
THE PROVINCE

MONDAY, JULY 20, 1914.

A SERIOUS MATTER.

It is perhaps easy to be censorious and roundly abuse the authorities for the farcical proceedings against the Hindus on the Komagata Maru on Saturday night, but it is not so easy to board a ship and pacify some 350 people who do not understand English and who feel they have been cheated and swindled by those same authorities. It is apparently useless to argue with these unwelcome excursionists and try and prove to them that Mr. Gurdit Singh is entirely to blame for their predicament. It is also apparently impossible to convince them that they will have to go back whence they came. They assumed they would be allowed to land in Canada and finding the immigration authorities refuse them that privilege they have taken complete possession of the ship and defy anyone to move them out of the harbour.

The authorities seem to have requested the captain of the Komagata Maru to leave Vancouver and Canadian waters. They are willing to provision the ship if the captain if the captain would take them away. The captain seems finally to have confessed that he was no longer in command and that the Hindus had seized his ship. Whereupon acting quite properly the authorities seem to have warned the Hindus to allow the captain to get up steam and added that if they interfered they would be forcibly restrained.

The Hindus refused, whereupon the authorities called in the city police to help and set out on a midnight expedition to the ship. They probably considered there would be no real resistance but they took some rifles with them. They got alongside and were refused admittance. Someone apparently had thought of a hose and accordingly it was played on the Hindus lining the side of the ship. They retailed with coal, brickbats, wood and various other missiles which poured from their fortress above and very soon beat off the attackers who retired with several casualties and a fortunate escape from real disaster.

It might be suggested that midnight is not well chosen for an adventure of this nature, also that if a hose was to be brought into play it should have been effectively followed by scaling ladders and a quick charge. It is fortunate perhaps the rifles were not used, although as they were taken they might at least have been presented and a volley fired over the heads of the Hindus. But to do this the tug would have had to get out of range of the hand missiles from the ship and the reports seem to indicate that the Hindus thoroughly demoralized their opponents. Under the circumstances it was not

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JULY 20, 1914

p.6

surprising, but the moral effect will be very bad, especially as nothing has been done since.

The fact seems to be that the authorities never really seriously contemplated resistance. They thought their bluff would not be called and were very surprised when their show of force was promptly met with a demonstration of what the Komagata Maru contains of a loose nature. The authorities do not want to kill anyone of the excursionists for an entirely mistaken idea, nor do they desire to get killed themselves. But while it is admitted they have an awkward problem to deal with it is self evident
