

(February 26th, 1912.)

Oriental Immigration.

By MR. H. H. STEVENS, M.P.*

AT a regular meeting of the Canadian Club, held on Feb. 26th, 1912, Mr. H. H. Stevens, M.P., of Vancouver, said:

Mr. President and fellow Canadians.—I esteem it a very great and high privilege indeed to have this opportunity of speaking to the citizens of Toronto on the subject of Oriental Immigration. The subject is one in which I, with a large percentage of the people of the West, am deeply interested. It is one that, were I to do justice to it, would require at least an hour and a half or two hours to present it in anything like an intelligent manner, so my remarks to-day necessarily have to be very brief, and I shall deal more with principles than with details. I wish to assume that you, as citizens of Canada, are interested, as we are in the West, in building up this great Dominion, and so will set this question in its broadest possible aspect.

In the first place, I should like to say that in order to solve problems we must grapple with them; you cannot form theories as to the manner in which certain questions should be dealt with when the conditions and circumstances are demanding immediate attention. So, in the West, we are looking at this question in the light of immediate conditions which have developed with regard to Oriental immigration. I shall ask you then to fill in the gaps in what I say, remembering that we are not dealing with abstract theories but with actual conditions.

Yesterday I listened to a sermon by a friend of mine in Ottawa, in which he used this phrase, "We surely have a goodly heritage in Canada." That describes in a very brief way what I would like to speak of just now. I wish to call your attention to the extent of Canada in that respect, stretching as it does from the Atlantic to the Pacific, whose natural resources we are only commencing to understand, and which

* Mr. H. H. Stevens, M.P., represents Vancouver in the House of Commons. A young man of much force of character, he was returned to Parliament for the first time on September 21st, 1911. He is a Conservative.

the world does not yet understand. On the Atlantic coast we have the great fisheries and the great seaports; then the fertile lands in the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. A little to the west are Quebec and Ontario, with their great natural resources, where you are building up industries with your wonderful water powers and electric powers that will make this part the New England of Canada. In the West are the prairies which are to be the granary of the world. A few years ago we imagined that only a small proportion of the land was fertile or fit for growing grain, and that vast areas were suitable only for grazing; but we find to-day that the whole of the prairie land, from the international boundary to the north, and from the Rocky Mountains to the Great Lakes, can grow wheat freely, and we have only managed to scratch a small plot! Finally there is that great Province which was truly described by Sir Richard Cartwright as "a sea of mountains." And its valleys will yield enormously as soon as we are able to cultivate them. For in the reports at Ottawa it is stated that they are capable of producing annually five hundred million bushels of wheat. At the present time people from all parts of Canada, from the United States, and other parts of the world are directing their attention to the Peace River valley. So we can rest assured that in the course of a year or so the development of that Province will equal that of Saskatchewan or Alberta. I need not remind you of the extensive mineral deposits of British Columbia, covered with timber for 182,000,000 acres of a type and character not surpassed anywhere else in the world. Nor of the fisheries, which equal if they do not surpass in their possibilities the riches of the Atlantic coast.

I simply call your attention to this great heritage, to point out that the people of Canada are to-day face to face with two great problems: first, the conservation of our natural resources, and second, immigration. Of the first, I shall have nothing to say to-day, other than to impress upon your minds that you dare not, in face of the experience of the United States, be prodigal of your natural resources. Already we have erred, but there is still time to check our prodigality.

In respect to immigration, we are to-day where the United States stood seventy-five years ago in relation to this problem. We cannot expect to build up with our small population a nation which will measure up to the responsibilities and resources of Canada, unless we have a number of immigrants coming into the country. So I say it is a problem—(for you must have immigrants)—worthy of the best brain and intellect in this country to solve it.

I shall call your attention very briefly to the experience of the United States, not simply that we may profit by it, but to try to inspire in you this idea, that we must profit by the experience of others if we are to do justice to the problems of Canada. It is folly, madness, on our part, to go on as we are. A virile race can assimilate any number of people. We have vast natural resources, enough for all and sundry to participate in them; but we have a responsibility to build up a people that shall be true to the traditions of the Anglo-Saxons and of the British Empire. (Applause.)

