 Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 4.
2 Ibid., p. 24.
3 Ibid., pp. 24-25.
which the migrants' firearms remained undetected. But what they had yet to consider was the underlying conditions that made Gurdit Singh's propaganda acceptable to these men. The frustrating, dehumanizing and filthy conditions in which the emigrants were literally imprisoned for five months together with Gurdit Singh's anti-government lectures which were liberally sprinkled with socialist ideas and then the advent of the German war had made the passengers feel desperate. Any small gesture of the police contingent using their conventionally rough method of dealing with such situations created further misunderstanding among the emigrants. Gurdit Singh merely used each discordant situation for his own advantage. At the end he was anxious to get to Calcutta to pose as a martyr and to inaugurate a full-scale agitation against the British government based on the voyage of the Komagata Maru and his interpretation of the discrimination against Indians by the British government.

Summing up the circumstances which led to the unfortunate result of loss of human life the Komagata Maru Committee observed that the Sikhs were by nature a courageous but excitable people who had been subjected to extremely trying conditions. These people believed they had been duped by the authorities and looked upon Gurdit Singh as their leader, spokesman and saviour. They trusted no one else and without him they saw no hope of being compensated for their losses. They would, therefore, incur any personal risk to protect him from arrest. At the time of the outbreak the men were hot, tired, confused and frightened. Their unsympathetic treatment by the European police had increased their resentment and the advance of Superintendent Eastwood towards Gurdit Singh was interpreted by the emigrants as a direct threat to

1 Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 28.
the only person who cared about their welfare. When a single shot was fired by some mischievous adherent of Gurdit Singh those who possessed firearms were ready enough to follow the example.¹

However, according to the findings of the Committee of Enquiry, Gurdit Singh was a scheming fellow who showed great ingenuity in using every action of the government to create misunderstandings which would lead to his advantage. He lied to the passengers constantly, keeping them in a state of dependence and confusion. He told them they were not being sent to the Punjab at all because trains did not go directly from Budge Budge to the Punjab but rather started from the Howrah side of the Hugli. This was true in the ordinary course of events but special arrangements had been made for the transport of these emigrants. Since no one had thought to inform them, however, their suspicions of the government's intentions were understandable. Gurdit Singh also owed money to several passengers on account of the advances made to him at Moji. It is doubtful that he intended to honour these debts, but to the emigrants he outlined a plan to pay them in the Sikh temple at Howrah and therefore the men did not wish to leave him until they had received their share. To other emigrants he promised that if they accompanied him to Calcutta he would bring a suit against the government to secure for them compensation against the government for their losses.² It is obvious that Gurdit Singh wanted to keep the men together as a potentially violent force that he could use to threaten the authorities and further his own malicious schemes. The Committee of Enquiry believed that the majority of passengers would have made no attempt to force their way to Calcutta.

¹ Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, Report, p. 28.
² Ibid., p. 29.
and would have gone quietly back to the Punjab had it not been for the influence of this man.  

Sympathising with the ignorant people who suffered the most in this drama full of economic and political exploitation, the Committee went on to declare:

At the same time we think that they, the Komagata Maru passengers, are in many ways much to be pitied. They had waited many months at various ports in the East with the intention of proceeding to Canada, a land represented to them as flowing with milk and honey, and when they did start on this voyage, they were fully impressed with the idea that they would be allowed to land on arrival without objection. They suffered considerable hardships on the voyage out, and those who had any money with them were made to subscribe considerable sums over and above their fares for this venture. On arrival at Vancouver they were refused admission and waited there for a period of two months, making fruitless efforts to secure permission to land. During this period they suffered great hardships, and were for a time in actual want of food. Finally they were directed to return, having spent about a lakh and a half of rupees on the voyage. Throughout the voyage they were subjected to seditious influences, particularly in Vancouver and on the return journey, and in the circumstances were peculiarly susceptible to the advice of disaffected and seditious leaders. Their discontent was accentuated by the fact that they were refused admission to Hong Kong where many of them had lived before, and because they were not allowed to land at Singapore. Finally, when they arrived in the Hughli, their resentment was aggravated by prolonged searches of their luggage, and by the fact that they were denied access to Calcutta, where they hoped to obtain some compensation for the losses which they had suffered. The ship was taken to Budge Budge, a place with which they were not familiar, and they were suddenly directed to proceed from there direct to the Punjab.

It was this unfortunate combination of circumstances which had led to the emigrants' rebellious actions. The Committee felt that the men were unwitting victims of forces they could neither understand nor control.

The Government of the Punjab was satisfied with the findings of

1 Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, Report, p.29.
2 Ibid., p. 30.
the Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry. Appreciating the report, the government commented that they were now furnished with a full account of the ill-fated enterprise in which several hundred unfortunate Punjabis were duped by the misrepresentations of Gurdit Singh and his friends. The Government also acknowledged that the report uncovered the schemes of Gurdit Singh and rightly showed how he shifted the onus of blame for the failure of his adventure by sidetracking the real issues and exciting the feelings of his dupes against the Government of India. Such findings seemed to exonerate the Indian government and the Punjab government believed that the whole affair would be an instructive lesson for those who might contemplate similar emigration activities in the future. In this way (according to the Punjab government) the report would assist the administration.¹

Yet this favourable conclusion was not so widely accepted as the government hoped. In spite of the imposition of emergency regulations in India which discouraged criticism of the government there was a very cautious but critical reaction in the Punjab press. The Tribune (Lahore) accepted the fact that the men were in an ugly mood when they arrived in India and had no cause to love the Indian government. However, the paper posed this question:

... was there anything serious in the conduct of the majority of the passengers during the return voyage of the Komagata Maru from Vancouver? ... Beyond this justifiable irritation, was there anything in the conduct of even those ignorant men to support the application to them wholesale of the provisions of the Ingress into India Ordinance?

The paper further commented that the government was probably justified in their desire to arrest Gurdit Singh and his thirteen friends for

their undesirable activities, but their action against other passengers was not warranted. The paper added:

To justify the resort to the War Ordinance to the whole passengers, we have not been able to find anything either in the circumstances connected with the voyage to British Columbia or in the return journey to India.

In conclusion, the Tribune expressed its unhappiness about the manner in which the returning emigrants were received.¹

The Punjabee (Lahore) observed that secretive enquiries and ready made conclusions about the Komagata Maru affair would not be accepted by the public. The paper criticized the Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry for adopting a cautious tone when relating their investigation into the actions of the officials involved.² The Sher-i-Punjab (Lahore) regretted every aspect of the Budge Budge Riot, whether the fault was on the part of the officials or the returning emigrants. It advanced the opinion that the

... Government should deal generously with the rioters, pardoning and releasing all of them who were under arrest and proclaiming a general amnesty for the rest. Such treatment will prove more impressive than the severe punishment that can be inflicted.

However, before the report had been published 91 detainees had been released at the beginning of December 1914.⁴ During all this time the Punjab government conducted thorough enquiries about the detained persons, and as a result of the findings Daljit Singh and Fagan, the two important members of the Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry cautioned Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, not to release any more prisoners until the whole situation was properly evaluated. Therefore, the Bengal government had to keep the

¹ Tribune, Jan. 20, 1915.
remaining 120 passengers in its prisons for the next two months.\(^1\)
The Bengal government was not very happy about the delay and Lord
carmichael, Governor of Bengal, wrote to the Secretary of State for
India on December 17, 1914, regretting that nothing further had been
done with the Komagata Maru prisoners, most of whom were still in
prison and arouses comment in Calcutta by their long internment.\(^2\)
Because of this the Punjab government felt obliged to take prompt
action in the matter. It was amid these various criticisms and
observations that the Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry report was
published in January 1915. And the Government of India at this
time declared its intention not to institute any further prosecutions
in respect of the findings revealed by the report.\(^3\) By the middle
of February the remaining 120 detenus were dealt with as follows:
85 were sent to the Punjab under police supervision; two were sent
to Poona jail; one died; one was admitted to hospital at Calcutta;
twenty-two were sent to Ludhiana jail for further investigation,
and nine were still detained in Calcutta.\(^4\)

In the early part of the present century a significant number of
Indians from the educated classes had found their way to Europe and
North America for the purpose of higher learning and had also founded
various Indian societies in Europe and in America, especially along
the Pacific Coast. Their main centres were in London, Paris, Geneva,
Berlin and several large cities in North America.\(^5\) In all of these
Indian communities, Indians aired their grievances against the British

\(^1\) Sir Michael O'Dwyer to Hardinge, Dec. 6, 1914, Hardinge Papers 88.
\(^3\) Govt. of India, Home Department Resolution 132, Jan. 63, 1915,
File 5028, L/P & J/6/1358.
\(^4\) Bengal Govt. to Govt. of India, Feb. 15, 1915, Home Proceedings 78A,
\(^5\) Sir Reginald Craddock, The Dilemma in India, p. 155.
in newsletters and pamphlets addressed to their Indian brothers. By 1914 this anti-British movement had gained some strength, especially on the Pacific Coast of North America, and the British government expressed its displeasure to the U.S. government for permitting such anti-British activities. However, the U.S. administration under Woodrow Wilson was reluctant to take any action concerning this matter. And the British government, as advised by its ambassador in the U.S., felt obliged to direct the Government of India to be more cautious about which Indians they allowed to leave for the U.S. At that time this anti-British movement was led by Hardayal and such was the strength of this movement that even before the start of the Komagata Maru affair, the sentiment on the Pacific Coast, so far as the Indians in the U.S. and Canada were concerned, was quite anti-British. The Director of Criminal Intelligence for the Government of India summed up the activities of these groups with these words:

... San Francisco is at present the headquarters of a gang of highly dangerous conspirators headed by Har Dayal. They have attracted to the State university of Berkeley some 50 Indian students over whom Har Dayal exercises a sinister influence. They are stirring up


2 Lala Hardayal was born in 1884, educated at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and then Government College in Lahore. He came to Oxford in 1905 for higher education, but left for India in 1907 as he became interested in working against the British government. He surrendered his scholarship because he disapproved of the English system of education. After returning to India he began to publicly voice his anti-British sentiments with the hope of bringing the British government to an end. He advocated a general boycott combined with passive revolution. In 1911 he reached California and the next year he became a lecturer in Stanford University at Palo Alto but by September 1912 he resigned his post to take up revolutionary work. He went on lecture tours along the Pacific Coast and by the middle of June 1913 as a result of aroused feeling among the Indians, the Pacific Coast Hindustan Association was formed. It was not long until other Indian groups on the Pacific Coast joined Hardayal's organisation. See Isemonger and Slattery, An Account of Ghadr Conspiracy, pp. 1-3; and W.D. Scott, Note on Hindu Revolutionary Movement in Canada, R.G. 76, File 536999, Vol. 11.
disloyalty among the Indian settlers in the Western States of America, and, with the help of Sikh leaders, are utilizing the grievances of Sikhs in Canada for disloyal ends. They publish a weekly paper which preaches the doctrines of rebellion and assassination to every Indian in America and have enlisted the aid of agitators all over the world with the object of flooding India with copies disguised as private letters. As a result of their propaganda, disloyalty and hatred of the British rule are widespread among Indian settlers in America. To what extent the spirit of disaffection has been or will be communicated to the Sikhs in India through returned settlers, private correspondence or seditious newspapers, cannot yet be estimated, but the gravity of the situation and the necessity for adopting measures to put an end to the pernicious activities of Har Dayal and his associates cannot be denied.¹

Indian immigrants, of course, were unhappy with the restrictive immigration regulations of the Canadian government and it was natural that anti-British agitators had found some sympathisers among them.²

The agitators managed to get access to the Sikh temples in British Columbia and some cooperative understanding was reached with the Sikhs but the main body of immigrants was not very active in this anti-British movement. However, the arrival of the Komagata Maru at Vancouver, the litigation proceedings, the hostile press statements of local politicians and the sensational atmosphere of the whole affair increased the popularity of the revolutionary movement among the majority of Indian immigrants in Canada. As the First World War broke out an urgent appeal was launched by the agitators to Indian immigrants to go home to engage themselves into all-out attempts to overthrow the British rule in India.³


3 Sir Reginald Craddock, op. cit., p. 156. (Craddock was Member of Viceroy's Council and was in charge of Home Department, Government of India.)
As Gurdit Singh's attempts to land his passengers in Canada failed he was not slow to use this readily available antagonistic force against the governments of Great Britain, India and Canada. The doctrines of this anti-British revolutionary policy were conveyed in daily lectures and poetry recitals. Even anti-British songs mixed with religious sentiments were undertaken as a regular programme when the boat was on her way back to India.  

The outcome of this propaganda was the creation of a very difficult and dangerous situation which resulted in loss of life and the Komagata Maru affair was a rude shock not only to the Bengal government but also to the governments of the Punjab and India as well. The Komagata Maru incident was easily distorted by agitators in the Punjab and by Ghadr agents abroad into an unjustifiable attack by merciless government on faultless Sikhs. Bands of Indian emigrants started to return to India and the Budge Budge incident was presented by the anti-British elements as an extra stimulus for seditious designs against the British rule.  

Anti-British movements in Bengal and in the south of India had been going on for several decades and the leaders of such movements had attracted support on the bases of local, religious and political factors. Various attempts on the lives of European officials were made. Similarly attempts to destroy government property were also made. Nevertheless, with vigilant and prompt government action, the British administration continued without much interruption.  

The situation in the Punjab was another matter, however, for this region had its own peculiar problem. The population of the province

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1 Slocock, op.cit.
2 Sir Michael O'Dwyer, India As I Knew It, p. 194.
3 Cd. 9190, Sedition Committee Report, pp. 21-40.
was diversified with 55 per cent Muslim, 33 per cent Hindu and 11 per cent Sikh. Yet in spite of representing less than one per cent of the total population of India the Sikhs of this area supplied a large number of soldiers for the British army, and the Punjab Muslims had an equal reputation for their army service for the British Crown. Besides this the province was noted for its agricultural output and in the beginning of the twentieth century an elaborate system of irrigation was completed by the Punjab and Indian governments. Yet even this quiet, loyal and progressive province had its own anti-British agitation as early as 1907. The result of this agitation was the arrest and deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh but this sentence was later rescinded and they were released. However, this anti-government movement continued during the years 1908 to 1912 and an attempt was even made on the life of the Viceroy (Hardinge). It was during this period that some educated persons like Hardayal found their way out of India and started movements against the British rule in India. As mentioned earlier, the movements had their main centres of activity on the Pacific Coast of North America though a part of the campaign was carried on in the Far East and Europe as well. Some of the important leaders in these campaigns were Punjabis, so it was not difficult for them to find sympathisers among Indian immigrants in Canada. Thus as soon as the Komagata Maru had left Hong Kong on her initial voyage to Vancouver the Director of Intelligence for the Government of India had expressed his grave concern about the Punjabis and Sikhs on the Pacific Coast. In his confidential report to the Indian government he stated:

1 Cd. 9190, Sedition Committee Report, p. 60.
2 As mentioned in Chapter 2.
3 Cd. 9190 Sedition Committee Report, p. 61.
I look upon the rabid discontent among the Sikhs and other Punjabis on the Pacific Coast as one of the worst features in the present political situation in India. In consultation with the Army authorities, the Punjab Government and the Government of India in the Home and Commerce and Industry Departments, I am considering the question of deputing officers to that part of the world to see if any thing could be done to bring those Sikhs and other Punjabis into a more reasonable state of mind.¹

Within the Punjab strong agitation against the government appeared among the Sikhs in 1913. It had long been the habit of Sikhs to carry a long knife, almost like a long sword, as one of the emblems of their creed.² The Punjab government proposed to limit the size of this sword, and a Nihang³ was arrested at Amritsar for possessing a kirpan so long as to be a formidable weapon. This sparked Sikh agitation, for the Sikhs interpreted the action as undue interference in their religion by the government.⁴ But there was further action that increased the enmity of the Sikhs. Early in 1914, in Delhi, the matter of the boundary wall of a Sikh temple, Bikaghanj, had to be settled by the local authority. This too, was construed as government interference in Sikh religious matters and the incident was used by Harchand Singh, a man with strong Sikh ideas, as the basis for renewed agitation against the government. Harchand Singh’s complaints influenced other Sikh orders such as Akali, Kuka and Nihang and he even started a newspaper, the Khalsa Akhbar in order to carry on his agitation.⁵

These circumstances had already created unrest among the Sikhs when

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¹ Director of Criminal Intelligence, Govt. of India, Report, May 11, 1914, R.G.7, G21, File 332, Vol. 206.
² This wearing of a sword is quite common among the Sikhs in the Punjab. They call it kirpan.
³ Nihang: a member of Sikh order known for their orthodox devotion to Sikh religion.
⁴ Isemonger and Slattery, op.cit., p. 87.
⁵ Harchand Singh was an associate of Ajit Singh who was arrested in 1907; and Gurdit Singh tried to send him a telegram while the Komagata Maru was at Singapore in order to arrange an anti-government demonstration for the reception of Gurdit Singh and his passengers. See Isemonger and Slattery, op.cit., pp. 87-88.
the Komagata Maru arrived in India. The Sikhs in the Punjab were restive and as far as the Muslims were concerned the situation was equally unsatisfactory. The reversal of the Partition of Bengal in 1911 had annoyed them.\(^1\) Great Britain had shown indifference in the war between Turkey and Italy and the Indian Muslims became angry when the British government took a hostile attitude towards Turkey in the Balkan war.\(^2\) The subsequent speech by the British Prime Minister (Asquith) in November 1912 was interpreted as showing British animosity against Turkey and against Islam,\(^3\) and these strong views were publicized through the Urdu daily, the Zamindar (Lahore) edited by Zafar Ali Khan.\(^4\) Punjabi Muslims felt a deep cultural allegiance with Turkey and to express their loyalty, they launched a campaign to collect subscriptions for Turkish aid. A considerable sum of money was raised and it was taken to Turkey by Zafar Ali Khan. As a return gesture the Turks sent a special carpet for the historical mosque (Badshahi Mosque) in Lahore.\(^5\) After the declaration of the First World War by Great Britain against Germany and Turkey, the Punjabi Muslims were again unhappy\(^5\) and soon preachings of jehad (holy war) against the British government were echoed in many parts of the Punjab.\(^7\) About fifteen Muslim students disappeared from the colleges of Lahore.

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1 Sir Reginald Craddock, op.cit., p. 152.
2 Cd. 9190 Sedition Committee Report, p. 61.
3 Sir Michael O'Dwyer, op.cit., p. 172.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 India Office, Memorandum, War with Turkey, May 25, 1916, Austen Chamberlain Papers AC 21/6/18-29B.
7 H. Wheeler (Criminal Investigation Department) to Hardinge, March 10, 1915, Hardinge Papers 121.
and made their way to join a pro-Turkey campaign in Afghanistan and
the Middle East.¹

It was this involvement of political circumstances that made
the outbreak of war so unsettling to the loyalties of the Punjabis.
Both Sikhs and Muslims became suspicious of the motives of the
authorities and began to doubt every government action, interpreting each
new order as a threat against their security. Since most of the men
aboard the Komagata Maru were Punjabi Sikhs, the Budge Budge incident
was bound to have a further detrimental influence on Anglo-Indian
relations in the Punjab and the affair became a serious matter for the
British government. At the same time the outbreak of the World War
presented the government with another major problem. Traditionally
Muslims and Sikhs from the Punjab supplied a large number of soldiers
to the Indian army. They were good fighters and were valued and needed
by the British especially in time of war. Their loyalty to the Empire
was therefore most desirable. However, the returning emigrants from
Canada began to inform their Punjabi brothers about the unequal treatment
that was meted out to them in Canada. They gave accounts of their
sufferings and also expressed new ideas of socialism and anti-imperial
feelings acquired on account of their unsuccessful voyage to the
Pacific Coast. The men who returned on the Komagata Maru were of low
social status and tales of their harsh treatment did not, therefore,
have an immediately visible effect on the entire population of the
Punjab, but their complaints of discrimination did create anti-British
feelings among a section of the Punjab masses and seemed to have gained
some sympathy among the Punjabi soldiers.² To add to this general

¹ For detailed study about the Muslim Pro-Turkey Campaign, see F.C.
University of Cambridge, 1970.

² Isemonger and Slattery, op.cit., pp. 88-89.
discontent, food prices had greatly increased with the beginning of the war and this present and real hardship was experienced in the entire province. The Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, while writing to the Viceroy, observed that high prices were the main source of discontent which united all classes and provided the frame of mind favourable for the agitators and sedition-mongers to work upon.  

The Government of India was still occupied with its investigations into the Komagata Maru affair when another ship, the Tosa Maru, was reported to be on her way from North America to Calcutta. The Tosa Maru was expected to arrive in Calcutta on October 29 and the Commissioner of Police Rangoon (Burma) described the passengers "ripe for mischief" as they openly declared their intention of causing trouble in India. The Government of Bengal was again caught in an unhappy and unavoidable situation and it appealed to the Government of the Punjab for some means to ease the mounting tension:

There are two alternatives, first, to confine them under the Ordinance in jail in Calcutta, no other form of restraint being locally possible, second to send them by train direct to the Punjab under escort. Government of Bengal consider it grave embarrassment to have confined in jail so large a number without definite evidence. Would Government of the Punjab be prepared to receive the whole number?

When the Tosa Maru reached Calcutta on October 29, the Bengal government gathered for the occasion 800 police constables of the Calcutta Police, 50 Calcutta Armed Police, 25 European Armed Police, a Company of the Royal Fusiliers and a Military Police Company of Gurkhas. To prevent any kind of incident the passengers were divided

1 O'Dwyer to Hardinge, Dec. 6, 1914, Hardinge Papers 88.
2 Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong to Govt. of India, Oct. 6, 1914, Home Proceedings 155A, December 1914, Vol. 9461.
4 Ibid.
into small groups. All the arrangements for the dispersal of these men were methodically made and the Bengal government issued a detailed notification outlining every minute circumstance of the plan. The Punjab Police for their part deputed one of their sub-inspectors to go on the boat in the guise of a doctor and the passengers were to be divided into three categories, (a) those who were to be sent to the Punjab under escort under the Ingress into India Ordinance; (b) those who were not permitted to stay in Calcutta which included those who appeared to be undesirable, even though enough proof for the justification of their arrest was not available; (c) those who were to be set free because they were believed to be harmless. The Punjab Police especially instructed officials dealing with the arrivals to inform the government about the temper and intention of the emigrants. Most of the passengers revealed violent seditious attitudes and hurled abuses on the British officials. Raja Daljit Singh, one of the members of the Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry, was present at the scene and the passengers shouted abuses at him, because of his pro-government position.

To preserve the peace, therefore, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, ordered that all 173 passengers be brought to the Punjab in groups and be immediately interned in central jails at Montgomery and Multan. Seventy-three of these men, however, were released on security and out of this group six were executed later because of their involvement in murderous outrages and another six

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1 Bengal govt. to Govt. of India, Nov. 16, 1914, Home Proceedings 159A, December 1914, Vol. 9461.
3 Isemonger and Slattery, op.cit., pp. 61-62.
4 O'Dwyer, op.cit., p. 195.
5 Isemonger and Slattery, op.cit., p. 62.
6 O'Dwyer, op.cit., p. 195.
were convicted for conspiratory activities. But as the majority of the Tosa Maru passengers were interned immediately the development of another potentially dangerous situation was avoided.¹

Another ship, the Mashima Maru, made her way from North America and reached Colombo on October 25, 1914² with a number of returning emigrants. By the end of November the returned emigrants began to wander about like sheep without a shepherd. They were unorganised yet shared the same deep animosity against the British government in India and their seditious activities around the country were undermining the authorities. At this time a serious attempt was made to start a rebellion. Near Lahore a group of returned emigrants tried to persuade some members of the 23rd Cavalry at Mian Mir (Lahore Cantonment) to mutiny, but they did not succeed.³ Because of all this unrest the Punjab government prescribed strong methods for dealing with returning emigrants under the Ingress into India Ordinance. The returned passengers were watched and warned to report at specific periods at a Central Enquiry Office at Ludhiana. As an extra precaution the antecedents of each emigrant were thoroughly investigated by government officials and the man's movements abroad and his attitude to British rule were also taken into consideration. When the Central Office at Ludhiana had compiled all this information it would decide the man's fate. The officials would recommend internment if they considered the man dangerous or if he were considered only moderately dangerous he would be restricted to his native village. If a man was found to be free from alignment with seditious activists he would be sent home with a warning.⁴ Thorough enquiries were made about these men in

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¹ Cd. 9190, Sedition Committee Report, p. 63.
² Isenmonger and Slattery, op.cit., p. 58.
³ James Campbell Ker, Political Trouble in India, p. 368.
⁴ O'Dwyer, op.cit., p. 196.
Canada, Hong Kong and the United States of America. Lists of all new arrivals with particulars about where they had come from and the reasons for their return to India were also made and immediately sent to the Punjab government. Only after this close scrutiny revealed their conduct to be satisfactory were the returning emigrants allowed to go home.¹ No returning emigrants could escape inspection, not even those who embarked from boats docking at the southern ports of India. For these the Madras government made out public notices in Urdu and English saying that every person whose domicile was in the Punjab or the North Western Frontier Province and who entered by any of the ports in the Madras Presidency, should, unless exempted by a police officer of the rank not below that of a Deputy Superintendent of Police, report himself to the District Superintendent of Police at Ludhiana within six days of his arrival at such port.²

Yet in spite of all these elaborate precautions and strong security measures many of the returned emigrants managed to reach their native villages. During the autumn of 1914 the Punjab government reported to the Indian government that the activities of the returned emigrants had, more than anything else, engaged official attention. The majority of these emigrants were found to have returned expecting to find India in a state of acute unrest and they hoped to convert this unrest into revolution.³ In a private letter, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab wrote to the Viceroy of India describing the Sikh trouble that was created by the returning emigrants:

¹ Isemonger and Slattery, op.cit., p. 64.
³ Cd.9190, Sedition Committee Report, p. 64; and India Office Memorandum on the Internal Situation of India consequent on the War, June 30, 1915, Austen Chamberlain Papers AC 21/6/1-17.
The present temper and attitude of the Sikhs are somewhat of a mystery. They are a very divided community, and no general statement will apply to all sections. There is however, little doubt that the pernicious propaganda carried on for some years from Canada, California and the Far East by revolutionary societies abroad has affected no small number of them. The recent return of several hundred disaffected or openly seditious Sikhs who had for years been in those places and under the most dangerous influences has aggravated such sullen or hostile feeling as already existed. Most of these emigrants have returned with the avowed intention of creating a revolution in the Punjab, which they expected to find in a state of open or suppressed mutiny. Several of them have arms (swords and pistols) and money; those who have not hope to secure them by creating disorder. From the paper we have seized and the statements made by those whom we have arrested it appears that their programme is -

(a) to rush police stations and secure arms;
(b) to rush tahsills and secure arms and money;
(c) to rush jails and secure the release of their friends, whom we have interned and of other adherents;
(d) to murder officials and stir up hostility all round against Government.

We have already had clear evidence of their determination to carry out their programme.1

The Lieutenant Governor also quoted instances of a large number of criminal seditious and anti-government activities carried out by these returned emigrants during the last months.2

On December 19, the Punjab government addressed the Government of India again to convey to them the increasing dangerous situation in the Punjab. They pointed out the existence of:

... definite attempts to foment a revolution ... which have been and are being made by returned emigrants ... who during absence from India have made no secret of the fact that they are turning at this juncture with the object of subverting the existing Government ...3

1 O'Dwyer to Hardinge, Dec. 6, 1914, Hardinge Papers 88.
2 Ibid.
and security in the districts the Punjab government quoted instances of several violent crimes committed by the returned emigrants and their local adherents. The list included the murder of police officials and rural notables. Also cited were attacks on railway stations, robbery of mail bags and attempts to derail trains. The Punjab government presented a strong case to the Government of India and impressed upon them the need for immediate changes in the procedure dealing with such crimes.\(^1\) Justifying such extraordinary proposals Sir Michael O'Dwyer wrote in his memoir that:

\[\ldots\text{it is most undesirable at the present time to allow trials of these revolutionaries, or other sedition-mongers to be protracted by the ingenuity of Counsel and drawn out to inordinate lengths by the committal and appeal procedure which criminal law provides. At the same time I submitted the draft of an Ordinance for speeding up the procedure in such cases.}\(^2\)

The new proposals of the Punjab government, therefore, included the elimination of committal procedure in the case of such offences of political and quasi-political nature, the elimination of appeal in such cases, the taking of securities from persons believed to be involved in seditious activities and prompt punishment of village officers and the fining of villagers colluding with or harbouring revolutionary criminals.\(^3\)

It must be noted, however, that these proposals of the Punjab government for dealing with this revolutionary situation were not acceptable to Viceroy Hardinge who still believed that the matter could be effectively sorted out under the existing legal procedure.\(^4\)

Yet neither Hardinge nor Lord Crewe were unaware of the potential

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\(^1\) Punjab govt. to Govt. of India, Dec. 1914, Home Proceedings 386A, April’15, Vol. 7.

\(^2\) O'Dwyer, op. cit., p. 199.

\(^3\) Ibid.

danger in the Punjab. In his private correspondence the Secretary of State for India told the Viceroy that:

One cannot pretend that Sikh feeling is likely to be satisfactory, so long as a witch's cauldron keeps on brewing in America and even when there is no absolute disaffection among them, there seems to exist a widespread sulky dissatisfaction. There have been various stories of grumbling and discontent at the front, confined to Sikhs and similar echoes from some of the hospitals.¹

The activities of anti-British elements in the Punjab accelerated at the beginning of 1915. The returning emigrants and revolutionaries drew recruits from lawless elements in the rural population. The result was that village officials and notables were terrorised and even loyal people were affected by threats and propaganda.² Under the instigation of the revolutionaries and in alliance with the local elements of disorder many outrages were soon committed all over the province of the Punjab. These outrages included murders, gang dacoities and robberies, a common feature of which was the reckless use of arms and explosives. Throughout this period persistent efforts were made to tamper with the troops throughout the cantonments of Northern India, while at the same time attacks on arsenals and outbreaks were also planned.³ At that time the revolutionary leaders - Rash Behari from Bengal and Ganesh Pingle from Bombay - appeared on the scene and established their centre at Amritsar.⁴ They began vigorous direction of local revolutionary activities. All this upheaval was to culminate in a general rising planned for February 21, 1915, for which bombs were prepared, arms and flags were made ready and a declaration of war drawn up. However, the authorities were on the alert and the

¹ Crewe to Hardinge, Jan. 1, 1915, Crewe Papers C19-C22.
² O'Dwyer, op.cit., p. 200.
³ Isemonger and Slattery, op.cit., pp. 90-91.
conspirators, suspicious of discovery, endeavoured to push forward their scheme for February 19 and they also moved their centre to Lahore. But on that day their headquarters in Lahore were raided. Thirteen of the most dangerous revolutionaries were captured with all the paraphernalia of the conspiracy, arms, bombs, bomb-making materials, revolutionary literature and four rebel flags. The timely action by the government on February 19 foiled the plans for a general rising that night. The cantonments at Sialkot, Ferozepur and Rawalpindi were accordingly alerted and due to their prompt precautionary measures, the projected scheme of general rising in the Punjab was foiled. As an added precaution the military authorities carried out thorough investigations of the Sikh soldiers suspected of being involved and these actions resulted in court martials and transfers. The Punjab Police continued its search, and by February 24, 1915, five more bombs were discovered. By this time the police had detailed information from the confession of the accused and further arrests followed.¹

The Punjab government had attempted to meet all of these serious situations with the ordinary resources and normal powers it had as a provincial government but these appeared to be insufficient. Therefore, the Punjab government again approached the Government of India in continuation of their letter of the past December. This time an account of the dacoities and violent crimes which had been committed by the returned emigrants and their followers was also furnished. There were 45 cases in all during that five month period. The Punjab government once more asked for extra-ordinary legislation. They warned that the situation had developed in a dangerous manner and the rural population had been adversely affected by the campaign of violence and sedition by the revolutionary group and the lawless section of

¹ O'Dwyer, op.cit., pp. 202-203.
the people who had also joined these activities. Furthermore, the Punjab government stated that all-out efforts were being made to stem the tide of unrest and it proposed that alarmist reports be checked and restrictions be imposed on movement with internment if necessary in the case of suspicious persons. The government also stressed the importance of prompt punishment for offenders caught in the act of committing crimes of violence.¹

Conditions in the Punjab were growing more and more unsettled but it was difficult to convey the full extent of this unrest to the authorities. However, in frequent letters² to the Government of India the Punjab government continued to report further criminal activities of the returned emigrants in order to impress upon the Indian government the urgency and seriousness of the situation in that province.

Meanwhile Sir Michael O'Dwyer called a special meeting of the Sikh Advisory Committee on February 27 at Government House in Lahore. All the leading Sikhs of the districts to which the emigrants mainly belonged were invited and these Sirdars (Sikh chiefs) pleaded the immediate internment of all returned emigrants who were either actually or potentially dangerous. But the Lieutenant Governor pointed out the difficulty in such a step which involved internment of thousands. Nevertheless it was seen that the Punjab government's action of internment and restriction had the approval of the Sikh leaders. The Sirdars advocated that the delay in dealing with crimes committed by the revolutionaries had a detrimental effect on the rest of the population and they requested that the lengthy routine procedure normally used

in the courts should be substituted with speedy and summary trials.

