

Resident Commissioner Ballarat reporting on the state of that Gold Field up to Dec the 2nd 1854.

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that after my letter of yesterday was despatched we had no further trouble with the mob, who we were informed were engaged in searching for arms and ammunition during the evening and would attack us during the night or early in the morning – we were under arms all night. –

From the fact of signals having been observed at no great distance from the camp & several shots fired into it & armed bodies reported to have been moving about the diggings, a notice was posted this morning to the effect that no lights will be allowed in the immediate neighbourhood of the camp after 8 o'clock and any person discharging fire arms under any pretence whatever, will be fired at -

The Rioters have divided their men into six companies, one comprised

[To the Chief Commissioner of the Gold Fields

[Melbourne of Frenchman another of Swedes & Germans and the rest principally of Irish & Van Dimonians, the remainder of their force are not drilled and are badly armed, about five hundred of them are determined men and the greatest scoundrels in the Colony – they are now entrenching themselves on the Eureka I am informed it is a strong slabbed palisades enclosing sixteen acres, several attempts have been made to draw the troops out of camp into the diggings and then to attack it in the rear. –

Mr. Black and another delegate with Mr. Smith the Priest came up to the Camp last night requesting me to give them an assurance that I would not go out any more for licences, I refused telling them that to long as it was a law I would maintain it, they then wanted to know when I intended to go out. I told them they must judge my intentions by my actions, Mr. Smith came again during the night & pressed me very much assuring me that would I do so every man would return to his work , I refused – I should not mention this but I think it shews they are frightened & from the fact of Humffrays & other delegates having withdrawn themselves they begin to find it is a dangerous game they are playing. –

I should be sorry to see them return to their work, as by their present conduct they are disgusting the majority with mob law, total stagnation of trade and the ruin of some of the best claims after seven or eight months work, is the consequence of it, & for another reason that we may be able to crush them the democratic agitation at one blow which can only done if we find them with arms in their hands and acting in direct opposition to the laws-

I have the honour to entreat that His Excellency will order the most rigorous measures to be taken against the leaders & all found with arms in their hands as I am convinced that the future welfare of the Colony and the peace & prosperity of all the gold fields depends on the crushing this movement in such a manner that it may act as a warning. –

A Sworn information was taken last night against Vern one of the delegates a Colonel of their mob, he is a great enthusiast and a most dangerous man a warrant was issued but he was not found, a mass of evidence is collecting against others who take a leading part – Mr. Johnston and myself are

looked on by the diggers as doomed & in their instructions in drilling they especially point out the necessity of first shooting the officers –

Captain Thomas has dispatched duplicates to the officers commanding the troops that the mob will lay in ambush for them - they want the guns- should they attack the camp they will be well received -

I have the honour to be

Sir

Your most obedient servant

Robert Rede

Resdt Commissioner