

# SOHAN WILL NOT READ NAUGHTY MUTINY PAPER

Voluble Witness at Bela Singh Trial Declares He is Lover of Fellow Man.

## SPENDS TIME IN PRAYER

Denies He Presided at Mock Trial to Arrange the Evidence to be Given.

Bela Singh, charged with the murder of Bhag Singh and Badan Singh, the latter sometimes known as Buttan Singh, appeared in the assize court yesterday before Mr. Justice Morrison. The case for the crown, conducted by Mr. A. D. Taylor, K. C., was not finished when the court adjourned last night and will proceed today when P. C. Lemon will take the stand. Innumerable Sikh witnesses were on the stand yesterday and several officers who were present at the Sikh temple on the night of September 5 following the shooting. Mr. Frank McDougal, who appears for the defence, will endeavor to show that the shooting was done in self defence and that a plot was on foot for the murder of Bela Singh because he was loyal to the immigration departments.

Several interesting events served to enliven the course of the trial, one of them being the arrest of Mit Singh, a priest now caring for the spiritual welfare of a congregation at Fraser Mills, on the charge of conspiring to kill certain persons. This is the third Sikh arrested on the same charge. The production of a Sikh newspaper published in San Francisco bearing the title of "The Mutiny" served to give some insight into the trend of thought now pursued by Oriental residents of the city.

Sohan Singh, a stubby Sikh witness, who has discarded his turban and adopted much of the western trappings, told the court that his heart was filled with love for his fellowmen and how he had never indulged in any advocacy of the murder of Bela Singh or the immigration officers. Sohan Lal repeated, word for word, the story of the shooting as told by all the other Sikh witnesses. No one saw who fired the first shot. All were looking the other way when that shot rang out but all equally are firm in the statement that Bela Singh, "the dog," as they describe him, fired that shot.

One and all declare that Bela Singh entered the sacred precincts of the temple, threw his offering into the collection pot and then sat down on the floor.

Sohan admitted he was fond of public meetings and that he sometimes gave lectures. Never, however, had he read the naughty Mutiny paper because it condemned the beloved British government in India and he was opposed to Russian rule. Asked by Mr. McDougal if he had made any speeches in the Sikh temple to the effect that Bela Singh would be better out of the road, he spent ten minutes in particular denial of the charge. He loved his

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fellow man; his fathers were honest men. He always spent several hours in prayer.

Confronted by the statements made by other Sikhs that he had frequently advocated the overthrow of British rule, he grew tearful in his denial. When asked if he had advocated the death of Harnan Singh, Bela Singh, Mr. Reid and Mr. Hopkinson, he became almost incoherent with indignation, repeated his vehement statements regarding his love for the little birds and his in-born objection to the taking of life.

"Did you not preside as judge at a mock trial while the Sikh witnesses were incarcerated in the jail and arrange the evidence you were all to give at this trial?"

"Can you believe a thing like that of me?" asked Sohan Lal. "I did not."

Evidence regarding the arrival of the police was given by Sergeant

Latimer and P. C. (22) McCarthy. They described the positions of the wounded men and the finding of the .38 calibre gun outside the temple. Dr. Curtis described the nature of the wounds in the two men causing their death. Mr. Bruce McKelvie, who was near the temple at the time of the shooting, described the order of the shots. First he heard one shot and after a brief interval, there followed a fusillade, then an interval and one more shot.

Mr. Taylor then asked the court for an adjournment in order that P. C. Lemon might be procured and placed on the stand. His lordship objected to the delay and stated that the witnesses were allowed too much liberty. "They are practically running this court" declared his lordship. Mr. Taylor insisted that the officer's evidence was necessary and apologized for the delay. The court then adjourned.