

81. W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory

San Francisco, Cal. ^{tonna,} ~~Oct.~~ ^{October,} 13, 11

W.W. Cory, Esq., C.M.G.
Deputy Minister of the Interior,
Ottawa, Canada.

Sir:

I left Seattle on the 6th instant on the S.S. President, and arrived in San Francisco about 8 p.m. of the 8th. The following morning I took up the investigation regarding Dass and visited the United States Immigration Offices on Angel Island. I was in possession of a letter of introduction to Mr. Samuel Backus, the Commissioner of Immigration at this port, from Mr. Ellis de Breuler, United States Commissioner at Seattle. Mr. Backus introduced me to Mr. H. Edsell, the assistant Commissioner at this port, and through the latter I became acquainted with Inspector Ainsworth of his staff. This gentleman, so far as I can see, is the only one of this office who is fully conversant with the Hindu situation, and his knowledge of the matter is certainly surprising.

I spent the day from 11 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. in his company, discussing Hindu matters, and from the insight that he has given me of Hindu affairs I am compelled to consider the situation from a more serious light than I have ever done, and this fact was impressed upon me by Mr. Ainsworth, who appeared surprised and expressed astonishment that the British Government had never taken cognizance of the situation

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created at this point by Hindu students attending the university and other educational institutions adjacent to this city.

From Mr. Ainsworth's information, it would appear that the State of California has been the objective of Hindu immigration ever since Canada amended her immigration act in 1908, and that the influx of these people was enormous until recently, when the medical officers of the United States Immigration Department discovered that the majority of the Hindus coming to this country were afflicted with the hookworm disease. Coupled with this were the efforts of the Asiatic Exclusion League, and a lengthy inquiry by the United States Government into the administration of the Immigration Act by the officers at this port. As a result of the investigation, certain officers were removed and transferred.

Finding that the tide of Hindu immigration had been practically checked, and that new arrivals were subjected to the severest of both medical and physical examinations (resulting in the rejection of more than 90 per cent of the applicants) the Hindu societies of this city took up the cause of their compatriots, and wherever possible resorted to the courts and appealed to the Department of Commerce and Labor at Washington, D.C. Prominent among the Hindus in this movement were, Tarak Nath Dass, Teja Singh and Suren N. Bose, who subjected the local

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immigration officers to a deal of trouble and annoyance whenever a boat arrived at this port with Hindus, giving the applicants information on points which they considered would enable them to pass the immigration restrictions and generally assisting them with funds, etc.

In my report of the 26th ultimo reference was made to the mass meeting in Vancouver regarding Bhag Singh and Bulwant Singh. I will now give you the full particulars of this case. This party, with eighteen other Hindus, including men, women and children, arrived at the port of San Francisco on the 24th of August, 1911.

Three, in particular, of the men or male members of this Hindu party were former residents of Canada, having migrated to that country about six years ago, establishing a domicile of about three years, and perhaps a year and a half in the United States. These men left Canada about a year and six months ago for the express purpose of returning with their wives and children, as also the wives and children of other Hindu residents in the United States and Canada. They started on their return trip about the month of February of this year. At Calcutta they were unable to secure transportation for their wives and children to Canada. As far as knowledge goes, they even went so far as to institute a suit against the transportation company for the purpose of compelling them to issue passage to Canada, to conform with the

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immigration laws in that country, which necessitate that immigrants intending to enter Canada come to a Canadian port by direct and continuous journey on transportation prepaid in Canada or purchased in the land of their birth or citizenship. This they were unable to do in Calcutta. The party proceeded to Hong Kong, where they applied to the agents of the transportation company for passage for the party to Vancouver. The agents of the company were willing to issue transportation to the returning members and families who had had previous residence in Canada, but not to the wives and children who were actually immigrants.

The non success of this move at Hong Kong resulted in their securing transportation on one of the Japanese lines, and they arrived at the port of San Francisco on the Tenyo Maru on the 24th of August of this year.

