

# THE DISTURBANCE AT PORTSMOUTH NAVAL BARRACKS.

## COURT-MARTIAL.

The Court-martial presided over by Rear-Admiral R. Winsloe, C.M.G., was resumed on Saturday, on board the *Victory*, at Portsmouth, to try Edwin Allen Moody, first-class stoker, who is being tried upon charges arising out of the riots at Portsmouth Naval Barracks on November 4 and 5.

Commodore the Hon. W. G. Stopford, recalled by the COURT, produced a copy of the orders which every man received on joining the naval barracks. He stated that there were three commanders in the barracks—the commander of the barracks, the commander in charge of all instructions, and the commander for drafting duties. Asked as to the arrangements for leave, he stated that the men of all classes had leave from after evening quarters until 6 45 the following morning. It was practically a free gate. A certain number had to remain in as a fire party. Third-class men did not have the privilege of Saturday to Monday leave.

The PRESIDENT.—In answer to a question yesterday you said that when you saw a number of stokers who had put in a request to see you you told them that you had seen the order "on the knee" carried out in several ships. You received the answer from one man, "I have been in three ships, and I have never seen it." Is that the usual way of men addressing you, or did you call for any man to address you?—I called for men.

Lieutenant Bernard St. George Collard, on being called, submitted for the consideration of the Court that, as the result of the Court of inquiry had not been made known to him, no question should be asked him the answer to which might tend to incriminate him in the event of subsequent proceedings being taken. He was quite willing to give evidence.

The DEPUTY JUDGE ADVOCATE stated that he need not answer any question which might incriminate him.

Lieutenant Collard then said he was commanding officer of the barracks on the afternoon of Sunday, November 4. He had been attached to the barracks since March 20, 1935.

The PRESIDENT.—Can you tell the Court when you first used the order "on the knee"?—At Whale Island, when I was on the junior staff, from July, 1901, to July, 1902.

Have you used it during the whole time you have been in the barracks?—I have used it now and then.

Have you used it to single men as well as to parties?—Yes.

Why did you give the order on November 4?—I gave the order to endeavour to get the upper hand of the stokers, who were thoroughly out of control, and, if possible to pick out the men who were trying to incite the others. It was impossible to see all the men, as some endeavoured to take cover behind the others. The number of men in the gymnasium was about 470. There were 31 petty officers, and 110 of the men were Nelson stokers.

Did the men readily obey the order?—No.

Was any particular man singled out as not obeying the order for a very long time?—One man was later than all the others in going down on the knee, and I told a petty officer to take him off the knee, and bring him into the centre of the drill-hall. When all the other men had gone down, and he looked round and saw that everybody else was down, he then went down himself.

Were any steps taken about that man afterwards?—No, I told the petty officer that he was not much worse than the others, and he was to be sent away, thinking that there would be an inquiry next day, when I should be able to proceed against him.

I understand that after the men were dismissed you went to the telephone and communicated with the Commodore?—I went over to the officers' quarters and made out a report, and also rang up the Commodore on the telephone. I told him exactly what occurred. The Commodore asked if it was all over, and I said it was. He asked me if there was any necessity for him to come into the barracks, and I said there was no necessity, as it was all over.

As commanding officer, did you take any steps to take the names of men who did not obey your order?—It was quite impossible. The whole lot were implicated, and I could not take every man's name.

You had 31 petty officers, and surely they were useful?—No, Sir, that was the number of petty officers who should have been there, but I did not count the actual number who were there. There were 31 in barracks that afternoon.

The prisoner.—Did you speak to any individual stoker, who remained behind after the stokers were dismissed, or use any epithet?—I did not speak to any man at all.

The prisoner asked if Lieut. Collard remembered using the epithet "dog" to a stoker in 1905, but the Court would not allow the question to be put, the PRESIDENT remarking that it did not refer to the present case.

Stoker Petty Officer Henry Perry, of the Victory, said about 9.30 p.m. on the Sunday, November 4, he was patrolling inside the stokers' blocks. The orders distinctly bearing on a case of this sort were to report all disturbances. He remained in the blocks and rooms throughout the disturbances, but he did not arrest any man, or take the name of any men prominent in the disturbances, and afterwards report him.

Stoker Petty Officer Thomas Arthur was in the rooms when the disturbances took place, and saw the men turn into hammocks to the best of his ability. He did not arrest or take the name of any man and report him afterwards.

Stoker Petty Officer Thomas Rowlands said he was not on duty until the middle watch, when the disturbances were nearly all over. He was in the barracks at the time, and turned out of his hammock, went on parade, and carried out the Commodore's orders. He made no arrests and took no names.

Stoker Petty Officer Alfred Coole, asked if he did not consider it his duty to arrest any man and take the name of any, replied not in this case, as he saw no reason for doing so.

Stoker Petty Officer Davoy, answering a similar question, said he could not recognize anybody. There was too much of a crowd.

Stoker Petty Officer Charles McGuinness said there was no disturbance in the part of the parade ground where he was. He did not consider it his duty to go where there was the disturbance, because there were officers and chief petty officers there.

Stoker Petty Officer William John Cole said he went to the guard room and reported the disturbances in the canteen on Monday night. He was told to return to his place and did so, subsequently going through his room with Lieutenant FitzClarence. Everything was then quiet in the room, but there was a lot of noise on the parade ground. At midnight the witness called his relief. Asked by the COURT whether he did not consider it his duty to assist the officers in keeping order, he replied in the affirmative, and said he did all he could to induce the men to return to their rooms. He did not take any names or make any arrests.

Stoker Petty Officer Robert J. Read said that after he was relieved at 12 o'clock he went to his room. Asked whether he considered that a proper thing to do, he said he had to call his relief. He did not arrest any men or take any names. The parade ground was 150 yards from his beat.

The PRESIDENT.—Surely, when the "assembly" sounded you should have considered that something out of the way was happening and have taken steps to assist the officers.

Stoker Petty Officers Henry Scott, George Alfred Fleet, James Strange, John Mincham, Herbert Thomas Reeve, and Richard Cooper also gave evidence. Questions directed to finding out whether they recognized that it was their duty to assist in quelling the disorder were put to witnesses by the COURT. In each case the reply was affirmative, and the witnesses said they tried to get the men to go into their blocks. They did not, however, take any names or arrest any men, as they could not identify any of them. Similar testimony was given by Leading Stokers William Sewell, Thomas Rumble Bennett, Adolphus Blackwell, and William Bonner.

The prisoner was then called upon for his defence. He intimated that he wished to give evidence in his own behalf. He also asked that he might be granted until Monday to prepare his defence.

The COURT granted the request, and adjourned until this morning.