

The Sun

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FRIDAY, JULY 24, 1914.

SORRY BUNGLING.

Sir Robert Borden, the Dominion premier, has associated himself fully with Mr. H. H. Stevens, in the methods employed by the federal member for this city, in getting rid of the Hindus. His telegram of congratulation and approval, the effect of which Mr. Stevens has eagerly communicated to the press, is comprehensive. Nothing that Mr. Stevens has done is repudiated. Everything is confirmed. The night attack of Sunday last is included in the list of the acts which have received ministerial commendation. And the employment of a superior force to compel the departure of the Hindus is especially referred to as a matter for congratulation.

We are not now finding fault with the calling in of the cruiser Rainbow. The Hindus had to be convinced that they would not be allowed admission to Canada and that they could not indefinitely remain in our harbor. As they would not go voluntarily compulsion was apparently necessary. But we should not forget that it was owing to the mismanagement of the whole matter by the government at Ottawa that compulsion became necessary. Every encouragement was given the Hindus to hope that they would finally be allowed to land, and it was only after public opinion had made itself felt that decided steps were taken to order them away. Then events occurred quickly and force became unavoidable.

How differently the entire incident would have been handled under an intelligent administration. In the first place the enquiry sent from Hongkong would have been answered and the Hindus would have been assured in unmistakeable terms that their admission to Canada was impossible. Had they not been deterred by that official intelligence they would have been met at every step after their arrival with obstacles to their advance, and in the meantime,

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Sir Wilfrid Laurier would never have called upon the navy as Sir Robert Borden did and there would have been no fear of trouble in India as a consequence of the refusal to admit the Komagata's passengers into Canada. Those who are afraid of what may be the result in India, and Mr. Stevens appears to be one of them, would not have to calculate on the inability of these deported Hindus to get back to their native land in time to cause trouble.

As far as the immigration authorities here are concerned, they deserve the highest credit for the way in which they acted throughout and they would have handled the matter better than it was handled had Mr. Stevens not interfered with them. The city police, too, and the militia performed the duty they were called upon to discharge in a manner that they had no reason to be ashamed of. All the bungling lies at the door of the government which Mr. Stevens represented, and it was certainly very sorry bungling at the best.