

THE DAILY PROVINCE

SEPTEMBER 7, 1914

A HINDU TRAGEDY?

The Hindus in Vancouver seem to have entered ou(?) a vendetta. There are evidently two parties among the various Singhs who make Vancouver their home and they do not chant in harmony. At the time of the great adventure of Gurdit Singh and the good ship Komogata(Sic) Maru, it is said some Hindus were assisting the immigration authorities. This does not necessarily mean that they were serving(?) to prevent the Hindus on the Komogata(Sic) Maru entering Canada, but they wished to see the law upheld and convince the people of Canada, and incidentally the Empire, that not all emigrants from India were in sympathy with the revolutionary movement in that country. That the Komogata(Sic) Maru was intended as an explosive illustration of the methods of British justice when applied to a white man in contradistinction to the methods of the same justice when applied to a native of India is undoubted. The whole fight was made as spectacular(?) as possible in order that the native in India might be stirred...(illegible word) against the British Raj. The illustration failed somewhat, chiefly because the German Emperor stepped in and wanted to attract attention entirely to himself. The revolutionary side show in India is now probably not considered much of an attraction. The whole of the native troops, with but whom no revolutionary movement could possibly be successful have something else to think about. They are burning to distinguish themselves in Europe and to show their worth against the German Emperor's picked men. The revolutionaries would, therefore, probably get but scant attention under such circumstances. They will have to wait for more propitious times.

They may feel, however, that this is a good time to pay off old scores in Vancouver and perhaps get rid of those men who have been suspected of favoring the British rather than the revolutionary movement. If this is so, it is obvious that the loyalists would get nervous and try and protect themselves in their own fashion. IF some of the latter came from the north of India the last thing they would do would be to go to the police and ask for protection. They settle these little affairs differently on the Indian border and possible some of

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the Hindus here—they are all classed as Hindus though there may be Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Mohommedans(Sic) and others among them—prefer their own methods to going to the police.

It is also quite probable that the well-known Bhagwan Singh, the priest who was forcibly deported by the immigration authorities and who is believed to have been somewhat responsible for the Komogata(Sic) Maru adventure, may know something of what is going on. He is supposed to be in Seattle, having gone there from Manila(?), and was prominent with ultimatums and pronouncements at the time of Gurdit Singh's visit. It will very likely be hopeless to expect any of those concerned in this latest tragedy to tell the true story or to help elucidate the affair. They will prefer to keep silent rather than shed any light on their underworld. They will consider it their own affair and no one else's. They will probably argue it is none of the white man's business as long as only their own fraternity are concerned. British justice, however, is hardly likely to consider this point of view. Murder is murder, whether the victim be king or pauper, revolutionary or loyalist. If there is a plot against those Hindus who have assisted the immigration authorities and they feel they want protection they have only to ask for it. If it is the revolutionaries who fear for their lives they, too, can be protected. The difficulty is chiefly one of finding out the truth.

Hearken then to the words of a Hindu Guru referring to the political situation in India.

"The language of English justice is wrong, wrong for our country—all wrong. Even the words by which you ask a man to swear in court are fools words; how should they bind him? Ask him to say "I touch the three sacred things," or to say "I sitting in a room, all washed white, do declare"—when he is making oath in court and you will get as near truth as the man can give. For do not these things mean, "May I be re-born outcaste; may I be a leper, if I live," and this is the Hindustani language for provoking the truth. God and fate made judgment not man. Not men talking and talking so as to blind the other men who listen. I have heard men say that the Hindu tells lies in the courts of

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English justice; and so without doubt he will. He would feel entitled to lie. Why should he not?"

We cannot perchance convince him that he should not lie but we may be able to prove to him that he cannot stage his tragedies in Vancouver. For all we know this may be only the first scene in a long-drawn-out drama and we have no desire to become spectators of more such happenings before the curtain falls.