

113. Minutes of Interview granted Vancouver deputation by Sir John Anderson, Undersecretary of State for the Colonies

London, May 14, 1913

The two member of the deputation consisting of Mr. Balwant Singh and Mr. Narain Singh came accompanied by Mr. Nand Singh and saw Sir John Anderson. Sir Dunlop Smith and Sir H. Just were present.

Sir John Anderson began by explaining to Mr. Nand Singh that he was understood to be with the deputation as their interpreter and not as forming a part of it. The deputation were invited to explain what had taken place between themselves and the Canadian Government and stated that Mr. Rogers had been interviewed by the Indians about a year ago and had in December 1911 informed them that he would consider their grievances, but that in spite of repeated written communication to him, no success had been achieved. Mr. Balwant Singh admitted, however, that his family had been allowed to land at Vancouver and to rejoin him as an act of grace.

Sir John Anderson explained to the deputation that they had acted wrongly in going past the Dominion Government and coming to London to approach the Imperial Government without again seeking an interview with Mr. Rogers. He pointed out that by the Constitution of Canada, the power to deal the matter in question had been placed in the hands of the Dominion Government and that if the Imperial Government attempted to deal with their grievances, in the circumstances they would be acting unconstitutionally.

They urged hopefully in reply that they had not sought a further interview with Mr. Rogers, because their many communications in writing had had no effect.

It appeared, however, that they had not come specifically to place their case before the Imperial Government, but were on their way to India, and had taken the opportunity afforded by their being in London to apply for an interview on the subject of their grievances.