

(No. 99.)



1879.

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TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

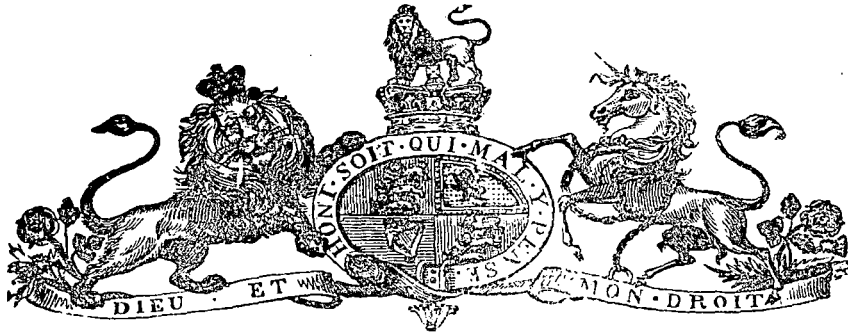
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VOLUNTEERS:

Despatches in connection with the Proclamation issued by His Excellency the Governor on the 27th June last, calling out for actual Military Service the Volunteer Force at Hobart Town.

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Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, February 11, 1880.



DESPATCH No. 38.

*Government House, Hobart Town, Tasmania, 7th July, 1879.*

SIR,

1. I HAVE to report that a Canadian priest, "Pastor Chiniquy," who has become a Protestant, has been delivering lectures in this and neighbouring colonies, turning to ridicule his former faith, impugning the loyalty of its professors, and the honor and chastity of their clergy and women.

2. He lectured at Launceston and at Hobart Town. The Town Hall was hired by a citizen and placed at his service. It has been usual to let the Town Hall to all applicants.

3. At Launceston the action of the Catholic clergy and the good sense of the people prevented any disturbance. At Hobart Town on the opening night, June 23rd, a disturbance occurred, but the lecture was concluded. The next night, June 24th, a strong body of opponents entered the Town Hall and successfully interrupted the proceedings. The police seemed rather to sympathise with them and offered no resistance. Cheers for the Queen and singing the National Anthem, rather than any stronger measures, were the means relied on to prevent the lecture from being delivered.

4. The next night, June 25th, the police measures taken were equally ineffectual. The assailants carried a side-door by a rush, and then burst into the Hall itself by forcing open another door. They sang "God save the Queen" as before, and offered to allow the lecture to proceed if they were not "insulted." After a discussion between them—the Municipal Superintendent of Police and Members of Pastor Chiniquy's committee—the meeting broke up.

5. On 27th June matters became really serious. An advertisement called an open air meeting in the Domain for the evening of the opponents of Pastor Chiniquy, who telegraphed to various parts of the country for reinforcements, and arrangements were set on foot for their conveyance to Hobart Town. All the revolvers obtainable in the shops were bought, great excitement prevailed, and most alarming reports were afloat in the town of intended outrages.

6. A deputation of Catholics waited on the Mayor to protest against the Hall, the property of the Municipal tax-payers, being used for lectures insulting and calumnious to a large body of citizens, and to ask that the lease should be cancelled. The Mayor pointed out that it had been let to a well-known citizen, and that it had been customary to let the Hall to any respectable applicant. However, in the sequel Pastor Chiniquy's committee were requested by the Municipal authorities to waive their claim to the Hall. The request was refused on the plea of "liberty of speech," and Government was applied to for protection.

7. Ministers replied that Government would undertake to keep the peace if the Municipal authorities failed to do so, and placed Mr. Swan, the Inspector of Police, with such few country police as he could obtain, at the disposal of the Mayor.

8. The Mayor, Mr. W. H. Burgess, had waited upon me in the morning, and consulted me on the position of affairs. I then advised him, if possible, to reclaim the Hall, and if he could not, to preserve the peace by the civil force; and I assured him of the full support of Government in upholding law and order. The Mayor called for special constables, but no number of reliable men came forward. He then summoned by name 150 respectable citizens, many of whom were not, however, effective. This force and the police were admittedly incapable of offering resistance to anything like the strength that might have attacked them.

