

'I have repeatedly been told by villagers that the dacoits had taken away their arms, so that if guns are still supplied to villagers as at present it will become a certain means of supplying the dacoits with arms and ammunition and enable them to continue dacoity with impunity.'

"The above extracts record the opinions of officers who had ample opportunity of observing the facts about which they wrote and who based their remarks on actual observation. Particular instances illustrating these remarks may easily be found. A few may be mentioned, and further information may be gathered from the note by the Inspector-General of Police which is printed among the annexures of this resolution. The insurgents who rose in the Bilin township, in the Shwegyin district, first attacked the village and police station of Bilin for the purpose of obtaining arms, and afterwards attacked other villages for the same purpose. No resistance by armed villagers is recorded. The history of the rising in the Sittang township is similar. The gang of dacoits known as the Bogale gang began by attacking the police station at Bogale, and then attacked and obtained arms from the villages between that place and Pyindaye, and afterwards from other villages. In Tharrawaddy a leader known as Bo Aung collected 150 guns from various villages. In the Bassein district, during the year 1886, there were 18 separate cases in which firearms were taken by small gangs numbering from two to ten men. In only one case was any attempt at resistance made. To take later statistics, since the 1st June 1887 five cases can be at once cited in which villages in the Thayetmyo district consisting of from 20 to

Commissioner Hodgkinson of the Irrawaddy district also opposes an immediate and total disarmament. He protests against disarming those who have assisted us, or who live in districts where the police protection is inadequate.

370 houses and possessing from 5 to 11 guns failed to resist attacks by comparatively small bands of dacoits."

The statement that Mr. Hodgkinson opposes immediate and total disarmament is correct, but it must be added that he is referring to Lower Burma only, that he is of opinion that it is desirable eventually to disarm the country, and that the policy enunciated in the resolution of January was not one of immediate or total disarmament. The following extracts from that resolution show the manner in which the policy was ordered to be carried out in Lower Burma:—

"The method of putting these instructions in force will differ somewhat in the upper and lower portions of the province. \* \*

\* In Lower Burma the Chief Commissioner wishes the further disarmament of the country to be effected by reducing the number of licenses granted as they expire and by the constant watchfulness of all District Officers and the rigorous enforcement of the Arms Act. It is plain from the police reports that even close to Rangoon, if not in Rangoon itself, firearms are in the hands of the most abandoned criminals. This would not be the case if sufficient attention were given to enforcing the Act. It is not desired to carry out a general search for arms in Lower Burma. The illegal possession of arms should be made dangerous to the possessor. Rewards should be given to informers for the discovery of

firearms held without a license, and persons convicted of breaches of the Arms Act, especially of the illegal manufacture or sale of arms or ammunition, should be dealt with as severely as the law permits.

“ Commissioners of Divisions in Lower Burma are requested to prepare and submit as soon as possible for each district in their divisions lists of the villages in which they propose to grant licenses for the possession of firearms, describing the grounds of exemption, the number of licenses to be granted, and specifying the arms to be granted. \* \* \* ”

In accordance with the orders quoted on page 69 of this note persons who have given the Government active and loyal assistance and persons who live in parts of the country where police protection is inadequate have been suffered to retain their firearms. They are treated as police auxiliaries, a course which Mr. Hodgkinson specially advocates. On the whole it is not too much to say that the policy of disarmament introduced by the resolution is the same as that approved by Mr. Hodgkinson.

This statement is not strictly accurate as it suggests the inference that Mr. Tucker is opposed to disarmament as a general rule. This is not the case. Mr. Tucker did not discuss the question generally when stating his opinion on the subject. He confined himself to stating what ac-

Commissioner Tucker, of the Eastern Division, does not approve of a total and immediate disarmament.

tion should, in his opinion, be taken in his division. He considered it unadvisable to carry out immediate and total disarmament in all the districts of his division, because in some parts the people had shown conspicuous loyalty, and because he thought it advisable to allow the possession of guns by persons of proved loyalty until order has been completely restored. As has been explained above the possession of firearms by loyal villagers is permitted under the resolution.

Several Deputy Commissioners have recorded opinions against a total disarmament.

Only three Deputy Commissioners have recorded an opinion against disarmament. Two are officers of short experience and the third is not one of the best officers in the province. One of these three after experiencing in Tharrawaddy the results of the contrary policy has changed his opinions on the subject and become one of the most strenuous supporters of a policy of disarmament.

Another Deputy Commissioner advised against the total disarmament of his district, but did not express an opinion on the general question. Having been recently transferred to Burma from Bengal this officer has had no opportunities of forming an opinion on the general question.

The Chief Commissioner is known to be a strong advocate of total and immediate disarmament. This fact undoubt-

The statement cited in the margin is supported by no

evidence. The circular in which the opinions of officers were asked stated fairly the pros and cons for and against disarmament as a general rule. Although the Chief Commissioner remarked that he was inclined to favour the policy of disarmament, he in no way committed himself to such a policy. He distinctly stated that before coming to a final decision he would await the opinions of the officers consulted. It is of course impossible to disprove categorically an expression of opinion, but there are strong reasons for believing that officers were not influenced in giving their opinions by their conceptions of Sir Charles Crosthwaite's views on the subject. The question of disarmament was considered early in 1886, nearly a year before Sir Charles Crosthwaite came to the province and at a time when Sir Charles Bernard, who was generally believed to be opposed to disarmament, was Chief Commissioner. Officers in Lower Burma were then consulted on the subject and many of them strongly advised stringent measures of disarmament. The opinions given by some of them in 1886 are cited on pages 72 to 74. The opinions given by these officers in 1887 can hardly be said to have been influenced by what was known or believed of Sir Charles

edly influenced some of the civil officers consulted.

Crosthwaite's views, as they merely adhered to the opinions which they had expressed long before Sir Charles Crosthwaite came to the province. It is not too much to say that for years past the balance of intelligent opinion in the province has been in favour of a stringent administration of the Arms Law, and it is beyond all doubt that the disarmament resolution is approved by almost every experienced officer in the province.

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*Text of Telegrams, dated 24th, 25th, and 28th March 1888, which appeared in the "Times."*

In the Pyinmana and Toungoo districts, where the disarmament is being strictly carried out, the dacoits have again become very troublesome. In Pyinmana a loyal pôngyi has been murdered and several houses have been burnt by dacoits. In Shwegyin the Karens have been rigorously disarmed although they took an active part in quelling the Burmese revolt in 1886. It is stated by persons resident in those districts, who by their position and experience are specially qualified to judge, that the result of the disarmament, so far as it had been carried out, is simply to leave the loyal and honest villagers at the mercy of marauding gangs. The dacoits continue to receive arms and ammunition through Siam. A large quantity of percussion-caps of French manufacture was recently found in Karenni. The Karens loudly complain that Burman officials are employed to disarm them and that their request that they might be permitted to give up their arms to English officers has been disregarded. The Karens also complain that they are deprived of their arms without receiving any compensation. Having regard to the longstanding and bitter race hostility between the Burmans and Karens, and to the fact that the Karens have been consistently loyal to the British, their present treatment would appear to be both harsh and injudicious.

THIS portion of the telegram makes a statement—that dacoity was in March 1888 again becoming prevalent in Pyinmana and Toungoo, and suggests an inference—that the revival of dacoity was due to disarmament. Both the statement and the inference were incorrect. During the past year and a half the Toungoo and Pyinmana districts have been practically undisturbed. During the month which preceded the date of this telegram only a few dacoities and robberies of ordinary type were committed in the Toungoo district. From the 24th March up to the present date (November 1888) Toungoo has remained tranquil except for an attack by dacoits on Mr. Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Police, on the 21st April, in which Mr. Barber was wounded. The occur-

rence has not been followed by any further attacks. During the month which preceded the 24th March the Pyinmana district was undisturbed save for a few dacoities and robberies of an ordinary character, and for an attack on Mr. Thurston's camp on the 19th March, to which reference is made in the correspondent's telegram of the 28th March. There is no truth in the statement that a loyal pôngyi was murdered. The attack on Mr. Thurston's camp was committed by a gang of dacoits known as San Pe's gang, which has its refuge in the hills to the east of the Pyinmana district. It may be mentioned that the camp which was attacked was situated in the heart of the forests and that the men guarding it were armed with firearms. This occurrence, therefore, cannot be attributed to any action on the part of Government in the Pyinmana district in the direction of disarmament.

The statement that the dacoits continue to receive arms and ammunition through Siam is made without evidence. Enquiries have been made which have gone to show that dacoits do not receive arms and ammunition from Siam. The dacoits cannot get arms easily, and they try to get them from the Bur-

man police and from the armed villagers. The Shan States take arms from Siam; few arms find their way through to Burma. It is not known on what information the correspondent bases his statement that a large quantity of caps was found in Karenni. No information on this point has been received by Government officers. Karenni is an independent State. The view that dacoits do not get any large supply of arms from Siam is confirmed by the fact that the Pyinmana district, which could easily get a supply through Karenni, was most completely disarmed by the Deputy Commissioner and General Lockhart's Brigade in 1886 and 1887 long before the resolution of January 1888 issued, and that the dacoits have not armed themselves again.

