

"Enclosure No 4 in Duplicate Despatch

No 162 of 20th Decr 1854 (copy)

Ballaarat, 30 November 1854

According to my intentions, detailed in my despatch of last night, to send out the police in search of licenses today, I have the honor to inform you that Mr. Assistant Commissioner Johnstone, accompanied by the usual number of police, went into the Gravel Pits, where they were pelted with stones and obliged to retire. I sent down more police to support them and, soon after, my presence was required-a mob was assembled on the road declaring they would not take out licenses, and wanted me to send back the police. I harangued them, telling them so long as the law was in force I would maintain it, that they had been

The Honorable the

Colonial Secretary

Melbourne told that by their delegates yesterday the intention of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor was to abolish the license-fee if advised to do so by the commission, that this commission was formed of members of the Legislative Council (a cheer was here given for Mr. Fawkner).

I appealed to the well disposed to retire, and some did so, but as there was still a considerable number, and I heard that the Eureka mob would join, I read the Riot Act and sent for the military to support the police. The mob dispersed and Mr. Johnstone made the people show their licenses. Several shots were fired on both sides; one policeman had his head cut open and one of the horses of the mounted 40th Regiment was stabbed, a miner was shot through the hand, and about eight prisoners were made who were brought into Camp. Before reading the Riot Act, and afterwards, I had large quartz thrown at my head. Had anything like a serious resistance been made there would have been considerable slaughter. Our object was gained; we maintained the law.

Whilst writing information has been brought in that the Camp will be attacked at 4 o'clock tomorrow morning. A large meeting is being held on the Bakery Hill. I hear they are all armed, and determined to release the prisoners. We shall be on the alert. The absolute necessity of putting down all meetings, public and private, I think must now be apparent for the abolition of the license-fee is merely a watchword. The whole affair is a strong democratic agitation by an armed mob. If the Government will hold this and the other gold fields it must at once crush this movement, and I would advise again that this gold field be put under Martial Law, and artillery and a strong force sent up to enforce it. I would also suggest a proclamation from His Excellency that it is his determination to stop it. I must also earnestly request some instruction for my further guidance.

I have &c.

{Signed)

Robt. Rede

Resdt. Commissioner.