

HOME DEPARTMENT, NOVEMBER 1919.

Pro. no. 133.] Distribution of a pamphlet published by " Indian Mirror " on Punjab Disturbances, etc.

been published in the papers, it was found necessary to issue the orders regarding precensorship but those orders were not confined to " papers owned by Indians " but were applicable to *all* newspapers whether owned and edited by Indians or by Europeans. Thus no partiality was shown to the European papers. One noticeable feature of the disturbances was the part played by *Sadhus*. They were specially conspicuous among the Kasur mob. It was they who acted as disseminators of false and alarmist rumours and attempted to work up the agriculturists in the villages. One of the most atrocious lies manufactured with the evident object of exciting the horror and indignation of the Sikh community all over India, and of Sikh sepoys and sowars in particular, was that the Golden Temple at Amritsar had been damaged and desecrated by the police and the troops. No harm was done to the Temple. Yet another malevolent invention had reference to the *Kirpan* incident at Amritsar and it was circulated that respectable Indian ladies had to submit to the indignity of their persons being searched and a number of *Kirpans* which they carried about them were forcibly taken away from them. Here are the facts of the case. On the 12th April the military authorities at the railway station of Amritsar had their attention drawn to the fact that in one of the compartments of the train, which had just arrived, were a number of Sikh girls who were being escorted by three men who were seated in another compartment. The men had in their possession hatchets and they themselves called the attention of the military authorities to the fact that the girls under their escort had with them a number of *Kirpans*. The military authorities were at a loss to decide whether the *Kirpans* should be confiscated or not and they therefore did not take any steps to remove them. On the arrival however of the Deputy Superintendent of Police, himself a Sikh gentleman, the military authorities consulted him in the matter. He explained the situation to the male members of the party and persuaded them to give up all the *Kirpans* in possession of the girls. While this was being done, the Commissioner and the Deputy Inspector General of Police appeared on the scene and having been informed of facts ordered the *Kirpans* to be returned to their respective owners, while the hatchets were retained by the military authorities. As the information that the girls had *Kirpans* with them was communicated by their male escort, there was of course no occasion for their persons being searched. The ladies made no complaint of their persons being searched or of molestation to the Commissioner and the whole party proceeded on their journey by the next train which left an hour after. It may be stated here that the searching of female passengers by men is strictly forbidden. It was by means such as these that the agitators strove to keep alive the popular excitement and to inflame popular passions against Government. On one side, a hostile press and platform orators were denouncing the Rowlatt legislation, with a virulence and violence of language which had never been surpassed, to poison the minds of educated classes in general and of students in particular, while, underneath the surface, agitators of a different class, in some cases disguised as *Sadhus*, were busy promoting ill-feeling and an attitude of defiance against Government among the illiterate and therefore easily gullible masses by circulating all sorts of unthinkable things which malignity and dishonesty could invent. The latter movement was led by men who were under the influence and possibly in the pay of foreign emissaries drawing their inspirations and sinews of war from the same source that had fomented the disorders in Egypt and exactly at the same time. The situation in the Punjab was therefore quite an unprecedented one and was unmistakably revolutionary in character. Misplaced lenience would have only led to greater bloodshed and trouble. In our next article we shall examine the results of the administration of Martial Law.—*Indian Mirror*, 19th July, 1919.

ADMINISTRATION OF MARTIAL LAW.

Martial Law is but another name for benevolent despotism and when its administration is entrusted to tactful hands, it not only enables the authorities