As is already known, they were rejected at this port, but the effort made by the prominent members of this colony resident in and around San Francisco, such as Teja Singh, Tarak Nath Dass, S.N. Bose, R.N. Puri and some prominent ladies resident in this city and Oakland, can only be known when the official records of the case are scrutinized.

As a result of this action on the part of the United States Immigration authorities, this question of permitting the landing of the wives and children of resident Hindus, both in the United States and

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Canada, has been widely agitated by the well educated of their class, and it is known that on the 24th of September of this year a large Hindu mass meeting took place in Vancouver, B.C., where a resolution was adopted to send delegates to the Government in Ottawa, with a view of obtaining, if possible, a relaxation of the laws affecting them in this country, so as to permit the wives and children of Hindu residents in Canada to join them.

Domicile can be claimed by returning Hindus to this country. What domicile actually consists of is a matter of the way the act is construed, and the only other way that these men can gain entrance to this country as returning residents is when they are citizens of the United States. There can be no refusal to any citizen of the United States returning to America, and if naturalization with regard to these people once gets through, there is no knowing when the end will be, for the simple reason that these are men that can never be trusted.

Immigration of these people to Canada has been practically stopped. The only entry they have to this continent is through the ports of the United States. But there the restrictions are now so severe that immigration of that nature has been brought to a minimum.

Failing to enter American ports of entry on the continent, when arriving direct from India or Hong Kong, the modus operandi adopted by these people is first to gain entry in the insular possessions of the

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United States, to-wit: Honolulu and the Philippine Islands. The Immigration Service have got on to this move from Honolulu, and have been aware of it for some time, but with regard to the Philippine Islands it has not reached any mature state. The immigration authorities, however, are aware of this new procedure.

Now, with regard to Dass and his doings on the Pacific Coast, from information I have been able to gather I learn that there are are several societies among the Hindus in this state, and composed of students attending the Berkeley University and other educational institutions adjacent to this city. Some of the prominent ladies of this city are members of a society called the Friends of Hindoostan, of which Tarak Nath Dass appears to be the President, and their office last year was at 454 Pacific Building, San Francisco. Application for incorporation of this society was filed about the 16th of September of last year, and the purpose, so far as I can learn, is to help the people of Hindoostan at home and abroad. The ladies closely associated with this movement are Mrs. Clara B. Walters of 2 Anza St., San Francisco; Mrs. E.B. Talbot, 483 Moss Ave., Oakland, and Mrs. L.F. Cleveland of Sebastopol.

Under the auspices of this society, Dass lectured before the California (Women's) Club in this city on or about the 20th of September, 1910. It is stated that he was invited to speak on Hindu

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philosophy, and that he addressed them to a certain extent on this matter, but rambled off to his pet subject, "British Rule in India," and denounced the Government of Great Britain in such language that Mrs. Jean Sinclair, the corresponding secretary of the club, objected to his language and hissed him. A Reverend Mr. Turner of Santa Rosa, who had addressed the club on the subject of New Zealand, also took objection to Dass and his attitude and language. During the hubub Mrs. Walters came to Dass's rescue and the meeting terminated forthwith.

Previous to this meeting, about the 29th of August, Dass lectured in Santa Rosa, Cal. under the auspices of the Theosophical Society of that city, and in very strong language denounced the British Government and its rule in India. What was stated by Dass at these two meetings is common knowledge, as the facts were to a great extent reported in the newspapers, copies of which I have tried to secure, but have not done so on account of the exorbitant price that the newspaper offices demand for them, to-wit a dollar and a half to two dollars apiece.

