

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2645	Press Mis.
46.47	
Dated	A — 10 — 1866.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
4th October 1866.*

No. 46. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Judicial Department:—

Passing orders on Mr. Police Commissioner }
Hearn's report on the recent disturbances in } (Here enter 21st September 1866, No. 1,469.)
the Town of Madras.

No. 47. ORDER THEREON, 4th October 1866, No. 2,645.

Miscellaneous.

Communicated to the Board of Revenue.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. GROSE,

Under Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue, with Proceedings Judicial Department, No. 1,469.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

21st September 1866.

No. 193. Read the following letter from Major C. S. HEARN, Commissioner of Police, to the Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 10th September 1866, No. 90.

I have the honor to submit a report of the recent disturbances in the Town of Madras, in order that Government may be in speedy possession of information; but, as the whole Police Force have been necessarily engaged up to this moment in active out-door duties, I have been unable yet to collect exact details on all points.

2. On Wednesday, the 5th instant, the price of rice was raised from 18 measures to 16 measures per Pagoda, and in the afternoon several rice-sellers in the Bankshalls, Rasapah Chetty Street, Black Town, and Triplicane, closed their shops. This led to the assemblage of crowds, who were, however, speedily dispersed, and if the Rice Merchants had continued to open their shops, and to sell rice freely, even at enhanced rates, no disturbance would probably have occurred, for money is tolerably plentiful, though grain is scarce.

3. On Thursday the 6th, the price of rice was again raised to 14 measures per Pagoda, or 4 measures per Rupee, and many of the rice-sellers kept their shops shut. The invariable result of this measure is that the mass of daily buyers, disappointed of their food, collect into angry crowds. The ranks are swelled by paupers and evil disposed persons, and when, at length, some of the sellers are persuaded to open their shops, a general rush takes place, resulting too often in confusion and panic, by which some of the dregs of the mob are enabled to help themselves.

4. At noon on Thursday, it was reported to me that an enormous mob was collected in Triplicane. Being laid up myself with a broken leg, I dispatched Mr. Deputy Commissioner Rámachendra Row at once to the spot, with reinforcements of Mounted and Foot Police. The judgment and energy displayed by the Deputy Commissioner, aided by the exertions of the Police Force at his disposal, availed to prevent the mob from breaking out into riot, although many thousands of persons were collected, probably the largest mass that assembled in any one place during the disturbances. Some small retail bazaars of grain, ghee, and oil, on the outskirts of Triplicane, were, however, plundered of their contents. Elsewhere in this quarter, sales partially re-commenced, and in the evening the mob dispersed; but a very large number of persons had been unable to buy their daily meal. On the same afternoon, a large mob collected in Chintadrepet Bazaar, with an obvious disposition to loot, but reinforcements of Police were at once thrown in, and the riot was quelled. Three or four petty retail bazaars of rice and sweetmeats were plundered. The loss is estimated at 14 Rupees only. Crowds also collected in Poodoopet Bazaar, and later in the evening in Egmore Bazaar, but were dispersed by the Police. About 6½ p. m., attempts were made to break open shops in the Cutwal Bazaar and Chenga Bazaar, 2nd Division, Black Town; but these attempts were prevented by the Police, and at 10½ p. m. all was quiet. On the 6th instant, therefore, the Police were everywhere able to restrain the populace from breaking out into open riot.

5. Parties of Mounted Police patrolled in each Division from early morning on Friday the 7th, and the Divisional Police Forces were concentrated as far as possible in the rice bazaars; but, notwithstanding these precautionary measures, it was reported, about 8 a. m., that Royapettah bazaar was being looted, and Mylapore threatened. Almost simultaneously, reports arrived that looting was going on in Pursewaukum and Choolay Bazaars. Such scanty reinforcements of

