

THE EAST INDIANS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A Report regarding the proposal to
provide work in British Honduras
for the indigent unemployed among
them.



Published under the authority of HONOURABLE FRANK OLIVER,
MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR.

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The Honourable the Minister of the Interior:

Sir,—I beg to submit a report regarding the steps taken by the Department with a view to efficiently dealing with the conditions among the East Indian community of British Columbia, which it was anticipated last summer would prevail during the present winter.

The anticipations were that a very large number of the community would be without work and without money,—in a word, would be public charges—and that there would be a repetition of last winter's conditions.

The steps taken in this connection were designed to prevent the possibility of hundreds of Hindus, (using this term to include Hindus proper, Sikhs and Mohammedans) becoming a burden upon Vancouver and vicinity; to offer as an alternative to the necessity of wholesale deportation to India a measure of opportunity in a country climatically better suited to them, and one in which they would be able to compete more successfully with other labour than they are in British Columbia.

British Honduras was one of the countries which, it appeared, might offer a satisfactory asylum. To permit the East Indians to judge for themselves whether British Honduras would prove attractive to them, they were asked to appoint two delegates to visit Honduras, the Dominion paying the expenses. The delegates appeared to be pleased with Honduras while there. They sometimes complained of the mosquitoes, and pointed out that the wages offered were low, but in all conversations I had with them, they appeared to consider Honduras a good place for the unemployed East Indians of British Columbia. I had no reason to believe they would not so report, but when they arrived in Vancouver, they reported strongly

against Honduras, and the community decided that no Hindus should go there. It appears to me that various influences, apart from the actual conditions in Honduras, operated largely to bring about this decision. These I shall refer to in detail in the body of this report.

Teja Singh, an educated East Indian, who came from the United States to Vancouver while the delegates were in Honduras, and who has, apparently, become the absolute dictator of the community, stated in a public lecture in Vancouver on Nov. 21st, that there were then 30 p.c. of the East Indians unemployed. That would mean about 1,000 in all British Columbia; 500 or 700 in the Vancouver district.

On account of the appreciable improvement in business conditions in British Columbia during the past couple of months, the exceptionally favourable weather conditions that have prevailed during the fall and early winter, and on account of special efforts by the community itself, it is hoped, however, that there will be no such suffering among the Hindus this winter as existed among them during previous winters.

HINDU CONDITIONS INVESTIGATED.

While in Vancouver upon other departmental business, I received the following by wire from the Superintendent of Immigration, under date July 8th, 1908:—

"I understand that a large number of Hindus are now
"a public charge on the Pacific coast, and are anxious to
"return to their native country. Please investigate this
"carefully and advise me by wire."

To the above I sent the following reply:—

W. D. SCOTT,
Supt. Immigration, Ottawa, Ont.

"Your wire received last evening. So far as Vancouver
"is concerned, it cannot be said any Hindus are public
"charge. Estimated 1,500 Hindus here and vicinity.
"Probably 700 of them out of work, and practically no
"prospect of getting any. They do not apply to public
"bodies for relief, but good many seek relief privately. City
"not feeding any. About thirty have asked Monro to de-
"port them. Doubt if one hundred would voluntarily seek
"deportation now, though more probably will as winter
"approaches. Prospect for winter for Hindus very un-
"favourable. Concensus opinion Hindus physically and
"mentally unfit to compete successfully in Canada, and that

"many will become public charges or starve this winter.
"Best course seems to be to notify them that all applying
"before specified date will be returned to India free, after
"which those who are indigent will be arrested and deport-
"ed. Can get detailed information in week if necessary.
"Advise me, writing fully."

J. B. HARKIN.

Enquiries in this connection impressed on me the seriousness of the outlook for a large number of the East Indians with respect to the approaching winter. The great suffering that there was among the East Indians during the two previous winters is a matter of common knowledge.

It is well known that commercial conditions were in a very depressed condition last summer, and at that time no one could give any assurance of any considerable improvement at an early date. It was evident that a large number of East Indians were out of work, and after the severe conditions of the previous winter, it was also apparent that unless action was taken early to have relief measures of some kind for the Hindus worked out before the approach of another winter, there was a strong probability of very serious conditions prevailing in British Columbia with respect to the East Indians when winter arrived.

It seemed to be likely that either there would be great misery and suffering among the members of the community, or the municipal or other authorities would have to look after them. This was the generally accepted view in Vancouver, so far as I could see, and it seemed justified by what anyone could see daily on the streets of Vancouver.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION.

However, I did not satisfy myself with general enquiries, but as far as possible got specific information. I consulted everyone that I had any reason to believe was likely to possess specific information.

Among those consulted were government immigration officials, municipal officials, employment agents, newspaper men, business men and white men who spoke Hindustani and were in close touch with the East Indians. The specific information from all sources was corroborative of the general view held at the Coast, viz., that there would be a large number of East Indians without work and without money during the approaching winter, and that unless assistance in some form was provided, there would be a repetition of the conditions of the previous winter.

In company with Dr. A. S. Monro (then Immigration Agent, now Medical Examiner for the Immigration Branch at Vancouver)

I visited the chief employment agents in Vancouver to ascertain the general and prospective labour conditions. The result of our enquiries showed that there were several hundred white men out of work then, and that unless there was an unexpected improvement in conditions, there would be several thousand white men in Vancouver without work during the winter.

HINDUS CAPABILITIES.

Enquiries were next made to ascertain to what extent the East Indian could compete successfully with the white man. General enquiries always brought out the statement that physically and mentally, the East Indian was not suited to the conditions in British Columbia. Enquiries were made among employers known to have employed some Hindu labour, and though a private employer picks and chooses those he considers most likely to make good, the replies on the whole indicated that while the Hindu might in most cases earn the comparatively low wage paid him, he could not class with white labour.

From this it seemed reasonable to suppose that if there were several thousand unemployed white men in Vancouver during the winter—in addition to large numbers of Japanese and Chinese—the chances of any considerable number of East Indians being able to retain work would be very slight.

Enquiries among white men familiar with the language and with the East Indians themselves indicated that there were then (July) from 600 to 900 unemployed East Indians in the Vancouver district, and that many had had nothing but occasional odd jobs to do since the previous winter.

Mr. W. C. Hopkinson (Inspector Indian Police, Calcutta) on leave in Canada, wrote from Vancouver to Sir Wilfrid Laurier under date of Sept. 6, 1908, regarding the Hindu situation. His letter summarized the conditions as follows:—

“To put the whole situation concisely, the facts stand as follows:—

“(1) There are about 3,000 Hindus in British Columbia.

“(2) From 700 to 1,000 of them are out of work, and in the winter the number is likely to be about 2,000.

“(3) The kind of work they are at present engaged in is as follows:—

(a) Labourers in sawmills and railway construction..

(b) Clearing land on contracts.

(c) Farm labourers.

(d) Cultivation on their own land.

“(4) The average wages earned are from 50c. to \$1.00 a day.

“(5) There is a certain percentage (about 15%) who have done well enough, inasmuch that they have bought tracts of land with what they saved from earnings combined with what they brought with them, and started dairy farming and vegetable gardening, which industries have yielded them sufficient to keep them from starving.

“(6) The leaders of the community are feeling the strain brought on them by the constant drain on their funds to support those out of work, and they feel that they cannot hold out any longer and face the situation in the coming winter.

“Mr. Harkin, in his recent visit here, asked me to sound the leaders on the following proposition: Would the Hindus go to the West Indies, where the labour and climate conditions were such that there would be no difficulty in finding work; in fact they would, as a matter of fact, be engaged for a certain number of years on indentures. This, the leaders, after holding meetings, decided to be the best way out of their difficulties, provided four of their number be sent to the West Indies to look over the proposal thoroughly, and the exodus of the Hindus would depend on their report on their return.

“It is the intention of these people, if possible, not to return to India, where the conditions are no better, but to accept whatever is put forward. I have had several of them question me as to when this West Indian proposition would be put through, but as I have no information, I cannot give them an idea.”

In further reference to the general labour situation, I should add that I was also informed that the Chinese Board of Trade estimated there were at that time 1,500 Chinamen out of work.

SOLUTION SOUGHT.

It will be seen that everything pointed to a very serious state of affairs among the Hindus during the winter. With such a prospect in view, it seemed imperative that something should be done to prepare for it. I spent several weeks consulting everyone that I was told might provide information as to the best way of dealing

J. B. Herkin, Private Secretary to the Minister of the Interior
to the Hon. J. B. Herkin, Superintendent of Immigration

Vancouver, 29 July, 1908

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with the subject, having in mind three objects: To avoid the necessity of deportation; to prevent indigent East Indians becoming a public charge upon the people of Vancouver; to provide work elsewhere for the unemployed East Indians of British Columbia, in order that they might be protected against suffering and want in Canada.

