

**The Epsom Advertiser**  
**incorporating the Epsom Observer**  
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**EPSOM MILIARY RIOT**

**CANADIANS' SAVAGE ATTACK ON POLICE**

**STATION SERGEANT MURDERED: INSPECTOR WOUNDED.**

**IRON RAILINGS AND STAKES USED AS WEAPONS.**

**POLICE STATION WRECKED: PRISONERS RESCUED.**

The Epsom police and Canadian soldiers stationed at Woodcote Park Camp came into desperate collision on Tuesday evening as the result of which a police-sergeant was murdered, the Chief Inspector wounded, and several policemen injured, while the police station was completely wrecked. There has been friction between certain ex-service men of Epsom and the Canadian soldiers for some time, and Tuesday's affray was the climax of a series of quarrels among them. The Trouble on Tuesday arose over the arrest of two Canadians, whose release was demanded by their comrades, who finally obtained reinforcements to the strength of about 500 from the camp and made a murderous attack upon the police at the station shortly after eleven o'clock.

For an hour the police battled against overwhelming odds, and when their small number is compared with the huge infuriated body of their opponents it is nothing short of a miracle that anyone of them is alive today. They faced the attack with a bold front and fought with courage and determination, and in absolute conformity with their duty; against these ruthless law-breakers. As a result of the affray the police have been strengthened and a magisterial order was issued for the closing of all public houses in Epsom and Ewell until Monday. The riot appears to have had a sobering effect all round, and in view of the improved conditions on Wednesday the Magistrates decided yesterday (Thursday) to rescind the closing order.

**TROUBLE BREWING**

About half-past ten there were signs of serious trouble brewing, but no one anticipated such a sensational and tragic development.

Disturbances have been witnesses in High Street lately when civilians (mostly returned soldiers belonging to the town) and members of the Canadian forces have quarrelled and the police have had to intervene. There was a similar outbreak on Tuesday evening and the police arrested a Canadian, which angered a crowd of soldiers, who were parading the town, apparently waiting for developments. Attempts were made to rescue the prisoner, but the police secured their man and arrested another soldier for having obstructed them in their duty.

This naturally aggravated the crowd, which increased in size and the police and their prisoners were followed to the station. Here the excited followers commenced to

demonstrate their resentment, but they did not show fight, and although few in number the police quickly dispersed them.

**RETREAT FOR REINFORCEMENTS**

The soldiers made off through Rosebery Park to their camp, and at once spread the news of their two comrades in custody. There they planned an organised attack, and shortly before eleven o'clock between five and six hundred of them massed together and broke camp. They proceeded to the police station and, enraged over their comrades confined there, they made a brutal attack upon the police.

Inspector Pawley went to the gate of the station and tried to persuade them to disperse and return quickly to camp, and persuasion was also attempted by two Canadian officers who had come upon the scene. But all attempts failed. The men wildly commenced their attack. They wrenched away the iron palings and wooden stakes in front of the station garden and on the opposite side of the road, outside the Wesleyan Soldiers' Recreation Room, and armed with these and stones they stormed the building.

The bombardment was most wild. Not only were stones and lumps of iron thrown through the ground floor windows, but the first floor was subjected to a running fire of missiles. Some of the rooms are the private apartments of Inspector Pawley, and his wife and family were aroused by the heavy missiles crashing through the windows, and they were compelled to dash to the rear for safety. The rioters pressed forward into the garden and busting open the yard door gained access to the yard. Here they came into violent conflict with Inspector Pawley, Station-Sergt. Green, sergeants and constables – not more than fifteen in all – and the police realising the serious consequences that might result if the soldiers got inside the station offered every resistance.

**A MURDEROUS ONSLAUGHT**

Furious fighting proceeded, and soon the weight of numbers began to tell. Not one constable escaped without injury of some kind, but, despite their injuries, the police fought stubbornly until their opponents gained their object – the release of the prisoners – and retired. Although the Canadians were kept out of the administrative quarter, which in itself is a tribute to the determined resistance of the police, they managed to get into the cells area. The

door of one of the cells was opened by smashing the lock and the prisoner rescued. The other prisoner was then released by the police themselves.

