

W.C. HOPKINSON WAS KILLED BY HINDU THIS MORNING

Mewa Singh Freely Confesses;
Says He Is Glad
He Did It.

Attacked Official With Pair of
Guns, One of Which He
Emptied.

Unfortunate Inspector Prob-
ably Shot Through Heart
by Second Bullet.

Mayor Baxter Speaks Bitterly
Over the Killing of This
Brave Man.

Mr. William C. Hopkinson, chief assistant to Malcolm Reid in the Dominion government immigration inspection service in Vancouver, was shot in the Vancouver courthouse on Georgia street this morning by a Hindu named Mewa Singh.

Mr. Hopkinson was killed almost instantly. His assassin attempted to escape, but he, as well as other Hindus in the corridor, were arrested. Mewa Singh is understood to have freely admitted that he killed the official.

Shooting by Mewa Only.

Five shots in all were fired. Hopkinson tried to grapple with Mewa when the first shot was fired, but the second brought him to his knees. Then Hopkinson collapsed to the floor and three other shots were poured into him.

Including Mewa Singh, there were in all nine Hindus in the party which filed along the Courthouse corridor this morning. Hopkinson was standing at the door of the Assize Court which was to be called in session within a few minutes. The official was standing with his hands in his trousers' pockets. Mewa came along and suddenly pulled his hands from underneath his overcoat, a revolver in each hand. He fired the first shot into Hopkinson's breast, holding the muzzle of the revolver within a few inches of the unfortunate man's body. Hopkinson grappled with the man, but the Hindu fired again, and this bullet probably penetrated Hopkinson's heart, for the poor fellow collapsed on his knees and then on his side. Mewa continued to shoot into the prostrate body of his victim until five shots in all were fired. This apparently exhausted one revolver's capacity and then Mewa turned and attempted to flee.

Tried to Shoot McCann.

He had moved only a few feet when James McCann, the Courthouse janitor, seized him in a grip that prevented Mewa from getting away. Mewa struggled and tried to shoot McCann, but the latter was too strong and several police officers coming forward disarmed Mewa before he could do any further damage. One of his revolvers had not been discharged at all.

Immediately the shooting began, there was a great scattering of the Hindus, who had been standing in the hall. Eight of them fled towards the front door, but all were stopped by policemen before they could leave the building. All have been locked up in the cells of the provincial police at the court house. No other Hindus are allowed into the court house this morning and have been searched by the

Intend to Hurry Case.

Hopkinson was threatened at the time of the Komagata Maru visit to Vancouver, but the reason of the action this morning probably arises out of a trial now pending at the assizes. He was to have been a witness today in the case of Bela Singh, which was to have been taken up by the grand jury this morning. Yesterday, Ram Singh, another Hindu, was acquitted on a charge of murder. Hopkinson gave testimony favorable to Ram Singh, who was an enemy of Mewa Singh. The police intend to proceed immediately with the charge against Mewa Singh, so that the matter may be disposed of at the present assize. The court opening was delayed this morning by the shooting, for the body of poor Hopkinson was left for a few minutes lying on the floor at the door where he fell in order that a careful examination might be made by the police and the coroner.

Saw the Shooting.

Mr. W. A. Campbell, a witness in one of the cases now before the court, saw the shooting. He declared that Mewa Singh had committed the murder. Not a word was spoken, he told a Province reporter. Hopkinson was standing just outside of the door of the witness room in the corridor when Mewa Singh stepped towards him, and without saying a word shot. The wounded man turned and grappled with his assailant, who shot him again and again.

Head Janitor James McCann heard the shots and turning dashed towards the place with City Detectives Norman McDonald, Crewe and Sunstrum. They met seven or eight Sikhs and Hindus running down the corridor and calling to the detectives to stop them. McCann and McDonald continued to the place where Hopkinson's body lay. Mewa Singh, with the two guns in his hands, turned and threatened McCann as he dashed towards him. Never hesitating McCann sprang upon the man and grappled with him for the possession of the revolvers. He succeeded in wrenching them from his hands and threw the fanatical Sikh towards McDonald, saying "Here, take him." McDonald caught him while McCann put the guns in his pockets.

"I shoot. I don't care," is what Mewa Singh is understood to have said to McCann when arrested.

The other Sikhs and Hindus arrested and held as witnesses are Jula

(Continued on Page 12)

[029]

Oct. 1914
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21 THIS MORNING

(Continued from Page 1)

Singh, Cabal Singh, Bacat Singh, Banta, Jawala Singh, Dalip Singh, Sohan Lal and Sundar Singh. They all fled following the shooting, with the exception of Sohan Lal, who cowered terrified in the witness room.

Mewa had been befriended by the man whom he murdered. He was arrested for carrying arms, but was liberated through the intervention of Mr. Hopkinson.

