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FEDERAL OFFICIALS WERE MENACED BY THE HINDUS

Latter Declined to Hear Official Invitation to Honduras
Yesterday.

WEIRD CEREMONY HELD

J. B. Harkin and Dr. Monro Refused to Remove Shoes at
Hindu Temple

Oriental and Occidental clashed in Vancouver yesterday. A bloodless victory was won by the Hindus and Sikhs. But the end is not yet.

Oriental finesse and diplomacy on seemingly innocent technicalities proved its resourcefulness in preventing Mr. J. H. Harkin of the federal interior department from presenting his official report respecting the terms offered by the government of British Honduras in connection with the project to transport certain(?) of the East Indians resident in British Columbia to the Central American colony. Prof. Teja Singh. M. A., a Cambridge graduate and the recognized leader of the East Indians, led the opposition. He was formerly a professor in a... (Illegible word) university and... (Illegible word) had occupied a chair in Columbia university, New York. He was summoned her

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about five weeks ago to bid(?) and counsel his countrymen by whom he is regarded as a veritable demi-god.

The proposed meeting arranged by appointment did not take place. Mr. Harking who is commissioner on behalf of the Dominion Government, accompanied by an interpreter and two Hindu delegates, recently visited British Honduras, acting on the advice of individuals who formerly resided in India and who claims to be well acquainted with Oriental character and who claim to be well acquainted with Oriental character and methods refused to present his report within the sacred precincts of the Sikh temple on Second avenue, Fairview. In reaching this decision, he was actuated by other considerations than a... (Illegible words) to accede to the conditions imposed by the Hindus. They informed him that he... (Illegible word) well as every white in his party must remove their shoes before entering the temple. Mr. Harkin was advised that if he acceded the Hindu leaders would attempt to stir up further strife in India by sending word there that British officials had committed an act of desecration by forcibly entering their place of worship during a religious service.

Thanks to Garu Nanak.

"Garu Nanak Ki Jut," loudly chanted two hundred Orientals to the beating of a drum as the Dominion commissioner and other whites took their departure after an hour and a half of futile parleying outside the doors of the temple. Garu Nanak is a... (Illegible word) of the Sikhs who reformed their religion hundreds of years ago. Their chanting literally meant a shout of thanksgiving, "Garu Nanak has given us victory."

The officials had not proceed half a block on their way home after delivering an ultimatum that the meeting, if one were to be held, must take place in the basement of the temple. An(?) apartment not devoted to religious purposed, when several Hindus overtook them and declared that they would not insist upon the meeting being held within the sacred precincts. Accordingly Mr. Harkin and his escort retraced their steps and entered the basement, where scores of turbaned East Indians were found assembled . A

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declaration of Prof. Teja Singh at the very outset that the deliberations not being held in the temple proper would not be regarded as binding brought about another deadlock. Five minutes more of argument on this disputed point and Mr. Harkin and his white companions withdrew. The report was not presented. The professor also insisted that the commissioner, before submitting the proposition should first give a written pledge that the East Indians must in no sense be regarded as compromising themselves. After further wrangling, during which several of the natives assumed a very defiant attitude, Mr. Harking and party withdrew.

This in brief summed up the stirring scenes that took place in West Fairview yesterday afternoon.

The Official Visit.

Mr. Harkin was accompanied by Dr. Monro, Dominion Immigration medical officer Mr. J. H. MacGill, local immigration agent, Rev. J. Knox Wright, pastor of Chalmers Church, Mr. C. J. Brook of this city, Mr. W. J. Hopkinson, the interpreter...(Illegible word) went to British Honduras and another white interpreter Rev. Mr. Wright as a missionary labored among the East Indians in Trinidad for many years. He speaks the language fluently and is regarded as their closest friend in this community. Mr. Brooke resided in...(Illegible word) nearly 30(?) years. He has also proven a warm champion of the Hindus since their invasion of British Columbia.

When Mr. Harkin and his white companions reached the temple at 3(?) o'clock they found that a religious service was in progress. It had been going on for hours. At the top of the staircase(?) leading to the temple proper(?) half a dozen stalwart East Indians were on guard. On the landing stood large boxes, subdivided into pigeon holes in each of which were deposited the shoes of the worshippers within. It is a strict injunction that no individual native or white can enter the sacred precincts unless he divests (?)himself of his footwear. During the service most of the worshippers usually wear rough home-made wooden sandals consisting of small flat pieces of board strapped to the feet by means of leather thongs. Some of the East Indians did not wear

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stocking, indeed many of them were barefooted, the only covering of their soles being the sandals.

A Weird Chant.

Through the half-open doors floated the weird chant of hymns and invocations to Buddha, uttered in mournful tones, mingled with the solemn beat of drumtaps. Then a silence would ensue, followed at intervals by another sacred song in which all the worshippers participated. The officiating priest wore a brown habit(?) not unlike that of a Catholic monk. It reached us...(rest of sentence illegible). He also wore white...(illegible word). His legs were bare from the knees down. (Illegible word) and then he uttered a prayer in a peculiar sing-song fashion. (Rest of this and next paragraph are illegible).

Dr. Monro Balked at This.

"Well, I for one will not remove my shoes and participate in any religious service. We are here to transact government... (illegible word) and it was well understood that in making the appointment the meeting was to have been held down stairs in the general assembly room," replied Dr. Monro with some feeling.

