

Detailed Story of the Battle Between Police and Hindus

How the Early Sunday Morning Efforts of the Bluecoats and immigration Officials to Assist the Captain Were Repulsed by the Infuriated Hindus from Their Deck Fifteen Feet Above the Invading Tug Sea Lion—five shots Fired by “the Enemy”—Officers Under Instructions Not to Raise a Gun.

Armed with swords, daggers and crude weapons of their own manufacture, as well as a few revolvers, and fighting like demons with all the fanaticism of their Oriental natures, the 352 Hindus on board the Komagata Maru, urged on by five Sikh and Mohammedan priests, early Sunday morning repulsed 120 policemen and 40 special immigration officers who attempted to board the vessel from the big steam tug Sea Lion, sent out to protect the captain and his Japanese crew from the Hindus.

Forty members of the attacking party were more or less seriously injured, eight of them having to be removed to the General Hospital. The injured included Chief of Police MacLennan and four police inspectors.

Unable to return the fusillade(Sic) of rocks, sticks, coal and serap(?) iron that rained down upon the policemen as they huddled together on the overcrowded deck of the tug, the advantage was all on the side of the Hindus, who had made every preparation to repel boarders. Nearly every man on board the Komagata Maru had seen service under the British flag in India, and they brought their knowledge of warfare into good use in repelling the attack.

Police Are Called In.

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

On Saturday afternoon Captain Yamamoto, master of the Japanese vessel, in compliance with the written orders of the Dominion

Government officials, attempted to get up steam and leave the harbor for Shanghai, with the Hindus who have been ordered deported from Canada. In this he was stopped by the men under Gurdit Singh and his life was threatened. He came on shore and made a written application for police assistance, saying that he was no longer in control of his boat. A conference was held between Chief MacLennan and superintendent of Immigration Malcolm R. J. Reid, at which Mr. H. H. Stevens, M. P., was present, with Mr. W. H. Ladner as legal adviser, and it was decided that a force of police should board the Komagata Maru and protect the captain while his men got steam up, after which the civic forces would withdraw and the Sea Lion, carrying 35 special immigration officers, armed with Ross rifles, should convey the boat to sea.

Half an hour after midnight the policemen, under the command of Chief MacLennan, Deputy Chief McRae, Staff Inspector Dan Leatherdale and Headquarters Inspector Craig, with reserves from the three sub-stations, under Divisional Inspectors Wilshire, McIntosh and Scott, arrived at the immigration sheds on the C. P. R. wharf, and were joined by special immigration police.

The Sea Lion, a powerful tug under the command of Capt. Robertson, was moored at the admiralty slip, immediately west of Pier "A," and was loading the provisions ordered by the Canadian Government for the use of the passengers of the immigrant ship on their journey across the Pacific. Only half the stores had been placed on board when the police arrived, and that work at once stopped. The bluecoats embarked on the tug, standing crowded on the fore deck, after deck and companion ways, while their officers with the immigration officials, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Ladner, Doctors Munro, Panton and Kennedy, the detectives and members of the press occupied the upper deck.

Were Out For a Lark.

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

At 1:15 the boat sliently(Sic) drew away from the dock, her departure being easily communicated to the Hindus on board of the silent vessel that lay black and mysterious-looking in the murky light of the quarter moon. Not a light showed along the deck of the Komagata Maru as the police boat approached while on board of the Sea Lion, the officers, men and immigration officials chatted and laughed at what was looked on as a good joke. Each policeman was armed with a .33 calibre revolver, while the special immigration police were carrying Ross rifles and ball cartridges, but before leaving the pier Chief MacLennan had given instructions to his men that no use of firearms should be made unless he issued new instructions.

As the Sea Lion, at slow speed, approached the silent vessel a white robed figure appeared on the after deck. It was one of the Hindu priests.

"Hopkinson! Hopkinson! Are you on board, Hopkinson?" He cried to Inspector Hopkinson, who was in the pilot house, but Mr. Hopkinson did not answer. He had been warned earlier in the evening by the Hindus that did he attempt to go with any party of police aboard the steamer he would be shot.

"Hopkinson! Hopkinson!" again shrieked the white-robed figure. "You no come on board," and then in a mixture of broken English and vitriolic Hinduistandee(Sic) he shrieked, all the time frienziedly(Sic) waving his arms and stamping his feet, declaring that any attempt to board the vessel would be met with violence, and that the Hindus would chance the consequences and even board the tug boat.

Turned on the Spot-light.

