

Refugees Tell of Terror in Bengal As Hindu-Moslem Rioting Goes On

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CALCUTTA, India, Oct. 18 (London Times dispatch)—Unofficial reports reaching Calcutta indicate that acts of violence are continuing on an alarming scale in the districts of Noakhali and Tippera. This is despite the local Government's assurance that the communal situation in eastern Bengal had shown some improvement during the last twenty-four hours.

Hundreds of refugees have reached Calcutta from these districts and they draw a grim picture of the happenings there during the last eight days.

They say that a hundred villages have been burned by hooligans, that hundreds of persons have been butchered or maimed and thousands made homeless and destitute. They report that both districts are infernos of communal fury, and that unless the Government urgently dispatches more troops and police whole minority populations will be wiped out.

[In New Delhi Mohandas K.

Gandhi repeated his declaration to Indian women that they should commit suicide rather than submit to dishonor.]

Both Noakhali and Tippera are predominantly Moslem areas. The total population there is just over 5,000,000, and of these only 2,000,000 are Hindus.

The latest reports show that the scenes of the disturbances since yesterday have been moving from Noakhali into Tippera and that they are concentrating in the Chandpur subdivision of that district.

The capital town, Chandpur, is a large railway and river junction toward which refugees are fleeing in an attempt to escape into western Bengal. But most of the roads and the river exits are being guarded by armed rowdies and a large proportion of the refugees has cut into the jungles and swamps to avoid molestation.

Thus far police and military ac-

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tion in the affected areas has been confined to about six firings. The casualties from this source are about twenty killed and an equal number injured.

The total casualties from the riots will perhaps never be known. Official sources [Moslem in Bengal] remain silent over this point but unofficial reports variously estimate the totals between 5,000 and 6,000 killed 1,500 to 2,000 injured. It is reported that a further 50,000 to 60,000 have been forcibly converted to another faith or abducted.

There is grave public anxiety in Calcutta over the inadequacy of the police and military forces dispatched to the stricken areas by the Bengal Government. So far only two companies of troops are known to have been sent to an area covering several hundred square miles. During the August Calcutta riots the authorities had at their disposal about 45,000 troops to protect the city.

Food is another urgent problem. With both railway and river communications seriously dislocated and trade completely at a standstill in most parts of Noakhali and Tippera, thousands face starvation. Local leaders have made urgent representations to the Government to fly food to the starving villages. They have also telegraphed to the Governor of Bengal and the Chief Minister, who at present are at the hill resort of Darjeeling, jointly to visit the affected areas.

The Secretary of the Bengal Hindu Mahasabha party has just received from the Governor's private secretary a message that the Governor proposes to visit Noakhali soon.

Gandhi Advises Suicide

NEW DELHI, India, Oct. 18 (AP)—Mohandas K. Gandhi, "spiritual leader" of the Hindu-led Congress party, again today advised women in eastern Bengal to take their own lives rather than submit to dishonor. In Bombay the provincial Congress party chief called for halting of all business activity as a demonstration of sympathy for riot victims.

Mr. Gandhi said he felt a "call" to go to the trouble areas as soon as the situation in New Delhi permitted. He said that at his request Acharya Kripalani, newly elected president of the Congress party, and Sarat Chandra Bose, recently retired member of the interim Government, had gone to investigate the riot reports.

He was most emphatic in his instructions to women, insisting it was "not an idle idea," and he meant every word he said.

Last night he advised women to suffocate themselves by holding their breath to bring death, but he said tonight that he had been told by physicians that suicide by that means was impossible.

"The only way known to medicine for instant self immolation is strong poisonous doses," he said he was told. He added: "If this is so I would advise every one running the risk of dishonor to take poison before submission to dishonor."

Stabbings in Bombay

BOMBAY, India, Oct. 18 (Reuters)—Tension increased in Bombay city today following reports of demonstrations against Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, leader in the Indian interim Council, in the North-West Frontier tribal areas.

By dusk eight persons were reported stabbed to death and another six wounded in the workers' districts.

Many shops were closed in the Hindu areas in protest against reported shootings at Pandit Nehru's party in the tribal territory.

"Machinations" Alleged

RAZMAK, Waziristan, India, Oct. 18 (Reuters)—A head-on clash between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Political Department may be one result of Pandit Nehru's trip into the tribal territory of the North West Frontier, where he has had a cold reception. [The frontier tribesmen are Moslems. Pandit Nehru is a Hindu.]

Members of Pandit Nehru's party ascribe the failure of the trip so far to the "machinations" of the department, which is alleged to have allowed only anti-Nehru tribesmen to come to Pandit Nehru's jirgas (representative assemblies of tribesmen).

The Political Department consists of British representatives in India for the exercise of the functions of the Crown in its relations with the Indian States.

Two jirgas have been held so far and both of them broke down after tribesmen had told Pandit Nehru they thought he could do nothing for them.