"Perhaps you have holes in your socks," facetiously suggested somebody, followed by a laugh as half a score of Sikhs and Hindus began to talk and gesticulate in their own language.

"You are perfectly right," added Rev. Knox Wright, addressing Dr. Monro. "If we accept the invitation the news will be spread from one end of India to the other that we forced ourselves on them during a religious ceremony and that we desecrated their temple."

"Don't go," he continued, this time directing his remarks to Mr. Harking, who seemed surprised at the strange turn of affairs. "A trap has been laid for you."

This injunction was not relished by the East Indians who fully understood its import. They again started to talk and gesticulate now and

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then engaging in animated discussions in Hindustani with the two interpreters.

No Place for Business.

"I suppose I shall have to be guided by the counsel of my advisors," interjected Mr. Harkin during a momentary lull in the animated babel of confusing tongues.

"By no means accept their invitation," warmly declared Mr. C. J. Brooke, who spent nearly a lifetime in India. "No such proceeding as has been proposed would be tolerated by the British authorities. There is a time and a place for such meetings. Their temple is sacred to them and it is no place to talk business. They know we are in the right. It is certain a plan has been devised to prevent you from reading your report."

"That is quite true," assented Interpreter Hopkinson. "Such a thing is unheard of in India. Over there meetings with the natives are called with the tap of drum and are held in public places."

So with another clatter of sandals half a dozen East Indians, forming a deputation, climbed upstairs to deliver the ultimatum.

Meantime the discussion on the verandah became more animated than ever, the white visitors reiterating their unwillingness to enter the temple. The little group was then joined by Mr. T. E. Knapp, a resident of this city, who is a student of Oriental philosophy, and who has presided at all the public lectures delivered here by Prof. Teja Singh.

Argued for the Hindus.

As soon as he learned the situation he took up the cudgels on behalf of the East Indians, maintaining that their request was not an unreasonable one. He engaged in a lively war of words with Rev. Mr. Wright and others. The retort courteous was passed several times with many interjections from both whites and Hindus. The discussion lasted nearly half an hour.

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"How long have you known Pro. Teja Singh," asked one of the interpreters.

"Nearly five weeks," replied Mr. Knapp, amidst a derivative laugh from one of two individuals.

"No personalities," retorted Mr. Knapp with no little(?) feeling. The discussion was then resumed.

"No personalities," repeated another party when Mr. Knapp again voiced his opinion.

It was finally agreed that he should enter the temple for the purpose of summoning Prof Teja Singh. After a long wait he returned with the message that the professor could not come downstairs. The reason offered was that the professor had taken the priests place and was conducting the service.

First Sight of Teja Singh.

Another half hour of lively discussion between Mr. Knapp, the other whites and a number of tall Sikhs followed. It was all to no purpose. Mr. Harkin and party then took their leave. Passing(?) out to the street their ears were greeted with the instant...(illegible words). Garu Nanak Ki...(illegible word) and noisy drum taps as the two hundred worshippers inside gave expression to their pent-up feelings. The government officials had not gone when they were overtaken by a Hindu who invited them to return, declaring that his people were prepared to hear the commissioner in the basement of the temple. So the...(illegible words) their steps. In the basement they found about 10(?) East Indians assembled. From upstairs still floated the monotonous chant of hymns and the muffled tapping of a drum.

The East Indians led by Prof Teja Singh, tall of stature and long of beard,...(illegible word) around Mr. Harkin and the other members of his party. He...(illegible words) in coming to the point.

"The responsibility for not meeting us in the temple is yours. We want discuss these matters in the presence of our Garu Nanak. Anything down here

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can have no significance. We are holding out for a principle. Anything we do in the temple has a peculiar sacredness. We carry religion into every action of our lives.

Introduced a Disclaimer.

"Bear in mind," he said, "anything we do right here has no significance. To be of any value in our eyes it must be performed in our temple. Before we hear your report," still addressing his remarks to Mr. Harkin, "I wish you would sign a... (illegible word) to the effect that this report is not binding on us, flashing an official letter, Mr. Harkin had written the Sikh priest, "Let Mr. Knapp draft it for your signature."

"There is no force or...(multiple following paragraphs are illegible).

Prof. Teja Singh then reiterated his objections to hearing the report of the commissioner. He pointed out that its presentation outside the temple proper had no significance.

"It is you who are taking advantage of a technicality," he said, again addressing Mr. Harking, who kept perfectly cool throughout the rather trying ordeal. "You know I am a lawyer although I never practiced."

The point was debated, but to no purpose.

"It is quite evident you do not wish to have the report read. There is nothing compulsory or mandatory about it. It is the earnest desire of the Dominion Government to do all in its power of your people," declared Mr. Harkin.

"I don't think the advices we were given as to the numbers of Hindus who are...(illegible word) to be out of work this winter will be confirmed. I hope not. You know the law. It gives the authorities power to deport any individual who becomes a public charge. I hope it will not have to be exercised. The Honduras proposition was devised with the object of helping out any Hindus who have not adapted themselves to conditions here. Many of the East Indians seem to have done well and again others have not."

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"I am glad to meet a gentleman," said Prof. Teja Singh as he said goodbye to Mr. Harkin, and cast a stony glance to other members of the white contingent.

Mr. Harkin was prepared to show that the Honduras Government had received 391 applications from Hindus from planters. IN addition the Colonial Government undertook to employ 200 more on railway construction, while it also agreed to give free land grants to two hundred others.