Many propositions were made and considered. The possibility of securing work for them in Fiji, Hawaii, Cuba, the Panama Canal Zone, was gone into. There were obvious objections to all these places. They were all dismissed in favour of a suggestion made to me by Rev. John Knox Wright, of Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Fairview, B. C. Mr. Wright had been a missionary in the West Indies, where there is a very large East Indian population, and his suggestion was that the unemployed East Indians of British Columbia should be secured employment in the West Indies under the indenture system that prevails there. In a letter dated Vancouver, July 29th, 1908, and addressed to the Supt. of Immigration, I reported in part as follows, in this connection:—

"To avoid the necessity of deportation, I have been sending you suggestions from time to time, as I got them. "It seems to me that it would be well to bear them all in mind, if any action at this stage is decided upon. The "best proposed, I think, is the one that the Colonial Office "should be induced to send one of its Coolie ships here and "take a load of Hindus to the West Indies from here, instead of a load from India. I am told that each year the "Colonial Office takes three or four ship loads of Coolies "from India to work on plantations in the West Indies. The "Coolies are indentured for a term of three years. They "receive, I believe, a shilling a day, and the Government "sees that they are provided with proper accommodation, "medical attendance and such. The Coolies taken there are "not of the same caste as the Hindus here. These here "are Punjabi, while those ordinarily taken to the West "Indies are from the United Provinces. The Hindus here "are said to be a considerably better class. This difference, "however, will not stand in the way of the Hindus here going "to the West Indies. They say that as long as they do not "have to live in the same buildings or eat with the other "Hindus, there will be no trouble about the work.

"If it is proposed to do anything in connection with "this proposal, I think we should without delay get a promise "from the Colonial Office to send one of the Coolie ships here, "if we can provide the passengers. Once we get that, we "should send three or four Hindus leaders on a hurried trip "to the West Indies, so they can see conditions as they are.

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"If these delegates report favourably, there will be no "trouble moving the crowd out. Even if their report were "adverse—and I do not see how it could be—I feel sure that "Hindus would rather go there than face deportation. I "think the idea of sending a few delegates is a good one, "because it is desirable that throughout there should not "be any appearance of harshness towards the Hindus, and a "favourable report would mean voluntary departure from "Canada.

"I had Hopkinson spend a day among the Hindus, "talking to them on the West Indies proposal. He simply "spoke to them as a friend, and not as representing the "Government at all. Their replies were to this effect: 'We "are quite willing to consider the scheme. Though the "shilling a day is small compared to the wages here, per- "manency of employment might compensate. However, "we have been deceived so much by white people here, "and been subjected to so much hostility, that we simply "won't trust any white man. If some of our own leaders "go to the Indies and report favourably on the conditions, "the unemployed Hindus here will be glad to go.' * * * "If we can get any considerable number of Hindus elsewhere "and they write back to those left here that they are doing "well, I think many of those remaining will follow them "and the Hindu question soon cease to be of moment here. "They are naturally dissatisfied with conditions and treat- "ment they have encountered here, and would not stay, I "believe, if they could find things more favourable else- "where."

AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL.

The West Indies proposition was subsequently brought to the attention of the Imperial authorities, and a reply was received suggesting that Canada should bear the expenses of a delegation of Hindus to British Honduras, where there was a good demand for labour, and where a large quantity of land was available for settlement. The despatch was as follows:—

P. C. 2389 M

Privy Council.

LORD CREWE TO LORD GREY,
London.

19th September, 1908.

High Commissioner has communicated to me suggestion from Department of Interior that arrangements might be made for send-

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ing some hundreds of unemployed Hindoos now in British Columbia to West Indies as indentured immigrants, in order to avoid distress. Question of indenture would involve considerable correspondence and delay (such)? labour is much wanted in British Honduras, and ample land is, I understand, available for settlement. I would therefore suggest (t)here may be a good opening for Indian settlers and labourers without the necessity of formal indenture. Legislature of British Honduras must be consulted before any expenditure from funds of that colony could be incurred.

As a preliminary step, would Dominion Government be willing to defray expenses of sending three or four leading Hindoos to British Honduras as delegates to report on local conditions; such a mission would be advisable in order to obviate possibility of misunderstanding, rate of wages for agricultural labour being much lower than in Canada.

It would be a great additional advantage if Canadian officer of standing could visit British Honduras at the same time as delegate. Governor of British Honduras is now in England, and on hearing from you, he will be further consulted. I shall be very glad if in this, or in any other ways, I can help the Dominion Government with regard to this difficult problem or coloured immigration.

(Sgd.) CREWE.

It will be observed that the Honduras proposal emanated from London. The Dominion proposal concerned the West Indian Islands where there is said to be an East Indian population of considerably over 100,000, and where these people are said to be well satisfied with their situation.

STEPS TAKEN.

Upon receipt of the London proposal the Dominion forwarded a reply that it would arrange for a delegation to British Honduras, and would pay the expenses thereof. I was then directed by the Deputy Minister of the Interior to at once proceed to Vancouver and carry out all arrangements in connection with the proposal. I arrived in Vancouver on Sunday, October 11th. On Monday, I personally discussed the proposal with people that I knew were familiar with East Indian conditions, and on Tuesday I had a general meeting in my room for the purpose of having these people discuss with me the best way to proceed. Those in attendance were the Rev. John Knox Wright, who lived among the East Indians in the West Indies for a number of years, Capt. C. J. Brook, retired officer of the Indian Army, J. H. McGill, (Immigration Agent), W. C. Hopkinson, (Inspector Indian Police, Calcutta.)

During the discussion I pointed out that there did not appear to be nearly as many Hindus wandering about the streets as there were

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in the spring and the summer, but the view held was that while many of the Hindus who had been unemployed were now at work on farms, and in orchards, the employment was only temporary and that the general situation and prospects as regards the winter were not seriously different from those that prevailed earlier in the summer.

It was decided that it would be well to have East Indian delegates appointed and sent to British Honduras without delay. Word was sent on Tuesday, October 13th, to the leaders of the community to attend a meeting on Wednesday morning, 14th, in the basement of Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Fairview. At this meeting besides the East Indian leaders, there were present Rev. John Knox Wright, Capt. C. J. Brooke, J. H. McGill, W. C. Hopkinson, and myself. The East Indians were addressed by Capt. Brooke and Mr. Hopkinson. Rev. Mr. Wright also spoke, though briefly.

PROPOSAL EXPLAINED.

The proposal was explained to the East Indians in this way:

You all know how a large number of East Indians suffered last winter. You all know that a large number of East Indians have been out of work most of the summer. You know yourselves that the prospects for the coming winter are anything but bright. The Immigration Act provides that any immigrant who becomes a public charge shall be deported. If Hindus are without work and without money this winter, and thus become public charges, they cannot be allowed to remain a charge on Vancouver or other places, and will have to be deported. The Government does not want to have to deport East Indians, and with the winter in mind, has been looking for some place that would offer work and more favourable conditions for them than British Columbia does. The Imperial authorities have pointed out that there is a good demand for labour and ample land available for settlement in British Honduras, and have asked Canada to pay the expenses of a delegation of East Indians to British Honduras in order that the East Indians may see for themselves whether Honduras would be a good place for them. We, ourselves, do not know anything about Honduras. We want the community to appoint two delegates who can go and see the country and report back to the community whether it offers opportunities which it would be to their advantage to seize.

PROPOSAL WELL RECEIVED.

The leaders seemed to me to be pleased that the government was taking an interest in their behalf, and promptly agreed to appoint two delegates. They at first wished to appoint two Sikhs, but I refused to allow this and insisted on the appointment of a Sikh and a Hindu, to represent the two principal East Indian elements in

British Columbia. They indicated the two they thought should go. I said that as the affair was a community one, the selection must be ratified by a meeting of the community. I asked them to have such a meeting that same night. They promised to notify as many of the community as possible to meet at their Temple building that night. The meeting was held on the ground floor of the Temple building, (the Temple is upstairs). There was only a small attendance, but those present again indicated their choice and I was given a certificate that Nagar Singh (Sikh), and Sham Singh (Hindu) had been selected.

IN HONDURAS.

The next day, Thursday, October 15th, the delegates, W. C. Hopkinson, whom I engaged as interpreter, and myself, left Vancouver for British Honduras. We arrived at Belize, the Capital, on Sunday, October 25th. On Monday, 26th, I presented my credentials to the Acting Governor, Hon. A. Collet, (who was acting in the absence of Governor Swayne, who was in England), and he arranged to call a general meeting of planters and citizens for Tuesday to consider the proposition.

Numerous meetings were subsequently held, and an arrangement made regarding the terms and conditions the government and planters of British Honduras were prepared to offer Hindu labourers.

As regards plantation labour these were:

Term.—One to three years as the labourer might elect.

Hours.—Fifty hours per week, not exceeding nine hours in any one day.

Wages.—Eight dollars (gold standard) per month with rations, or twelve dollars per month, without rations.

