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WHITE CANADA

A JAPANESE VIEW OF CANADA'S ORIENTAL PROBLEM

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LIKE other British colonies, Canada regards its territory as closed to Oriental races. The watchword is "White Canada." That mystifying yet singularly appealing expression has been industriously exploited, especially by those affiliated with the labour unions on the Pacific Coast.

And yet Canada's treatment of Asiatic races cannot be said always to have been severe. True, it raises against the Orient a barrier as insurmountable as that erected in other exclusive countries, but those Asiatic immigrants who were allowed to enter the country in accord with the provisions of the immigration law Canada has as a rule treated with consideration and even leniency. She has extended to the Orientals the privilege of naturalization and even of securing homesteads. Even in British Columbia, the stronghold of the anti-Oriental agitation, no such discriminatory laws as have been proposed and enacted in California have been introduced in its Legislature. There the Japanese and Chinese are permitted to conduct business and cultivate land, not only unmolested, but enjoying all privileges enjoyed by British subjects in Canada. They can own land, both urban and rural, and in Provinces other than British Columbia they even enjoy voting privileges.

The question arises: "Why of all Provinces and Territories does British Columbia alone discriminate against the Orientals in the matter of franchise?" In the Yukon Territory there are about a hundred Japanese, most of whom are naturalized, while in the Provinces east of the Rockies what small number of Japanese there are have also sworn allegience to Canada. All these naturalized Japanese exercise the franchise just as though they were native Canadians. But in British Columbia the Japanese, though free to become Canadian subjects, are not allowed to cast a ballot. The reason for this discriminatory measure is not far to seek.

British Columbia does not issue fishing licence to aliens. When Japanese fishermen were brought into the Province they found it necessary to secure naturalization certificates in order to obtain fishing licence. Thus it came to pass that almost ninety per cent. of the naturalized Japanese in British Columbia are fishermen, many of whom are uneducated, if not illiterate. The wisdom of naturalizing such immigrants is open to question, but in as much as the Province had to rely upon them for the exploitation of one of its most important economic resources, it had to give them naturalization certificates. Naturalization in such circumstances means little more than the granting of fishing privilege. It does not necessarily mean that the recipients of citizenship certificates are ready to become

faithful subjects of the Empire, nor that they intend to reside permanently in Canada. Not a few of such Japanese do not see much difference between the fishing licence and the naturalization paper.

Under such circumstances we can fully understand, and even sympathize with, British Columbia when it over-rode the Dominion law and deprived naturalized Japanese within its jurisdiction of the right of casting the ballot. Certainly those Japanese fishermen who are not *bona fide* citizens of the Dominion have no moral right to protest against this Provincial measure.

And yet the fact remains that this discrimination is in obvious contravention of the naturalization law of the Dominion. Besides, it wrongs those Japanese who have obtained naturalization certificates in good faith, and are to all intents and purposes desirous of remaining loyal subjects of the British Empire. It is estimated that up to 1911 some 3,091 fishermen were naturalized. Granting that some of these men have since returned to their native country or passed into the unknown shores, there must still be more than 2,000 naturalized Japanese engaged in fishery. It would be unjust to presume that all of these fishermen are ignorant and otherwise unqualified to vote, for my personal observations lead me to believe that some of them are intelligent and are sincerely desirous of swearing allegiance to their adopted country. Moreover, there are in British Columbia some five hundred naturalized Japanese who are not fishermen, but who are, in intelligence and moral character, the equal of the average immigrant from any European country. The interest and welfare of this class of Japanese it would be the duty of British Columbia and Canada to safeguard, especially since the naturalization law obviously means to extend the franchise to all naturalized aliens.