I have not the opportunity at the present time to work out the problem of immigration, but I recommend to any man the perusal of a book lately written by Jeremiah W. Jenks and W. J. Locke. This book contains, boiled down, the essence of an investigation covering several years, a large amount of facts and data giving most valuable information, dealing with this question. I shall quote some of the information, from this book, and lay down principles. I was amused last week to read how some people pictured myself; it gave me an idea of what sort of man I am, with slaughter in my heart and blood in my eye. (Laughter.) But I say this, with a fervent desire for the good of Canada, that it is absolutely essential for us to grasp the underlying principles of this great problem before we can deal with it in an intelligent manner.

From this report, presented by this commission, I want to read a quotation: "While the American people have in the past welcomed the oppressed of other lands, care should be taken that immigrants be such both in quality and quantity, as not to make too difficult the process of assimilation." Assimilation is the underlying principle of immigration; it is the root of the whole problem. I want you to get fastened in your mind this fact, that unless you assimilate your immigrants you are laying up a problem which will equal the negro problem of the south. I quote again:—"Since the existing law and further special legislation recommended in this report deal with the physically and morally unfit, further general legislation concerning the admission of aliens should be based primarily upon economic and business considerations, touching the prosperity and economic well-being of our people. That is, immigration should not be allowed to simply develop some individual industry, but should be regarded as a factor in nation-building." Again:—"The slow extension of industry which would permit the adaptation and assimilation of the incoming labor supply, is preferable to a very rapid industrial expansion which results in the immigrants and laborers of low

standards and efficiency, and imperils the American standard of wages and conditions of employment."

In other words, immigration should never be used simply as a means to develop individual industries here and there or for advancing certain classes of the people; immigration should be used as a factor in nation-building, not simply for the accumulation of wealth by certain individuals. The United States stands out to-day as the greatest example of the abuse of this great principle. Seventy-five per cent. of the immigrants in the United States are congregated in the great cities. In nineteen cities containing more than 250,000 population the foreign-born population exceeds the native-born. In New York, two-fifths of the population is foreign-born, another two-fifths is composed of native-born children of foreign-born parents, and only one-fifth are native citizens or children of such. In Chicago, 35 per cent. of the population is foreign-born, two-fifths are children of foreign-born parents, and less than one-fifth are native-born or children of native-born. This is producing for the people of the United States a problem that they are staggered with, and which the best brain of the Republic is trying to solve. We are in a position now where we can avoid that problem if we take proper steps to safeguard our immigration.

I have said enough to impress on your minds the fact that the great problem is assimilation. On the Pacific coast our primary objection to the Oriental is that he will not assimilate. We have had considerable experience. The people of the United States have been testing the case for fifty years with the Chinese, and there is not the slightest sign that he will assimilate. Large numbers of Chinese came there in the gold rush of 1849 and '50; most of them are dead now, but their children are still Chinese to the core.

We fully appreciate the good qualities of the Oriental in his own way. I want to say this, that I have traveled in China and Japan, and have a very keen appreciation of the capacities of these nations; and the man who belittles the possibilities of these two nations in this world's history is underrating them very materially and making the most serious mistake of his life. But the very fact that I appreciate the capability of these people is one reason why I hesitate to encourage them to come here. If you can't assimilate them, you are building up a distinct and separate race and no nation can do so without suffering from the effects of it in future years. But add to this the fact that the Orientals still retain their allegiance to their own

land, and their strong religious sense, and this intensifies the danger.

British Columbia is at least one-tenth Oriental, I suppose it may be one-seventh of one-eighth, so we have reason, I think good reason, to be alarmed. In the United States they have only four in one hundred of the population on the coast Oriental, but in British Columbia the problem is more intensified; yet the United States have excluded Orientals, making laws regarding the Chinese and the Japanese; in one place they have asked the British Government to prevent entirely Hindu immigration. I think we have equal or greater reason to be alarmed at the possibilities of this immigration in our midst.

Another objection is this: no matter how fine a type of men these may be, I contend that the Oriental, be he Japanese, Chinese or Hindu, is entirely different in ideals, political, economic, social, religious, intellectual; in fact in every way his traditions and history are entirely different from ours. So that in view of that fact the process of assimilation is a waste of time.