Rations.—Flour, rice and various other articles. (The list was approved by the delegates.)

House accommodation.—Free.

All the terms were included in an Ordinance, and were thus enforceable in the Courts. In the Ordinance were incorporated the various provisions for the protection of employer and employee in the ordinary labour Ordinance of the country. It was also provided that all the contracts should be made between the East Indians and the Government, the latter allotting them to private employers as it saw fit.

From the Government was received:

Offer to immediately grant to 100 East Indians free grants of 10 acres of land near the new Government railway. This was subsequently increased to an offer of 200. The Government was prepared to go further in the way of land grants as soon as surveys could be carried out.

Offer to employ 200 East Indians upon the construction of the new Government railway and other public works.

Offer to employ 12 Sikhs upon the Honduras police force.

The Government also undertook to ascertain how many East Indians could be offered immediate employment by planters, and to forward to Canada an order for the number required.

As large areas of good lands in Honduras are held by private owners, I saw as many of these people as possible and got letters from them setting forth the terms on which they would dispose of land to East Indians. The terms were varied but in nearly all cases exceedingly fair and reasonable to the labourer.

While the negotiations were going on the delegates were shown the principal districts in the colony, both northward and southward. They were taken to the towns, the plantations and the jungles, and had every opportunity of seeing exactly what conditions were in Honduras.

RETURN TO VANCOUVER.

We left Belize on Friday, November 6th, and reached New Orleans on Monday, November 9th.

I had agreed to wait at New Orleans for a wire from the Acting Governor of Honduras, lest despatches he expected on Monday from the Colonial Office should contain anything that might interfere with the arrangements we had made. His wire was as follows:

“We are apparently expected advance cost of transports. If so, labourers from wage.”

I felt satisfied that with the low wage offered in Honduras it would be absolutely useless to ask any East Indians who might go there to accept an advance for transportation and repay same out of wages. After an exchange of messages with the Deputy Minister, I received instructions to come direct to Ottawa. As I was familiar with the details of the general proposition and no one at Ottawa had such full information, it was deemed advisable that I should be on hand for the purpose of assisting in prompt action regarding the transportation subject.

Accordingly I left New Orleans Wednesday, November 11th, and instructed the interpreter to go direct to Vancouver with the two delegates. I also asked that no general meeting of East Indians should be held at Vancouver until I arrived there, inasmuch as I had a great deal of information regarding what Honduras offered which the delegates were not familiar with. I had given them every possible opportunity and facility to see the country and the people and expected them to report thereon. I, myself, had had to do all the negotiating regarding **terms and conditions** of employment, lands,

etc., and had not had an opportunity to explain very much to them. I, therefore, wanted the full case presented at Vancouver, and not simply a partial report.

CONDITIONS AT VANCOUVER.

I arrived in Vancouver on Monday, November 30th.

Before my arrival, there had been an announcement in the press that the East Indian community had held a general meeting, heard reports from the delegates and decided not to have anything to do with Honduras. There was also a report that the interpreter had offered a \$3,000.00 bribe to the delegates to make a favourable report on Honduras. I also learned that the idea had been cultivated that the Honduras proposition involved a design to force the East Indians out of British Columbia—willing or unwilling—instead of what it really was, a proposition designed to help those who needed help.

So far had the community been deceived by misrepresentations of this kind and by absolutely false charges—like that of the alleged bribe—that it was apparent they had been artfully welded together in an attitude of hostility. Instead of appreciation of the Government's efforts there was insolent ingratitude.

I learned that almost as soon as the delegates left Vancouver, some influences began to work against the Honduras proposition. The Hindu interpreter of the U.S. Immigration Office at Vancouver, who is a white man and a native American, told me that from day to day as Hindus came to his office he always made enquiries regarding the Honduras matter. For the first few days the reply always was, "We do not know anything about it but will when the delegates return." Soon, however, the reply became, "No Honduras for us. It is full of yellow fever and the wages are very low."

Evidently before the delegates had got to Honduras the influences against the proposition had done effective work.

As soon as I reached Vancouver I had a conference with people familiar with East Indian matters, to ascertain the best course to pursue in view of the misrepresentations that had been made and the hostility that had been worked up among the Hindus. At the conference there were: Rev. John Knox Wright, Capt. C. J. Brooke, Wm. Snee, (white man born and educated in India), R. G. Chamberlain, (Chief of Police), Dr. A. S. Munro, J. H. McGill, Mr. M'Mahon (City Relief Officer, Vancouver), W. Willans (Immigration Inspector) and myself.

It was decided that the best course to follow was to prepare a report on what Honduras offered and write to the Priest of the Sikh Temple, asking him to call a general meeting of the community at the Sikh Temple building on the following Sunday, for the hearing of reports from the delegates and myself.

The following correspondence took place:

VANCOUVER, B.C., 1st December, 1908.

Bulwant Singh,
Sikh Temple, Fairview,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Sir,—In reference to the agreement of October 14th, in which Nagar Singh and Sham Singh were named to represent the Sikh and Hindu communities of British Columbia to visit British Honduras and to report to the communities here with respect to conditions in that country, and the question of unemployed and indigent Hindus removing there, I beg to ask you to be good enough to call a general meeting of the East Indian community for the purpose of hearing the reports of the delegates and of myself and Mr. Hopkinson.

I would be glad if you had the meeting as soon as possible. Next Sunday has been suggested as a suitable date, and the Sikh Temple building as a suitable place. I would also ask you to take steps to get word to the East Indians residing at out-of-town points, with regard to the proposition and the meeting.

Awaiting your reply,

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) J. B. HARKIN,

Private Secretary to the Minister of the Interior.

On Friday I received the following reply:

1866 2nd. Avenue,

VANCOUVER, B.C., 4th December, 1908.

Dear Sir,—A meeting of Sikhs and Hindus has been called to meet on Sunday the 6th instant. The notice was rather short, but we hope to have a fair gathering by 1 p.m., when the regular proceedings will begin.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) BALWANT SINGH.

J. B. Harkin, Esq.,

Private Secretary to the Minister of the Interior.

On Saturday I told Mr. Hopkinson, the interpreter, to tell the Hindu leaders that 2 o'clock would be a more suitable hour. This information he conveyed to Teja Singh on Sunday morning.

About 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon, Rev. J. Knox Wright, Capt. C. J. Brooke, Dr. A. S. Munro, J. A. McGill, Wm. Snee, W. C.

Hopkinson (interpreter) and myself, arrived at the Sikh Temple building. We found the large room on the ground floor of the temple building unoccupied. It was in this room that the general meeting of Hindus took place for the ratification of the selection of delegates which had been made at a previous meeting of Hindu leaders held in the basement of Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Fairview. I had assumed that Sunday's meeting would take place in this room. But the Hindus were congregated upstairs in the Temple itself holding service. We sent up word by several Hindus that we had arrived and were very much surprised when word came back that we should go upstairs to the Temple itself. It is necessary that every one entering such a temple should remove his shoes. Several in my party said they would not do so. Personally, I had no objection to the shoe part of the proposal, and said so, but I had to refuse to enter the Temple when Rev. Mr. Wright, Capt. Brooke and others familiar with East Indian customs advised me not to go into it, and that if I and the party entered while service was in progress, it would be flashed all over India that a Government party had desecrated and defiled the Temple. Several Hindus who were on the lower verandah of the Temple where our party was, tried to persuade us that it was customary and necessary for all matters relating to an East Indian community to be dealt with in the Temple. Those of our party who are familiar with East Indian affairs said that so far as the relations between Government officials and the natives were concerned, this did not apply; that whatever the natives might do in the matter of reaching decisions among themselves, proclamations and presentation of proposals or facts by Government officials or others were never carried out in the Temple. In regard to the statement that it is necessary that decisions be reached in the Temple, it is significant that nothing of this kind was suggested when the delegates for the Honduras trip were being appointed. In connection with the appointment of delegates, there were two meetings. The first was of leaders, and was held in the basement of Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Fairview. At this meeting the delegates were selected, but a general meeting was held in the evening in the basement of the Sikh Temple building to ratify the selection. And in the basement room, a memorandum was signed, certifying to the selection of the delegates.

Several times we asked that Teja Singh, who had become the East Indians' recognized leader, though he had then been in Vancouver only a few weeks, should come down to see us. Finally, a white man, Mr. Knapp, who is a personal friend and admirer of Teja Singh, appeared. It was explained to him that we would not enter the Temple proper; that our only object was to present to the community a report giving in detail the arrangements made in Honduras regarding land and work for East Indians, such information

not having been in the possession of the delegates, and, therefore, not having been placed before the Hindu community at their previous meeting. It was further pointed out that the East Indians had arranged to meet us at 2 o'clock, and that we wanted the meeting in the same place as the previous general meeting had been held, namely, the downstairs of the Sikh Temple building. It was simply a matter of their coming downstairs and listening to the report. Mr. Knapp undertook to go to the Temple to discuss the matter with Teja Singh. After an absence of a quarter of an hour, he returned and said the meeting must be held in the Temple. We had then been standing outside for an hour and a half, and had not got an interview with any recognized leader, and therefore decided to leave.

