SEDITIONISTS AT WORK IN TEMPLE

Hindu Witnesses at Trial of Bela Singh Tell of Speeches Regarding Revolutionary Movement in India.

IMMIGRATION OFFICERS' LIVES ENDANGERED?

Story of Shooting of Bhag Singh and Events Connected Therewith Are Further Related at Assizes.

In the criminal assize court yesterday before Mr. Justice Morrison the case against Bela Singh charged with the murder of Bhag Singh in the Sikh temple on the evening of September 5, was continued. It is expected that the hearing of the evidence and the finding of the jury will be completed today.

Mr. I. Rubinowitz, who, as magistrate took the dying depositions of Bhag Singh and Badam Singh at the hospital, was called and a discussion followed as to the admission of these statements. The court said that there was a clear line to be drawn between a dying declaration and a deposition.

Mr. Taylor for the defence held that the evidence he proposed to put in was both a dying declaration and a deposition. The court held that it must be shown that the man knew he was dying.

Dr. E. Barker, a physician at the hospital, was called and said that Bhag Singh had declared just before the statement was taken: "I am going to die. You can do nothing to help me." The doctor stayed by the bed until he died.

Injured Man's Statement.

Mr. Rubinowitz then proceeded to read the statement, the injured man having been sworn and the statement made in the presence of the prisoner, the utterances being in Hindustani and Mr. W. C. Hopkinson, the immigration officer shot a short time ago, acting as interpreter.

Bhag Singh had said: "I think I am going to die," and had gone on to say that Bela Singh had shot him while they were at prayer. Bela Singh had been asked if he wished to ask Bhag Singh any questions, but he said no. The injured man was fast becoming unconscious and died while the deposition was being read over to him to sign. To Mr. McDougall for the defence, Mr. Rubinowitz read a part of the statement by Badam Singh, who said Bela Singh was only a couple of feet away from him (Badam Singh) when he was shot. Mr. McDougal pointed out that all the other witnesses said that Badam Singh and Bela Singh were 18 or 20 feet apart.

The evidence of Mr. W. C. Hopkinson, the immigration inspector shot by Mewa Singh and for whose murder the latter was sentenced to be hanged last week, was read and that finished the case for the Crown.

Case for Defence.

In introducing his case Mr. McDougal said he would establish self-defence and that he would show that Bela Singh had been a marked man among the Hindu community for nearly a year, and the victim of many assaults.

Pertab Singh, Sr., formerly in the Seventh Bombay Lancers and for several years in the North China Police before coming to this country, had heard Bhag Singh threaten Bela Singh and also Mr. Hopkinson. He was in the temple on the night of the shooting. Bela Singh sat close to Bhag Singh and a little to one side. Both men were talking during the prayers. Bhag Singh said: "You dog, what brought you here?" and made a motion. Badam Singh said: "Don't you do anything, I will fix him," and took a gun out of his pocket. Bela Singh ran to the back of the room and Badam fired. Bhag Singh seized the holy sword from under the altar. Then there were a lot of shots, but he did not see who was hit at that time.

Pertab Singh, Jr., was also in the temple. He noticed that Bhag Singh and Bela Singh were in an argument and just as the singing and prayers finished Bhag Singh said: "You immigration dog." Badam Singh arose from the other side of the room and said: "Never mind," he would "fix him." Badam Singh had a black pistol in his hand. There was a lot of shooting and the witness ran away. The witness was in the temple the Sunday previous to the shooting. Mewa Singh the man who had shot Inspector Hopkinson, had asked Bela Singh to go there to settle the troubles that had come up. Bhag Singh had said to Bela Singh: "I know what you are doing and I am going to finish you." Badam Singh had said: "Don't touch him now, the police are watching." There was a crowd of Hindus with sticks outside and someone had sent for the police.

A Mock Trial.

He had been held as a witness in the police station along with other Hindus and there the men held a mock trial with Sohan Lal as judge and Mit Singh as lawyer.

The Court—Was there a jury?

Witness—No; it was just to make up a story to tell in the court so that Bela Singh would not get off.

It was, continued the witness, just like children learning their lesson at school. They had told him that if he did not tell a story like they did that they would kill him like Hernan Singh. Hernan Singh had been a friend of Bela Singh's and had given evidence for him in a court case and he had been murdered. He had heard Bhag Singh and Sohan Lal threaten to kill Reid, Hopkinson, Bela Singh and Baboo Singh. Another time in the temple they started to beat Bela Singh, but he ran away.

The next witness was Thaker Singh, who said that in the temple the fatal night he heard cross words being spoken from Bhag Singh to Bela Singh. Badam Singh also seemed to be in a great temper and got up and took out a pistol. Then there was a lot of shooting and he went away. Just before the shooting they were all talking and in a bad temper.