The statement in the telegram that disarmament is (*i.e.*, was at the end of March 1888) being strictly carried out in the Toungoo and Pyinmana districts must be understood to mean that special measures are being adopted and that all firearms are being withdrawn. This is not quite correct. The Pyinmana district was completely disarmed in 1887 and no special action has been necessary or has been taken in it since the beginning of 1888 in the matter of disarmament. In the Toungoo district special measures were taken in obedience to the orders on the subject of disarmament issued at the end of January. But these measures did not go to the extent of complete disarmament. In pursuance of the policy laid down in the disarmament resolution licenses to possess firearms were not renewed, except in favour of persons who could be permitted to possess them under the terms of the resolution. In consequence of the non-renewal of licenses some 600 guns had been surrendered in this district by the 8th April.



Special consideration was shown to the Karens in the Toungoo district in the matter of disarmament. The number of guns which they had to surrender in consequence of non-renewal of licenses was less than 200. Nearly all these guns were surrendered in a part of the district where the rules appended to the disarmament resolution were not complied with. Persons in this part of the country cannot safely be allowed to retain their guns unless they comply with the conditions under which alone guns can be possessed without danger of falling into the hands of dacoits. If they comply with the rules, licenses will be issued and their guns will be returned to them. In other parts of the Toungoo district, where the rules were complied with, the Karens were not and have not been disarmed. The Deputy Commissioner reported in September 1888 that the number of guns remaining in the hands of Karens in the Toungoo district was at least 2,000.

The telegram goes on to state that the Karens have been rigorously disarmed in the Shwegyin district. The action of the authorities in the Shwegyin district in this matter was as follows. The Deputy Commissioner found it necessary to temporarily disarm the Karens in certain parts. In these parts the Karens were found to have in their possession a large number of guns which they obtained for the most part during the disturbances of 1886 and 1887, and for which they possessed no licenses. During 1886 and 1887 the then Deputy Commissioner considered it unadvisable to enforce the law against the Karens and suffered them to remain in illegal possession of firearms which they possessed. When the question of disarmament came to be considered at the beginning of 1888 Mr. Todd-Naylor, the then Deputy Commissioner, came to the conclusion that the Arms Act must be strictly enforced and that the Karens could not be permitted to retain firearms in contravention not only of the disarmament rules, but also of the ordinary provisions of the Arms Act which are in force throughout India. He accordingly insisted on the surrender of firearms by the Karens in this part of the country. These arms will be or have been re-issued with regular licenses to those who comply with the rules appended to the disarmament resolution. The action of the Deputy Commissioner was judicious and in accordance with the law. The irregular condition of affairs which was suffered to exist during 1886 and 1887 could not be allowed to become permanent, and the tranquil condition of the Shwegyin district in 1888 afforded a fitting opportunity for insisting on a strict

compliance with the law. It may be added that the particular Karens to whom reference is made in these remarks are not entitled to special consideration because they are known to have trafficked in arms with dacoits, and because they rendered little assistance to Government during the disturbances of 1886-87.

The next statement in the telegram is that the result of the disarmament, as carried out hitherto in the Pyinmana, Toungoo, and Shwegyin districts, has, in the opinion of qualified judges, been to leave loyal and honest villagers at the mercy of marauding gangs. The persons who are believed to be here referred to as qualified judges are American missionaries. Their opinion has not hitherto been borne out by facts. As has been explained above the Pyinmana, Toungoo, and Shwegyin districts have been practically undisturbed since the beginning of the year up to the present date (November 1888). It must be remembered, too, that American missionaries cannot be accepted as impartial judges. Much of their influence with the Karens depends on their procuring arms for their congregations. Any action of Government which tends to restrict the possession of arms by Karens naturally meets with strong opposition from them. At the same time they eagerly advocate the disarmament of Burmans. The policy which would meet with their complete approval is one which would give Christian Karens free liberty to possess arms and would place severe restrictions on the possession of arms by Burmans. But such a policy cannot be adopted by Government. It would be unjust and impolitic to make the distinction between Burmans and Karens which the missionaries would like to see made. To do so would be to embitter and alienate Burmans throughout the country. American missionaries are by reason of their position and their surroundings incapable of forming an unbiassed opinion on the question of disarmament. Their intercourse is almost entirely with Karens, who regard Burmans with feelings of aversion, and who desire to possess firearms principally in order that they may be better armed than their Burman neighbours. The missionaries cannot help sharing to a certain extent the race prejudices of their congregations. The utmost which can be done to meet the wishes of the missionaries is to frame the rules regarding arms in such a manner that, while they will have general application throughout Burma, they will permit loyal Karens placed in exceptional positions, equally with loyal Burmans

similarly situated, to retain their arms. This has been done. Under the disarmament rules the Karens who have rendered service to Government during the last two years have as an almost invariable rule been permitted to retain their guns. Some alterations were made in the early part of April in the rules appended to the disarmament resolution on the special representation of the missionaries. These alterations have been declared to be of general application, but they were introduced primarily to meet the wishes of the Karens. They consist in—

- (i) the substitution of a badge for the uniform jacket which the rules originally required gun-holders to wear;
- (ii) the grant of permission to licensed gun-holders to carry their guns anywhere within their circles\* instead of, as originally ordered, within the limits of their villages only.

This second alteration, which the Chief Commissioner was assured by the reverend missionaries was necessary to induce the Karens to retain their guns, shows the value of the statement that the guns are wanted for the defence of their homes. The fact is that the guns are wanted mainly for sporting purposes, and that if the Karens were forbidden to carry them away from their homesteads and their own fields, they would in many cases prefer to give them up. A further special concession has been made in favour of Karens. It has been ruled that Karen gun-holders, when called out against dacoits, shall be led by their own headman and not by Burman officials, provided they are organized under regular headmen or pastors.

The telegram goes on to say that the Karens complain that Burmans are employed to disarm them. It is a fact that the subordinate executive officers who carry out the disarmament policy are Burmans. But this is inevitable. Almost all non-European district officials in Burma are Burmans. To lay down a rule that Karens shall surrender arms to none but European officers, while Burmans are required to surrender their arms to Burman officials, would be to introduce a race distinction of a most invidious kind. It would be equivalent to a declaration that Karens are not subject to the ordinary rules of administration and that Government intends to grant them special privileges not extended to Bur-

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\*The circle is the unit of revenue administration in Burma and varies greatly in size. A circle of average size contains 100 to 200 square miles.

mans. Any action in this direction would create great discontent among Burmans, that is to say, throughout the country generally.

It is further stated in the telegram that the Karens complain that they are deprived of their arms without compensation. As has been explained in a former part of this note, the rules regarding disarmament have been so framed that, as a general rule, Karens who now possess guns will be able to retain them. Persons from whom guns are withdrawn will fall into two classes,—

- (i) persons who being able to comply with the conditions under which firearms may be possessed decline to do so;
- (ii) persons who are not in a position to comply with the rules.

Persons of the first class are entitled to no consideration. They have only to comply with the conditions to retain possession of their guns. Persons of the second class suffer a certain amount of hardship. This hardship is unavoidable, and is suffered equally by Burmans and Karens. Few if any Karens have suffered so far as is known and cases of special hardship receive special consideration.

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In the telegram of the 7th April, extracts from which are cited below, the *Times'* correspondent continues his attacks on the action of Government in the matter of disarmament. To a considerable extent this telegram is a repetition of former charges which have already been shown to be unfounded. Before the various inaccuracies which this telegram contains are pointed out, it is necessary to explain that the whole telegram conveys a mistaken impression of the action and policy of Government. Upper and Lower Burma are confused. The circumstances of the two provinces are entirely dissimilar, and the policy of Government as set forth in the disarmament resolution is different in the two provinces. In Lower Burma, which is in a state of comparative tranquillity, the resolution, while ordering a general but gradual disarmament, provides for the retention of their arms by loyal members of the population, especially Karens, who are placed in exceptional positions, who can protect themselves, who are willing to assist the Government, and who comply with regulations under which only firearms can be possessed with safety. In Upper Burma the state of affairs is different.

There are practically no Karens, and too short a time has elapsed since the annexation for any general feeling of loyalty to have sprung up among the people. In the disturbed districts the dacoits are villagers and the villagers dacoits. As a general rule arms which are possessed are possessed without any license, *i.e.*, in contravention not only of special rules, but of the ordinary law. To a considerable extent the action taken in Upper Burma under the disarmament resolution has been to withdraw unlicensed weapons and to control and systematize the administration of the arms law which had hitherto been enforced as each Deputy Commissioner pleased. In the present state of Upper Burma no system could be devised under which firearms could safely be possessed by the people generally. Experience has repeatedly shown that the people cannot be trusted with arms and that to arm villagers is equivalent to arming dacoits. Disarmament must precede the establishment of order. At the same time there are parts of the country such as Yaw, which has not been brought under direct administration, and the frontier portions of outlying districts like Bhamo, Myadaung, and the Chindwin districts, in which Government cannot afford the people complete protection from the raids of wild tribes and must suffer them to retain the means of protecting themselves. In these parts the possession of firearms is and will continue to be permitted. The necessity for disarmament in Upper Burma, except in frontier parts, becomes every day clearer. Past experience justifies the policy. The districts in which most attention was paid to disarmament in 1886 and 1887 were Pyinmana, Shwebo, and Ye-u. Pyinmana, in particular, was completely disarmed by Mr. Eales in 1887 and has since then been one of the quietest, if not the quietest, district in Upper Burma. During 1886 it was the seat of continuous disorder. The Shwebo and Ye-u districts have also been tranquil in comparison with Minbu, Sagaing, Myingyan, and other districts where the work of disarmament has not been thoroughly carried out. A few instances of the evil results of allowing arms to be retained and of the beneficial results of disarmament may be quoted with advantage. On the 11th February 1888 the village of Pinwa in the Minbu district was attacked by about 50 dacoits armed with 30 guns. This village possessed 20 guns which had been entrusted to the thugyi in the hope that he would be able to maintain order in the surrounding country. The village was strongly stockaded and a broad space cleared all

