

STATISTICAL TABLES
OF THE
DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE
FOR THE YEAR
1913.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



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DUBLIN DISTURBANCES COMMISSION.

REPORT

OF THE

DUBLIN DISTURBANCES COMMISSION.



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1914.

WARRANT OF APPOINTMENT.

BY THE LORD LIEUTENANT GENERAL AND GENERAL GOVERNOR
OF IRELAND.

ABERDEEN.

Whereas in the months of August and September, 1913, during the existence of trades disputes in Dublin, certain disturbances and riots took place in that city :

And whereas allegations of the use of excessive and unnecessary force have been made against the police engaged in the suppression of these disturbances :

We do hereby authorise and direct you, Denis S. Henry, Esquire, and Samuel Lombard Brown, Esquire, two of his Majesty's counsel learned in the law, to hold an inquiry at Dublin aforesaid on the 5th January next and following days, to inquire into the origin and circumstances of the said riots and disturbances and into the allegations above-mentioned, and to hear and examine all such witnesses as shall appear before you, with reference to the matters aforesaid, and to report to us thereon :

And we do appoint Thos. Patton, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, your Secretary.

Given at His Majesty's Castle, at Dublin, this 19th day of December, 1913.

By His Excellency's Command,

J. B. DOUGHERTY.

DUBLIN DISTURBANCES COMMISSION.

REPORT.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN CAMPBELL, K.T.,

LORD LIEUTENANT-GENERAL AND GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

On the 19th of December, 1913, Your Excellency issued your Warrant to us whereby, after reciting that in the months of August and September, 1913, during the existence of trade disputes in Dublin, certain disturbances and riots took place in that City, and that allegations of the use of excessive and unnecessary force had been made against the police engaged in the suppression of these disturbances, Your Excellency authorized and directed us to hold an Inquiry at Dublin on the 5th of January then next, and following days, "and to inquire into the origin and circumstances of the said riots and disturbances, and into the allegations above mentioned, and to hear and examine all such witnesses as should appear before us with reference to the matters aforesaid, and to Report to Your Excellency thereon."

In obedience to Your Excellency's Warrant we opened the Inquiry in the Four Courts, in the City of Dublin, on Monday, the 5th of January, 1914, at the hour of 11 o'clock. The Warrant having been read in open Court by the Secretary, we explained the course we intended to take in the conduct of the Inquiry. Owing to the fact that our Warrant directed us to inquire into all the riots and disturbances which took place in August and September, we thought it more convenient that we should hear a statement from those representing the police of the dates and character of the various disturbances, especially as no one appeared in opposition to the police with reference to several of the incidents we were to inquire into. We would then hear the evidence of the police witnesses, and we explained that it would be open to any of the parties attending the Inquiry to cross-examine those witnesses, and to give evidence with reference to the various matters involved in the Inquiry. We also stated that we were prepared to examine any persons who would transmit his name to our Secretary, and so far as possible during the Inquiry we gave every facility to members of the public who were desirous of giving evidence.

Mr. J. P. Powell, K.C., and the Hon. Cecil Atkinson (instructed by Mr. Gerald Byrne) appeared on behalf of the police, and Mr. Ignatius Rice, Solicitor to the Corporation of Dublin, appeared on behalf of the Housing Committee of the Corporation, with reference to certain charges made with reference to the conduct of the police on the 31st of August in certain buildings in the City which are the property of the Corporation.

Our Sittings closed on the 28th of January, 1914, having occupied eighteen days, during which 281 witnesses attended for the purpose of giving evidence. Of these witnesses 202 were members of either the Dublin Metropolitan Police or of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and 79 were civilians.

ORIGIN OF THE DISTURBANCES.

On the 30th and 31st of August, and 1st and 21st of September, 1913, fifteen separate and distinct riots took place in the City of Dublin. Of these five occurred on Saturday, the 30th of August; seven occurred on Sunday, the 31st of August; two occurred on Monday, the 1st of September, and one occurred on Sunday, the 21st of September.