9. I had conferred with the Premier in the morning after seeing the Mayor, and we at once saw the necessity of taking very decided measures if the Municipal authority was unable to keep the peace. In the afternoon the enclosed Memorandum was sent to me by Ministers. Upon it I wrote the accompanying minute. After an Executive Council, it was found necessary by my Law Advisers to issue the following Proclamation,—

WHEREAS by "The Volunteer Act, 1878," (42 Victoria, No. 12, Section 22), it is declared that the Governor may, at any time, by Proclamation published in the *Gazette*, call out for actual Military Service any Volunteer Corps, or any part thereof: And whereas it is expedient to call out for actual Military Service the several Batteries of the Southern Tasmanian Volunteer Artillery stationed in Hobart Town in Tasmania, and the several Companies of the Tasmanian Volunteer Rifle Regiment, also stationed in Hobart Town aforesaid: Now therefore I, FREDERICK ALOYSIUS WELD, Esquire, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and St. George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief as aforesaid, do, in pursuance of the provisions of "The Volunteer Act, 1878," hereby by this my Proclamation call out for actual Military Service the several Batteries of the Southern Tasmanian Volunteer Artillery stationed in Hobart Town aforesaid, and the several Companies of the Volunteer Rifle Regiment stationed in Hobart Town aforesaid,—

to give legal effect to the position taken, as we unanimously were of opinion that nothing but overwhelming force in reserve could now ensure the maintenance of peace.

10. The notice was short, but the Volunteers mustered in full numbers without distinction of creed or nationality. A reserve was left in barracks and the main body was placed in the yard, corridors, and halls of the Government Buildings close to the Town Hall, the scene of apprehended disturbance. Lieut.-Colonel St. Hill, the Commandant and my A.D.C., made the required arrangements with judgment; and he speaks in the very highest terms of the promptitude and thoroughly soldierlike spirit evinced by all, officers and men, both Artillery and Rifles.

11. Whilst these arrangements were being made and carried out by the civil power, the Most Reverend Daniel Murphy, Bishop of Hobart Town, was gradually rendering them unnecessary, though they strongly supported his efforts. He issued the following address, which appeared in the morning papers:—

#### TO THE CATHOLICS OF HOBART TOWN.

SEEING that your efforts to prevent the City Council letting the Town Hall for the purposes to which it has been devoted during this week have failed, and being informed that further demonstrations on your part, in that direction, will be resisted by the force of law—leading probably to rioting and bloodshed—I most earnestly request that you will have the good sense to abstain from making any further attempts to vindicate, on the present occasion, your rights as citizens and ratepayers, and to absent yourselves from the precincts of the Town Hall this evening.

My only object in thus appealing to you is to prevent injury to persons and property, and to induce you to show your respect for yourselves as Catholics and loyal citizens.

+ DANIEL MURPHY, *Bishop of Hobarton.*

*Hobarton, June 27, 1879.*

I wrote at once to thank him for his efforts, and to express a hope that his clergy would continue to exert their influence with the leaders and people; and they and the leading laity did so with great effect, and prevented any very considerable influx of men from the country or complete organisation for the evening meeting in the Domain. The Mayor also wrote warmly to thank him.

12. I arranged with Ministers and Commandant that, should the meeting in the Domain persist as threatened in marching to attack the Town Hall, I should hold myself in readiness, and my horse saddled to mount at a moment's notice, and proceed at once to the scene of contention to use my personal authority.

13. Still a large number of persons, many of them I am assured armed with revolvers and other weapons, did meet in the Domain at night-fall; but the Bishop with his Clergy, and several laymen of position came upon the ground and finally persuaded the crowd to forego their intention of marching on the Town Hall, and they ended instead by escorting the Bishop's carriage through other main streets of the City to his residence. Some 3000 people, I am told, were present when the Bishop gave them his blessing and thanks for their obedience to his advice, and dismissed them to their homes, and the crowd, after giving vent to both loyal and religious feelings in cheers, peacefully dispersed. It is noteworthy that no cry was heard or word uttered offensive to Protestants as a body. Pastor Chiniquy's Lecture was undisturbed, and Hobart Town was in perfect quietude before 10 P.M. It has since been publicly stated that a body of 60 or 70 Orangemen were stationed within the Town Hall.