round it. Yet the dacoits entered the village at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon without opposition, walked to the thugyi's house, burnt it down, and carried off the 20 guns without doing further damage. In reporting the occurrence the Commissioner of the division, Mr. La Touche, remarked: "It would seem that muskets are nowhere really safe except under a guard of military police." Another case is that known as the Kokozi dacoity which occurred in March 1888. In this dacoity seven women were murdered. The headman of the village had eight guns. He made no resistance. On the approach of the dacoits he hid himself in a hedge with four or five guns and remained there while the women of his family were murdered before his eyes. The necessity for disarmament is shown by Captain Hastings' operations in the Popa country. The Popa country had long been disturbed and was infested with well-armed gangs. Captain Hastings quieted it during May 1888 by hunting down the dacoit gangs and by thoroughly disarming it. In forwarding Captain Hastings' report General Stedman\* remarked: "In the Sagaing district 15 licensed guns have been recently taken from one of Mr. Colquhoun's self-defending villages. I think every fresh case tends to prove that complete removal of firearms is the only reasonable and possible policy."

*Text of Telegram dated Rangoon, the 7th April 1888, which appeared in the "Times."*

There can no longer be any doubt that the Chief Commissioner, in deciding to disarm Burma, has made a lamentable mistake. Mr. Crosthwaite decided on the policy of disarmament in opposition to the recommendation of many of the most experienced civil officers in Burma. Colonel Street, senior Commissioner in Burma, who has since retired, pointed out in an able minute the unfortunate consequences likely to result if the people were disarmed. In the present condition of the country Colonel Street and other experienced officers urged it would be impossible for some time to afford adequate protection to the peasantry, especially to those in the remoter districts, and that disarming the loyal classes would leave them at the mercy of dacoits, who would find no difficulty in procuring arms and ammunition.

The first statement of fact which this telegram contains is inaccurate. It is not a fact that many of the most experienced civil officers in Burma opposed the Chief Commissioner's policy in connection with disarmament. The *Times'* correspondent here repeats the statements which he made on this subject in his telegram which appeared in the *Times* of the 30th January. On pages 70 to 77 it has been pointed out that the only officer of weight and experience who opposed the general policy adopted by the Chief Commissioner was Colonel Street.

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\* The Inspector-General of Police.

Colonel Street, though an estimable officer, was altogether singular in the view which he took in the matter of the administration of the arms law. He opposed the action of Government not only in strictly enforcing measures of disarmament, but also in arming Karens and in granting them special facilities for obtaining arms and ammunition. If his views are judged by results it must be admitted that they are thoroughly unsound. The action of Government in granting special facilities for possessing firearms to loyal Karens has been justified by the assistance which the Karens have given to the Government during the last two years in maintaining order. There is no room for doubt that if during 1886 and 1887 Government had refused to recognize and take advantage of the loyalty of the Karens, the difficulties of restoring order would have been enormously increased. The district in which the policy advocated by Colonel Street of arming villagers freely has been followed to the farthest length has been Tharrawaddy, and for the first six months of 1888 Tharrawaddy district was the most disturbed in Lower Burma. The result of freely arming the villagers was that six distinct gangs of dacoits collected, and there was a large increase in crimes

The predictions have unfortunately proved only too true. Complaints are pouring in from all sides as to the unfortunate results of disarmament. The last official bulletin on Upper Burma reports murders by dacoits of loyal thugyis, or village headmen, in Sagang, Yaw, Myingyan, and the Lower Chindwin district. In one case the wife and daughter of one of these unfortunate men were massacred at the same time. The *Rangoon Times*, a journal which has hitherto been a steady supporter of Mr. Crosthwaite's administration, says in its issue of the 3rd April in reference to disarmament: "The worst fears regarding its effects on the local people of all races are being realized and the end is not yet. There are already indications that no act of the Government during the war has been more disastrous to the pacification of the country than this, save perhaps the disbanding of Thebaw's troops with arms in their hands."

of violence. Order only began to be restored by a rigorous disarmament of all villagers except those, principally Karens, who have shown themselves able and ready to defend themselves and to assist the Government against dacoits.

The statement that complaints are, (*i.e.*, were in the beginning of April 1888) pouring in from all sides is an exaggeration. No complaints have been made to the Chief Commissioner except those to which reference will be made hereafter, and the only complaints which have appeared in the local papers have been vague generalities of the kind quoted in the *Times'* correspondent's telegram. So far as is known the only persons who complain of the disarmament policy are the American Baptist Missionaries of Toungoo and Shwegyin, and it is believed that the article from which the *Times'* correspondent quotes was prompted by these missionaries. As was pointed out on page 83 the Shwegyin and Toungoo missionaries were angry because the Karens were to a certain extent disarmed in Shwegyin and Toungoo. The circumstances and extent of the disarmament have been explained on pages 81 and 82, and it has been pointed out that if the Karens who have been disarmed comply with



the arms law they will not be permanently deprived of their arms. In Toungoo disarmament has been carried out in certain parts only where the arms rules were not complied with. In Shwegyin the disarmament consisted principally in the withdrawal of firearms from persons who held no licenses of any kind to possess them. They had been suffered to retain them in defiance of the law during 1886 and 1887 by the weakness of the then Deputy Commissioner. When a strong Deputy Commissioner came to Shwegyin he very rightly insisted on compliance with the law. It is impossible to give way to the clamour of the Shwegyin and Toungoo missionaries, who are perfectly unreasonable in this matter. There are Karens and Karens, and the fanaticism of missionaries whose influence rests to some extent, as has already been pointed out, on their success in supplying their flocks with arms and ammunition, cannot be accepted by Government as a guide of the policy which it shall pursue. The Karen missionaries of other parts of the province do not sympathize with the Toungoo and Shwegyin missionaries in their endeavours to hamper the administration. The Chief Commissioner has been in personal communication

with the Revs. Denchfield, Nicholls, and Bushell, the heads of the American Karen missions in the Hanthawaddy, Bassein, and Thongwa districts, three districts of Burma which are among the most largely peopled with Karens. These gentlemen represented to the Chief Commissioner early in April 1888 that certain unimportant details of the rules were distasteful to the Karens and they asked that alterations might be made. Being anxious to meet the wishes of the missionaries so far as they were reasonable, and considering that the alterations proposed by these gentlemen were unobjectionable, the Chief Commissioner altered the rules as advised by them. They have expressed themselves as quite satisfied with the rules in their present shape. The nature of the alterations made is stated on page 84. It may further be mentioned that the Roman Catholic missionaries, of whom there are a considerable number working among the Karens in Burma, have offered no objections to the policy of Government. Many of these gentlemen have rendered much assistance to Government during the last two years, they have the interests of their Karen flocks quite as much at heart as the American missionaries, and there is no reason to believe

that they would hesitate to bring to the notice of Government any hardship which they might consider the new arms rules inflicted on their congregations.

After referring to certain occurrences which were reported in the official bulletin of the 2nd April, the correspondent goes on to quote the *Rangoon Times*, a local paper. The statements which the correspondent quotes and endorses imply that effects disastrous to the pacification of the country were at the beginning of April already resulting from the policy of Government, in other words that the condition of the country as regards crime was deteriorating. This was not the case either in Lower or Upper Burma. The condition of Lower Burma at the beginning of April was far more satisfactory than its condition a year previous. The only districts in Lower Burma which could be called disturbed were Tharrawaddy and Thayetmyo, for the political disturbances which occurred in Tavoy could hardly be ascribed, even by the *Times*' correspondent, to the disarmament policy of Government. In April 1887 not only Tharrawaddy and Thayetmyo, but also Henzada, Bassein, and Shwegyin were in a state of disorder. These three districts, equally with the rest of the province, excluding Tharrawaddy and Thayetmyo, were tranquil in April 1888. It must not be supposed that the improved condition of the province in April 1888 was due to the disarmament policy enunciated in the resolution of January. Sufficient time had not elapsed for the results of the orders issued in that resolution to become apparent. Gradually, however, and, as time goes on, more and more distinctly have the results of the orders become apparent. Since the date of the correspondent's telegram (7th April 1888) up to the present time (November 1888) the improvement in the condition of the country has been very marked. Facts have altogether falsified the correspondent's prophecy of a fresh outburst of disorder. The orders regarding disarmament which were issued in January have been now very generally carried out. The result has been success beyond anticipation. In no district was the execution of the orders attended by any disturbances. On the contrary crime diminished in the province generally, and in districts which had been disturbed rapid progress was made towards the restoration of tranquillity. In the two districts, Tharrawaddy and Sagaing, which at the

beginning of 1888 were in open disorder, the good effects of disarmament have been most clearly manifest. Sagaing has been reduced to almost complete tranquillity and Tharrawaddy, though still somewhat disturbed, is in a more satisfactory condition than at any time during the last two years. Again, in Shwegyin the course of events has falsified in a most marked degree the prophecies of the correspondent. As has been explained above the disarmament policy was carried out with exceptional vigour in this district, yet no revival of crime was the result. Between February and April 1887 the number of crimes of violence committed in which firearms were used was 62. The number of such crimes committed between February and April 1888 was six, and since that date the district has been almost entirely free from crimes of violence.