When searched Mewa had cheques from other Hindus amounting to \$386 upon him. Mewa in his cell at the provincial police headquarters was cool and collected. When asked why he had done the shooting, he started a tirade in broken and unintelligible English. The only words which could be understood were frequent references to the British. He finally said that he would talk willingly through the intermediary of an interpreter.

Mayor Takes Action.

Mayor Baxter was apprised of the murder by Mr. H. H. Stevens, M. P., just as he was signing a cheque for the dead inspector's witness fees.

"This thing must stop," the mayor declared a moment after, beating his desk with his fist. "It is bad enough having these Hindus kill their fellow-countrymen but when they shoot our citizens, it has come to the limit of our endurance."

The mayor tried to reach Chief of Police McLennan by telephone at the time but both the head and the deputy chief were at the scene of the murder. The chief magistrate declared that he intended to instruct the police department to take every step within its power against the Hindu colony to make such tragedies an impossibility and the chief of police could swear in as many specials as necessary if the permanent force was not enough, he said.

Had Been Arrested Before.

Mewa Singh, who shot Inspector Hopkinson this morning, is the Hindu who was arrested at Abbotsford at the time of the Komagata Maru incident, on a charge of smuggling arms into Canada. At the time of his arrest then, he had one revolver concealed under his left armpit and another concealed in a sling alongside his leg. Two boxes of ammunition were found hidden in his boots.

Mr. W. H. D. Ladner, who prosecuted Mewa Singh on that occasion, saw him in the police cell this morning, and Mewa frankly admitted that he was the man who had been arrested at Abbotsford. At that time he was fined \$50 for carrying concealed weapons, but on his professions that the incident had been a lesson to him, and that he would henceforth become a friend of law and order, he was not punished on the smuggling charge, for which the law provides a ten-year sentence.

"This is the kind of return for our leniency," said Mr. Ladner with bitterness, as he stood before the cell of Mewa.

Mewa Says He Is Glad.

"You have killed your best friend," said an officer to the Hindu, in the cells.

"Is he dead? Sure? Then I am glad," replied the Hindu, who has spent most of the time since his arrest in a sort of spiritual exaltation, singing and humming his native airs.

His Hindu friends in the opposite cells are not talking with him. Those who have spoken disavow any foreknowledge of the crime. Sundar Singh professed to be shocked at it.

"It does no good, and it is not right to take any human life," he said.

Mewa, who is a short, stockily-built man, says he is a Sikh and is thirty-four years of age. He has lived in Canada for eight and a half years, latterly at an address on Second avenue, Fairview.

Only yesterday Inspector Hopkinson was discussing with some friends the difficulties the department was having over some of the Hindus, and he described Mewa Singh as being one of the worst Hindus in the province. Though Mewa Singh refuses to state his reason for shooting Inspector Hopkinson, it is believed to be for revenge for Inspector Hopkinson's evidence in the Ram Singh case yesterday. It was largely on Hopkinson's evidence that Ram Singh was acquitted and Ram Singh's release was a bitter disappointment to Mewa Singh and his coterie. Although Mewa Singh had not worked for many months, he had cash and cheques in his possession when arrested totalling \$385.

was a most conscientious, efficient and trustworthy officer. His assassination comes as a poignant loss to the department, myself and his other associates. His devotion to duty cost him his life. His activities in connection with the attempt of the Hindus of the Komagata Maru to secure admission to this country made him a marked man. His murder was not altogether unexpected either by himself or by his associates. We have known that attempts would be made on his life and of others."

Bullet Meant for Ifim.

The murder of Inspector Hopkinson this morning was the second attempt made within the past year to effect his death. He had repeatedly been threatened because of his activity in suppressing Hindu plots and in frustrating their attempts to spread sedition throughout the Hindu colonies in this country and through agents in this country to India.

He was in San Francisco about a year ago looking into an alleged plot and the publication of seditious literature in that city for distribution in this country. One night he was going up a narrow lane, when a man stepped out from behind a doorway and taking deliberate aim fired at his back. The bullet missed him by a small margin.

So confident were those who had planned his assassination at that time that their object had been accomplished that a report was telegraphed to this city that he had been shot and had died in a hospital to which place he had been taken.

When he was leading the attack on the Komagata Maru last July upon the occasion when the police and immigration men were so badly beaten, several shots were fired from the Hindu ship, and at that time it was well known that they were intended for Inspector Hopkinson and Superintendent of Immigration Reid. This was so evident that a friend snatched off Inspector Hopkinson's gold-laced cap and substituted his own straw, for the tell-tale badge that marked the brave officer.

An Appreciation.

The death of Inspector Hopkinson comes as a terrible shock to the official and shipping community for, during his service on the waterfront, he came in very close contact with the men whose affairs are closely related to the port. Inspector Hopkinson was a very splendid type of official. He was cool, calm and collected in many situations which might have developed into tragedy.