At the same time British Columbia has the right to prevent the injection of undesirable elements into its body politic. How, then, can the Province find the way out of this dilemma? To me the way is clear. Issue fishing licence quite independently of naturalization paper; in other words, extend fishing privilege to aliens, so that no ignorant fisherman, whether Oriental or European, need be naturalized simply because he is needed for the perpetuation of the salmon industry. This is the policy adopted by most States in the United States. California, for instance, issues fishing licence to any alien upon the payment of an annual fee of $10. I do not see why British Columbia cannot adopt a similar policy. On the other hand, all aliens, naturalized in conformity to the laws of the Dominion, should be allowed to enjoy all privileges, civil and political, enjoyed by the citizens of Canada. This British Columbia can afford to do, once she has found the way to secure labour for the promotion of the salmon industry without at the same time admitting ignorant fishermen into citizenship.

British Columbia's peculiar manner of dealing with the naturalization question naturally created a grievance among those Japanese who secured citizenship certificates in good faith. A few years ago these Japanese sought redress through legal channels. In the Provincial courts their claim was upheld, but the Privy Council at London, to which the Province carried the case, virtually overruled the decision of the courts by declaring that the franchise can be exercised by naturalized foreigners only when the Provincial Government recognizes their fitness as voters. From the purely legal point of view there is still room for the Japanese to urge their contention, but the real remedy—a remedy satisfactory to both parties—should be found, I believe, on the line suggested in the foregoing passages.

At present Canada has within its boundaries 12,000 Japanese, as against

40,000 Chinese. The cry of "White Canada" was first raised in the eighties against the Chinese. In 1885 the first anti-Chinese law was passed, imposing upon each incoming Chinese a poll tax of $50, and permitting the steamers to bring only one Chinese immigrant per each ton of the capacity of each vessel. In 1901 the poll tax was raised to $100, and in 1904 to $500; yet during the past several years Chinese have been coming in in much larger numbers than Japanese.

The restriction of Japanese immigration follows a line totally different from that followed in dealing with Chinese immigration. The Japanese are not required to pay any poll tax which is not imposed upon European immigrants. In accord with the provisons of the general immigration law they must possess upon their arrival in Canada at least $25 during the eight months from March to October, and from November to February, when demand for labour becomes less, at least $50. But there is between Canada and Japan, as between the United States and the Mikado's Empire, a sort of "gentleman's agreement." This understanding, entered into in 1908, admits Japanese only of the following classes:

1. Settled agriculturists.
2. Parents, wives, and children of resident Japanese.
3. Those coming back to Canada to resume their residence or business.

This agreement was the immediate outcome of the unscrupulous act of some self-seeking Japanese and Canadians who brought Japanese from Hawaiian plantations by the shipload. Prior to 1907 the Japanese Government of its own accord restricted the emigration of its subjects to Canada, and thus prevented the immigration question from interfering with the cordial relations existing between Canada and Japan. But in that year a body of Japanese in Vancouver, in complicity with their Canadian associates, broached the idea of importing Japanese labourers in Hawaii in order to supply the unprecedented demand for labour created by the general prosperity then prevailing in Canada and the United States. For this specific purpose these men chartered a steamer and began importing Japanese on a large scale. The result was that during the twelve months from July 1, 1907, to June 30, 1908, there were 7,601 Japanese immigrants, showing an increase of 5,500 as compared with the figures for the preceding year.

This sudden influx of Japanese labourers naturally aroused among the labouring class a hostile feeling against the Japanese. About this time the Exclusion League of San Francisco, having established a branch office in Seattle, was striving to extend its influence to British Columbia. Fowler, the man in charge of the Seattle office of the League, came to Vancouver, instructed by his chief, O. A. Tveitmoe, to fan the anti-Japanese sentiment alrealy stirred up by the influx of Hawaiian Japanese. The result was the Vancouver riot of September 7th, 1907. On the evening of that day several hundred labourers marched through Powell Street to demonstrate their hostility against the Japanese. On the whole, these men were orderly and apparently had no intention to resort to violence. But some of them, under influence of liquor, uttered vile epithets and attacked some Japanese, and broke the windows of a few Japanese stores. The Japanese readily accepted the challenge, and the scene that followed was one of violence and disorder. When the scuffle ended several men of each group were seriously wounded.

