

[E. Blake Robertson, Assistant Superintendent of Immigration, to Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister, re Komagata Maru]

OTTAWA, 20th July, 1914.

Sir Robert Borden,

In accordance with our understanding I handed to the newspaper correspondents asking for information about the "Komagata Maru", the following statement:-

"The Captain of the 'Komagata Maru' was given till six o'clock last night to state whether or not he intended to obey the deportation orders which had been served upon him covering the rejected Hindus. Shortly after that hour he reported that the passengers prevented him from getting up steam and asked for assistance. About 100 policemen and immigration officers went out to the vessel in the largest tug available, but were unable to gain the decks of the 'Komagata Maru' in the face of the stubborn resistance offered by the Hindus on board who from all parts of the ship hurled down on the officers, coal, iron bars, pieces of machinery, tobacco and smoke, injuring many and smashing the windows of the tug. Some shots were fired by the Hindus, but the officers did not return the fire, and at 9 a.m. the tug retired and returned to the wharf, taking with them their twenty injured, amongst whom was the captain of the tug suffering from two broken ribs. Fortunately none of the injuries received are likely to be fatal.

The self-restraint of the police and immigration officers under great provocation is appreciated and highly commended by the Acting Minister.

While desirous that no unnecessary violence should be used, the Government are determined that the law shall without fail be effectively and rigidly enforced, and with this end in view have authorized the use of the 'Rainbow' to effect a landing when, if necessary to secure and maintain control, the full number of Hindus will be landed, a proceeding which in view of their violent actions last night, is fully justifiable.

The Government has instructed its agents to deport all rejected Hindus on the 'Empress of Japan' next Thursday if it appears that deportation by 'Komagata Maru' cannot be promptly and effectively accomplished, and is also taking legal proceedings against the master and charterers of the 'Komagata Maru'.

(Sd) E. Blake Robertson,
Assistant Superintendent of Immigration.

IDENTIFIER

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ARTIST

Borden, Robert L., 1854-1937; Robertson, E. Blake