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SAYS HINDUS ARE MOST PATRIOTIC

Sohan Lal Declares They Have No Use for the Germans.

Says Dominion Has Not Kept Faith in Case of Komagata Maru.

"There is not a single Hindu living in Vancouver but would rather starve in the street than live under German rule. The men from my native land who are fighting for the Empire on the battlefields in Flanders are the best proof of the loyalty of the people of India," declared Sohan Lal, a well known Hindu, in his evidence before Judge Schultz today, in the course of the suits arising over the Komagata Maru trouble.

Sohan Lal is the secretary of the Komagata Maru committee, which is being sued for the return of monies, and he told the whole story of that adventure from his own point of view, culminating with a denunciation of the suggestion that members of the local Hindu colony had anything to do with any German plans to cause embarrassment to the British Empire. The statement was the more noteworthy because Sohan Lal is one of the men who have been under suspicion for disloyalty and was one of those arrested on a charge of conspiracy after the murder of Immigration Inspector Hopkinson by Mewa Singh. He is a particularly bright, plausible and well spoken specimen of the educated East Indian.

The statement in regard to the loyalty of the entire Hindu colony was not the only important statement he made. He charged that the Dominion Government, through Hon. Martin Burrell, had entered into an obligation or agreement whereby if the Vancouver Hindus would consent to the Komagata Maru leaving without further trouble or bloodshed, the Dominion Government would make good any financial loss suffered by the local Hindus. Sohan Lal said that altogether the Vancouver Hindus had lost \$54,000 on the Komagata Maru, but so far the Dominion Government had failed to keep faith with them in regard to making up their losses.

His story in brief is that after the priest Balwant Singh broke the news to the local Hindus that the Komagata Maru was coming with a shipload of their brothers, an appeal for funds was made in the expectation that Gurdit Singh and his men would want funds to take care of the ship's charter and to contest any litigation that might arise.

In course of time when the charter was about to run out, the Komagata Maru committee made an appeal to the Vancouver Hindus to join in a fund for a joint patriotic and business venture, whereby they would raise funds to renew the charter and obtain a cargo for the vessel to take to the East. Fifty-four thousand dollars in deeds and cash were thus raised he said by the Vancouver Hindus, all of which had been lost when the Komagata Maru sailed away without discharging her Hindus and cargo and taking on a new cargo.

Sohan Lal said he had the assurance of Mr. A. H. MacNeill, K. C., his counsel at that time, that Hon. Martin Burrell for the Dominion Government had agreed that if the Vancouver Hindus would allow the ship to depart without bloodshed or delay, the government would compensate them for any loss they would suffer. He produced the charter party documents and the books the committee to support his statement.

It was at this juncture that Judge Schultz interposed with the suggestion that the Komagata Maru might have been sent here with the financial aid of the German Government in order to foment trouble. To this Sohan Lal gave positive denial that such aid was given or that if it was given that any Hindus here were parties to it.

"I did not wish to imply in the slightest degree that the Hindu fraternity in Vancouver is disloyal. I had no such opinion of the Hindus here, but I thought I would like to make you aware of the rumor that has been going about, and to hear what you had to say on the matter," observed his honor.

The case is still proceeding, with Messrs. C. M. Woodworth and Mr. G. R. Fisher for the plaintiff, and Mr. J. E. Bird for the Komagata committee.

STAGE DRIVER DISAPPEARS

Circumstances Indicate He Met With

ECHOES OF KOMAGATA

Hindus Who Contributed to Charter Money Ask Money Back. 30

It was made quite evident in Judge Schultz's court today, that no matter how ignorant the general public was about the advent of the Komagata Maru, the Hindus and Sikhs of the city were well apprised of the coming of the vessel last summer with its cargo of 375 Hindus. This was made clear in the course of three trials which are before his honor, in which Hindus are suing the Houssein Bahim and the estate of the late Bhag Singh, members of the Komagata Maru committee, for the return of \$1400 in all, which they had advanced to the committee to help renew the charter of the Komagata Maru.

According to the stories of the three plaintiffs, Sungu, who gave \$500; Lakg Singh, who gave \$600, and Haru Chund, who gave \$200, the first intimation of the coming of the trouble ship was one night in the temple when a great gathering had assembled to hear a report from the priest, Balwant Singh, who had returned from England after his unsuccessful mission to secure the admission of Hindu women to British Columbia.

Balwant Singh then, it is said, told his auditors that he did not wish to speak about the women, but about a great ship which was coming from India, under the leadership of the Bhai Gurdit Singh, with a shipload of their brothers. He bade them keep the matter secret and meet again. At the next meeting a collection of \$300 was taken up, which was used to hire a launch in which Rahim and Raja Singh put out from Alberni, met the Komagata Maru in the gulf, and had a conference with Gurdit Singh before the vessel reached Vancouver.

After the vessel got here a meeting of Hindus was held in the Dominion Hall, at which an appeal for \$16,000 to renew the charter was made. No less than ninety title deeds were handed over by the Hindus to raise money on. The following Saturday at the temple 500 of the Hindus were present and subscribed from \$15 to \$600 apiece, because the banks were unable to investigate the titles and advance the funds in the two days remaining before the charter expired. All who gave the larger amounts received a title deed as security.

Sungu, who received one of these deeds to secure his advance of \$500, now wants his money back, but the defendants claim that he gave it as a contribution and not as a loan. Messrs. Woodworth, Fisher & Crowe are acting for the plaintiffs, and Mr. J. E. Bird for the defendants. The case is attracting very great attention from the Hindu fraternity.

GH DENIED LE OF CONSPIRACY

agat Singh Was the Ag-
essor in the Fight With
Rattan Singh. 7

or the second time the fate of Jagat Singh, the Hindu accused of the wilful murder of Rattan Singh to be submitted this afternoon to the hands of a Vancouver jury. Six months ago a jury found him guilty, but this verdict was set aside by the Court of Appeal, which held that the trial judge had erred in stating to the jury that the case was one of murder or of nothing, and that there was no ground for bringing in a verdict of manslaughter.

Bela Singh and Baboo Singh, two Hindus formerly in the pay of the government immigration department, gave evidence against the accused, Bela saying that Jagat Singh was the aggressor in the fracas which resulted in the killing of Rattan. Bela denied point blank the story told by the prisoner to the effect that the revolvers found in his hands by the police were two that Bela had given him along with \$100 to commit some murders with. Bela said that on the day fixed by the accused as the day of the alleged transaction, he was in Victoria trying to organize a Sikh detachment to go to the front.

Mr. George E. McCrossan drew from Bela the admission that he was serving a prison term for assault, that Baboo Singh was serving a term for forgery and that had he not been in hospital and under arrest on a charge of attempted murder, Pertab Singh would have been a witness against Jagat Singh. At the suggestion of Mr. Justice Gregory the big ugly looking sword with which Jagat was armed at the time of his arrest by P. C. Lefler was moved to a safe place out of reach of any of the Hindu witnesses.