

THE DAILY PROVINCE

JUNE 5, 1914

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ON HUNGER STRIKE, BUT ONLY IN THE DAYTIME

**Believed that Hindus, Starving All Day, Raid the
Pantry at Night.**

**Anyway, Captain Yamamoto Thinks It is All a Good
Joke.**

**Gurdit Singh Wishes to Sail Back to India, for
Another Shipload, Maybe.**

**Leader Sends Another Message to King,
Complaining that He is Hungry.**

The Hindus are still going hungry. A courier from the Komagata Maru brought news ashore this morning that none of the Hindus have broken the hunger strike which they inaugurated on Wednesday evening.

It is stated that an official of the immigration department, who went out to the ship late yesterday afternoon, was kept waiting for some time while the Hindus finished their prayers in the small temple that they have aboard ship. When prayers were finished he was informed that the Hindus had collectively taken the vow not to eat anything more until they were released in a body. They have decided too(Sic) not to allow any one of their number to come ashore unless all come at the same time. They declared that they would stay there and die rather than eat again while virtually kept in jail.

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It is related that Captain Yamamoto thought the best joke of the day was that while the rank and file of the Hindus declined to partake of food, Gurdit Singh, the leader, was taking his meals regularly.

Eat Heartily at Night.

It is shrewdly suspected by the Japanese officers aboard the vessel that the "hunger strike" is merely a bluff. They believe that at night, after the immigration guards are withdrawn, the Hindus cook and eat a great quantity of food—sufficient to last them over the next day.

Mr. J. E. Bird, counsel for the Hindus, went out in a launch last evening and Gurdit Singh was allowed to come down and talk with him from another launch. They were in consultation for a couple of hours. Mr. Bird declined to say anything more than that he would probably soon be in a position to make a proposal for a temporary solution of the present deadlock.

From another source(Sic) it was learned that Mr. Bird this morning forwarded a formal offer to the immigration officials which the latter have referred to Ottawa for decision. The plan outlined by Gurdit Singh, through Mr. Bird's letter, is that the Hindu charterer shall be allowed temporarily to bring his men ashore in order that the ship may come alongside the dock, discharge her cargo of coal and after being cleaned take on a cargo of lumber for Hongkong or some other Oriental port. Gurdit Singh proposed to rent or erect a suitable building to temporarily house the would-be immigrants and, of course, to pay the remainder of the charter money to the steamer in order that she may be held to take the Hindus back if they are finally ordered deported when the courts are finished with their cases. Gurdit Singh also offers to feed his men during the time they are ashore.

Gurdit in a Hurry.

It develops too that Gurdit Singh wants all this done in a hurry. On excellent authority it is learned that he intends if possible to sail back to the Orient, if he can arrange things here in the meantime, leaving aboard the Empress of Russia a week from today. It is rumored that he intends to go back

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to India to exert all possible influence there in favor of the men held here.

Gurdit could be in Calcutta within three or four weeks and with the cases of the Komagata Hindus pending in Vancouver he might make things very interesting for the officials on the other side.

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Also he might stir up quite a lively time among his countrypeople(Sic) in the way of an agitation while the question is still hot in Vancouver. Also it is suggested that he may intend to charter a new boat entirely and bring another party –men who would be well supplied with cash and who could not be refused admission on the ground that they had not come direct from the land of their birth.

Objections to Plan.

Gurdit Singh's entire proposal has been submitted to the department at Ottawa. Vancouver immigration officials decline to discuss the matter, but in official circles there does not appear to be much apprehension that the government will countenance the plan for a moment. There are a number of objections to it. First, there is no building in the city that could be rented for such a purpose as housing all these Hindus and the time involved that they might be "temporarily" held up is very indefinite. It is possible that with the Hindus safely ashore appeals might be carried along for two years. It would be a gigantic task to keep guards over them all this time, especially in view of the feeling against the Hindus landing among all classes in Vancouver and the everpresent(Sic) possibility of a recurrence of rioting. Then it might turn out to be a very protracted job to get the Hindus back on the steamer, once the government consented to allow them off, even if they were finally ordered to be deported. A writ of habeas corpus is much more effective ashore than at sea, as well.

Send More Cables.

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Gurdit Singh sent ashore a few more cables this morning. The chief ones were for the King and the Duke of Connaught. He recited that there were 360 of His Majesty's subjects still aboard the ship and that they were starving because they had been refused provisions by Superintendent Reid.

Ashore the board of enquiry resumed this morning and the session will again be called this afternoon. No business was done this morning and the chances are about a million to one that none will be done this afternoon. The reason is that the three whose cases were partly heard still remain away and will not appear for trial. An official was sent out to the ship this morning for the trio, but he was referred to Gurdit Singh, who said that until the officials would hear them all former residents with brand new arrivals, none at all would go ashore.