

RAM SINGH WAS ACQUITTED BY JURY

Evidence Proved He Was Not Guilty of Murdering Argan Singh.

Gun Which Argan Bought for His Protection Accidentally Exploded.

Ram Singh, a patient-faced elderly Sikh with a great reputation among his countrymen for plenty, was this morning placed on the trial in the Assizes on a charge of murdering his former friend, Argan Singh. Ram Singh is said to have spent his six weeks in prison in meditation and devotion. Whether that was effective or not, the fact is that before the case had proceeded much more than an hour his innocence was proved by the jury of formally enter a verdict of not guilty. Ram Singh left the court with a large number of his friends, looking very gracefully for the turn of events.

Argan Singh was found dead by the police in a house at 1747 Third avenue west, Kitsilano on September 3. All that could be learned from the Hindu inmates went to show that the gun which shot Argan Singh was at the time in the hands of Ram Singh. Detective Jewett who found the revolver and the cartridges in the garbage can of the house placed Ram Singh under arrest.

This morning the Crown called Sucha Singh, Hari Ram and Bahal Singh the three eyewitnesses of the shooting to give evidence. All of them told the same story, namely that Argan Singh had bought the pistol home and invited Ram Singh to examine it. Ram Singh excused him, saying that he did not understand firearms and was afraid of them. "It is not loaded" said Argan Singh who handed the revolver to Ram Singh. Ram Singh took in his left hand and gripped it, when the weapon exploded, shooting Argan Singh through the neck, Ram Singh dropped the gun and picked Argan up, but Argan died in a

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few minutes, after grasping out "I did not know it was loaded." Bahal said that it was himself who had taken the revolver and cartridges and put them in the garbage can.

The statement of the three witnesses tallied exactly with the statement made by the accused to Inspector W.C. Hopkinson of the Immigration department immediately after his arrest, and led to Mr. Justice Morrison instructing the jury that the Crown had failed to make out any case.

It may be explained that the police suspicion fell upon Ram Singh at the time because Argan Singh had been afraid of his life following the finding of the dead body of a friend whom he believed had been murdered by enemies. He had bought the revolver for his own protection. The tragedy is linked with the greater tragedy which occurred later in the Sikh temple, when Bela Singh a friend of the two dead men, after returning from Argan Singh's funeral is said to have opened fire killing and wounding eight persons. Mr. G. Roy Long who defended Ram Singh this morning is to act with Mr. Frank McDougal in the defence of Bela Singh next week.