The absurdity of the accusations of the *Rangoon Times* is shown by the comparison which it draws between the action of Government in withdrawing arms from the turbulent people of Upper Burma and the action of some unknown person who is alleged to have disbanded Thebaw's troops with arms in their hands. The firearms which are now being withdrawn in Upper Burma are to a great extent firearms carried off by Thebaw's old troops. It is the height of absurdity to condemn the disbandment of Thebaw's troops with arms in their hands and in the same breath to condemn the withdrawal of those arms.

The *Rangoon Times*, in the same article, after dwelling on the fact that disarmament leaves the loyal classes at the mercy of the disloyal, points out that the dacoits have no difficulty in supplying themselves with arms. It says: "Are not guns and ammunition imported all along the line of the Salween and down even to Mergui? The Karenni is said to have abundance of military caps at very low prices, and as for gunpowder, almost every one knows how to make it. The dacoit has little difficulty in obtaining arms and ammunition."

The statements cited in the margin regarding the facility with which dacoits obtain arms and ammunition are not borne out by facts. So far as information on the subject is available it appears that arms are not freely imported from the Shan States and Karenni. If this were the case, the disarmament of Pyinmana, which borders on these territories, could not have been carried out; yet Pyinmana was disarmed a year and a half ago and at the present time hardly any guns are possessed in it. That

dacoits have difficulty in obtaining firearms is proved by the attacks made on police posts and on armed villages for the purpose of obtaining firearms. Nor is it a fact that ammunition is easily procurable. Dacoits are driven to various devices for the purpose of obtaining ammunition. They have been found to use as caps toy caps of the kind sold with toy pistols, and to get gunpowder by breaking up crackers and other fireworks. Most of the ammunition which comes into Burma comes in through Rangoon. Now that the importation of ammunition and its sale by licensed vendors has been carefully regulated dacoits are put to great shifts to obtain ammunition. There is distinct evidence of this in the correspondence captured from the Tavoy rebels in the early part of 1888. In Tavoy, if any where, the rebels could have got arms and ammunition from Siam, especially as the leaders came from that country. As a matter of fact they resorted to the Migyaunghlaung and Nabulè police stations and to apparently respectable people in the district for arms, and purchased their ammunition from the licensed vendor in Tavoy.

It has been pointed out in a former part of this note that few Karens have been actual-

It declares that the result of the policy of disarmament, which is alienating the loyal classes, is that the very hope of future successful government in Bur-

ma is being quenched. The ill-judged action of the local Government in depriving the loyal Karens of their arms without even paying the value of the weapons is universally condemned. In many cases these Karens invested all their savings in the purchase of guns or mortgaged their little properties to raise money to procure firearms. They purchased these weapons with the full acquiescence and knowledge of the Government. After conspicuous and unswerving loyalty on the part of the Karens they have been deprived of their guns without compensation and left to face dacoits unarmed and to meet their creditors unassisted.

ly deprived of their arms and that most of those who have been so deprived will be able to obtain licenses and recover possession of their arms on complying with the law. There are no Karens in Upper Burma. The following districts in Lower Burma contain a considerable Karen population, namely, Toungoo, Shwegyin, Henzada, Thongwa, Bassein, Hanthawaddy, Tharrawaddy, Pegu, and Amherst. The action which had been taken in regard to the disarmament of Karens in these districts at the time of the correspondent's telegram was as follows. The action taken in Toungoo and Shwegyin has already been stated. The guns withdrawn from Karens in Toungoo were not finally confiscated and the Karens in Toungoo still possess at least 2,000 guns. The firearms withdrawn in Shwegyin were for the most part firearms which the Karens possessed in contravention of the ordinary arms law and which were purchased in many cases from dacoits. They were certainly not purchased with the acquiescence and knowledge of Government. The Henzada district authorities reported that the number of guns possessed "at present," *i.e.*, before the putting in force of the orders contained in the disarmament resolution, was 837. They

proposed to reduce the number of guns suffered to be possessed to 578. Of these 475 will remain in the possession of Karens, 80 in the hands of Burmans, 23 in the hands of other races. The Deputy Commissioner of this district reported that not a single gun was withdrawn from Karens during the three months preceding April 1888 in execution of the orders about disarmament. The following remarks made by him in a letter dated the 24th March shows that the local authorities recognize the necessity of treating loyal Karens with consideration and exposes the falseness of the assertion that Karens are being generally deprived of arms which they purchased with the approval of Government :—

“ I might have been able to recommend a larger withdrawal but for the fact that out of these 578 guns nearly 200 were purchased at their own cost by the Karens of Ôkpo and Kanaung townships under Father Bringaud\* in 1887, under the sanction of Government and helped much to bring that part of the country to order, and it would seem ungracious on our part, I think, to now at once withdraw them unless we gave them compensation ; and, further,

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\* A Roman Catholic missionary.

as they have always been on our side and have always resisted dacoits, it would seem unnecessary to withdraw them. The rest of the guns retained on the list are nearly all Karen villagers or Karen levies, and the same remarks apply to them ; they are, I think, a source of strength and not weakness as they do not readily assort with the Burman."

In the Thongwa district it was proposed to reduce the number of guns allowed to be possessed from 882 to 578. Of these 578 about two-thirds will be possessed by Christian Karens of tried loyalty. Seventy-three guns were withdrawn from Karens in this district during the three months preceding April 1888. Of these 51 were voluntarily surrendered by their owners, 22 were withdrawn because they were possessed without licenses, *i.e.*, in contravention of the ordinary arms law.

In the Bassein district a number of arms were temporarily withdrawn from Karens pending the issue of new licenses. No firearms will be permanently withdrawn from Karens who abide by the conditions imposed in the new licenses. The Deputy Commissioner is working in this matter through the American missionaries, who approve his action.



- In the Hanthawaddy district no arms were permanently withdrawn from Karens. The Deputy Commissioner is in communication with the American missionaries of the district who are furnishing him with lists of the villages which they wish to see armed. The recommendations of the missionaries will, as a general rule, be followed.

In the Tharrawaddy district 36 guns were withdrawn from Karens. Of these 29 were possessed in villages in which the new rules were not complied with. If the villagers comply with the rules, the guns will be returned to them.

In the Pegu district only six guns were withdrawn from Karens. They were withdrawn because the conditions of the new rules had not been complied with by the owners.

In the Amherst district action under the disarmament resolution had in April 1888 been taken in the Thatôn subdivision only. The Deputy Commissioner reported that the Christian Karens in this subdivision had not been deprived of their arms and that heathen Karens had been disarmed only to such an extent as the rules rendered necessary.

The foregoing statement of facts is sufficient to show

the incorrectness of the assertion that the Karens of Burma have been generally deprived, without compensation, of arms procured by them with the knowledge and acquiescence of Government. Nothing further need be said to expose the absurdity of the statement that the action of Government has left the Karens "to face dacoits un-armed and meet their creditors unassisted."

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*Text of Telegram which appeared in the "Times" of 23rd April 1888.*

THE present condition of the Mon Valley, in Upper Burma, affords a good illustration of the evils of the disarmament policy now being enforced, and shows the impossibility of rallying the peasantry to British rule while such a system is maintained. These districts, which are among the richest in Upper Burma, are practically ruled by Ottawa, formerly Boh-Shway's chief Lieutenant. Ottawa is no ordinary dacoit chief. The local authorities in his district have to contend not with robber gangs, but with far-reaching and elaborately-planned political organization. Ottawa now styles himself Minge, or Chief Minister. He claims to have received this title from the Shwaygyobin Prince, one of the Alompra pretenders. The country comprising the Mon Valley and adjoining districts is divided between Ottawa and his Lieutenants. The villagers have to pay taxes, for which they are regularly assessed, and are bound to comply with the requisitions for food. If the villagers do this, they are protected from dacoits and no stranger is allowed either to dacoit or levy taxes. Our police stations are occasionally attacked, but as a rule, Ottawa's action is confined to punishing those Burmese who actively assist us, give us information, or act as village headmen. Death is the invariable penalty for any of these acts or for any disobedience to Ottawa's orders. The villages are surrounded at night and men who have offended taken out and killed. Any stray Natives of India are

IN the telegram cited in the margin the correspondent gives an account of the Môn valley and suggests that its condition is due to the disarmament of the peasantry by the present Chief Commissioner. The account of the state of the valley was at the time when it was published in the main correct, and was in fact furnished to the correspondent by Mr. La Touche himself. The correspondent sent Mr. La Touche an extract from a letter which he had received from a military officer, which contained a totally inaccurate account of the matter. To prevent the correspondent from publishing this account Mr. La Touche gave him a true account.

The telegram was sent to Mr. La Touche for comment, and his remarks are as follows:—

"In the *Times* of 23rd April 1888 there appears a

telegram from the Rangoon correspondent, in which the condition of the Môn Valley is cited as an illustration of the evils of the disarmament policy now being enforced in Upper Burma.

“The illustration is an unfortunate one. No licenses to possess arms have ever been given in the Môn Valley, and consequently none have been withdrawn under the orders of January 1888. The account of the valley given by the correspondent shows that it would be madness to attempt to arm the population of the valley.

“Ôktama came into notice in February 1886, when he attacked and burnt the town of Sagu. Mr. Phayre, the Deputy Commissioner, hurried up from Minhla and found that practically all the inhabitants of the Môn Valley had joined with Ôktama. In Burmese times they had been known as turbulent and disaffected.

