

CONFIDENTIAL.

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1
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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.

POLITICAL—DEPOSIT.

Proceedings, October 1919, no. 31.

Report on the total number of casualties at the Jallianwalla Bagh at Amritsar during the recent disturbances.

PREVIOUS REFERENCES.

NOTES.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, OCTOBER 1919.

No. 31

REPORT ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CASUALTIES AT THE JALLIANWALLA BAGH AT AMRITSAR DURING THE RECENT DISTURBANCES.

THE CASUALTIES AT THE JALLIANWALLA BAGH.

DEAR SIR,

In the course of the debate on the Indemnity Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council on the 19th instant, the hon'ble Mr. Thompson is reported by the Associated Press to have made the following remarks regarding the casualties at the Jallianwalla Bag of Amritsar on the 13th April, 1919, "Coming to the Jallianwalla Bag incident, he (Mr. Thompson) said that the casualties there according to Pandit Malaviya amounted to 530. Now the Government of the Punjab had adopted every means in its power to ascertain the actual number of deaths there. A proclamation was made in Amritsar and the surrounding villages, inviting all persons who had any information regarding the names of those who had met with deaths. Instructions were issued to the local authorities there to encourage men to come forward and give information they possessed. Every possible step was taken in that direction. The result of the enquiry was that the total number of casualties amounted to 291, and any further number suggested by any body must be taken with great discretion."

As the question is one of more than passing interest, may I venture to intrude on your hospitality and, through the medium of your esteemed journal to state the correct facts bearing on the point. Before proceeding further, I feel I should mention the fact that I have been working at Amritsar from the 18th July, 1919, in connection with the distribution under the auspices of the Allahabad Seva Samiti of relief to the sufferers from the recent disturbance. Owing to the nature of the work entrusted to me, I have had to make, from the very day I came here, strenuous efforts to ascertain the number of the killed and the wounded at the Jallianwalla Bag. The method pursued by our volunteers has been to go from house to house in the City of Amritsar, ascertaining the names not only of the killed, but also of the wounded. I further arranged to send out volunteers to visit every single village in the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Sialkot and Lahore so that we might give relief to their dependents in case of want. We are also advertising in the Urdu and Gurmukhi papers of the Punjab, asking people to communicate to the office the names and addresses of the killed and the wounded. We have so far finished the district of Amritsar only, and I am awaiting the reports of our volunteers who are touring in the remaining three districts.

I think that what has been said above will suffice to satisfy even the hon'ble Mr. Thompson that the figure mentioned by our President, the hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, is not based on mere unattested hearsay, but has been arrived at as a result of several weeks' patient and hard labour. (The number of the killed, so far known to us, comes up to 530, including 60 who could not be traced and, unknown and unclaimed, were cremated by certain philanthropic gentlemen. We have also received the names of over 200 persons who were wounded but have now recovered. Thus the total casualties come up to 730, of which 530 were killed and 200 wounded. Our lists are however not yet completed and I expect that some more names will have yet to be added. The figure of 291 given by the hon'ble Mr. Thompson is therefore a palpable understatement.)

I know that the Officiating Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar issued on the 11th August, 1919, a proclamation asking people to communicate up to the 20th August the names of the killed to the Health Officer, Amritsar. He also asked the Patwaris to send in the lists from villages. But the Officiating Deputy Commissioner knows, and the hon'ble Mr. Thompson does not know, how much the people here are terror-stricken, and how reluctant they are to supply the information to the public authorities. Mr. Puckle therefore requested me to assure the people that those who communicated the information in their possession would in no way be harassed or prosecuted. I accordingly issued a notice in Urdu and Gurmukhi, asking the people to come forward and give information. Notwithstanding this, several persons could not muster courage enough to give the information to the Health Officer. As regards the reports from the Patwaris, the less said the better. I will content myself with saying only this much that their reports have in several cases, been found by us to be grossly inaccurate.

I should like to know if the Punjab Government has made any attempt to find out the names

of the persons belonging to districts other than Amritsar, who were killed or wounded on the 13th April. So far as I know, no such attempt has been made. And yet it is known to all that a considerable number of persons present at the Jullianwalla Bag were drawn from the ranks of those outsiders who had come on account of the great *Baisakhi* day to Amritsar from such far-off places as Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Montgomery, Campbellpore and Srinagar (Kashmir). We have got the names of the killed belonging to these places in our list, but they are not to be found in the official list, copy of which has been supplied to us through the courtesy of the Officiating Deputy Commissioner. In the face of these facts, I venture to suggest with great respect to the hon'ble Mr. Thompson that he is wrong in saying that "every possible step was taken in that direction." I assert that "every possible step" has not been taken to ascertain the names of the killed and the wounded. I further say that such action as has been taken was not taken until it was too late. And having regard to the facts narrated above. I would in all humility request the hon'ble Mr. Thompson to take his figure of 292 "with great discretion."