After this conference the Punjab government established Sikh Advisory Committees in all districts to help district officers in dealing with returned emigrants. 1 Explaining these measures to Hardinge and requesting more power to deal with the situation O'Dwyer stated in his private letter:

I would not ask for such a special measure if I were not convinced that the emergency demands it. Last week I had a confidential discussion with some of the leading Sikhs of the province - three Members of the Provincial Council and the two leading religious leaders - in regard to the action to be taken against the revolutionary emigrants, and one of the first suggestions offered - and by a leading pleader whom the others supported - was that the ordinary legal procedure with its delays and subtleties was quite unsuitable at this crisis, and that a more summary and simple system should be substituted for it.

The promulgation of an Ordinance ... so far from indicating that Government is alarmed will, I believe, show that Government is prepared to use every legitimate weapon to maintain the public peace, and will be welcomed by the law-abiding, while it will strike fear into the lawless and turbulent classes.

Our Police and Magistrates are doing all that is possible under the ordinary law; so far owing partly to good luck, partly to good information and timely dispositions we have been on the whole fairly successful in dealing with a critical situation. But this recent and unexpected outbreak in the Mahomedan districts of the west, coupled with the revolutionary movement in the centre of the province, shows how small is our margin of safety and how necessary it is to strengthen our hands by every legitimate means. 2

O'Dwyer made his suggestions and waited for the government's decision. But while the government deliberated something had to be done to keep the peace in the Punjab. Within the province itself the Punjab government took the maximum strict measures under section 3 of the Foreigners Ordinance and under the provisions of the Ingress

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1 Isemonger and Slattery, op. cit., pp. 65-66; and O'Dwyer, op. cit., pp. 204-205.

2 O'Dwyer to Hardinge, March 7, 1915, Hardinge Papers 89.
into India Ordinance, 1914. In an extraordinary Gazette the Punjab government announced:

Whenever the local Government directs or has directed ... that (a) the movement of any person shall be restricted to any specified place or area; such person shall unless the District Magistrate otherwise directs enter into a bond, for such amount or with such number of sureties as shall be fixed by the District Magistrate, that he will remain within the said limits in accordance with the order of restriction. The District Magistrate can require him to give a bond.\(^1\)

Then to reinforce the written requests and to appraise the Indian government about the dangerous and serious situation in the Punjab, the Lieutenant Governor paid a visit to Delhi in the middle of March and had long interviews with the Viceroy (Hardinge) and the Home Member, Sir Reginald Craddock. O'Dwyer urged the Government of India to pass some emergency regulations to deal with the Punjab situation.\(^2\) As well as this the Home Department (Government of India) submitted a detailed memorandum to the Viceroy outlining the evidence of a conspiracy against British rule in India. The memorandum enumerated the various attempts of the revolutionaries, returned emigrants and anti-British Muslims to foster anti-British sentiment in India.\(^3\)

Finally on March 18, 1915 the Government of India found it necessary to pass Act V of 1915, Defence of India Act to provide for special measures to secure public safety and the defence of India and for the more speedy trials of certain offences. The statement of Objects and Reasons for this act provided special measures for the existence of war and prevailing lawlessness which needed quick action. The new act empowered the government to prevent communication among enemies and

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1 \(^{1}\) Punjab Government Gazette Extra-Ordinary, Lahore, March 13, 1915.
3 H. Wheeler to Hardinge, March 10, 1915, Hardinge Papers 121.
to stop the spread of false reports. The government was also empowered
to ensure the safety of the armed forces and their success; to protect
water, and gas supplies and property and to prohibit the possession of
explosives. The act gave the powers to search, arrest and to control
the movements of persons whose actions were reasonably suspected to be
prejudicial to public safety by removing them or keeping them in specific
areas. The act also permitted the trial of certain offences in
notified areas before a specially constituted tribunal whose decision
was to be final and conclusive; and no order of confirmation was to be
necessary in the case of any sentence passed by such a tribunal.¹

In a personal telegram to Lord Crewe, Hardinge stated clearly that
he had to act even in anticipation of the approval of the Indian Office
in London primarily because of the serious situation in the Punjab which
could not be allowed to get out of hand. The main causes of concern
(as the Viceroy pointed out) were those concerted efforts of returned
emigrants, revolutionaries, and Muslims to commit crime and tamper
with troops, the intriguing links between the Punjab and Bengal anti-
government forces, and the prevailing spirit of lawlessness throughout
the Punjab.² Hardinge pointed out that it was the Punjab situation
that forced him to pass the Defence of India Act. Furthermore, the
Viceroy stated that a large number of arrests had already been made
as a result of violence in this province and he also stated that
during his discussion with O'Dwyer, he was informed that even the
Punjab Chief Court Judges thought that the matter was beyond the
scope of ordinary law.³

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¹ The details of the Defence of India Act are available in the Punjab
Record, 1915, Part II.
² Hardinge to Crewe, telegram, March 13, 1915; Home Proceedings 393A,
April 1915, Vol. 7.
³ Hardinge to Crewe, March 25, 1915, Home Proceedings 501A, April 1915,
Vol. 7.
The serious and explosive situation created by the returning
emigrants can be judged from another urgent telegraphic request from
the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India. He stated:

With reference to the internal situation here it
would be most useful to us to receive any information
procurable as to the numbers, political attachments,
intentions as regards the return to India of Indian
emigrants still in Canada, U.S.A, Japan, China, Straits
Settlements. We should be grateful if such particulars
as can be readily obtained, could be collected and
telegraphed to us with the concurrence of the Foreign
and Colonial Offices.¹

By undertaking such effective precautions and with the use of the
Defence of India Act the Punjab Lieutenant Governor was pleased to
report within two weeks that there was a marked improvement.² Even
the Governor of Bengal (Lord Carmichael) thought that the Defence of
India Act had settled a good many problems of sedition in his province
and he was pleased to report to the Secretary of State (Lord Crewe)
on March 25, 1915 that:

The new Act should help us to deal with our most
dangerous people in any emergency.³

By early April, when Sir Reginald Craddock, Home Member of Viceroy's
Council, visited Rawalpindi (Punjab), he was satisfied to report to
Hardinge:

I went down to see the jail this morning with O'Dwyer
and we talked to some of the interned Sikhs; they are
about a dozen there, four or five of them are decidedly
unpleasant customers .... Some of them have considerable
sums of money, and nearly all of them admit having landed
property in Canada. It is remarkable how, according to
their own accounts, they were suddenly seized with the
desire to visit their wives and families. I think
O'Dwyer has done extraordinarily well in these matters.
The dacoity epidemic in the Western Punjab has come to
a standstill for the time being at all events.

¹ Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, telegram, March 24, 1915,
³ Lord Carmichael, A Memoir, p. 206.
⁴ Craddock to Hardinge, April 6, 1915, Hardinge Papers 89.
The Viceroy was also satisfied about the improvement in the situation as he wrote to Austen Chamberlain, the new Secretary of State for India, on May 27, 1915:

If you were to ask my opinion of the general situation in the Country I would say it is distinctly reassuring. There have been serious troubles in the Punjab and I have no hesitation in saying that in February and March the situation was distinctly critical.¹

Under the Defence of India Act, special tribunals were appointed and they tried nine groups of conspirators in Lahore. In the first three major cases 61, 74 and 17 accused persons were tried, out of whom 36 were ordered to be hanged, 77 were sentenced to life imprisonment, 15 were given imprisonment for different lengths of time, and 24 were acquitted.² In this way, in all, 175 accused persons were tried. Many of those who were hanged, transported or imprisoned were prominent members of the Ghadr movement from the Pacific Coast.³

By November 1915 the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab was pleased to report to the Viceroy:

Over 6,000 émigrés returned to the Punjab ... since the war began. It is believed that at least half of these were more or less deeply involved in the revolutionary movement. They probably found an equal number of adherents in men who had returned from abroad earlier or whom they succeeded in infecting with their views. I take it that early this year there were from 6,000 to 10,000 men in the Punjab who given the arms, the direction and the opportunity, were ready to raise the standard of revolution. The internment of several of their leaders, scared some, the betrayal of the conspiracy by various informers frightened others. The hostility of the people as a body and the alertness of the police kept many others quiet, pending further developments. Finally the exposure of the various plots in the conspiracy trial made those who had not yet compromised themselves by any overt acts careful to avoid risks.

¹ Hardinge to Austen Chamberlain, May 27, 1915, Austen Chamberlain Papers, AC 21/6/1-17.
² James Campbell Ker, op. cit., p. 365.
³ New York Sun, May 14, 1916.
⁴ O’Dwyer to Hardinge, Nov. 8, 1915, Hardinge Papers 90.
The situation in the Punjab was met with great firmness by the Punjab government under Sir Michael O'Dwyer and the passing of the Defence of India Act enabled the conspirators to be effectively dealt with. These men were exceedingly dangerous for the government at such an inflammable and critical time. They desired to overthrow the government but they did not have any long-sighted aim in front of them. After the new security measures were instituted the trouble created by the returned emigrants began to wane and the country was more orderly by the middle of 1915. After this restrictions on those who were confined to their villages were gradually removed and by 1919 all of them were lifted.

The unsuccessful attempt of the Komagata Maru to land her passengers at Vancouver marked the climax of the complicated problem of Indian immigration into Canada. Most of the passengers were ignorant rural people from the Punjab who were induced to spend all their money in order to undertake the voyage and when the attempt failed Gurdit Singh found a readily available answer for the problems that were really his fault. He put the entire blame on British rule in India, and held the British government responsible for all ills, problems and troubles of these Indians. When the ship was finally ordered back to India anti-British socialists on the Pacific Coast, Indian students and agitators in America were able to create a receptive mood for their seditious ideas among the Komagata Maru passengers. The entire journey from Vancouver to Calcutta was taken up with lectures, hymns, and propaganda against British rule and the Sikh temple in the boat was available to carry on this programme. The passengers, already disillusioned and bitter, were easily indoctrinated with a desire for

1 O'Dwyer, *op.cit.*, pp. 205-206.
2 Ibid., p. 207.
revenge against the actions of what they believed to be a callous and prejudicial government.

The Government of India and the provincial governments in the Punjab and Bengal were very much concerned about repercussions that would be expected from men who had been subjected to such trying circumstances. The return of this adventurous lot to India, therefore, could not be treated as an insignificant event. The long intelligence report received by the government emphasized the danger surrounding the affair and because of this, elaborate arrangements were made for the passengers' reception. But the passengers were deliberately misled and therefore, misinterpreted the action of the government. Gurdit Singh, eager to cover his crimes, used every move of the government to save himself. The various pretexts of going to the Sikh temple at Howrah, the arrangement of a big demonstration and the incitement of the passengers to behave insolently towards British officers suited his purpose while the confusion leading to riot solved his problem and allowed him to escape. For the government's part the detailed programme of deputing a large number of officials for the reception of the Komagata Maru passengers and their efforts to search the baggage do seem efficient. But as the dramatic events unfolded British officials showed themselves not prepared to deal with the smuggling of pistols and the sudden eruption of trouble. The violent outcome of this returned voyage revealed that the British did not fully understand the seriousness of anti-British feeling in India and the action of the British administration was unfortunately based on panic, miscalculation and inefficiency. The post-riot enquiries and government actions did not solve any part of the real problem. The Budge Budge riot should not have been allowed to happen for it was used by agitators
and revolutionaries abroad as an example of British prejudice and brutality. No-one any longer wished to subject himself to such degrading treatment. As a result of this the trend to emigrate to British colonies was reversed and a large number of Indians began to return home. Such action was a great boost for the further endeavours of the revolutionaries. In the various provinces within India there were latent factors against the British administration that needed only slight new pressure to be activated. The antipartition of Bengal agitation did not completely subside in 1911 and a section of Bengalees still continued their hostile attitude. The Muslims too, were unhappy over cancellation of the partition of Bengal and also over the anti-Turkish attitude of the British government. The Punjab, in fact, had been brewing with trouble since the turn of the century over such incidents as the Colonisation Bill, the arrests of Lajput Rai and Ajit Singh, the Sikh agitation about the size of their kirpans (swords) and the Rikabgunj temple incident. The feeling against the government was strong but the accusation of discrimination was the focal point of all those various grievances and the Budge Budge incident was, therefore, the catalytic agent which erupted these forces like a volcano. As the anti-government elements became more active they made attempts to disrupt the government by blowing up trains and bridges and attacking government stores, treasuries and even ammunition depots. Besides, serious attempts were made on the lives of British officials and Indians loyal to the Crown. Finally the revolutionaries drew up a programme for a general uprising to be initiated on a particular day and in these disruptive activities they were encouraged and aided

1 Craddock, op.cit., p. 147. Partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911.
by the German and Turkish governments.¹ Because of the seriousness
of these activities the Governments of the Punjab and Bengal became
not only alarmed but panic-stricken and pressed for emergency
regulations which could easily be instituted on the pretext of war
conditions in 1914-1915. At the same time the local press was gagged
under the same excuse. But in spite of all these measures the
agitation which began with the return of the Komagata Maru continued
for one year and the Punjab government had to suspend even the ordinary
course of justice during the time and was forced to resort to passing
the Defence of India Act of 1915, under which a large number of
agitators were tried and condemned by special tribunals who had full
and final powers.

The building of such awesome governmental powers, however, was
surely hasty and premature. Even taking into consideration the
seriousness of the situation and the desire of the government to
maintain order one views with alarm a procedure that was so tyrannical,
arbitrary and from which there was no possible appeal. Concerning the
trials for political and suspected political offences one wonders what
harm could have resulted from allowing appeals to be made to the
higher courts if one had grounds to challenge the decision of such
tribunals. The Calcutta Weekly² pointed out that such appeals would
have served to satisfy the accused and the public that either justice
had been done or injustice remedied. The journal further commented
that it could never be wise to shake the confidence of the people in
the proper administration of justice. But the short-sighted policy
of the government dealt with the immediate situation and steadfastly

¹ Cd. 9190, Sedition Committee Report, p. 67.
ignored basic grievances that continued to smoulder for many years. For the time being the local agitation came to a halt because its leaders were divided and jealous of one another and their plans were constantly miscarried when their plots were given away or they were careless. A good many of these men were interned in their villages but typically the British officials considered them so inferior as not to pose any threat. This attitude is reflected in the words of Craddock (Home Member of the Viceroy's Council):

...their ideas were vague, chaotic and there was not a man among them capable of leading more than an undisciplined rabble. They were a source of danger rather for the mischief they could do among ignorant and fanatical men than for any final results they sought to achieve.¹

Yet cooperation in some form among anti-British elements continued and later on, at the end of the war a more united and stronger agitation movement emerged.

With the failure of the Komagata Maru enterprise and the subsequent adverse publicity the trend to emigrate to Canada was reversed and the propaganda spread by the revolutionaries had the effect of steering emigrated Indians home² to raise the standard of revolt against the British rule in India. In order to achieve their objective the revolutionaries advised the Indians in North America how they should conduct themselves when they returned to India. They were instructed to win over Indian troops and massacre all loyal subjects and officials. Further helpful revolutionary activities included the setting up of a revolutionary flag, breaking open jails, looting treasuries, winning over youthful sympathies, distributing seditious literature, consorting

¹ Craddock, op. cit., p. 152.
² Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case, Judgment, 1917, p. 23.
with foreign enemy powers, commissioning dacoities, procuring arms, manufacturing bombs, founding and maintaining secret societies, looting police stations, destroying railways and telegraphs and propagandizing villagers. Revolutionary forces in North America capitalized on the unsuccessful return of the Komagata Maru and their interpretation of governmental prejudice and wrong treatment that they fed to the ignorant immigrants instilled a desire for redress. To attack the problem at its source they were eager to return to India. The Director of Intelligence, Government of India, reported in November 1914:

In the end of August one gentleman wrote from Victoria B.C. to the Secretary for War that a friend of the writer who was an estate agent broker had received instructions from a Sikh to sell two lots of property at half their value. The Sikh said that he wanted the money, to send Indians home; in two months' time there would hardly be an Indian left in America. He would not disclose the reasons of the exodus but hinted that it was unfriendly to the British Government.

Thus in the end the Komagata Maru affair resulted in terrible rioting and anti-government activities in India and Canada. While deciding the Second Supplementary Conspiracy Case, the special tribunal observed in their conclusion:

We have no doubt that there was an active sedition in Canada as there was in the States, that the incident of the Komagata Maru inflamed still further those who were already ripe for mischief, and that the outbreak of war was seized upon as an opportunity for putting into operation the expected Ghadr conspiracy, that many Indians left Canada arrayed for war, and prepared to carry their intentions of waging war into effect by any and every means, and that having arrived in India, many of them put their intentions into active operations.

The Indian immigration question was thus subordinated to the anti-British campaign whose doctrine was, return home and fight the British rule in

1 Isemonger and Slattery, *op.cit.*, p. 42.
2 Ibid., p. 52.
3 Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case Judgment 1917, p. 32.
India. No further attempts by Indians to force their way into Canada received any public notice. But the incident was not forgotten and for the British Empire as a whole the consequences were serious and startling. The unfortunate outcome for the ignorant passengers was loss of money, imprisonment, shock, disillusionment, bewilderment and in certain cases, even death, injury and lifelong misery in grinding poverty. For the British administration the outcome was more far-reaching. At the same time it was a startling thing for they learned to their dismay that Sikhs and Muslims in the Punjab with long pro-British martial traditions, could sever what the British thought were unbreakable ties and unite among themselves and readily incite other seditious elements in India against the British rule. The beginning of the First World War at that time further complicated the matter as The Times rightly observed twenty-six years later when Sir Michael O'Dwyer was shot dead:

At the outset of the last war, O'Dwyer was confronted by the return to India of a number of Sikhs who imbibed in Canada revolutionary doctrines from Indian extremists whom the German Foreign Office was taking under its wings.1

The end result of the Komagata Maru affair thus reversed the trend of Indian immigration and instead of Indians coming to Canada they returned to their homeland. Before the Komagata Maru affair the strain was felt by the Canadian government who appealed to the Government of India to adopt some restrictive measures to keep Indians out of Canada; but after the Komagata Maru affair when the population of Indians in Canada quickly and steadily declined it was the Indian government and the Government of the Punjab who were concerned with

1 The Times, March 14, 1940.
these Indian migrants who returned from Canada, China, Japan and Malaya indoctrinated with socialistic and revolutionary ideas and desiring to overthrow the Imperial government in India.
CHAPTER 10

India's war effort. Importance of Sikh community for Indian army. Lord Hardinge's famous speech about changes in Indian migration policy. Austen Chamberlain's meeting with Sir Robert Borden. India Office's comprehensive plan. Hardinge's memorandum on: questions likely to arise at the end of the War. Views of Indian National Congress. Dr. Sunder Singh and his appeals to Ontario public. Formation of India Canada League. Representation of Presbyterian Church. Lionel Curtis and his meeting with Borden and Roche. His tour of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and India. Chelmsford and Curtis and the question of Indian participation in the Imperial War Conference 1917. Indian migration question in Imperial War Conferences of 1917 and 1918. Agreement on the Policy of Reciprocity of Treatment. Permission for Indian families and visitors. Canadian press reaction. Indians' exclusion from Canada.
The general policies dealing with emigration and immigration of Indians up to 1914 were totally inadequate and in most respects untruthful and unrealistic. The Indian government, not wishing to create any further internal problems by imposing what would be considered unfair restrictions upon Indians with regard to their free movement within the Empire, maintained the principle of open emigration of the Indian population; and Canada and the other Dominions adopted various indirect but nevertheless effective ways of keeping them out. Because of the reasons outlined in previous chapters the Indian government was not ready to depart from its policy even though the Dominion urgently requested that they do so. This whole question of Indian migration within the British Empire had been the topic of prolonged discussion at Whitehall but no satisfactory settlement could be reached. The status of Indians as British subjects and their right to enter the self-governing Dominions were difficult questions to resolve, since the Indians claimed these rights of citizenship but were always strongly opposed by the white population. No positive government stands were taken and no reciprocal policies or guidelines for action were set up. The Indians continued to have freedom to leave India, and Canada continued to restrict their entry. The antagonism that was engendered fermented locally and was finally brought to a climax with the arrival of the Komagata Maru at the Pacific Coast in the summer of 1914. This particular event brought the whole migration issue into the open when it appeared on the front page of newspapers in many parts of the British Empire.

1 Hardinge, Summary of the Administration of Lord Hardinge, p. 41, Hardinge Papers.
Reaction to Canada's restrictive immigration policies was especially strong in the Punjab. Protest meetings were held and resolutions were adopted in favour of the free admission of Indians into Canada. It was not difficult for the Indian government to realize that on the question of free movement within the Empire all Indians were united.1

Under these circumstances, the Secretary of State (Lord Crewe) and the Viceroy (Lord Hardinge) were convinced that some positive change was necessary in the emigration policy of the Indian government, and the Secretary of State expressed his desire to start negotiations through the Colonial Office. Continuously mindful of public opinion, however, he also asked for Hardinge's estimate of the possible reaction in India.2 The Viceroy ruled that educated Indians did not favour that Indians should force themselves upon countries where they were not welcome and where they could not easily be assimilated. But at the same time the Viceroy knew that there was a strong feeling among less educated classes, especially the Sikhs, in favour of unrestricted migration.3

The Sikhs as a religious group were a very important element for the British government in India and the government had no wish to offend them. In its civil aspect the Sikh religion inculcated unquestioning loyalty to authority and in its military aspect it looked upon self-sacrifice as the highest form of heroism. As far back as 1911 the Commander-in-Chief of the British army in India had been concerned about any occurrence that might place the Sikhs

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1 Punjab govt. to Govt. of India, June 25, 1914; Govt. of India to India Office, Sept. 3, 1914; July 23, 1914, July 30, 1914, and Sept. 10, 1914, C.O. 42/985/27893 and 31402.
2 Crewe to Hardinge, telegram, June 9, 1914, Crewe Papers 1/17(2).
3 Hardinge to Crewe, telegram, June 12, 1914, Hardinge Papers 98 and Hardinge to Crewe, June 3, 1914, Hardinge Papers 120.
in danger of losing the distinctive character and loyalty which
the British military service had been careful to preserve by
encouraging the survival of the purity of their Sikh religion. He
wrote that "first, fanatical Christian missionaries interfered with
the life of the people and insulted their holy teachings. Secondly,
other Indian religions exerted counter pressures on these simple,
truthful, and totally unworldly Sikhs. Thirdly in Amritsar, the
headquarters of the Sikh religion, Hindus had become more commercially
successful and because of this the Sikhs sought marriage among them
and were influenced by their materialistic preaching." Realising that
the Sikh community was in danger of being submerged into the Hindu
majority. General Greagh (Commander-in-Chief of Indian army) had
pointed out that there were 33,000 Sikh soldiers, all of whom were
reliable fighters and loyal to the British Empire and if the Indian
government wished them to remain that way it had to keep orthodox
Sikhism alive and check the spread of anti-government propaganda
initiated by aggressive and powerful elements of Christianity,
Islam and Hinduism. The maintenance of the Sikh religion, therefore,
had become a vitally important part of British policy.¹ But by 1914
the Indian migration question into Canada with its associated
controversial problems threatened to damage the loyalty of Sikhs,
especially the Sikh soldier class. It was because of this threat
that the Indian government felt an urgent need to off-set anti-
British feelings among the Sikhs and by the middle of 1914 the
Viceroy of India felt the necessity of some definite action to
eliminate the irritation caused by this migration question. In a

¹ General Greagh's seven-page Memorandum on the importance of Sikhs
for the British rule in India and his special stress on their
services in the British army and the policy of the Government of
India is available in Hardinge Papers, 50.
telegram to the Secretary of State for India, Hardinge suggested that some system of reciprocity, such as a passport system, might put Indians and the Colonists in a position of equality.\(^1\) Explaining his proposals further the Viceroy sent another telegram to Crewe the next day which read:

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\begin{align*}
\text{I am inclined to think that the only remedy lies in some arrangement by which immigration into Canada is restricted to a certain number annually and giving equality of treatment to Canadians visiting India and to Indians visiting Canada, which though of no real advantage to intending emigrants, would at least conciliate Indian amour propre. This would of course, involve a change in our policy which has hitherto been to refuse to associate ourselves in any way with the restriction of emigration to the self-governing Colonies.}\(^2\)
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While the Viceroy was suggesting that these changes in the emigration policy of the Indian government were now necessary because the Komagata Maru affair had focused public attention on the plight of Indian immigrants during June 1914; at that time Henri Bourassa, the well-known French Canadian political leader in Canada, happened to be in London. On his request, the India Office arranged his meeting with three Indian National Congress leaders, Sarma, Sarnath and Sinha, and from their discussion the same points emerged that the Viceroy had pointed out in his telegrams. All agreed that the need for immediate action was urgent but the India Office, the Government of India and the Congress leaders were each afraid to initiate that action. Sir Theodore Morison while writing about the meeting and its outcome observed:

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\begin{align*}
\text{I pointed out to the Indians that the Government of India could not be expected to advocate such a course as this, unless it was demanded by leaders}
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\(^1\) Hardinge to Crewe, telegram, June 11, 1914, Hardinge Papers, 98.
\(^2\) Hardinge to Crewe, telegram, June 12, Hardinge Papers, 98.
of public opinion in India, as it would expose them to the reproach of surrendering the rights of their subjects. In reply the Congress delegates said that they were prepared to accept this solution without complaint, but dared not advocate it, because it would expose them to the attack of the extremists. This I fear, is an impotent conclusion which is of very little help but I thought it my duty to let you know of this talk upon the subject which must be causing a great deal of anxiety.  

The Viceroy knew, of course, that the publicity associated with the Komagata Maru affair would provoke the anger of Indians and arouse renewed hostility against the British. He decided, therefore, to devise a new arrangement with Canada on the lines of the Japanese agreement, and whatever terms were to be concluded by Canada would be reciprocally conceded by India to Canada. In his private letters to Chirol, Hardinge explained the reasons for this scheme:

This would not have the slightest effect upon Canadians who want to come to India but it would be balm to the wounded amour propre of the Indians who in reality feel the sentimental side of the question.  

However, the migration of Indians to the self-governing Dominions was a problem that found no easy solution. The Secretary of State for India, Lord Crewe, had been Secretary of State for the Colonies before he took over the India Office and he fully appreciated the great difficulties that the problem entailed. His own views on the matter coincided with those of Hardinge and he sent the following letter of encouragement to the Viceroy:

I shall look out with keen interest for your Colonial immigration proposals .... I often used to think that though the racial problem in its imperial aspect is in one sense insoluble yet something might be done on reciprocity principles.... Indian sentiments seem to be curiously open to formal recognition of this sort, and it might be possible to devise some modus which would not have the opposite

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1 Sir Theodore Morison, Member of Council of Secretary of State for India to Hardinge, July 2, 1914, Hardinge Papers 93.

2 Hardinge to Chirol, June 30, 1914, Hardinge Papers 93.
defect of rubbing up Colonial vanity which in its way is not less thorny.¹

Such schemes, however, were only under correspondence between the Viceroy and the India Office while the very real problem that the Komagata Maru affair had provoked was about to land the emigrants with the returning ship right in India. The declaration of the First World War became a further complication in this already difficult problem. Hardinge who was, as I have said, aware of all the implications of this issue, hoped that a change in the policy of the Indian government would improve the general atmosphere in India, England and the Dominions.² Accordingly the Viceroy outlined his proposals in his famous speech in the opening session of the Legislative Council at Simla. The Viceroy dealt with the emigration question as a whole by stating that it was being commonly asserted — whether on historical, legal or constitutional grounds — that the full rights of citizenship of the British Empire include the right to settle in any part of that Empire irrespective of the existence of local legislation. But to such a doctrine there existed a political impediment of an almost insuperable character. The self-governing Dominions were empowered to manage their internal affairs as might seem best to them and control of immigration was primarily an internal question, for each self-governing unit was expected to know best from what material it desired to provide itself with its future citizens. Thus the right of free movement within the Empire was conditional upon the exercise of local legislatures and their undoubted powers. The principle of free migration was indeed the principle for which the Government of India

¹ Crewe to Hardinge, July 30, 1914, Hardinge Papers 120.
² Hardinge to Crewe, Sept. 9, 1914, Crewe Papers C19-C22.
had long and consistently contended, but the course of events had made it more and more clear that there was no hope of its adoption. On the other hand, reviewing the whole situation and policy of the past years, the obvious conclusion was that the result of this attitude on the part of the Government of India had been to force the Dominions to undertake more and more drastic legislation and then to produce the Komagata Maru situation in Canada, which had brought the problem to an acute stage. After outlining the difficulties of the problem, the Viceroy observed that the time had come to make a change and to consider whether, if the Government of India could not get what it wanted, some alternative was not feasible to relieve at least the present situation which was unsatisfactory from the viewpoint both of Indian and Dominion interest. He believed that such an alternative could be found. When the Viceroy touched on the Komagata Maru incident he pointed out that the expedition was carried out without the approval of the Government of India and the organisers knew that entry into Canada would be refused. However, the Viceroy reminded his listeners that the Indian government used its influence and pressed the Canadian government to use no force in the implementation of its deportation order. Furthermore, he registered his appreciation to the Canadian government for the generous supply of provisions they provided for the return journey of the Komagata Maru. He continued by summarizing the situation from the British Indian point of view:

I think I have shown clearly that we have drifted into a position of isolation and it is evident that, if we are to secure for our Indian fellow-subjects any of the advantages that are now denied, we must substitute for this a policy of co-operation. This can, in my opinion, be achieved only by negotiation with the Colonies on a basis of complete reciprocity. Taking Canada for instance, we know that a certain
number of Japanese are admitted annually on a passport system. Surely India may claim at least most-favoured-nation treatment in any negotiations that are opened, and secure equally favourable terms for Indians. It should not be difficult to limit by agreement the number of passports to be issued which, while providing very fully for temporary residence, as in the case of students, tourists and the like, would at the same time strictly limit the right to settle permanently in the country. Those attempting to secure admission without such permits or passports would be rejected at the port of entry after ample warning in the country of origin that such rejection would be inevitable.

The new proposals involved reciprocal arrangements with the other Dominions and since it would be necessary to consult those Dominions the Viceroy proceeded to outline the conditions that had a bearing on this point. He suggested that negotiations be opened with the Dominions and explained further that:

Clearly no reciprocal arrangements for controlling emigration at both ends can be outlined or considered in detail without full discussion with the Colonial Governments concerned, and it would obviously be undesirable to commence negotiations with the Colonies unless there was a reasonable prospect of some practical outcome of the discussions. If this alternative policy commends itself to the people of India, it would be futile to consider any other line of action until it has been tried and has failed. But with the knowledge in our possession that the Colonies have on various occasions shown themselves alive to the necessity of giving such consideration as is possible to the wishes of the Government of India, I am full of confidence that they would be willing to go to some length in giving facilities to a moderate number of Indian immigrants, while obtaining through such a compromise certain restrictions in India on free emigration to the Colonies. This is the policy which the Government of India would advocate at the present time - a policy based on a scheme of complete reciprocity - and it is for the consideration of the Honourable Members and of the Indian public that I have developed our views here to-day. If these views meet with general approval, the Government of India are ready to recommend them to the Secretary of State, with a view to opening negotiations with the Colonies concerned. I appeal to the Indian public to view this question in no narrow light. India has her rights, but equally have the Colonies. Should it be decided to negotiate with the Colonial Governments, I am confident
that they, with their strong Imperial instincts, will meet us in no mean or niggardly spirit, provided that we on our side show our readiness to meet them half-way. The fact that in a few weeks' time our splendid Indian soldiers may be fighting side by side and shoulder to shoulder with our Colonial fellow-subjects against the common enemy is a guarantee of fair and generous treatment on both sides in a controversy of this nature.  

The Viceroy had carefully timed the delivery of this speech so that it should take some of the heat out of the Komagata Maru affair and help to minimize the expected demonstrations on her arrival in India. He believed that it was a suitable time to announce this change in the emigration policy and he knew that the India Office in London was already trying to open negotiations with the Colonial Office in this regard. Hardinge had always tried to identify himself with the Indian people and their sentiments and had consequently enjoyed their gratitude, respect and appreciation. In fact this attitude had been called his secret of true statesmanship. But this announcement by the Indian government of their intended departure from the emigration policy of the past did not immediately achieve the desired result, and the Komagata Maru affair ended in riots and served as the starting point for trouble all over the Punjab. The immigration trend was reversed, as I have pointed out in the previous chapter, and more and more Indian migrants began to return home. At this time the demand for Indian immigration into the Dominions lost its urgency.

