

CONTRACT LABOR.

Indian Hop Pickers Cannot Come Here.

PORT TOWNSEND, Aug. 24—The government is determined to prevent alien labor competing with American workmen. The attention of the treasury department has been called to the fact that Indians from British Columbia have come down into the hop fields of Washington by Colonel A. M. Fisher, immigration inspector, and competing with white labor. Colonel Fisher added that the Indians were really a necessity in some instances, inasmuch as white labor could not always be obtained. The department replied:

Your favor of a recent date at hand asking if Indians entering the United States to perform labor under contract made in a foreign country is in violation of the contract labor law. The contract labor law knows no privileged persons. Indians coming in violation of the contract law must be deported. This bureau now has a case of alleged violation of the contract law of some 40 Indians coming from Canada to pick hops in the northern part of New York State.

August 10 Colonel Fisher, in a communication to the department, asked for more emphatic instructions, stating that he hesitated to act in the matter on account of the expense involved and the probable desire of the hop growers for Indian labor. Here is the reply:

In reply I will say that the general instructions to immigrant inspectors for the enforcement of the alien contract labor law cover this case. Our immigration laws must be enforced.

From other communications it is apparent that the department will strongly insist upon American labor being protected from alien competition. The general instructions and orders are very emphatic. Colonel Fisher said last evening that he would rigidly enforce the provisions and endeavor to prevent British Columbia Indians from going into the hop fields under the contract system.