This satisfied the rioters, and a bugle sounded the "Fall in." They responded, fell in, not in order, however, and returned to camp, shouting, hissing, and cheering alternately.

The following is a complete list of casualties among the police :-

**KILLED.**

Station-sergt. Green.

**INJURED.**

Inspector Pawley, blow to the head.

Sergt. Greenfield, injured arm.

Sergt. Blayden, slightly lamed.

Sergt. Durham, struck on the head.

Sergt. Kersey, injured back.

P.-c. Weeding, blow on the head.

P.-c. Berwick, injured arm.

P.-c. Hook, struck in the abdomen.

P.-c. Barton, damaged arm.

P.-c. Monk, cut eye.

P.-c. Short, bruised neck and struck in abdomen.

Station-sergt. Green was removed to the Infirmary in an unconscious condition. His injuries consisted of a fractured skull, and died the following morning. The greatest sympathy is felt with his widow, who is an invalid, and his two daughters, all living at 92 Lower Court-road. The more seriously injured were Inspector Pawley and P.-c. Weeding. Both were violently struck on the head, and the police inspector's wound was so severe that stitches had to be inserted. He appeared the next day with his head enveloped in bandages. P.-c. Weeding had to be taken home immediately because of his delirious condition, which for a time was critical. Subsequently he regained consciousness and is now improving.

Sergt. Durham is also suffering from a severe blow on the head, and has not been able to resume duty.

As regards the injuries sustained by the soldiers the authorities at the camp were very reticent about them, but it is certain the men did not escape lightly, and the wonder is that some managed to stagger back to the camp. They were severely punished, and some had to be admitted to the military hospital, while quite a number were in need of first aid treatment on returning to the camp.

On Wednesday morning there was a full parade of soldiers, when their commanding officer, Col. Priest, addressed them. He was sure that they all regretted what had happened, and were sorry at the death of Sergt. Green. He advised them to keep away from the town in future.

**A PITIABLE SPECTACLE**

Never has such a savage and dastardly affair been witnessed in Epsom, and the next morning the police station with its picturesque little garden admired by all passers by was a pitiable spectacle. Not a fragment of glass remained in any of the windows, and the size and weight of the missiles which were thrown may be gathered from the fact that the window frames and partitions themselves were broken into fragments. The brickwork showed indentations where stones had apparently missed their mark, and the evergreen on the lower part of the building was torn down. The garden was trampled over,

and the floral archway over the pathway, to which Inspector Pawley has devoted his horticultural talents, was destroyed, as likewise were the beautiful roses which bordered the paths. The cells at the back were damaged, and every window was broken. Fortunately the soldiers were kept outside the station, and no documents, books, or papers were lost or damaged.

The next morning the Chairman of the Urban Council (Mr. H. B. Longley), after consultation with other members of the Council, sent the following telegram to the Adjutant-General of the War Office and the Canadian Military Headquarters, London :-

Serious riot of Canadian convalescent soldiers stationed at Woodcote Park Camp occurred last night, resulting in murder of Police-sergeant, injury of several police and wrecking of police station. Strong action should be taken at once as the inhabitants have no security at night. Owing to its position the camp is difficult to effectively control except with large guard. All licensed houses and clubs should be at once placed out of bounds and camp evacuated as soon as possible. There are no military police in district. Immediate action is necessary for the safety of inhabitants.

**PUBLIC HOUSES CLOSED**

Before, two Magistrates – Messrs W. Dorset (in the chair) and E. B. Jay – in the police court on Wednesday afternoon Inspector Goodenough, deputising for Inspector Pawley, applied that all public houses in the parishes of Epsom and Ewell should be closed for the sale of intoxicating 'liquors' until Monday. He made the order under the instructions of the Chief Constable under the Closing in Times of Riot Clause of the Intoxicating Liquors Act of 1910.

The Chairman- I think it a very proper application.

Inspector Goodenough said that he made the application owing to further anticipated trouble. There was very strong feeling in the town on the part of the civil population at the cause of death of Station-Sergt. Green. There was a rumour that there was likely to be more trouble, and it was felt it would be better if the public houses were closed.