We shall deal separately with the circumstances of each of these riots, but before doing so it is necessary to report on their origin.

The year 1913 was a period of industrial unrest in Dublin. Between the end of January and the middle of August, 1913, no less than thirty strikes took place in the City, many of which were accompanied by actual violence and intimidation, resulting in prosecutions and convictions in some forty-five cases. On several occasions from the month of March, and particularly in the month of August, speeches containing direct incitements to violence were delivered at meetings of working men, and in many of these speeches, especially those delivered in the month of August, attacks were made upon the police. In the last week of August a strike occurred of a large number of the employees of the Dublin Tramway Company, but as some of the employees of the Company remained in their employment, it was possible, with the assistance of newly engaged hands, to continue a diminished service of the cars. In order to prevent the cars and their drivers and conductors from being attacked in the streets, it was necessary to obtain police protection, and for a considerable time a member or members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, or of the Royal Irish Constabulary, accompanied each of the cars. The protection afforded to the Tramway Company in running their cars notwithstanding the strike created great resentment, not only against the Tramway Company, but against the police, and two of the earlier riots on Saturday, the 30th of August, and several of the riots on Sunday, the 31st of August, had their origin in organised attacks on tram-cars. All the other riots, with the exception of the riot in Sackville Street on Sunday, the 31st of August, with the origin of which we have dealt separately, had their origin in organized attacks on the police. Although all the riots were directly or indirectly the result of industrial disputes, they were not confined to working men, and in all of them the worst element was supplied by those who seldom or never work, and who may be described as the corner-boys and criminal class in the City.

It is a remarkable feature of the disturbances on which it is our duty to report that between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Sunday evening the 31st of August, serious rioting occurred in six widely separated districts in the City.

RIOT AT RINGSEND ON SATURDAY, 30TH AUGUST, 1913.

On the afternoon of Saturday, the 30th August, the first of the riots which we have investigated broke out in the district of Ringsend, near the City.

The Power Station of the Dublin Tramway Company is situated here, and it was in the neighbourhood of this building that disorder first showed itself.

Inspector Bannon of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, was in charge, and he was assisted by Inspector Chase, who was accompanied by a number of mounted troopers.

During the riot Inspector Chase was struck by a stone, and his horse was knocked down by members of the crowd. The tram cars were attacked, and when the police sought to protect them, they were received with a volley of stones, bottles, and other missiles, thrown not only from the street, but also from houses. Four members of the force were injured in the course of this riot, which lasted for an hour.

The efforts made by those responsible for the preservation of the peace did not involve the use of any unnecessary violence.

RIOT IN BRUNSWICK STREET, SATURDAY, THE 30TH AUGUST, 1913.

Later in the same afternoon another riot broke out in Great Brunswick Street, within the City. Superintendent Kiernan and Inspector Barrett were in charge of the district; and the immediate cause of the riot was an attack on a van the property of the *Independent* Newspapers, which was proceeding from Ringsend towards the City, under the escort of two constables. A crowd of about 250 persons assembled, and blocked the road. The horse was seized, and when the constables forming the escort attempted

to protect the driver, they were struck with stones, one of them—Constable O'Callaghan—~~was~~ knocked down, and kicked while on the ground.

The men who went to the assistance of these constables were assaulted and struck by stones and bottles, and in the case of some persons who were arrested numbers of stones were found in their pockets.

Men and women joined in the attack, and a prisoner who had been arrested, was rescued. The men in charge of the tram cars in the street were also assailed. During the continuance of this disturbance the street was a scene of great violence. The conduct of the police who were chiefly engaged was described in these words by a clergyman who was present:—"It is my distinct opinion that the five or six policemen (D.M.P. and R.I.C.) whom I saw subjected to these insults and violent conduct, behaved with

being

singular self-restraint, and in some cases with actual good humour. There was an absence of violence on their part, except in the last instance, when they only employed such force as was necessary to secure and retain their prisoners. Their behaviour was the only redeeming feature of what was for a Dublin citizen a really humiliating and disgusting spectacle." This statement, which will be found in the evidence of Sir John Ross, was forwarded by the Reverend Gentleman.