We had just reached the sidewalk when a messenger was sent after us to say that the East Indians had decided to come downstairs and listen to the report. It was almost four o'clock before they came down. It was explained to Teja Singh that all that was wanted was that the community should hear the report. He remarked that the leaders would listen to it, but I said that it must be the whole community. He then started to raise questions and discussions of various kinds. He devoted considerable time to insisting that if they listened to the report, it would be binding upon them. It was pointed out to him that the mere listening to a report could not bind anyone. He would not agree with this, however, and when Dr. Monro told him that his attitude on the subject was absurd, he proceeded to argue it was not. Mr. Knapp, his white friend, also told him listening to a report was not binding on anyone, but to satisfy him, I volunteered to sign a statement that by listening to the report, the community would not be committing itself to anything. Thereupon, he asked that I sign a further statement that the community was ready to meet us at 2 o'clock in the Temple, and that it was my fault there had not been a meeting. I, of course, refused, and another long discussion followed. During the discussion, Dr. Monro found it necessary to emphatically order Teja Singh to stop breaking into the conversation while I was explaining the purpose of the report to Mr. Knapp.

"You have no right to talk to me like that," replied Teja Singh, in a loud and defiant tone. Immediately, a number of Sikhs aggressively repeated their leader's remarks, and for a moment it looked as though it would not require very much to cause a display of physical force. However, matters quieted down, and the discussion continued of the many little points raised, one after another, by Teja Singh, until it became apparent that there was an absolute determination on the part of Teja Singh to prevent the East Indians hearing the real facts regarding Honduras. I therefore then withdrew.

THE BRIBE CHARGE.

After the meeting, the bribe charge seemed to me to be the matter requiring attention. My first impulse was that proceedings should be taken for criminal libel against Teja Singh, who had given the story to the press. However, enquiry showed that he had so fortified himself that there did not appear to be much likelihood of successful criminal prosecution. He gave the story to a *World* reporter and a *Province* reporter at the same time. Later on, before publication, he notified the papers both by telephone and by letter that the story must not be used. The following is a copy of the letter received by the *World*, the original of which is in my possession:

VANCOUVER, B. C.,
1866 2nd Ave.,
Fairview.

"Dear Sir,

"Your reporter met me in the Robson car, just for a minute or two, and asked me hurriedly about a matter which is of an extremely & private nature. No report of that conversation is to be put in any paper.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) TEJA SINGH."

It would thus appear that Teja Singh has protected himself against criminal proceedings for libel. I am informed there can be no criminal proceedings for slander, and I suppose it is possible that his notification might protect him, even as regards civil action for slander.

The Hindu delegate, Sham Singh, called at my hotel several times, and told me that he knew nothing of any bribe having been offered, and that the first he had heard of the charge was when Nagar Singh, the Sikh delegate, made it in the Temple. I was anxious to get a statement from Nagar Singh. I am told he was at the Temple building the Sunday the meeting was arranged for, but he never came to see me, or even came within my sight. Dr. Knapp, the white man who is a friend and admirer of Teja Singh, came to my hotel Sunday evening after the meeting, at my request, and while we were discussing matters, Sham Singh, the Hindu delegate, called. I asked Dr. Knapp to examine him regarding the alleged bribe, and then arranged that Dr. Knapp should come to the hotel on Monday at 3 p. m., that Sham Singh should bring Nagar Singh to the hotel at the same time, and that Dr. Knapp should examine both of them regarding the alleged bribe, the evidence to be taken down by a court reporter and the interpretation to be done by a Hindu. Sham Singh turned up, but without Nagar Singh, who, he reported

refused to come because he had been told at the Temple not to come, and because he would be asked questions. I may say in this connection that it was anticipated that Nagar Singh would surely come, because there was a balance due him and the other delegate in connection with an arrangement by which each delegate was to receive \$1.50 per day during his absence from British Columbia, as compensation for loss of time. We told Sham Singh we wanted to pay them the balance in a joint cheque, and wanted them both to sign a receipt for the amount when the cheque was handed over. Nagar evidently preferred to do without his money rather than undergo cross-examination on the bribe charge.

A DEMAND.

Failing to secure anything definite in this way, I next wrote the following letters, which I sent by registered mail:—

Immigration Branch,
Department of the Interior,
Vancouver, B. C., Dec. 10th, 1908.

Dear Sir,—

It is reported that you have made a statement charging that my interpreter offered a bribe to you in Honduras to secure a report favourable with respect to that country. The Government has directed me to secure a full and complete statement regarding this matter. Through Boleun Kand and Sham Singh I sent a request to you to come to see me last Monday for the purpose of having an interview in the presence of Mr. Knapp, who is, I believe, a trusted friend of the East Indian Community.

The Government must have a statement from you upon this bribe charge. I am therefore writing this letter to request you to furnish me at once with a full and complete statement regarding the alleged bribe, with special reference to time, place and amount.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) J. B. HARKIN,

Nagar Singh,
Sikh Temple,
Fairview, B. C.

Immigration Branch,
Department of the Interior,
Vancouver, B. C., Dec. 10th, 1908.

Dear Sir,

A report has been made public that Nagar Singh, one of the delegates sent to Honduras, has stated that an attempt was made

by my interpreter in Honduras to bribe him to make a favourable report regarding that country. As you are aware, the Government's undertaking was that the two delegates should be taken there and left free to report in whatever manner they saw fit. The Government is, therefore, entitled to know the facts regarding the alleged bribe, and must learn them. I have been instructed to get statements from the delegates upon this point. I have already had several interviews with Sham Singh in the presence of witnesses, and his views are therefore known. However, I have not been able to get an interview with Nagar Singh. He apparently will not undertake to come and make a statement.

I therefore appeal to you, and through you to the committee, to secure from him a definite statement regarding the charge, with particulars as to time, place and amount. I enclose copy of a letter which I have addressed to Nagar Singh.

The request for a statement is made on behalf of the Government, and on instructions therefrom. Under the circumstances, I trust you will lose no time in having such a statement sent me.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) J. B. HARKIN,

Bulwant Singh,
Sikh Temple,
Fairview,
Vancouver, B. C.

I also wrote demanding a report upon British Honduras from the delegates, in order that the Government might have something definite in that connection.

THE REPLY.

These letters brought forth the following:—

(Copy.)

VANCOUVER, B. C.,
1866 2nd Ave.
Sikh Temple,
23-12-'08.

Dear Sir,

We are sending herewith:—

1. A translation of the minutes of our assembly held on 22-11-'08 when the report of Nagar Singh and Sham Singh was heard.
2. A translation of an extract from the diary of Nagar Singh, relating to British Honduras.

3. A translation of an extract from the diary of Sham Singh, relating to British Honduras.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) BALWANT SINGH.,

J. B. Harkin, Esq.,
Private Secretary to
The Minister of Interior,
Dominion Govt., Ottawa.

NAGAR SINGH'S DIARY.

Translation of the diary of Nagar Singh, from the copy duly signed by him, which he submitted to The Khalsa Diwan, Vancouver.

25-10-08. Reached British Honduras. The first city was Belize. Went into the Indian Hotel at about 11 a. m. Cooked some rice, and after partaking of them, went to see the city. We had just passed about twenty shops when the sea came in view. It appeared to be on all sides. Came back soon after seeing the city, which was rather small. Coolies are found in numbers, but they have no work, whosoever gets it has to content himself with 1s to 1s. 6d. per day. A shilling is worth 25 cents. I heard that many of these men were East Indians.

26-10-08. An East Indian came to see me, and I asked him, "Are you going on well?" He replied, brother, I am living from hand to mouth (starving), and can not get work. I then asked him, Can't you cultivate land. He replied that some East Indians have been in Honduras from thirty to forty years. I again asked, but why don't you till land. He said that eight years ago I bought land for ten dollars. After clearing it I put in plantains, cocoanut, oranges and lemons. Now I want to sell it and cannot get more than five dollars for it. Hearing that cultivating land was so profitable I was very much surprised.

27-10-08. Next day I went to the house of the East Indians, found that they were really starving. Their children clasped round my neck and I felt that they were really starving.

