

12676 vol 601 file 879545 pt 3
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one subject in any one letter.

In your reply refer to No.

File 53

6.

Immigration Branch

Department of the Interior
Canada

B 14352

Vancouver, B.C. 8th July,

1914.

159 W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory
WHC/DMcN.
Sir,

With further reference to my letter of the 7th instant, regarding Gurdit Singh's enterprise, I now beg to inform you, that as a result of the decision handed down in the Appeal Courts of British Columbia, Gurdit Singh with his committee of six on board the "Komagata Maru" have expressed their willingness in writing to their legal adviser, to waive all Boards of Inquiry.

This now brings the position of affairs to a point, where these people are willing to return to Hong Kong at the earliest opportunity.

Since his arrival here, Gurdit Singh has assigned his charter to H. Rahim and Bhag Singh, as representing the Hindu Committee ashore.

This assignment took place on the understanding that the sum of \$14,000 would be paid by these men to fulfil the charter obligations, and thus have control of the ship till the 27th September 1914. This money has been paid, and was subscribed by the members of this community in Vancouver and vicinity.

Under the terms of the Immigration Act, Sections 25, 44, 45 and 46, the charterers are responsible for the return of these Hindus to Hong Kong; but I am afraid that the terms of the Sections cannot be enforced, in view of the fact, that the new charterers are not in a position to undertake the expenses of provisioning and watering the ship for the return East, and further, they have no desire to lose the sum of \$14,000 in this enterprise, which would be the case if this boat were to return immediately.

Counsel on behalf of the new charterers, has proposed certain conditions viz:- (1) that this boat be permitted to load a cargo for her outward voyage, and the Government to pay a sum of \$100.00 a piece as passage money for the return of these Hindus; or in the alternative, provision and water the ship and pay the charterers the sum of \$20,000 in cash, when the boat would sail immediately

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for Hong Kong.

The Government are not compelled to accept, under any circumstances, either of these two or both conditions, and certain suggestions have been made by Mr. Reid in connection with the disposition of this vessel and her passengers.

I believe that if we eventually are able to come to an understanding and utilize the "Komagata Maru" for the return of these men, it will entail a cost of nearly seven or eight thousand dollars to provision and water the ship for the 30 days voyage; but if it cannot be arranged, and I have every reason to believe that the charterers will not accede to this arrangement, and the only other solution seems to me, is to deport them en masse at once on one of the liners to Hong Kong. The Canadian Pacific Railway have, I believe, willing to give a charity rate of \$35.00 a head which in the case of some 355 men, would cost in the neighbourhood of \$12,425.00. At the time of writing, this matter is under consideration by the Canadian Government. As I have stated before, the majority of these men are penniless, and the whole undertaking is a dead loss to both the men on board and the Hindus ashore.

Stephen

Gurdit Singh has proposed, through his legal advisers, to ask the sanction of the Canadian Government for permission to land as a tourist, and allowed to proceed to London, England. What his idea of such a proposition is, I am unable to definitely decide; but I believe it is nothing more than an attempt on his part to leave his compatriots, and avoid any trouble that might be raised on their return to Hong Kong. I do not think the Canadian Government will sanction this application, and I further believe, that the Hindus on board will not consent to his leaving them in the lurch.

For the first time, yesterday Gurdit Singh exhibited for

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inspection a letter from a firm of solicitors named, Wilkinson & Grist of 9 Queen's Road, Hong Kong.

I enclose you herewith a copy of this communication, and in doing so, would point out that Gurdit Singh alleges that he undertook this enterprise on the statements contained in this letter. When asked why this letter was not handed over in the first instance, he stated that he made the same over to the committee on shore who had only returned it to him the day before yesterday. Gurdit Singh and his committee on the ship, have entirely mis-understood the contents of this letter, inasmuch, on the face of it and I do not know that it can be construed otherwise, it deals with the question of Emigration from the Colony of Hong Kong and the Rules and Regulations pertaining to this matter. This appears to me to be simply an attempt on the part of Gurdit Singh to justify his undertaking.

Yours obediently,
W. C. HOPKINSON

W.W.Cory Esq., C.M.G.

Deputy Minister of the Interior,

Ottawa.

*Copy for the information of
W. D. Scott Esq.
Superintendent of Immigration
Ottawa*