

I am sure that all decent citizens have been profoundly shocked by the events of Thursday night. People irrespective of their political or religious beliefs are universally agreed that the burial of the dead is a time for reverence and respect. One can therefore only regard with horror the display by a large group of people Thursday afternoon, who made the occasion of the funeral of the Minister of Home Affairs into a riotous demonstration. Worse than that these same people organised themselves in roving gangs after the funeral and used violence on persons who had only gone to the funeral to pay their last respects to a friend or colleague. It did not stop there. Eventually, there was a riot through the surrounding streets and areas in which some fifty persons mostly of a particular race were injured. Several of them were severely injured. Last night I visited some of these at the Georgetown Public Hospital and was able to see the tremendous suffering which has been inflicted on innocent people. They were savagely attacked while going about their normal business. Because they belonged to a particular racial group, they were singled for attack. In a few cases where members of other races, horrified by what was happening, intervened to help, they were also subjected to violence. A report by the Commissioner of Police to me states in part the following:

"In all 50 civilians were injured 42 of them being East Indians, 6 Africans and 2 Portuguese. 20 of these detained in hospital, 3 of them being considered as seriously hurt. 3 Policemen were injured none of them seriously.

28 Persons were arrested by the Police for varying offences.

3 cars were damaged and 1 shop was broken into. There were 20 reports of larceny from the person but most of these involved the injured persons mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

"Many shops owned by East Indian businessmen were stoned and windows broken. There were no reports of actual looting."

Following this report, more information has come to me indicating an even more alarming picture which shows that persons were not only attacked in the streets but also in their homes.

These events are the result of the prolonged incitement of people by political and trade union leaders and by sections of the Press. For example, I am appalled to find that the Press yesterday failed to condemn the horrible events. One paper even went further and attempted to set people against the Police. Let me assure you that such acts will be met with all the necessary force required to maintain law and order. I want to issue a clear warning to the Press that any further attempts at incitement will be met with immediate steps for the cessation of publication.

These outbreaks of violence are beginning to be too regular a feature of our society. It is a cancerous growth which if not removed surgically, will spread throughout the country. We have therefore decided, in the light of these events to take as a first step, the following action.

The Greater Georgetown area has been proclaimed and all processions and public meetings of more than five persons are prohibited unless authorized in writing by the Commissioner of Police.

I am aware that there are a number of persons who regard these outbreaks of violence with pleasure because they are directed against this Government and their supporters. To these persons, I say, take heed. Violence like fire is no respecter of persons, and once it takes root in society, all will suffer irrespective of their race or religious or political persuasion. And those who have the most to lose will lose most.

There can be no doubt that the General Strike called by the T.U.C. is creating a situation which will inevitably lead to increasing disorder. It will no longer do for leaders to go on making statements about peaceful intentions and "week of Sundays", while at the same time the participants are clearly defying law and order. Several trade union and political leaders have made statements which can only inflame and incite. Thus one prominent trade unionist has recently made statements of a racial character which are calculated to increase tension and to predispose people to violence such as happened on Thursday. Another leading trade unionist under the guise of "Passive Resistance" is openly advocating with the support of a section of the press, courses of action which is leading to violence. Similarly in a recent T.U.C. broadcast a leading political figure explained the lines along which people might with impunity break the Emergency Order. And yesterday the President of the T.U.C. gave a biased account of the arrangement for the distribution of food which is calculated to arouse bitterness and hatred in sections of the community.

When the talks with the T.U.C. broke down on May 7, there was three main points of difference. As we were still anxious to reach agreement, the Government proposed a working party consisting of representatives of the T.U.C. and C.A.G.I. with the Commissioner of Labour representing Government as Chairman which should explore the possibilities of finding a way out of the deadlock on the Labour Relations Bill. These three points were the composition of the Board, the method of application to the Board of a Union seeking recognition and the basis for the certification of a Union. After some nine meetings, the working party forwarded to me a letter dated May 23 in which certain recommendations were made and on the basis of which it was felt full discussions could be resumed.

I accordingly met representatives of the T.U.C. and C.A.G.I. on Friday, May 24 and again on Monday and Wednesday of this week. After full and I had hoped that with agreement reached on these 3 major points, and in view of Government's assurances not to proceed with the Bill until the talks have concluded the strike would have been called off. But unfortunately I was told that discussions must continue on minor points and on terms of resumption. Government is prepared to discuss these minor points preferably to start with on the tripartite Working Party. The Government is also prepared to discuss resumption of work terms in respect of those unions in which it is in a position of Employer. We are now waiting to hear from the T.U.C.

There should be no great difficulty in arriving at resumption of work terms. The T.U.C. has repeatedly declared that this is an industrial strike. The principles for resumption of work in the case of industrial strikes are well-established and there should be no great difficulty in applying them to our own situation.

fresh discussions, agreement was reached on the three main points.

There is no doubt that the general strike is endangering public safety and order and creating conditions in which tempers run higher each day and there is increasing bitterness of feeling between groups. The shameful events which occurred on Thursday is a blot on the good name of this country and the sooner the general strike is called off, the better. I appeal to all decent-minded citizens to join me in openly expressing their abhorrence of what is taking place in our once peaceful country.

1st June, 1963.

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