Yours truly,
V. N. TIVARY,
(Member, Servants of India Society)
Honorary Secretary,
Seva Samiti, Allahabad.

AMRITSAR ;
21st September 1919.

W. H. V[INCENT],—26-9-19.

Copy should go to Punjab.

H. D. CRAIK,—27-9-19.

Draft put up. Director of Central Intelligence would perhaps be interested and may see the file after issue.

A. L.,—29-9-19.

The Punjab Government has doubtless received a copy from the writer.

Director of Central Intelligence may see.

H. D. CRAIK,—30-9-19.

Director of Central Intelligence.

Seen thanks.

H. V. B. HARE-SCOTT,—1-10-19.

Home Department.

LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB, NO. 2119, DATED THE 8TH OCTOBER 1919.

Demi-official from H. D. Craik, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to the Hon'ble Mr. J. P. Thompson, C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, no. 2119, dated Simla, the 8th September 1919.

With reference to your demi-official letter no. 1778-S.W., of the 5th September I enclose for your information (in case you have not seen it) a copy of a printed letter by the Honorary Secretary, Seva Samiti, Allahabad, entitled "The Casualties at the Jallianwalla Bag."

Demi-official from the Hon'ble Mr. J. P. Thompson, C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, to H. D. Craik, Esq., I.C.S., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, no. 1932-S.W., dated the 11th October 1919.

With reference to your letter no. 2119-Political of the 8th October, I send you a copy of a letter no. C-360 of the 8th October which I have received from Burton to-day.

Copy of a demi-official letter no. C-360, dated the 8th October 1919, from F. H. Burton, Esq., I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, to the Hon'ble Mr. J. P. Thompson, C.S.I., I.C.S., Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab.

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In reply to your demi-official letter of 1st instant I write to say that I see no reason to amend the total number of deaths in the Jallian-walla Bagh given in Puckle's letter no. 312-C., Poll. Deposit, September 1919, no. 23. dated the 3rd September except that the total is now 300 which includes casualties on 10th April (8). Mr. Tivary of the Sewa Samiti has seen our list and has been promising all along to send us his; but has not done so. I saw him on the 23rd ultimo and he then told me that his list was typewritten and he would send me a copy soon but he has never done so. I am writing to him again to give him a last chance. This keeping back of their list is suspicious and it will require very clear proof from the Sewa Samiti if they are to establish the fact of 172 additional deaths. I think it would be best to wait one week longer to allow of a reply from Mr. Tivary before coming to a final conclusion, and I will inform you of the result of my letter in a week. If he sends his list we shall be able to check it and see how far it is correct.

As regards our own list the figures have been obtained as follows. There are four registers of deaths in the city and the bye laws of the Municipal Committee say that every death is to be reported. The 200 reported before Puckle's proclamation of 9th August were obtained through these registers and included in this total are 44 unidentified bodies which were entered as the result of the Registrar's personal enquiries at cemeteries and burning grounds. Since the proclamation was issued 212 names have been received of which 114 were at first found to be new but verification of these in Amritsar town has led to the exclusion of 11 which were already entered and of 3 persons who were found to be living. The death reports made by village headmen, etc., have not yet been verified and it is possible that verification may result in some reduction here as names are no longer coming in. Moreover it seems to me that some of the 44 unidentified bodies may possibly be those of persons entered by name in the list.

Puckle had an agreement with Tivary that he should use the Health Officer's registers for his charitable programme on condition that he reported his own figures to Puckle or to the Health Officer. All that Tivary has done so far is to tell me his total figures and we do not know whether he has checked his figures with ours or not. He told me that his figures were the result of house to house enquiry.

Submitted with papers.

A. L.,—15-10-19.

Information. Adjutant General should see.

H. D. CRAIK,—15-10-19.

W. S. MARRIS,—15-10-19.

Army Department.

Thanks.

H. BARSTOW,—18-10-19.

D. P. S.

G. MARSHALL,—21-10-19,

Home Department.