

# JUSTIFIES ACTIONS OF THE POLICE IN RIOTS

## D.A.P.M. Miller Says They Did Only Thing Saturday Night to Stop Trouble.

### THE SOLDIERS' VIEW

## G.W.V.A. Secretaries Testify to Bad Feeling Against Aliens Among Returned Men.

Justification of the action of the police during the rioting of Saturday night, Aug. 3, was contained in the evidence of Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal William Miller, former Toronto detective, at yesterday afternoon's sitting of the Court of Enquiry at the City Hall. Witness declared that it was his opinion as a military man that, had not the civil officers taken the steps they did, the disturbances would not have been over yet.

Magistrate Denison: "Then the police were not too severe in handling the crowd?" "Not in the least. It was the only thing that could have been done to stop the rioting, short of the reading of the Riot Act."

"The least possible bloodshed occurred in this way?" "Yes."

Secretaries of the various branches of the G. W. V. A. testified to the general feeling among returned men against the employment of alien enemies, and against aliens in general, the latter because of the fact that they were able to escape the Military Service Act, although their country was at war with Germany.

### Soldier Was Struck.

Corp. Alfred E. Ducker, an original Princess Pat, was the first witness called by Mr. Robertson at the afternoon session.

"I was on duty at Victoria street when I received word to take five men to the White City Cafe, where a disturbance was taking place. When we got there the place was wrecked. I went through to the back and I saw a policeman had hold of a Greek whom the crowd was attempting to get at. I saw a stick raised to hit the constable, and I grabbed it, but in so doing I was struck over the eye by a stick or crutch from behind."

"Was it a soldier who was attempting to strike the policeman?" asked Mr. Robertson. "Yes."

"What did you do then?" "I got my wound dressed and was taken to the hospital."

Sergeant G. R. Mather stated that Friday night he got a telephone message from No. 2 Police Station, and then took sixteen men to the White City restaurant, but found the place had been completely wrecked.

On Saturday night, between 7.15 and 7.30 a crowd of five hundred people came down Victoria street, about half of whom were soldiers, and stopped at the office, asking if there were any prisoners there.

"Were these people led?" asked Magistrate Denison.

### Wanted to Rescue Prisoners.

"Yes, they were," replied Sergeant Mathers. "Two men on crutches seemed to be directing their movements."

"Did they ask for prisoners?" "Yes, they said they wanted the prisoners if there were any."

Corporal Fairbrother stated that he was in charge of the party that went up to the corner of Carlton and Yonge on the Friday night in question. There were about 800 people there in his opinion.

Witness stated that he did not attempt to make an organized attack on the rioters themselves.

"Those were not my instructions," said the corporal. "I was told to distribute my men among the crowd, which I did."

"You did not consider that it was your duty to attempt to restrain the rioters?"

"No, sir," replied the witness. "There were too many civilians taking part."

Corp. Edward Willis: "The police were trying to protect a Greek who was employed at the White City Cafe, when Corp. Ducker and I arrived. In the scuffle Corp. Ducker was badly cut over the eye."

"Did you attempt to make any arrests?" asked Mr. Robertson. "No, it was useless to move. We were powerless to take any action."

Detective Mitchell stated that at Saturday night's riot, Yonge street down town, was packed solid with men, women and children. He described how, in company with Inspector Kennedy, he had "scouted around" looking to see where the trouble was emanating from.

### Soldier Led the Crowd.

"In front of the Library steps on College street the crowd stopped for a while," continued the witness. "A soldier in uniform seemed to be directing its movements."

"He was directing the movements of the cars and to an inoffensive citizen who was driving a motor car he said: 'You better get out of this or you'll get yours, too.'"

"From my judgment in what I saw of the police handling the crowd I think they were extremely lenient. I never saw one person struck."

Mr. Roebuck: "You saw the mob dispersed several times?" "Yes."

"It was not necessary to hit them over the head with batons?" "No, they ran like sheep."

"Did you see the clashes at Yonge and Queen and on Court streets?" "No."