By the end of 1914, the Komagata Maru Committee of Enquiry found that there was unanimous and strong public feeling in favour of adopting retaliatory measures against Canada. However, the Government of India in consultation with the Lieutenant-Governor  

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1 The full text of the speech of Viceroy Hardinge was reported in the Gazette of India, Sept. 19, 1914, pp. 963-998.
2 Hardinge to Crewe, Sept. 9, 1914, Crewe Papers C19-C22.
3 Indian Emigrant, September 1914, p. 35.
of the Punjab (Sir Michael O'Dwyer), whose province was chiefly interested in the matter, came to the conclusion that instead of adopting retaliatory measures - which would give only sentimental satisfaction and be in no way beneficial to the migrants - it should press for the admission of family members and a further small number of Indians every year into the Dominion of Canada. In order to create favourable public opinion for this idea Daljit Singh, member of the Viceroy's Council, offered to move a resolution. But due to the emergency created by the First World War, the matter was postponed.¹

The grievances of Indians, of course, were not forgotten and problems about the disabilities of Indian immigrants were again brought to public attention by the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society in London. This society submitted a long statement of the Indians' complaints to the India Office and Colonial Office.² The main points of contention included the harsh immigration regulations applied to Indian migrants to Canada and the denial of permission to allow the entry of wives and children of Indians already settled in Canada. The society substantiated its appeal with examples verified by its Vancouver representative.³

Austen Chamberlain, who was now Secretary of State,⁴ was sympathetic to the charges made by the society, particularly the point made about the refusal of permission for wives and children to join their husbands in Canada. The separation of families was indeed a serious issue and the India Office pointed out to the

¹ India Office (undated) minute by Daljit Singh, Member, Council of Secretary of State for India, File 3277, L/F & J/6/1393.
³ Secretary, Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society to Lord Crewe, May 8, 1915, C.O. 886/7.
⁴ Austen Chamberlain became Secretary of State for India on May 27, 1915, Hardinge Papers 121.
Colonial Office that only the outbreak of war stopped severe agitation in India. It seemed evident that after the war the issue would again become a focal point of public attention in India and in order to prevent further serious demonstration some way should be sought to solve this problem.¹

However, the Colonial Office considered itself powerless to act effectively in this matter and pointed out:

The determination of public opinion in Western Canada not to tolerate an influx of Asians is the ultimate cause of the existing restrictions, rather than any special preference on the part of the Canadian Government, for the methods in force, and any proposals made, if they are to have any chance of success, must, whatever form they take, supply a check on emigration as effective in fact as that which is now in force. It will be necessary, for instance, to satisfy the Canadian Government that any modification of the existing "continuous journey" clause in the immigration law in favour of British Indians would not result in a large influx of Indians into Canada.²

At that time the Canadian Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) was to be in London for consultation, and on the suggestion of Bonar Law (Secretary of State for Colonies) the Secretary of State for India (Austen Chamberlain) decided to see him.³ Austen Chamberlain discussed the matter with the Dominion prime minister and found him not wholly unsympathetic to the plight of Indians but at the same time faced with tremendous difficulties in Canada. Chamberlain outlined his views of the meeting in a private letter to the Viceroy of India which stated in part:

No doubt economic competition is at the root of the Canadian objection to unrestricted immigration, but this feeling is strengthened by other considerations which you can picture to yourself. It is so strong in British Columbia that Borden told me that any attempt

¹ India Office to Colonial Office, July 13, 1915, C.O. 42/990/32078.
to ride roughshod over public opinion in the province would menace Canadian unity and might lead to a separation movement in British Columbia.¹

The Secretary of State for India also discussed with Borden Canada's refusal to admit Indian wives and children as well as the harsh treatment of Indian immigrants which he considered more severe than the treatment meted out to the Japanese. Borden replied that Japan controlled and restricted her emigration to Canada whereas India had steadfastly refused the imposition of such restrictions. Since this Canadian-Japanese policy seemed to work satisfactorily, Chamberlain was convinced that a settlement patterned on such a model would be possible for India as well. With this idea in mind the India Office started preparation of a detailed memorandum on the subject.²

In the meantime, during June 1915, Chamberlain received from Martin Burrell³ (Canadian Minister) an extract from a local newspaper in Canada which had commented on the discriminatory report of Clogstoun⁴ and declared in favour of generous treatment⁵ for Indians. The assessment by the Secretary of the political department of the India Office was that because of the treatment of Indians in Canada and the attitude towards minority groups by Canadians, once loyal Sikhs who gave allegiance to the crown when in India had become disloyal since emigrating to British Columbia.⁶

Austen Chamberlain was concerned about the situation and he did not hesitate to inform Burrell about the strong feelings of all Indians with regard to the emigration problem. He pointed out

1 Austen Chamberlain to Hardinge, August 13, 1915, Hardinge Papers 121.
2 Ibid.
4 See Chapter 8.
5 India Office Minute by Seton, Secretary Political Department, July 9, 1915, File 3277, L/P & J/6/1395.
the dangers inherent in such severe restrictive immigration policies and enquired of Burrell whether or not it would be possible for the Canadian government to make a concession on two points - the refusal to allow the wives and families of Indian immigrants to enter Canada and the more favoured treatment of Japanese immigrants. However, no concessions were forthcoming from Burrell who simply repeated Clogstoun's report that Indians were a seditious lot and were only staying temporarily in Canada. Though the letter from Burrell was "not encouraging" the view in the India Office was that when the Dominion government saw the detailed report it might decide to grant some concessions.

Consequently the India Office went ahead with its plans and prepared a comprehensive memorandum on Indian immigration into Canada. The history of Indian immigration, the policies of the governments of Canada and India, various restrictive measures of the Dominion government, and various attempts on the part of Indians to force their entry were outlined in detail. The position of Indians in comparison to other Asians, Japanese and Chinese, was also stated. The memorandum stressed the seriousness of the emigration question and its impact on the British Empire in India. Of particular importance was the information concerning the Punjabi Sikhs. The Punjab was described as the chief recruitment ground for the Indian army and the services of the Punjabi Sikh soldiers were vital for the British Empire. Since most Indians who tried to emigrate to Canada were Punjabi Sikhs their grievances were

3 India Office Minute by Austen Chamberlain, Sept. 2, 1915, File 3277, L/P & J/6/1395.
4 India Office Minute by Holderness, Permanent Under Secretary, File 3277, L/P & J/6/1395.
used as propaganda weapons against the British rule by agitators in India, with the result that loyal service of Sikh soldiers was undermined. The position of Canada with regard to this immigration question was different from that of South Africa which did have an Indian immigration problem but there the migrants were mostly non-Punjabi indentured labourers.\textsuperscript{1} The seriousness of the problem in Canada was that it involved Sikhs whose treatment in North America had a direct repercussion on the political situation of the British in India. The fact that Indians as a whole had grievances against the Dominion as a whole was practically the only point on which the loyal leaders of Indian opinion and the martial races of Northern India could agree with disloyal agitators and lawyers and clerks who edited the vernacular press. The memorandum contained a note of deep appreciation for the participation of Indian soldiers in the First World War and commended their services as the force that fought by the side of forces from the self-governing Dominions. But it warned that after the war India would demand equality of status among the self-governing Dominions and at that time also strong emphasis would be placed on the equality of Indians as migrants in any of the Dominions. The India Office believed that this would be the inevitable conclusion of rising Indian demands and suggested that Canada should therefore act before this happened and allow Indians already in Canada to bring their wives and children and abandon the policy of total Indian exclusion to permit a small number of new Indian immigrants to enter Canada each year. For its part the Indian government would cooperate in the issuing of necessary

The Secretary of State for India strongly favoured a change in the Indian government's policy of non-possumus and all the members of his council approved the new approach as outlined in the memorandum.

Austen Chamberlain, while sending the memorandum to Sir Robert Borden, further stressed the serious nature of the problem:

I know how difficult a problem it is for you and I do not think it reasonable to expect, or to ask that you should allow unrestricted Indian immigration. But you will pardon me for saying that the absolute bar placed upon the entry of Indian settlers into Canada at the present time, and still more the refusal to permit the wives and minor children of those who are already there to join them, do seriously add to the difficulty of the problems of Indian Government. As pointed out in the memorandum, this specially affects the Sikhs from whom many of our best soldiers are drawn and on whom, from the Mutiny onwards, we have been accustomed to rely with confidence for wholehearted support of the British Raj. For the first time in their history there has now been serious discontent among them and this has been largely due to, or at least made possible by, the exploitation of their grievances in this matter.

At the same time Chamberlain informed Hardinge that if Canada were to accept the suggestion made in the India Office Memorandum, the India Office would ask for the active cooperation of the Indian government in the application of the new regulations of Canada. Since Lord Hardinge had made a similar suggestion a year ago and there was no criticism of it he believed that the Indian public would accept any arrangement which was just and fair. But at the same time the Viceroy was mindful of all the difficulties of the Indian migration

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1 The India Office Memorandum, August 26, 1915, is available in Hardinge Papers as an enclosure to Austen Chamberlain to Hardinge, Sept. 10, 1915, Hardinge Papers 121.
2 India Office Minute by Austen Chamberlain, Sept. 8, 1915, File 3277, L/F & J/6/1395.
3 India Office Minute by Holderness, Sept. 8, 1915, File 3277, L/F & J/6/1395.
4 Secretary of State for India to Prime Minister of Canada, Sept. 10, 1915, Documents on Canadian External Relations 1900-18, p. 659.
5 Austen Chamberlain to Hardinge, Sept. 9, 1915, Hardinge Papers 121.
question and he endeavoured to convince Indians that it was futile to believe that Canada and other Dominions would open their gates wide for Indian free entry. In his view there had to be restrictions, and it was necessary for Indians to realize that only on that basis could negotiations be opened.¹

However, the Viceroy was more emphatic about permission of entry for wives and children of Indian immigrants who were already in Canada. He urged Chamberlain that:

As regards the other suggestion that the Canadian Government should remove the grievances regarding family separation; I need only say that this has been more than once urged upon them without success, but that if the present moment seems to you propitious for representation, on this point, you will earn the hearty gratitude of India if you succeed in securing a favourable reply.²

In the meantime, the First World War created a new situation for Indians. In battle in Asia and Europe Indian troops were positioned side by side with soldiers from Britain and the self-governing Dominions. This close comradeship created a feeling of equality among Indians with the Dominions. India provided men and money for the war and the country was brought more closely than ever before into contact with other nations. Inevitably these new feelings and experiences resulted in a great rush of national consciousness which had been growing slowly in India for some years before the War. A new sense of amour propre was awakened in many Indians and their growing desire for autonomy expressed itself specifically in a cry for better treatment of Indians abroad. It is no wonder that by September 1915 the Viceroy was concerned about the "Questions likely to arise at the end of the War". He therefore sought the opinion

¹ Hardinge to Sir R.M. Ferguson, Governor General of Australia, Oct. 29, 1915, Hardinge Papers 121.
² Hardinge to Austen Chamberlain, Oct. 15, 1915, Hardinge Papers 121.
of the provincial governors in India regarding these important issues and their priorities. Sir Michael O'Dwyer emphatically stated that the political discontent arising out of the inferior position of India vis-a-vis the self-governing Dominions was self-evident. Indian emigration to the Dominions was the most pressing and at the same time the most unsatisfactorily handled great question of the day. He further stated that this question served as a platform on which all shades of Indian opinion was completely united, for all factions - pro- and anti-British - seemed to join against a common antagonist. The Lieutenant Governor quoted instances that showed how seditious activities were initiated by agitators like Hardayal, Ram Chandra and others simply by their portrayal of the harsh and arbitrary conditions to which Indian migrants were subjected in Canada. Sir Michael O'Dwyer observed:

"The question is more a sentimental than an economic one. And I believe that Indian public opinion would welcome a settlement on the same lines as that between Canada and Japan by which a limited number of Japanese are admitted to Canada under certificates from their own Government. One of the incidents most galling to Indian emigrants to Canada is to find themselves in a British Colony at a disadvantage with other Orientals - Japanese and Chinese - and much capital has been made out of this unequal treatment by the revolutionary leaders."  

British supremacy in India was threatened and Hardinge submitted a comprehensive plan about the measures that should be adopted and especially the boons the British government should consider to bestow on Indians in order to maintain its rule in India. While advocating a greater share for Indians in the administrative set-up of the British Empire, the Viceroy urged Imperial authorities to remove racial disparities between Indians and Europeans and between treatment

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of Indians and other Asiatics in the British colonies. Hardinge further pointed out that public opinion in India was becoming extremely sensitive about the position of inequality in which Indians found themselves.\(^1\) For both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India the question of Indian migration within the British Empire assumed the greatest priority.

This issue was also enthusiastically debated by the main political parties in India; the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. When Hardinge had made his speech in Council in September 1914, the Indian National Congress in its annual session held at Madras passed the resolution expressing the profound gratitude of the people of India for the sympathetic manner in which he had handled the question of Indian emigration. The resolution further stated:

\begin{quote}
... while welcoming His Excellency's suggestion of reciprocity as the underlying basis of negotiations with the Colonies, this Congress desires to record its conviction that any policy to be effective and acceptable to the people of India must proceed on the basis that the Government of India should possess and exercise the same power of dealing with the Colonies as they possess in regard to India.\(^2\)
\end{quote}

Speeches pertaining to this resolution cried out for the rights of Indians and stressed that India should have an absolute equality of status with self-governing Dominions in this regard. Various speakers emphasised that if Canada said that Indians could only go direct from India to Canada when there was no direct steamer from India to North America, India should say that no Canadian should come to India except by a direct line of steamers from Canada.\(^3\)

The Congress delegates deplored the fact that non-British Asians

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\(^1\) Hardinge, Memorandum: "Questions likely to arise at the end of War", pp. 22-27, Austen Chamberlain Papers AC 22/2.


\(^3\) Ibid., pp. 83-89.
Chinese and Japanese - had not to face the same problems as Indians had in Canada and special emphasis was given to the fact that Indian migrants settled in Canada were not allowed to bring their wives and children. As one means of protest against this unfair treatment, therefore, the meeting was unanimously of the opinion that retaliatory restrictions should be imposed on all colonials wishing to visit India.¹

In 1915 a representation of the views about the position of Indians in Canada was forwarded to the Government of India on behalf of the Provincial Congress Committee of the United Provinces by Dr. Satish Chandra Banerji. He observed that nowhere within the Empire were Indians accorded the rights that were due to them as British citizens and in making his proposals for dealing with the situation in Canada he hoped that the same solution would apply equally to all other parts of the British Empire where the problem might exist. It was quite evident that by their own unaided efforts Indians had not been able to secure an amelioration of the conditions of their fellows in Canada and quite naturally they turned to the Government of India for help in this regard. Indians looked upon the Government of India as their own government identified with their own interests. Their trust and respect had been strengthened by the support emigrants had received in their efforts to secure their rights in the colonies and by government intervention to prevent the use of armed force against the passengers of the Komagata Maru. But Indians also felt that the colonies had been influenced in their conduct by the idea that the Government of India, being subordinate to the Government of Great Britain, had no power to protect the interests of Indians or to obtain for them a recognition of their just rights as fellow-citizens of the Empire. It was true that India was a dependency whose

affairs were managed in accordance with the wishes of Great Britain, yet at the same time if public opinion was strong enough, the desires of the people must be considered and new policies must accordingly be enacted. Until 1914-15 the Indian public was largely ignorant of the humiliations Indians were subjected to outside their own country, but as they became aware of the treatment of their fellows abroad their loud protests could no longer be ignored, and Lord Hardinge recognized the necessity of pressing for a just solution. Indians, it seemed, desired to migrate and they felt they could adjust to any new surroundings. Banerji stressed the fact that Indians in Canada adapted themselves well to their new environments and posed no economic, moral or personal threat to Canadians. At the same time he outlined the valuable military service Indians had contributed to the preservation of the Empire and observed that since Indians in Canada were mostly from this military group, every well-wisher of the Empire should consider it his duty to deal with them in such a manner as to strengthen and not weaken these ties.

In the opinion of Dr. Banerji the attitude of the Dominion had been short-sighted and the impact of its conduct had influenced other countries (such as the United States of America and Portuguese East Africa) to adopt the same restrictive policy toward Indian immigrants. Formally England might have protested against such legislation but having possibly permitted racial discrimination in her own colonies she could hardly object to it in other countries. Until a few years ago Indians had been the outcasts of the Empire, but by 1915, according to Dr. Banerji, they had become outcasts of the world. Therefore, to prevent any more serious repercussions Dr. Banerji suggested that immediate relief be given to Indian immigrants.
in Canada by permitting their wives and children to join them and by allowing all subjects of the Crown full freedom to establish themselves in any part of the Empire as their European counterparts were able to do. Although he did not believe that the colonies would agree to this, he hoped that during wartime when both Indian and colonial troops fought a common enemy in defence of a common cause the comradeship in the battlefield would inspire the colonies with a higher feeling towards and a more just appreciation of the qualities of their fellow subjects. If, however, the colonies refused to accept Indians on the basis of equal rights, Dr. Banerji said that corresponding tests and restrictions should be placed on colonial immigrants into India. Reciprocal imposition of disabilities would give satisfaction to the Indian public and would dispel the false idea that India was powerless to act in the interests of her countrymen. Such action, he felt, would allay discontent in India and provide a lasting solution of the vexed problem of Indian emigration.¹

Meanwhile when the Indian National Congress met in December 1915 M.K. Gandhi moved the resolution:

The Congress regrets that the existing laws affecting Indians in South Africa and Canada have not, in spite of the liberal and imperialistic declarations of Colonial Statesmen, been justly and equitably administered and this Congress trusts that the Self-governing Colonies will extend to the Indian emigrants equal rights with European emigrants and that the Imperial Government will use all possible means to secure the rights which have been hitherto unjustly withheld from them, thus causing widespread dissatisfaction and discontent.²

In Canada, the Indian immigrant leader, Dr. Sunder Singh, again made appeals for better treatment for Indians, and in April 1915 he paid a visit to Toronto³ for this purpose. By that time Canadian

¹ The full text of Dr. Banerji's representation is available in Canada and India, July 1915, pp. 2-5.
³ Globe, April 8, 1915.
and Indian troops were fighting side by side in Europe against Germany
and a spirit of comradeship was created among them in the supreme
hours of conflict.\footnote{Toronto Star, May 15, 1915.} Because of this Dr. Sunder Singh believed the
time was right to bring to the attention of Canadian people the
extent of their discrimination against Indians. He said that the
complete exclusion of Indians from Canada was a stigma not put on
Chinese, Japanese or negroes and his views were reflected even in
an editorial of the \textit{Globe}, which commented:

\begin{quote}
... bona fide merchants and students from India
should be freely admitted as those of any other
Oriental country ... some sort of agreement such
as is now operating between Canada and Japan might
be entered ... by which the amour propre of the
natives of India might be saved.... Our position is
not logical and the Indian is quick in detecting
the flaw in our reasoning. We admit the Chinese
because he is a profitable source of revenue. We
admit the Jap because he insists upon admission
as an ally of Britain and as a sign and token of
racial equality. We reject the Sikh ... because
he is not in a position to enforce respect. This
is as dangerous as unfair. It is against such
discrimination that the Hindus protest rather than
against Canada's unalterable resolution to prevent
racial fusion on the Pacific slope.\footnote{Globe, April 8, 1915.}
\end{quote}

The change in the attitude of the Canadian press was also exhibited
in the editorials of the \textit{Toronto Star} of May 15 and June 18, 1915.
The paper observed:

\begin{quote}
We are quite sure that intelligent Indians do not
want wages lowered or the standard of living reduced.
Let Canadians and Indians get together, talk the
matter over, and try to come to an understanding....
It would be quite possible to make some arrangement
that would prevent the flooding of the labor market
in British Columbia without hurting the feelings of
our Indian friends.\footnote{Toronto Star, June 18, 1915.}
\end{quote}

Similarly the impact of the spontaneous loyalty of India and the
bravery of her sons in European battlefields was echoed in the \textit{Montreal}
Witness which urged the Dominion to be more considerate towards
Indians.  

Under Dr. Sunder Singh's direction a Canada-India Committee was founded in Toronto in April 1915. The Committee's objectives were to promote a wide appreciation of Canada's relations with India and to secure an equitable adjustment of Indian migrants. This could be achieved by educating both Canadians and Indians and thus removing existing prejudices. The Committee also planned to develop a series of practical campaigns to remove certain prejudices felt towards Indian migrants in Canada.

In July 1915, under the auspices of the Canada-India Committee, the first edition of the Canada and India was published. It was described as a "Journal of Information on Conciliation" and its purpose was primarily educational. It was intended to help Canadians learn more about India and Indians in the hope that more knowledge about Indian customs and beliefs would help break down existing prejudices held towards Indian people in Canada.

The Canada-India Committee was very active in Toronto during 1915-16. Many parlour and public meetings were held and one of the largest gatherings was addressed by Dr. Sunder Singh in February 1916 in the Central Technical Auditorium. Members of the Canada-India Committee spoke at universities, religious orders and secular societies. Every effort was made to explain the situation of the Indian in Canada.

During 1915 and early 1916 the Canada-India Committee campaigned

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4 This journal ran irregularly, two numbers coming out in 1915 and five in 1916. Publication then appears to have stopped. The only complete set is available at the University of Toronto Library.
for membership; by 1916, the Committee was converted into the Canada India League with membership fees of one dollar. In spite of vigorous campaign activities, however, the League had not more than 100 paid members in all. The new League had similar declared objectives as the Canada-India Committee, that is, its main objective was to improve relations between Canadians and Indians. The scope of its activities was extensive: it distributed literature and sought assistance from public bodies and religious organizations and it tried to win over the press. One advantage was that the League had its office in Toronto and it was, therefore, away from British Columbia where Indian immigrants usually resided and where the stress of Indian immigration was most keenly felt. The League busied itself with voluminous letter-writing, the passing of innumerable resolutions and the sending of petitions and deputations to Ottawa. However, they were completely ineffective in Ottawa and the Dominion government did not make any changes in its policy.

Thus the Canada-India Committee and its off-shoot, the Canada India League, kept the cause of Indians in Canada constantly before the public. Canada's first consideration at that time was the part Canada was required to play in the First World War, and Canadians were preoccupied with their efforts to carry it on successfully. The part played by Indian troops alongside their Canadian comrades, therefore, provided a very useful lever for the Canada-India League and it made full use of it. But the impact of the activities of the League was limited to Ontario and particularly to Toronto. The efforts of the League to influence the Dominion authorities at Ottawa and thus alleviate the hostility against Indian migrants

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1 Canada and India, Vol. II, No. 4 (1916), pp. 31-32.
on the Pacific Coast of Canada were not successful. Dr. Sunder Singh was the predominant figure in all these attempts to promote the Indian cause in Canada and in spite of his failure in past representations to Ottawa he still remained an important factor in Indian immigration issues.

Meanwhile the Philanthropic Committee, a voluntary society working to help the less fortunate people of Canada in their social, economic and other problems, took up the Indian immigration question with the Canadian government. This Committee made representation to the Dominion authorities at Ottawa and after deploiring the severe restrictions imposed on the entry of Indian women to join their husbands, expressed surprise at the existence of such a deplorable situation. It observed that only three Indian women were allowed to enter Canada and this permission was gained after litigation. The Committee's representation to the Dominion government was simple and emphatic:

... we see no reason why, if the matter of continuous passage has been difficult, Hindus wives and children in India and transportation companies may not be assured of an entrance in Canada befitting a civilized people and as loyal subjects of the British Empire.

At this time the Presbyterian Church in Canada petitioned for the admission of Indian women and children. However, the Superintendent of Immigration (W.D. Scott) would not vary his policy and tried to convince the churchmen that Canadian immigration regulations were impartial and presented no discrimination against Indians. To the Presbyterian Church Committee he said:

... there is not now and never has been any legislation which applied specifically and

2 Rev. Robert Campbell, Assistant Secretary, Presbyterian Church, to W.D. Scott, Sept. 19, 1917, R.G.76, File 536999, Vol. 10.
only to East Indians, nor yet that there is any distinction in existing regulations as applied to women and not to men.\(^1\)

But the churchmen were not satisfied with this reply and sought to remind the authorities that Indians resident in Canada were deprived of their rights as husbands. They emphasized that the government which kept man and wife apart caused bitterness among Indians in British Columbia and disloyalty among Sikhs in India. Their further representation put a straight question to the Superintendent of Immigration in the Canadian government at Ottawa:

Is it not a fact that the same regulation as to the continuous journey is applied to women as to men, and that this has the effect of shutting out wives and children of men already here?\(^2\)

In another representation the churchmen warned that such policy of complete exclusion of Indians from Canada had

... stirred up the worse elements in the make up of these men, and furnished inflammable material along with other incidents of aggravating nature for political agitation, which has turned a large number of them into pro-German sympathizers and affected very seriously conditions not only here, but also in India. It has also placed a premium on immorality, rendering these men who have no form of home life the easy prey to the intrigues of low class women that infest our cities, and which now form the chief menace to our work. Canada has suffered morally, and the British nation has suffered politically and will suffer still more in the days that are to come on account of it. Our Church work has also suffered seriously both here and in India.\(^3\)

The Immigration Superintendent (Scott) could hardly justify Canadian immigration regulations in the face of such direct charges. His reaction, however, was to view the admittance of wives of Indians in Canada as a dangerous precedent. He did not wish to establish

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1 Scott to Rev. A.E. Armstrong, General Secretary, Presbyterian Church, Sept. 25, 1917, R.G.76, File 535999, Vol. 10.
3 Ibid., Oct. 3, 1917.
a general principle that when married/were admitted legally into Canada, their wives ought also to be admitted. He, therefore, again stressed the need of the continuous passage regulation as the basis for the immigration policy. Scott further believed that if this grievance of stopping Indian wives from coming to Canada was removed, agitators against British rule would find some other cause on which to base their complaint.¹

In the Punjab at that time, the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, made a spontaneous suggestion to the Government of India that the Maharaja of Patiala (Sikh ruler of the largest state in the Punjab) should pay a visit to British Columbia and the United States of America to counteract the perverse ideas circulated by the Indian agitators on the Pacific Coast.² The Punjab government proposed that the Maharaja should be accompanied by Sikh preachers, some religious musicians, some well-known philanthropic leaders of the Sikh community, and a person well acquainted with Sikh service for the Indian government. The purpose of such visit would be to explain to the Sikhs in Canada and the U.S.A. that they should not be misled by insidious teachings of Indians of other races who had no regard for the Sikh religion. The Lieutenant Governor also stressed the need of immediately introducing some type of arrangement in the emigration policy from India to Canada. He believed that although such an arrangement might not satisfy the abstract demands of Indians who insisted on equal citizenship status with Europeans, at least it would be a positive step in the direction of removing those discrimination grievances which served to unite all Indians in their opposition to the British government.

in India. The India Office attached special importance to Sir Michael O'Dwyer's opinion but had certain reservations:

Quite frankly, I do not think that any old-fashioned Sikh gentleman would visit British Columbia without acquiring a lively detestation for the manner and conditions of the country. Nevertheless the India Office and the Colonial Office pressed the Canadian government for an immediate arrangement for the visit. But in Vancouver the Immigration Agent (Malcolm Reid) was not in favour of the visit at all. His observation was that there were only 1000 to 1200 Indians in Canada and he insisted that there was absolutely no unrest among them. The Dominion government accepted his assessment of the situation and since they seemed satisfied that no problem existed they declared that the proposed visit would serve no useful purpose and efforts to arrange it were therefore quite futile. The scheme was subsequently dropped, however, judging from the amount of interest the whole idea generated, one could see the importance attached to it by the Punjab government, the Government of India and the India Office in London. Only the immigration officials in Canada remained indifferent.

Because of the lack of specific action in Ottawa to deal with the question of Indian immigration that was vitally important to British interests in India Austen Chamberlain, in consultation with the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Bonar Law), decided to raise the matter in the forthcoming Imperial Conference. He

1 India Office, Minute by Dunlop Smith, Political Secretary, Dec. 21, 1916, File 362, L/P & J/6/1475.
2 India Office Minute by Seton, Secretary, Public and Judicial, Dec. 21, 1916, File 362, L/P & J/6/1475.
3 Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor General of Canada, telegram, Jan. 16, 1917, CO. 42/100/4/2071.
5 Governor General, Canada to Secretary of State for Colonies, telegram, Jan 21, 1917, C.O. 42/100/4/2071.
6 Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, telegram, Jan. 31, 1917, File 362, L/P & J/6/1475.
thought that in this way he might be successful in securing a solution of the problem through personal communication. Sir Robert Borden, in his turn, consulted with concerned officials in the Department of External Affairs and W.D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, was called upon to give his opinion as chief of the department concerned. He had seen the crises created by Justice Hunter's decision in 1913 and the Komagata Maru affair in 1914 and because of these events his views were not sympathetic to the adoption of any leniency in Canada's immigration policy as it affected Indians. But even in 1913 Scott had expressed his strong misgivings about liberal immigration policies and he quoted examples of serious problems of bad race relations and ghetto concentrations in various communities in the United States of America. Scott insisted that if Canada was to maintain its harmonious population relationships within the country a highly restrictive immigration policy was more important for its defence than the maintenance of an army. He was strongly opposed to undesirable immigrants whom he described as

... those who will not assimilate with the Canadian people or whose presence will tend to bring about a deterioration from a political, moral, social or economic point of view.

Superintendent Scott further believed that the problem of Indian immigration into Canada was indeed solving itself because many Indians had succumbed to consumption while others either went to the United States or returned to India where they could find a warmer climate. According to his calculations, therefore, the number of

3 W.D. Scott, "Immigration and population", Canada and Its Provinces: A History of the Canadian People and Their Institutions, Toronto, 1914, pp. 517-591.
Indians in Canada was steadily waning each year¹ and the only concession he was prepared to recommend was that Indians who were legally resident in Canada and who were in a position to receive and care for their families should be permitted to bring their wives and minor children. With respect to general policies on immigration, Scott suggested that the Dominion government should promise to consider only a very small number of Indians for admission to Canada each year but for the time being even a small number could not actually be admitted since the employment and economic situation in British Columbia would not permit any immigration into that province. The immigration chief justified his viewpoint by referring to the expected severe economic condition at the end of the war.²

The Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) also sought the opinion of the provincial government of British Columbia. Sir Richard McBride (premier of British Columbia) appreciated the attitude of the Government of India in the past and he also realised the importance of the services of Indians in the defence efforts of the British Empire. But at the same time he expressed his fear of an Indian take-over in his province if unrestricted immigration of Indians was allowed. He compared the small population of British Columbia with over three hundred million people of India, thousands of whom might wish to emigrate. He expressed his willingness to accept students, merchants and travellers as non-immigrant and temporary visitors but he maintained that only a small number of labouring class immigrants should be allowed entrance on a permanent

² Ibid.
basis. He further suggested that a reciprocal arrangement should be negotiated which would mean that only such number of Indians should be allowed in Canada as the number of Canadians going to India.¹

After hearing these opinions, Sir Robert Borden asked Dr. Roche, the Minister of the Interior, to examine the whole question thoroughly.² Meanwhile this issue of migration of Indians within the British Empire had its bearing not only on Canada, but also on other Dominions. By chance at that time Lionel George Curtis³ happened to be in Canada and he was already known for his deep interests in the British Empire through his writings, speeches and publications.⁴ Curtis had also founded a quarterly journal, the Round Table, to advocate the federation of the self-governing Dominions of the British Empire and Dr. Roche decided that a man of such experience should be consulted on the problem of Indian migration.⁵ Roche made arrangements for Curtis to call on Borden in Ottawa and discuss the Indian migration issue with the Canadian government.⁶ In his

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² Borden to Roche, June 2, 1916, Documents on Canadian External Relations, p. 669.
³ Curtis had worked in South Africa for ten years from 1899 to 1909. After the South African War in 1902 he was appointed as town clerk for the city of Johannesburg and the next year he went to Pretoria to take up his appointment as assistant colonial secretary of the Transvaal. In 1905 the Governor of the Transvaal (Lord Selbourne) asked Curtis to head the team engaged in preparing a formal memorandum showing the imperative need for unity of the South African colonies. In this way, the scheme for integrating the former South African colonies into one self-governing Union of South Africa was drafted by Curtis and it was ultimately implemented in 1909. The question of Indians and coloured people in the South African colonies did exist but the formation of the Union and the granting of self-governing status provided the unchallenged constitutional authority of the new government with the power to adopt the policy of apartheid which also relieved the British Government of its responsibilities for looking after Indians and coloured people in South Africa.
⁵ Roche to Curtis, June 5, 1916, Chelmsford Papers MSS E-264/17.
book, The Problems of the Commonwealth, Curtis argued against the principle of free migration within the Commonwealth on the grounds that the inhabitants of Asia and Africa, although in theory entitled as British citizens to enter England, would in practice avoid doing so, because of its climate and congestion, and, if permitted to migrate freely would choose instead to settle in the more spacious territories of Australia, South Africa and Western Canada. Secondly since non-European races comprised six-sevenths of the Commonwealth's total population, free settlement by them in these Dominions would mean that the white pioneers would be heavily outnumbered and less capable, burdened with such a large majority of politically immature subjects, of exercising their fundamental responsibility of self-government. Substantiating his fears for the future, Curtis pointed out that being content with lower wages than those needed to maintain a European standard of living the non-Europeans (freely admitted to white Dominions) would tend to monopolize manual labour, and in return restrict Europeans to the narrow spheres of administration and management. White immigration would diminish, coloured immigration would increase, and all hope of a wider dissemination of the highest cultural and political values would be defeated.