Mr. Hopkinson made no answer, but with his hand on the controller switched the powerful searchlight full on the fanatical priest, and then swept the length of the deck with the blinding glare.

The light revealed a sight which made it apparent to every one(Sic) on board the Sea Lion that the next few moments would prove that the expedition was not the lark that it had first appeared to be. Crowded along the rail were the swarthy Hindus, wearing their multi-colored turbans and

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

picturesque raiment, but it was seen that none of them were wearing any surplus clothes. Mostly they were attired only in pyjamas, while a number were clothed in long flowing robes. As they blinked in the glare of the searchlight, the serious-looking faces and fanatical yelling spoke eloquently of the impending trouble. Hardly a word was spoken on board the tug as the two vessels touched, the Sea Lion's main deck, fifteen feet below that of the Komagata Maru. The blue-coated stalwarts looked up in silence at the seething horde of brown men, and each man grasped his baton. High above the din could be heard the five priests on board the immigrant ship, screeching, exhorting, praying and singing battle songs.

Come to Grapple.

The contest between the two races was marked. The Hindus, all men trained and disciplined under the same system and in the same drill as the silent officers and constables on the little tug. There was no outcry on the Sea Lion. Here and there an exclamation of "There's a gun," or "Look at that sword," could be heard, while the quiet voice of Chief MacLennan and the sharp clear orders of Inspector of Immigration Hopkinson and Superintendent Malcolm R. J. Reid rang out.

As the prow of the Sea Lion touched the steel side of the big steamer a grappling iron was thrown from the Sea Lion and caught a firm hold.

"Now, boys, easy," the command came from the group of officers on the bridge, and as several constables sprang from the rail and tried to catch the iron stanchions that appeared above them. The Hindus with long bamboo poles, stabbed and pushed them back on to the tug again, while a gigantic Hindu dressed in all in white, leaned far over the railing, held by his belt from behind, and with a keen-bladed meat cleaver fastened on the end of a bamboo pole, chopped and hacked away at the taut cable that was binding the boats together. He might have succeeded had not a brawny policeman jumped to the rail directly in the path of the swinging axe and with a well-delivered blow struck him on one wrist, when with a scream of pain and rage the man withdrew and another took his place.

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

Almost as soon as the vessels came within range the bombardment from the big boat had commenced. A big piece of coal, hurled by a man from the companion way near the after deck of the Maru, crashed through the glass on the pilot house, narrowly missing the captain and Mr. Hopkinson, who coolly continued to play the searchlight on those mutineers who were trying to sever the cable, blinding them somewhat by the glare of the powerful lamp so that they could not use their long spears.

Many Missles(Sic) Thrown.

These spears were made from bamboo poles ten or twelve feet long, with a sharpened knife bound to the end. The first piece of coal was followed by a perfect rain of missles(Sic) of all kinds, and the shattering of breaking glass could be heard on all sides above the hoarse shouts of the combat and the cries of the wounded. Bricks from the boiler settings in the stoke hold, scrap iron and pieces of steel plate with sharp and jagged edges, sticks of wood and other heavy things were thrown, and almost every missile(Sic) found a mark on the crowded fore deck of the Sea Lion. A Province reporter who was aboard found the situation exceedingly interesting, but awfully uncomfortable. The officers on the top deck fared but little better. Chief McLennan while reaching to grasp a hose pipe was struck on the head with a piece of coal, weighing several pounds. He staggered(Sic) back beneath the shock, but quickly regained himself only to receive another stinging blow on the right temple. Again and again he was struck, but he and Inspector D. D. McIntosh(Sic), of "B" division, who had a most exposed position, had secured a line of hose, which connected with the tug's pumps, was sending out a powerful stream of water, and they maintained their position. The advent of the hose made the mutineers recoil for a moment, but they soon recovered and returned to the ship's side hanging on like leeches to the iron rails and continuing their bombardment of the helpless constables below them.

Taking a Howling Bath.

One man in particular was conspicuous by reason of the tenacity he displayed in withstanding the stream of cold water. He was clothed in a gown

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

which was secured around his waist by a belt. He had a long sword in his hand and was leaning over the rail trying to slash a constable when the chief and inspector McIntosh first saw him. They directed the stream fairly at him while the full glare of the searchlight was turned on his face. Almost drowned by the water and blinded by the light, the man hung on and actually climbed on to the second rung of the iron railing. He stood there for nearly a minute waving his sword above his head, and shrieking curses, the whites of his glaring eyes and the double row of ivory teeth showing in sharp contrast through the mass of tangled black beard that covered his face. At last the water won. He loosened his hold on the rail and tumbled back into the mass of humanity that surged back and forth along the deck.