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Mounted and Foot Police as were still available were dispatched to these places. At 9 A. M., news came that the Chenga Bazaar, Cutwal's, and Big Patcherry Bazaars, and Rasapah Chetty Street (a considerable Grain Depôt), all in 2nd Division, Black Town, were also being looted; and at 10 A. M., it was reported that large masses had collected in Chintadrepettah Bazaar, and that a loot was imminent. It was evident that the outbreak was almost universal, and, therefore, too strong for the Police, who could not be concentrated in any one spot in sufficient force to put down the tumult, since all parts of Madras were equally threatened. It was necessary to prevent all chance of the mob proceeding to further excesses after plundering the grain shops, and, moreover, it seemed of vital importance that confidence should be sufficiently restored by next morning to admit of the shops being re-opened and the sale of rice continuing. I, therefore, determined to call in the aid of Troops, and wrote direct to Colonel Kitson, Commanding 2nd Regiment N. I., who acted so promptly on my requisition that a Company was thrown into Chintadrepettah keeping in check. I also wrote to the Officer Commanding 41st Regiment N. I., for aid in Pursewaukum, Choolay, and Perembore, sending the letter to the Inspector, 6th Division, to be delivered in case of need. The Inspector did not, however, present the letter, but a Company was furnished next morning to restore confidence in that part of the town. I further wrote to the Brigade Major, requesting that a Sub-division of Europeans might be sent to Triplicane, and that the requisition of Mr. Ansell, Deputy Commissioner of Police, might be attended to for such number of Europeans as might be required to restore peace in Black Town. Accordingly, about 1 P. M., a Sub-division marched to Triplicane, where no attempt was made to renew the disturbance of the previous afternoon, and a Company proceeded with Mr. Ansell into the 2nd Division of Black Town, where order was shortly restored. The rioters in this quarter, not content with plundering grain, broke open the cloth godowns of two Merchants in Salay Street, and took cloths of the stated value of Rupees 3800. Cloths to the value of Rupees 500 were recovered, and 24 persons are in custody for this offence. In the 1st Division of Black Town, no disturbance of any moment took place. A few petty retail bazaars were plundered here and there by passing vagabonds. The loss is estimated at Rupees 33 in all. In the 7th Division (Washermanspettah, north of the Railway Terminus) there was a considerable disturbance during the afternoon. Eight small rice bazaars and four houses were looted. The value of property lost is estimated at Rupees 315. Mr. Ansell, the Deputy Commissioner, proceeded to the spot, and the Police succeeded in restoring order before 8 P. M. Disturbances also took place in the suburbs of Nungumbaukum and Tanampet during the day, and several small bazaars were looted. When night fell, the whole Town was quiet, and the European Troops on duty were relieved by Native Infantry.

6. During the disturbances of the 7th, Mr. Robinson, the Inspector General of Police, offered aid, which was accepted, and very rapidly furnished. A party of 22 Madras District Police arrived during the night of the 7th. An Inspector and 14 Constables arrived from Vellore at 9 A. M. on the 8th, and the evening train brought an Inspector and 50 men from Salem. On the 9th, a party of 40 Police arrived from Chittoor by the early train. These reinforcements have been most useful, and my best acknowledgments are due for the service rendered.

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7. The Town has been perfectly quiet since the evening of the 7th. The sale of grain partially recommenced the next morning, and has continued to increase; but it is carried on under certain restrictions and difficulties resulting from the panic which will, I fear, tend to embarrass the trade. The present prices (6 and 7 measures per Rupee) have doubtless been adopted by the merchants under the influence of fear, and in several of the looted bazaars there has been no sale of rice since the riot. The Picquets of Native Infantry will be kept on duty until confidence is completely restored.

8. It is impossible yet to estimate the exact amount of property lost. The most exaggerated reports are made. As far as I can ascertain, I think the total value of property plundered is under Rupees 25,000. Property estimated at about Rupees 1500 has been recovered, and more will be traced out by the Police. The property plundered was chiefly grain; but in some instances money, jewels, and other articles were taken. Two hundred and fifty-six persons have been arrested, and are now under investigation. The mob was of a very composite character, comprising members of most of the lower classes of the Native community. In some places, a few sticks were carried, but this was rare. Stones and brickbats flew occasionally during the riots, but to no great extent. No great violence to person was used, and only two cases have been reported in which it was necessary to take sufferers to Hospital from injuries received. About 130 shops and houses were looted in all.