Sewa Singh said that he had heard threats against Bela Singh the Sunday before the killing. On the night of the shooting he heard Bhag Singh say Bela Singh had no right there. He saw Badam Singh draw a pistol and Bhag Singh reach for the holy sword. Then the witness ran out. Baboo Singh said that any of the members of the revolutionary party in Vancouver would have killed Bela Singh if they could have got at him. Bela Singh's life had been threatened many times. So had his own.

Pram Singh was about to be sworn on the Christian Bible when Mr. Taylor began asking questions as to the man's belief in the Bible and whether he regarded an oath on it as binding on his conscience.

The Court—Don't you think you are a little late in asking questions on this point? If there is any doubt as to the regard of these men for an oath on the English Bible we will have to swear all the other witnesses. You cannot make any objection to this man without having all the testimony taken again. All these men have had the same attitude towards our Bible.

Threats Against Bela Singh.

Pram Singh then told that he had heard threats against Bela Singh.

Ganga Ram was then called. He said that Bela Singh's life had been threatened since December, 1913, when Bhag Singh had said in the temple, "People are giving secrets to the immigration and are very much harm to our movement against the British rule. Traitors to our countrymen had better be fixed before we go any further." Sohan Lal had agreed with Bhag Singh's statements. On the Sunday before the shooting Mewa Singh had invited Bela Singh to go to the temple to settle all the troubles connected with the immigration matters. There were 35 or 40 Hindus with clubs outside the temple. Some of Bela Singh's friends had sticks and Ghag Singh wanted them taken away from them. Then Bela Singh said, before settling the other matters, he wanted to settle the trouble between him and Bhag Singh owing to the latter swearing against him falsely in a court case. Bela Singh said he would leave the matter with the priest, Balwant Singh. It was stated that the men outside with clubs would fix Bela Singh.

Amar Singh, a Victoria Hindu, was in the temple on the evening of Sept 5. Bela Singh and Bhag Singh, he said, were in heated talk. The latter said Bela Singh should not be there. Then a big black man, whose name he did not know, came across the room and said "I fixe him myself," and pulled a pistol from his pocket. The witness then ran out.

Labh Singh had heard Bhag Singh say on one occasion: "They send all the little dogs to find out and they tell the big dogs and until Hopkinson and Bela Singh are killed we cannot get on here at all."

Bhagat Singh was also in the temple on the night of the shooting. Bhag Singh had told Bela Singh to get out. Bela Singh had said: "The temple belongs to all of us and you cannot put me out." Then Badam Singh came from across the room with a pistol in his hands and fired. The witness ran out then, but there were a lot of shots fired. He had heard threats against Bela Singh and also statements that Mr. Reid, Mr. Hopkinson and Bela Singh should be put out of the way on another occasion.

Dr. Ragunath, a doctor attached to an Indian army regiment, and who is now on leave, was next called. He came to Vancouver as medical man on the Komogata Maru. He had attended a meeting in the Sikh temple, at which three or four men made speeches regarding the revolutionaries in India, and he had heard them say that they would fix the men who were telling secrets to the immigration department.

Bela Singh's Story.

Bela Singh himself was then put into the box. He said that he had been a signaller in the 30th Punjabis in India and was still on the reserve. He had been in British Columbia since 1906 and had been doing special duty with the immigration department since November, 1913. All the trouble started over the deportation of Bhagwan Singh, the priest. Since October of last year his life had been threatened in connection with this and other matters. Before that he used to go to the temple every week, but after the Hindus started talking against him he stopped. Bhag Singh had said that they did not blame the white people, but they did blame the Hindus who were giving information to the authorities. Bhag Singh said: "If they want money we can give it to them, and if they don't stop we will fix them some other way." After that he stopped going to the temple.

There was some discussion as to the admission of evidence of threats and assaults committed against Bela Singh to show the bias against him and the court agreed to hear the statements, the case being continued until this morning.

Swiss to Adopt Belgian Orphans.

Berne, Switzerland, Nov. 4.—Over two thousand Swiss families have announced their readiness to adopt Belgian orphans. Some 500 Belgian widows and orphans already have arrived in Switzerland.

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an vs. Olsen—Application for t. Order made.
vs. Moore — Application for t order nisi. Order made; one
am vs. Alvensleben — Application leave to continue action. Order
Wing vs. Wo Hing—Application ay of execution. Withdrawn.
vs. Rice—Application to have ismissed. Struck out.
er vs. Handy—Application for proceed with accounts. Struck
man & Company vs. Nickson & —Application for leave to proth action against liquidator.
Permanent Loan vs. Eldy—Ap- for leave to add defendant.
and Higgins vs. Laselle—Ap- to have action dismissed. until today.