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to deal swiftly and successfully with an abnormal situation which it is impossible for them to cope with by relying upon the ordinary law and procedure, but to the people also it comes as a positive blessing in disguise. No one who takes into account the state of things which prevailed at Lahore in April last and examines the series of orders which were issued by Colonel Frank Johnson, the Officer appointed to administer Martial Law there, can honestly say that those orders had not been abundantly warranted by the situation which had arisen and which could yield only to exceptional measures. The first order issued required all residents, except Europeans and those in possession of a military permit, to remain indoors from eight o'clock at night till five o'clock in the morning and warned them that any person found disobeying this order would be arrested and that in the event of any attempt being made to evade or resist arrest, the offender would be liable to be shot. This order was intended to prevent disturbances being committed at night. In the same order it was further notified that in order to protect the lives of the troops and the police, if any firearm was discharged or bombs thrown at them, the most drastic reprisals would instantly be made against the owners of property surrounding the scene of the outrage. Finally, all processions, meetings, or other gatherings of more than ten persons without permission were prohibited and an order was issued forbidding any person to offer violence or cause obstruction to any person desirous of opening his shop or conducting his business or proceeding to his work or business and notifying that any person contravening this order would be arrested, tried by a summary court and liable to be shot. All *tongas* and *tomtoms* were commandeered but the drivers were to receive pay and the horses were to be rationed. The issue of third or intermediate class tickets at all railway stations in the Lahore Civil Command, except in the case of servants travelling with their European masters or others in the employ of Government, was prohibited in order to prevent the agitators from spreading their propaganda from one place to another. It was discovered that *langars* or shops for the sale of cooked food were being used for the purpose of illegal meetings or the dissemination of seditious propaganda, whereas all other shops were closed as a demonstration against Government. Accordingly it was ordered that all *langars*, except such as might be exempted, must be closed and that any disobedience of this order would lead to the confiscation of the contents of such shops and the arrest and trial by summary procedure of the owner or owners thereof. It having come to the knowledge of the authorities that certain persons employed by Lahore lawyers were engaged in disseminating seditious propaganda, it was ordered that none of these men should leave the Lahore Civil Command without a permit signed by a competent authority and every legal practitioner was required to submit a list of the persons employed by him as a munshi, dalal or agent. The next notice issued under Martial Law was directed against certain students of the D. A. V. College, who were engaged in spreading seditious propaganda and all students of the said College were required to report themselves daily to the Officer Commanding Troops at a stated hour at the Bradlaugh Hall until further notice. It was found that Notices and Orders issued under Martial Law were being torn down or defaced by evil disposed persons. To prevent it, orders were issued that in future such notices should be handed to certain selected owners of property who would be held responsible for the proper exhibition of such notices and keeping them in an undamaged condition. The public was put to much inconvenience owing to the continued strike of the shopkeepers who were afraid of opening their shops owing to threats of violence by the agitators. Accordingly an order was issued requiring every shop or place of business to be opened, failing which all shops were to be forcibly opened by the authorities at the risk of the owners or occupiers and they would further be liable to punishment including that of imprisonment, fine or flogging. An order was next issued forbidding the carrying of *lathis*. A Martial Law notice posted on the premises of the Sanatan Dharma College Hostel having been torn or

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defaced, all male persons domiciled in that Hostel were arrested and interned in the Lahore Fort pending further orders as to their trial or other disposal. The previous notice requiring the opening of shops having proved infructuous, fresh orders were issued requiring the immediate opening of shops, failing which the shops would be compulsorily opened at the risk of the owners. The next order was directed against the spreading, publishing or repeating of false reports and the offenders were warned that they would be arrested and dealt with under Martial Law. Certain students of the Dayal Singh College having been engaged in spreading seditious propaganda, an order was issued affecting the students of the College, similar to the one issued against those of the D. A. V. College. An order was issued commandeering all cycles in order to provide for the better mobility of His Majesty's troops in the disturbed area and another requiring the surrender of firearms and ammunition in the possession of persons, by virtue of exemption, licence or otherwise, in order to prevent such arms and ammunition from passing, by theft or otherwise, into the possession of those who might use them unlawfully. The next order directed all motor-car drivers, whose services were badly needed by the authorities, to report themselves for registration or engagement. Martial Law Order no. 20 reduced the hours during which the streets were closed to the public. The next order directed a surrender of cycles owned or possessed by Indians and then followed an order directing the removal of all electric lights and fans, the same being required for the preservation of health and greater comfort of the British troops stationed at Lahore. The next order was intended to secure the more complete control of all horse-drawn vehicles so as to prevent further loss and inconvenience to the public, by the refusal on the part of the driver to ply for hire. The students of the King Edward Medical College, or at any rate a large number of them having openly given expression to seditious sentiments and cries and with a view to limiting the mischievous activities of such students, orders were issued directing the students of the aforesaid College not to leave Lahore without a permit, unless they had been specially exempted on the recommendation of the Principal of the College. Some mischievous persons having set fire to the contents of a pillar letter-box, causing thereby loss and inconvenience to the public, it was notified that a repetition of the offence would be deemed to be an offence under Martial Law and punishable with all the "certainty, celerity and severity" of such law. Quite a number of orders were issued to prevent dealers in provisions and cloths from charging exorbitant prices and they were required to sell their stores at fixed prices. These orders brought much needed relief to the poorer residents and in the fulness of their gratitude they raised the cry—"Martial Law ki Jai" or "Blessed is Martial Law." This incident conveys a world of meaning and furnishes the amplest justification of the orders issued by Colonel Johnson. It having come to the notice of the authorities that certain students in the Lahore Colleges were in the habit of defacing with obscene and filthy comments pictures appearing in illustrated papers of members of His Majesty's Naval and Military forces, Civil or other services, it was notified that for such outrages, all inmates of the premises, where such damaged or defaced picture or literature might be discovered, would be held responsible. Information having reached the authorities that attempts were being made to extort money from persons with a view to saving them from penalties for intentional or other breaches of Martial Law or for the purpose of removing them from the restrictive incidence of such Martial or other Laws, it was notified that to offer or receive such bribes would be visited with two years' rigorous imprisonment with or without a fine and the offender would further be liable to a whipping. Then there were certain orders requiring Afghan subjects, on the outbreak of hostilities with Amir Amanulla, not to leave Lahore without permission, while residents were warned against circulating false reports regarding the military or political situation as affected by the attitude of the Amir. Orders were issued further reducing the hours during which the streets were closed to the public and making processions and gatherings in connection with *bonâ fide* religious services, weddings,