14. Pastor Chiniquy's Committee resigned their claim to the Town Hall from Monday, June 30th, and he has since held meetings in places of worship which were undisturbed.

15. I issued the following General Order to the Volunteers who were released from Active Service on 7th instant:—

The Governor and Commander-in-Chief requests the Commandant to make known to the officers and men of the Artillery and Rifle Corps, now called out on service, his high appreciation of the spirit of military duty and discipline which has animated them in so promptly coming forward to the support of the civil authority, in obedience to the Governor's proclamation of the 28th June.

By His Excellency's Command,

W. H. ST. HILL, *Lt.-Col., Commandant.*

*Government House, June 30, 1879.*

16. Deeply as it is to be regretted that the circumstances which it has been my painful duty to detail should have arisen, it is nevertheless a matter of congratulation that a breach of the peace, which would, probably, have involved most serious consequences, should have been averted by the co-operation of moral force with a firm attitude of physical force, which rendered any successful breach of the law hopeless, whilst all that might add to irritation or invite collisions was avoided. It is also a matter of congratulation that the Volunteer Force has been proved to be thoroughly reliable, and this Colony will be fortunate should the events of the last few days show the necessity (which I have never ceased to impress upon successive Ministers) of placing the Police Force upon a proper footing under the control of Government, and of keeping up a small permanent Military Force so as to avoid as much as possible the resort to a Volunteer Force for police purposes.

17. I have reported rather more fully than I should otherwise have done upon this matter because it is possible that questions may be asked in Parliament as much excitement has prevailed here, and I have thought it therefore advisable that you should have full particulars at your service.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

FRED. A. WELD.

*The Right Honorable Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bart.*

P.S.—As the Mail is about to close, I have this moment received the enclosed Address from Ministers.—F. A. W.

WE respectfully beg Your Excellency to accept our thanks for the very material assistance you rendered the Cabinet in relation to the Pastor Chiniquy disturbance, by exercising your personal influence with His Lordship the Bishop and Clergy of Hobart Town with a view to the maintenance of law and order.

(Signed) WILLIAM LODGE CROWTHER.  
THOS. REIBEY.  
D. LEWIS.  
JNO. STOKELL DODDS.  
C. O'REILLY.

*Hobart Town, 2nd July, 1879.*

*COPY of Memorandum from the Honorable the Attorney-General to His Excellency the Governor.*

*Attorney-General's Chambers, Hobart Town, 27th June, 1879.*

# MEMORANDUM.

MINISTERS, having considered the observations of His Excellency on the letter of the Mayor of Hobart Town of this day's date, consider that the suggestions made by the Governor cannot be carried out adequately without the issue of a Proclamation, as provided by Section 22 of 42 Victoria, No. 12; and they advise the issue of such Proclamation.

(Signed) JNO. S. DODDS, (*for Ministers not absent*).

PROCLAMATION signed accordingly.

(Signed) FRED. A. WELD.  
27th June, 1879.

TASMANIA.  
No. 43.

*Downing-street, 5th September, 1879.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch, No. 38, of the 7th July, informing me of certain disturbances which took place in Hobart Town on the occasion of lectures delivered in the Town Hall by Pastor Chiniquy, now a Protestant but formerly a Roman Catholic priest, and reporting the steps taken for the preservation of order in the town.

I have to express to you my satisfaction that the apprehended riots were averted by the course you adopted, and by the action of other authorities and of the Roman Catholic Bishop, seconded by the good sense of the community.

I have noticed with especial pleasure the readiness with which the Volunteer Force responded to your Proclamation.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. HICKS BEACH.

Governor WELD, C.M.G.

NOTED and returned.

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WM. MOORE.  
24th November, 1879.