HINDUSTANI WORKERS
ON THE PACIFIC COAST

By
Rajani Kanta Das, M. Sc., Ph. D.
Lecturer in Economics, New York University
Former Special Agent, Department of Labor,
United States Government.

1923

WALTER DE GRUYTER & Co.
VORMALS G. J. GÖSCHEN'SCHE VERLAGSHANDLUNG —
J. GUTTENTAG, VERLAGSBÜCHERHANDLUNG — GEORG
REIMER — KARL J. TRÜBNER — VEIT & COMP.
// BERLIN and LEIPZIG //
By the same author

I. Factory Labor in India
   A critical and analytical study in the rise, growth, conditions and problems of the factory workers in India.

II. Factory Legislation in India
   With an introduction by Dr. John R. Commons, Professor of Economics, University of Wisconsin.
   A historical and analytical study in the legislative institution relating to Indian factories with special reference to the social, political and economical forces which led to its origin and growth and influenced its nature and function.

III. The Labor Movement in India
   A critical and analytical study in the working class movement in India with special reference to its origin, development, nature and significance.

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To the Memory of
GOBINDA CHANDRA DAS
Late Vakil, Judge's Court,
Dacca India.
PREFACE.

A good deal has been said and written by the Americans and Canadians about the “Hindus” or Hindustanees on the Pacific Coast. As most of the speeches and writings were the outcome of the agitation against Hindustani immigration, they were generally prejudiced and erroneous. To find out the truth about the social and economic conditions of these Hindustanees had for several years been the intention of the writer. But the proper facilities for the study were not available until the Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, became interested in the subject.

The purpose of this study is not, however, the advocacy of Hindustani immigration. There exists in America a good deal of superstition and prejudice against Asian and Eastern European races and nationalities, some of which have migrated into America. The origin of such superstition and prejudice lies in ignorance. Although the Hindustanees in America are insignificant in number, they represent a great nation. The interpretation of their life to the American people is one of the objects of this study.

There is still another important object which has prompted the writer to this undertaking. Long before his arrival in America, he had been interested in social movements in India. With her immense resources and vast population as well as the spiritual and intellectual wealth of Hindu and Mohammedan civilisations, to which has been added Western culture, India stands today on the threshold of a new epoch and has all the possibilities of building up a new and great civilisation. The greatest part of the material for the upbuilding of this civilisation will come from the wants, requirements, ideals and aspirations of the masses, which have remained up to this time inert and passive. The Hindustanees on the Pacific Coast offered a splendid opportunity for the study of their latent faculties as compared with those of the other people and for the ascertainment of their ability to respond to the new social, political and economic conditions.
The writer does not claim anything new in the subject-matter or methodology. In fact, much more thorough studies have been made on similar subjects. But in most of the studies, the workers have been regarded as a bundle of material wants rather than a group of moral and intellectual beings. If the new democracy for which idealists are looking forward is ever achieved, it will be done not only by equalising opportunities in political and industrial fields, but also by establishing the fact that the life of the working classes is pervaded by the same spiritual and intellectual ideals which are found among the so-called upper classes. The writer did not fully accomplish what he aimed at. The unit of the study was too small and the time at his disposal was too short. Moreover, the investigation was carried on under the auspices of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the scope of which is restricted to the collection of industrial statistics rather than the interpretation of social facts. The writer has nevertheless attempted to make a comprehensive survey of a group life including both social and economic conditions as well as spiritual and intellectual ideals.

In presenting this treatise to the public, the writer wishes to express his deep gratitude to Mr. Ethelbert Stewart, Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, whose kind interest made this study possible. He is thankful to Mrs. Margaret Gadsby of the same Bureau and Mr. S. N. Kar, M. A., of New York for kindly reading the manuscript and offering valuable criticisms. He also takes this occasion to thank the men and women in the United States and Canada, who, through reports, statements, interviews and many other ways, helped him complete the investigation.

New York, May 15, 1922.

Bajani Kanta Das.
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FOREWORD.

The study in the social and economic conditions of the Hindustanees\(^1\) on the Pacific Coast was undertaken by the writer as special agent of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor, United States Government, in 1921-22. The present treatise has been based on the report made to the Bureau.

The writer spent several months in the field, beginning the investigation in Southern California, and extending it to British Columbia. During the study, El Centro, Fresno, Stockton, Sacramento and San Francisco in California, Portland in Oregon, Seattle in Washington, and Victoria and Vancouver in British Columbia were made headquarters, and the investigation was carried on within a 100 mile radius of these centers. The writer interviewed over 200 Hindustanees and about as many Americans and Canadians, many of whom gave written statements. Besides he met over 400 Hindustanees in different group activities. Several questionnaires were prepared for specific information.

