

October 27, 1914.

[1066]

DETAILS OF THAT KOMAGATA RIOT

When Hindus of the Trouble
Ship Attacked Officers
in India.

Official Report of the Govern-
ment of Bengal Published
by London Times.

The London Times just to hand contains a detailed account of the riot of the Komagata Maru Hindus on their return to India, short reference to which has already been received by cable. The Times publishes the following official communique issued by the Government of Bengal on October 1:

"Passengers on the Komagata Maru who were being repatriated by the Government of India arrived in Hooghly last Saturday evening. The Government of Bengal, having been asked to arrange for the safe conduct, at the expense of the government, to the Punjab, and so a special train was arranged to meet the steamer at Budge Budge yesterday morning. A number of Punjab officers and magistrate of twenty-four parganas with others had met the steamer, and after persuasion prevailed upon the men to land; this was effected about 2 p. m., but they were still unwilling to believe the assurance of the magistrate that they were to travel direct to Punjab. The Magistrate had power, under Ordinance No. 5 of 1914 to compel them to follow his instructions, but scrupulously refrained from exercising powers till he found that the men refused to enter the train, and were determined to march by road to Calcutta.

"He then produced the ordinance and explained its terms to the leader, but in complete disregard of his orders they proceeded on the Calcutta road, and he had not sufficient force to prevent them. Troops and police were then requested to stop them, and they were stopped when they had gone three or four miles. Sir William Duke, who had proceeded with troops, met them there, taxed their leader with a breach of the ordinance, and told them that what they had to say would be considered at Budge Budge, whither they must return. On this they went back without further demur, followed by police, and at a distance, by troops.

First a special train had already gone off with about sixty men, who most willingly had already gone on, and Sir W. Duke preceded the party to Budge Budge, and procured a second special. He was actually inside the station making final arrangements when the following occurrence took place:

"As soon as the party arrived at the station just after dusk, Mr. Donald called for the leader with the intention of explaining the position. The men suddenly became very excited, and without warning a hot revolver fire was opened on the police and officers, while others charged them with staves, knives, and even one or two swords. The revolver fire was returned by four out of the posse of sergeants, who alone were armed with revolvers. In a few seconds Sergt-Major Eastwood was brought to the ground, shot in the back. Sir Fred-eric Halliday was wounded in the foot; Mr. Petrie was shot through both legs and arm; Mr. Humphreys was seriously injured; Mr. Lomax, assistant traffic superintendent of the Eastern Bengal Railway, was fatally shot through the body, and several sergeants were badly wounded in the head.

"Troops were behind, and the affray was partly screened from them by railway fencing; also police and officers were at first mixed up with their assailants. It was only when this front was cleared, although that may not have taken many seconds, that troops could be ordered to fire; even when they did so the rioters made two or three further rushes, while one party occupied some shops from which they maintained steady fire, and here the majority of their casualties took place—sixteen rioters killed, as well as two innocent on-lookers.

In addition to the casualties above-mentioned the Punjab Police had one killed and six injured. The Punjabis scattered through the surrounding villages, a certain number surrendering to the police and picquets. An extensive combined sweeping movement is being made by the military and police to collect the rest, and up to an early hour this morning thirty-two prisoners had been made.

"The Government of Bengal deeply deplore the loss of life which has occurred. They were acting in pursuance of openly declared intention of sending to their homes the passengers who had suffered so much in pocket by the voyages of this ship. They were aware of the existence of a certain amount of strong political discontent amongst some of the passengers, and in full concurrence with the Government of the Punjab considered that the return to their native country should be prompt and direct. No one had the smallest suspicion that any of the party were armed for desperate and unprovoked attacks on British officers."

but quickly recovered himself and closed with his assailant. At this point Mr. Henry S. Belck, of the S.S. Niagara, and Mr. C. E. Michaelson, of the Wilbur Rooms, appeared on the scene and soon settled the altercation. While the officer was recovering from the effects of the first blow the Hindoo struck him a second time, almost breaking his wrist.

