

K 54/13.512 Date 30th Nov

Reg 4th Dec 1854

Capt. Pasley – Ballarat Further Report – with regard to the disturbance Camp Ballaarat

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Sir, In accordance with the resolution adopted last night, Mr. Commissioner Johnstone was sent out by the Resident Commissioner this morning at about 11 o'clock in search of unlicensed miners in the district of the Gravel Pits. He was accompanied by a small party of Police, who were attacked and some of them injured (although not seriously) in the discharge of their duty. Mr. Rede then proceeded to the spot and endeavoured to induce the mob to disperse. Upon their refusing to do so, he read the riot act, and sent for the troops. Captain Thomas immediately ordered out the same troops that had been previously detailed for the purpose of dispersing the meeting if necessary. The troops advanced in skirmishing order across the flat, with cavalry both flanks and in the centre. No active resistance was made to the advance, but there was very little cause to look for effective support from any portion of the population of that district.

My duty, as active aide de camp to Captain Thomas caused me to be constantly riding backwards and forwards between the several detachments and amongst the diggers' tents, and I had consequently an opportunity of observing the feeling of those assembled in the neighbourhood, which did not appear to be very much in our favour. The moments were carried out quite successfully and without the loss of a man, although several shots were fired on both sides. Mr. Commissioner Johnstone's district was swept, and eight prisoners brought in, who are now under examination. An armed meeting is now being held in the Bakery Hill, and we are informed that the men are being drilled, but it is too late to disperse them, as darkness would come on before we could get back to the camp. Information has just been received that it is the intention of the armed mob to attack the camp on all sides at about 4 o'clock tomorrow morning. I do not know how much confidence is to be placed in this, but in any case we shall be ready to receive them. From what I have seen today, I am convinced more than ever that very strong measures are necessary on this Gold Field, and that sedition must be put down by force.

I feel sure that conciliatory measures will only do harm at such a late period in the disturbances, and that the disaffected must be coerced.

Although I have no doubt of our holding the camp against any force that the diggers can bring into the field, I think it is very desirable that we should be reinforced by the whole disposable troops in Melbourne, and by Artillery as I am convinced that, before many days have passed, it will be necessary for us to sweep the whole Goldfield, It will not do for the Government authorities here to remain entirely on the defensive.. I think that we have gained moral force by the operations of today but they could not be often repeated, with the small force at Captain Thomas' disposal. At the same time that the troops are sent up – should His Excellency decide on sending them, I would beg strongly that the Magistrates should be empowered to proclaim Martial Law, in case of a necessity for such a step arising.