Clearly one could see that Curtis' South African background had disposed him to certain definite ideas about white supremacy in the British Empire. As far back as 1908 Curtis had revealed his racial bias and in a private letter to Amery he gave his opinion of Mackenzie King's report on Indian immigration. He declared that the hypocrisy of excluding Asiatics from freedom to colonize whatever countries they chose within the Empire on the

1 A Conservative Party member, and later Secretary of State for India.
grounds that they would not be able to adjust themselves to new climates should be abandoned and English people should instead base their objections to Asiatic immigration on the real issues of racial discrimination. Curtis expressed his fear that just as rabbits may propagate more quickly and easily than sheep and cattle in a vacant country such as Australia so a lower civilization might take root more quickly in a new country than a higher one if one was to give free play to the movement of Asiatic populations before white civilization had established a firm hold. The lower race, he maintained, would overrun Canada, Australia and South Africa and the lower wages paid to Asiatic factory workers in these countries would make it difficult for a competing white industry to have a chance at all. Curtis reasoned that what the white population must prevent was the threat of Asiatics Indianizing the vacant portions of the British Empire. Asiatics therefore should be taught by the Imperial government to think that their future was in Asia. Such colonies as had no Asiatics, he said, had no trouble, but those that imposed no restrictions and only extreme qualifications found themselves confronted with a large number of brown competitors. In his opinion such an undesirable situation was bound to continue until exclusion of Asiatics was based on the true ground of race and not on bogus grounds of property or education. He declared that distinction by race was natural and fundamental and should be upheld even though the law chose to ignore it.1 By 1916 Curtis had fully formulated his views on Asiatic immigration and his observations of the British colonial situation were put into a letter to the Minister of the Interior, W.J. Roche. He acknowledged the existing

1 Curtis to L.S. Amery, July 20, 1908, King Papers, Vol. 7.
Asiatic immigration practice in Canada and found the government guided by two different principles. The treaty arrangements between Canada and Japan allowed 400 Japanese to enter Canada each year while the Chinese were allowed to enter subject to a head tax of $500. The majority of these immigrants had themselves smuggled into the United States, but about 30,000 remained in British Columbia. These 30,000, he believed, would cause great trouble when Asiatic labour came in competition with European labour because Canadian provinces would devise laws to penalize the Asians and the Dominion government would then be confronted with the problem of whether or not those laws ought to be sanctioned. These Japanese and Chinese immigrants had been allowed to dribble into the country because Canadians desired them for domestic service and also because the government profited from the immigration head tax. Indians, on the other hand, although they were British subjects, possessed manners and customs which were more objectionable to Europeans, and towards their entry, therefore, the Canadian government applied the principle of total exclusion. But Curtis suggested that the real objection to Asiatic colonization was what should be considered. This was that any establishment of an Asiatic community in the heart of a European community was productive of social, moral and political evils. The two races could not be assimilated, he said, and any attempt to intermarry would produce a hybrid race unacceptable to both Europeans as well as Indians. Furthermore he stated that Asians multiplied more quickly than Europeans and actually checked the increase of the European population by monopolizing the field of unskilled labour. Europeans by association quickly found such unskilled labour degrading. So in order to develop the country the government would be forced to allow more Asians to enter
the country or be satisfied to leave the country at a standstill. The policy of dribble therefore was merely postponing the day when some definite stand would have to be taken against the evil of any further Asiatic colonization. He asserted that Canada should not pay any heed to the Government of India's sentimental proposal to allow Indians to enter Canada on the same basis as the Japanese. Since the Canadian government did not wish to claim for Canadians the right to colonize India, Japan or China he saw no reason why Canada should be expected to give these rights to Asiatics to come to Canada. Although he did not object to the exchange of visitors, students, religious men, professors or business agents on a temporary basis, he stipulated that each should have a passport which could be revoked if he tried to remain permanently in the country. He said that those Indians already in Canada must be accepted as a permanent part of the population and should be put on the same footing as the whites. They should be allowed to bring one wife to Canada but further colonization of British Indians should be prohibited at the same time renouncing any claim to the right of Canadians to permanent colonization in India. The machinery of passports was very important, he said. Canadians desiring to visit India should first obtain a passport in Canada and for that purpose the Indian government should have in Canada its own admissions officer whose signature would guarantee admission into India for the purpose specified on the passport. In this way no Canadian visitor to India who held a passport would be turned back at an Indian port. The same principle would be applied to Indians and if Canadian or Indian visitors violated the conditions of their entry the passport would be revoked and the visitor
ordered to leave the country. Curtis believed such an arrangement would offer a permanent and comprehensive basis for the whole Asiatic immigration problem in Canada. He said the Indian government and even the Japanese government could not claim rights in Canada which the Canadian government did not claim for Canadians in India or Japan. These proceedings assumed international importance when he considered that a further consequence of this settlement might be the influencing of the United States of America to follow such reciprocal principles and thus improve the relations between America and Japan.  

After giving his views to the Canadian government Curtis made his way to Australia and New Zealand where he met government leaders and made similar observations about their Indian migration questions. By November 1916 Curtis reached India and told Lord Chelmsford (Viceroy of India) about his dialogue with Australian and New Zealand government leaders on this question. Chelmsford found the views of Curtis and the result of his tour through Canada, New Zealand and Australia "extremely interesting" and exactly in line with his own ideas on the subject. The Secretary of State for India (Austen Chamberlain) also agreed with the views of Curtis and Chelmsford. However, the basis of his observations seemed different. To him the Dominions desired only to protect their social and economic conditions and the racial question was of secondary importance. And for Indians, Chamberlain thought the question primarily involved a feeling of self-respect and had little

1 Full text of Lionel Curtis' letter to Dr. W.J. Roche, June 19, 1916, is available in Borden Papers Vol. 41.
to do with economic gain.

However, during the course of the war the importance of India had increased and, as Hardinge had suggested earlier, a change in policy towards Indians was absolutely essential. India thus became a pivot in the foreign policy of Britain during this period. A change in the status of India as part of the British Empire had already been discussed at Whitehall and several practical steps - the association of Indians with the Imperial administration, higher jobs for Indians, promotion of democratic institutions in India and also representation of India in the Imperial Conference - had already been taken. But the question of migration of Indians to all Dominions in general and Canada in particular still occupied the attention of the India Office, the Colonial Office, and the Viceroy of India. The Imperial War Conference was to be held in London in the spring of 1917 and the India Office in consultation with the Colonial Office had already decided to bring this question before the Conference members. It submitted a memorandum on the subject. After describing the various devices by which Indians were excluded from entry into the self-governing Dominions the India Office especially made the point about the complete ban on the entry of wives and children of Indians who were already in Canada. The memorandum continued that a great deal of capital had been made of this grievance in India, although it was improbable that a dozen or so Sikhs of labouring classes would rush to bring their wives. This issue had rather become a focal point of political propaganda and a ready-made

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2 Ibid.
weapon to be used by anti-British agitators in India. When Canada allowed the Chinese and Japanese to bring their wives, the memorandum questioned the unequal nature of treatment of Indians with non-British Asians. In order to redress these grievances, the India Office note stressed that it should be recognised that these matters were of sentimental nature as Indians regarded themselves as British subjects and at the same time were unable to understand why they were excluded from the Dominions. They were proud of their British Indian nationality, of their ancient civilization, and of the great intellectual traditions which they had inherited. They had made sacrifices for the British Empire and had proved their loyalty, courage and fortitude and they asked that this should be recognized. In this way the question of Indian migration into the Dominions was full of sentiment and imagination. The note further added that if the Dominion were to make concessions which would meet the feelings of this order, they would find that India would not be unreasonable on material points. Keeping these principles in mind the India Office suggested that:

(1) As regards Indians already permanently settled in the Dominions they should be allowed to bring in wives (subject to the rule of monogamy) and minor children, and in other respects should not be less privileged than Japanese settled immigrants.

(2) Future admission of Indians for labour or settlement should, if possible, be regulated on lines similar to, and not less favourable than those governing the admission of any other Asiatic race.

(3) If this is not possible, there might be reciprocal treatment in India and each Dominion of immigration for purposes of labour or permanent settlement. If a Dominion is determined to exclude these two classes of immigration from India, India should be free to do the same as regards that Dominion. It would be clearly recognized that the exclusion in either case was not motivated by prejudices of race, but was the outcome of different economic conditions.
Along with such exclusion reciprocal arrangements would be made for granting full facilities for the admission of tourists, students, and the like, and for business visits entailing temporary residence, so long as this residence was not for labour purposes or for permanent settlement.

The Imperial War Conference was held in April 1917 and India was represented by Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India; Sir James Heston, Governor of the United Provinces; the Maharaja of Bikaner and Sir Satyendra Sinha, a well-known member of the Indian National Congress. The question of migration of Indians was to be discussed on April 27, 1917. In order to avoid adverse publicity and possibly awkward press comments and their repercussion in India and the Dominions, an informal discussion between members of the Conference was held on April 18, 1917. The case of India was put forward moderately and fairly but very ably by Sinha. Speaking about his proposals Sir Robert Borden expressed frankly the difficulties of the Dominion government and pointed out that it was futile for him to take a stand which was not supported by public opinion in Canada. He further suggested that the Indian representative should prepare a draft resolution and submit it to the Dominion representatives before formal discussion could take place. As a result of this informal and secret discussion Sinha agreed to propose:

... that in the matter of immigration due regard should be had on the one hand to the desire of India for complete citizenship in the Empire and on the other hand to the difficulties of the self-governing Dominions and that the conditions of future emigration and immigration between India and the Dominions should be regulated on the basis of reciprocity. Second, that visits between India and the Dominions for purposes of travel, education, business or otherwise than for permanent settlement should be free subject only to passport or such other

1 Full text of the India Office proposal March 22, 1917, is available in Cd. 8566 Proceedings of Imperial War Conference 1917, p. 162.

2 Borden to Blount, Private Secretary to Canadian Prime Minister, telegram, April 19, 1917, Borden Papers, Vol. 40.
similar system as may be agreed upon between the Dominions concerned. Third, while the right of each country to regulate its own immigration is recognized and while India makes no claim for unrestricted emigration to the self-governing Dominions yet a strictly limited number of Indians annually should be allowed to settle permanently in any of these Dominions. The number in each case should be determined by agreement between the Dominions concerned on the one hand and the Secretary of State for India on the other but provision should be made that India shall not be placed in this respect in a worse position than the most favoured Asiatic nations which are not subject to the British Crown. Fourth, that Indians residing or settled in the Dominion shall receive just and equitable treatment, shall not be subjected by reason of their nationality to any legal disabilities and expense, ... and shall have the right to bring in each individual case a wife and minor child if any.¹

However, as these proposals were thoroughly discussed in secret session prior to public hearing a slightly different understanding seemed to have been reached and when the question was formally placed before the Imperial War Conference on April 27, the Secretary for State for India, Austen Chamberlain, said:

Mr. Chairman, my colleagues and I recognize the strong feeling that there is in the Dominions that they wish to preserve the homogeneous nature of their population and the special civilisation which they have striven to cultivate, and I desire to make it clear that we neither claim nor expect any thing like an unrestricted right of emigration and settlement in the Dominions. What we particularly ask is that in the first place British Asiatics, that is, Asiatics of British nationality, should at least not be less favourably treated than other Asiatics. In the second place, we should ask that the freeest facilities possible be given to educated Indians for travel, study, or for visits, as apart from settlement, in the Dominions for any purposes. Lastly, we would ask that a kindly and sympathetic consideration should be given to those Indians who have already been permitted to settle in the Dominions.²

Sir Robert Borden praised Sinha and Austen Chamberlain for their

¹ Borden to Blount, Private Secretary to Canadian Prime Minister, telegram, April 19, 1917, Borden Papers, Vol. 40.
understanding representation of the problem and he explained the Dominions' case in these words:

... it is manifest that public opinion in all the Dominions of the Empire must be taken into account, because it would be idle for any Government to undertake what public opinion would not in the end sanction or sustain.

I am happy indeed to agree to the resolution which Mr. Chamberlain has moved, and to say also that the considerations he has mentioned and those which are set forth in the Memorandum alluded to in the Resolution, will be taken into account. We shall do our best to arrive at a fair understanding with regard to those matters and I have a somewhat confident hope that a clear understanding will be reached.¹

After further discussion the resolution was put forward and was accepted unanimously. The resolution stated:

That the Imperial War Conference, having examined the Memorandum on the position of Indians in the Self-Governing Dominions presented by the Indian representatives to the Conference, accepts the principle of reciprocity of treatment between India and the Dominions, and recommends the Memorandum to the favourable consideration of the Governments concerned.²

The Secretary of State for India (Austen Chamberlain) was pleased with the Resolution of Reciprocity of Treatment between India and the Self-Governing Dominions and he informed Chelmsford that:

The Dominions have recognised the principle of equality and independence of status.... They have recommended to the favourable consideration of their Governments the Memorandum in which we asked for the adoption of three principles - First that British Asiatics should not be worse treated than alien Asiatics in the matter of settlement; Secondly that facilities for travel and study as apart from students should be accorded to educate Indians; and Thirdly, that sympathetic treatment should be meted out to those Indians who had already been permitted to settle. We on our side, have freely abandoned the idea of any unregulated or general settlement of Indians in the Self-Governing Dominions, and

² Ibid., p. 120.
have recognized the determination and the right of the Dominions to protect the homogeneity of their population and the essential unity of the civilisation they are building up.

This resolution was passed by the Imperial War Conference in 1917 and immediately became the target for criticism by the opposition party in the Canadian parliament. The main bases of the attack on the Dominion government were that a part of Canadian sovereignty had been given away when the Canadian representatives in the Conference had undertaken to change the Dominion immigration policy with regard to Indians. The opposition spokesman on immigration affairs, Rudolphe Lemieux, voicing his apprehensions about the resolution referred to his recent visit to South Africa where:

... they, Hindus, had practically obtained control of all small trades in all these cities, towns and villages. I found Hindus swarming throughout every part of South Africa. Now if you go to Cape Town, Johannesburg or Durban, you find as many mosques as you find Christian churches.... Any man who has been to South Africa or any minister of the Crown in South Africa will tell you that a danger in that country today is the presence in such large numbers of Hindus.²

Drawing a parallel with his own observations in South Africa and a possible future in Canada, Lemieux deplored the Canadian government's stand in the Imperial War Conference and his conclusions were:

... the policy is today to pave the way for Hindu immigration into British Columbia.... The Hindus are going to come in, they are going to bring their wives with them and the white labourer will be at the mercy of our new fellow British citizens of that vast country of India.³

However, Dr. Roche's (Minister of the Interior) reply was that no

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3 Ibid., p. 1764.
such promise leading to changes in the immigration policy was made in the Conference. Brushing aside the misgivings of the opposition spokesman, the minister stated that Lemieux had formulated a policy for himself from the newspaper record\(^1\) and furthermore Dr. Roche stated that the proposals made by the Imperial War Conference were not laid down as a policy nor were they acted upon by any government. Indeed they were formulated to be a point of reference which respective governments might consider. Robert Rogers, former Minister of the Interior, supported Dr. Roche on this point. He assured the opposition spokesman that no such rights had been given away and there was never even any thought of doing so.\(^2\) Robert Rogers was appreciative of the war efforts of India but at the same time he explained that Canada would maintain her rights. Explaining the Canadian commitment Rogers further pointed out that at the Imperial War Conference the Canadian delegates had said that favourable consideration would certainly be given to the request of Indian representatives, who wanted some remedy for Indian grievances.\(^3\) Dispelling any chance of change in the Canadian immigration policy Rogers remarked:

> We said that we would give favourable consideration to the requests they made, but we assured them that we had not any hope that those representations would meet with any success in the way of a change in the policy that Canada had adopted in the past with respect to immigration from the Indian Empire.

It was quite clear that Canada felt in no way bound by the resolution of the Imperial War Conference, and no change in the immigration policy was contemplated.

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1 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, May 1917, p. 1764.
2 Ibid., p. 1765.
3 Ibid., p. 1766.
4 Ibid.
However, on August 7, 1917, the Secretary of State for the Colonies addressed the Self-Governing Dominions in a formal despatch, in which he enclosed the India Office memorandum and copies of the discussion of the Imperial War Conference 1917, and invited comments from each Dominion. ¹ The Government of Canada expressed its willingness to allow Indian migrants legally and permanently settled in Canada to bring in their wives and children and it also accepted that Indians belonging to non-immigrant classes would be treated in the same way as non-immigrant classes from any other country. Furthermore, their entry into Canada would not be subjected to unnecessary delays or difficulties. But so far as the future immigration of labouring classes from India was concerned, the Dominion government put off the matter by stating:

... in view of the changing economic conditions in Canada, particularly in the Province of British Columbia, where alone East Indians have settled, and in view, moreover, of the problem which Canada must face at the close of the war in absorbing into self-sustaining occupations discharged returned soldiers and munition workers thrown out of employment the question of further immigration of East Indians of the labouring class be not dealt with at present but be allowed to remain in abeyance until at least eighteen months after the war. ²

At this time the Canadian government also recognized the right and freedom of India to impose restrictions against Canada similar to those which Canada had adopted with regard to India but was anxious to make clear that exclusion in either case was not governed by prejudice of race but was instead the outcome of different social and economic conditions. The Canadian government further suggested that some of the grievances of Indians would be effectively remedied

¹ Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor General Canada, August 7, 1917, C.O. 886/8.

² Minister of Immigration and Colonization to Governor General of Canada, Nov. 27, 1917, R.G.76, File 936999, Vol. 10.
if the Dominion government should have its representative resident in India. The duties of this Canadian official would be to clarify any misunderstandings and facilitate the movement of those persons who might desire to travel from India to Canada.¹

After so much deliberation on the part of both India and Canada the question of migration of Indians within the British Empire remained unsolved and the only action that had been taken was the passing of a resolution in the Imperial War Conference and the inviting of views from the Dominion government. No positive remedy had even been initiated and Sir James Meston (Governor of the United Provinces), who attended the Imperial War Conference of 1917, expressed his anxiety about this state of inaction. He believed that Indian people, at that particular time, were willing to find common terms for settlement of the immigration in Canada. In his personal note to Holderness (Permanent Under-Secretary of the India Office) he observed that

> We are approaching a season at which every effort will be made to remove old grievances and the bitterness about emigration is one of those which ought to present no grave difficulty at the present time.²

Meston emphasized that since there was then no particular agitation about the subject of emigration in India, the time was most suitable to bring about a favourable and peaceful settlement of the whole problem. He therefore suggested

> ... that a Bill be drafted ... prescribing the conditions of immigration from the Colonies into India, and that the draft be shown to the colonial representatives at the coming Conference. If the draft is one to which they are prepared to acquiesce, it would give them an opportunity of initiating a

¹ Minister of Immigration and Colonization to Governor General of Canada, Nov. 27, 1917, R.G.76, File 536999, Vol. 10.
² James Meston to Sir T.W. Holderness, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for India, May 3, 1918, File 3479, L/F & J/6/1498.
similar legislation in their own dominions dealing with the Indian immigration on parallel lines, and we should thus be in sight of an all round solution.  

If positive action was not taken immediately he expressed himself as being "very nervous" about the revival of the old excitement in India. Acting on Meston's advice the Secretary of State for India urgently requested the Viceroy of India to institute the passing of a bill to restrict immigration into India from Canada and South Africa.  

In the meantime Lionel Curtis continued his effort to bring the resolution of 1917 on the subject of Indian migration to a practical arrangement. In a detailed memorandum addressed to Montagu, Secretary of State for India, he explained his proposals and their bearing on the relations also of Australia with China and Japan:

... The Bill in question should, I think, in the preamble make it clear that in future the Indian Government will not accord rights of permanent settlement in India to any European, who has not already acquired a footing there, from any country which does not permit the permanent settlement of Indians. This puts everything on a footing once for all of absolute legal equality. It is no argument against this course that Indian Nationalists will at once raise their demands on the ground that the Dominions are empty countries and India is a full one. The poison of a real grievance is drawn the moment we affirm the principle that India, like every other country in the British Commonwealth, is entitled to control the composition of its own population, and that until Indians can do this for themselves, we, as trustees, will do it for them.

I would further draw your attention to Mr. Hughes' attitude on the subject. Herein lies the key to our growing difficulties with China and Japan. If, without reference to them, we establish this principle inside the British Commonwealth they in future negotiations can then make no complaint if we ask for the recognition of the same principle by foreign countries. We have no justification in

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1 James Meston to Sir T.W. Holderness, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for India, May 3, 1918, File 3479, L/F & J/6/1498.

2 Secretary of State for India to Viceroy of India, telegram, May 25, 1918, File 3479, L/F & J/6/1498.
asking the right of permanent settlement for Europeans in China and Japan, and if we say so we are then fully entitled to deny permanent settlement to them throughout our Dominions, including India. We do want facilities for visit and terminable residence, and there is no earthly reason why similar facilities should not be granted to them in Australia. Hughes sees that Australia cannot permanently deny the claim of a great commercial corporation in Japan to have agents resident in Australia, provided they cannot procure domicile thereby; which can be secured if the passport is revocable at any time when the holder may endeavour to secure permanent domicile. In plain words, time expired men must retire to their own countries and not settle in Australia. I believe your Office has the matter in hand already, but I venture to bring it to your notice because it is now a question of days before the Imperial Conference meets, and a hitch at this juncture would be calamitous. Believe me, there is no difficulty in carrying this matter through to a final solution at this juncture which cannot be overcome by a man like yourself, resolved that nothing should stand in the way of removing a crying injustice.

The Imperial War Conference was held in July 1918. In the light of the previous year's Resolution of Reciprocity of Treatment Between India and the Self-Governing Dominions, and keeping in view the suggestions of Curtis, the India Office circulated a new memorandum on the subject by Sir S.P. Sinha. It was almost a repetition of the previous year's note which the India Office had circulated on Emigration from India. The new note confirming the Resolution on Reciprocity stated:

Finally, as regards the question of future emigration of Indians to the Colonies for purposes of settlement, there is no change from the position which was taken up last year, that in this matter the Indian British subjects have a right to expect that they should not receive a less favourable treatment than other Asiatic people who are not subjects of the British Empire. But this question is not of any immediate urgency for India, and might well wait future discussion.

On our side we are being pressed to give practical effect to the resolution of last year's Conference, and

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1 Curtis to Montagu, Secretary of State for India, June 4, 1918, File 3479, L/P & J/6/1498.
we have in draft a Bill empowering the Governor-General of India in Council to make rules for the purpose of securing that persons domiciled in other parts of the British Empire should have the same rights and privileges as regards entry into, and residence, in British India, as are accorded by the law and administration of such other parts of the Empire to persons domiciled in India. But it should be made perfectly clear that it is in no spirit of retaliation that recourse will be had, if necessary, to this legislation, but simply for the attainment of an equality of status between different subjects of His Majesty in matters of immigration and Allied subjects.

... A most excellent start was made last year and the impression created in India was most favourable. It would be a thousand pities if steps were not now taken to give effect and tangible shape to the good understanding and mutual comprehension attained last year. It is also obvious that these important questions should be settled not in any petty huckstering spirit of reciprocity only, far less of militant animosity and retaliation, but on those broad principles of justice and equality which are now more than ever the guiding principles of the British Empire, and which must be the foundations of the mighty Empire round the shores of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean which are slowly but surely rising before one's eyes.¹

The proceedings for the Conference were similar to those in 1917 and here again before the formal discussion took place an informal meeting was held at the India Office and it was there that the formal resolutions were agreed upon. Therefore when Sinha introduced the resolution on July 24, 1918 it was unanimously accepted by all the delegates. This resolution stated:

The Imperial War Conference is of opinion that effect should now be given to the principle of reciprocity approved by Resolution XXII. of the Imperial War Conference, 1917. In pursuance of that Resolution it is agreed that:-

1. It is an inherent function of the Governments of the several communities of the British Commonwealth, including India, that each should enjoy complete control of the composition of its own population by means of restriction on immigration from any of the other communities.

2. British citizens domiciled in any British country, including India, should be admitted into any other British country for visits, for the purpose

¹ Cd. 9177, Proceedings of the Imperial War Conference 1918, p. 248.
of pleasure or commerce, including temporary residence for the purpose of education. The conditions of such visits should be regulated on the principle of reciprocity, as follows:

(a) The right of the Government of India is recognised to enact laws which shall have the effect of subjecting British citizens domiciled in any other British country to the same conditions in visiting India as those imposed on Indians desiring to visit such country.

(b) Such right of visit or temporary residence shall, in each individual case, be embodied in a passport or written permit issued by the country of domicile and subject to visa there by an officer appointed by, and acting on behalf of, the country to be visited, if such country so desires.

(c) Such right shall not extend to a visit or temporary residence for labour purposes or to permanent settlement.

3. Indians already permanently domiciled in the other British countries should be allowed to bring in their wives and minor children on condition (a) that not more than one wife and her children shall be admitted for each such Indian, and (b) that each individual so admitted shall be certified by the Government of India as being the lawful wife or child of such Indian.

4. The Conference recommends the other questions covered by the memoranda presented this year and last year to the Conference by the representatives of India, in so far as not dealt with in the foregoing paragraphs of this Resolution, to the various Governments concerned with a view to early consideration.1

The Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Robert Borden, was immensely satisfied with this resolution because Canada had secured the formal and public acquiescence of the British Government and the Government of India to the Canadian viewpoint that Canada should have absolute control of the composition of its population. He informed the government about the resolution and stated that temporary visitors from India would be henceforth excluded from permanent settlement in Canada. Canada had achieved its aim, Borden believed, without wounding the self-esteem of India and in this way that established the foundations for good will in the future. He informed the

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1 Cd. 9177 Proceedings of the Imperial War Conference, 1918, p. 195.
Dominion government that Canada agreed to the admission of wives and children of permanently settled Indians because of the loyalty and devotion of Indians to the Empire and their excellent service in the war. ¹ Twenty years later, in 1938, Sir Robert Borden recalled with pride the achievement for Canadian immigration made by the Imperial War Conferences of 1917 and 1918. He believed that the work of the Imperial Conferences was an impressive achievement in immigration control, and he thought that it had only been through his personal efforts that the principle of reciprocal regulation of immigration between India and the Dominions had been established. In 1918 it had been Sir Robert Borden who insisted on that important clause of the resolution which accepted that the Governments of India and Canada were entitled to have complete control over the composition of their own population by restrictions, if necessary, of migration from any other part of the Empire. ² Only the principle of granting permission to settled Indians to bring in their families was a departure from the settled policy of total Indian exclusion and Sir Robert Borden mentioned that Canada accepted this change in its immigration policy because of humane consideration for the needs of family life and because of the splendid devotion and loyalty of India during the war. ³

The Resolution of the Imperial War Conference was commented upon by newspapers across Canada and that part of the Resolution which permitted Indian visitors to Canada for the sake of education, pleasure or trade found particular approval. ⁴ However, there was

1 Borden to Prime Minister Ottawa, telegram, July 27, 1918, Borden Papers, Vol. 40.
3 Ibid., p. 851.
4 Vancouver World, July 30, 1918; Sun, July 30, 1918.
some objection to the clause which allowed the settled Indians
immigrants to bring in their families. The Vancouver Sun said that

... the clause permitting those now here to bring
over their wives and families ... means a Hindu
population born in this country. To permit this,
is to abandon the hope that within a generation
there would be no more Hindus in the province. 1

The Vancouver World expressed satisfaction over the arrangements
agreed in the Imperial War Conference and hoped that in future it
would go some way towards the prevention of misunderstandings which
could be exploited by Germany in the past. 2 The Calgary Herald
commended the Resolution by stating that:

There is nothing to which objection could be
taken in any of these recommendations....
Viewed from the standpoint of common decency
and public morals, this proposal seems to be all
right. Affecting as it does only those men who
are already permanently located in the country,
it keeps the door sufficiently closed to prevent
any wholesale arrival of undesirables in the
future, while at the same time it provides
safeguards against the unfortunate mixing of
races, which is always a source of danger where
men of the East find themselves, as it were,
marooned in a foreign land, and with no females
of their own race to mate with. 3

The Globe (Toronto) expressed relief that the Indian delegate to
the Imperial War Conference had assented to the proposal to prohibit
the emigration of labourers from India to Canada. However, its
further observations were more critical:

The racial and economic arguments against building
up an Indian colony in British Columbia by family
life have weighed strongly with many Canadians in
other Provinces. Perhaps the absolute assurance
that no more Hindu laborers will be admitted will
reconcile British Columbians to the War Conference
plan, though it tends to perpetuate an insoluble
element in the Province....
An agreement by consent with India will remove

1 Sun, July 30, 1918.
2 Vancouver World, July 30, 1918.
3 Calgary Herald, July 31, 1918.
a source of friction which has embarrassed the Councils of the Empire for years. Other Asiatic immigration is already under control. Canada must remain a white man's country, and it is reassuring to know that the leading nations concede the point. 1

The Moose Jaw Times praised the efforts of Prime Minister Borden and Immigration Minister, J.A. Calder for establishing for Canada the right to refuse the migration of Indians. This worth-while policy was seen to be Canada's protection against undesirable aliens:

With a strict understanding of this arrangement there should be no repetition of the disagreeable incidents such as occurred at Vancouver some years ago. It [the Resolution] will also make the possibility of a misunderstanding arising between India and Canada more remote, and work for the general welfare of the empire. Canada's representatives ... insisted that Canada was going to be a white man's country. Premier Borden and Hon. J.A. Calder both stood out for keeping Canada for the white men. 2

The Brantford Courier predicted that the solution (as suggested by the Imperial War Conference) would be regarded by most people of the Pacific Province as fair and satisfactory. 3 The Edmonton Journal commented that a possible source of great trouble had been removed by the new immigration policy decision and praised J.A. Calder for effecting the new arrangement under which each Dominion had been given the absolute right to control the composition of its population. The paper was also most pleased that India had abandoned its claim to free migration of Indians within the British Empire. 4

If the newspapers echoed the sentiments of Canadian citizens, then it seemed that Canadians were happy to have accomplished their aims in keeping Indians out of the country. The only newspaper to condemn the injustice of the whole scheme was the Calgary Canadian:

1 Globe, August 14, 1918.
2 Moose Jaw Times, August 14, 1918.
3 Brantford Courier, August 17, 1918.
4 Edmonton Journal, August 17, 1918.
Somebody appears to have thrown a monkey wrench into the machinery of the Tory Imperialists. Immigration from India to Canada has been ordered stopped, and it is a queer kind of Imperialism that can prevail when a British citizen from one part of the Empire is not permitted to leave his own land and settle in another part of the Empire which is also British.¹

Another note of total condemnation was sounded by the Edmonton Bulletin but this time the criticism was in respect of the laxity of the Resolution towards Indians. According to this newspaper, the whole arrangement under which Indian immigrants were going to be allowed to bring their families to Canada was deplorable. The paper argued on the same lines as Curtis had done in his correspondence with the British and Canadian governments and after comparing the enormous population of India confined within a small space with the small population of Canada spread over a large area the paper observed that more and more natives of India found conditions in Canada most favourable for the development of their business success and social satisfaction. If such immigration were permitted to continue, the news article stated, then in a matter of years western ideals would be replaced by Indian civilization and governmental affairs might very easily be dominated by Indian instead of western principles. The paper mentioned that Canada had no wish to interfere with the state of affairs of Hindus in India, even though certain conditions in that country seemed objectionable to Canadians. One fact was because of these different ideas and practices that Indians were not welcome in Canada, for if Canada should be overrun by Indians then the foundation principle of western civilization that the majority of the people shall rule, would ensure not a progressive western civilization but a predominantly eastern one.

¹ Calgary Canadian, August 14, 1918.
founded on the tradition of untold centuries. Because of the climate and economic conditions of India, Canadians could not adapt themselves to a life in that country as easily as Indians could adjust to life in Canada; therefore any advancement of the ideas of agreed exchange of migrants was ridiculous. Besides, the article continued, the British Empire depended upon the British race and the British overseas Dominions were a means of strengthening and expanding that race. Canada, Australia and New Zealand therefore, must be maintained as white men's countries, for if Asiatics were allowed to migrate at will India could spare enough people to swamp the white races in these Dominions without even knowing they had gone. The argument continued that each country had a right to maintain its own culture and branded as ambitious treachery, those actions of Lloyd George and Borden which pretended that the interests of the Empire demanded the sacrifice of British to Indian civilization in Canada.¹

While Canada had reservations about the outcome of the Resolution the proposal was warmly received by the Government of India, and the only comment was in the Bombay Chronicle which called attention to the fact that permission had been granted to Indians to bring their wives and children to Canada.²

Meanwhile Curtis continued his activity to see that the Resolution of the Imperial War Conference was fully implemented. At that time representatives from the Dominions and India had gone to Paris to attend the Paris Peace Conference after the end of the First World War and Curtis suggested that a committee should be convened in Paris under the chairmanship of the representative from India to make all

¹ Edmonton Bulletin, August 2, 1918.
² Bombay Chronicle, August 14, 1918.
the necessary arrangements. He offered his services to any committee and suggested that since the Imperial War Conference of 1918 had accepted reciprocity of treatment as the basis of migration within the British Empire this resolution should be put into practice immediately. Once this resolution had been adopted, Japan could no longer claim the right of free migration into Dominions as other European nations did. Instead the arrangement agreed upon with India could be used as a good example of Dominion autonomy within the Empire, and Japan could be told that every Dominion was free to control the composition of its population. But the Colonial Office did not agree to use this Reciprocity arrangement as an example for negotiating with Japan. Furthermore the Indian representative, Sir S.P. Sinha, refused to act as Curtis wished.

The task to guide the new resolution through parliament was finally entrusted to Borden's Immigration Minister Calder. No new legislative act was needed and the Canadian government issued an Order in Council on March 26, 1919 formally approving the Resolution passed by the Imperial War Conference. The question of Indian immigration into Canada seemed to be settled at last.