A subsequent examination elicited the fact that the visor of the officer's helmet alone saved him from a fractured skull. The accused man is of large proportions, standing well over 6 feet in height. The officer will be unable to resume his duties for a day or two.

JURY DISAGREES IN BELA SINGH CASE

Four Hours of Deliberation
Leaves Hindu Awaiting An-
other Trial.

After being out for four hours the jury in the case of murder against Bela Singh could not reach a verdict last night and were discharged, the accused man being remanded into custody to await another trial.

Mr. Justice Morrison, who followed the counsel for the crown and defence in addressing the jury, charged strongly for the accused man, saying that if the evidence of the defense was to be believed the man must surely be acquitted. If there was such a conflict of evidence between the two stories as to create a doubt in the minds of the jurors as to which party was telling the truth, then, his lordship said, the prisoner must be given the benefit of the doubt and be acquitted. It was not a favor on the part of the jurors to do so, but it was their bounden duty to give the accused the benefit of any reasonable doubt.

His lordship, Mr. Justice Morrison, clearly defined the law in regard to homicide and shooting in self-defence. A person is justified, he said, in repelling force with force if he be in reasonable fear of death or actual bodily harm by reason of the violence with which the attack upon him is made.

Commenting upon the evidence, his lordship said that the jury must apply various tests to determine which story to believe. They should weigh the testimony, having regard to who the witnesses for the crown and who the witnesses for the defence are. What are their antecedents?

"It is at a time like this," his lordship remarked, "that a person's previous character counts." He referred to the evidence given earlier in the day to the effect that Bela Singh was an officer of the law, and as such was entitled to carry a revolver. His conduct as an officer of the immigration department had been good.

It had been suggested that Bela Singh had no right to go to the temple at the time he did, but his lordship remarked that he thought that he was quite justified in believing that at such a solemn occasion as a funeral he would be free from attack in the sacred precincts of the temple. The desire for worship was not a thing to be scoffed at, but rather one to be commended. A white man in the city who wished to worship could go to half a dozen different churches, but with Bela Singh there was only one edifice of his faith, and it was there that he had to go to carry out the duty imposed upon him by the death of his friend.

After having been out for over an hour the jury returned for instructions upon the law in regard to the killing of a person in self-defence. His lordship again clearly defined the law and again commented upon the evidence in an effort to aid the jurors in reaching a conclusion. He said that it was better to err on the side of mercy. If any man were holding out to convict on the grounds of racial prejudice, his lordship declared, he was guilty of a terrible offence. He hoped that the jury would not be insulted at his having referred to this case. There should be no difference in the evidence in this

HINDOO STRIKES OFFICER OVER THE HEAD WITH CANE

Will be Sentenced Tomorrow
—Visor of Helmet Saved
Officer From Frac-
tured Skull.

Pleading guilty to an assault upon Police Constable (215) Smith, Sav- Singh, a Hindoo, was remanded until tomorrow for sentence by Magistrate Shaw in the police court this morning. The circumstances surrounding the case are particularly brutal, and had it not been for the ability of the officer and the timely arrival of two civilians, it is quite possible that there might have been a repetition of Tuesday's tragedy.

The incident took place at the intersection of Cordova and Carrall streets about 11:30 o'clock last night. The Hindoo was throwing orange peelings on the sidewalk, and when asked to desist the Hindoo gave vent to a torrent of abusive language. Anxious to avoid unnecessary trouble, the officer quietly repeated his request to the East Indian. In answer to the second request the Hindoo called the officer a vile name and said, "Do you think just because a Hindoo killed a white man you policemen can all go after us?"

Hardly had he completed the sentence when, without a word of warning, he dealt the officer a severe blow over the head with a cane which he had been carrying. Temporarily stunned, the officer reeled for a moment,