

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HOME DEPARTMENT, NOVEMBER 1919.

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

to different directions. Another collision with the police took place at Lahori Gate, where also the crowd was ordered to disperse but as it refused to do so, the police fired and several persons were wounded and two died. Soldiers with bayonets guarded the Government buildings and the Banks and at night an aeroplane was flying overhead making circles over the city, to frighten the rioters but it took no part in quelling the disturbance. The Deputy Commissioner, apprehensive of more disturbances, distributed the next day notices broadcast prohibiting the people from forming any procession and stating that if, in disregard of this notice, processions were formed, they would be dispersed by force. Armed police, cavalry and soldiers were posted to guard the city. All Lahore wires were interrupted. It will thus be seen that no order to fire was given either at Delhi or at Lahore until the refusal of the mob to disperse left no alternative but to have recourse to it. It is preposterous to say that these popular risings had anything to do with the Rowlatt Bill. Very few of the rioters cared anything for it though the agitators had kept it in the forefront of their grievance simply to conceal the real character of their anti-Government movement. The Rowlatt Bill only gave them a handle of which they made the fullest use. If there had been no Rowlatt Bill, some other pretext would have been seized.—*Indian Mirror, 16th July, 1919.*

RIOTING AT AMRITSAR AND GUJRANWALA.

Early in the morning of the 10th April notices under the Defence of India (Consolidation) Rules were served on Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal of Amritsar. These two local agitators had delivered a series of inflammatory speeches against the Rowlatt Act and by their activities during the previous weeks had brought about a state of general unrest at Amritsar. They were removed by motor and train to an unknown destination and no sooner had this news spread, than a large crowd, numbering ten to twenty thousand, assembled and endeavoured to rush the civil lines. The local authorities, anticipating possible trouble, had taken the precaution of posting picquets at the railway over-bridge and level crossing connecting the city with the Civil Lines. The crowd arrived at the over-bridge and was requested to disperse peacefully. The mob not only refused to do so but began throwing stones at the men of the picquet, whereupon the District Magistrate found it necessary to order the men to fire upon the mob. Finding that the authorities were determined to stand no nonsense, the crowd turned back towards the city, abandoning their project of sacking the Civil Lines, and divided themselves into two branches, one of which, armed with wooden rails and similar weapons, attacked the railway station. They burnt a part of the goods shed and murdered a European railway subordinate named Robinson who had ventured to check their advance. The military and the police on the spot, however, succeeded in preventing the mob from doing any damage to the station itself. The second branch of the mob meanwhile attacked and burnt the Town Hall, the Banks—sparing only one of them, and certain other buildings within the city. British officers of the National Bank, Messrs. Stewart and Scott, and Mr. Thomson of the Alliance Bank of Simla were foully murdered, recalling the savagery of the rebel sepoys at Cawnpore. Other Europeans in the city succeeded in evading the rioters with the exception of Sergeant Rawlings, Cantonment Electrician, who was intercepted and overpowered while endeavouring to reach the Fort. Other smaller bodies of rioters attempted to destroy the permanent way at various points and wrecked the small stations of Chhirta on the main line and Bagtanwalla on the Patti-Kasur line. A number of Europeans owed their safety to the humanity of friendly Indians who gave them shelter and food. All the European women and children had fortunately been removed to the Fort, where the women slept on the floor and the men slept in the open. It is fortunate that the local troops and the police were reinforced by a company of Gurkha soldiers who happened to be passing through Amritsar at the time by train and who rendered invaluable assistance in restoring order at the railway station and other important points. During the

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course of the evening more troops arrived at Amritsar and by nightfall the city was practically surrounded. Between twenty and thirty among the rioters were killed and many more wounded. On Sunday the 13th the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act was applied to the districts of Lahore and Amritsar, which were declared to be Proclaimed Areas under that Act. The result of this measure was to make it illegal to hold, without permission, a public meeting for the furtherance or discussion of any subject likely to cause disturbance or public excitement. But in spite of this prohibition and on the same afternoon an attempt was made at Amritsar to hold a public meeting which was attended by six thousand people. It was indeed a distinct challenge to Government, the mob having been assured by the artful agitators that the Indian troops will refuse to fire upon them, if ordered to do so. The unfortunate dupes of the unscrupulous agitators were soon undeceived. A small force of Indian troops, composed of Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Sindhis, opened fire upon them and dispersed them. It is feared that the casualties were heavy. Now how can any right-thinking man have any sympathy for a class of agitators who thus misled their unsuspecting dupes to certain destruction? On the 12th the morning train from Ferozepur was held up outside Kasur station and looted by a mob of about one thousand, most of whom were armed with *lathis*. Two Europeans, Lieutenant Selby of the Ordnance Department and Sergeant Mostyn of the Artillery were murdered and another European was injured. After looting the train and doing a good deal of damage in the station, the rioters burnt the Post Office and invaded the Tahsil. Here, however, they were driven off with some casualties by the police guarding the place. Several stations on the Kasur-Amritsar line were attacked the same day, showing that the movement was preconcerted and Khem Karan station was looted while the Treasury at Taran Tarn was attacked but fortunately without success. In consequence of these happenings, it was found necessary to march a movable column with a gun from Kasur to Amritsar. The column started on the morning of the 13th. On the same day damage was done at various places to the line between Amritsar and Lahore and communications were interrupted temporarily. On the 14th there was an outbreak at Gujranwala and anxiety was felt for the safety of the European and American residents. The civil station, the Church and a considerable quantity of railway property were burned. The American Missionaries managed to get safely away to Sialkot and the European population took refuge in the Treasury, where, with the assistance of the police guard, they successfully defended themselves against the mob. As the rioters had destroyed all possible means of access to Gujranwala in order to prevent the arrival of troops, the authorities very wisely sent out an aeroplane from Lahore, which quickly arrived at Gujranwala and dropped bombs upon the rioters, causing a number of casualties. At Lahore an aeroplane was used for observation and not offence. But at Gujranwala, if it had not been used, the European residents would have most certainly perished.—*Indian Mirror*, 17th July, 1919.

A STATE OF "OPEN REBELLION."

On the 14th April three of the prominent popular leaders of Lahore, namely, Mr. Harkissen Lal and Mr. Dunichand, barristers-at-law, and Pundit Rambhuj Dutt Chowdhury, pleader, were deported to an unknown destination. It had now become apparant that the situation had become an Imperial question. The Province was now in a condition which was only one step removed from a state of rebellion. The Government of India could no longer remain inactive and accordingly issued a Notification in the Home Department stating that they were satisfied that a state of "open rebellion" existed in the Districts of Lahore and Amritsar and that it had become necessary to bring into force in those districts the provisions of Section 2 of the Bengal State Offences Regulation, 1804, for the trial,