9. I deeply deplore the fact that these excesses should have been committed in the Town of Madras unrestrained by the Civil power; but I trust the Government will not consider that this resulted from want of arrangement or action on the part of the Police. A Police Force can only deal effectively with a large mob by concentrating strength on the threatened spot, but this was impossible, as already shown, during the recent riots, which spread over the whole of Madras, and, in some instances, while the majority of the Divisional Force were engaged in combating a riot in one quarter, other rioters took advantage of the opportunity to break out in different quarters of the same Division. A Police Force cannot be ubiquitous under such extraordinary pressure. The number of rioters apprehended under circumstances of unusual difficulty (when rescue was frequently attempted) shows that they were not inactive.

10. There is no symptom of renewed disturbance, but every precaution will be taken. I will hereafter submit a report containing precise details of property lost and recovered; houses plundered; and persons apprehended, committed, and convicted.

No. 194. ORDER THEREON, 21st September 1866, No. 1469.

In the letter above recorded, the Commissioner of Police, Major Hearn, gives a clear account of the disturbances which unhappily prevailed in Madras on the 6th and 7th instant.

2. The primary cause of the disturbances seems to have been the sudden and considerable rise in the price of grain on the 5th and 6th instant, aggravated by the closing of the shops of some of the small dealers, who became apprehensive of the possible consequences of the enhancement of prices.

3. The town, however, remained undisturbed until noon of the 6th, when a very large crowd assembled in Triplicane, which, by the exertions of the Police, and the judgment and energy displayed by the Deputy Commissioner Ramachendra

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Row, was prevented from breaking out into riot. Mobs also gathered in the afternoon and evening in Chintadrepettah, Poodoopet, Egmore, and Black Town, but were restrained by the Police from committing any serious excesses. A few small shops were plundered here and there, but the Civil power was predominant.

4. On the following morning, however, riots broke out simultaneously in so many places, that the Police were unable to repress them, and it became necessary to call in the aid of the Military, European and Native, whose presence, happily, sufficed to restore order. Reinforcements of Mofussil Police also arrived, and by night-fall the Town was again quiet. Since then, there have been no further disturbances.

5. It is not surprising that the Police proved unable, on the 7th, to cope with the large crowds which assembled in so many different localities; but the loss of property is much less than might have been expected under the circumstances, and a considerable number of those concerned in the outrages have been arrested, and are being brought to justice.

6. Such disturbances as these, however, derive their importance chiefly from the feeling of insecurity they engender in the minds of the local dealers, the check they may impose on the import of grain, and the pernicious influence they exert on the ill-disposed of other places.

7. The Government are glad to find that confidence is being rapidly restored, and that, by the punishment of many of the offenders, the law is being vindicated.

8. The precautions which have been taken to prevent any recurrence of these disturbances, will be continued, and the Picquets of European and Native Troops, which are now stationed in different parts of the Town, will not be withdrawn until confidence is entirely restored. Any renewed attempt at rioting must be immediately repressed by the effective employment of the ample means, Civil and Military, now at the Commissioner's command.

9. Such of the parties most seriously implicated in the late riots, as may not have been already apprehended, should be persistently tracked and brought to justice.

10. Representations have, as the Commissioner is aware, been made of misconduct on the part of some of the Police Force. Major Hearn will thoroughly investigate these, and, in due course, report his proceedings to Government.

11. The acknowledgments of Government will be conveyed to Mr. Robinson for the seasonable aid afforded by him, and also to Colonel Kitson for the prompt manner in which he responded to the Commissioner's call for Military assistance.

(True Extract).



Secretary to Government.

To the Commissioner of Police.

„ Inspector General of Police.

„ Military Department.

„ Revenue Department. ✓

Exl. J. H. Burns.



Revenue 1866. Dep't
 No of Govt for 1866
 No. 3313.
 Proceedings of the Bureau
 Govt in the 1866.
 Dep't.

Notes 21st of
 Revenue 25th of
 No. 1469.

Having notes on
 the Revenue and
 Report on the recent
 disturbances in the
 Town of Madras.

No. 5:4:10

No. 6:4:10

Communicated to the
 Revenue

No. 2645

No. 2645

No. 2645

No. 2645

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