The Chairman – I quite agree.

Mr. Jay – it is a very serious step to take. We want evidence.

The Chairman – You only have to go to the other side of the road to the police station to get evidence.

Mr. Jay - Have you any knowledge that there is going to be a riot?

Inspector Goodenough – We have no practical knowledge; there is only a rumour.

The Chairman – If my friend on the Bench could have been in my house last night he would know all about it. (A garden separates Mr. Dorset's residence from the station.)

Mr. Jay – We will do all in our power to maintain law and order. Are there any extra police?

Inspector Goodenough – We have some extra police.

Mr. Jay – Have you asked for military help?

Inspector Goodenough – We have made application.

Mr. Jay – This riotous conduct must be put down.

The Magistrates granted the application and questioned whether all the clubs in the same districts would be closed.

Inspector Goodenough said he had no instructions to do that.

The Magistrates after considering the matter, decided that the sale of intoxicating liquors in clubs should be prohibited until Monday.

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#### CANADIAN ABSENTEE.

While the Magistrates were signing the orders to be served on the licensees a young Canadian, Thomas Allen Noble (20) of the Seaford Camp, was brought before them on a charge of being a deserter since the previous day.

Detective Bell said that at 2.45 that afternoon he was in company with other officers making enquiries when he stopped prisoner in High-street and told him who he was and that he suspected him of being an absentee. Prisoner replied, "Oh, yes, I am a soldier. I was discharged from Woodcote Camp some time ago and I am up here from Seaford."

Asked if he had anything to say prisoner said he would say it later on. "I got struck in the face and was continually tripped," he added.

Prisoner was remanded to await an escort.

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#### BISHOP'S REGRET.

The Winchester Diocesan Board of Missions held its annual festival at Epsom on Wednesday, and presiding at a meeting in the Lecture Hall in the afternoon the Bishop of Winchester said in connection with the Archbishop's Western Canada Fund :-

"In speaking of Canada to-day it is painful to us that so tragic an incident as that last night should have cost the life of a public servant belonging to the town, and a great deal of injury to others. We shall be far removed from attributing this to anything like the habitual conduct or the average character of our Canadian brothers. We know what splendid heroism they have shown and we regret that part of their unit, under the greater trials of peace, should have been led, no doubt in trying circumstances, into an affair with such painful results. I should feel that I had acted disrespectfully if I had said nothing about what has happened. We pass now to the brighter thought of what Canada has done for us and what we have done and are still trying to do for her."

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#### POLICE COMPLAINT

On previous days the Magistrates have dealt with cases arising from street quarrels and have fined both soldiers and civilians. During the hearing of one case Inspector Pawley complained of the military not providing police in the town to keep their soldiers in order, and an officer from the camp on that occasion said it was not the duty of the camp authorities to do that, although he promised to make representation to the A.P.M. in the matter.

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#### AUTHORITIES' STATEMENT

The Canadian Headquarters Overseas Military Forces of Canada has issued the following statement:- "It has not been possible as yet to ascertain how the occurrence arose, but according to some of the men a Canadian soldier who was walking with his wife was insulted by a gang of

civilians. A disturbance arose and several Canadians were placed in the police station. Several Canadians returned to the camp with this news, and a large number of men, resenting this treatment of their comrades, went down to Epsom with the idea of securing the release of the prisoners. The officer of the day having failed to prevent the men leaving the camp went down to the town with them in the hope of averting a disturbance. The officer entered the police station to make inquiries, and as he did not appear for some time the Canadian soldiers, being under the impression that this officer had also been arrested, rushed the police station. After the affair at the police station the men returned in groups to camp and went quietly to bed."

It is understood that a military inquiry will be held and there is a possibility of police court developments. Major Lafone, a Metropolitan Chief Constable, was in the town on Wednesday, and in addition to a large number of extra constables having been drafted to the town several detectives from Scotland Yard were at work in the neighbourhood. On Thursday two Canadian soldiers were detained, but no charge was preferred against them. They were conducted from the camp by two plain clothes officers, and later in the day they were conveyed to Bow-street Police Station.

