

CHAPTER VII.

Lyallpur District.

This district has, in its present state, been brought into existence by the extension of irrigation from the Upper Chenab Canal. The traders in the market towns which are of recent origin come largely from Amritsar and Lahore. The Colonists have been drawn largely from the Central Punjab and maintain communication with their old homes. The area is thus a microcosm of the Punjab and is likely always to react quickly to influences from other districts.

Lyallpur.

1. In Lyallpur itself there was a district Congress Committee and on the 6th of April they successfully brought about a *hartal* which was marked by no violence and seems to have been purely a political demonstration. On the 11th news arrived of Mr. Gandhi's arrest at Palwal and on the 13th the town was in a state of excitement. *Hartal* commenced and, with short interruption, continued until the 19th.

2. During this period a very disquieting and prominent feature in Lyallpur was the continued exhibition of posters of an inflammatory and criminal character. The *kipan* incident at Amritsar where some Sikh girls had been allowed to travel with Sikh knives and without being searched by any one was represented thus :—

“ O Sikhs, die or drown yourselves in the tank of Deputy Commissioner's bungalow as your daughters were dishonoured at the hand of the sweepers. Allow your young men to take revenge.”

Other posters are as follows :—

“ Blessed be Mahatma Gandhi. We are sons of India. We shall not give way. We shall lose our lives. We shall never abide by this Rowlatt Bill. Gandhi ! We the Indians will fight to death after you. The flag of cruelty and oppression has been fixed in the ground, Alas ! British, how you have cheated us. Do you remember those days when you were groaning ; when Germans were threatening you in the battlefields of Europe. Your boat was light, but the storm was heavy and you were calling us (the Indian ship) for help. We the Indians lost our lives for you and defeated your enemies. Now be ashamed you have done much oppression upon us and

our cup of patience is about to overflow. You have fired on the Indians and have shot them to death. See that night is coming for your days of wrongs. The times are coming when you will not be here and all your oppressions and cruelties will come to an end."

"The treatment which have been meted out to our girls at Amritsar are unbearable, and we cannot express them. You should ponder over this that we should have seen such a time in a dream. It is very sad that all your brethren are keeping silent at this moment."

"What time are you waiting for now? There are many ladies here to dishonour. Go all round India, clear the country of the ladies and these sinful creatures, and then will be the only time when we can all say together: 'Blessed be the Hindus, Muhammadans and Sikhs.'"

3. On the 13th and 14th nothing occurred save excited and noisy gatherings of people, but the tension was such that on the evening of the 14th all the Europeans (to the number of about 90) concentrated in two bungalows in the civil lines so that they might more easily be defended. On the same day a committee was appointed at a public meeting to decide as to when the *hartal* should be brought to a close. On the 15th shops were re-opening or preparing to re-open. Some troops had arrived on the 14th, but the bulk of them had to be sent to Sangla and in fact were instrumental in saving the station there.

On the 16th news came of the burning of stations at Chuharkana, Moman and elsewhere. It was anticipated that mobs would come to Lyallpur from Sangla, both by the authorities and the people. Some people went by train from Lyallpur to join the large crowds which were expected to be coming: the authorities posted what men they could spare to intercept any such crowds. Some of those who had left the town engaged in destruction of telegraph wires on their return. In the night of the 17th, four out of eight stacks of Government *bhusa* * at the station were burnt. No one was ever sent up for trial or convicted for this though the damage done amounted to about R50,000 and it seems just possible that it caught fire accidentally. More troops arrived on the 17th and on the 19th a moveable column came to Lyallpur, its presence safeguarding the town against further disorder.

Gojra.

Hartal was held here on the 15th and 16th of April. We were told that one missionary had left on hearing that his house was likely to be burnt. On the 15th a large crowd went to the station. We are informed that they prevented a train from starting until they had looked for Europeans in it, but they

* Cattle fodder.

found none. Save that they assaulted a sweetmeat vendor and attempted to close the refreshment stall, they did no special damage.

Chak 150—Gugera Branch.

A gang of villagers, mostly *Jat* Sikh colonists, came out at night and tried to wreck the line between Toba Tek Singh and Janiwala, overturning telegraph poles and cutting wires.

General Note.

In many other towns and places in the Punjab, to which we have not thought it necessary to refer, *hartals* were held and acts of violence or disorder occurred. In a chronological statement appended to their case as presented to us, the Punjab Government have mentioned, in order of date, the different events connected with the disorder and we refer to this document as enumerating a number of events in the province upon which we did not call for specific evidence. A statement of the damage done to property during the disorder will also be found in the appendix.