During the First World War there was a strong wave of anti-British agitation, especially in the Punjab, and it was intensified by the bitter feelings of Indian migrants who returned to India and told of the maltreatment or unequal treatment meted out to Indians in Canada. Such tales of Canadian discrimination were
effective weapons for anti-British agitators and even the Germans tried to capitalize on the Indian treatment in their propaganda campaign against the British Empire. During the course of the war, however, the realistic demands for loyal manpower created a new outlook among British authorities in relation to the Dominions and India. India had provided splendid troops to fight for the preservation of the Empire. It seemed grossly unfair that Indians who were British subjects should be required to die for the Empire if necessary but should, at the same time, be denied the right to settle in British Dominions and Colonies. The whole question of India as a member of the British Empire had to be reviewed and various suggestions were considered by the British government. One method of appeasement was to offer more high positions for Indians in British service and increased association with the British government in India. A scheme of reform was also advanced whereby India's position within the Empire would be enhanced in order to satisfy Indian opinion and India's participation in the peace agreement was also suggested.¹

The first step in this new advancement for India's progress was India's membership in the Imperial Conference but there the question of Indian migration posed an almost insurmountable difficulty. The India Office favoured an immigration agreement for India and Canada similar to that in operation between Canada and Japan. This seemed a sensible plan and one which would have given Indians some chance to settle in Canada. However, the emotionalism generated by the whole question created the same sentimental and sensational atmosphere that surrounded the Komagata Maru affair of 1914, and instead of

¹ Hardinge, Memorandum: Questions likely to arise at the end of the War. Hardinge Papers 116.
negotiating for actual improvement in the immigration act Indians sentimentally were willing to accept a placebo in the form of retaliatory measures of exclusion for Canadians coming to India. This did nothing to alleviate the real problem of discrimination against Indians within the Empire and the basic policy of complete exclusion of Indians from settlement in Canada, Australia and New Zealand remained very much in force. The Resolution of Reciprocity gave this policy a cloak of diplomacy and consoled the Indians with the deception that they still maintained their pride and freedom by this restrictive action against Canadians. The only concession gained from this elaborate diplomatic charade was the admission of families of Indians already settled in Canada. The Colonies considered Indians to be undesirable candidates to populate countries they felt should be kept for white men, and no matter how government policies tried to disguise this attitude the inevitable outcome was that Indians were not allowed to emigrate to Canada. This policy of Indian exclusion had the tacit approval of the British government, and the Dominions and India were given the power of complete control over their own immigration and emigration of population. This principle of autonomy relieved the Imperial authorities of the responsibility to act as guardians of the rights of Indians as British subjects. Lionel Curtis firmly believed in racial inequality and his picture of an Asiatic culture drowning western civilization in the Dominions greatly influenced the thinking of policy makers. His philosophies about racism and his prophecies about a possibly aborted progressive development of a British Empire composed of British people made the unequal treatment of Indians within the Empire seem to be a correct, logical and constitutional
step in controlling a threatened Asiatic takeover.

In the Canadian Pacific province of British Columbia the question of Asiatic immigration was used as a propaganda weapon for election purposes. The Dominion government at Ottawa could not risk losing votes by offering humane treatment to Indian migrants when political leaders in Vancouver said that Indian immigrants were the cause of serious labour problems. At the same time this Asiatic immigration problem became a formidable weapon for Indian agitators to use against British rule. The Indian political scene was troubled by anti-British agitation on various issues, and although the emigration question provided substantial propaganda material for these factions for a while, the war years altered this situation and Indians were more amenable to a reasonable settlement. This was an opportune time to discuss and negotiate a far-sighted emigration policy. Instead, the demand for retaliatory measures created during the Komagata Maru crisis, was skillfully revived by the Dominion political leaders and became the basis of a new arrangement. The subtle exclusion of Indians became a settled policy, and Lionel Curtis had furnished the academic, practical and philosophical justification for such exclusion. However, Imperial and Dominion leaders could ill-afford to declare explicitly the full extent of such discrimination, and the oblique ways of political expediency superseded the visionary action responsible statesmen should have provided. Instead of laying the ground for the controlled movement of people to develop a new land, a feeling of difference and suspicion was allowed to harden into racism. Curtis wished to keep white men's lands for white men, but one wonders how he intended to justify his position to humanity in general and to Canadian Indians in particular, whose
lands the white man had usurped.

In India demands continued to increase for a better status of India as part of the British Empire as well as for a better position of Indians as British subjects. The self-governing Dominions had increased their freedom and independence but the movement of India towards more responsible government presented difficulties for the British government who were anxious to maintain their sovereignty in that country. By not pressing for the Indian cause in immigration the British government seemed to approve schemes by which Indians would be compelled to remain in India. The large population congested in the sub-continent and the lack of opportunity there for any kind of economic advancement made ambitious and active men restless. They were anxious to test their skills in fields of trade and labour in new lands where they could better their lot. Lucrative job prospects in the Dominions and opportunities for business served as a great pull factor towards the new countries. At the same time bad economic conditions in India could push many Indians out of the country if there was an outlet. Dominion labour forces feared the competition from so many foreign labourers who would probably work for reduced wages. They did not want an Indian takeover, and the complex situation which had been created in South Africa was constantly used as an excuse for more restrictive immigration laws in the Dominions. The concession of granting permission to Indian visitors, students, business agents and professors and the admission of Indian families of settled immigrants was made more for removing the propaganda weapon of Indian agitators than from any humanitarian or pro-Indian sentiments. The inferior status of Indians as British subjects still remained the same.
though their exclusion was constitutionally established by this reciprocal arrangement.

As a byproduct of this arrangement the Indian government devised an elaborate system for dealing with the documentation of Indians desiring to leave India. The Indian government had been caused much trouble during 1914-15 by returning migrants who harboured all sorts of anti-government feelings. Under the new arrangements, therefore, proper travelling documents were issued only after thorough and lengthy police investigation to screen all anti-government suspects. Later on this bureaucratic and lengthy method became a normal routine applicable to every Indian. The British rule ended in 1947, but this intricate process with all its unnecessary formalities outlived its utility and still survives in the South Asian sub-continent.

The shifting of responsibility of various subjects, including migration, from Whitehall to the Dominion capitals and Delhi was a very astute move on the part of the British government, and it served to sidetrack, for the moment at any rate, this sensitive and inflammable issue of racial equality. On the surface at least it appeared that Imperial authorities were granting more, not less constitutional responsibilities to India. But in reality the Resolution of Reciprocity of Treatment meant the total exclusion of Indians, as J.A. Calder, Canadian Minister of Immigration explained:

That resolution affirms the principle that each self-governing nation of the Empire should have complete autonomy in the matter of admitting or excluding immigrants, even though they come from some other part of the Empire. Thus Canada could exclude Hindus and India could exclude Canadians. All the great States of the Empire concurred in the resolution, including India.¹

¹ Quoted in the Toronto Star, July 31, 1918.
In this way the Canadian continuous passage regulation, that
discriminatory measure aimed at stopping Indians' entry into the
Dominion, was replaced by this constitutionally accepted though
equally effective exclusion measure. And what is even more remarkable
is that it was duly endorsed by the Indian government.

The deliberations in the Imperial War Conference, the press
comments and most other discussion on the migration question about
Indians showed the staunch belief among Imperial and Dominion statesmen
in the supremacy of Europeans and the monopoly of white settlement
in the Dominions; and any possibility of sharing these areas, even
on a very small scale, seemed to pose a threat to these beliefs.
The World War brought the peoples of the British Empire together
to fight against a common enemy; but even at the end of the war,
the Empire was far from being united and the unrest that arose
from this short-sighted diplomacy was to contribute eventually to
the loss of British supremacy in India, and to the disruption of
the Empire.
CHAPTER 11

The question of further immigration of Indians into Canada was settled in the Imperial War Conference. When Resolution No. XXI established the principle of Reciprocity of Treatment of Indians this meant, as I have pointed out in the previous chapter, the virtual exclusion of new Indian immigrants. However, there were two important facets of the Indian immigration issue that remained to be settled: the permission for Indian wives and children to join their husbands and fathers who had migrated to Canada in the past and the granting of full rights of citizenship to Indians already domiciled in Canada. The Governments of India and Canada devised an elaborate migration procedure for dealing with the application of such wives and children,¹ but the problem of Indians in Canada who wished to become Canadian citizens was more difficult to solve.

The British North America Act gave the provinces restricted power of legislation with regard to aliens;² therefore, if any province wanted to impose any statutory discrimination on any group of aliens, it could legally do so. Often this discrimination was imposed on racial grounds. Aliens from Europe were allowed to attain full citizenship under the Naturalization Law after a five years' residence in Canada and in the case of British subjects only one year's residence was necessary. Yet Indians, in spite of their status as British subjects by birth, were denied this privilege of becoming citizens. No matter whether the duration of their

¹ India Office to Colonial Office, August 11, 1919; Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor General, Canada, Sept. 19, 1919; Governor General, Canada to Secretary of State for Colonies, Feb. 14, 1922; Colonial Office to India Office, March 15, 1922, and India Office to Colonial office, July 22, 1922, C.O. 886/9.
² British North America Act, 1867, sec. 91. No-25.
residence had been one year or five years, Indians were not allowed to become Canadian citizens. In this matter of citizenship they were considered in terms of the same general exclusion laws as that under which Orientals—Chinese, Japanese and Indians—were debarred from franchise in British Columbia. According to the electoral procedure, only those persons could vote who were on the provincial voters' list. However, since Indians were excluded from the provincial voters' register, they were automatically debarred from federal voting.1 This disability debarred them not only from voting in provincial, federal or municipal elections but also from serving on juries, becoming legal practitioners and pharmacists, or from working as contractors under the public works department of the government.2

This disability was strongly resented by Indians and when the Imperial Conference met in 1921, the Indian representative, Srinivasa Sastri,3 put forward the Indian case in these words:

We have already ... agreed to a subtraction from the integrity of the rights of the compromise of 1918 to which my predecessor Lord Sinha was a party, that each Dominion and self-governing part of the Empire should be free to regulate the composition of its population by suitable immigration laws.... but we plead on behalf of those who are already fully domiciled in the various self-governing Dominions according to the laws which those Dominions are governed

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3 Srinivasa Sastri was a man of varied experience and extensive accomplishment. He was a Fellow of Madras University; a member of the Madras Legislative Council; a member of the British Privy Council and the Viceroy's Legislative Council; Leader in the Upper House; Representative of India at the League of Nations at Geneva, and the Washington Conference of 1921-22.
to these people there is no reason whatever to deny the full right of citizenship, it is for this that we plead; where they are lawfully settled, they must be admitted into the general body of citizenship and no deduction must be made from the rights that other British subjects enjoy. It is my unfortunate part to have drawn prominent attention to what we consider a great defect in the present arrangements.

After lengthy discussion the Imperial Conference of 1921 finally agreed to pass Resolution IX on the Position of British Indians in the Empire:

The Conference while reaffirming the Resolution of the Imperial War Conference of 1918, that each community of the British Commonwealth should enjoy complete control of the composition of its own population by means of restriction on immigration from any of the other communities, recognizes that there is an incongruity between the position of India as an equal member of the British Empire and the existence of disabilities upon British Indians lawfully domiciled in some parts of the Empire. The Conference accordingly is of the opinion that in the interests of the solidarity of the British Commonwealth, it is desirable that the rights of such Indians to citizenship should be recognized.

All the delegates from the Dominions (including Canadian Prime Minister Meighn) agreed to this resolution with the exception of Smuts, the South African delegate.

The British and Indian governments requested Sastri to visit Australia, New Zealand and Canada to confer with the governments of those Dominions. His mission was to facilitate the removal of the disabilities imposed on Indians settled in the Dominions. Sastri started his tour of Australia and New Zealand in June 1922. After addressing public meetings and speaking with the leaders of those governments he reached Victoria (B.C.) on August 13. He immediately conferred with the British Columbian Lieutenant Governor

1 Cmd. 1474, Proceedings of Imperial Conference 1921, p. 34.
2 Ibid., p.8.
3 Canadian Annual Review, 1922, pp. 197-203.
and Provincial Premier about citizenship rights. Later, in his full schedule of public addresses, he pointed out the disadvantages Indians in British Columbia suffered because they were denied citizenship in the country in which they chose to live. However, at the time of Sastri's most ardent efforts on behalf of Indians living in Canada, there were already important changes in federal government personnel. These changes affected the outcome of Sastri's mission and voided the promises the previous government had made about Indian citizenship. By 1922 Conservative Prime Minister Meighn had resigned, and in his place the Liberal Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, was in office. Sastri discussed the naturalization problem with the new government leader and Prime Minister Mackenzie King assured Sastri that:

... at the earliest favourable moment, the government will be pleased to invite the consideration of parliament to your request that natives of India resident in Canada be granted a Dominion parliamentary franchise on terms and conditions identical with those which govern the exercise of that right by Canadian citizens generally.

The subject is necessarily one which parliament alone can determine. It will be submitted to parliament for consideration when the franchise law is under revision.¹

But before parliament would make a decision on the matter, Sastri's many speeches sparked a controversy in the Canadian press who expressed their concern about the question of franchise for Indians. The Ottawa Journal found Sastri's requests entirely justifiable and commented:

Mr. Srinivasa Sastri who comes from India to ask us that 1100 British Indians domiciled in Canada be given full rights to British citizenship, to wit, the franchise, has an impregnable case. "We do not ask," he says, "that you surrender the right to exclude us. What we say is that if you admit us, then you should admit us, on terms of equality." There is no answer to this.²

² Ottawa Journal quoted in Manitoba Free Press, Sept. 12, 1922.
Sastri's plea for the admission of resident Indians to franchise was founded upon the premise that Indians were British subjects. He argued that such citizenship would help to strengthen Indian bonds with the Empire and would not do any harm to the Canadian public. Besides, the Canadian Prime Minister (Meighn) had promised this citizenship in the Imperial Conference of 1921. But these pleas were strongly opposed by J.S. Ewart, in his letter to the Ottawa Citizen. He quoted the South African example of exclusion of Indians and pointed out that such exclusion from franchise did not mean inferiority. It was his opinion, therefore, that the Indians' feeling of sensitivity and their loss of faith in the British Empire because of denial of citizenship rights were unwarranted. Ewart further stressed that:

Experience places beyond controversy that entrance by members of an unassimilable race is followed by assertions of rights, that one concession is apt to be followed by another; and that bestowal of the vote hardens and makes more strident the assertion on the one hand and on the other confuses election contests with racial questions.

Reinforcing his argument against Sastri, Ewart alleged that Indians in Canada were practising polygamy and (because of such vast difference in their social customs) could not fit into the Canadian system of government. The question of whether Indians should or should not be

1 John Skirving Ewart was a renowned lawyer and influential writer. He had been practising at Winnipeg from 1882 to 1904 when he moved to Ottawa to join Ewart, Scott, Kelley and Kelley, Barristers and Solicitors of 14 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa. In Ottawa his practice was confined to the Supreme Court and the Privy Council. He was the author of a large number of books on legal subjects and he was also the chief Canadian Counsel of North Atlantic Fisheries Arbitration at the Hague in 1910. He criticised Lord Grey for his pro-Imperial position. It was Ewart who issued the Kingdom Papers advocating Canadian sovereignty. See Who is Who in Canada, 1927-28, p. 1024.

2 Manitoba Free Press, Sept. 11, 1922 published a leading article on "Hindus in Canada: Opinions For and Against the Franchise to Those in the Country". It quoted extracts from the Ottawa newspapers.
granted citizenship rights was now publicly debated and Meighn's former promise to the Indians at the Imperial Conference of 1921 no longer carried any weight.1 The argument for and against Indian rights continued and R.E. Gosnell,2 who supported Sastri, observed:

Mr. Sastri stands on the moral right on what India understands as the pledge of Empire. The East Indian mind and temperament are not altogether ours. The spirit of the Indian people has been wounded by what it regards as the implication of inferiority!

If in conclusion, Mr. Ewart could point to any economic or social evil that can possibly result from what Mr. Sastri asks, there might be force in his contention.... The privilege asked, because it must be privilege though morally a right, is trifling, but it means much. If Mr. Ewart cares nothing for the Empire as it is, there are a thousand to one who do.3

Unfortunately the result of this tour by Sastri and the controversy in the press did not remedy the disabilities of Indian residents in British Columbia, and the Canadian government did not take any action. However, in June 1923, the question of granting franchise was brought before the Canadian House of Commons by Samuel William Jacobs (Member of Parliament from Montreal). He made a strong case for enfranchising the Indians resident in Canada by the following declaration:

The Hindu franchise is of great interest to this country. There is no reason in the wide world, so far as I can see, why British subjects domiciled in Canada should be deprived of the franchise.... In all respects they were quite as capable of using the franchise as any person who resides

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1 See Manitoba Free Press, Sept. 12, 1922.
2 R.E. Gosnell was a well-known freelance journalist in Ottawa. He served as secretary of the Provincial Bureau of British Columbia and edited the Year Book of British Columbia (six editions 1897-1914). He served as Provincial Librarian and also had been the Archivist of British Columbia in 1908-1910. Gosnell was editor of The Victorian Colonist for some time, but from 1914 to 1930 he became a freelance journalist and lived in Ottawa. His famous publications included The Story of Confederation (1918) and A History of British Columbia (1913). See Encyclopedia Canadiana, Vol. 4, p. 394.
3 See Manitoba Free Press, Sept. 12, 1922.
in this country.... The Hindu citizens have a bigger claim upon us by reason of the fact that they are part of the British Empire.... The question was urged upon the delegates at the Imperial Conference by the Right Honourable Mr. Sastri who travelled through the country last year and made what I consider an irrefutable case for his people who are resident here.... Mr. Sastri stated when he was here that he was delighted to know at the time that our government was going to fall in with the views of the representatives and delegates at the conference, but he said he found to his bitter experience that the intellectual acceptance of a theory sometimes was very far from its practical application, and he found, so far as this government seemed to be concerned, that there was no intention of putting into effect the promise given by the then Prime Minister of Canada at the conference.... Those of us who listened to Sastri ... were very much struck by his argument in favour of the inclusion of his countrymen in franchise of this country. He pointed out that India at the present time was disturbed by sedition. The Ghandi propaganda was generally accepted throughout India, and these people of India were making capital out of the fact that the sister Commonwealth country was not carrying out the undertaking which had been given to them at the Conference.... With regard to the dominions constituting the British Empire India is treated in exactly the same way as the other Dominions, and consequently when we deal with the inhabitants of India we have to deal with them in the same way as we deal with the people of South Africa, Australia, New Zealand ... I should like to learn if it is the intention of our Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the other delegates who attend this conference to carry out the undertakings given by our delegate at the last conference, whether we intend to embark upon some new policy and to deny to those people the right to which I claim they are justly entitled.

But severe opposition to Jacobs came from another Member of Parliament, Alan Neill, who had lived in New Zealand and had visited South Africa. He criticised Jacobs for his desire "to give the right to vote to people born in India, a heathen and many of them a debased

1 Canada, House of Commons Debates, June 29, 1923, pp. 4640-4642.
2 Canadian Parliamentary Guide 1924, p. 159.
Neill voiced his strong fears about the possible results if Indians were given the right to vote in British Columbia and observed:

Five thousand voters infected in British Columbia would have a powerful influence in the electorate and on the result of the election. They would be skilfully handled; they would vote in a mass and for one object, and the result would be to swing perhaps two or three seats. Would it not be a case of those five thousand votes going to the candidate who would undertake to let these people bring their relations, or their friends? These votes would go solidly for a man who would do that or the party that would do that. If we grant it to the Hindu how can we deny it to the oriental born in British Columbia who speaks the same tongue as we do? It follows as the night the day that if we grant it to Hindus we must grant it to other orientals.

We know that in the years to come, especially if we give these people the vote there will not be a white British Columbia but a yellow British Columbia.

After expressing these fears of an Oriental takeover, Neill emphasized the bitter opposition British Columbia felt toward Indian enfranchisement and stated that the problem

... is not a Dominion matter.... It is a British Columbian problem for this reason: the franchise invariably originates in the province.... I would quote Sir Wilfrid Laurier who in 1917 laid down in most emphatic language in paragraph after paragraph that the true basis of our Dominion franchise under the British North America Act is the provincial franchise.... I would ask this House therefore, not to force upon us in British Columbia a thing which is unconstitutional, and is against our customs and bitterly against our desires. There is no precedent for it whatever. Talk about creating a sore spot. Do this and you would create a cancer in British Columbia that we as a nation would never recover from.

1 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, June 29, 1929, p. 4645.
2 Ibid., p. 4646.
3 Ibid., p. 4647.
4 Ibid., p. 4647.
Another member from British Columbia, Thomas George McBride, spoke for a section of organised labour:

We have on the coast of British Columbia, Chinamen and Japs running our stores. They are running the white people out. We have the Greeks there running our hotels and we have Jews running our second hand stores and now some people want to bring in the Hindus to run our mills. We have had enough of that in the past, and if this government wants to cast British Columbia adrift let her cast it adrift ... before any more orientals come in. If they do, we white people out on the Pacific will prevent any more orientals coming to British Columbia.\(^2\)

But James Woodsworth, Member of Parliament from Manitoba, questioned the logic of this opposition to granting the franchise to Indians:

I admit that I do not believe in admitting large numbers of these people at the present time because we are not in a fit position to take care of them. I do not believe we can have intermingling of these races under existing economic conditions; but it is one thing to say to the orientals; "it is not well for you to come in at the present time", and it is quite another thing after we have allowed them to come in and they are citizens with us, ratepayers with us and all the rest of it, to deny them the fundamental right of citizenship.\(^3\)

Mackenzie King (Prime Minister of Canada) pointed out that Meighn, who represented Canada at the Imperial Conference of 1921, might have agreed to the resolution of the Conference to grant the franchise to Indians. However, he declared that Meighn's acceptance of this resolution was not binding for Canada.\(^4\) Informing the House of Commons about his own meetings with Sastri on the franchise question and the policy of the presiding Dominion government, the Prime Minister said:

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1 T.G. McBride was the proprietor of a large builders' store. See the [Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1924](#), p. 149.
2 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, June 29, 1929, p. 4648.
3 [Ibid.](#), p. 4651.
4 [Ibid.](#), p. 4661.
I might say that the point on which particular emphasis was laid in conversation with Mr. Sastri was the fact that our Dominion is a federation of provinces, that in distribution of seats in this House regard is ... had to the provinces, each province being allowed a certain portion in relation to the others, and that at all times the provinces of the Dominion have had regard for each other's problem, that nothing could be more unfortunate than that an effort should be made on the part of any province or group of provinces to coerce, so to speak, any other province in regard to any matter which was of great concern to it, that the federal government could not afford to ignore the prevailing sentiment in any province. I pointed out to Mr. Sastri that when the Dominion franchise law would be under review mentioning in that connection that it would come up for review in all probability before any general election was held, doubtless it would be referred to a committee of the House to consider and that the representations which he had made would be presented to the committee, but that what was of most importance was how the members from the province of British Columbia themselves would view the matter. I said quite frankly that if the members from the province of British Columbia regardless of political party were to be favourable to having the franchise granted to the Indians in British Columbia, the rest of parliament would fall cordially into harmony with their views, that on the other hand if there was no agreement among the members of the province of British Columbia on this question, if it were clear to the members of this House that so far as British Columbia was concerned instead of being in favour of granting the franchise they were all pretty much the other way, it was hardly probable that the members of parliament generally would seek to impose any view upon them which would be contrary to their views. In other words, that it was very doubtful how any situation of unrest in one part of the British Empire could be improved by creating a new condition of unrest in another part.  

It is clear that although the question of franchise for Indians resident in British Columbia was enthusiastically represented in the Canadian House of Commons the whole discussion was nothing more than an academic debate. The Prime Minister (Mackenzie King) justified his inability to conform to Mr. Sastri's wishes by referring to the

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1 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, June 29, 1923, pp. 4665-4666.
peculiar constitutional nature of Dominion - provincial relations.

When the next Imperial Conference was held in 1923 the issue of disabilities imposed on Indians resident in the Dominions became a burning question. Lord Peel, Secretary of State for India, emphasised that a solution to these Indian grievances should be found because it was essential and imperative for the preservation of the British Empire. Explaining this point he said:

'The Viceroy of India, in his private letters, is constantly explaining and pressing upon me how strongly the feeling of soreness and bitterness is growing on this subject, and how, in many ways, the task of wisely governing India is made difficult by the intensity of feeling. Therefore, I want to place this first point before the Conference - the remarkable unanimity of feeling on the position of Indians in the Dominions. The reason why there is such unity among our fellow subjects of India is this, that they regard the disability under which their countrymen labour as a brand of social inferiority. That is what cuts so deep into the consciousness of Indians. I have no doubt ... in what I am saying now, I do voice the general opinion of Indians.'

The Secretary of State for India further pointed out that the question of social status of Indians in the self-governing Dominions was a contributory cause in the formation of the many restive social and political movements in India disguised under more resounding names.

The Indian representative, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, also put the case of Indian grievances in very strong and emphatic words:

'... so far as this question of Indians overseas is concerned, we stand solid and united. We have our own domestic quarrels; we have moderates and extremists; we have non-cooperators; and we have Hindus and Mahomedans. But so far as this question

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1 Cmd. 1987, Proceedings of Imperial Conference, 1923, pp. 67-68.
3 Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was an eminent lawyer, a member of the Indian National Congress, an expert on Indian Constitutional Reforms, and a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. See The Times, Jan. 21, 1949.
is concerned let me tell you with all the sincerity that I am capable of that we stand absolutely united. ... We attach far more importance to the honour of our nationals in other parts of the Empire than probably you realise. ... It is my country [India] which makes the British Empire truly Imperial. One fifth of the human race with a far more ancient civilization than your own ... joins with you in acknowledging the suzerainty of our common Throne. That allegiance with us is a real thing. Shake that allegiance, and you shake the foundations of the entire fabric with the consequence which it is difficult to overestimate.

Sir Tej made the specific point that on this question of Indian rights abroad the Indian masses were very sensitive, and the vernacular papers in India exploited any anti-British sentiments, expressed or implied by the Dominions, in their propaganda appeals to Indians. Emphasising the seriousness of the matter Sir Tej continued:

Any inequality of Indian nationals enters like iron into our souls ... it cuts to the quick our national pride, and consciousness. It permeates and sours our whole outlook in regard to Imperial relationship. It derives impetus from the natural inclination to take pride in being a member of the biggest Commonwealth that the world knows today.²

Finally Sir Tej proposed that the self-governing Dominions and the British government for Colonies and Protectorates should agree to the appointment of committees to confer with a committee appointed by the Indian government as to the best and quickest means of giving effect to the Resolution of the 1921 Conference.³

The conference expressed its high appreciation of the able and moderate manner in which the Secretary of State for India and the

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1  Cmd. 1987, Proceedings of the Imperial Conference, 1923, p. 73.
2  Ibid., p. 74.
3  Ibid., p. 82.
other Indian delegates had presented the Indian case. The Canadian Prime Minister (Mackenzie King) explained that difficulties in conceding the franchise to Indians generally in British Columbia were not due to distinction of colour but to economic and complex political considerations, and he reiterated what he had already said to Sastri on the occasion of the latter's visit to Canada in 1922, namely, that the question of whether natives of India resident in Canada should be granted a Dominion Parliamentary Franchise on terms and conditions identical with those which governed the exercise of that right by Canadian citizens generally was necessarily one which Canadian parliament could determine and that the matter would be submitted to parliament for consideration when the Franchise Law came up for revision. Mackenzie King appreciated Sapru's views. However, he expressed his fears that if the Dominion government was to press a decision on British Columbia such action would be labelled as coercion of the Provincial government by the Federal government and this would be used as a political weapon. Mackenzie King pointed out that the Resolution of the Imperial Conference of 1921 was not "binding" on Canada but only, as he termed it, a "desirable goal". Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's angry reply was that delegates of the last Conference sat as statesmen and not as lawyers or a court of law.

Besides Mackenzie King there were still others who raised their voices in protest against the Indian delegation's requests. The

2 Ibid., p. 102.
3 Ibid., p. 103.
4 Ibid., pp. 102-103.
5 Ibid., p. 102.
Indian proposals on the question of disabilities of Indians resident in the Dominions were severely opposed by Smuts, the South African Prime Minister. He not only opposed them but also condemned the Resolution of the Conference of 1921 as well as Sastri's tour of the Dominions.¹ His memorandum² on the subject which he presented to the Conference created an awkward exchange of words between Sapru and Smuts. However, the South African viewpoint did not get them much support in the Conference, and Sapru was successful in outwitting Smuts.³ Yet the differences between India and South Africa were of such vehemence at that time that they overshadowed the question of granting the franchise to Indians in Canada at this Conference. The outcome was that although the proposals of the Indian delegates were passed in the form of a resolution at the Conference, the actual position of Indians in the Dominions did not change. In the next Imperial Conference of 1926, this issue was mentioned only in the South African context and Canada was not mentioned at all.⁴

The general pattern of immigration into Canada after the First World War was one of rapid increase during the years 1920-23, 1926 and 1929 but with the onset of the depression of the 1930's the inflow of immigrants declined.⁵ In August 1930 the Dominion government passed an Order in Council restricting immigrant entry into Canada to wives and children of heads of families already

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² Ibid., pp. 138-140.
⁵ Canada Year Book 1957-58, p. 6.
established and agriculturists with sufficient money to invest in farming. During the entire inter-war period 1918-1939 the number of Indians entering Canada was small — mainly wives and children of Indians already domiciled in Canada. Since many Indians had returned to their own country, the size of the Indian population in Canada at this time had declined from over 5000 to just about 1200 people.

During the period between the two world wars, Orientals were considered a potential danger for Canadian society, especially those Orientals in British Columbia. The matter was a favourite topic for discussion in contemporary journals and even pamphlets appeared. A.H. Frenwick wrote a lengthy article in MacLean's Magazine \(^2\) under the caption "For East is East". In this article which bore the sub-title "In British Columbia Oriental Penetration", he branded Orientals as a "menace". He stated,

> That the unobtrusive but effective penetration by the Oriental races of the commercial, industrial and agricultural life of the Dominion has developed to the extent of becoming a real danger to the welfare of the country is the opinion of practically all persons who have the opportunity to observe at close range the inroads the Asiatics have made in the last decade or two. \(^3\)

Under the other sub-title, "British Columbia Bears the Brunt", the writer quoted the number of Japanese, Chinese and Indians living in the province as well as their position in trading and industrial activities. His conclusions were that the low standard of living of the average Oriental enabled him to compete unfairly with the white in commerce and in industry and thus the whites were forced

\(^1\) Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Canada, One Hundred Years 1867-1967, p. 90.
\(^2\) MacLeans Magazine, Jan. 15, 1928.
\(^3\) Ibid.
out of business and farming. Frenwick pointed out that,

In agriculture the Oriental works industriously and systematically and anyone who observed him on the land has nothing but admiration for the manner in which he organizes his work and the intelligence he displays in growing and marketing his products. In industrial employment he can be almost universally depended upon to be "on the job" every day and to keep on working. In trade he gives the most excellent service, studying the wants of his customers and filling them promptly and courteously.

Thus the Asiatics' low standard of living and the small amount of wages necessary to meet his needs, combined with his willingness to work and the good service he gave his employers were interpreted as a threat to white labour. Commenting on the attitude of the people in British Columbia towards Asiatics, a well-known missionary, Dr. S.S. Osterhout, wrote in 1929 that the views expressed in Frenwick's article represented the thought of the average Westerner.

Another writer, Tom MacInnes, agreed with Frenwick's observations about the traits of Asiatic workers. He found that Orientals did not shrink from hard work. They would perform menial tasks of clearing, and would use every labour-saving device including machinery and team cooperation in order to make a profit. They were ready to work longer hours and according to him, they were reliable and dependable workers. These Orientals, he said, had their own culture and enjoyed living in British Columbia which they found climatically very suitable. Altogether they possessed superior qualities for the economic struggle in Canada. Thus MacInnes concluded:

... it is clear that economically we cannot compete with the Oriental in this community, industrially, commercially or professionally, except we handicap him, hamper him, restrict him, and as far as possible put him out of the industrial and commercial running.