#### CLOSING ORDER RESCINDED

Since the Canadians returned to Woodcote Park the town has been placed out of bounds to all troops stationed at the camp. Military police were stationed in different parts, and about five hundred picked Canadian troops were drafted to the town to deal with any emergency that might arise. However, the fatal sequel to the riot seems to have had a sobering effect all round, and there have been no further signs of disturbance.

Because of the improved conditions the magistrates decided on Thursday morning to rescind the order that had been made the previous day to close all public houses in the district. Inspector Pawley remarking that the police asked for this course to be adopted as the situation was well in hand, and it was not desired to inflict unnecessary hardship on the public.

Lord Rosebery drove from the Durdans on Thursday morning to the police station and had a chat with Inspector Pawley concerning the riot.

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#### A POPULAR SERGEANT.

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#### TWENTY-FOUR YEARS IN POLICE FORCE.

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#### INQUEST ADJOURNED.

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Widespread regret is caused by the death in such tragic circumstances of Station-Sergeant Thomas Green, who was one of the most popular officers in the force as well as the locality. He was in his 52<sup>nd</sup> year, and his service in the police force covered a period of 24 years, being within a year of his retirement. For eight years he had done duty at Epsom, and was held in the highest esteem by his colleagues and among the inhabitants generally. Prior to his police service he was for eight years in the Royal Horse Artillery.

The inquest was opened at the Infirmary yesterday (Thursday) afternoon, when the Coroner (Mr. Gilbert White) informed the jury that the reason he held the

## COUNCIL'S PROTEST

The Epsom Urban Council met in committee yesterday (Thursday) evening and afterwards issued a statement strongly repudiating the official explanation of the Canadian authorities that the riot was the result of the attitude of the civilian population, and protesting against the explanation being issued before judicial inquiries had been commenced.

inquiry so soon after the affair was that a burial certificate could be given and arrangements made for the funeral. He therefore proposed to adjourn the inquest, and he would then call as the first witness Inspector Pawley, who was in charge of the police station at the time of the occurrence, as it was better for the jury to hear direct from him what happened than men who possibly were in possession of information not quite accurate.

The jurors were Messrs J. Chuter Ede (foreman), W. Cole, H. Skilton, H. Cook, W. Thompson, H. W. Martin, W. Sykes, and F. H. Tarr, and Lieut.-Commander H. Chamberlain.

Evidence of identification was given by Sergt. Kersey, who was still evidently suffering from the effects of his injury. Deceased, he said, was on duty at the police station on Tuesday night.

Replying to the Coroner Mr. A. M. Barrack, Assistant clerk to the Urban Council, stated that the following letter was received from the War Office by Sir Rowland Blades, the Member for the Division:-

“With reference to your call here today Mr Churchill asks me to thank you for the information that you submitted to him as to the local conditions at Epsom. The whole matter will be the subject of searching investigation. Meanwhile he understands that prompt and adequate steps are being taken by the Canadian authorities to prevent any recurrence of the disorder. Mr Churchill desires to express the greatest sympathy with the relatives of Sergt. Green, who has died as a result of his injuries.”

It was decided to adjourn the inquest until Wednesday next.

Mr Chuter Ede asked if he could take it that adequate precautions would be taken that the military witnesses who might be required would not be repatriated or removed from the Coroner's jurisdiction during the adjournment. It might be necessary to call certain officers, N.C.O.'s and men at the camp, and those proceedings would be prolonged and considerable difficulties would arise if nothing was done to prevent their repatriation.

Inspector Pawley - We may take it for granted that any soldier who is known to have been implicated will be retained at Epsom, and if the jury think it necessary for any man to be called I feel sure that Colonel Guest will render every assistance.

Mr Beswick said that in a covering letter Sir Roland Blades wished to convey his regret to deceased's relatives.

Inspector Pawley - On behalf of the family I wish to thank Sir Roland Blades for his kind expression of sympathy.

## THE FUNERAL

Of the late Sergt. Green will take place at Epsom Cemetery on Monday afternoon. There will be a service beforehand in the Wesleyan Chapel, of which the sergeant and his wife were members. It was three years ago, while they were attending service at the chapel, that Mrs Green had a seizure, from which she has not yet recovered.

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