### Battle of Shrapnel Corners.

He then told of the battle at Shrapnel Corners on Tuesday night, where he said the soldiers had sticks and other cudgels, and showed a most formidable weapon with which

a man was in the act of striking Acting Inspector Snyder.

"I tried to get him, but he hit Snyder before I got there."

"Did you get him?" asked Mr. Robertson. "Yes."

"Was he convicted?" "Yes, and sentenced to a year."

Magistrate Denison: "I may say that I have already received an application from Ottawa for the pardon of McChesnie, the man who struck Snyder."

Mr. Roebuck: "I may say also that the G. W. V. A. made no application for his pardon. I wish to point out that the attack on Snyder came subsequent to the time the soldiers were attacked at Carlton and Yonge streets."

"The soldiers attacked?" queried Detective Guthrie. "Yes. Hadn't you heard about that?" returned Mr. Roebuck. "I had not."

Magistrate Denison: "I don't blame the friends of these criminals if they did make a petition for pardon. You know, Mr. Roebuck, they so often get off."

#### Pickets Did Nothing.

Deputy A. P. M. Wm. Miller, former detective on the Toronto Police Force, was called at the forenoon session.

"On Saturday," he said, "I went to the White City Cafe about 8 o'clock, but the crowd had all gone. It had been completely wrecked. I remained down town till 10 p.m., when everything seemed quiet, and I went home, with instructions to take the military picket wherever fresh trouble occurred."

Witness said subsequently he was called with his picket first to Dovercourt and Bloor and then to College and Yonge. At the latter place he said there were nearly 2,000 people, and civilians and soldiers were wrecking the White Star Cafe.

"I had the picket, only ten men, but they could do nothing. I ordered them to distribute themselves throughout the crowd to secure identification and information. Two men were prosecuted by court-martial."

"You didn't think there was anything your men could do there?" "Not my ten policemen."

"Why?" "Well, the crowd numbered 2,000, the proportion of uniformed men in the crowd was small, and I knew perfectly well it was useless for my ten men to go into that crowd."

Magistrate Denison: "How many police were there?" "Possibly 25. It was useless for them to try to stop the proceedings."

Later he was present when the Marathon Cafe was being wrecked, only two of his men, he believed, were with him then. Major Mitchell was present there and the picket and the militia generally was completely under his jurisdiction. I reported to Maj. Mitchell and asked him if we couldn't do anything to help out the police. He said the truck load of men could only be used on order of written requisition of the Mayor or magistrate and after the reading of the Riot Act.

"You were inclined to be a little less formal?" "Yes, I was prepared to use them as police."

On Saturday night witness said he had 25 or 30 men at his disposal. Part on reserve, part on patrol throughout the city."

#### Asked for Assistance.

Magistrate Denison: "Were you asked for assistance for the civil police?" "I was."

"Did the civil police get assistance?" "They did not."

"What do you think about the reading of the Riot Act?" "I think it would have been disastrous to read the Riot Act."

Magistrate Denison: "That is, you would have had to go on with the soldiers and shoot the people down and so on?" "We would have had to do so."

"And you do not think the Police Commissioners were to blame for not reading the Riot Act?" "No, sir."

"You think they did right as they did, in letting the police go in and quell the trouble on the second night?" "I think so."

Mayer Church: "If the police had done nothing on Saturday night, could more damage have resulted?" "It would not have been over yet."

Magistrate Denison: "H'm. There would not have been any policemen left by this time. Then you think the Police Commission did the best thing advisable to leave the situation in the hands of Deputy Chief Dixon and the police?" "I do."

"Less bloodshed resulted in this way?" "Yes."

Magistrate Denison: "Was this poor fellow Button with Brown?" "At the evidence of the court-martial, Button testified that Brown was not in the riot. It was shown, however, that the evidence of shell-shock patients was not reliable."

Lieut. Miller stated that, "In the spring one of the secretaries of the returned men's associations notified the military authorities that they were going to turn out all the enemies out of the munition factories by force."

Magistrate Denison: "If the Government had interned more of the aliens there would not be so much dissatisfaction."

Mayor Church: "If the Government would deal with the alien question properly they would remove the basis of the trouble."