1 MacLeans Magazine, Jan. 15, 1928.
2 S.S. Osterhout, Orientals in Canada, Toronto, 1929, p. 58.
3 Tom MacInnes, Oriental Occupation of British Columbia (Vancouver B.C., 1927), p. 38.
His fears were that Orientals would control the commercial life of
Vancouver as Jews controlled it in New York, and would eventually
oust Europeans and marry European girls as well.¹

Suspicion and resentment against Asiatics who were prospering
in British Columbia continued to grow. Even the Legislative
Assembly of British Columbia prepared a report listing the assets
and activities of Orientals within the province. It showed the
number of Japanese, Chinese and Indians, their properties and their
occupations.² The depression years of the 1930's only intensified
these economic-based objections to Asiatics. British Columbians
were against further immigration and their prejudice and bitterness
were apparent in their daily dealings with all Orientals. They
tried to hamper their success as much as possible. Since Indians,
though British subjects, were ineligible to vote, the voters' lists
were used as the basis of exclusion in other aspects of life as well.
For example, contractors engaged in provincial or municipal public
works were not allowed to employ those people whose names did not
appear on these lists.³ The prejudice of the people continued
even though the numbers of Indians in the province did not increase
significantly. For example during the years 1915-1925 the number
of Indians entering British Columbia was only 131.⁴ The largest
number of Indians trying to enter Canada and hoping to settle in
British Columbia was 210 in 1939 but they were ordered to be
departed. However, with the outbreak of the Second World War the

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¹ Tom MacInnes, _op. cit._, pp. 51-52.
² Province of British Columbia, _Report on Oriental Activities Within
the Province_, Victoria, 1927.
³ David C. Corbett, _Canada's Immigration Policy_ (Toronto, 1957), p. 34.
⁴ _Report on Oriental Activities Within the Province_, p. 7.
deportation order could not be carried out. And as the War went on with its horrors it brought about a reversal of public opinion in British Columbia by changing the outlook of the world on the question of race. At the end of the war, India's new political status and her increasing importance in international affairs seemed to have some bearing on the Canadian government's policy towards Indian immigrants. One instance that indicated this new trend in government thinking was the incident of the 210 Indians who came to Canada in 1939 and who had been in Canada for eight years as temporary residents awaiting the implementation of deportation orders. On August 14, 1947, the Dominion government issued an Order in Council by which these Indians were allowed to stay in Canada permanently. Such a progressive step was greeted with grateful enthusiasm by the Indian immigrant community in Canada and was the basis for the liberalization of future Canadian immigration policy. These new policy views had taken a long time to come about and might not have been implemented so soon had it not been for the continuous efforts of the Khalsa Diwan Society over a period of many years.

The Khalsa Diwan Society was the main organization of Indian immigrants in Canada. However, after 1914, because of the decrease in the number of Indian immigrants, the Society became less active. The economic depression during the period between the two wars was responsible for restricting the number of migrants and also for the movements of those already settled in Canada to new positions where they employed themselves and were not dependant on company

1 P.C.3312, August 14, 1947.
jobs. The result was that Indians went into trucking and farming, and some of them set up their own sawmills. But they became more isolated from the white community. Since they were mainly a male population and were not used to social activities as European Canadians were, the temple became their principal meeting place, both for worship and social exchanges. The temple was the centre of their community and the Society they formed there continued to be important in spite of the decrease in the number of Indians in the population.

By the end of 1941, the Society renewed its efforts and invited H.S.L. Polak, Secretary of Indians Overseas Association in London to visit Vancouver. Polak was asked to put their case for the granting of franchise and he did speak to Mackenzie King, the Canadian Prime Minister. But with the serious turn of events in the Second World War when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and gained sudden victories in South East Asia, the question of Indian franchise was considered in the light of the entire Oriental problem and thus was put into cold storage.

At the end of the war, the Khalsa Diwan Society invited Dr. D.P. Pandia to lead the campaign for obtaining franchise rights. Pandia addressed church organizations and various political and social groups and soon found that the new atmosphere of toleration

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2 H.S.L. Polak was known for his work for Indians in South Africa. See H.S.L. Polak, The South African Indian Question: Studies in Conflict and Cooperation (London 1947); and "Indians Overseas: Their Rights and Their Responsibilities", Indian Times (Suva, Fiji), Sept. 15, 1945.


4 Department of External Affairs to Polak, Feb. 21, 1942, ibid., p. 16.

5 Dr. D.F. Pandia had been in the American continents before the war and had been working for the welfare of Indian migrants. See Report on ... Franchise for the Hindus, p. 5.
seemed favourable enough for pursuit of this cause. Professor Ormsby, in her study of the history of British Columbia, has remarked about this change of attitude on the part of the white population:

Some of the tolerance of the peoples probably sprang from the belief current in 1945 that the forming at San Francisco - so close to home - of the Charter of the United Nations would usher in the new age of "one world". The wider experience of the war veterans, no doubt contributed to it.¹

Pandia was able to put the Indians' case effectively before the Government of British Columbia, and at the end of 1946 an all-party Election Act Committee composed of seven members, was appointed to recommend any necessary change in the Election Act.² In September of that year Professor Henry F. Angus³ had pointed out that the few hundred Indians domiciled in Canada had an international importance out of all proportion to their small number. He reminded Canadians that India was going to decide shortly whether to remain in the British Commonwealth or to secede from it. In such decisions emotions play as strong a part as reason, and therefore he warned that Canada's withholding of franchise rights from Indians could create a very difficult situation for the British Commonwealth. The wisest policy, he advocated, was to extend the franchise to Indians.⁴

Therefore when the Election Act Committee met at Vancouver in October and November 1946, it recommended the necessary changes in the Act to extend the franchise to Indians.⁵ The provincial premier

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¹ Margaret A. Ormsby, British Columbia: a History, p. 492.
² Report on ... Franchise for Hindus, p. 6.
³ Professor Henry F. Angus is a well-known authority on international relations and social sciences. He was born in Victoria and lived most of his life in Vancouver. During the First World War he was in India and it was this stay that gave him first-hand knowledge of the precarious position of India within the Commonwealth. Information from Interview with Professor Angus, August 1972.
⁵ Report on ... Franchise for Hindus, p. 6.
(John Hart) informed the Prime Minister of Canada (Mackenzie King) that the majority of the provincial Legislative Assembly had approved the recommendation of the Election Act Committee. So by April 1947, Indians were given franchise rights in British Columbia and by October 1947 they had voting rights in various towns of British Columbia.

The Second World War had changed the map of the world and the European countries in particular saw human, economic, industrial and commercial destruction on a large scale. It was in this changed situation that Canada realized the necessity of adjusting her immigration policy which had formerly been influenced by the economic fears and terrors of the great depression and its legacy of hopelessness. The influx of immigrants into Canada had fallen off sharply during these years. The average yearly immigration from all source countries was 15,000 between the years 1931-1941, with only 12,000 annually during the war years. At the end of the war, in December 1945, David Carroll (Liberal member of the Canadian House of Commons for Spadina) urged the Dominion government to begin an immediate study of immigration with a view to the development of a short-term and long-term immigration policy more in keeping with changed conditions in the world. In reply, the government stated that the matter was under consideration. In April 1946, the Canadian immigration policy was severely criticised in the Canadian House of Commons when W.R. Thatcher, member of parliament from Moose Jaw, introduced the motion:

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1 Margaret A. Ormsby, *op.cit.*, p. 492.
4 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, December 1945, pp. 3525-3527.
That in the opinion of this house the government should give early consideration to the advisability of instituting a reasonable immigration programme, planned in accordance with Canada's absorptive capacity, its economic needs and possibilities of development.¹

The member made a strong case for amending the Canadian immigration policy. He said,

... it is very difficult to justify our present immigration policy on purely humanitarian grounds. The war in Europe resulted in millions of people being uprooted and scattered far and wide. Many of them cannot return to their old homes and most of them are living in abject poverty. There is widespread lack of shelter and clothing. Food is so scarce that thousands of them are dying of malnutrition. Confiscation of property has been fairly general throughout European countries. Certainly racial and religious prejudices prevail at every hand. Hundreds of thousands of orphans are homeless in Europe.... The vast majority of these refugees were active opponents of the fascist countries...our immigration policy is contrary to the interests of the nation as a whole. No thoughtful person can travel across Canada without feeling that there is an immense area whose economic resources have not yet been properly exploited. The general process of settlement has been neither complete nor satisfactory. A moderately well planned immigration would have numerous advantages for Canadians generally.²

The member made the point that increased immigration would increase the home market for Canadian goods as well as provide more people to share the tax burden. A larger population would boost economic growth, increase skilled manpower and generally help Canada develop her potentials.³ He quoted a resolution of the Labour Congress of Canada which had also made a request for planned immigration in the post-war period.⁴ Another member of parliament, D.A. Caroll (Spadina), supported the motion and added:

1 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, April 1946, p. 524.
2 Ibid., p. 525.
3 Ibid., p. 526.
4 Ibid., p. 527.
Canada's immigration policy since 1914 can well be called a dog in the manger policy. Here we are inhabiting a country whose area is the third largest in the world, and we have a population about the size of that of Afghanistan. We have here what is potentially one of the richest countries in the world; yet we have only scratched the surface of our wealth ... we have not permitted people to come here and help us and give this country a fair opportunity. 1

The Dominion government appointed a Canadian Senate Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour to examine the desirability of admitting immigrants to Canada and to investigate the type of immigrants who should be preferred for immigration. The Committee was to look into such matters as the availability of immigrants, their training and other characteristics, as well as the facilities, resources and capacity of Canada to absorb, employ and maintain such immigrants, and the appropriate terms and conditions of immigrant admission. This Senate Committee started its work in May 1946 and in its hearings it sought a wide range of official and voluntary opinions. The findings of this Committee were that Canada regarded immigration as an important step for her future and believed that immigrants should be admitted in substantial numbers. It stressed that Canada needed more people to maintain and improve her position at home and abroad and that Canada's ability to support a substantial increase in population was beyond question. Furthermore, the Committee urged that Canada should share the programme of helping refugees and displaced persons. 2 The existing Canadian immigration policy was made the target of criticism 3 and a demand for liberalizing the policy was accelerated. By the next year the Prime Minister of

3. Canada, House of Commons, Debates, April 1946, pp. 524-545.
Canada (Mackenzie King), while resuming the debate on the second reading of the bill to amend the Immigration Act, readily agreed that:

The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration.... The government's long term programme ... is based on the conviction that Canada needs population.¹

Yet in spite of this need for changes in the Immigration process and the expressed desire to increase Canada's population and help displaced persons, the Canadian Prime Minister was quite specific on the terms for the new immigration policy. He insisted on three points: the right of Canada to select immigrants, the desire to make no changes in the basic ingredients of the Canadian population and the need to continue the exclusion of Asians:

With regard to selection of immigrants much has been said about discrimination. I wish to make it quite clear that Canada is perfectly within her rights in selecting the persons whom we regard as desirable future citizens. It is not a "fundamental human right" of any alien to enter Canada. It is a matter of domestic policy. Immigration is subject to the control of parliament of Canada.... There will, I am sure, be general agreement in the view that the people of Canada do not want as a result of mass immigration to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large scale immigration from the Orient would change the fundamental composition of the Canadian population. Any considerable Oriental immigration would, moreover, be certain to give rise to social and economic problems of a character that might lead to serious difficulties in the field of international relations. The government, therefore, has no thought of making any change in immigration regulations which would have consequence of the kind ... the government has no intention of removing the existing regulations respecting Asiatic immigration unless and until alternative measures of effective control have been worked out.²

¹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, May 1, 1947, pp. 2645-2646.
² Ibid., p. 2646.
In the light of this policy the Canadian government issued Orders in Council during the years 1946 to 1949 to encourage only Europeans to migrate to Canada. This action was interpreted by Indians as race prejudice and as seriously damaging to British-India relations.

By 1947 when British authorities were planning to grant independence to India the question of Indian migration and status in Canada was an important topic not only for the immigration authorities but also for the Department of External Affairs. Canada had not included India and Pakistan in the schedule of the British Commonwealth of Nations. According to the Canadian Citizenship Act, Commonwealth meant the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Newfoundland and Ireland. In July 1947, the Canadian High Commissioner in Delhi, reminding the Dominion government of the disastrous effect this exclusion could have, asked the government to amend the schedule and give India and Pakistan status recognition. Explaining the urgency of such a step the High Commissioner observed:

India is peculiarly sensitive in regard to the status and treatment of Indians abroad.... India (Hindustan) will tend before long to break away from the Commonwealth.... Our welcome to Indian Dominions as fellow members of the Commonwealth should be prompt and cordial. One reason for this is that, if India should decide to break away, her leaders will be on the lookout for pretexts upon which to base this action. It would be regrettable if any lack of warmth in


2 India was divided into two separate self-governing states - India and Pakistan - on August 15, 1947. So in the matter of migration studies the term South Asians will be used to mean people of India and Pakistan.

the Canadian attitude should serve as one such pretext. We should be in a better position vis-a-vis India and in the face of world opinion, if it was in spite of the cordiality rather than because of tepidity, of our welcome that India severed fraternal relations with, among other Commonwealth countries, ourselves.¹

The Dominion government, after thorough consideration of the proposal, informed the Canadian High Commissioner that Canada would include India and Pakistan in the schedule of Commonwealth countries for citizenship purposes, but only when such a request was made by them. The High Commissioner was further informed that for the time being he should not take any initiative in this regard.²

Existing Canadian immigration regulations, as they applied to Indians, allowed entry only to wives and children under 18 of Indians who had previously entered Canada legally.³ Other than this restricted category, Indians were completely excluded from Canadian immigration. However, when India was to become an independent country and Canada was in the position of encouraging immigration from other countries, the Dominion government had to look for ways in which it could justify its rejection of Indian immigration.

One possibility that the Canadian authorities considered was that of accepting a small number of Indians as migrants on a token quota system. But the government was sceptical of the success of such a venture, and remained indecisive in their communication with their High Commissioner in Delhi and their Ambassador in Washington:

As regards the establishment of a token quota for Indians, such an arrangement would be a radical departure from the past policy of the Canadian Government in immigration matters. I may say for

¹ High Commissioner for Canada in India to Secretary of State for External Affairs, July 8, 1947, File 536999, Vol. 18.
³ P.C. 2115, Sept. 16, 1930.
your own information that consideration is being given to the advisability of introducing a quota system in Canada, but as yet the question has not been decided. The Canadian Government would, however, be prepared at any time to receive representations from the Government of India as to the possibility of making some change in the present law or regulations affecting immigration from India into Canada, with a view to reaching some arrangement more acceptable to the susceptibilities of the Indian people.¹

This proposal of a token quota system for Indians, therefore, remained in abeyance throughout the winter of 1947-48. Meanwhile, India and Pakistan were occupied with serious communal riots and were too busy to devote time to Commonwealth status. But by the spring of 1948, the Indian Constituent Assembly was occupied with framing the constitution of India, and the question of the future relationship of India with the Commonwealth again became an important issue. Interest in the outcome of the situation was more pronounced and provoked press comments.² There were two possibilities for Indian relations with the Commonwealth. First a majority of the Indian cabinet was in favour of India remaining a member of the Commonwealth. Secondly the majority of the Indian Constituent Assembly appeared to be in favour of an Indian republic unassociated with the Commonwealth. Since the majority of the Constituent Assembly was in favour of severing Commonwealth ties, the Indian Prime Minister (J.L. Nehru), would not risk his political future by favouring any unpopular movement and therefore would lend his voice to the majority.³ Commenting on the contemporary situation,

¹ Department of External Affairs to Canadian Ambassador, Washington, June 25, 1947; and to High Commissioner for Canada, New Delhi, July 24, 1947, File 536999, Vol. 18.
² Hindustan Times, May 25, 1948.
the Canadian High Commissioner at Delhi informed the Dominion
government that:

It would be impossible ... in view of the attitude
of the majority in the Constituent Assembly, for
India to continue its dominion status. The best
that could be hoped for would be membership in the
Commonwealth as a republic, if this is or were made
possible, but there are certain obstacles which
if not removed, might make even this latter arrangement
impossible, the chief of which is the immigration
policy of some of the other Commonwealth nations
more particularly, Australia and Canada.... If Canada
could ... allow ... a "token" number of Indians to
migrate yearly to Canada, it would not only remove
the remaining cause of friction ... but would deprive
the anti-Commonwealth element in this country of an effective weapon.¹

Assessing the advantages of this proposal the Canadian High Commissioner
stated:

It seems to me that in view of the large scale
program existing for immigration into Canada from
Great Britain and Europe, to admit one hundred Indian
nationals per annum would constitute by comparison, a
drop in the bucket. The following are some of the
advantages which I believe would ensue:
(a) The chances of India remaining in the Commonwealth
would be improved.
(b) The last vestigates of what is here regarded
as an unfair discrimination as between India
and Canada would be eliminated.
(c) Whether India is ultimately a member of the
Commonwealth or not, it is important that the
relationship between India and Canada be as
cordial as possible.
(d) I believe the Canadian public would welcome
such a move because they would interpret it for
what it is, i.e., an inducement to have India
remain in the Commonwealth and a measure to
augment international goodwill.
(e) It would be a desirable precedent with regard
to other Asiatic countries rather than the
reverse.²

The High Commissioner further pointed out that the Indian
government would accept these plans and he stressed that an Order in

¹ John D. Kearney, High Commissioner for Canada to Secretary of State
² Ibid.
Council be passed immediately on the lines of his proposals by the Indian and Canadian governments. The High Commissioner had already discussed these proposals with the officials of the Department of External Affairs, Government of India, and found them entirely agreeable.¹

While these proposals were being considered by the Dominion government, the Indian immigrant community was very active. They sent Dr. D.P. Pandia to Ottawa to plead their case for the relaxation of immigration restrictions on Indians. Dr. Pandia met with A.L. Jolliffe, Director of Immigration and Dr. H.L. Keenleyside, Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, and presented to them the Indians' grievances. The basic complaint was that Indians belonged to one of the Asiatic races whose admission into Canada was restricted to wives of landed immigrants and their children who were under 18 years of age. He pointed out that the Indian population in Canada had declined from 5428 in 1911 to 1465 in 1941; that a quarter of the Indians in Canada were over 60; and therefore that within the next decade there would be a further decrease in the Indian population. He emphasized the fact that Indians were not detrimental to the country. They were established in Canada as successful farmers and businessmen. They had contributed to the development of such basic industries in British Columbia as lumbering and agriculture, and had supplied skilled labour to these enterprises as well as

¹ John D. Kearney, High Commissioner for Canada in India, closely observed the attitude of the Indian government and the Indian Constituent Assembly towards the future membership of the Commonwealth and the impact of exclusion of Indians from Australia and Canada. He personally discussed these matters with Saint Laurent, Canadian Minister for External Affairs in Ottawa and he had a long conversation with Sir Girja Shanker Bajpai, Secretary General, Department of External Affairs, Govt. of India. But he also registered his concern about the right-wing stand of Sardar Patel, Indian Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. Full details of his interview with Sir Girja are available in his secret despatch to Secretary of State for External Affairs, May 27, 1948, File 536999, Vol.18.
investing millions of dollars in their improvement. As a people they were reliable, thrifty, hardworking and law-abiding. Besides this, Indians were British subjects the same as the other people of Canada. Because of all these factors, Dr. Pandia requested the Dominion government to consider Indians as being in a preferred position with regard to Canadian immigration regulations, and said they should be given the same privileges as British subjects were accorded in other British Dominions.¹

But the immigration authorities opposed any change in the policy and expressed serious fears about any relaxation in restrictions on Indians. They reminded the Canadian cabinet that a change in the regulations affecting Indians would require some revision of the Order in Council (P.C.2115, September 16, 1930) which applied to other Asiatic races as well. It was likely that similar requests would be made by other Orientals, especially the Chinese,² who might also come to Canada in great numbers. Therefore, when the Canadian cabinet met in June 1948 it decided not to revise its policy and to give the request of Dr. Pandia further consideration. However, the cabinet authorised the Immigration Department to consider individual applications for admission of male fiancées as well as relatives of Indian Canadian residents where the applicant was in business in Canada and needed the relative to carry on his business when no other relative could assume his responsibilities.³

Thus the Canadian government refused to amend its restrictive immigration regulations with regard to Asians although it kept the

¹ Dr. D.P. Pandia to Dr. H.L. Keenleyside, Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, Feb. 27, 1948, File 536999, Vol. 18.
² A.L. Jolliffe, Director of Immigration, Memorandum to Cabinet Committee on Immigration Policy, June 4, 1948, File 536999, Vol.18.
³ Department of Mines and Resources, Cabinet Memorandum on Immigration, June 18, 1948, File 536999, Vol. 18.
proposals of a quota system under consideration. By February 1949, discussion on the subject was again sparked off in the Indian parliament. India’s Commerce Minister, who had been informed about the restrictions imposed on Indian businessmen by the Canadian government, said:

In Canada, too, the principal disadvantage from which Indian businessmen suffer is lack of their status there under the immigration rules. Although there are no statutory restrictions on the conduct of trade by Indians the temporary non-immigrant visa which is usually granted to them makes it not only impossible for them to stay there for any length of time, but also, strictly speaking, does not even permit them to do any business other than that of a transitory nature.¹

This statement led to editorials in the Hindustan Times which advised the Indian government to take retaliatory action against the countries imposing special disabilities on Indians.² The Indian News Chronicle summed up the feeling entertained by the majority of Indians on the subject of the non-status position of Indians in the Dominions:

It is well known that this unfair treatment of Indian nationals abroad is largely a legacy of British rule, for the British Government paid little attention to Indian interests in these matters. Indians were in many cases consigned to the position of mere "colonials" from British possessions and could not therefore, secure the full status which foreign nationals were freely enjoying in this country. This anomaly has no justification whatsoever and can no longer be tolerated.³

The position of Indians in Canada was clearly stated in the press, but the Indian press reaction against Canada was not very hostile because the Indian Minister of Commerce had confirmed that the Government of India was already in communication with the Government

¹ This news was given prominent space on the front page of the Hindustan Times, Feb. 9, 1949 and the Indian News Chronicle, Feb. 10, 1949.
of Canada and both were trying to find some solution to this problem.¹

On the other side of the world the Indian High Commissioner in Canada, Sardar H.S. Malik² represented the cases of those Indian migrants who returned to India prior to 1939 and could not return again to Canada because of the war. When after an absence of eight years, they wanted to come back to Canada they were prevented from doing so. Indian residents whose children were under 18 in 1939 but after the war were too old to be eligible for immigration under the existing immigration rules of P.C.2115 were similarly barred, Malik said.³ These were out-of-the-ordinary circumstances and therefore the Dominion government promised to give such individual cases of hardship special consideration.⁴

When Sardar Malik returned to India in August 1949, Canadian restrictions on permanent migrant rights for Indians was again the subject of criticism by the press. The newspapers reported that Sardar Malik confirmed Canada's policy of Indian exclusion.⁵ At this time Dr. D.P. Pandia returned to India and presented his views on Canadian treatment of Indians.⁶ Dr. Pandia visited the High Commissioner for Canada in Delhi and asked if the Canadian government contemplated the establishment of a quota system in the near future so that at least some Indians could migrate to Canada. But Canadian officials in Delhi maintained silence on the matter.⁷ Only four months before, however, the Canadian Deputy Minister (Dr. H.L. Keenleyside) had

1 High Commissioner for Canada to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Feb. 12, 1949, File 536999, Vol. 19.
2 Sardar Malik was the first Indian High Commissioner in Canada after Indian independence in 1947.
5 Hindustan Times, August 8, 1949.
6 Ibid., August 10, 1949.
7 High Commissioner for Canada to Secretary of State for External Affairs, August 27, 1949, File 536999, Vol. 19.
stated in his address to the Symposium on Canadian Population and Immigration held at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario on April 21-22, 1949, that:

It is still the Government's desire to increase the Canadian population by immigration, to grant special facilities of admission to certain British subjects, to certain French nationals and to United States citizens; to restrict Asian immigration to very narrow limits, to avoid the charge of racial discrimination by the offer of special agreement, on "a basis of complete equality and reciprocity" to any country that considers itself affronted by the Canadian regulations. Coupled with this is a firm statement of Canada's right to select those to be admitted, and recognition of a similar right in other States.¹

This offer of special agreement on a basis of complete equality and reciprocity with India had been on the table for two years while the relationship of India with the Commonwealth was being discussed in the Indian Constituent Assembly. When the Indian Dominion decided to become a republic and also to stay in the Commonwealth,² the urgency of reaching an arrangement between India and Canada should have waned. But by 1949 the world had witnessed the rise of Communist China backed by Russia, and the next year the Korean War brought a clash between America and North Korea backed by China and Russia. So by 1951 the basis of Canada's Far-Eastern policy was the assumption that Russia was a danger not only for Europe but also for such Asian countries as India and Pakistan. China's policy of aggressive nationalism was also considered menacing to these countries. In such circumstances the Canadian Secretary of State (L.B. Pearson), stressing the Canadian need for cooperation with India and Pakistan,³

¹ External Affairs, May 1949, p. 4.
³ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Feb. 2, 1951, p. 52.
Indeed nationalism allied to a restless and insistent demand for a better life - is the most important political phenomenon in Asia today. Therefore in framing our policies we must try to avoid offending the legitimate national and social aspirations of Asian peoples.

These international problems arising out of the American/Russian race for a sphere of influence in Asia may have hastened the formalisation of an agreement between Canada and India and Pakistan on the migration issue. In any case a formal agreement was signed in Ottawa between India and Canada on January 26, 1951\(^2\) by which Canada offered to accept 150 Indian immigrants under the general category. A similar agreement was signed in Karachi with the Pakistan government by which 100 Pakistani immigrants were to be allowed into Canada annually.\(^3\)

By 1952, the Canadian immigration policy was quite clearly defined. Those who were admitted under the first category were British subjects from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa as well as citizens of the United States, France and Ireland. All were to have sufficient means to maintain themselves until they could secure employment. Under the second category citizens of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, West Germany, Finland, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland would be admitted with the approval of Canadian immigration authorities. Persons from the Middle East - Egypt,

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1 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, Feb. 2, 1951, p. 53.
2 Agreement between Canada and India, Treaty Series No. 1, 1951, Jan. 26, 1951.
3 Agreement between Canada and Pakistan Treaty Series No. 21, Oct. 23, 1951. During my interview with the senior immigration officials at Ottawa, it was stated that India and Pakistan were given token quotas of 150 and 100 persons a year as a gesture of good-will for becoming self-governing units of the British Commonwealth.
Israel, Lebanon, Turkey - or any country from South or Central America, would be admitted if they were husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, or sister of a Canadian citizen or a person legally admitted to Canada for permanent residence. The resident, however, was required to apply for such relatives. South Asians - Indians and Pakistanis - were to be admitted up to the number of the annual quota, 150 and 100 respectively. The category of admission of relatives in the case of South Asians was restricted to husband, wife or unmarried child under twenty-one years of age. The Canadian immigration policy as it was formulated in 1952, showed a definite geographical bias. Categories of admission were arranged by countries, and preference was given to certain designated areas. The regulations were intended to emphasize the fact that Canada wished to attract white immigrants, particularly from white Commonwealth countries, the United States and Western Europe. Even the admission of relatives of legal residents depended on the relatives' geographical origin. For preferred countries the term "relative" was broadly defined to include many kin but definition of the term became more restricted when applied to the South Asian countries of India and Pakistan. The basic prejudice against coloured immigrants underlying these regulations clearly reflected the discriminatory feelings which were prevalent throughout Canada. In reply to a question about racial prejudice in the immigration regulations, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Walter Harris) bluntly stated that:

... in the light of experience it would be unrealistic to say that immigrants who have spent the greater part of their life in tropical or sub-tropical countries become really adapted to the Canadian mode of life which, to no small extent, is determined by climatic conditions.2

2 Quoted in David C. Corbett, Canada's Immigration Policy: A Critique, p. 53.
The Khalsa Diwan Society was concerned about the inferior position of Canadians of South Asian origin who wished to sponsor relatives from their homeland. Acting as spokesman for Canadian Indians, the Society approached the Dominion government to grant them the same right to sponsor their overseas relatives as that enjoyed by other Canadians. The matter reached the Canadian House of Commons on July 4, 1952. Both Liberal and Conservative members from British Columbia spoke in favour of the request of the Khalsa Diwan Society but the Immigration Minister (Walter Harris) declined to concede to it.\(^1\) The Canadian government's basic attitudes on the subject came to the surface in March 1955 when J.W. Pickersgill, then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, appeared before the House of Commons Special Committee on Estimates. In that year the Committee had examined the whole operation of the Citizenship and Immigration Department thoroughly. One of the members of the Committee asked the Minister (Pickersgill) why it was necessary to maintain a staff of twelve in New Delhi to process so few immigrants. In reply, the Minister stated:

> As a matter of fact, you know as well as I do that we do not have an office in Delhi for the purpose of getting immigrants, for the sake of increasing the population of Canada. We agreed upon this quota as a gesture for the improvement of commonwealth relations. And, having done so, we have to treat these applicants decently and have enough employees there to answer the letters and deal with the correspondence and the applications which are received.\(^2\)

This frank admission by the Minister of his government's restrictive policy on Indian migration to Canada exhibited the official viewpoint.

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Moreover, the public too seemed to support the government's position.

One writer, Paul M. Roddick (Executive Officer, Ford Motor Company, Windsor, Ontario and formerly Current Affairs Adviser, Department of National Defence), in his article in the International Journal on "Canadian Immigration Policy: The Hard Facts" argued in favour of the Canadian government's immigration policy. He observed:

> As a matter of policy the Canadian government, with apparently the almost complete support of the Canadian people, bars or severely limits the immigration of Asiatics and Coloured people, not on the basis of individual merits but wholly on the basis of race. We do so, ... on two entirely justifiable grounds, one concerned with economic integration of the immigrant, and the other with his social cultural evolution into an indigenous Canadian citizen....

Elucidating his point the author pointed out:

> But with the best will in the world it cannot be said that Canada's experience with the integration of Chinese, Indian, Negro and other non-European immigrants has been a happy one.... The presence of Chinatowns and similar settlements in Canada many generations after the forefathers of their present inhabitants came to this country is an abiding proof of our limitations and consequently of limitations of a non-restrictive immigration policy.²

The Liberal party of Canada stayed in power for twelve years in the post-war period (1945-1957) and the policy of exclusion of Asians as declared by Mackenzie King in 1947 continued throughout this time. Though this idea of exclusion was less frequently expressed over the years it no doubt survived in the minds of Canadians and was an attitude which largely governed the administrative practice of the Canadian Immigration Department.³

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2 Ibid., p. 128.
3 David C. Corbett, "Immigration and Foreign Policy in Australia and Canada", ibid., Spring 1958, pp. 110-123.
In 1957, the Conservative Party, led by John Diefenbaker, came into office. Prior to this, however, there had been political crimes in Hungary which resulted in a large number of refugees who needed some place to live. In November, 1956 the Dominion government had decided to admit as many Hungarian refugees into Canada as wanted to come and for whom transportation facilities could be provided. At the same time there had been rapid economic development in Canada in the post-war period and this coincided with the effects of a low birth rate. The result was a need for more people and an increasing liberalisation of immigration regulations. By 1958 the new Canadian government saw fit to revise its agreement with the Government of India and increase its yearly quota to 300 while the existing arrangement with the Government of Pakistan was confirmed. The need for an increased population in Canada plus a more moderate government attitude were instrumental in producing a more liberal view towards immigration origins.

A new awareness of Canada's development potential sprang up alongside of her wider acceptance of diversified nationalities and cultures. These changes were reflected in government attitudes. The Conservative Party promised to overhaul the Immigration Act and apply a vigorous manpower policy in order to populate Canada. Diefenbaker expressed his devotion to the cause of equal rights for all regardless of race or creed. In the light of this new view Canada's immigration policy was seen to need revision to remove

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4 Canada Year Book 1957-58, p. 21; Toronto Telegram, April 26, 1957.
the stigma of racial discrimination. At that time, although there was high unemployment among unskilled workers, skilled workers were in great demand. Besides there was a heavy rush of sponsorship applications. The revision of the Immigration Act, therefore, seemed very important and necessary for economic as well as idealistic reasons and the Immigration Department considered ways to implement needed changes. By January 1962 the revised regulations were presented to the Canadian House of Commons. According to the internal memorandum of the Deputy Minister, Dr. Davidson, the main purpose of this exercise was twofold: to eliminate all discrimination based on colour, race or creed, and to encourage skilled immigrants. With these objectives in mind, new immigration regulations were drafted to control the size and quality of immigration in relation to Canada's economic needs and interests. Prospective immigrants were then to be judged solely on the basis of their education, training, skills or other special qualifications regardless of their race, origin or religion. Tabling the new regulations Ellen Fairclough (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) said:

If a person can qualify on these grounds and has sufficient means to establish himself in Canada until he finds employment or alternatively is coming forward to approved employment or with suitable plans for self establishment in Canada he or she is admissible subject only to the normal requirements of good health, good character and so forth. This means that any suitably qualified person from any part of the world can be considered for immigration to Canada entirely on his own merit without regard to his race, colour, national origin, or the country from which he comes.

1 Freda Hawkins, Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern, pp. 127-8.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 130.
Under the new regulations vital changes were made in relation to independent applicants and these were contained in section 31 which stated:

Landing in Canada is limited to persons who comply with all the requirements respecting landing in Canada set out in the Act and these Regulations and who come within one of the following classes:

a person who by reason of his education, training, skills or other special qualifications, is likely to be able to establish himself successfully in Canada and who

(i) has sufficient means of support to maintain himself in Canada until he has established himself,

(ii) has come to Canada, under arrangements made or approved by the Director for placement in employment,

(iii) has come to Canada, under arrangements made or approved by the Director, for establishment in a business, trade or profession or in agriculture.¹

Under the same section all immigrants could sponsor close relations - son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, unmarried nephew or niece under twenty-one years of age, and fiance - provided these relations were citizens of any country of American or European continents, Israel, Lebanon or Egypt.² Once again Asia and Africa were ruled out under this clause.

About the general effect of the regulations the Minister (Mrs. Fairclough) pointed out that they would improve the position of all without weakening anyone's position and would, she believed, chiefly benefit Asians, Africans and the nationals of the Middle East.³

But the new immigration regulations made no mention of special agreements which were in effect with India and Pakistan under section 21

² Ibid.
³ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, January 1962, p. 10.
of the immigration act and therefore, since no new provision had been made, the old agreements were still in force. The Dominion government expressed its views that the old agreements were unnecessary and declared that it intended to make new arrangements with South Asian countries. But the possibility of extending the application of these new regulations to India and Pakistan migrants seemed doubtful in actual practice:

This glaring contradiction of the "principles of equity and justice" which Mrs. Fairclough maintained were at the very heart of the regulations was the result of a real fear that without such barrier there would be unprecedented influx of suitably qualified immigrants from India, Pakistan and Ceylon.