“Four thugyis who had taken part in Ôktama's insurrection were condemned to death; all guns found in the villages were seized; some 400 muskets I believe were confiscated. It was felt that every village gun was a gun at the service of the insurgents. Since that time every gun found has been confiscated. About 200 guns have been seized since the begin-

dealt with in the same manner. Four sepoy were captured some time ago and brought before Ottawa himself, who ordered them to be immediately executed.

The pursuit of Ottawa has been persistently maintained. The country is, however, very difficult—a long narrow valley, with miles of wild jungle on each side. Ottawa and his bodyguard live in the jungle, constantly shifting their camp. Ottawa takes extraordinary precautions and is said never to sleep in his camp. Accompanied by one or two attendants he remains about a quarter of a mile away. It is an absolute impossibility to afford thorough police protection to villagers in the district. To do so it would be necessary to place military or police guard in every village. This would involve increasing our force in the district sixfold. As the villages are rigorously disarmed the largest villages are at the mercy of a party of half-a-dozen dacoits who arrive with guns. Little surprise can be felt that under such circumstances it is found impossible to get the peasantry to give information, and that the villagers stand aloof from the British. They have to choose between certain death at the hands of the dacoits—as the whole village population have been disarmed and left without means of resistance—or of incurring the censure of our authorities. The result is not doubtful. The civil administration of the Mon division has been under the control of Mr. La Touche as Commissioner. Mr. La Touche, who came to Burma from the North-West Provinces with a high reputation, has under exceptionally difficult circumstances shown ability in administering the most difficult district in Upper Burma.

ning of the cold weather operations.

“ In other parts of the Minbu district the principle of arming loyal headmen has been tried. Maung Ya Byi, a Chin Chief in the north of the district, has now 50 guns and holds his own. The Myoôk's retainers are all armed. But it is not every one, even loyal men, who can be trusted with guns, and that as much for his own sake as for the sake of the peace of the country. Guns are now scarce among the dacoits, and to be known to possess guns is to invite attack. On the Magwe side of the river a loyal thugyi was entrusted with 20 guns. He was nephew of the Myoôk, and apparently a man who could be trusted. A gang of dacoits walked into his village at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, burnt his house, and carried off his guns. He himself narrowly escaped. Had he not had guns, he would not have been attacked. The sole object of the dacoits was to get the guns. As it was Government served out 20 guns to arm the dacoit gangs.

“ The instances are extremely rare in which villages which possess licensed guns have used them for self-defence. As a rule such guns are kept buried or hidden lest they should be stolen and are never available when wanted. A Burman villager

has no strong-room in which he can lock up his gun. The people are incurably careless in keeping watch, and it is extremely difficult to get them to unite in defence.

“ Yet another instance recently occurred on the Magwe side in which a gang of 13 dacoits was followed up by the villagers whom they had attacked and the whole gang killed. The villagers were armed with the countryswords of which they have nowhere been deprived. They were led, I believe, by a rival Bo ; but the case shows that if villagers wish to resist they can do so, or at any rate they can follow and cut off the dacoits, or follow up the track and give information to the police when a party will at once go out to help them.

“ It may of course be argued that the proper course on annexation was to arm every village and make it responsible that no dacoit gangs existed within its bounds. But between this and complete disarmament I for one can see no intermediate course in a country like the Môn Valley, dominated as the correspondent explains by Ôkta-ma.

“ A dacoit who was recently captured stated in his confession that a large village last year sent to Ôktama, who was in the jungle close by, to know whether they had his

permission to supply grass and grain for the ponies of a party of troops which had encamped in the village. Ôk-tama gave permission. There can be no doubt that in the case of the four sepoy's mentioned by the correspondent, the villagers sent word to the dacoits that the sepoy's had come to the village. There was no legal evidence of this however. The boy who made the statement in the first instance afterwards retracted it.

“ To arm a population thus in sympathy with the enemies of order would be madness. Even loyal headmen could not be allowed to keep guns. Ôk-tama could always bring an overpowering force against a village. A thugyi armed with five or ten guns could not resist. The guns would certainly fall a prey to the insurgents. Last October there was more than one case in which Burman police posts were attacked with the sole object of getting guns and occasionally with success.”

It thus appears that Mr. La Touche, who, as Mr. Moylan admits, has shown ability in administering the district, and who has an intimate acquaintance with it, is a thorough supporter of the policy of disarmament ; and also that this policy was enforced long before the present Chief Commissioner took office.

IN the telegrams quoted in the margin the Rangoon correspondent of the *Times* refers to a resolution on disarmament which was issued last June. The correspondent gives it to be understood that before the issue of the resolution rigid and uniform disarmament had been enjoined on Government officers, that the Resolution inaugurated a change of policy by directing that Burman and Karen villagers whose loyalty was ascertained should be permitted to retain their arms, and that this change of policy was due to instructions of the Government of India. None of these statements and suggestions have any foundation in fact. As has been pointed out in former parts of this note the policy of disarmament set forth in the resolution of January was not one of rigid and uniform disarmament. The resolution distinctly laid down that disarmament was not to be put in force in border tracts to which Government was unable to afford adequate protection, or in parts of the country in which a loyal population could be found ready and willing to assist the Government against disturbers of the peace. The second statement of the correspondent, that the resolution of the 2nd June introduced a change of policy, is also incorrect. The resolu-

*Text of Telegram dated Rangoon, 19th June 1888, which appeared in the "Times" of the 20th June 1888.*

THE Chief Commissioner has issued a minute materially modifying the disarmament policy and doing away with the more objectionable features of it so frequently referred to in my recent telegrams.

*"Times" of 25th June 1888.*

*Rangoon, 24th June 1888.*

As already announced the Chief Commissioner by a minute published in the last Gazette has materially modified the disarmament policy and removed its most objectionable features. Henceforward disarmament will be neither rigidly nor uniformly enforced, and the Karens and Burman villagers whose loyalty is ascertained will be allowed to retain their arms. Much wider powers are given to the District Officers in the matter of granting licenses to carry arms to persons residing in their districts. This change of policy is believed to be due to instructions sent by the Government of India. It signally vindicates the wisdom of the opinion recorded by Colonel Street, late senior Commissioner in Burma, in opposition to the policy of universal disarmament when it was first proposed.

tion was published for the purpose of reiterating the orders of January and of circulating the new forms of arms licenses which merely gave legal effect to the orders of January. These new forms of arms licenses embodied, with slight alterations, the rules appended to the resolution of January. The alterations were made early in April at the request of certain Karen missionaries. Their nature is explained at page 84 of this pamphlet. They were practically a concession to the prejudices of the Karens and were made out of consideration for the good services which the Karens had rendered in Lower Burma during the two previous years. These alterations dealt with matters of detail and made no change in the general policy of disarmament. It is perhaps to them that the correspondent refers when he states that there has been a change of policy. At the time when he made this statement the correspondent was no doubt aware that the modifications of detail which he dignified with the title of change of policy had been made more than two months before he despatched his telegram. He must have been equally aware that the resolution of June did not change the policy of disarmament enunciated in January, but insisted on



its enforcement. The third paragraph of the resolution of the 2nd June quotes at length that portion of the resolution of January (quoted on pages 67 to 69) which lays down that persons whose loyalty is ascertained are not to be disarmed. Yet, with the resolution of June before him, the correspondent stated that "henceforward disarmament will be neither rigidly nor uniformly carried out," a statement which was equivalent to the assertion that before June disarmament had been uniformly and rigidly carried out. The third statement of the correspondent, that the so-called change of policy was due to instructions from the Government of India, is a pure fabrication.

It is not difficult to divine the motives which induced the correspondent to send the two telegrams quoted above. His former telegrams had placed him in an awkward position. He had begun in March and had continued in April a violent attack on the disarmament policy of Government. He began by asserting that Government had ordered a practically universal disarmament, he went on to connect any murders or dacoities which happened in various parts of the country with the action of Government in connection with disarmament, and he prophesied disaster as a result of that action. When his prognostications were falsified by facts, when it became evident that the process of pacification which has been going on steadily for the last year and a half had suffered no check, the correspondent found himself in the position of a false prophet. To extricate himself he created a change of policy out of his own imagination as the best means of retreating from an untenable position.

