

507, Dominion Building,  
Vancouver, B.C.

20th September, 1922.

The Right Honourable Arthur Meighen,  
OTTAWA, ONT.

Dear Arthur:-

Having further reference to your letter regarding the extension of the franchise to British Indians properly resident in Canada, let me say at once that our chief interest has always been in securing such relations as would prevent immigration of these people to Canada in competition with our resident white workers.

I understood from Mr. Sastri while in conversation with him in your room at the Hotel Vancouver that his Government had effectively and definitely stopped emigration to Canada and that they had officially acknowledged Canada's right to impose exclusion against persons from India, if we so chose. This apparently definitely disposes of the immigration problem.

Indeed, as to extension of the franchise to British Indians now properly resident in this country, I can see no reason why this should not be granted. I have always held strongly to the belief that we should not admit to Canada persons to whom we are not prepared to extend the franchise. In other words, that should be the test of our immigration policy. Further, I would point out to you that it is the duty of the Provincial Government to take action in this matter. It is a Provincial and not a Federal Law that prevents the extension of the franchise to these Indians. I admit that our Federal Law limits the franchise in a Federal sense to that of the Provincial law, and care should be taken in suggesting any change to this.



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The proper course is for the Federal Government to make the necessary representations to the Provincial Government to secure such amendment to the Provincial franchise law as will do justice to these people.

I therefore beg to suggest to you that care should be exercised in this matter as the responsibility rests wholly upon Mackenzie King and John Oliver and you and I are not called upon to relieve them of this responsibility. Nevertheless I am quite prepared to stand by the principle enunciated in the former part of my letter.

Yours very truly,