Such prejudice against Asians was observed by Norma E. Walmsley in her research report on "Some Aspects of Canada's Immigration Policy" to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. She pointed out:

The only case that can be made conclusively is that Canada's record of immigration policy and administrative practice substantiates, very clearly, during certain periods of history a marked discrimination against Asians....

Professor Anthony Richmond reached a similar conclusion. His sociological investigation showed that:

Non-European immigration constituted a small fraction of the total.... Altogether, non-white immigrants have constituted less than 4% of the total post-war immigration into Canada. Until 1962, the way in which the Immigration Act was administered clearly discriminated against Asian and Negro immigrants. Immigrants from Britain and Western Europe, together with the Commonwealth countries had a "preferred" status, immigrants from Eastern, Central and Southern Europe in an intermediate category and those from other parts of the world had least priority.

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Canada, by tradition, had been seeking to increase her population through immigration. Such an increase would expand domestic markets and reduce per capita costs of administration.\(^1\) By the mid sixties the Dominion had declared its aim of a high standard of economic growth.\(^2\) In order to meet the challenge of this growth in an age of advanced technological changes Canada relied heavily on the immigration of trained manpower.\(^3\) Immigration, therefore, was necessary to the economic vitality of the entire country. But the traditional source countries (Great Britain and Western Europe) from which such migrants moved to Canada, enjoyed good economic conditions of their own by the mid sixties and the desire to migrate was not so strong. Besides such skilled workers were also in demand by other countries interested in migration and expansion. Skilled workers, therefore, found many opportunities to exploit their knowledge and were less eager to travel to a distant place. The Financial Post (Toronto), emphasizing the need for trained people, pessimistically declared, "Skills, oriental and occidental are not knocking at our door."\(^6\) Canada's demand for trained immigrant workers seemed to be exceeding the expected supply, so by August 1965 the Canadian government launched an intensified programme to bring about a greater flow of professional skilled and trained immigrants into the country. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (John R. Nicholson) was quoted as telling a meeting of the Ontario Economic Council in Toronto that

\(^1\) Canada Year Book 1968, p. 227.
\(^3\) Department of Manpower and Immigration, Canada's Highly Qualified Manpower Resources, p. 3.
\(^4\) Canada Year Book, 1970-71, p. 266.
\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Financial Post, Nov. 7, 1964, p. 17.
Canadian manpower development was the most important single factor in the country's economic growth. He said that Canada had the tools and raw materials to assure economic well-being but that the country was facing a serious and critical shortage of professional and trained workers that might even retard development. Therefore, the Minister proposed to step up the expansion of immigration services in various countries of Europe and even explored the possibilities of encouraging migration from South East Asian and Far Eastern countries.¹ The Department also undertook to re-examine thoroughly the whole question of immigration.

This manpower-oriented attitude of the Dominion government seemed to dominate the immigration policy and its programme of expansion throughout the mid sixties. The desire was to encourage skilled workers to settle in Canada. The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration, Rene Tremblay, advised the House of Commons on August 14, 1964 that he proposed to initiate detailed studies on immigration and manpower requirements after which a revised Immigration Act would be introduced.² The studies included papers on the following subjects: immigration programing, migrant supply, sponsorship system, social and cultural factors in immigration, the participation of the Canadian public in immigration, immigration appeals and immigration studies. Meanwhile the Canadian government was involved in the preparation of a white paper on Canadian immigration policies, practices and their administration. The results of this comprehensive study were to be presented to the Canadian parliament³ as a guide to the administration of immigration.

¹ See Labour Gazette, August 1965, pp. 700-701.
policy. In December 1965 the Prime Minister (L.B. Pearson) went one step further and announced the creation of a new department which he called the Department of Manpower and Immigration. Jean Marchand was named as the minister in charge. The new department formally opened its doors on October 3, 1966 and on October 14 the White Paper on Canadian immigration was published.

Introducing it to the House of Commons, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration emphasized:

... it is expansionist. It seeks to establish the basis for a steadily active immigration policy adapted to our manpower needs, a policy that will assist Canada's growth by bringing here every year a good number of people able to adapt to our society and qualified to contribute to our economy... It is not discriminatory. It establishes principles and procedures that can and will operate without regard to race, colour or creed.

This 42-page document opened with the proposition that Canada needed immigrants and should encourage the entry of as many immigrants as could be readily absorbed. In observed that immigration was important for the maintenance of Canadian independence and economic growth and provided the balancing force in the face of economic and cultural pulls from the south (United States of America). The White Paper pointed out that Canada was a competitive and industrial society which required skilled manpower capable of being trained and retrained in line with the changing needs of the Canadian economy.

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2 Freda Hawkins, op. cit., p. 151.
4 Ibid.
5 Jean Marchand, Minister of Manpower and Immigration, White Paper on Immigration, p. 1.
6 Ibid., p. 7.
7 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
It further pinpointed the essential need of forming a national immigration policy:

Perhaps the most fundamental point is that, in a world in which immigrants of the quality required by Canada are relatively scarce, we cannot expect to recruit them on an erratic basis. If we were to promote immigration one year and discourage it the next year, turning the tap on and off in response to short-term economic conditions in Canada, we could not expect to get much high quality immigration. For qualified people who are reasonably assured of success in their original countries, migration is a complex decision compounded of economic inducements, political circumstances, social pressures and dissatisfactions, family traditions, ambitions, adventurous spirits. The successful promotion of immigration requires capitalization on these factors as they affect skilled people. This cannot be achieved by sporadic action. A selective immigration policy today must be planned as a steady policy of recruitment based on long term considerations of economic growth.\(^1\)

The White Paper opposed unskilled immigrants strongly:

The migrant who lacks the skills or competitive qualifications to establish his economic position will tend to become a permanent inhabitant of the ethnic concentration area to which he has first migrated. If many fail to move on, the balance will be upset and we will find ourselves with ghetto-like slums, with all they entail in human misery and increased welfare costs.\(^2\)

About the international implication of immigration the White Paper clearly pointed out that "any discrimination in 'selection' of immigrants creates strong resentments in international relations."\(^3\)

Thus the White Paper called for tighter screening of immigrants not regarding race, colour or religion but regarding individual efficiency only. The future policy called for more careful investigation of skills and the ability to adapt to Canadian life. Even before publication of the White Paper Jean Marchand had advocated these criteria as the basis for immigration selection. He told the House

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1 Jean Marchand, Minister of Manpower and Immigration, White Paper on Immigration, p. 12.
2 Ibid., p. 15.
3 Ibid., p. 17.
of Commons that changing economic and technological conditions necessitated a shift in immigration perspective, and this made it essential that immigration programmes should be geared in line with the professionalization and specialization of the work force.¹

The White Paper remained under the consideration of the Dominion government for over ten months and it was not until August 16, 1967 that the immigration regulations were announced.² These new regulations were to be totally non-discriminatory and were to be applied in the same way to all applicants in all countries so that immigration would reflect the economic needs of Canada. Three categories of immigrants were set up - those who were sponsored, nominated or independent. Sponsorship rights were to apply on equal terms to all areas of the world. For independent applicants education and professional skill were the main criteria. The quota system restrictions were abolished. Instead, under the new regulations, every independent applicant was required to score 50 out of a possible 100 points³ in order to qualify for entry.

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3 The hundred points were distributed in this way:
   (a) Education - 20 units, one for each successful year of formal education.
   (b) Personal assessment - up to 15 units on basis of immigration officer's assessment of applicant's adaptability, motivation and initiative.
   (c) Occupational demand - up to 15 units if demand for the applicant's occupation is strong within Canada.
   (d) Occupational skill - up to 10 units for professional skill.
   (e) Age - up to 10 units for applicants under age 35 with 1 unit deducted for each year over 35.
   (f) Arranged employment - 10 units for a definite arranged job in Canada.
   (g) Knowledge of French and English - up to 10 units.
   (h) Employment opportunities in the area of destination - up to 5 units.
   (k) Relationship - up to 5 units if the applicant had relatives ready to help him in Canada.

Under the new regulations Canadian citizens were given the right to apply for the admission of their dependents. They might also nominate for admission to Canada a wide range of non-independent relatives. The main objectives of these regulations were to achieve universality and objectivity in the selection process. Altogether nine factors would be used in assessing the admissibility of an applicant—education, occupational demand, age, occupational skill, employment arrangement, knowledge of English or French, relatives in Canada, area of destination, and personal qualities. The first eight factors were of an objective nature and would be assessed by immigration officers. In addition, the interviewing officers would take into account the personal qualities of an applicant. Besides qualifying by the point system, the applicant had to meet basic standards of good health and character established by the Immigration Act. Regardless of an applicant's achievements under the nine categories, however, the interviewing officer could recommend the acceptance or rejection of an applicant if there were good reasons why the assessment did not reflect the particular individual's chances of successful establishment in Canada.

By 1967, under the new regulations, the restrictions on South Asian migrants to Canada were abolished. The new rules applied to all immigrants equally. At this time the former restrictions on Asians were so relaxed that even visitors to Canada were allowed to apply for landed immigrant status. It appeared that Canada had an open-door policy on immigration. But as these changes had been initially presented and discussed, the Telegram (Toronto) commented:

1 Department of Manpower and Immigration to Immigration Officers, Background to the New Immigration Regulations, 1967.

The simple truth is that despite our professed idealism and humanitarianism we are a conservative, selfish community which jealously guards its partly unearned affluence. Our immigration policy is a faithful reflection of this attitude.  

In point of fact the new immigration policy was an economic policy and therefore immigration was regarded more as a source of manpower resources than as a social or humanitarian movement. This skilled manpower-oriented policy was based on "pull" factors to select immigrants on the basis of quality.² Fears of shortages of skilled manpower was the theme underlying the new policy and the economic needs of Canada justified the new thinking.³ The result of this arrangement was that by August 1970 the Department of Manpower and Immigration was quoted as announcing that the new immigrants were younger, better educated, better trained, were less likely to be European and were fitting better into the work force.⁴ The immigration regulations were becoming less restrictive, and an increased number of South Asian migrants was quite evident from the list of arrivals. This number rose from 658 in 1961 to 6,281 in 1971.⁵

In 1972 a new problem was created for Canadian immigration officials when Uganda expelled a large number of Asians.⁶ Canada accepted about 6,400 such expellees⁷ and the Canadian government chartered commercial aircraft to bring these refugees to the Canadian Forces base at Longue Points (Montreal).⁸ From there they were sent

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1 Telegram (Toronto), Oct. 19, 1966.
4 Ibid.
6 People of Indian or Pakistani origin.
to various parts of Canada from Newfoundland to British Columbia. These immigrants included among their numbers all sorts of people from tailor to technician, businessman to professional. For the successful movement of these Ugandan Asians across Canada, the Canadian Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Robert Andras) praised the Canadian press, the public and the provincial governments.¹

By January 1, 1974 Ugandan Asians seemed to be well adapted to the new social and cultural climate of Canada. Ugandan teenagers speak English with a Canadian accent often punctuated by Canadian slang. In a recent television interview a young Ugandan Asian said:

> We are now living in our own country where there will never be a fear of expulsion as in Uganda. People label us as D.Ps., but this is a very derogatory term in its usual meaning. For us D.Ps. stand for delayed pioneers of Canada and not displaced persons.²

Yet the immigration policy of Canada, as adopted since 1967, has not been without problems. The right of visitors to apply from within Canada for landed immigrant status³ provided a big loophole in the immigration act and could easily be abused. Even if a person visiting in Canada was refused a landed immigrant status on his first application he could apply to an appeal board, and until his case was decided he could remain in Canada. This lengthy process resulted in an enormous backlog of pending cases. There were 200 cases in January 1969; by January 1, 1973 the number rose to 11,875, and by June 1, 1973 it reached 17,472.⁴ In October 1972 when the Canadian government announced it was considering some amendment to the immigration regulations ⁵ 4,500 visitors arrived at Toronto International Airport⁶ in one weekend. This complication

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² See Winnipeg Free Press, Saturday, February 2, 1974.
³ Immigration Regulations, 1967, Section 34.
⁵ Ibid., June 20, 1973.
of immigration cases coupled with the Liberal Party's discouraging results in the autumn federal elections\(^1\) forced the Canadian government to take immediate action. The first step was to revoke the right of visitors to apply for landed immigrant status. Justifying the amendment the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Bryce Mackasey) stated:

> We've tried to be reasonable and fair in permitting continuation of the policy that permits visitors to apply for landed immigrant status, but there is increasing evidence that organized movements are exploiting individuals by misrepresenting our Immigration policy. It can best be described as commercial trafficking in human beings.\(^2\)

In order to avoid the imposition of undue hardship the Canadian government announced a general amnesty for all illegal immigrants if they would come forward and apply for landed immigrant status by October 15, 1973.\(^3\) The government's appeals to this effect were repeatedly carried in the press and thousands of dollars were spent on radio and television broadcasts to explain the government's position. Meanwhile, the government's immigration policy had been the subject of critical discussion since autumn 1972. In order to avoid a repetition of previous mistakes and to anticipate shortcomings in its future long-term immigration policy planning, the Canadian government, in 1973, invited suggestions from the provincial governments, one hundred voluntary organisations and individual

\(^1\) Many factors contributed to the decline of the Liberal Party's popularity in the election of 1972. Those mentioned most frequently were the French language question and rising unemployment. Immigration was not directly blamed but Mackasey (Minister of Manpower and Immigration) was criticised for his very liberal attitude as well as for slackness and the creation of the huge backlog of immigration appeal cases.

\(^2\) Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Press Release, Nov. 3, 1972.

\(^3\) Ibid., July 31, 1973.

citizens. The Minister of Manpower and Immigration pointed out that the expansion of urbanised population in Canada, the fast mobility of people, the slowing down of European migration movement to Canada and the substantial increase in non-European migration were some of the factors to be considered. He added that since the 1967 regulations were formulated:

... dramatic changes have taken place in Canada and in the world. Not least, attitudes and values have undergone striking transformation. One trend concerns the increasing reluctance of Canadians to have large families. Our fertility rate has now decreased to the point where to rely on births alone could mean a levelling off; if not an eventual decline in Canada's population. Because of the decreasing birth rate and the prospect that we will continue to lose people through emigration, immigration seems likely to determine, more than heretofore, Canada's size of population.

The Minister pointed out that careful consideration would be given to the impact that immigration streams might have on the balance between English- and French-speaking Canadians and the present multicultural fabric of Canada. He added that his aim was to shape Canada's future immigration policy in the light of its economic, social, cultural and demographic growth. With these ideals in mind the Canadian government hoped to identify the problems of immigration and analyse policy options in terms which would finally affect the social and economic future of Canada. Furthermore, the government announced its intention to devise administrative techniques and legal framework by which suitable immigrants would be recruited according to government policy.

3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
As the immigration policy has continued to develop, its dominant features have been a consideration of the economic needs of Canada and a desire to preserse the French-English balance. When Britain joined the European Economic Community on January 1, 1973 there was more freedom of movement of workers within Europe and accordingly a sharp decline in migration from Western Europe to Canada. On the other hand there was an increase in migration from Asia.  

Recently the Canadian government announced the opening of new immigration offices in Asia and Africa to process the large number of applications. Asians seem to be more readily accepted by the Canadian population than they were in the past. The easy absorption of Ugandan Asians confirms this fact, and their entry into Canada reflects the humanitarian concern of the Canadian government. The Canadian Prime Minister (Trudeau) and his colleagues proudly refer to Canada as a nation made up of a mosaic of cultures. Immigrants can hold high positions and there are human rights commissions to hear appeals against discrimination. In urban areas minority ethnic groups have their own associations and they are allowed time on the national broadcasting network to demonstrate their own cultures. In the post-war period massed demonstrations against immigration are no longer heard in Canada.

The Canadian government has adopted a multicultural policy in response to the Report\(^2\) of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Book IV 1969). This policy advocates encouragement and help for all cultural groups which could prove their will to survive and their need for assistance; help for other ethnic groups

to overcome cultural barriers and to enable them to enjoy full
participation in Canadian society; promotion of creative encounters
and interchanges among all cultural groups for national unity; and
help for learning English or French. The Canadian government has
designed various programmes to implement this new policy.¹

In future there seems to be a strong probability of increased
migration from South Asian countries to Canada to compensate for
the small number of admissions from Europe. Currently the Canadian
government is reviewing the whole immigration process, but the new
policy has not yet been announced. Immigration has played an
important part in Canadian history, yet it should not be looked
upon as a demographic phenomenon alone.² It is desirable that
more research into the social aspects of migration be undertaken,
for this will facilitate easier adjustment and assimilation of
immigrant peoples. However, ethnic studies have not yet gained
prominence in Canadian institutions of higher learning. Only two
Canadian universities³ for example, include Asian disciplines on
their curricula. Yet when the Canadian society is becoming more
and more multicultural the universities should reflect this varied
ethnic background and should try to expand their instructional
services in the light of new needs and demands in the community.

¹ Included among these programmes are a cultural development plan which
provides for research into the relationship between language and
cultural development; the provision of textbooks for non-official
language learning; and a study of ethnic press; twenty ethnic histories
to be commissioned by the Citizenship Branch; and additional programmes
to be developed by Federal cultural agencies such as the National Museum,
National Film Board, National Library and Public Archives. (Information
gained from an interview with Mrs. Knirck, Official of the Citizenship
Branch at Slater Street, Ottawa, August 1972.)

² J. Manglam, "General Theory in the Study of Migration: Current Needs
and Difficulties", International Migration Review, Vol. III, Fall 1968,
p. 6.

³ Universities of Toronto and McGill.
The more people know about the culture and background of other ethnic groups the more easily doubts and fears aroused by different customs and manners will be removed. New migrants will be accepted more easily and there will be a better understanding among all peoples.

Mass migration into any country would create grave problems and would benefit neither the migrant people nor the host country. But a highly selective non-discriminatory programme may prove to be a success. It is possible that Canada will set an example as the first self-governing Dominion of the Commonwealth to pursue a selective immigration policy that has no bias toward race, creed or colour. After many years of hardship the Asian migrant who can contribute his technical and professional skills and his cultural heritage as well, may find himself welcomed in the self-governing Dominions. However, this favourable position has not been granted without a struggle. A brief summation will serve to refocus the troubled history of the immigration of Asian peoples into Canada.

After the First World War Indian immigration into Canada was severely controlled by the arrangements of Reciprocity agreed to in the Imperial War Conferences of 1917 and 1918. Thus from 1915 to 1920 there was no immigration, except one person in 1916. In 1921 a new arrangement by which the entry of wives and children of Indian migrants already settled in Canada was established. The number of such wives and children entering Canada between the years 1921 to 1940 was as follows:

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1 See Canada Year Book 1921 to 1941.
The main source of encouragement to leave home which acted as a push factor for Indian migrants before the First World War was the propaganda spread by certain Indian individuals who wished to make a profit by the exploitation of those other Indians who hoped emigration would better their lives. But the failure of the Komagata Maru affair in 1914 and its subsequent repercussions, combined with the application of war emergency regulations, stopped the flow of immigration altogether. Instead, there was a steady return-home movement among Indian migrants during the war. The number of Indians in Canada decreased sharply. Those Indians who remained in Canada had no home life and all their activities centred around their temple. Thus the Khalsa Diwan Society continued to be their main organisation. When the period between the wars was marked by the internal economic troubles of the depression, Indians had to move from factories to other vocations which included trucking, fuel supplies and farming. By 1940 some Indians owned small businesses and this slight prosperity allowed them to send for their wives and children.

However, as the Second World War began the number of admissions (of wives and children only) began to fall. From 1941 to 1945 there were only five admissions.¹ In the immediate post-war period the only large number of admissions noticeable was 149 in 1947.² But when the agreements on the basis of specified quotas were signed with the Governments of India and Pakistan the number of arrivals began to increase and by 1955 it reached 249³ and by 1957 it stood at 334.⁴

¹ Admissions of Indians to Canada were: 1941 - 1; 1942 - 3; 1943 - 0; 1944 - 0; 1945 - 1. See Canada Year Book 1941 to 1946.
² As mentioned earlier in this chapter.
⁴ Ibid., 1957.
The hostility toward Asian immigration was quite evident in 1914 and the same attitude persisted after the First World War. Even franchise rights for provincial and municipal elections were refused to Asians in British Columbia and this automatically deprived them of their vote in the Federal election. In spite of strong representation by the Indian government and the agreed resolutions of the Imperial Conferences of 1921 and 1923, this exclusion of Indians continued. No Dominion government could stay in power if the majority of the electorate were going to object fundamentally to its policies. Immigration changes could mean sharp disapproval of conflicting opinion and general uncertainty in British Columbia. Thus the successive governments in Ottawa adopted a safe course of no change in the immigration policy because they did not want to risk any of their support from the Pacific Coast Province of British Columbia. The depression of the period between the wars and India's internal problems combined with her quarrel with South Africa minimised the Canadian question. However, as the war came to an end the Canadian government realised its unjustifiable stand on the exclusion of Indians.

In 1947, as India was about to get independence, the question of prestige of Indians in Commonwealth countries threatened to become a sensitive issue. Indian leaders could use it as a lever to justify their desire to depart from the Commonwealth. Therefore, disabilities of Indians in British Columbia, especially their exclusion from franchise rights, could create an awkward situation for Canada in the forthcoming Commonwealth Conferences, United Nations assemblies and further international meetings. During this troubled period the
Khalsa Diwan Society kept the franchise question alive by its consistent efforts toward more equal rights for Indians. Finally, the Dominion government submitted to pressure and granted franchise rights to Indians. With the rise of Communist China, the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949, the Korean War of 1950 and the beginning of the Cold War, the importance of South Asian countries increased. Therefore, the continued exclusion of Indians from migration to Commonwealth countries who might have to ask favours of India proved to be an unavoidable and unpleasant subject. Since the reaction against exclusion of Indians from Canada could lead to India's withdrawal from the Commonwealth, the Government of Canada, in 1951, decided to enter into agreements, on the basis of a quota system, with the Governments of India and Pakistan. In practice, however, this new system seemed just another device to replace the former complete exclusion of South Asians which had been the result of the reciprocity agreement of 1918. The new agreement, in fact, made little difference as the quota agreed upon was only 250 (Indo-Pakistani) migrants a year. From 1952 to 1955 the new quota was not fully utilised. The basis of the Canadian government's cautious approach seemed to be fear of a sudden large-scale influx of South Asians with their strange looks and customs to take over Canada.

Canada is a dualistic society in terms of language, culture and politics. Yet the population is only 30% French Canadian; therefore, the influx of a large number of immigrants from any one

1 Canada had admitted about 194,391 immigrants mainly from Europe in 1951. See Immigration Statistics, 1951.

2 Number of migrants from India and Pakistan were: 99 in 1951, 122 in 1952, 139 in 1953, 175 in 1954, and 249 in 1955. See Canada Year Book, 1951 to 1955.
country might upset the very delicate French-English balance in Canada. Even after the Second World War when large numbers of migrants could be absorbed, Mackenzie King was quite concerned about the maintenance of the basic character and composition of the Canadian population. So the policy (in relation to Indians) of extreme caution, control and restriction was pursued by the Liberal Party until 1957. During these years the Liberal government made only those minor changes which Mackenzie King felt could not antagonize organised labour and the electorate in British Columbia where most Asian immigrants were settled. As Dr. David Corbett summed up in his book, Canada's Immigration Policy: A Critique, the prime minister chose the minimum change:

A national government dealing with immigration policy is like a ship buffeted by contrary winds. Labour blows one way and employers another; French Canadians puff up a powerful blast against the prevailing English speaking majority; various nationality associations exert their pressures; and a chill-draught of prejudice against foreigners comes from some of the old stock. In these gusty waters the government must steer a course. Sometimes it may choose to use its auxiliary motors and go against the wind.

When the Conservative party came to power in 1957 they tried to relax the restrictive immigration policy. Diefenbaker's declared championship of non-discrimination policies and his frontal attack on South Africa in the Commonwealth Conference of 1961 were indications pointing towards his intention to liberalise Canadian immigration regulations. But equal treatment for non-European migrants was not achieved at this time. It was not until the early sixties when Canada's need of skilled manpower increased that Canada was led to adopt a universal immigration policy based on the

education, training and health of individual applicants. The racial question was finally omitted from the regulations.¹ As a result of this new policy South Asian migration reached 4,614 in 1967 and 6,281 in 1971.²

However, the changes in immigration regulations with their universal application have had some practical difficulties. There are only two Canadian immigration offices in South Asian countries, one in New Delhi opened in 1952 and the other at Islamabad opened in 1967. On the other hand there are eight offices in the United Kingdom and one in the Republic of Ireland. In addition there are over thirty Canadian immigration offices in Western Europe.

Immigration officials have shown preference for European migrants. Dr. Freda Hawkins, who was commissioned by the Dominion government to carry out intensive research in this field, made three tours of Canadian immigration offices abroad. Her reply to charges of discrimination against immigration officials was as follows:

... it was claimed that Canadian immigration officials showed a marked preference for European and United States immigrants.... This claim was, I think justified.... Almost all visa offices were there in Europe. European immigrants were the immigrants with whom the overseas staff were most familiar, and also the immigrants with whom they themselves often had some ethnic affinity because of the basically European character of previous movements to Canada. Immigration officers are, inevitably, very conscious of their own family immigration history which I found, was often quite recent or quite vivid in their own minds.³

Dr. Hawkins concluded that the Canadian immigration policy with its

¹ The new changes were quite in line with the changes in the United States immigration policy. See Edward M. Kennedy, "Immigration Law: Some Refinement and New Reforms", International Migration Review, Vol. IV, Number 3, Summer 1970, pp. 4-10.


³ Freda Hawkins, op.cit., p. 280. Dr. Hawkins was surprised to know that she was the first to inspect the Canadian immigration offices abroad. But it is interesting to note that South Asian countries were not included in any one of her tours.
strong European bias had been the result of, first, Canada's historical ties with Europe and her obvious Atlantic orientation in foreign policy and international relations; secondly, based on European preferential ideology; thirdly, negative control over non-European migrants; fourthly, concentration of Canadian visa offices in Europe and their obvious absence from Asia and Africa. Added to this was the Canadian special preference for migrants from the United Kingdom and the United States. Professor Anthony Richmond found similar evidence of particular preference for U.K. migrants in his survey on immigration. The Canadian Minister of Immigration (J.W. Pickersgill) justified this bias as an easy process to "transplant individuals into similar soil".

Yet in spite of lack of information about Canada, and with only two immigration offices to service over 600 million South Asians, the result of the point system immigration policy has been a continued increase from 658 Indian immigrants in 1961 to 6,281 in 1971. The increase after ten years was over nine times. In the first ten years after the war (1946-1955) the number of South Asian (Indian and Pakistani) migrants was only 1,193. It rose to 16,170 during 1956 to 1967. But during the next five years (1968-1972) the number reached 29,456. By 1970 in comparison with migration from other countries, South Asian migrants were the sixth largest group comprising 4.5% of the total number admitted.

1 Freda Hawkins, op.cit., pp. 55-60.
2 Anthony Richmond, op.cit., pp. 24-25.
3 Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1956, p. 7219.
5 Admissions for 1970 were: Total admissions = 147,713; Great Britain = 26,497; U.S. = 24,424; West Indies = 12,456; Italy = 8,533; Portugal = 7,902; India and Pakistan = 6,680. See ibid., 1970.
By 1973 South Asian migration was 6.3% of the total admissions into Canada.¹ These figures indicate the impact of changing trends in Canadian immigration.² The effect of the new policy, based on the point system, since the end of 1967, is quite evident as the number of South Asian migrants from 1946 to 1967 was only 17,393 whereas after the new regulations were formulated it was 41,095 for the years 1968 to 1973.³

There was about 10% of the Canadian labour force employed in professional and technical professions in 1961 but the Department of Manpower and Immigration expects to raise this proportion to 16% by 1975.⁴ For this supply of highly skilled manpower Canada relies on immigration.⁵ Under this new trend in immigration, the increase in the number of migrants from India and Pakistan was mostly made up of skilled and trained people. There were only 202 labouring class migrants who were admitted to Canada for the years 1968 to 1971 when the total number of South Asian admissions was 23,217.⁶ Thus labouring class migrants formed less than 1% of the total migration from India and Pakistan.⁷ Unskilled migrants without suitable competitive qualifications to establish themselves in the economic system are likely to become

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¹ Admissions for 1973 were: Total admissions = 184,200; Great Britain = 26,973; U.S. = 25,242; Hong Kong = 14,662; Portugal = 14,483; India, Pakistan and Bangladesh = 11,639. See Press Release March 21, 1974.
³ Ibid.
⁴ B. Ahmad, A Projection of Manpower Requirements by Occupation in 1975, Department of Manpower and Immigration, 1969.
⁵ A.G. Atkinson et al., Canada's Highly Qualified Manpower Resources, Department of Manpower and Immigration, 1970.
⁷ Ibid.
permanent inhabitants of particular areas and may create ghetto or slum conditions by their lack of mobility and adaptability.\textsuperscript{1} Such ghettos are often the source of dissident feelings and can ferment hostile attitudes and explosive situations as was the case in Chinatown and Japantown in Vancouver in 1907. The improvement in the quality of migrants made their movement within Canada much easier. The danger, therefore, of a large concentration of the entire South Asian immigrant group in one province or city all competing for the same kind of unskilled job was avoided. The variety of training in different professions enlarged the distribution of settlers. Besides, since the Indian and Pakistani migrants come from all over the sub-continent of South Asia and not from one place or province there were no family ties or background similarities to draw them together in Canada. For the most part the economic and cultural background of the new immigrants was better than that of the Punjabi soldiering class who came in the beginning. Many of the migrants moved to Canada after studying and staying in Britain and the U.S.A. For them there was no language problem. Also western education has minimised the rigid observance of the caste system and modified other conspicuous habits which can be a source of prejudice for the Canadian population.

Rapid changes in the communication system and increased travelling have changed the outlook of Canadian people. Before the Second World War migration into Canada was mainly from the United Kingdom, but in the first twenty years (1946-65) of the post-war period migration from Britain was only 33.2\% when non-British European migration was about double that amount. The number of U.K. migrants was 64,420 in 1967; 26,497 in 1970, and only 15,451 in 1971. By 1973 the

\textsuperscript{1} Jean Marchand, Minister of Manpower and Immigration, White Paper on Canadian Immigration Policy 1966, p. 15.
number of admissions from Britain further fell to 18.5% of the total immigration into Canada.¹ With the decrease in migration from the U.K. the general characteristics of the new Canadian immigrants changed. They came from different countries and brought with them many different cultures and manners. Indians were seen as just another different race among many others. So the increase in the number of South Asian migrants did not pose a threat. By the 1960's Canadians had become used to the strange looks and different customs of South Asians who had for their part adopted European dress and living standards. No longer did there seem to be any hostility against South Asian migrants. With regard to immigrant acceptance and adaptability the new liberalisation of the immigration policy of Canada has worked well. There is no Indian or Pakistani town in Canada. According to the Census of 1971 there are 52,100 Indo-Pakistanis settled in various places right across the country.² Out of this population 23,105 still speak their own Asian languages at home. Yet there has been no problem of adjustment in recent years. The reason for this change is the higher level of education of the migrants, and education, therefore, is one of the crucial variables in the adjustment of migrants. The higher the education the greater is the likelihood of being accepted in Canadian life.³

² Breakdown of number of Indo-Pakistani settled in Canadian provinces: Newfoundland 305; Prince Edward Island 130; Nova Scotia 1165; New Brunswick 340; Quebec 5000; Ontario 22,455; Manitoba 1855; Saskatchewan 1250; Alberta 3215; British Columbia 16,350. See Census of Canada, 1971.
³ Professor Anthony Richmond carried out two surveys in this field and he found education to be the crucial variable for adjustment and acceptance in the Canadian society. See his book, Post-War Immigrants in Canada, Toronto 1967.
In the post-war period, the Canadian government approached the question of migration on a very rational basis. The immigration department was expanded and a large number of specialised branches were created with special emphasis given to the economic and social adjustment of migrants. Research units were also established to study immigrant patterns across the country. In this way any imbalance in the process could be detected immediately as it appeared on the barometer of their Canadian adjustment, and quick and rectifying measures could be undertaken to adjust the system. The passing of the Canadian Bill of Rights and its implementation was a forward step in the direction of tolerance and equality in Canada.¹

The acceptance of Ugandan Asians showed the humanitarian viewpoint of the Canadian government. However, when the government realized how many extra immigrants were coming to Canada on tourist visas that they attempted to convert into permanent entry, the enormous backlog of appeals necessitated a change in immigration regulations. The Canadian government announced a general amnesty for those already in Canada but stopped this loophole by refusing permanent entry from visitor visas. Discrimination played no part in this action.