The manner in which he made use of the Karens illustrates the disingenuousness of the correspondent's attacks. In his telegrams of March and April the points on which he

insisted most strongly were, first, the unwisdom of disarming the Karens ; and, second, the evil consequences of disarmament as shown by the alleged recrudescence of disorder in Upper Burma. The inference which his telegrams suggested was that the disarmament of the Karens was one of the principal causes of disorder in Upper Burma. He carefully suppressed the notorious fact that there are no Karens in Upper Burma and that the disarmament of every Karen in existence would have no effect whatever on Upper Burma. The fact is that the disarmament policy enunciated in January has been a complete success. The work has been carried on vigorously in Upper Burma and with excellent results. Even if there were grounds—and there are not—for treating Lower Burma differently, except in details, from Upper Burma, such a course would be impossible. With Upper Burma disarmed Lower Burma must be disarmed too ; otherwise firearms would be imported in large quantities from the lower to the upper province. After the experience of recent years it would be madness to arm Upper Burma or to leave more arms in Lower Burma than can be helped. The risings in Tavoy, Akyab, and Tharrawaddy show the folly of arming the people. The following extract from a letter from the Deputy Commissioner, Tavoy, written in August 1888, shows what use was made of guns possessed by villagers in Tavoy during the disturbances which took place in the early part of the year. “ I would not advocate the arming of any Burman villages here in future. Many have shown themselves disloyal and there has been no case of armed resistance to dacoits or rebels where the villagers were armed. On the contrary the Shan Mintha had no difficulty in collecting arms in the Northern Township. Many of the licensed gun-holders joined his ranks and a list of ‘ weapons presented to His Highness, ’ the accuracy of which has since been proved, was found on the dead body of a Bo killed at Dauklauk on the 3rd May.” Tharrawaddy also teaches a useful lesson. It was in this district that Colonel Street put in practice during 1887 his theories as to the advisability of arming Burmans. The condition of Tharrawaddy during the first half of 1888 can hardly be said to “ vindicate,” as the *Times*’ correspondent puts it, “ the wisdom of the opinion recorded by Colonel Street.” As has been pointed out before, arms are not used and are not required in Burma for self-defence. People like to possess them as a luxury, either because they wish to shoot game with them or because they consider that the possession

of firearms confers a distinction on them. Firearms are never kept with care and are generally lent without scruple. As a general rule people who have arms are deprived of them sooner or later by insurgent gangs. In many cases they join the gangs, bringing their arms with them. Often they lend their guns or let them out on hire to professed dacoits. With the country disarmed large gangs of armed men are impossible. All evidence shows that dacoits as a rule have nothing but old arms and that there is no influx of new arms either from Siam or elsewhere.

It is a fact that there has been a great improvement in the state of Upper Burma during the last six months. This is partly due to the beginning of the rains, but principally to the careful execution of the orders regarding disarmament which were issued in January. The number of firearms possessed in the various districts in Upper Burma has now been reduced to a reasonable amount. The result is that dacoits are no longer able to procure arms by attacking villages. Almost every successful attack on a dacoit band means that the number of firearms in the possession of the criminal classes is diminished, and as the former source of supply has been cut off gangs are now far less numerous and less formidably armed than they were a year or six months ago. It is now nine months since the policy of disarmament began to be put in force on an uniform principle throughout Burma. The success of the policy has been established

*" Times " of 13th August 1888.*

*Dated Rangoon, August 11th, 1888.*

The official bulletin last issued on the condition of Upper Burma is somewhat favourable. Several petty affairs between the police and dacoits are reported. In Mandalay town eight dacoits, who had assailed a house in the outskirts, were attacked by the police, one of them being killed and three captured. The heavy rains make military operations in many parts of Upper Burma impossible for the present. The weather also lessens the activity of the dacoits, and the mounted infantry have been re-called to headquarters in several districts.

beyond all doubt by the rapid improvement in the condition of the province during the last six months. It is not too much to say that no measure adopted for the restoration of order in Burma since the annexation has been so immediately or so signally successful as the policy of disarmament enunciated in January 1888.

**Note No. IX.—Disturbances in Tharrawaddy in 1888.**

*Text of Telegram which appeared in the  
"Weekly Times" of 13th July 1888.*

*Rangoon, July 7th, 1888.*

On the 3rd instant a band of dacoits, 300 strong, from the Tharrawaddy district in Lower Burmah, cut the railway and telegraph lines at a point some 200 miles to the south of Prome. Early information of the assembling of the dacoits was telegraphed to Rangoon, and a train with a body of military police was despatched to Zeegon station, which was menaced by the marauders. The train with the police arrived as the dacoits were actually engaged in tearing up the line. The rails had been removed, and the pilot engine preceding the train ran off the line. The police attacked and drove off the dacoits. The railway lines to Prome and Tounghoo have since this attack been patrolled by armed police, and pilot engines precede the mail trains. The stations near the scene of the attack are occupied by military police. This attack on a railway line has caused considerable alarm, as the dacoits had not previously interfered with the railway. Grave apprehensions are entertained that other dacoit bands may resort to similar tactics.

The attack on the railway was marked by some unusual features. The Tharrawaddy district, from which the dacoits came, has been British territory since 1853. It is, generally speaking, open country, affording few secure refuges for dacoits.

THE first paragraph of the telegram contains many inaccuracies, but it is unnecessary to remark on them, as the main fact is true that a plan was laid to derail the train on the 1st July. The police got information; prompt precautions were taken; the train was not derailed. Two of the rioters were shot and most of those engaged in the business have been arrested and have been tried or are under trial.

The Tharrawaddy district has been British territory since 1853. It was brought into subjection with much difficulty and has always been noted for crime. It is not an open country affording few secure refuges. One of the causes which contribute to make it difficult to govern is the large area under high elephant grass between the railway and the river. It is also completely covered with forest on the east, where it extends up to the ridge of the

Pegu Yomas. It also contains a large area of reserved forest.

It is true that the district has been disturbed more or less since the annexation and that it has had to pay a punitive police-tax since 1886.

It is untrue that the tax is so heavy as to amount to a confiscation of the property of the poorer classes, and it is untrue that any good authority made such a statement. In the first place the average incidence of the tax when it was collected in 1887 is reported by the Commissioner to have been about one rupee six annas per house, *i.e.*, not much more than two pence per month. This was the average. No complaints have been made to the Chief Commissioner about the tax and it has never been put forward by the people as an excuse for dacoity or insurrection. Since they have seen the statements in the papers and the translations of the *Times*' correspondent's misstatements they have perhaps taken stock of their grievances. It is also a fact that the punitive police-tax for the current year had not been collected when the correspondent telegraphed, as the time for its collection had not come, and therefore if the men who attacked the line attacked it because they had been compelled to pay punitive police-tax, they must have been in-

For some time past it has been in a disturbed condition, and a very heavy punitive police-tax has been imposed on all the inhabitants of the district. This tax is so heavy that it is stated on good authority to amount practically to a confiscation of the property of the poorer classes. The local newspapers report that in consequence of the people of Tharrawaddy being made desperate by recent taxation an attack was made on the line.

cited to this act by the remembrance that a year before they, or some of them, had been called on to pay a contribution of two shillings more or less to the punitive police. It is very difficult to get men in that part of Lower Burma to serve as messengers or policemen even at Rs. 12 and Rs. 14 per month, so that the tax is certainly not felt heavily by the people.

The dacoits who attacked the line are reported to have declared that they only wanted to injure Government property and to attack public officials.

There is no authority for the statement cited in the margin. The police were informed that the dacoits intended to pillage the Gyobingauk bazaar, and when they were met by the police they had taken up the rails near Zigôn station and were on their way back to Gyobingauk, which is a fair-sized town on the railway. It may also be noted that the dacoits had prepared destruction for a train which they knew would contain five or six hundred of their own countrymen. The suggestion that the men were actuated only by a desire to injure Government property and to attack public officials is singularly inconsistent with the facts.

The Rangoon newspapers allege that the police have been guilty of extortion and oppression in Tharrawaddy in connexion with the punitive tax. It was in the Tharrawaddy district that a village was recently dacoited by a party of policemen, who murdered some villagers and burnt the houses.

The newspapers may have made the allegations as here stated. So far as is known no complaints of extortion connected with the tax have been made. The Commissioner by the Chief Commissioner's desire has been all

over the district seeing the headmen and elders, and he reports no complaints of this sort. Some policemen were charged with having been concerned in a dacoity. The charge has been proved to be without foundation, the real culprits having confessed their guilt.

It is not true that the people of the Tharrawaddy district are suffering from scarcity. It is true that agricultural operations in some parts of the Tharrawaddy district were for a time at a standstill owing to the lateness of the rains. This was the subject of close enquiry in the Revenue Department, and even if the matter had not been put right by copious rain, there would have been no cause for alarm. The result of the unfavourable nature of the season might be scarcity next year, but could not be scarcity now. The crops are reaped in the cold weather (November—January), and stoppage of agricultural work could not have any effect on the food-supply in July, which was derived from the crops of last year. As an indication that the local authorities were not unmindful of the danger of stopping work in the fields it may be noted that the Deputy Commissioner released on bail a number of persons arrested on sus-

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*Text of Telegram which appeared in the "Weekly Times," July 27th, 1888.*

OVER 100 persons have been arrested in connexion with the late outbreak. While the district is afflicted by cholera, and the people are suffering from scarcity, large and arbitrary fines are being imposed on the villages without distinction between the guilty and the innocent. The local Government refuses to give any information as to the amount of the punitive taxes imposed on the people of Tharrawaddy, stating that such information is not usually communicated to the press. Under the General Police Act, when a punitive tax is imposed, notice must be published in the Gazette; but under the Burma Rural Police Act no public notice of the imposition of a punitive tax is required. The Deputy Commissioners impose these taxes practically as they think fit on any village incurring their displeasure.



picion in connection with the late disturbance in order that they might be able to go on with their ploughing. The revenue system in Lower Burma is elastic and is liberally worked. Last year Rs. 32,836-8-0 of revenue were remitted in Tharrawaddy in places where the crops were bad.