Last week I propounded this question to the Woman's Canadian Club: "A great many people say, let us welcome these people to our shores, but ladies, are you willing to give your daughters in marriage to Hindus, or your sons to marry Hindu women? You are asking us in British Columbia to do it!" I say assimilation must mean intermarriage; are you prepared to adopt that course to give your own sons and daughters in marriage to these races? History tells us this fact, that the offspring of the intermarriage of Occidentals and Orientals shows detriment of both races, that there seem to gather within that offspring the vices of both races and the virtues of neither.

Of the Chinese on the coast ninety-five per cent. are males and five per cent. females, and they have been there forty or fifty years. There is a system by which certain rich men have a syndicate, with headquarters at Vancouver or Seattle; they bring over coolies, pay their passage and head tax, and I am told in Vancouver that from the day they land there till they have paid the tax with a heavy rate of interest, they are practically slaves of these contractors or bosses, who hire them and send them to work whenever and wherever they like. The individual has nothing to say. They are slaves in the true sense of the term till they pay off the full amount of their indebtedness, which I know takes in some cases twenty years! Is that the type of immigration you want? Is it consistent with Anglo-Saxon traditions to promote a system of slavery?

for this is nothing else; it is the paramount practice on the Pacific coast.

The Chinese are also inveterate gamblers and white slavers. A large number of women are brought in as the wives and daughters of merchants, and are sent to the great centres in the eastern cities of Canada. This is the most profitable source from which the white slave traffic is drawn. I know it to be a fact. The rich merchants will swear that these women are their wives or daughters, and the syndicate, the interpreters and everyone else all work together, while the Chinese is silent as a clam about anything affecting him, so it is very difficult to get evidence against these men.

The Japanese are engaged chiefly in logging and fishing. The mill industry is the largest industry on the Pacific coast. This is one of the evil effects of the policy of ten or twelve years ago:—When the large mill men on the coast owing to shortage of labor—(I do not blame the mill men. It seemed to them no doubt the best thing or the only thing to do)—employed large numbers of Orientals. In the shingle mills the boys were replaced by Chinese and Japanese; consequently, instead of having a large population of mill workers with families from which to draw workers constantly as the years go on, the mill men and other employers of labor find they have built up a population of individual Chinese. The consequence is, labor is scarce. Not only in these direct lines, but in domestic lines too and the fishing industry there are no families, they are replaced by Orientals.

In the fishing industry there were 9,500 white fishermen engaged on the Pacific coast ten years ago; now there are ten thousand and more Japanese fishermen. I contend that that one fact alone is sufficient to awaken in the mind of any true Canadian some idea of the immense importance of the problems created by the employment of Orientals on the Pacific coast. The whole industry to which you look for men to defend your shores in case of attack, the industry which has always been the backbone of defence of a nation, has passed into the hands of an alien and ambitious race. This should make every true Canadian sit up and listen!

Let me give you a brief illustration of what this means. A coasting vessel wished to let off a couple of passengers at a place up a little inlet or fjord. The captain did not know what the passage was like, and had no chart, but a Japanese fisherman produced a complete chart of the fjord, which showed the channel better than any that is to be found in the Archives

at Ottawa. And among these Japanese fishermen are many naval reservists, who have had training in the navy.

Sixty-five per cent. of the captains sailing into Vancouver are sons of Nova Scotia fishermen. But if you are talking about a navy, where are you going to get men for your navy, if that population is entirely replaced by Orientals? This is a condition which obtains now, which must be faced; it is not the result of a moment, but that of a mistaken policy which has been perpetuated on the coast. People three thousand miles east of there do not realize matters as they are; but for the past five or ten years we have been building up this foreign population there; and we are in hopes that the people all over Canada will realize this problem as we do on the coast.

Hindus are largely employed on the Pacific coast, first of all in the lumber mills more than in any other single employment, also in gardening and excavating and lot clearing in the cities—a class of labor for which there is always a fair demand and a reasonable supply. They engage very little in farming, and that only contiguous to the great centres. They do no pioneering. They tend to gather close together, in similar conditions to what they live in in their own land, but entirely foreign to those in which we Anglo-Saxons live. Another matter the mere matter of money! By the employment of Oriental labor employers find the housing problem rendered easy. A white man will demand certain food and accommodation, but the Orientals are of such simple tastes that to demand better accommodation they think would cast a reflection on their employers. I know many men who are interested in the welfare of their employees, but in actual industrial life it is only natural that they should take advantage of the situation thus presented. Then the Asiatic has a tendency to gravitate towards the centres of population, and there to build up "Little Asias," as at Vancouver and New Westminster, where there are a "Chinatown," a "Japtown," and "Hindutown." There is no chance of assimilating these people.