Alarmed by this outbreak, the Dominion authorities sent special commissoners to Japan to negotiate an agreement for the restriction of Japanese immigration. The result was an exclusion agreement much of the same nature as that between Japan and the United States. Before 1907 Japanese immigration to Canada was

not very large. In 1904 there were only 354 immigrants, in 1905 1,922, and in 1906 2,042. In 1907, as we have already noted, the figures suddenly increased to 7,601. Then came the immigration convention, as the result of which Japanese immigration suddenly declined to 495. In 1909 it continued to decline, the figures for the year being 271. In 1910 there were 437 Japanese immigrants, and in 1911, 765. It must be borne in mind that the majority of Japanese immigrants now seeking Canadian shores are not fresh immigrants, but those who were in Canada before and are coming back to resume their residence or business there. In the following table we observe that Japanese immigration since the conclusion of the "gentleman's agreement" is much smaller than Chinese immigration:

Year.	Japanese.	Chinese.
1908-1909	495	1,887
1909-1910	271	2,156
1910-1911	437	5,278
1911-1912	765	6,247

Not only has "White Canada" erected a barrier against the Chinese and Japanese, but it is even more strictly excluding the Hindus, who are, like the Canadians themselves, the subjects of His Britannic Majesty. Up to 1905 Hindu immigration to Canada was a negligible quantity, but in the year following there are 2,124 immigrants from East India, and in 1907, 2,623. Then Canada took immediate steps to check the further influx of Hindus, as the result of which there were only six immigrants in 1908. Since that year the figures have remained almost stationary, the number for 1911 being only three.

The treatment accorded the Hindus in Canada is much the same as that given them in the United States. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the East Indians are in their religious practices, customs, and appearance, far more exotic than the Japanese, and even the Chinese. Even as the Chinese used to regard the queue as the inalienable appendange to the head, so the Hindu clings to the turban almost with reverence, and is furthermore wedded to peculiar ideas and habits born of the religious conceptions and practices of his native country. Such ideas and habits, when better understood, may be found harmless and unobjectionable, but as yet they are a puzzle to the Occidentals, and in consequence the cause of aversion and repugnance. In the United States, and especially on the Pacific Coast, I saw Hindu immigrants, unable to secure a lodging, sleep in deserted, ramshackle buildings and unoccupied barns. It is probably much the same story in British Columbia.

In Canada the Hindus are not only refused the franchise, but are forbidden to bring their wives or children with them and establish family relations. At one time the Canadian Government went so far as to form a scheme for the wholesale deportation of East Indians to Honduras. The scheme was not carried out, as the Hindus refused to go, but the Parliament at Ottawa adopted in 1911 an immigration law providing a clause which made it virtually impossible for the Hindus to enter the Dominion. That clause provides that no 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 prepaid in Canada" shall be admitted. Innocent on the face of it, the clause is to all intents and purposes directed against the Hindus, who consider it "cruel, vexatious and tricky." To understand the Hindu point of view one need only recall that there is no direct steamship service between Canada and East India, and that no steamship companies in India will issue through tickets to Canada. This discriminatory measure has been the cause of bitter complaint on the part of the Hindus. "The Canadian Immigration Law," says a Hindu

writer, "has laid a clearly defined line between His Majesty's subjects of Canada and that of India, in the face of the bold and clear proclamation of our late Queen Victoria. It is a puzzling riddle to be solved that in India we are British subjects, in England we are British subjects, but in Canada, to legalize our British citizenship right, we have to secure another deed to that effect."

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Canada is "white." Oriental immigration as compared with that from Europe is insignificant. In the fiscal year 1911-1912 immigrants to Canada totalled 354,237, of whom only 1,845 were Orientals—6,247 Chinese, 765 Japanese, and three Hindus. And yet there are plenty of alarmists trying to conjure up the phantom of an Oriental domination. Through the activities of such alarmists various anti-Oriental bills have been occasionally introduced in the Legislature, both Dominion and Provincial. Some of such bills are no doubt put forward for the purpose of wooing the labour vote and need not be taken at their face value. The Province of Saskatchewan, for instance, adopted two years ago a law prohibiting the Orientals, keeping stores and amusement places, from employing white women.