After this I was told by Mr. Hopkinson, the interpreter, to attend the meeting. Reached there at 5.10 p. m. There were white people attending it. They asked us to sit down, and asked us what do you generally take in the way of food. We said wheat flour, rice, ghee dal (pulse), sugar, fresh milk, onions, potatoes, cauliflower, spices. They again asked, do you take meat. We said only ten of us out of a hundred take it at Vancouver. They again said do you get all these things at Vancouver. We replied yes. One of the

gentlemen said "Go to hell, they eat everything." The interpreter, Mr. Hopkinson, pressed this gentleman's hand, and told him not to abuse us, as we could understand some English. Just after this we were asked to leave the Assembly room. We silently walked out, remained sitting outside. After one hour the members of the Council came out and told us to go to our lodging. Sham Singh said we will go with Mr. Harkin and Mr. Hopkinson. On this they got angry and told us to walk on quickly. On this I got very angry. On reaching the hotel I told Mr. Hopkinson that these tricks will not serve any purpose any more. They will be found out. My anger knew no bounds, and I spoke very loudly. I was told to speak in a lower tone, but I could not be appeased. Then the interpreter began to praise me, saying "Sikhs are very well behaved, and good people. You should not speak loudly."

28-10-08. At 3 p. m. we were called by Mr. Harkin and Mr. Hopkinson, and told that in British Honduras we will have to observe the following regulations: Each man will have to dig or prepare land 30 ft. long, 18 ft. wide and a certain depth, within ten hours. The wages would be \$8 and rations per month, which is equivalent to about 26 cents a day. The working hours for a week would be 48 hours. Hearing this, we left them.

There are many East Indians in this country. Many of them came to see us. The interpreter, Mr. Hopkinson, called me to him, and told me not to allow these people to come to me. I told him (Mr. Hopkinson) that they were my brother countrymen. I could not turn them out of my room simply because he, Mr. Hopkinson, told me to do. He (Mr. Hopkinson) had no right to speak to me like that.

Then I went among my brother countrymen and asked them, "What do you think of this country?" They asked me, "Have you come here to settle down?" I replied no. "only for seeing it." They said, "What for have you come to see it, the people already here are living from hand to mouth, as they cannot get work, and even when they get it the wages are only 25 cents a day."

* * * * *

The city is very small and is surrounded on all sides by water. The rations for a coolie allow 7 topas of flour, and if flour is not procurable rice is given instead. This allowance of flour is barely sufficient for a coolie. *For other rations see agreement.*

The man who takes rations from his employers gets \$7 to \$8 per month, and one who does not take rations gets \$11 to \$12 per month. If the coolie gets ill and has to go to the hospital, a deduction of \$½ per day is made. There are other charges which the coolie has to meet out of his pay of \$12:—

House rent.....	\$ 3
Rations.....	\$ 5
Water, if rains fail.....	\$ 4

The clothing outfit and boots, etc., the coolies here most probably have to get from their mother country, as the above items generally finish the \$12, his monthly wages.

There are no lumber mills, workshops, or any other kind of manufactory.

The total habitation of this town is not over 2,000 houses.

There is a slight winter from October to January. In summer mosquitoes are very abundant, and the inhabitants cannot pass a single day without a mosquito net. Fever is very much rife in the months of June and July, the months in which water is to be bought from a company which brings it in a boat.

The summer is reported to be very hot. So much that one's perspiration never dries during the whole day.

29-10-08. Go to the Manager River. It was five hours way to our destination. Got into a small sailing boat at 11 p. m. (28-10-08) and reached Tancrek (Steincreek) at about 6 a. m. It is a small town, having sea on one side and a jungle on the other. At about 12 noon went to see the jungle. Went as far as three miles into it. Plantains and sweet potatoes were very abundant. Mosquitoes are found in enormous numbers. Cocoanut and sugarcane are also there. The whole land is jungle land, and mosquitoes do not allow one to walk in peace, as one has to frequently kill them while stinging hands and the face.

30-10-08. From 9 a. m. to 8 p. m. remained on horseback and went into the jungle for a distance of 25 miles. It was full of plain-tains, and had sugarcane here and there. There we saw a railroad on which coolies were working on 45 cents per day. The humming of the mosquitoes sounded like the rustling of trees during a high wind. Methinks these mosquitoes suck one dollar of life blood from each coolie per day, working there for 45 cents.

31-10-08. Left Tancrek at 10 a. m., and about 2 p. m. reached the house of a white man. There took a horse-cart and went to see the jungle. Cocoanut and plantains are very abundant. Saw one plant of Mongi nuts. There was ginger, too.

1-11-08. Left this place at 9 p. m. for Belize. It was very stormy. Reached Belize at 3 in the morning (2-11-08) and went to the Indian hotel.

2-11-08. Left Belize at 12 noon by a steamboat and reached Krosall at 5 a. m. next morning.

3-11-08. Saw the city of Krosall. It is a small town, with a sparse population. Took a horse cart and saw the place.

There was sugarcane plantations, and so came across one or two sugarcane pressing mills. One mill has eight bullocks.

There are many East Indians here. We enquired from them, what wages do you get. They said 1s a day (25 cents a day). If by good luck one gets better pay, it is 1s. 6d. per day.

Returned from that place at 3 p. m. Took a small steamboat. At about 8 p. m. left the small boat for a large one. Mr. Hopkinson, the interpreter, gave me a money bag. Sham Singh was with me. Mr. Hopkinson took one dollar out of it and gave the bag with the money in it to me. (Re Amount vide statement made by Sham Singh and Nagar Singh before the Khalsa Diwan, Vancouver, on 22-11-08.)

4-11-08. Saw Gamsall. Rubber trees were there. Orange trees were also to be seen there. Stopped there about three hours, and then returned to Krosall at 11 p. m. Left the small steamboat and went into the large boat, and returned to Belize.

5-11-08. On our way to Belize returned the money bag to Mr. Hopkinson.

Reached Belize at 2 p. m. and took our meals at the Indian hotel.

6-11-08. Returned to New Orleans, and took our boat at 11 a.m., which left at 12 noon.

7-11-08. On the sea.

8-11-08. Still on the sea, a little stormy. The interpreter asked us to give him a signed report. He said, "You (Nagar Singh) can write in Hindu, and Sham Singh in Urdu. I said I cannot do so. He again said, write down that the Country is good. These papers will be sent to Ottawa. I again replied that I had no right to give a signed report. He could only get it from the Sikh Temple Committee at Vancouver. He again said, if you do not give your signed report, your people will be sent back to your country. I replied he had no right to threaten me, and his threats would carry no weight with me, as no one could turn my people out by force.]

(Sgd.) SAVA SINGH,
President,
Managing Committee,
Sikh Temple.]

(Nagar Singh, his
signature.

9-11-08 to 18-11-08. Journey to Vancouver.

(Seal) SHAM SINGH'S DIARY.

Witnessed
Talwant Singh.
(Seal)

Translation of the Original Copy of the Diary
submitted by Sham Singh, and written and
signed by him.

Honduras part.

25th Oct., 08. Reached Belize at about 12 noon, and at 5 p.m., after taking our evening meal we went to the city. It took us one hour and a half to see the whole of it. This city is located on a small island, surrounded by the sea, as far as the eye could see. From what is heard about the Andamans, the Convict Island to which convicts from British India are sent, I thought Belize to be just like that, as this too is located on a small island surrounded by the sea on all sides.

26-10-08. Stayed in our quarters, with Nagar Singh. Two white men came and said, "Come to this country, we will give you work."

27-10-08. These two gentlemen we saw in the Council, which we went to attend at 5 p. m. There the Governor-General asked us, "What do you eat?" Then we went over the list of the general articles of diet which we take.

In reply to this we were told that fresh butter (or ghee) and fresh milk, were not to be had there. Then I (Sham Singh) replied that our men could not live without fresh butter and fresh milk. Then the Council said, "We will try to arrange about these, too."

Again we were asked, "Can't you use cocoanut oil." We replied in the negative, as we said most of our people don't take meat; therefore fresh butter or ghee and fresh milk were essential articles of diet for our people. If we cannot get those, our men will not be able to work.

Then the Council gave us an estimate of our rations, which is given in detail in the Agreement required by the British Honduras Government.

After these few questions and answers, we were told to leave the Council Hall for a time, and were told that we would be called in again. Then we went out, and while sitting there got the names of all the gentlemen sitting in the Council. They were as follows:—

1. W. Collet (H. E. The officer administering the Government.)
2. S. Wolffsohn,
3. A. Carter,
4. A. D. P. Williamson,
5. F. Paton Auld (Supt. of Public Works)
6. R. L. Heustis,
7. T. M. Rosada,
8. S. T. Burke,
9. B. Ormsby,
10. C. O. Taylor,
11. R. H. Furness,
12. S. Cuthbert,
13. C. Reis Davis (The Hon. The Acting Colonial Secretary.)

Then these gentlemen came out and told us to come to the same place on the following day. Then we returned home, and after some time, Mr. Harkin and Mr. Hopkinson sent for us and told us that we will have to meet the Council again on the next day. Then we replied that we would have no objection to going, but we have a point to make, and that is this, "when you turn us out of the Council, our going does not serve any purpose. You can as well let us alone, and tell us everything here."