On the whole the new policy of the Dominion government which aims at the promotion of multiculturalism in Canadian society is a constructive step. If future programmes can include the expansion of university curricula to incorporate non-European disciplines it will be another constructive step. The immigration department should also sponsor more research in the field to keep it well informed about the social impacts of the immigration policy. This will help Canada to develop and prosper as a unique multicultural society. One can hope that

¹ James S. Frideres, "Discrimination in Western Canada", Race, October 1973, pp. 213-222.
while the long-term immigration policy is being planned, it should be considered neither a demographically oriented social science nor an economic necessity nor a political scapegoat. Rather it should be considered a vital and dynamic discipline having extensive local, national and international implications.
CHAPTER 12

Some Concluding Reflections
The beginning of East Indian immigration into Canada was a byproduct of the participation of Indian soldiers in the Jubilee in London and their subsequent return home via Canada. Besides this, after the Indian army's visit to China during the Boxer Rebellion, some soldiers crossed the Pacific and reached British Columbia. The Canadian Pacific Railway encouraged this migration because of the need for cheap labour to build railroads and some ticket agents saw migration as an opportunity for quick economic gains. Local industrialists also were in favour of Indians coming to Canada because they were efficient workers who accepted minimum wages. Thus the number of Indians in Canada rose from 45 in 1905 to 2,124 in 1907. It was a simple question of supply and demand. The need for cheap labour was the main criteria and to ensure a sufficient number of such workers other Asians such as Chinese and Japanese were allowed to migrate to Canada also.

The majority of Indians in Canada came from the Punjab and most of them were Sikhs. The province was noted for its loyalty to the British Empire and Sikh soldiers were proud of their service to the Crown. The Sikhs were hard-working and mobile people who wished to establish greater opportunities for their economic betterment in a new land. However, their unusual clothes, unshaven beards and coloured turbans created an unfavourable impression among British Columbians who were already predisposed to hate those whom they suspected of creating wage disparity in the labour market. Indians' customs were also different. Since they were without women of their own race the absence of normal family life darkened their
whole social existence. Usually they lived in a club of three to a dozen men and remained apart from the rest of the established community. They were further isolated by their lack of education. Most were scarcely able to read and write their own language, let alone English. There was no way in which they were able to communicate with British Columbian society. Dr. R.K. Das, who carried out a survey of the Indian community on the Pacific Coast in 1921, noted that the absence of recreation was a great defect from this point of view of the Indian's health and happiness and also represented a consequent reduction in opportunities to meet the white community. He blamed the Indian culture for this:

The ideal of Hindu culture relates more to contemplation and meditation rather than to action and pleasure. While the higher castes may follow such ideals to the average man it is practically meaningless. The result has been that the majority of the people in India have been deprived of a great deal of the pleasure of living.\(^1\)

His conclusion was that Indians indulged, during their leisure hours, in lengthy and unnecessary discussion which, however sharpening to the wits, led to frequent quarrels. This trait did not help them in their attempt to assimilate into new surroundings. Their one form of social activity appeared to be within associations of semi-religious or semi-political natures. Such associations lacked a centralizing and directing force. Therefore, these ignorant migrants arrived in Canada without any unbiased leadership among themselves and without any educational direction from any group or organization that would help them understand and conform to new and different standards of living. Neither the Indian nation nor the Indian government were attentive to their interests. Under such adverse conditions...
circumstances any integration with Canadians that might have been possible was out of the question. Clearly, some responsibility toward the adjustment of migrants must be accepted by the country to which the migrant is indigenous as well as by the host country, if a smooth transition is to be effected. This is especially true where vast differences in social background and customs pertain.

In the case of Indian immigrants in the early twentieth century no such responsibility was ever assumed and this is an important reason why the migration was such a disastrous experience.

In Canada, arguments against Oriental immigration were based on a theory borrowed from political economy. It was assumed that cheap labour would considerably lower the standard of living of white Canadian workers just as imports from any country where they are low priced tend to lower the price of the same goods in the importing country.

Since British Columbia's geographic, economic and cultural set-up made the province remote from the rest of Canada, the people there regarded themselves as an isolated group who had to be zealous about their own economic welfare. Exploitation of low-paid Oriental immigrant labourers by capitalist industrialists, therefore, was regarded by white workers as a threat to their own job security. Labour leaders, anxious to increase their own political power, exaggerated the Asian threat and the immigrants, to whom unions did not readily offer membership and who were unused to such organizations anyway, had no way of communicating with white labourers to work out any suitable labour policy. The result was that the fears of white labourers were fanned into anti-Oriental riots in 1907 and the two political parties, anxious to woo the votes of white workers, pledged
immigration control for Asians and this was soon expanded to include their exclusion from Canada.

Theories of Social Darwinism posited that a superior race in its rise to the top would run the risk of degeneration by mixing with inferior stock. This belief gave a sophisticated polish to the expression of white supremacy and sanctioned the racist attitude adopted by many countries. White supremacy was usually judged in terms of technological progress, good health and the ability to wage war successfully and on a large scale. Underdeveloped countries, plagued by too many people, lack of technology, famine and disease, obviously could not compete with the standard of living in Europe and North America. Race superiority was the white man's prerogative and this idea was championed by the popular press. "Mongrelized races", "miscegenation", "inferior stock", "racial contamination", "a clean people for a clean land" were terms of reference used by politicians, journalists and wage earners alike to refer to coloured immigrants. The Canadian immigration policy reflected this prevalent attitude and the exclusion of Indians was thought to be a safe and desirable action. The views of Lord Morley, Mackenzie King, Lord Minto, Colonel Swayne, Lord Hardinge and Lionel Curtis supported exclusive immigration policies. However, because of Britain's position in India, they thought it expedient to clothe their discrimination in more subtle language. Morley said that East Indians were unsuitable immigrants because of climatic and institutional reasons. Mackenzie King propounded the theory of "Competing Standards". Colonel Swayne expressed his concern that Indians were exposed to crude socialism which would germinate unrest in India. Hardinge used the argument of "self-governing status of
Dominions" and their right of exclusion and acceptance of the type of people judged suitable for their population. Curtis cited the theory of Social Darwinism, and expressed his concern about the Indianization of the British Empire.

However, India's membership of the Empire made any kind of exclusion practice difficult to justify. Indians, as citizens of the Empire, claimed equal status and demanded the same right as other British citizens to migrate within the Empire. Indirect methods of exclusion were deployed, but these could not be sustained in the law courts and proved to be an embarrassment for the Dominion government. The migration question came to a climax with the Komagata Maru affair and its failure to land its Indian migrants in Canada. The aftermath of this episode was marked by the eruption of troubles all over the Punjab with the added possibility of a rebellion of Indian soldiery. Agitators against British rule made full use of the issue. Thus the treatment of Indians as unwelcome immigrants within the Empire was of major importance to Britain's future in India.

The number of Indian migrants who had settled or attempted to settle in Canada was small but the treatment they received with regard to their equality of status from the Canadian, Imperial and Indian governments became the basis for bitter feelings that had far-reaching consequences for British rule in India. Indeed, the question of superiority and inferiority of different races became an increasingly important issue within the British Empire and posed a grave threat to the continuance of its harmonious internal relations. The Komagata Maru affair that gave wide publicity to the Canadian government's exclusion of Indians who had attempted to overcome the continuous
passage clause of the immigration laws clearly showed Canada's racial prejudice. When the Imperial and Indian governments did not champion the cause of the immigrants they felt betrayed. The circumstances surrounding the entire unfortunate incident were used by agitators in India to sharpen the focus on injustice for Indians under British rule. This accent on the inferiority of Indians as British citizens which was evidenced in the Dominion and which seemed to be acknowledged also by the British undermined the once fierce loyalty of the Sikh soldier class in the Punjab and ultimately contributed to the anti-British feelings in India. In spite of all the good British rule had brought to India the government there was short-sighted in its lack of decisive action to deal with the problem of the migratory rights of Indians as British citizens. The issue was an emotional one and the British did not seem to realize the strength of feeling that was caused by the branding of Indians as second class citizens within the Empire. Emotional issues are the most volatile and the badge of racial inferiority cannot be tolerated without serious eruptions. Thus, although the number of migrating Indians was small, the focus of attention on their exclusion from Canada because of racial bias was a precipitating cause of Indian dissent in the Punjab. It is unfortunate, indeed tragic, that some British officials who reigned in India chose to remain oblivious to the consequences of racial discrimination. Clearly the responsibility for the successful adjustment of migrating peoples must be assumed, at least in part, by governments involved, whose immigration laws and educational and propaganda programmes must facilitate the assimilation of newcomers.

Indian participation in, and immense contribution to, the
First World War earned the high praise of British statesmen and gave Indians a sense of self-esteem. Their exclusion, therefore, from the Dominions was a blow to Indian prestige. They interpreted it as a designation of inferiority. All Indian people, no matter how they were divided on other matters, were united on this question. It was an intensely felt issue and they attached tremendous importance to it. The Indian National Congress approached the Indian government to remove all invincible restrictive distinctions between His Majesty's Indian subjects and other subjects of the Empire. During the war the question of Indian exclusion from Canada, especially that of wives and children, became a focal point. The Viceroy of India (during 1914 to 1918), Hardinge and Chelmsford, came to the conclusion that the policy of exclusion of Indians with the tacit approval of the Imperial and Indian governments could not be continued and a change was vitally important. Through diplomatic skill the arrangement of Reciprocity of Treatment of Indians was agreed to in the Imperial War Conference of 1918. Dominion representatives promised the granting of full citizenship status and rights to Indian migrants in Canada but this was not fulfilled. The only concession the Indians actually received was the admission of wives and children of Indians settled in Canada. Though the new arrangement in principle advanced equality of status for Indians within the Empire, in practice, their exclusion from the Dominion was still diplomatically agreed upon and the Government of India extended its open and official approval.

In a migrating situation it is vitally important that the immigrant peoples assume the habits of those of the host country in order to minimize the traits that are often objectionable to the host community and which contribute to racial bias.
People learn to adapt themselves to the communities of their childhood through the process called socialization, and the adjustment to new countries may be described as resocialization. Adjustment in a new society, or adaptation to a new environment, or assimilation in the host community is a lengthy process. It requires that migrants should acquire the ability to use the vernacular language colloquially, and should seek to possess other skills required for communication. They should have knowledge of the history and culture of the host community, its ideology, values, norms and social structure. The extent to which the host community is ready to accept the incoming group of people is also an essential part of the adjustment process of migrants. The cause of the mutual interaction of immigrants and their host community and the subsequent effects on both groups are dependent on the demographic and psychological characteristics of immigrants, social and economic conditions, and prevailing frames of reference concerning migrants in the host country. An understanding of these factors as they affect the individual requires the combined resources of social psychology, cultural anthropology, sociology, and the social sciences, and it is not to be easily achieved.

Immigrants in any society present many educational problems.

1 Socialization has been defined by Merton as the process by which peoples selectively acquire the values and attitudes, the interests, skills and knowledge - in short the culture - current in the groups of which they are members or seek to become members. See Merton, Reader and Kendall, The Student Physician (Harvard University Press, 1957).


to the host community, especially if they arrive in considerable numbers. Adults have to be introduced into a society strange to them, a new language may have to be acquired, and new habits of dress, hygiene, feeding and living will be demanded. When people from widely differing cultures attempt such a process of socialization it is likely to extend over a period of many years.

But the difficulties of reorientation of immigrants were not sufficiently understood at the beginning of the century and no educational process was undertaken by Indian migrants or by Canadians. Instead, the policy of exclusion of these different peoples was adopted. Fear of an Indian take-over was expressed in political speeches as well as in academic works. Indeed, the most important facet of the situation was the hostility caused by the belief that there would be a sudden and overwhelming influx of Indians (coloured British subjects) into Canada to obliterate its small population of white Europeans. The strange appearance and different customs of the Indians were looked on as a threat to the continuance of the European way of life. The enmity and fear were more marked in sparsely populated British Columbia where racial intolerance was built up into fixed habits of thought and behaviour.

Race prejudice is accompanied by incorrect or ill-informed opinions regarding the people or group against whom it is felt. The majority of people in British Columbia knew very little about the Indian peoples. The name applied to all of them was "Hindus". While it is true that the majority of the people of India are Hindus,

most of the Indian immigrants in Canada were Sikhs with a few
Muslims and only a very small number of Hindus. Sikhs and Muslims
are separate religious groups of India and they do not like to be
called Hindus. The fact that Sikhism is a religion and not a province
of India, did not occur to many people in British Columbia. This
ignorance about Indian people was the starting point for racial
prejudice.

Racial prejudice is not an instinct. Its real bases are not
biological but social and cultural. It includes a belief that one's
own standards are universal or true, one's own group strong. The
target group is defined as exploitable and to be hated, a traditional
enemy. Many false beliefs take the form of "stereotypes" - exaggeration
of certain physical or cultural traits which are found among members
of the exploited group. When stereotypes exist an individual is judged
not by his own characteristics and merits but on the basis of exaggerated
and ill-informed beliefs of what are thought to be the real
characteristics of the group. Ignorance of the masses - those who
belong to the dominant group as well as those belonging to the non-
dominant group - enables the propagandists for exploitation and
political domination to succeed more readily. If one group of people
knows little about another group or has false beliefs about it, it is
more susceptible to the camouflaged demands of the exploiters.

Racism or the superiority complex is a strong cause of prejudice and
racial discrimination. It exists in popular beliefs in the biological
superiority of one group, with a conviction of the inferiority of
another group. It develops with the fears and anxieties about the

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1 See Kimbell Young, "The Social Psychology of Oriental-Occidental
possibility of the degeneration of one group if it mixes with another.
Prejudice is centred around economic and political matters, and such phenomena as religion and morals, quite as much as around race. It contains an element of dislike if not of fear and hatred. The tendency to prejudice comes from both personal and cultural conditions. Since the cultural heritage of the past is passed from parents to children, teacher to pupil and older to younger persons, it is reasonable to assume that prejudice — racial, national, creedal or class-based — is also passed down from generation to generation and is fed and conditioned by every crisis which arises when the two groups of different races come into competition or conflict.¹ Myths and legends furnish the rationalization for those habits and attitudes which express prejudice. Prejudice also rests on cultural stereotypes of cultural differences, on political ambitions and on current crises arising out of group rivalry and competition.

In British Columbia the current situation fostered the growth of prejudice against East Indians. The vast cultural difference between the newcomers and the settled residents, their different religious and social habits, were the source of suspicion and frustration on both sides. The darker complexions of Indians were also looked upon with disfavour by the white population, partly because black and coloured, as concepts, are associated with dirt, evil, the devil and other undesirable traits.² When one links these feelings about colour with further associations of inferiority because coloured races seem to be located in backward countries and

¹ Kimball Young, _op.cit._, pp. 773-785.
² _Ibid._
possess strange manners and customs it is relatively easy to form a stereotyped concept of Indians as dirty, uncivilized aliens who are intent upon taking white labourers' jobs and lowering their standard of living. Thus fear, suspicion and lack of any means of communication with each other or any understanding of difference can only lead to prejudice in opposing groups.

Since the individual tends to identify himself with the group, he becomes the product of the group to which he belongs. Religion and language become the instruments of group defence. In the case of a minority group exposed to prejudice, religious institutions become the most powerful means of defence both as an organizational base and as symbols of solidarity. The minority group tends to develop an oppression psychosis in which feelings of subjectivity, suspicion and aggressiveness lead to a sense of group solidarity. Because of differences, therefore, each group withdraws into its own pattern of interests and regards with suspicion all activities engaged in by the other group. As a result prejudice really rests upon the construction and acceptance by a group of certain generalized notions or perceived pictures of the typical characteristics and activities of another group. Some contribution is also made from the competitive society which sets man against man. Thus the dark skin, strange manners, lower standard of living, lack of common language and different religion of the Indians in British Columbia were regarded with contempt by white Canadians who felt superior to Indians and condemned them because they did not act in the manner of the majority.

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2 Ibid., p. 40.
3 Kimball Young, op.cit.
On the other hand, by the very nature of their intrinsic beliefs, Indians, especially Sikhs, could not conform to the accepted pattern of life in British Columbia. Even the unorthodox members of the Indian migrant community could not entirely accept the prevailing culture of British Columbia. Religions teach a way of life and a corresponding set of standards that are adhered to by devotees. Religion is thus a part of one's cultural heritage and figures in thought and action. Although the fundamental aspects of any religion teach devotion to a god figure and offer laws to govern good conduct that should provide the basis for man to get along with man, the particular differences between religions have long been the source of conflict instead. Since Richard the Lion-Hearted engaged Holy Wars against the infidel, Christianity in the Western world has been popularly regarded as the superior religion. Indians in British Columbia, therefore, who practised Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism were considered to be heathen and this was another mark of their inferiority. It seems entirely likely that much of the trouble between Indians and whites in British Columbia sprang from the prejudice generated by the Indians' strange religions, the oddity of their unpressed clothes, bearded faces and turbanned heads, their lack of education and knowledge of English, and their different standard of living. Because of these characteristics they were ostracized by the white community and treated with harshness and contempt. However, such treatment must inevitably have reacted still further on the Indians' unsociability, helping to increase the impression of unassimilibility and therefore magnifying the prejudice against them.

The position of Indians in the British Columbian society can be explained by reference to group psychology. Group characteristics are
attitudes and habits of loyalty, mutual aid, cooperation with each other, a sense of social solidarity or unity and an instinctive understanding, a "consciousness of kind". But the superiority complex among Europeans in Canada, and a hatred and fear of Asians seemed to prevail everywhere on the Pacific Coast. There was no group solidarity of white and coloured races and the circumstances under which the two races were brought together seemed to preclude the possibility of any favourable assimilation. In fact most expressed opinion at the time extolled the virtues of white supremacy. Impressed by the material progress of the past two hundred years, in ignorance of the factors which produced it, one writer seriously remarked:

All we can do is to ask for the evidence that other races are our equals. All the evidence in hand seems to indicate the superiority of the whites.... The maximum good of the world lies in the continued prosperity of the white races.... Does it not seem that the race which has extended its sway over the world, politically, militarily, and industrially is a superior race?

The prepossession of the whites, therefore, with regard to the Oriental races was not dependent upon any instinct which dictated mutual avoidance. Rather it rested upon cultural stereotypes of differences fed and enhanced by literary and theatrical representations, by political ambitions and by current crises arising out of group rivalry and competition.

Any cultural assimilation of Indians was further prevented by the development of their separate residences. Indian migrants did not live in the best surroundings in British Columbia. Most of them were driven to live in the worst areas simply by inability to procure

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accommodation anywhere else, for, though they were permitted to own property, few apparently did. Most of them lived in groups of five or six or even as many as twenty, in shacks or barrack-like boarding houses. ¹ This demeaned them further in the eyes of their neighbours. Besides, the isolation encouraged the continuance of their racial peculiarities which the whites found objectionable, gave them no opportunity to learn English and created in the Indians a sense of being different and inferior. This in turn made them more withdrawn.

After the First World War the Empire Settlement facilitated the migration of British subjects into the Dominions and Canada encouraged it. But this concession was not extended to British subjects of Indian origin. Rather the Dominions made efforts to turn the Empire settlement into a means of converting the British Empire into a white man's country. Indians were increasingly aware of the reality that the British Empire was less concerned about fair play and equality before the law than about racial differentiation and inequality based on colour. ² Even those Indians who were settled in Canada were not allowed to become citizens. They were deprived of their franchise rights. And when the economic recession of the late twenties and thirties resulted in a tightening up of immigration policies there was little chance that Indians would be allowed into the country. Thus the exclusion of Indians continued. The feeling of preference for a new land reserved for white men as well as a lack of tolerance for other cultures and others' ways of life were visible in the

¹ See E.E. Smilie, "An Historical Survey of Indian Migration within the Empire", Canadian Historical Review IV, September 1923, p. 229; see also C.H. Dickie (member of parliament from British Columbia), Canada House of Commons, Debates 1923, p. 4661, who told the Canadian House of Commons that the Hindus were mostly shack dwellers and dwelt under conditions intolerable to a white man.

organisation of the British Empire. There seemed to be no understanding or willingness or encouragement to learn about pigmented British subjects. Instead, people in Canada were fed on propaganda centred on the differences and inferiority of Indian migrants as well as a fear of white men losing jobs to them and being contaminated by lower standards of living. In British Columbia the originators of such propaganda spread false reports for their own political ends; but the majority of the Canadian people did not know this. Therefore all the unfavourable Indian publicity from government officials and labour leaders combined to reinforce the stereotyped picture of Indian immigrants as wholly undesirable people. Most people in British Columbia were therefore against the settlement of Indians in their province; their hostility was expressed by ostracism and violence. They had no compassion for the plight of these lonely men and thought only to rid themselves of an undesirable nuisance. The Indians were equally hostile and their bitterness was fed by their continued harassment. Neither side could approach the other to work out any compromise; indeed no government agency even suggested such a possibility. Canadian opinion in general at this time supported the exclusion of inferior coloured races from a country they hoped would be settled by white men only.

When "Reciprocity of Treatment" was instituted and women and children of Indians in Canada were allowed to immigrate, the Indian way of life underwent a profound change. The men and children in particular adopted modern Canadian clothing and engaged in a more homely domestic life. They worked hard to establish themselves in the new land and in spite of the economic depression seemed to prosper in their new jobs and businesses.

However, this evidence of stability and willingness to assimilate
did not change the living conditions of Indians within the white community. They were still excluded by a white society that justified its actions by the Marxian theory (capitalist system), the stranger hypothesis (ignorance), the scapegoat theory (used by self-seeking politicians), the colour-class hypothesis (white supremacy or Social Darwinism) or the "sudden influx" theory (extinction of European culture by coloured take-over). The attitudes of western society seemed fixed on the subject of social inequality. Government leaders and ordinary people shared the view of white supremacy and of reserving Canada for white men. It is difficult to imagine that these ideas could be altered but the Second World War changed the world order and influenced Canadian thinking in the process. Slowly more reasonable and humane attitudes towards coloured immigration became evident. Such shattering experiences as the wholesale destruction involved in modern warfare and the horrors of the concentration camps in racist Germany were responsible, possibly, for making men more aware of the consequences of superiority and expansionist theories. Also Indian soldiers had often been comrades-in-arms of Canadian troops and the men became more understanding of each other's ways. The post-war period in Canada was marked by more open-mindedness towards other cultural groups as well as a desire to utilize the skills of those groups to enhance economic progress.

Immigration was seen to be an important element in Canadian population growth and vitally necessary to economic expansion. After the war the main trade unions in Canada - Trades and Labour Congress (T.L.C.) and Canadian Congress of Labour (C.C.L.) - changed their forthright opposition to partial support of immigration and the business community pressed for an increase in immigration. The expansion of the economy was rapid enough to absorb all newcomers. During the
1940s Canada made a rapid transition from a largely agricultural society to one of the most advanced industrial countries in the world. Meanwhile in the post-war period a new trend was visible in immigration into Canada when the number of eastern and southern European migrants tremendously increased. Rapid changes in communications, automation and computerization have a strong bearing on Canadian social organization. Industrial societies create many positions which primarily involve responsibilities and skills of administration. As this change was felt the need for skilled manpower to foster continued industrial growth became apparent in Canada. Therefore, in order to encourage the process, and to increase the skilled component of the immigrant labour force, Canadian immigration regulations were revised and were made universally applicable to everybody without any regard to race, colour or religion. At this time the most dramatic economic development was undertaken by the dominant business corporations. During the period of the 1950s and 1960s there were several mergers within the group of large firms as well as among the chartered banks and their associated trust corporations.

In an industrial society an emphasis on loyalty, family ties, religiosity or any other personal attribute or inherited quality is not enough for choosing among people when filling a position. These qualities are supplemented by the cultivation of impersonal social relations and impersonal considerations. An industrial society must give prominence to universalistic values and relations. It must prize efficiency and competence. Industrial societies tend to be much concerned with performance, with measurable rates of change.

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and with individual accomplishments within general norms that are impersonally applicable to diverse situations and undertakings.

Industrial societies are internally heterogeneous. They consist of diverse groups, aggregates and styles of life. Besides, for all the emphasis placed upon the idea of merging in a mass society, with its totalitarian regimentation, modern societies have become the context for the development of individualism. In addition they have provided opportunities on an unprecedented scale for diverse groups and individuals within the society to participate in the enjoyment and management of the society.

Social arrangements do not stay static under any circumstances. Modern societies, however, are marked by fairly rapid and comprehensive transformations in relatively short periods of time. They value change and exhibit it. They also generate movements and institutions that counter social change in the name of various traditions. Progress and improvement, as well as stability and the preservation of certain cultural resources, belong to values that govern modern social arrangements. Indeed, modern societies contain a series of dichotomies and strains that engender change and are the product of it.

During the industrial phase, with growing urbanization and expansion of commercial enterprises, a form of pluralistic integration of ethnic minorities was characteristic of Canada. Not only were ethnic sub-cultures a distinctive feature of city life, but a variety of social institutions emerged to meet the special needs of immigrant groups. The receiving society in Canada adapted itself in many ways to the social changes generated as a consequence of a high rate of population increase and diversification due to migration.

As a result a new kind of migrant population emerged in Canada.
The outstanding characteristics of the new type of migrants were their high educational qualifications, cosmopolitan outlook and lack of permanence in any one country or locality. Canadian immigration policy with its emphasis upon educational and occupational qualifications attracted and still attracts such migration in increasing numbers. Under the new immigration policy the number of migrants from South Asian countries began to increase. The characteristics of this new group were quite different from those entering Canada in the earlier part of this century.

A change in taste through contact with an affluent way of life can have a strong influence on talented people from poor countries. Persons with moderate degrees of skill may move to rich countries in order to improve their qualifications and from there they can migrate to countries which offer better opportunities. This change or location or short distance movement has practical application in the case of new South Asian migrants to Canada. Many Indians anxious to better their economic position and improve the social status of themselves and their families were eager to leave India and live in a country where their special skills would be recognised and compensated. Thus Canada's new immigration policy attracted talented, adventurous, enterprising peoples. These immigrants had more knowledge of the world and found it easier to adapt to the new country's social customs. They were also more easily assimilable and former barriers of colour, religion and manners were of less consequence in the new mosaic of cultures that began to define the Canadian way of life. Social distinctions based on birth and background that still prevail to some extent in the old world are replaced in the new world by distinctions based on education and economic position.
In Canada the integration of immigrants gave evidence of a cultural variety within a growing cultural unity. This view was well expressed by the Canadian Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Integration was used in Canada to express a theory which contained unity and diversity. In Canada the unity was sought in the common principle of political philosophy and participation in common citizenship. The diversity was maintained by reciprocal appreciation of diverse cultural contributions.

For the encouragement of the "mosaic" each group with its vested interests and peculiar traditions presents a significant and perhaps a formidable problem of national dialogue. On the other hand the differences may have the advantage of more clearly identifying the significant and pervasive issues which individuals and groups must face, instead of obscuring these differences through attempted cultural standardization. The proliferation of various ethnic modes of communication and cultural activities seems to be distinctively a Canadian phenomenon and may indeed signify the principle that Canada is integrated through conflict and not through conformity to some national and majestic norm.

After the Second World War the idea of the superiority of white races seems to have waned and is rarely supported in academic discourses. Besides, the Canadian stand against racist regimes on the African continent could hardly be justified if Canada continued to share South African policies of racial bias. The rapidly changing economic needs of industrialized Canada could not support the continuation of an immigration policy based on racial exclusion when the skilled men needed for Canadian economic expansion were in demand and welcomed in western Europe. Thus the variegated qualities of new South Asian migrants, well-equipped with technical training, cultural knowledge
and social understanding, made them entirely acceptable in Canada.

In the new economic set-up of Canada the old competitiveness between white men and South Asians for unskilled jobs and the running of small businesses is out of the question. Similarly the old fear of a sudden enormous influx of Indians as British subjects claiming the right of admission into Canada has been dispelled by the new immigration laws. The ignorance of Canadians and South Asians about their respective cultures also belongs to the past. The changes in the Canadian immigration policy from complete exclusion to equal acceptance of South Asians came about entirely in accordance with Canadian social, political and economic forces and interests. In the case of the acceptance of Ugandan Asians Canada again reflected her preference for that type of migrant who could establish himself in the Canadian economic structure. The special professional and technical skills required as a qualification for immigration in Canada help immigrants to be absorbed in the general social structure thus preventing the creation of ghettos. It seems evident that, when migration is planned in volume and in quality, it has favourable results.

Inter-group contact between immigrants and the host community can result either in conflict or harmony, depending upon the situation and conditions under which it occurs. When the contact situation involves a combination of equal status, common goals, no competition along group lines, and has the support of authorities, law and customs, as well as being free from the use of the scapegoat hypotheses, political exploitation and ignorance and the fear of a sudden influx of aliens, improved group relations are likely to be realized. Canada
is trying the difficult experiment of building a multicultural society in which a myriad of cultural, economic, political, demographic and ecological factors interplay. So far it seems to be working well.

But mass migration of people does not offer any reasonable possibility of resolving the tremendous problems which the steady growth of population is creating in some developing countries. Besides, migration as a politically feasible, economically viable and socially acceptable solution seems to be a very remote possibility for the future. However, the example of the Canadian immigration policy based on a merit system has already been followed by Australia and New Zealand. One can hope that the future will bring better understanding and that the colour barrier will disappear in the practice of migration policies in all countries. Socialization of different cultural groups within receiving countries can be accomplished if suitable conditions prevail and if government policies set reasonable standards for immigration. Under such conditions both immigrant and host community benefit. One can hope also that the circumstances that surrounded the Komagata Maru affair and the plight of the first Indian immigrants into Canada will never again be allowed to happen. In that instance ignorance and fear in the host community as well as the lack of any specific policies by the Canadian, Imperial and Indian governments were major contributory causes to racial bias. The intensity of emotion engendered by race prejudice is often out of proportion to the actual events involved. In the case of East Indians in British Columbia the repercussions from the enmity that was levelled against these few people shook an Empire in India. Pride of race and reaction against labels of inferiority because of colour are formidable forces to which any government must give serious consideration when working out the problems of world
resettlement. Surely Canada's solution to these problems will provide a working guideline for other nations in future years.

The problems associated with the integration into a society of people of different race, colour or creed have always been complicated by emotional issues. No legislation can wipe out prejudice but government action to inform and educate can help to break down some barriers. A wise immigration policy that allows into the country the types of skills needed for its economic growth and a class of people easily mobile because of education and training ensures the absorption of these people into the established society. Isolated ghetto communities are not typical of the present Canadian scene. There is no need for busing of black and white students to attempt to ensure equality of education as there is in the United States. People live where they choose and send their children to neighbourhood schools. There are no race riots. There is no apartheid. In recent years Canada has managed to foster a multicultural atmosphere while maintaining a selective unbiased immigration policy, on paper at least. The policy was based on economic issues to bring in more people who could contribute to Canada's growth and prosperity. Even the humanitarian gesture extended to the Ugandan Asians provided Canada with a group of ambitious hard-working people who are anxious to contribute their skills toward economic advancement. Yet the bleak picture cast by the world's present inflation, the threat of depression and the tremendous increase in the number of people who are immigrating to Canada have caused some labour organisations to recall the economic depression of the 1930s and to cast a suspicious eye on the continual influx of foreigners into the labour market. The government is now
forced to make some changes in its immigration policy. Robert Andras, Minister of Immigration, has assured the Canadian Parliament that only the number of immigrants will be reduced and no restrictions with regard to race or geographic region will be practised. The continued success of Canada's multi-cultural experiment rests now with the government's formation of wise and appropriate new measures to deal with the current immigration situation.
APPENDICES
# APPENDIX I

## SOUTH ASIAN IMMIGRATION INTO CANADA

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### APPENDIX II

**POST-WAR IMMIGRATION INTO CANADA**

**Source of Immigrants - Distribution of World Areas**

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S.ASIAN IMMIGRATION
INTO CANADA

NO OF IMMIGRANTS →

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S. ASIAN IMMIGRATION INTO CANADA
1955–1973
## APPENDIX IV

### Canadian Ministers of Immigration 1905-1973

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<td>William James Roche</td>
<td>1912 - 1917</td>
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<td>James Alexander Calder</td>
<td>1917 - 1921</td>
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<td>John Wesley Edwards</td>
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<td>Hewitt Bostock</td>
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<td>James Alexander Robb</td>
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<td>Charles Stewart</td>
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<td>Guy Favreau</td>
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<td>Jean Marchand</td>
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<td>Nov. 1972 -</td>
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- Record Group 26

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- Record Group 25 A2, volume 62, file I 20/11, and file I 21/24
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Sansar
Saturday Sunset
Seattle Post Intelligencer
The Times
Toronto News
Toronto Star
Toronto Telegram
G. INTERVIEWS

Professor Henry F. Angus (Retired Chairman of Faculty of Social Sciences, University of British Columbia). He was born in 1891 at Victoria, B.C. and has observed the whole question of Indian immigration. Professor Angus was in India during the First World War. He has been interested in this problem for the past sixty years.

Mr. Henry Herbert Stevens (Retired Conservative Member of Parliament). He was member of the Canadian House of Commons from 1911 to 1940. He was quite active during the climactic situation of 1914 when the Komagata Maru, with 376 Indians on board, arrived in British Columbia.

Dr. E. Ziegler, Director, Immigration and Manpower Division, Department of Manpower and Immigration, Dalhousie Street, Ottawa.

Mr. Peter Ross, Head of Highly Qualified Manpower Research, Department of Manpower and Immigration, Dalhousie Street, Ottawa.

Dr. R.S. Hall, and a large number of Indians at Vancouver.