And yet when I was travelling in that Province last year I came across in the City of Moose Jaw two Japanese young men operating a prosperous restaurant where all waitresses were Canadians of English or French descent. I found the establishment one of the best restaurants in the city, and patronized by the leading business men and the best classes of residents. The city authorities were fully informed of the enactment of the new law with regard to the employment of white women by Orientals, but they could see no sense in applying such a law to a respectable Japanese restaurant. Its proprietors, educated, intelligent men, were themselves married to Canadian women of respectable families, and were among the best citizens of the city. Why molest their legitimate business simply because some politicians wanted to curry favour with a radical segment of the labouring class? So these Japanese were permitted to conduct their restaurant as if the employment law had never been passed. Yet the existence of such a law was highly repugnant to the Japanese, and it was but natural that the Japanese Consul at Vancouver requested the authorities of Saskatchewan to exempt the Japanese from the scope of this law. The Provincial Government graciously responded to the request, and the Japanese merchants and business men are no longer subject to that discriminatory law. So far as other Oriental peoples are concerned, that law still remains valid.

The story of the Japanese restaurant-keepers in Moose Jaw is but one of many instances of the fact that the Japanese are possessed of essential qualities to make good citizens. A few years ago these Japanese donated $500 to the Young Men's Christian Association of Moose Jaw, and find staunchest supporters among the religious workers of the city. In Vancouver and Victoria there are a number of public-spirited, intelligent Japanese, who should be allowed, as their brothers in other parts of Canada, to exercise the voting privilege, as do other Canadian citizens.

The principle represented by the catchword "White Canada" is not necessarily a wrong one, but Canada would do well to reflect that all "whites" are not "good whites." Moreover, while Canada is admitting the Chinese by the thousand, it is barring out the subjects of the most advanced and enlightened country in the Orient, an allay of the British Empire. Again, in the fiscal year 1911-1912, Canada admitted South and Eastern European immigrants as follows:

Bulgarians	3,295
Hebrews	5,322
Poles	5,060
Russians	9,805
Turks	632
Greeks	693
Italians	7,590
Roumanians	793
Servians	209
Syrians	144

In the United States many authorities on the immigration question are beginning to realize the danger of admitting without restriction immigrants of the races represented in the above table. If Canada's enormous natural resources cannot be developed without recourse to immigrants it would seem the part of wisdom on her part to conceive her laws so as to receive only desirable immigrants, both from Europe and Asia.

It is much to be hoped that Canada and the British Empire will not permit the shibboleth of "White Canada" to be exploited by those pseudo-publicists and self-styled patriots who have their own axes to grind. It is just such publicists and patriots who constantly raise the hysterical cry of "Japanese domination." They say that the Japanese have placed in their political programme "the occupation of British Columbia," when in reality, Japanese immigrants are merely peace-loving, law-abiding, unobtrusive souls, desirous only of improving their lot in life in this new world of opportunity. They say that the Japanese have "settled down in British Columbia in solid phalanxes of 10,000 or more at a time and place," when the entire Japanese population in Canada does not exceed 14,000, of whom less than 4,000 are in Vancouver.

All such alarmist notes are sounded chiefly, if not merely, for the purpose of creating a powerful Pacific fleet of warships for the Dominion. One can well understand why so many of the politicians of British Columbia are eager to conjure up the bogey of Japanese domination, when one recalls that men-of-war are far more liberal customers of coast-wise cities even than men-of-commerce.

To indicate the extent of patronage which a naval fleet bestows upon a seaport city, let me cite the case of San Francisco. In 1912 $5,000,000 was expended in the City of the Golden Gate by the Commissary for Supplies. In the fiscal year 1913 the expenditure increased to $8,000,000. As a writer in a recent military journal states, "ninety cents out of every dollar of this not inconsiderable sum will swell the bank accounts of San Francisco merchants, civilians, mechanics, labourers, and others to whom the United States pays living expenses." Is it any wonder that Vancouver craves "defence"? It wants to see Dreadnoughts frequent its harbour not because of any fear of Oriental invasion, but because the navy is notoriously "a good spender."