28-10-08. In the morning we were again sent for by Mr. Harkin and Mr. Hopkinson, and were told that you will have to fulfill the following terms, which can be seen in detail from a copy of the Agreement brought by us.

At 5 p. m. Mr. Harkin and Mr. Hopkinson went to attend the Council, and on returning told us, to-morrow morning we will see another place.

29-10-08. At 6 a. m. we reached Steinkrek, and on reaching there we were shown the jungles. Plantain trees were found there in abundance. Papaya and sweet potatoes, mangoes, orange, and lemon, were also to be found there. But the town was only a small village. Mosquitoes were very abundant. A railroad was also under construction. We travelled into the jungle for about 25 miles, and found plantains everywhere. The 30th of the month was also spent in this locality, and the above account includes our doings on the 30th, too.

31-10-08. At 10 a. m. we left Steinkrek, and after about two hours reached the house of Mr. Ormsby, who was one of the members in the Council we met at Belize. He showed us his plantain, cocoanut and orange plantations. We left this place at 10 p. m., and reached Belize. The account of the first November is included herein.

2-11-08. Left Belize and reached Krosal, and here Dr. Winter showed us the land and plantations. There we met some Hindu brothers, some of whose names are given by me.

We came to know from them, too, that British Honduras was not a good country. Five of these names are given below, out of a list of fifteen submitted by Sham Singh.

1. Phagu, age 48, has been in Honduras for about 20 to 30 years; is now at Belize.
2. Swabny, age 30.
3. Baiga, woman, age 80, left India at the age of 20; has been in Honduras for 60 years
4. Ajausia, age 90, left India at the age of 28; has been in Honduras, etc., for 62 years; is now Gomalien.
5. Dahim Bakhsh, age 60, left India when 20; has been in Honduras, etc., for 40 years.
6. Damodar Ram, aged 110, left India at 20; has been in Honduras, etc., for 90 years.

* * * * *

3-11-08. At about 9 p.m., Mr. Hopkinson took us out of a small boat into a large one, and said you should sleep here for the night, and that he (Mr. Hopkinson) would sleep in the city. After saying so, he handed over a small handbag containing clothes, and a money bag to Nagar Singh, taking one dollar out of it before he (Mr. Hopkinson) left us. He added, that keep this handbag and money bag with you, and that he would return in the evening. We then went to sleep. On 4-11-08 at 9 a. m. he came to us and told us to leave the large boat and go into the small one, which would take us further. When he said this to me he had his handbag in his hand, but I do not know whether he had taken his money bag back from Nagar Singh or not. Then left this place, and after going on for nine miles, came back to Belize. Left Belize at 2 p. m., and reached Kewsall at 11 p.m., and here we got into the same boat in which we had slept at Orange Dock.

5-11-08. Left this place at 2 in the morning and reached Belize. Mr. J. B. Harkin came to us and asked us, "Do you like British Honduras." We replied, "Sir, the country is good, but only for those who want to settle down permanently. For labourers it is not good, because the wages are very low." Then they said, we will get you 10 acres per head of free Government land for all your people. We replied, we will tell our people all that we have seen.

6-11-08. We left this place for New Orleans at 11 a. m., and on 8-11-08, while we were on the boat, Mr. Harkin and Mr. Hopkinson asked us to give a report of the country to them, and state whether it was good or bad. We said, we could not do that, at that time. When we go to our committee at Vancouver we will tell them all that we have seen. If they like it then we can sign the report which they submit, now we have no right to give them any report.

Signed by:

(Sgd.) I. N. D. SHAM SINGH,

Witnessed:

(Seal)

BALMA KAND,
SAVA SINGH,
President Managers' Committee
Sikh Temple,
Vancouver, B. C.

(Seal)

MINUTES OF THE TEMPLE.

Translation of the minutes of the Khalsa Diwan, Vancouver, of 22-11-08 when the report of Nagar Singh and Sham Singh Delegates to British Honduras was listened to, and it was unanimously resolved that no East Indian was to go there.

After the recitation of hymns, a letter from Bhai Nagar Singh and Sham Singh who were sent to British Honduras as delegates to report upon the climate and wage conditions there, was read to the

Diwan in which representatives from Port Moody, Barnet, Eburn, New Westminster, Victoria and Vancouver, etc., were present. This letter which was written from British Honduras by the delegates ran as follows: The country is like Andaman Islands, the Convict Island where British Indian Convicts are sent and food conditions very unsatisfactory."

Then Nagar Singh and Sham Singh stood up in the Diwan and related their experiences in British Honduras. The climatic and water conditions are quite unsuited to East Indians. Wages very low, \$8 to \$12 a month, hardly sufficient to maintain the wage-earner himself. Fresh butter and milk not procurable, and if obtainable it is very dear. Fresh water is scarce in seasons of drought, as the only fresh water procurable is an accumulation of rain water from house roofs. During drought fresh water is sold by a Company, and the price is about \$3 to \$4 a month (for water). Sea water alone can be had for bathing. This is quite unsuited for washing hair and beards which the Sikhs are bound to keep under the laws of their religion. Mosquitoes are very abundant, and their sting causes trouble and fever. The wage conditions are under a contract system, and the labourer has to fulfil the terms and conditions thereof. This contract is usually for three years. One has to take whatever food the employer pleases to give under the items mentioned in the contract. There are many East Indians there who are very badly off. Some of them have been, there for forty years, and we have got the addresses and names of some of them. They have not been able to save even fare enough to return to India, our mother country. They implored us to get them back to India. Their children were heard saying "Papa when will you show us our Old Country." When we heard little children talking in this way we felt extremely troubled, but we were helpless to do anything for them.

The Council held at Belize, Honduras, only asked us a few questions about eating, and then sent us out. This was against all rules of any assembly, as all persons invited should be present during the proceedings. This was an insult to us and the Khalsa Diwan, Vancouver, which sent us.

We did not know what the Committee meeting there decided. In a way a temptation in the way of money was also cleverly arranged. This was in the form of a money bag handed over to Nagar Singh by the Interpreter. Nagar Singh who had it, states that he counted about \$3,000 worth of bills in it. It was apparently a clever hint, though not an offer.

Then the Full Diwan (the Sikhs and Hindus assembled in Sikh Temple) unanimously decided that they would not go to British Honduras and would help their own unemployed with the help of their Sikh brothers in Japan, Hong Kong and Shanghai and India, and organize themselves into a self-supporting community. As the

majority of them were with work, next summer would see everything settled down properly.

It was further resolved that as occasion required telegrams be sent to India for help.

The Ottawa Government (Dominion Government) also to be informed that as we do not like conditions in British Honduras, we would not go there and make suitable arrangements for our own people.

(Sgd.) SAVA SINGH,
President Khalsa Diwan Sikh Temple,
Managing Committee.

Dated Vancouver the 23rd December, '08.

Seal.

AFFIDAVIT BY SHAM SINGH.

In connection with the above, I beg to call attention to the following affidavit by Sham Singh, the Hindu delegate:

IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPOSED EMIGRATION OF
CERTAIN HINDUS FROM THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH
COLUMBIA TO THE COLONY OF BRITISH HONDURAS;
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE CHARGE OF AN ATTEMPT
BY WILLIAM C. HOPKINSON TO BRIBE NAGAR SINGH;

I, SHAM SINGH, of the City of Vancouver and Province of British Columbia do solemnly declare:

1. That I reside at the City of Vancouver aforesaid, and have personal knowledge of the matters herein referred to;

2. That at a meeting of the leaders of the Hindu and Sikh communities called by James B. Harkin of the Department of the Interior, Nagar Singh and myself were appointed delegates to accompany the said James B. Harkin to British Honduras, and to report thereon to our communities at Vancouver;

3. That with the said Nagar Singh and William C. Hopkinson a Hindoo interpreter, I left Vancouver on the 15th day of October last past on such said mission and returned to Vancouver aforesaid on the 18th day of November last past;

4. That the said James B. Harkin accompanied our said party, but on the return left the same at New Orleans, and asked us the said delegates to withhold our report to our said communities until he should arrive at Vancouver, and be present at the meeting of our people. This he explained at that time was because of the delay incurred through his returning to Vancouver aforesaid by way of the City of Ottawa.

5. That Nagar Singh and I, the two delegates, did not wait for the return of the said James B. Harkin, but on the 22nd day of November being at a meeting of our people in the Sikh Temple in

the said City of Vancouver at the request of Bulwant Singh, a priest of the said temple, we made our report.

6. That we then reported that British Honduras was not so good a country as British Columbia, giving various reasons, chief of which was that the rate of wages was much lower in the former than in the latter.

7. That during his report on that occasion, Nagar Singh stated to the people that the said William C. Hopkinson had offered him a purse containing the sum of \$3,000.00 as a bribe, if he would sign a paper stating that British Honduras was a good country, and that the said Hopkinson had then said that he, Nagar Singh, could spend the money.