With regard to the question of the Hindus in connection with this problem of their wives,—I have never taken the position yet, although probably more active in this matter than any other single person, that we should deny to a Hindu the right to have his wife with him. But I contend that the whole question must be taken into consideration in connection with the whole problem of Oriental immigration. What the Hindu is demanding is the right to free travel throughout the Empire. I want to call your attention to this fact. Allowing them this right, with three hundred and fifty millions of peo-

ple what chance have you with fifty or sixty millions of Anglo-Saxons? The ambition of the Oriental is to obtain the free right of travel, the free franchise of citizenship, and the right to sit in elective positions. They have asked me, "Why are not we given the full rights of British citizenship as you have it to-day?" I hold that we are not prepared to give the Hindus that right, because they have demonstrated that they are not even well ready for home rule as we have it in Canada. I claim that India is not in the same position as Canada, Australia or New Zealand. Anglo-Saxon law can never be administered by Hindus in India. The judges in India never register a conviction on the sole testimony of Hindus, but always require white testimony as well. In British Columbia we have had this experience in relation to Hindu testimony, and Judge Shaw, Judge McKinnon, Judge Bull, and Judge Williams, all have refused to try a case concerning Hindus, because they can not trust them. The other day, for example, a man came in with his breast lacerated, saying that two Hindus had wounded him, but it was found out that this man himself had put some pieces of glass in the wall and rubbed his breast against them, his object being to get revenge upon his fellow Hindu for some reason or other. The other two men, when the Government discovered this fraud, were put in prison for perjury.

The Hindus are not prepared or equipped to take the full rights of citizenship, in face of their propaganda on the Pacific coast. This demand for the admission of their wives is simply a trumped-up plea to get the laws amended. We are prepared to deal with the Oriental question on its merits, and when that is settled then we can take up this other matter of the Hindus' wives according to the standards of humanity, and will deal with them as individuals. As individuals it may be right to do what may not be right to do as a race, but we must not break down the great policy of restriction of Asiatic immigration, and they have no right to demand it.

Regarding this law which demands that the Hindu shall take a continuous journey to Canada, so far as I am concerned I know it is a gigantic farce. But we are clinging to that as a last straw, because if that restriction is abolished we shall be inundated. Practically all the Hindus now in British Columbia came in one year. About 1897 there was a large influx of Japanese from the Hawaiian Islands, so in order to stop that in such a way as not to give offence to Japan the Government put that provision into effect. It applies to Swedes, Italians, Hindus, Japanese and everybody. I admit the thing is a farce;

but what we want is that the people of the East shall agree to deal with this question on its merits. I should be delighted to see it swept away, but until you are prepared to deal with this question, (the consideration of which we have been refused time and again by the Ottawa Government, the Government of British Columbia having repeatedly passed laws which were promptly disallowed) in self defence we have to cling to whatever regulation we can.

If the Hindu is truly Imperial, why does he not content himself with seeking to build up the Empire in countries and under conditions where he is eminently fitted to do it? In India, Egypt, North Africa, where he is equipped to live in the climatic conditions as not all people are, there is a chance to demonstrate his enthusiasm for the Empire.

But, gentlemen, seriously, this question of their claim based on Imperial loyalty is very weak. Every man who signed that demand is conniving with writers who approve of the action of the men who tore down the Union Jack at Vancouver the other day. These men that raised that trouble came from the United States West. I simply am giving you facts that can be proved.

My firm conviction is, that the British Empire owes its prestige to-day chiefly to the high standard of national life we have always defended and advocated, and anything which interferes in the slightest degree with the purity and integrity of the national ideals must correspondingly weaken the Empire. We have to be true to the past, for our fathers bled and died for the Empire, and we must uphold in the highest possible way these standards of morality integrity, and honor.