It is unfortunately true that this district, like many other parts of Burma, has suffered severely from cholera. It is not true that large arbitrary fines are being imposed on the villages without distinction between the guilty and the innocent. The correspondent confounds assessments for the support of extra or punitive police and fines imposed on villages under section 21 of the Burma District Cesses and Rural Police Act, 1880. A fine under that section can only be imposed on a village if in or near the village a dacoity or robbery is committed or attempted, or if dacoits or robbers are harboured, sheltered, or assisted, and if the inhabitants of the village without reasonable excuse fail to render active assistance in preventing the offence or in arresting and securing the offenders. The sanction of the Chief Commissioner is necessary to the imposition of a fine in every case. In all cases enquiry is made on the spot, in Tharrawaddy generally by the Deputy Com-

missioner himself, and the villagers have ample opportunity of showing cause why they should not be fined. The circumstances of the case and the means of the inhabitants are and must be taken into consideration in assessing the amount of the fine and the proportion to be paid by each person. It is an abuse of language to describe these fines as taxes, or to say that they are arbitrarily imposed. They are fines authorized by law for specific misconduct and imposed after the observance of legal and formal procedure. The most common complaint is that the legal formalities and the reference which has to be made to the Chief Commissioner cause so much delay that fines are not imposed in all cases in which they are deserved. It is untrue to say that the Deputy Commissioners impose these taxes (or fines) practically as they think fit on any village incurring their displeasure. The principle of punishing villages as a corporate body for certain delinquencies has the sanction of the law. The firm and constant enforcement of this law is absolutely necessary, as it is one of the few means which exist of making the people co-operate in the cause of order. It has been found effective.

It is impossible to answer the vague assertion contained

An enormous number of persons have been and are being arrested in connection with various outbreaks throughout

the province. This is rapidly becoming a very serious question, and it is now being generally asked how is all this to end?

The arbitrary policy which has been enforced in Tharrawaddy and Tavoy, and which is alienating the people, ought to be replaced in Lower Burma by more conciliatory action.

in this paragraph. As a matter of fact outbreaks, as the correspondent calls them, have occurred recently only in Tavoy and Tharrawaddy. Many arrests have been made under due process of law. This must happen if crimes of this kind are committed. But it is not clear what unfavourable inference can be drawn from the fact that many persons believed to have been concerned in serious crimes have been arrested, and it is not known what other outbreaks are referred to. The matter will undoubtedly end in the punishment of the wrongdoers and in the suppression of crime, and the end will not be unsatisfactory. If further outbreaks should unhappily occur, the law will be enforced as heretofore.

It is untrue that an arbitrary policy has been enforced in Tharrawaddy or in Tavoy, or that it is alienating the people. The only measure enforced in Tavoy is the imposition of additional police at the cost of the people of that part of the district which joined in a treacherous rebellion for which there was not the shadow of an excuse. The means of suppressing crime, which the law sanctions, are being vigorously and judiciously employed. The Chief Commissioner watches most carefully the employment of

these means by local officers and takes every precaution that arbitrary acts are not committed.

THE correspondent implies that there has been no improvement in the condition of Tharrawaddy and that the action which he attributes to the Deputy Commissioner of compelling small villages to amalgamate with larger ones is the cause, or at any rate one of the causes, of the present state of affairs. As a matter of fact very marked progress has been made during the last two months in reducing Tharrawaddy to order. The improvement is shown not so much by the marked diminution which has taken place in the number of crimes of violence committed, a circumstance which may be attributed in part at least to the rains, as by the actual successes which have been obtained against dacoits. Three of the principal leaders of dacoit gangs as well as several less noted criminals have been killed and their gangs broken up, captures of dacoits are of frequent occurrence, and members of various gangs are now surrendering unconditionally. The last-mentioned symptom is peculiarly significant. It shows that the dacoits prefer to throw themselves on the

*Text of Telegram which appeared in the "Times" of 13th August 1888.*

*Dated Rangoon, 11th August 1888.*

Tharrawaddy still continues in a disturbed condition. The Deputy Commissioner is compelling the villagers occupying the smaller villages to abandon their habitations or remove them to larger villages. This step has been taken with a view to simplify the task of resisting attacks by dacoits.

mercy of the authorities rather than to undergo the intolerable hardships to which the present unceasing pursuit by the police subjects them. It may be added that the same symptom manifested itself in the middle of 1887 in Shwegyin, which was so successfully pacified by Mr. Todd-Naylor, the present Deputy Commissioner of Tharrawaddy. Tharrawaddy is at present in a more satisfactory condition than it has been at any time during the last two years. Much no doubt remains to be done to restore it to complete tranquillity, but recent events leave no room for doubt that the local authorities are at last getting the upper hand of the criminal forces. The work of complete tranquillization is now merely a matter of time.

• In his telegram the correspondent refers to the action of the Deputy Commissioner in connection with the removal of villages. It is not a fact that the Deputy Commissioner compels villages to move. Small villages remote from police protection are often the haunt of dacoit gangs and, even if inhabited by honest villagers, are a source of danger because the villagers, being unable to protect themselves and being too far from police posts to be protected by the police, are compelled to harbour and feed dacoits. The Deputy Commissioner therefore uses his influence so far as possible to induce such villages to come within the area of police protection. The only compulsion used on villages which decline to move is to assess them to punitive police to an extent sufficient to ensure that they shall be properly protected. The action of the Deputy Commissioner in this matter is judicious and has the Chief Commissioner's approval. It is reasonable that villages which decline to avail themselves of the protection which the ordinary police arrangements

afford should be required to pay the cost of the special arrangements rendered necessary by their obstinacy.

It is true that information was received that Ne U, one of the Tharrawaddy outlaws, a robber and murderer of the worst type, intended to attack the line, but no attempt was made to carry out the alleged intention. The following arrangements for patrolling the line have been in force since the attack on the railway in the beginning of July. They are quite sufficient to protect the line from all possible dangers. Four policemen from each police station on the line walk along the line each night to the neighbouring station. The police stations are as a rule some 6 or 7 miles apart. No further precautions are taken. The Inspector merely gives orders as to the hour at which the patrols shall start, arranges for the men to be employed, and so on. He does not ordinarily go out on patrol himself. The "numerous parties of police under European Inspectors" are creations of the correspondent's imagination.

The concluding portion of the extract quoted in the margin is a misrepresentation. Of the three men designated by the priest who planned the attack on the railway as his principal lieutenants two were notorious outlaws who have been guilty of numerous dacoities and murders. The priest looked to the criminal classes for support. This is shown by the proclamation which he issued and in which he specially called on all bad characters to enrol themselves and promised them appointments as Wuns (governors) and Bos

*Text of Telegram which appeared in the "Times" of 21st August 1888.*

*Dated Rangoon, the 15th August 1888.*

The Tharrawaddy district continues in a very unsatisfactory condition. Renewed attempts are anticipated to cut the railway line to Prome, near Zeegon, the scene of the late outrage. The line is strongly guarded, and at night is patrolled by numerous parties of police under European Inspectors. The most serious feature in connexion with the recent attack on the railway is that nearly all the people concerned are villagers, hitherto known as respectable men and unconnected with dacoits or bad characters. They appear to have been driven to make the attack by the indiscriminate imposition of punitive taxes by the Deputy Commissioner.

(military officers). The following is an accurate translation of the proclamation:—

“In obedience to the orders of His Majesty .

“The Tharrawaddy Wun Maha Minhla Mindin Yegaung issues the following order:—

“To all subjects of His Majesty in the various towns and villages in Tharrawaddy together with all headmen and thugyis in that district.

“While (I am) engaged in suppressing the heretical enemy, let there be no oppression, robbery, wanton destruction, incendiaryisms, dacoity, &c., among the Royal subjects. Village headmen shall, as heretofore, continue to protect and govern their respective circles and shall carry out all orders issued from the headquarters of the Royal army.

“Every thugyi shall arrest and quickly send to the army headquarters all who in his jurisdiction unjustly oppress and rob the poor. If such offenders are too strong to be arrested, the thugyi will personally report the matter at the army headquarters, and an armed detachment will be despatched against such offenders, and having arrested them, severe and exemplary punishment will be inflicted on them and their relatives.

“All bad characters residing in towns and villages and all others who desire to serve His Majesty should collect bands consisting of 100 or 50 men each, and in company with thugyis enrol themselves. Royal letters patent bearing the Royal seal appointing them Wuns and Bos will be given them and they will be required to serve His Majesty according to their abilities and qualifications.

“For such service rendered, wunships, sitkèships, myoòkships, myothugyiships, &c., will be conferred on these men according to their merits.

“All armed loyal subjects in the lower province who have at heart their own welfare, the welfare of their fellow-creatures, of their lord and master, and of their religion will combine and help in attacking and destroying the heretical enemy.

“All elders of towns and villages will, immediately on receipt of this Royal order, cause copies to be circulated to all villages under their control and explain the contents of the order to the villagers.

“The towns and villages which set at naught this Royal order and fight (against us) in conjunction with the heretical enemy will be rased to the ground.

“Further, all who possess elephants, ponies, swords, spears, &c., must forward them with the names of their owners to the Royal army headquarters.

“The value of these will be paid hereafter.

“Order of the Tharrawaddy Myowun Maha Minhla Mindin Yegaung.”