8. That on Thursday the 3rd of November, we were at Orange Walk in British Honduras, and I then saw at dusk in the evening the said Hopkinson give to Nagar Singh a leather clothes bag, and a small purse to keep for him while he, Hopkinson, went into the City.

9. That the purse was a small leather one which I had often before and since seen in the possession of the said Hopkinson.

10. That the following day when we went on our journey, I saw the leather clothes bag in the boat and afterwards saw the same purse in the possession of the said Hopkinson.

11. That Nagar Singh never told me about the purse or any money whatsoever, or of any bribe or anything of a like sort during the remainder of the said journey, and that the first I heard or knew of the same was at the Sikh Temple, Vancouver, through his before mentioned report.

12. That I do not know how much money was in the said purse at the time referred to in paragraph "8" of this my declaration; that I only then saw it for a few minutes; that I understood at the time it and the clothes bag were given Nagar Singh by Hopkinson for care and safekeeping; and that I know nothing of any bribe being given or of any attempt whatsoever to bribe Nagar Singh or myself, whether by the said Hopkinson or any other person whatsoever, or of any other attempt at any time to influence our report upon the conditions prevailing in British Honduras in any way whatsoever.

13. That I have heard of a newspaper report of a lecture given by Teja Singh in which report it appeared that the said Hopkinson had given \$3,000.00 to Nagar Singh and that I had counted the money, which report is wholly false and untrue, and altogether, so far as I know, without foundation.

14. That I never counted the said sum of \$3,000.00 or any other sum, and that I never heard of such said sum until after our return to Vancouver before mentioned and, then first in the report of the said Nagar Singh mentioned aforetime.

15. That I have no reason to think or believe that any such or any other bribe whatsoever was given or that any attempt was ever

made at any time to offer such a bribe or any other bribe whatsoever, and I verily believe that such said report is untrue.

16. That no bribe was ever offered me or any attempt at any time made to bribe me or in any way to influence my report concerning British Honduras.

AND I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and knowing it to be of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence Act.

DECLARED before me at Vancouver,
B.C., this 24th day of December,
A.D., 1908.

(Sgd.) I.N.D. "SHAM SINGH."

(Sgd) "J. H. MacGill,"

Notary Public, in and for British Columbia.

AFFIDAVIT BY THE INTERPRETER.

Herewith is a copy of an affidavit by Mr. W. C. Hopkinson, the interpreter:

IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPOSED EMIGRATION OF
CERTAIN HINDOOS FROM THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH
COLUMBIA TO THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH HONDURAS.
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE CHARGE OF AN ATTEMPT
BY WILLIAM C. HOPKINSON TO BRIBE NAGAR SINGH
AND SHAM SINGH.

I, WILLIAM C. HOPKINSON, of the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, do solemnly declare:

1. That I am a Hindoo interpreter residing in the City of Vancouver aforesaid and formerly of the City of Calcutta; for 4 years an Inspector of the Calcutta Metropolitan Police, and I have personal knowledge of the matters herein referred to.

2. That as a result of conferences held in the month of October last passed and the preceding months between James B. Harkin and the leaders of the Sikh and Hindoo communities in and around the said City of Vancouver at which said conferences I acted as interpreter for the said James B. Harkin, Nagar Singh a Sikh, and Sham Singh a Hindoo, were appointed delegates by the said communities for them, and on their behalf to proceed to the Colony of British Honduras with the said James B. Harkin in order to investigate the labour and other conditions of the said Colony, and to report on the same to their said communities with a view to the removal thence of the unemployed and indigent members of the said communities from this Province.

3. That in company with the said Nagar Singh and Sham Singh,

I left the said City of Vancouver with Mr. Harkin in the capacity of interpreter for the said Colony of British Honduras on the 15th of October last passed, and returned to the said City of Vancouver with the said Nagar Singh and Sham Singh on the 18th day of November last passed.

4. That I have read the report of the statement made at a public meeting by Teja Singh, which said report charges me with an attempt to bribe the two delegates aforesaid to give a favourable report to their countrymen regarding the labour and other conditions and circumstances of the said Colony of British Honduras, which said report was published on pages 1 and 3 in the issue for the 23rd of November last passed of the Daily Province, a daily news paper published in the said City of Vancouver, a copy of which issue is hereto annexed and marked Exhibit "A", to this my declaration.

5. That the said charge is altogether without foundation and that the said statement thereof is wholly false and untrue.

6. That I never at Stann Creek or any other place, nor at any time bribed or attempted to bribe, or offered or attempted to offer a bribe in any way whatsoever to the said delegates, or either of them, nor did I influence or attempt to influence the report to be made by the said delegates or either of them to their communities aforesaid.

7. That I never had a small bag or any other bag containing \$3,000.00 as alleged in the said report or any other sum of money and that I never offered such a bag or handed or left the same with the said delegates or either of them at any time, and that the only receptable for money which I ever had during the said mission was a small leather purse which I still have and which never at any time during the said mission was out of my possession.

8. That previous to the departure of the said delegates from the City of Vancouver, it was arranged by and between the said James B. Harkin and the said delegates, that they the said delegates should receive an indemnity for their loss of time while on the said mission at the rate of \$1.50 each per day.

9. That I did at the instance of Mr. Harkin and in pursuance of the arrangement set forth in the preceding paragraph and solely on account of the same from time to time give certain sums of money to the said delegates, a true and correct statement whereof, and of the dates upon which such payments were so made by me, is hereto annexed and marked Exhibit "B", to this my declaration.

10. That I received for the purpose set forth in the two preceding paragraphs from time to time and at various times from the said James B. Harkin and for other expenses incidental to the said delegation various sums of money, a true, full and correct statement whereof, and of the days and dates upon which I received the same is set forth in the account hereto annexed and marked Exhibit "C" to this my declaration.

11. That during the said time namely, from the 15th day of October to the 18th day of November both last passed I had in my control, possession or power no other sum or sums of money than those set forth in the said Exhibit "C" herto annexed, and that at no time between such said dates had I in my control, possession or power at any one time, a greater sum than \$132.00.

12. That between the said dates in the next preceding paragraph I did not receive any other monies from any other source whatsoever.

13. That I have no knowledge of any attempt to bribe or any offer of a bribe to the said delegates or either of them either previous to the said mission during the same or subsequent thereto.

14. That the first intimation had by me of any report to such effect was obtained by the perusal of the issue of the Daily Province for the 23rd November last passed herein before referred to as Exhibit "A" to this my declaration.

AND I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and knowing it to be of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence Act.

DECLARED before me at Vancouver,

B.C., this 7th day of December,
A.D., 1908.

(Sgd.) WM. C. HOPKINSON.

(Sgd.) J. H. MacGill,

A Notary Public in and for the Province of British Columbia.

"B"

MEMORANDUM OF SUMS OF MONIES PAID BY W. C. HOPKINSON TO NAGAR SINGH AND SHAM SINGH ON ACCOUNT OF THE BRITISH HONDURAS MISSION:

1908	15 Oct.,	paid to Nagar Singh	\$10.00
	28 "	" "	10.00
	3 Nov.,	" "	5.00
	9 "	" "	12.00
	11 "	" "	2.00
	12 "	" Sham Singh	1.50
	17 "	" "	2.00
			\$42.50

This is the Exhibit marked "B" referred to in the annexed declaration taken by William C. Hopkinson this 7th December, A.D., 1908, before me,

(Sgd.) J. H. MacGILL,
A Notary Public in and for British Columbia.

"C."

MEMORANDUM OF SUMS OF MONEY RECEIVED FROM
J. B. HARKIN BY W. C. HOPKINSON ON ACCOUNT OF
INDEMNITY TO NAGAR SINGH AND SHAM SINGH, AND
SUNDRY OTHER EXPENSES OF BRITISH HONDURAS
DELEGATION.

1908, Oct. 13.—	Received from J. B. Harkin	\$ 10.00
" 14.—	"	100.00
" 17.—	"	20.00
" 19.—	"	20.00
" 29.—	"	20.00
Nov. 2.—	"	50.00
" 9.—	"	10.00
" 10.—	"	10.00
" 11.—	"	100.00
" 11.—	"	25.00
		\$ 365.00

This is Exhibit marked "C", referred to in the annexed declaration taken by William C. Hopkinson this 7th December, A. D. 1908, before me.

(Sgd.) J. H. MacGill,
A Notary Public in and for British Columbia.

Perhaps I should repeat here what I wired to the Department when the charge first came to my attention, viz.:—

"So far as I am aware and so far as I am concerned, there is not the slightest vestige of truth in the bribe story."

I should also add that at no time during my Honduras trip did I have in my possession \$3,000, or any sum approaching that. When I left Ottawa, I was given \$2,300 with which to pay the expenses of the delegation. I purchased a letter of credit from the Bank of Montreal at Vancouver, and approximately never had more than \$200 or \$250 in actual cash in my possession while in Honduras. It

was, therefore, impossible for Mr. Hopkinson to get \$3,000 from me, and there was no one else to give him any money.