A new danger arose. This was the possibility of the Sea Lion capsizing. Unable to secure a foothold on the Komagata Maru and having to withstand the rain of missiles(Sic) from above the constables and specials sought the shelter of outer or starboard side of the tug, causing it to list dangerously. The rail was almost under water and the sea poured through the ash chutes into the boiler room and stoke hold.

A Fancy Flail.

Seeing the grave danger Mr. Malcolm R. J. Reid and Inspector Hopkinson tried to clear the deck and distribute the ballast more evenly with considerable success, for when the policemen realized what it meant most of them went right back into the thick of the fray, and by scrambling up on the rail of the tug sought to reach the bare feet and legs above them with their batons. One Hindu—a powerful man—was operating a deadly weapon. This was a slicer-bar from the stokehold to which a flatiron was fastened by hay wire making a very effective flail. He knocked one policeman's helmet off; and another narrowly escaped being hit. Still another Hindu had a big deck brush with which he was punching the constables back. Captain Charlie Anderson, of the harbor police, caught hold of it and pulled it away from the man and belabored him over the legs and body with it.

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

Suddenly three shots flashed out of the darkness on the Maru's after deck and another window in the pilot house shattered with a crash. It was probably Inspector Hopkinson whom they were then attempting to kill. He was very conspicuous standing as he was beside the captain, the gold lace on his cap marking him. He stepped to the door to give a command and a friend snatched the cap from his head and replaced it with a straw hat.

Captain Robertson had maintained his position at the wheel, suffering several bruises from flying stones which hit him on the body. At last, half a brick smashed one of the remained panes of glass and struck him between the eyes. The captain, stunned by the blow and blinded by the blood that spurted form the wound, staggered back into his cabin. Just then a cry of "man overboard" was heard and Captain Robertson, his face red with blood, sprang to the door and shouted for the boat to be lowered. It was Detective Peter McArthur who fell overboard. McArthur was on the top deck and had been struck several times. He was moving towards the shelter of the pilot house when another piece of coal hit him. He staggered back dazed, and hit against the low railing. He tottered and swayed for an instant and then fell with a splash to the water. He went down once, twice and was going for the last time when some one(Sic) shoved down a rifle. He grasped the stock of the gun and hung on until several policemen under the direction of Mr. Hopkinson had grasped him and aided him to the deck.

Other Officers Injured.

Detective Ricci in stooping to pick up a piece of coal to throw back at the Hindus was struck on the head by a piece of coal. It tore open his scalp and knocked him unconscious for a moment. He was assisted into the disordered cabin and a doctor was sent for. As Ricci sat in the captain's arm chair bleeding form his wound and the several cuts on his face another big piece of coal smashed through the window and passed by him.

Inspector Dave Scott, in charge of "C" division was struck a severe blow on the side of the head which knocked him out. He was assisted into shelter,

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

but as soon as he had regained his powers he was again in the thick of it urging his men to stick fast.

Inspector D. D. McIntosh, the veteran officer in charge of "B" division, who displayed remarkable coolness, was cut about the face and head as he stood shoulder to shoulder with Chief MacLennan on the top deck with the fire hose.

Sergeant Munro, in the forefront of the first attempt to rush the Maru, was struck a severe blow by some instrument, probably a piece of iron, on the knee and sank to the deck only to rise crippled to urge his men on.

Detective Robert Tisdale, who was standing near Ricci in front of the pilot house was hit almost at the same instant. Half of brick smashed him in the face cutting through his cheek, opening his gum and breaking several teeth.

Constable Alex Imlah (137), in the general melee following the first attempt to board, received a crack on the head with a swinging club that laid him out cold. His head was badly cut.

Constable Duncan Johnson (133), had a narrow escape from death being saved by his helmet. Johnson was in the front rank of the attacking squadron and was trying to get a foothold on the railing of the tug when a big, black, turbaned pirate taking aim threw an axe at him. The sharp blade cut clean through his helmet and slit open his scalp, but did not dangerously injure him. It was owing to the helmets worn by the police that more serious wounds were not occasioned.

