

The Curse of Chinese Immigration: What It Has Done for Other Countries and What It Is Doing for Canada

In a large measure the people of eastern Canada are blind to the grave menace that Chinese immigration is to the interests of the country. The action of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress in asking the Dominion Parliament to raise the tax on Chinamen entering Canada from \$50 to \$500 is a step in the right direction. A great deal of false sympathy is expended on behalf of John [a man from China] by people who have never investigated the question or asked why organized labor seeks to prevent the unrestricted immigration of Chinamen. We are assured that if we wish to make a Christian of John we should welcome him with outstretched arms and try to do him good; but we candidly confess, without any apology, if those are the only terms on which he can be Christianized he had better remain a heathen, for a little while longer at any rate.

Now, as a matter of fact, every country that has suffered through the immigration of the Mongolian race has had sooner or later to take active steps to combat the evil ... We have it on the authority of a prominent clergyman, who made a study of the question as it affected San Francisco, that for every Chinaman converted to Christianity in that city he was confident that, at a very low estimate, twenty Americans went to hell. Children in that city, to his personal knowledge, were in hospitals through the contraction of loathsome vices and diseases as a direct result of their contact with Chinamen. In the Chinese quarters of the city the inhabitants are herded like rats, an ordinary room in many cases having as many as two additional floors placed in it so as to make three with not space for a man to stand upright; and here, packed like sardines in a box, the Chinaman lives, works, eats and sleeps. He can subsist on a few cents a day; and this is the kind of competition that self-respecting white labor is asked to meet.

As more directly affecting Canadians we can state that at the present times the Chinese are increasing in British Columbia to an alarming extent, and they are bringing with them the same vices that have worked such dire effects in San Francisco. They are entering all avenues of trade and are slowly, but surely, displacing white labor on every hand; they are in the mines and canneries, and, in fact, it is hard to find an avocation that sooner or later they do not enter. Even the clergymen in British Columbia are standing shoulder to shoulder with organized labor, as indeed do all classes of the community; for there, where the evil is recognized, no maudlin sentimentality or false sympathy is wasted.

It is not only British Columbia that is threatened but the whole Dominion. Mr. Chinaman does not stand still; once he has secured a footing he gradually works his way, and, once established, it is next to impossible to get rid of him. During the last year the increase of the Chinese in Winnipeg, Manitoba, was over 25 per cent, and even there people are beginning to realize the danger. Here in London, and in points further east, we have them, and though as yet in no great

numbers they are increasing. So far they have confined themselves to the laundry business; this is always the first step, but, inevitable as fate, when the time comes they will invade other fields, and when too late the people of the east will realize that the people of the western provinces should have had their support before the evil had gained too great a footing. Australia has had to grapple with this question and they have already done what the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress has asked the Dominion Parliament to do.

Wherever free and slave labor has come into competition, free labor has always inevitably been forced to the wall. Living as he does under the most degrading conditions, subsisting on the outlay of a few cents a day, the Chinaman is in a position to take a situation for a pittance that no self-respecting white man could live on, leave alone support a family. The Chinaman has no desire to be raised to a higher position or plane of life; he has no intention of becoming a citizen; on a miserable pittance he can live and accumulate what will be a fortune when he returns to China. It is because of this that the people of the Pacific province are crying out for relief. It is for this that the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress has asked for an increase of the tax. Canadians cannot, at this time, afford to waste sympathy where it is not needed. Organized labor has been actuated by no narrow or contracted spirit, it has no fight with the Chinaman because he is a Chinaman or foreigner but because of the grave menace which his presence is to the welfare of the country. Shall we stand idly by and see free labor displaced by slave labor, because slave labor means a larger profit for those who employ the Chinese; or shall we insist that Canadian labor shall be protected and stem this tide that threatens such dire calamities to the working classes. Agitate this question everywhere until the government shall be compelled to act and stem the tide of undesirable Mongolian immigration.

We will have more to say on this matter in the future for we believe that if not resolutely encountered now it will have to be faced when it has grown to more alarming proportions. Now is the time to crush the danger, and it cannot be undertaken a moment too soon.

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