THE BRIBE CHARGE AS PUBLISHED.

The following is the bribe charge as it appeared in the Vancouver Province of Nov. 23:—

Bribes were offered to Hindus to go to Honduras.—This is charged at Mass Meeting of the Natives Yesterday.—Refuse Now to Move. Resolution to this Effect are sent to Ottawa, London and Calcutta.

Three thousand dollars in greenbacks is the amount alleged to have been offered the Hindu delegates for making a favourable report on the proposition to transport their countrymen to British Honduras.

Prof. Tejah Singh, M. A., the leader of the local colony, broke silence this morning. He stated that he believed the story of the delegates to be absolutely true.

He alleges that Mr. Hopkinson, the official interpreter, offered the bribe.

"The Hindus who accompanied the Government Commissioner and interpreter to British Honduras tell a story that bears all the marks of absolute truth," said Teja Singh to-day. "They kept diaries during their travels, and have not omitted an incident that occurred.

"They have informed me that the bribe was offered them by Mr. Hopkinson at a town named Tancret, or at least their pronunciation makes it sound like that. The money filled a small bag. They were told that they could keep it if they made a favourable report. They took the sack, and later found that it contained \$3,000 in bills, mostly of large denominations. The delegates, of course, never intended to betray their countrymen in British Columbia. As soon as they found out the amount of the bribe, they returned the money.

"On their trip, the interpreter assured them that money was no object, and that their every wish would be gratified. They travelled in regal style all the way to Honduras and back. The delegates also exposed another matter to the committee here. They state that they were invited to attend a meeting of planters at Belize, capital of the colony. Through the interpreter they were informed that the country was an ideal place for Hindus, as fresh milk and butter could be secured in abundance at a low cost. They were requested to leave the room. The delegates felt very indignant over this, and took occasion to express themselves very plainly to Mr. Hopkinson a few hours later.

"One or two circumstantial details of the financial transaction may be given to the public within a day or two. I am glad the delegates were loyal to the trust reposed in them. The sum offered them would have made each of them independent for life. But the divine spirit animated them—that's why they spurned the offer," concluded the professor with a mystical smile.

A CHANGE OF FRONT.

I beg to call attention to the complete change of front regarding the bribe charge. When the announcement was made in the papers it was very specific. It said:

Three thousand dollars in greenbacks was offered the Hindu delegates as a bribe for a favourable report on Honduras.

Both delegates were said to have told the bribe story.

The bribe was alleged to have been offered at Tancret (Stann Creek). They were told that they could keep the money if they made a favourable report.

They took the money bag and found it contained \$3,000 in bills.

When forced by my letters to give a statement regarding this matter, what happens?

1. The scene of the alleged bribe is transferred from Stann Creek which is in the south of the colony, and where I was with the party, to Orange Walk, which is in the north of the colony, and where the interpreter was alone with the delegates. This I have no doubt was done in order to endeavour to get a certain amount of corroboration for Nagar Singh's statement through the statement of the other delegate that at Orange Walk he saw Mr. Hopkinson hand a purse to Nagar Singh.

When forced to furnish a written statement what does Nagar Singh say?

"Mr. Hopkinson, the interpreter, gave me a money bag. Sham Singh was with me. Mr. Hopkinson took one dollar out of it and gave the bag with the money in it to me."

Sham Singh's report says: "He handed over a small handbag containing clothes and a money bag to Nagar Singh (taking one dollar out of it, before he (Mr. Hopkinson) left us. He added that keep this handbag and money bag with you, and that he would return in the evening."

The minutes of the Temple meeting are also given. The following is what they say in this connection:—

"In a way, a temptation in the way of money was also cleverly arranged. This was in the form of a money bag handed over to Nagar Singh by the interpreter, Nagar Singh, who had it, states that he counted about \$3,000 worth of bills in it. It was apparently a clever hint, though not an offer."

Compare this with the sworn statement of Sham Singh, the Hindu delegate.

Analyzing the various statements the situation is as follows:—

There is a complete backdown regarding the bribe charge, and an evident fear to assume the responsibility of any direct statement leaving the maker thereof open to criminal prosecution, and resort is had to insinuation, and even that is made not by the party who is supposed to be able to do so, but is made in the Temple minutes.

Against this is the sworn statement of one of the delegates that the first suggestion of any bribe he heard was when Nagar Singh spoke in the Temple at Vancouver.

It is evident the bribe story was originated in Vancouver after the return of the delegates, and originated, I believe, to so scare the community with regard to Honduras as to prevent the possibility of any of these even considering the proposition to go there. Against the charge also is the clear, emphatic and specific denial by Mr. Hopkinson by affidavit.

A COMPARISON.

Teja Singh, the new leader of the East Indian community, who gave the bribe charge to the press, is credited with saying, on Nov 23rd:

"They (the delegates) informed me that the bribe was offered them by Mr. Hopkinson at a town named Tancret, or at least their pronounciation makes it sound like that. The money filled a small bag. They were told they could keep it if they made a favourable report. They took the sack, and later found that it contained \$3,000 in bills, mostly of large denominations. The delegates, of course, never intended to betray their countrymen in British Columbia. As soon as they found out the amount of the bribe, they returned the money."

Yet, from the Temple minutes of Nov. 22, the day previous, Teja Singh must have known that the record was as follows:—

"In a way, a temptation in the way of money was also cleverly arranged. This was in the form of a money bag handed over to Nagar Singh by the interpreter. Nagar Singh, who had it, states that he counted about \$3,000 worth of bills in it. It was apparently a clever hint, though not an offer."

There is a circumstance in connection with the documents that also throws light on the mental operations of Nagar Singh, and also upon the probable origin of his diary as sent to me. At a meeting of

the Honduras Committee, the question of rations for Hindus came up, and the two delegates were sent for in order that the matter might be discussed with them. As soon as the discussion was concluded, the Committee proceeded with other matters, and the delegates were told they could go. Upon Mr. Hopkinson and myself returning to the hotel later on, Nagar Singh came to us and protested long and vehemently because, he alleged, the delegates had been put out of the meeting. The protest was solely on that ground. He evidently spoke of it on his return, for in the *Province* newspaper of Nov. 23, Teja Singh is credited with the following:—

"The delegates also exposed another matter to the committee here. They state that they were invited to attend a meeting of planters at Belize, capital of the colony. Through the interpreter, they were informed that the country was an ideal place for Hindus, as fresh milk and butter could be secured in abundance at a low cost. Then they were requested to leave the room. The delegates felt very indignant at this, and took occasion to express themselves very plainly to Mr. Hopkinson a few hours later."

Sham Singh, in his diary given in full on previous pages, says in this connection:—

"Then we returned home, and after some time, Mr. Harkin and Mr. Hopkinson sent for me and told us that we will have to meet the Council again on the next day. Then we replied that we would have no objection to going, but we have a point to make, and that is this: 'When you turn us out of the Council, our going does not serve any purpose; you can as well let us alone and tell us everything here.'"

Yet Nagar Singh's diary reads in this connection:—

"Just after this, we were asked to leave the assembly room. We silently walked out, remaining sitting outside. After one hour, the members of the council came out and told us to go to our lodging. Sham Singh said we will go with Mr. Harkin and Mr. Hopkinson. On this, they got angry and told us to walk on quickly. On this I got very angry. On reaching the hotel I told Mr. Hopkinson that those tricks will not serve any purpose any more. They will be found out. My anger knew no bounds. I spoke very loudly. I was told to speak in a lower tone, but I could not be appeased."

The real occasion of his anger was the fact that the delegates were told to leave the committee meeting, the committee being through with them; yet in his diary he tries to make it appear due to bad treatment at the hands of Mr. Hopkinson and myself. And this despite the fact that Teja Singh said in the *Province* interview that "they were treated in regal style."

In conclusion I beg to say:—

1. That all the evidence that it was possible to get last summer indicated that there would be great misery among the Hindu community during the approaching winter through lack of money and employment, and that it appeared to be imperative that something should be done forthwith to prepare for such a situation.

2. That it having been represented that conditions in the British West Indies were such that it appeared that if arrangements could be made to transfer unemployed and indigent Hindus there, under indenture, the situation in British Columbia would be relieved without resort to deportation.

3. That when this proposal was made to the Imperial authorities, they suggested British Honduras instead of the West Indies.

4. That the proposition was favourably received by the Hindu community, which appointed delegates to visit Honduras.

5. That the delegates in question appeared to be favourably impressed with Honduras, but reported unfavourably upon their return; such unfavourable report, apparently, not being based on the facts, but being the result of agitation coming from Hindu groups settled in the United States.

6. That as conditions among the Hindus in British Columbia appear to be relieved, there does not now appear to be any necessity for further action.

Respectfully submitted,

J. B. HANKIN.