

RECENT RIOTING IN DELHI DESCRIBED

Following Passing of Rowlatt Bill, It Is Said to Constitute First Purely Political Dis- turbance Known in India

By The Christian Science Monitor special
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CALCUTTA, India.—It would per-
haps be quite accurate to say that the
recent rioting in Delhi was almost the
first purely political disturbance that
has ever taken place in India--and yet,
to those who have been any length of
time in this country, it appears almost
certain that, as the Statesman re-
marks of the people who took part in
it, "possibly none knew the name of
the act to protest against which the
business of the city had been dis-
turbed; none knew the real tenor of
its provisions, and few knew, even
from rumor, the nature of the
anarchist terror experienced by
Bengal."

The ultimate cause of the trouble
was Mr. Gandhi's vow of passive re-
sistance against the Rowlatt bill,
passed into law a few days before,
immediately prior to the adjournment
of the Imperial Legislative Council.
It may be remembered that the vow,
the terms of which have been for-
warded in previous correspondence,
bound the adherent to abstain from
all violence, but while it was assumed
that Mr. Gandhi would rigorously ob-
serve this self-denying ordinance him-
self, it was considered very doubtful
whether his followers would imitate
him in this respect. The disturbances
which have taken place at Delhi in-
dicate that these doubts were justified.

A Day of Humiliation

The facts, so far as they have yet
emerged, show that a few days before
it was announced that Sunday, March
30, would be observed in Delhi as a
day of mourning and humiliation for
the passing of the Rowlatt act. Noth-
ing definite was known, however, until
Saturday evening, when the promoters
of the movement, having conducted
an extensive house to house canvass,
decided that the following day should
be observed by fasting, using no ve-
hicles, and doing no business. The
police authorities, on learning this
decision, took special precautions
against a breach of the peace.

So far as the town was concerned,
the demonstration of the passive re-
sisters appears to have been success-
ful, in that all shops were closed,
and no vehicles either plied for hire
or otherwise. But at the railway
station, which is one of the biggest in
India, the demonstrators were in-
formed that the sweetmeat sellers
demurred at the proposal that they
should take a holiday. A large crowd
visited the station, and, finding the
sweetmeat vendors obdurate, blows
were exchanged, and two demonstra-
tors were taken into custody. The
mob then got out of hand, some
damage was done to the station build-
ings and the arrested men were re-
scued. A handful of soldiers and police
who appeared on the scene were
roughly handled, brickbats, etc., being
thrown and injuries being inflicted.
Finally Mr. Currie, additional district
magistrate, arrived, and in view of
the threatening demeanor of the mob,
which is said to have numbered 5000,
he ordered it to disperse, warning it
that it would be fired upon if it did
not. The only reply was a shower of
stones, and the order to fire was given.
Several casualties were inflicted, and
the crowd broke up.

Half an hour later another crowd
molested a small party of British
soldiers and Indian police who were
patrolling Chandni Chowk. Warning
was also given here, but again without
effect, and a volley was discharged in-
to the crowd, resulting in further
casualties and the immediate disband-
ment of the rioters. A third collision
between Gurkhas and the mob was
narrowly averted, one of the Gurkha

rifles going off, by accident, it is said,
although nothing could persuade the
crowd that it was not a set purpose.

These incidents exhaust the discipli-
nary measures taken on that day.
Next day a procession was held, esti-
mated at 15,000, but it passed off in
an orderly manner, and many of
the shops opened. Attempts were
made to stop the tramway traffic, and
the authorities were inclined to take
stern measures; but, yielding to the
urgent representations of the leaders
of the mob, left it to them to pacify
the demonstrators, with the result that
quiet was completely restored by five
o'clock in the afternoon.

Attitude of Nationalist Press

The Nationalist press, which had
almost unanimously approved the
Satyagraha movement, now with almost
as complete unanimity took up the at-
titude that the Delhi officials, the
police and military, had been guilty of
an outrage, and garbled accounts
speedily began to make their appear-
ance in a number of Indian papers,
the purport of which was to show that
the demonstrators at Delhi had never
offered violence to anyone, and that
they had been fired upon without any
rhyme or reason. In order to combat
these accounts, the local government
issued an official statement of the
facts, substantially as they have been
set out above.

Demonstrations by Fasting

On some of the more fanatical peo-
ple deciding to introduce the Saty-
agraha movement into Calcutta, the
Bengal National Chamber of Com-
merce, which consists largely of Mar-
warri merchants, issued the following
statement: "The Bengal National
Chamber of Commerce, while not sup-
porting the Rowlatt act, is of opinion
that passive resistance in any form,
including closing of shops, bazaars,
and places of business would be detri-
mental to the public interest."

The "day of mourning" was, how-
ever, observed on the following Sun-
day in Calcutta, Madras, Lahore and
other centers, where large crowds
"demonstrated" in an orderly man-
ner. Hundreds of thousands fasted,
abstained from business and from
riding in carriages or motor cars, but
Mr. Gandhi's caution against forcing
other people to follow suit was hon-
ored at least as much in the breach
as in the observance. Pressure of a
strong kind was certainly brought to
bear upon all and sundry in Calcutta,
and as a result it may be said of a
great many who were roped into the
demonstration that they had little if
any appreciation of the points in issue
between the organizers of the agita-
tion and the government.

So far the only other place where
the Satyagraha "day of mourning"
was attended with any excitement was
in Lahore, where the police took up
a strong attitude. The crowd at first
threatened violence, but on being
harangued by their leaders, dispersed.