The statement that the persons who took part in the outbreak were “driven to make the attack by the indiscriminate imposition of punitive taxes by the Deputy Commissioner” is disproved by facts. In the first place it will be seen that the

priest makes no reference in his proclamation to Government oppression or misgovernment. He appeals to the patriotism, the religion, and the cupidity of the people. It is obvious that had the priest thought that he could move the people by references to Government oppression he would have done so. That he did not do so was because there had been no oppression. It has been ascertained that of the 84 insurgents who have been arrested for complicity in the attack on the railway line not one has been fined\* or has come from a village which has been fined under the Rural Police Act, and that only 20 have ever been assessed for punitive police under the Police Act. The amount paid by these 20 persons was Rs. 25-12-0 and was levied in 1887. Of the 25 men from the Gyobingauk and Tapun townships who were arrested for joining in the conspiracy none had been fined under the Rural Police Act and only 17 had been assessed for punitive police. Of these 17 men 13 proved that they had refused to entertain the solicitations of the priest. Consequently of the men detained in custody for joining in the conspiracy only four were assessed for punitive police. Whatever may be said as to the effect of the assessments for punitive police on the rest of the district, it is obvious that the assessment can have had no connection whatever with the attempt to derail the mail-train on the 1st July because the great majority of the persons concerned in that attack had never been assessed.

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\* The nature of fines under the Rural Police Act, and of assessments under the Police Act is explained on page 115.



**Note No. X.—Disturbances in Tavoy in 1888.**

*Text of Telegram which appeared in the "Weekly Times" of 13th July 1888.*

*Rangoon, 7th July 1888.*

THE Chief Commissioner, in reply to the memorial from the people of Tavoy, has decided that the action of the Commissioner of Tenasserim in levying a punitive police tax was illegal. He states that as notice has now been given of the imposition of the tax the collection will be proceeded with.

WITH regard to the correspondent's Tavoy news it should be known that he is the Advocate of some Tavoy malcontents who petitioned the Chief Commissioner against the imposition and the illegal collection of a punitive police-tax. The Commissioner acted illegally in authorizing the tax to be levied in some cases before the notification had appeared in the Gazette. The Chief Commissioner recorded on the petition that the Commissioner had acted illegally in levying the tax before the notification had issued. The people of Tavoy did not memorialize the Chief Commissioner. The correspondent presented a petition from five persons purporting to act for the townspeople of Tavoy, but having no authority from them. The Chief Commissioner directed the Commissioner to send for the petitioners and ascertain from them the matter of their complaint, and how far they had been injured by the premature collection of the tax. The correspondent advised his clients not to appear before the Commissioner. It has been ascertained that no tax was actually levied from these men. It may be added that

the correspondent's object in enlarging on the imaginary causes of the Tharrawaddy outbreak is to back up his clients' petition about the Tavoy tax, in the success of which he is professionally interested. It is as well therefore to state that the outbreak in Tavoy, which was analogous to that in Tharrawaddy and was got up in a similar manner in the name of the Myingun Prince, could have had no origin in the pressure of taxation as no tax or fine had until this outbreak occurred been imposed in Tavoy.

The statement that about the 14th July (the date of the telegram) a band of dacoits was assembled in the hills near Tavoy is devoid of truth. On the date in question that portion of the Tavoy district which was recently disturbed was completely tranquil. About 15 scattered members of the rebel gang were in hiding by ones and twos near their villages. There has been no disturbance in any part of the Tenasserim division since the 27th May, when Nabulè, a police station in Tavoy, was attacked for the second time. Strong measures were at once taken to put down disorder and these measures were successful. It is known that the rebels retreated across the Siam frontier where some of them, including the leader, were arrest-

*Text of Telegram which appeared in the "Weekly Times" of 20th July 1888.*

*Rangoon, 14th July 1888.*

Southern Tenasserim continues in a disturbed and dangerous condition. A band of dacoits 200 strong is assembled in the hills near Tavoy. It is highly discreditable to the local Government that Tenasserim, which has been 60 years British territory and was always known as the most peaceable portion of Burma, should be allowed to continue for months in its present lamentable condition.

ed by the Siamese authorities. The latter portion of the paragraph quoted is misleading. The correspondent states, in effect, that Tenasserim has for months been in a "lamentable condition." Tenasserim is one of the divisions of Burma and contains an area of 46,590 square miles. Tavoy is one of the districts of Tenasserim and contains an area of 7,150 square miles. Between February and June disturbances occurred in two townships of Tavoy, the Central and Northern townships, which contain an area of 2,680 square miles. The rest of the Tavoy district and the whole of the rest of the Tenasserim division were completely tranquil during the period above mentioned, and have been entirely free from disorder during the last year and a quarter.

*Text of Telegram which appeared in the "Times" of 13th August 1888.*

*Dated Rangoon, 11th August 1888.*

Disturbances are reported from Tavoy, where the inhabitants are resisting payment of the punitive police-tax, which is being forcibly levied by armed police. The *Rangoon Times* reports that the military police, with fixed bayonets, have visited several houses in Tavoy to compel payment of the tax, but have so far collected very little. Great discontent prevails among the people of Tenasserim. The action of the local Government in levying a punitive tax on Tavoy is very generally condemned. To restore order in this province it is absolutely necessary that some change should be made in the officials in charge of it. The present state of things has been allowed to continue too long. The public interests should now prevail over personal considerations.

It is not true that any disturbances have taken place recently in Tavoy. Since the 27th May Tavoy has been completely tranquil. The correspondent gives it to be understood that the punitive police assessment is being levied by force and that its levy is being resisted by force. As a matter of fact no active resistance whatever has been offered to the levy of the assessment. In some cases people have refused to pay and warrants of distraint have been issued as the law requires

against their property. Nothing further has been done. All due consideration is being shown to the people in the collection of the tax. The thugyis, *i.e.*, the revenue collectors, are authorized to collect in instalments in cases in which the payment at one time of the whole sum due for the year would cause inconvenience. The statement that so far very little of the tax has been collected is incorrect. The total assessment for a whole year beginning from June 1888 is Rs. 40,000. Of this Rs. 9,969 had been collected on the 11th August. The statement that military police have visited houses with fixed bayonets *to compel payment of the tax* is a misrepresentation. Maung Gale, the Extra Assistant Commissioner of Tavoy, one of whose duties is to collect the assessment in Tavoy, reported to the Deputy Commissioner some time ago that several well-to-do persons, from whom he demanded sums legally due from them which they were fully able to pay, not only met his legal demands with obstinate refusal, but further treated him personally with gross disrespect. For this reason the Deputy Commissioner directed a small picket of military police to accompany him on his rounds to enforce respect for his authority. On one

occasion the picket went round with fixed bayonets by an accident.: They were called from the parade-ground, where they were being drilled, for this duty and forgot to unfix their bayonets. The necessity for providing the Extra Assistant Commissioner with an escort is, probably, directly due to the action of the *Times'* correspondent. The correspondent, in his capacity of Advocate for five Tavoy malcontents, advised his clients to refuse to make their grievances known to the local officials and cast imputations, which were proved to be unfounded, on the probity of the Extra Assistant Commissioner Maung Gale. The persons in Tavoy who refused to pay the punitive tax and insulted Maung Gale were merely acting in the spirit of the advice given by the correspondent to his clients. It is hardly necessary to add that the Deputy Commissioner was doing no more than his plain duty in providing Maung Gale with an escort. Tavoy town is known to contain many disloyal persons and serious political disturbances have recently taken place in its neighbourhood. If the local officials failed to assert their authority, there would be very serious risk of a fresh outbreak. The concluding statement of the correspondent, that "great

discontent prevails among the people of Tenasserim," is absurd. As is explained on page 125 of this pamphlet the area disturbed between February and June forms only a portion of the Tavoy district, which again is only a small portion of Tenasserim. The imposition of a punitive police-tax was carefully confined to that portion of the Tavoy district which had been disturbed and which needed protection. There is no ground for supposing that the people beyond the area affected regard the action of Government, so far as they are acquainted with it, with anything but indifference. The rising in Tavoy was peculiar in several respects. It was purely political, it was confined to Tavoy and its environs, the plot had no ramifications in the rest of Tenasserim, and it was fomented from Rangoon. There is no foundation either in ascertained facts or in public opinion for the assertions of the correspondent that Tenasserim is in a disturbed condition and that the people are discontented.

As has already been pointed out, there has been not the slightest disturbance in any part of the Tenasserim division since the 27th May.

The Chief Commissioner visited Moulmein, the capital of Tenasserim, in September

*Text of Telegram which appeared in the "Times" of 27th August 1888.*

*Rangoon, 25th August 1888.*

The condition of Tenasserim continues very unsatisfactory.

Some years have elapsed since the province was visited by the Chief Commissioner of Burma. The local officials, owing to the want of supervision, have

altogether neglected their duties, and extraordinary police corruption and oppression have prevailed.

1887. He visited Toungoo, the largest town, next to Moulmein, in Tenasserim in May 1888. The Chief Commissioner has not visited Tavoy since 1885. Owing to the amount of work thrown on him since the annexation of Upper Burma he cannot place himself out of postal communication for any time and there has not been anything to call him to Tavoy. It may be added that Tenasserim was during the latter half of 1887 in charge of Mr. Hodgkinson (formerly special Commissioner, who in 1887 was created a C.S.I. for his services) while Colonel Plant was absent on furlough. During his tenure of office Mr. Hodgkinson visited Tavoy, but heard no complaints. Whenever the people of Tavoy have considered themselves aggrieved they have freely used the telegraph and post office. For instance, early in 1888 the Deputy Commissioner forbade the holding of a "pôngyi byan," *i.e.*, the ceremony of cremating a priest, on the ground that large crowds would be assembled and the public peace endangered. Some of the inhabitants of Tavoy telegraphed direct to the Chief Commissioner appealing against the Deputy Commissioner's order. The matter was inquired into and finally permission to hold the