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funerals, etc., lawful without permission. With a view to interfere as little as possible with the religious exercises of the people, Mahomedans were permitted to visit their mosques on the night of the *Shabrat* festival at any hour, notwithstanding any Martial Law orders to the contrary. This order however did not apply to the Badshahi Masjid which had been prostituted to political purposes and in consequence had been closed pending receipt of guarantees against its misuse in the future. Such guarantees having subsequently been received, the Masjid was forthwith opened to Mahomedans as before. Then orders were issued against the waste or misuse of pipe water and against persons who had assaulted the drivers of *tongas* retained for the use of the military, for having refused to accept them as "fares." On the night of the *Bhadrakali* festival there was a further reduction of the hours during which the streets were closed to the public and similar orders were issued on the occasion of the *Parka Mela*. Lastly orders were issued for the return to their owners of the electric fans and lights, motor cars and cycles which had been commandeered before for State purposes. It will thus be seen that no restriction was continued a moment longer than it was necessary and that none had been imposed which was not absolutely necessary in the interest of the maintenance of peace and order and with a view to the suppression of seditious or disloyal movements. Nor can there be any doubt that the restoration of normal conditions would not have been so quickly and satisfactorily accomplished had it not been for the extraordinary powers with which the authorities had armed themselves under Martial Law.—*Indian Mirror, 23rd July, 1919.*

THE CONCLUSION.

Those who have attentively perused the articles regarding the Punjab disturbances, which have already appeared in these columns, will, we are confident, admit that the situation which confronted the Punjab Government was absolutely unprecedented and abundantly justified the drastic, or call it repressive, measures which were adopted by the authorities to nip the threatened revolution in the bud. True, the adoption of those measures had unfortunately been attended with bloodshed. But if those measures had not been taken timely, the consequences would have been more disastrous and there would have been greater bloodshed. The policy of coquetting with veiled sedition had been tried in other Provinces and had miserably failed there. In Calcutta during the last riots, the authorities were at first chary of interfering with the agitators and what was the result? The situation was simply aggravated, the forbearance of Government was attributed to weakness, and in the end the Government was obliged to order the rioters to be fired upon. It was fortunate that the revolutionary movement in the Punjab was confined to a few selected cities, for if it had spread into the interior, among the Jats, Sikhs, Dogras and other races which had principally furnished recruits in the war, then such a conflagration would have taken place as all the waters of the Indus would not have sufficed to quench. The enemies of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, and a strong administrator is bound to raise a host of enemies, insinuate that the Punjab disturbances were the inevitable result of the oppression which was practised by the authorities upon the villagers in order to compel them to furnish recruits for the army in the war. This atrocious allegation is disproved by the fact that the disturbances were confined to a few cities only, whereas if Sir Michael O'Dwyer had really oppressed the people and thereby become unpopular, then the unrest would have penetrated into the interior whence the recruits were principally obtained for the war. The very fact that these disorderly outbreaks had practically been confined to the urban population and to a few selected cities, completely refutes the charge that Sir Michael O'Dwyer had oppressed the people or that his administration of the Punjab had been harsh and unsympathetic. Much sympathy has been expressed by the enemies of Government for the relatives of the rioters who had lost their lives. But not a word of sympathy has been uttered for the innocent Europeans who were done to death nor any regret expressed for the damage and