My impressions of his calm judgment were strengthened into conviction by his handling of the Komagata Maru trouble. "Hopkinson Sahib" was always able to take charge of the many unpleasant incidents which arose during the stay of the trouble ship in Vancouver from May 23 to July 23. His death makes the twenty-third in connection with that venture.

In the closing days of the Komagata Maru's stay in Burrard Inlet, I spent many night hours with Inspector Hopkinson in the patrol launch, and it was during those lonely night watches that he struck me as being an official of more than usual efficiency. He was brave to a fault, for he took chances which, perhaps, would have daunted others.

I remember the last night patrol with him on July 22. It was after Gurdit Singh had alarmed the authorities by unexpected demand for livestock. The Rainbow had been in the harbor all day, and the immigration officials had been on duty for nearly 24 hours straight. Sometime near midnight I went out to the Komagata Maru with Hopkinson, who bore the final ultimatum to the effect that unless they left at 5 a.m. the following morning, the Rainbow was to take charge of the situation.

The Sea Lion turned her searchlight on the gangway of the Hindu ship as our little launch drew near, and Hopkinson calmly trotted up the ladder into the midst of an avowedly hostile crowd. But his cool conduct brought him through unscathed, although we in the launch felt very anxious for his safety. The balance of the night we put in on the Sea Lion, and at daybreak next morning we went alongside the Komagata Maru. Hopkinson, alert, brave and confident, leaned from the rail and spoke to that crowd in their several languages and dialects. The Hindus were loading firewood from a scow, and the hour for departure was drawing near. Hopkinson advised the rest of us to keep out of sight while he conducted the palaver.

"Don't let's spoil the arrangement for the sake of ten minutes," he urged when suggestions were made that at 5 a.m. the lines should be cut. He spoke with the greatest confidence to the Hindus and told them to hurry up. Some of them scowled and looked

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Hopkinson's Career.

Inspector Hopkinson who was slain today was in his thirty-seventh year. He was the son of a British soldier, and though born in Yorkshire was taken as an infant to India by his parents. With his mother he was left at Lahore in the fateful year of 1878 when his father formed one of the escort which accompanied the British ambassador Sir Louis Cavagnieri to Cabul. It was the assassination of the British ambassador and his escort which led to Lord Roberts' famous march on Cabul.

Reared in India, so that he could talk the dialects like a native, Hopkinson later became a member of the Indian Volunteer Rifles and a member of the police staff at Calcutta and police chief at Lahore. He came to Canada nine years ago and for the past six years has been a valued member of the Vancouver office of the immigration department. With his wife and two little daughters, aged two and six, he had resided at 1754 Barclay street, until they recently moved to 2526 Fifth avenue west.

Since coming to Vancouver Inspector Hopkinson had become a member of the Sixth Regiment and was a corporal in C Company. One of the first men to pass the dead body of the inspector as it lay covered with a coat on the Courthouse pavement was Col. H. D. Hulme of the Sixth Regiment, who was on his way to consult with his law partner, Mr. A. D. Taylor, K. C., the crown prosecutor.

"Who is it?" asked Col. H. D. Hulme.

"It is poor Hopkinson of the immigration department," replied a constable.

"One of my own men; one of the best," ejaculated Col. Hulme, taken by surprise.

Tributes to Dead Officer.

Mr. H. H. Stevens, M. P., and Mr. Malcolm Reid, superintendent of the Dominion immigration service for British Columbia, both expressed themselves in terms of highest commendation in speaking of the assassinated officer.

"Mr. Hopkinson was one of the most faithful and cautious officers we had in the government service," remarked the former. "His death will be a great loss to the department. His wide and varied experience in immigration matters, his command of many languages and his knowledge of the subtleties of the Oriental mind make him a very hard man to replace.

Mr. Reid said: "Mr. Hopkinson

spent many night hours with Inspector Hopkinson in the patrol launch, and it was during those lonely night watches that he struck me as being an official of more than usual efficiency. He was brave to a fault, for he took chances which, perhaps, would have daunted others.

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"Don't let's spoil the arrangement for the sake of ten minutes," he urged when suggestions were made that at 5 a.m. the lines should be cut. He spoke with the greatest confidence to the Hindus and told them to hurry up. Some of them scowled and looked nasty, far too nasty for we civilians to take chances, but Hopkinson never moved and his very air of determination drove those Orientals.

He did not like publicity, and he was a very hard man to get any information from. But the newspapermen who came into such close contact with him formed a very high opinion of his worth. To think that "Hoppy" was shot down without a second's warning, comes as a terrible blow to men who are not accustomed to giving way to feelings. God rest his soul, and let his epitaph be: "Here died a brave official who, in the pursuit of his duty, fearlessly faced death daily."