Although the police got the worst of the argument and were forced to withdraw there are some Hindus on board of the pirate ship that have reason to regret the visit of the police, for with their batons some of the officers were able to reach high enough to roundly club the bare shins of those nearest to the rail, while others wrestled the big bamboo sticks away from their owners and slashed right and left with them. One incident of cool-headed retaliation was witnessed when P. C. Constable Duncan McKinnon (179), had his helmet

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

knocked off with a bit piece of coal. The officers saw the man throw the coal, but did not have time to dodge it. He stooped down and picked up the same missile(Sic) and waited patiently for several moments until he again got sight of his man and then threw it with all his might. It struck the Hindu square in the face, and he went back with a yell and rolled over on the deck.

It was seen that without the use of firearms that it would be impossible to gain possession of the deck of the Komagata Maru. The hose had proved ineffectual and had but checked the mutineers for an instant and although Chief MacLennan knew that if he ordered his men to get to the deck at any cost they would do it, he had no desire to sacrifice his men, nor did he nor Mr. Reid wish to cause the death of any of the Hindus, so it was thought advisable to withdraw.

Had the chief given the word to his men to shoot, the slaughter on the decks of the steamer would have been terrible, for so closely were they packed along the rail that every shot would have told. That the Hindus had firearms on board was known. Five shots were fired altogether in the fight, but it was said that two of these came from a launch a hundred yards distant from the ship. Three shots, however, were fired from the deck of the Maru.

One of the special police drew his revolver in his excitement, and was going to shoot in anger at the man who had thrown a brick at him, but Mr. H. H. Stevens, M. P., who was in the thick of the fight all the way through, stepped up to him and prevented him from firing. Although frequently struck with small pieces of coal Mr. Stevens fortunately escaped serious injury in spite of the fact that he was prominent in places of the greatest danger. Mr. W. H. Ladner, of the firm of Bowser, Reid & Walbridge, solicitors for the immigration department, was struck several times by bricks and pieces of coal.

The big cable that bound the two boats together was finally cut and the tug backed away from the Komagata Maru amidst the wild shouts of triumph, curses and imprecations of the mutineers and the music of wildly beating tom-toms. As soon as the boats parted the officers commenced to take stock of the damage done in the fifteen minutes in which the battle had raged, while

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

doctors Munro, Panton, Kennedy and McDairmid attended to the wounded. All through the conflict the doctors moved about from one part of the boat to another attending to those who were hurt.

Interior Was a Wreck.

Nearly every pane of glass in the port side of the ship had been broken and the deck houses were dented and bruised by the forces of the missiles(Sic) while the white paint was grimy with coal dust and marked freely with blood. The interior of the pilot house where Captain Robertson, Inspector Hopkinson and one of the crew had withstood the brunt of the battle was practically a wreck. Splintered glass was over everything while the floor was covered with big pieces of coal, some of them weighting five or six pounds, bricks and cement from the boiler settings and concrete picked from the stokehold floor. The wheel had been hit several times, while the bright brass compass stand had been marked in several places.

The captain's cabin was in an awful mess. The two windows had been broken—one by a bullet, which passed out through the open door opposite—the wash stand and porcelain basin had been cracked and the bed was covered with broken glass and hunks of coal, sticks of wood and bricks. The new carpet on the floor was stained in a dozen places with pools of blood.

Some of the stores which the Dominion government had ordered for the mutineers were on the deck forward. A number of bags of potatoes and several crates of cabbages had been loaded before leaving the dock, and some of these had been broken open. The cabbages had been used freely by the policemen as weapons of offense, and more than one Hindu received one in the face.

The wharf was crowded when the Sea Lion again tied up at the dock and cries of indignation greeted the appearance of the bloodstained constables as they clambered to the gangplank to the wharf. Detective Crewe and Sunstrum, who had been detailed, much against their will, to remain on duty on shore on hearing the gun shots from the boats in the harbor had anticipated that there would be a number of persons injured and had sent in a

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

hurry call to the police headquarters for the ambulance, and also several private ambulances. These were in waiting at the pier, and those of the wounded who were the more seriously injured, were assisted to the cars and were at once hurried to the General Hospital where a staff of doctors had nurses who had been apprised of the battler were in readiness.

The police were mustered on the pier and each divisional inspector called the roll of his men. Nearly all the policemen bore marks of the conflict and many of them were minus their helmets, while bloodstains were conspicuous on many faces in the white light of the arc lamps.