However, through the courtesy of the Asiatic Exclusion League, who have extensive clippings, I have been able to peruse the articles under reference. The papers in question, and the dates, I am commemorating below:

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San Francisco Call, 28/8/10

" Chronicle, 9/10/10

" 22/ 9/10

" 21/ 9/10

Examiner 21/ 9/10

" 25/ 9/10

" 17/ 9/10

Post 27/ 8/10

" 21/ 9/10

Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 30/8/10

Oakland Tribune, 28/8/10

I have tried to trace back as far as possible the origin of this anti British movement on the part of Hindu students, and from what I can find it appears that a man named Swami Ram was in this country about seven or eight years ago, now deceased. This man formed a society or association for the benefit of Hindu students coming to this country, and collected funds to help them through college. The objects of this association were widely circulated through India and Japan, and as a result a man named Giren Nath Mookerjee and several others came to America shortly after from Japan and India.

After the demise of Swami Ram, the matter of the association was

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left in the hands of a Dr. Heeber, now deceased, who looked after it for a short while until the funds ran out. Mookerjee took hold of this association after Dr. Heeber, and originated this anti British movement. Dass who migrated to Canada six years ago joined Mookerjee about a year after, and became his disciple. Finding that they were unable to run the association by themselves, they applied to a man named Swami Trigunatiti, Minister of the Hindu Temple at 2963 Webster St., in this city, and which is the headquarters of the Rama Krishna Mission, Belur Math, Calcutta, India. Swama Trigunatiti is the teacher of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco. He received these two men and accomodated them for a short time in a room in a basement of the temple, but when he became aware that they were agitators against the British Rule he turned them out, and said that his society would never be mixed up with any matter affecting the British Rule In India. Mookerjee and Dass then got together soem five or six other students and formed a society called the Samiti, which is considered the most secret among all the societies with Hindu affiliations.

Mookerjee and Dass did their utmost since then to bring Swami Trigunatiti into close touch with their propoganda, but he has refused in every instance, thus drawing down on him and his assistant, Swami Prakashananda, the wrath and dire condemnation of Dass's society.

G.N. Mookerjee, during his stay at the university, circulated pamphlets widely through India, Japan, China and other parts where there were Hindu students, advising them to come to this country, where the ideals of liberty and government were all that could be desired.

After graduating from the university this man returned to India, where he is still carrying on, although very secretly, his agitation against Britain, and is in correspondence with Dass and other students of the university who belong to the society of which Dass is now the head.

Mookerjee is said to be employed in one of the mills in Cawnpore, United Provinces, India.

The new members of this society, (which I must make clear is independent of the Friends of Hindoostan,) are T.N. Dass, S.N. Bose Sarangdhur Dass of Orrissa, India, G.D. Kumar, Luskar and a white man named J.B. de Gessen of Bandon, Oregon.

To give you an idea as to how closely connected Sarangdhur Dass and J.B. de Gessen are with Dass and his movement, I inclose you copies (Exhibits A and B) of two letters received by Swami Trigunatiti.

With respect to Luskar, I have not yet been able to know exactly how this man stands, but I have been informed that he has gone through

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a military institution in San Francisco to learn military tactics. At the present time I have not my report with me, but I think I drew your attention to this part of my information in 1910, and on my return to Vancouver I will be able to give you the date of my report.

I would point out that all the Hindu students in this state are not acting in concert with Dass, and quite a few of them have held aloof altogether from Dass and will have none of him.

Regarding Swami Trigunatiti of the Vedanta Society, I am quite assured that we at least have one loyal East Indian, with his assistant, in this city, and the attitude that this society has adopted with regard to agitation can well be seen from a copy of a letter from its head office in India to Swami Trigunatiti, which I exhibit as "C."

The delay with respect to this report, and what has hampered me to a certain extent, has been in the first case, that I am a stranger to this city and its environments; secondly this week has been crowded into holidays, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday being such. However, I am continuing my investigations and will get in better touch with things as soon as matters quiet down after the departure of President Taft, who is due to leave the city on Saturday.

I might add that I have conducted this investigation in as quiet a manner as possible, and kept myself away from newspaper men. The

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object of my telegram on Monday night was that in case I should have to see some officials of the United States Government, the credentials would be necessary to establish my status.

Your obedient servant,

Sd. W. C. Hoffmeyer