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one subject in any one letter.

CONFIDENTIAL

In your reply refer to No. File 58

6.

Immigration Branch

WCH/DHON.



Department of the Interior
Canada

B 04697

Vancouver, B.C. 17th June 1914.

Sir,

In continuation of my letter of the 10th instant, regarding the Hindu immigrants on the S.S. "Komagata Maru", I beg to inform you that the situation is practically the same as it was on the date of the above letter, with the exception that the passengers on this boat are now becoming very restive.

There are several causes leading to this; primarily, of course, is their detention on board pending the examination. The shortage of provisions, the delay in their examinations and the strict surveillance that is being kept over this boat, has resulted in disputes between the passengers and Gurdit Singh. The latter is now unable to handle the crowd, and as an example of his inability to control the situation, I give you below an instance.

There are two Japanese warships due to visit Vancouver within a day or so. The "Komagata Maru" is berthed at a pont which is usually occupied by warships on a visit to this harbour. This being the case, the harbour-master yesterday instructed the captain of this boat to proceed under steam to another berth, about 300 yards East from where she is at present anchored. The captain accordingly instructed his engineers to get up steam and move the vessel; but the Hindus on learning of the intended move, refused to permit the engine-room crew and the firemen to perform their duties, by obstructing the doors leading to the engine-room. The captain being apprised of this situation, tried to induce the Hindus to desist from their actions; but his protestations were of no avail.

He communicated this state of affairs to Messrs Gardner Johnson, Agents for the Owner, who took up the matter with the harbour-master. Yesterday afternoon, Mr. Johnson proceeded on board the "Komagata Maru" with a view to impress the charterer and his passengers of the futility of their obstruction in the movement

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of the ship. Gurdit Singh informed Mr. Johnson in my presence, that he was quite willing to permit the vessel to move to her new berth; but that the passengers on board would not permit such action.

After a dispute on the subject for nearly over one hour, I addressed the Hindus on board on the subject, and advised them that the ship was to be moved to make place for the visiting warships. Apparently the majority of the passengers, either through wilfulness or instructions, would not see the situation as I laid it before them. They said that there had been too much delay in this matter, and believed that the present move was at the instance of the Immigration Department for some ulterior object. The suggestion was made by some of them, that if two of their leaders from shore, Bhag Singh and Balwant Singh (Priest), came out on the Immigration launch and advised them from that boat, that the intended removal of this ship had no object other than of making place for the warships, they would consent to its removal; but only on the understanding that she be berthed in her new position by tugs and not under her own steam. I considered the situation, and advised Mr. Johnson to acquiesce to this arrangement and he consented, and left the ship to consult the harbour-master, and within an hour of his leaving the ship, we were informed through his office that the harbour-master had decided not to move the "Komagata Maru".

Another difficulty has arisen in connection with the examination of Hindus on this boat. The manifest of this boat, as furnished us by the charterer, contains certain information in conformity with the Immigration regulations,

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one of which calls for the declaration of the amount of money in the possession of each passenger. In the cases that have come before the Board of Inquiry, none of the applicants have hitherto been able to produce the amount of money noted against their names, and in nearly every instance, in lieu of the cash, they have produced a receipt, alleged to be signed by Gurdit Singh, for the sum on deposit with him, and in some instances where no amount is noted, against them, they claim to have money on board.

After a conference between ourselves, it was decided to give Gurdit Singh notice to hand over the amounts of money as noted on the manifests to the passengers, so that when the Immigration Officers called within three hours to check up the amounts in the possession of each man in conjunction with the information on the manifests, the passengers would be able to produce the actual amount of money in their possession.

Gurdit Singh absolutely refuses to return the money on deposit with him, and stated he was in a position to satisfy the Authorities that none of the passengers on his ship would ever become a public charge, and moreover, that the Hindus were here and intended to take up land and become farmers. I advised Gurdit Singh that such action on his part was of no avail, and that those people who had deposited their money with him were entitled to a refund so that they could produce the amount stated on the manifests to the Immigration Officers, and that failure on the part of these people to do so, when appearing for examination, would result in more delay and perhaps in a decision against them.

Gurdit Singh apparently considers "a bird in hand is worth two in a bush", and will hold on to the money in his possession as long as he can, notwithstanding the fact that this action on his

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his part, will cause a great deal of inconvenience to those who he has brought here. In 90% of the cases, independent of the money deposited with Gurdit Singh, the Hindus have no other resources, and unless this money is returned to them, they will be absolutely penniless on their arrival in Hong Kong, if the consignment is ordered back. I am led to believe that one of the reasons for Gurdit Singh's refusal to return the money is, that some kind of action in the Law Courts will be instituted against him for the recovery of these amounts, and this is an opportunity which he is openly courting, for besides the question of a refund, he is confident that once the matter is taken into court, his hand will be strengthened and the question of their detention and examination will be in the hands of the judicial authorities. Dr. Raghunath Singh, the medical officer on this ship, has received intimation of the termination of his contract. This officer's situation on board is assuming a serious aspect. With him on the ship are his wife and child. The permission which was granted Dr. Raghunath Singh to proceed on shore for the purpose of purchasing medical supplies and the interviews that the Immigration Department have had with him, has led Gurdit Singh and his fellow passengers to suspect that a collusion exists between this officer and the Immigration Department. Confidentially speaking, we have received a good deal of information and assistance from this medical officer, and I have arranged to receive from him a confidential report for the information of our Government, the Imperial Government and the Government of India, and which I hope to transmit

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within the course of a few days. This report will contain some valuable information, and owing to the details and other matters connected therewith, he is undertaking to write the same in his own language, as he avers that he cannot express the situation in the English language as clearly as in his own. I am led to believe that this officer's connection with the "Komagata Maru" and the assistance rendered to our Department, will be the subject of a confidential report to the Department.

Further developments will be reported.

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.)