RIOT IN BERESFORD PLACE, TALBOT STREET, MARLBOROUGH STREET,
— EARL STREET, EDEN QUAY, AND BURGH QUAY, SATURDAY,
30TH AUGUST, 1913.

On the night of Saturday, the 30th August, violent rioting took place in the district comprising Beresford Place and the quays adjoining, Marlborough Street, Corporation Street, Talbot Street, and Earl Street.

Inspector Campbell, of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, was on duty in Beresford Place in charge of twenty men from about 7 p.m. They were stationed outside Liberty Hall, the Head Quarters of the Irish Transport Workers Union, and about 8 p.m. a crowd which had collected, began to booh and hiss the police, and become violent. The Inspector was struck on the face with a piece of glass, and a large number of his men were also struck. Reinforcements were called for, and Inspector Willoughby, with between twenty and thirty men, shortly afterwards came to the assistance of Inspector Campbell.

Before any charge was made on the crowd at least five constables had been injured, and when the crowd was dispersed by the police, they reassembled at different points from time to time.

The stone-throwing continued, and charges were made during the night along Eden Quay, across Butt Bridge, on Burgh Quay, and in Beresford Place. During part of the disturbance Superintendent Quinn was in charge of a party of men on Butt Bridge, and a number of his men were injured, at least one having to be removed to hospital. This constable, who was hit with a bottle on the head, was unable to return to duty for three weeks.

The riot in this locality went on for a long time, and while it lasted, the throwing of stones and bottles was almost continuous, and many injuries were inflicted.

We regret to say that as far as we can ascertain two deaths are attributable to injuries received as a result of baton charges which took place. At Eden Quay, a man called James Nolan, of 8, Spring Garden Street, North Strand, sustained a fracture of the skull, which resulted in his death at Jervis Street Hospital on the morning of Sunday, the 31st. The jury at the inquest found that death was caused by fracture of the skull, and compression of the brain. They also found that the injuries were caused by the blow of a baton, but that the evidence was too conflicting to say by whom the blow was administered. It was proved before us that before the baton charge in question took place, the crowd at the spot in question had been very disorderly, stones had been thrown, and it was quite obvious to any peaceable person that a riot was in progress for some time. No evidence was given before us as to the circumstances under which Nolan became a member of the crowd, but it was beyond all doubt a riotous one.

On the same night a labourer named John Byrne, residing at 4, Lower Gloucester Place, was treated at Jervis Street Hospital for a wound on his head. He died on the 4th September, and the jury at the inquest found that John Byrne died from fracture of the skull and hæmorrhage. They further found that they had no evidence to show how the deceased received his injuries.

No person gave evidence at the Inquest, or before us, as to the circumstances under which John Byrne sustained the injuries which resulted in his death, and the only account available was the statement made by him to his wife, that he had been struck with a baton at Burgh Quay. It was proved before us that a baton charge had taken place at Burgh Quay on Saturday night, and that the crowd against which this charge was directed was very disorderly and violent, and we have little doubt that in the course of this charge Byrne received the injury which led to his death.

We are of opinion that in the case of both these crowds their conduct towards the police clearly showed to any peaceable persons the danger that they ran by remaining members of them.

Later on on the same night riotous crowds assembled in Marlborough Street Talbot Street, and Earl Street, and damage was done in many instances to shops and houses. The rioters gathered at the corners of streets, and when charged by the police rushed away,

to re-assemble later on and again indulge in stone-throwing. In fact during the greater part of the night continuous disturbances existed in this area, and the force engaged were kept busy in dispersing crowds. Unless the officers in charge were prepared to abandon possession of the streets to rioters, they had no alternative but to give the orders to clear the various streets that they did.

THE RIOT IN SACKVILLE STREET ON SUNDAY, 31ST AUGUST, 1913.