Chief MacLennan moved about amongst his men, while blood trickled down his face from a cut on his temple. He moved with difficulty for not only had he been struck repeatedly on the head with bricks and stones, but he had received a crushing blow from a block of wood that had struck him over the kidneys as he crouched with Inspector McIntosh on the deck directing the hose. After commending "his boys" for their obedience to orders and ascertaining that no one was fatally wounded, the chief went to the immigration officers where he held a conference with Mr. Reid, Inspector Hopkinson, Mr. Stevens and Mr. Ladner, after which a report was drafted which was telegraphed to Ottawa.

Were Covered With Blood.

Deputy chief McRae, who like the chief had been in the forefront of the fight, was also bleeding from several cuts and limped from a nasty bruise on his leg, superintended the placing in the ambulance of those who were injured, and with Staff Inspector Leatherdale, Headquarters Inspector Craig and Divisional Inspectors Wilsher, McIntosh and Scott reviewed the men. Inspector Wilsher was covered with blood from a wound in his head, while Inspector McIntosh was bleeding from several cuts on his face. Scott, who was still dizzy from the terrific blow that he had received on his head, was urged to go to the hospital, but insisted on staying with his men.

Inspector of Detectives Dan McLeod with one arm hanging helpless by his side, minus his hat and covered with bruises, also refused to go away until

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

he was satisfied that all the men under his charge were accounted for. Twelve detectives were on board the Sea Lion under Inspector McLeod, and nearly all of them had been struck. Detectives Ricci, McArthur and Tisdale had been rather severely cut up, while the others had nearly all been slightly bruised. Detective Perry was in the forefront of the battle armed with a piece of a bicycle cross-bar instead of a baton, but he escaped almost entirely.

Sergeant Rod Monro, was the most seriously injured of the sergeants. His knee cap was cut by a piece of sheet iron.

Of the constables P. C. Imlah was the most seriously injured. He was struck on the head. P. C. Johnson was out with an axe. P. C. McCall sustained several broken ribs. P. C. Schultz was badly beaten about the head and body. P. C. Urquhart has his cheek cut and P. c. Deacon had his wrist injured. About forty of the constables were more or less bruised.

L. H. Taylor and G. D. Minneti, special officers, were cut about the head and today and several of their fellow specials were more or less injured.

Capt. Robertson was the only member of the boat's company who was injured.

When the sounds of pistol shots were heard by the forty or fifty persons who had gathered on the deck, consternation reigned. They dispersed and took refuge behind the freight sheds for fear that stray bullets would strike them, as the firing from the Komagata Maru was directly toward the city. Many of them fled uptown and spread the news of the fight in the all-night cafes and on the streets and before the boat returned to the dock a crowd of several hundred collected.

Three Hindus employed by the immigration department, attempted to leave the immigration offices and go uptown shortly after the arrival of the Sea Lion. They were met just below the C. P. R. station by an angry crowd of men and were in grave danger of being mobbed, but the timely arrival of Mr. Stuart Thompson, a photographer and several citizens who recognized the men, prevented any violence being done to them.

Swearing them In.

When it became known shortly after 10 o'clock on Saturday night that an attempt would be made to make the Hindus on board the Komogata(Sic) Maru leave the port the immigration officials were besieged by men wishing to volunteer as special police, but Mr. Malcolm Reid would only accept the most suitable, men who were members of the militia or who had seen active service. He had thirty-five Ross rifles at his disposal and these were soon issued to the men who were sworn in.

The volunteers gathered in the immigration shed and accepted the oath that Superintendent Reid administered to them. He made it plain to them that they were not going on any picnic. He said that there might be some trouble and that any who wanted to back out could do so. There was a laugh when he made this offer. He told them that as specials they would receive \$4 per day.

"Oh, are we going to get paid for this?" exclaimed one tall fellow. "This is good."

Inspector Quiney thought that he was going to be left out of the excitement and he approached Mr. Reid. "Oh, sir!" he exclaimed. "You are not going to leave me out of this. Please sir!"

(Continued on Page 2.)

BATTLE BETWEEN HINDUS AND POLICE

(Continued From Page 2.)

"All right, Quiney," responded Reid. "You may go."

"Thank you, sir," exclaimed the tall immigration man. "Thank you," and Quiney was in the very midst of all the trouble.

The Wisdom of It.

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.1&2

Viewed in the calm, cool reflection of the morning after, many Vancouver citizens are today questioning the wisdom of sending the police equipped as they were on a midnight...(illegible word) against the Hindus. The...(illegible word) were in no sense surprised on board their dirty steamer, for the arrangements for the...(illegible word) of the police had been going on since early Saturday evening. Warned by their chief not even to draw their guns the six score policemen had no weapons but their batons which...

(Article copy ends here)