

This volume gives the results of many different visits by the author to the Pacific, while dealing with the Indian problem in that area. On three occasions he visited Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand on behalf of the Indians who had emigrated to Fiji under the intolerable conditions of indentured labour. He explains the marvellous recovery which they have made since that effete labour system was abolished. He discusses the relation of Australia and New Zealand, both to the Indian problem in Fiji and also to India itself. In dealing with this subject he comments on the "White Australia" policy, and suggests some important modifications.

He then surveys the Indian dispersion in the North Pacific with which he has become familiar through many visits. There is much new material concerning India's close relation to China and Japan, which will be of deep interest to the Western reader.

In the end, he deals with the Indian migration from the Punjab to British Columbia, which resulted in the Komagata Maru incident. He pictures India, in the future, as having a far larger share in the Pacific, both politically and commercially, than appears likely at the present time.

INDIA AND THE PACIFIC

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TO MY FRIEND
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
PRESIDENT
ALL INDIA NATIONAL CONGRESS

P R E F A C E

ON two previous occasions, in 1915 and 1917, I had been asked by the Indian leaders to go out to Fiji, in the centre of the South Pacific, to enquire into the conditions of Indian indentured labour recruited for those islands. My friend, Mr. W. W. Pearson, accompanied me on the former of these two visits and we wrote a joint report, on our return, strongly condemning the indenture system as leading inevitably to moral degradation.

On my second visit I was obliged to travel alone and made a stay in the South Pacific of more than six months. The state of things under indenture was much worse than before, and it became quite clear that the whole system ought to be abolished as soon as possible. This was finally accomplished on January 1, 1920, when those still under indenture were at last set free. That date was a red-letter day in the history of Indian labour. For not only in Fiji, but in all the British colonies, Indian indenture was abolished. The system had become almost world-wide, and its abolition was world-wide also.

All this took place nearly twenty years ago, and in one sense it is past history. On the other hand, the after-effects of a long-established practice of this kind, which had produced evil results, cannot be cleared up in a day.

Last year, 1936, I was requested by the Indian community in Fiji to go out once more on an entirely different errand. For after the Indian labourers had been set free from indenture and the system had been brought to an end, citizen rights, on an education and

Appendix B

TAGORE AND CHINA

THE father of Rabindranath Tagore, called Maharshi because of his saintly character, took a profound interest in China and made a voyage to that country when it was a rare thing for an Indian who was a Brahmin to take such a step. Rabindranath Tagore followed in his father's footsteps and visited China on two occasions. He pleaded for a renewal of the ancient cultural friendship between China and his own country. His words did not fall on deaf ears. Quite recently, as a result of an exchange of visits and a long correspondence, the Chinese educated classes have raised a large subscription and have themselves built a Hall of Chinese Learning in the midst of the Poet's Asram at Santiniketan. A very large library of Chinese books is attached to the Hall, and a Professor of Chinese Literature is now a part of the Staff of the University. Chinese students come over to India in order to learn Sanskrit, and a plan has been formed whereby Indian students may be enabled to go for study to China. To Tagore himself this has been a profound satisfaction, and at the opening ceremony he sent his thanks and good wishes to the Chinese nation. The importance of this new development has been recognized all over India.

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