The subject-matter of the study was divided into the following groups: — First, representative Hindustani workers and their leaders on the Pacific Coast. Second, the group life of the Hindustanees in fields, factories and residences. Third, the attitude of the Americans and Canadians, both official and non-official, who came in contact with them either directly or indirectly. Fourth, the second-hand material related to them, such as reports, pamphlets, and articles. Except in the chapter on immigration and in a few places here and there, all the material used in the treatise was gathered by personal investigation.

\(^1\) The people of India are generally known as "Hindus" in America and Canada. But the word means in India only those who believe in Hindu religion. The word "Hindustanees" has been used in this treatise to include all classes of people in India irrespective of their religion. Hindustani means related to Hindustan or India.
CHAPTER I.

IMMIGRATION.

1. Conditions at Home.

By far the majority of the Hindustanees on the Pacific Coast came from the districts of Hoshiarpur, Jellundar, Amritsar, Lahore, Ludhiana and Feerozepore of the Punjab. Dispersed among them here and there are to be found a few men from such other parts of India as Gujrat, Oudh and Bengal.

Practically all of these Hindustanees were born in the rural districts of India and are agriculturalists by occupation. Some of them were recruited by the British Indian Government for work either in the army or in the police force and were sent abroad for service. But the majority of them had remained in the country and were occupied with farming before their coming to America. Only a few of them were wage-earners.

The size of the farms which most of them owned, together with other members of their family, varied from 30 to 80 acres. The land was fertile but the methods of farming were rather primitive. The implements used were simple and for the most part antequated. Among the crops they raised, the following were most important: wheat, corn, sugar-cane, barley, gram, peas, alfalfa, cotton, cantaloup and water-melon.

2. Arrival in Canada.

The Hindustanees who first came to Canada were soldiers or policemen in the service of the British Government at Shanghai, Hong Kong and other parts of the Far
East. During the Boxer War they came into contact with men of other nations and realized the importance of their service in the international struggle. Travelling abroad and crossing the ocean fostered in them a spirit of wanderlust and either at the time of their retirement from the service or while on leave of absence, some of them crossed the Pacific to Canada.

Besides these first arrivals, a number of the Sikhs, who, after the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee in Great Britain in 1897, travelled through Canada, realized the great opportunities offered by that country for industrial success. Some of them remained in the country, while others carried with them the message to their countrymen in India.

The number of both of these groups of the Hindustanees who arrived in Canada was very small. When their relatives and neighbors came to learn of their success, however small it might have been in the beginning, they began to come to Canada on a large scale. It was in 1905 that a considerable number of them arrived in Canada as immigrants and they were followed by still larger and larger groups in the following three years as shown below:

Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>2124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>2623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5179</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After 1908 a new policy was adopted by the Canadian Government by which the immigration of the Hindustanees was practically stopped as shown below:

1 Canada, Report of the Royal Commission, 1908, p. 75.
IMMIGRATION

Table II

Hindustani Immigration into Canada.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 118

It is thus seen from the above tables (I and II) that while 5179 Hindustanees reached the shores of Canada in the first four years, the number of such arrivals amounted only to 118 during the following twelve years from 1909 to 1920.

During practically the same period, a large number of them were also rejected at the Canadian ports as shown below:*

Table III

East Indian Immigrants Debarred from Entering Canada.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Canada, Rept. of the Sup. of Immigration for 1913-14, p. 76.
It is thus seen from Table III that about 390 Hindustanees were rejected at the Canadian ports from the year 1906 to 1914.

During the same period several of them were also deported after admission into Canada. In the six years from 1908-09 to 1913-14, the number of those deported from Canada amounted to 29 as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1908-09</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909-10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table IV**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East Indians Deported from Canada.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>9 months only.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Causes.

The fundamental cause of the immigration of the Hindustanees into Canada was economic. Canada, especially British Columbia, with its rich natural resources and sparse population offered a great opportunity to the people of India where the population is dense, the resources comparatively rare, and the wages very low. Thus while a Hindustanee can earn only ten or fifteen cents a day in India, in Canada he can earn from two to five dollars a day. As to how the Hindustanees came to know of these economic opportunities in a distant country, there has been a good deal of controversy.

*9 months only.*