

CANADA'S PLAN OF AVERTING THE YELLOW PERIL

SIR WILFRID LAURIER in his capacity of Prime Minister of Canada has made many notable addresses; but it is doubtful if he ever made a more convincing one than that delivered by him on the occasion of his last visit to Vancouver, when he dealt with the subject of Asiatic immigration. Perhaps, says *Canadian Life and Resources*, not since the early years of British Columbia's history as a member of the Canadian Confederation, when the delay in building the Canadian Pacific Railway threatened to break the newly formed ties uniting the people of the Pacific Coast with those of Eastern Canada, had there arisen in that Province a question so charged with the possibilities of serious trouble. Sir Wilfrid faced the problem squarely, and discussed it frankly and fully. There were several interests to be considered: the interests of the people on the Coast; those of Canada as a whole; and, above all, the interests of the Empire. The Prime Minister went on to say:

Looking to the fact that the interest of Britain is worth while, it should be our paramount consideration as Canadian and British subjects to preserve friendly relations between Great Britain and the Asiatics. To maintain these good relations, immigration must be controlled, checked and kept within reasonable bounds. . . . For countless generations the nations of Asia had been ground down by despotism and were in a condition of penury and dejection as to food, garment and lodging. Frugality became sordidness and the Oriental was able to work on the fraction of the wage necessary to maintain a white man in respectability. To admit the Oriental indiscriminately under such circumstances would be to create an economic disturbance fraught with evil consequences.

Sir Wilfrid reminded his audience that under the government of the late Sir John Macdonald a head-tax of \$100 was put on the Chinese. The present government had

YELLOW PERIL

been asked to increase this to \$500 and to place the same amount on the Japanese. With the first proposition he had agreed. No national or imperial relations were involved. With the Japanese it was different. Close and friendly relations existed between them and the government of King George. The Premier had therefore appealed to the Japanese consul not to force Canada to repel his people, and had suggested that the Japanese Government control the matter itself.

The result was an engagement to limit immigration to 400 per year, which operated from 1900 to 1907. Then the government of Japan turned a new leaf, adopting many British institutions. Canada became a party to the commercial treaty with Japan. In 1907 there was a sudden influx of Japanese immigration. It was charged that the treaty had over-riden the agreement. Hon. Mr. Lemieux was despatched to Tokyo, and was able to secure the re-enactment of the immigration restriction. This undertaking had been scrupulously observed to the present time.

Now a new problem had been presented in a new immigration—this time from the British country of India. Hindoos were employed in cement works and elsewhere on the Pacific Coast. To quote Sir Wilfrid further:

These men could not be turned back ignominiously by a man who prides himself on being a British subject. True, the color of their skin was not the same, but they were British subjects, many wearing uniforms and fighting British battles. Hon. Mackenzie King was sent to Calcutta. His mission was confidential, but since that time not one other man had come from India.

Now, frankly, which is the better method? Why is not my vision as good as the vision of those men who attacked me? . . . California offered to humble the Japanese and Chinese residents, and the President of the United States had to go down on his knees and beg the local authorities to change their tactics.

Britain adopted a different method.