The immediate cause of the riot in Sackville Street on Sunday afternoon, the 31st of August, 1913, was the appearance of James Larkin outside the Imperial Hotel in Sackville Street, for the purpose of addressing a public meeting, which had been proclaimed by the Chief Magistrate of the City of Dublin. Larkin was arrested, and committed for trial on the 28th of August, 1913, and was admitted to bail on the same day. After his admission to bail Larkin publicly expressed his intention of holding a public meeting in Sackville Street on Sunday, the 31st of August. On the 29th of August a Proclamation, which was extensively posted and circulated in the City, was issued by the Chief Magistrate, prohibiting this meeting. On the evening of the 29th of August Larkin burned a copy of this Proclamation at a meeting in Beresford Place, and again expressed his intention of holding a meeting in Sackville Street on Sunday, the 31st of August. In these circumstances a warrant was issued for the re-arrest of Larkin, and it became necessary for the police authorities to take steps for the purpose of preventing and dispersing the meeting if an attempt were made to hold it in Sackville Street on the Sunday. The steps taken for this purpose were described to us in detail by Mr. W. V. Harrel, the Assistant Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and will be found in his evidence annexed to this Report. The length of Sackville Street is 616 yards, and its width from wall to wall a little over 50 yards; and it was not known in what part of the street the intended meeting would be held. In these circumstances it became necessary to make such arrangements as would ensure a sufficient force of police to prevent and disperse the meeting in whatever part of the street the attempt might be made to hold it, and at the same time to prevent any filling up of the street. With this object in view, Mr. Harrel met all the Superintendents at Head Quarters on Saturday, the 30th of August, and directed them to assemble at 11.30 a.m. on the Sunday in Sackville Street, a force of police, which in fact consisted of 5 Superintendents, 9 Inspectors, 23 Sergeants, and 274 Constables, of whom 72 were members of the Royal Irish Constabulary; to instruct their officers and men that while persons were to be allowed to pass freely along the street about their lawful business, no assembly of persons was to be permitted; that the police were to advise persons to pass along, and not to remain about; that small parties of police consisting of a sergeant and a few constables were to move along the sections of the street allotted to each Superintendent to keep the people moving when necessary; that no organized bodies of people were to be allowed to enter the street at any point; and that James Larkin was to be arrested if he appeared. The Superintendents to whom these instructions were given are all men of long experience in the force, and they and the other officers of the Dublin Metropolitan Police who were in command of the various sections of the force in Sackville Street on Sunday, the 31st August, had frequent previous experience of dealing with crowds and meetings in that street, and were competent to deal with any emergency which might arise in their immediate neighbourhood. In accordance with these arrangements, which were subsequently communicated by Mr. Harrel to Sir John Ross, the Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and approved of by him, the police took up their position in and about Sackville Street at 11.30 a.m. on the Sunday. The force was distributed in the following manner:—One division under Chief Superintendent Dunne, and consisting of Inspector Bannon, six sergeants and sixty-three constables, was stationed in sections at the south side of O'Connell Bridge, at the Ballast Office, and at the *Independent* Office at the corner of D'Olier Street. Another division under Superintendent Kiernan, and consisting of two Inspectors, five sergeants, and fifty constables, was stationed in three sections on the east side of Sackville Street between Eden Quay and the Pillar. A third division under Superintendent Flynn was stationed at the Bachelor's Walk side of O'Connell Bridge, and a fourth division, under Superintendent Murphy, was posted in sections, one near the corner of Middle Abbey Street, and the other at Prince's Street, near the office of the *Freeman's Journal*. A fifth division, under Superintendent Gordon, had charge of the west side of Upper Sackville Street, from Henry Street to the Rotunda; and a sixth division, under Inspector Willoughby, had charge of the east side of Upper Sackville Street, from Earl Street to Great Britain Street. Both Sir John Ross and Mr. Harrel arrived in Sackville Street about 1.30 p.m., when the rioting was almost over. They left the Head Quarters at the