

Council Chamber,
City Hall,
Halifax, N. S.,
May 9, 1945,
5:00 P. M.

A meeting of Aldermen was held on the above date to deal with an emergency situation created as a result of riots in the City of Halifax occurring during "V-E" Day celebrations.

There were present Aldermen Batson, Moriarty, Breen, Hosterman, Coffin, Adams, DeWolf, Walker, Burgess and Ahern.

Moved by Alderman Coffin, seconded by Alderman Burgess that Alderman Ahern act as Chairman as His Worship the Mayor was absent attending a meeting at M. D. #6. Motion passed.

Alderman Coffin stated: "This is the most terrible thing that has ever taken place in Halifax. We are now instructed that the situation is being dealt with. At a meeting this afternoon, the question arose as regards reparation for losses and it was felt that we should put in the minutes of Council something that we could have set up later."

Alderman Coffin then read the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED:

(1) That an adequate investigation be held forthwith in order to establish responsibility for the acts of destruction committed in the City of Halifax during V-E Day celebrations.

(2) That the Federal Government be requested to arrange for compensation for loss to those citizens suffer-

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ing damage from the said acts of destruction.

(3) That a Commission be set up to administer the distribution of compensation.

Moved by Alderman Coffin, seconded by Alderman Burgess that the resolution as submitted be approved. Motion passed unanimously.

Alderman Doyle arrives at 5.05 P. M.

A telegram sent to Acting Prime Minister Ilesley at Ottawa by His Worship the Mayor was read by the City Clerk as follows:

HON. J.L. ILSLEY
ACTING PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA
OTTAWA ONTARIO

IN VIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE SHOCKING EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED IN THIS CITY MONDAY NIGHT AND TUESDAY AS MAYOR OF THE CITY OF HALIFAX I WISH TO ADVISE YOU THAT THE CITIZENS OF HALIFAX LOOK TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO MAKE ADEQUATE COMPENSATION TO THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE SUFFERED STOP OFFICIAL ENQUIRY WILL PLACE THE BLAME BUT SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE IS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE CITIZENS AS TO THE PERSONS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DAMAGE AND FOR ALLOWING IT TO PASS OUT OF CONTROL STOP IMMEDIATE CONFERENCE IS ADVISABLE STOP PLEASE ADVISE WHEN SAME CAN BE HELD

ALLAN M. BUTLER
MAYOR OF HALIFAX

The City Solicitor stated: "There was a meeting of members of Council, representatives of the Board of Trade and His Worship the Mayor. It was stated at that meeting what was being done to control the situation and His Worship the Mayor explained the action of bringing in the regiment of soldiers. People have asked why Martial Law was not put in yesterday and this is the reason: (1) There was an endeavour to prevent bloodshed. (2) There was no point in proclaiming Martial Law until there was

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an adequate force of trained troops to enforce it. The forces were neither trained nor available and to send them out with live ammunition would be terrible. There was no attempt made to call out the militia. Why was the Riot Act not proclaimed? For the same reasons, but it would have no effect if the forces were not here to enforce it. It has to be read in the presence of twelve rioters and if they do not desist within thirty minutes, it gives the law enforcement a chance to go in and put down the riot. Anyone injured is deprived from process through the courts. Both of these would result in incidents that would be worse than the destruction of property. It was decided to handle this by persuasion. I understand from the meeting that the situation is not clear for the future. It is not improbable that there will be smaller outbreaks. Police are patrolling the streets and are assisted by the R. C. M. Police and the Service Patrols. They will be at certain places where they will be needed. Back of that there is the regiment of infantry. It seems that if the Naval Force can be returned to their barracks, the only people who can be dealt with will be the citizens. If the City Police had been tangling with the Service Police, there would have been an attack on the Civil Police."

His Worship the Deputy Mayor stated that we decided to ask the Admiral to take action. We communicated with the Attorney General and we went to the Atlantic Command. Admiral Murray was asked to appear in person to the men and then it worked better.

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Alderman DeWolf asked the Solicitor if the Riot Act had to be read before twelve rioters to which he replied in the affirmative and stated that the Attorney General calls the Riot Squad. If it were Martial Law the Attorney General must make a written request to the Armed Forces.

Alderman Burgess stated that Admiral Murray blocked everything we tried to do, but Brigadier White co-operated with us.

Alderman Walker asked the Solicitor to explain the difference between Martial Law and the Riot Act.

The Solicitor replied that under the Riot Act armed force is used and that involves shooting etc. Martial Law is simply a case of war, they are to attack the rioters as if they were an enemy.

His Worship the Deputy Mayor then asked the Members of Council if they were in accord with the telegram sent to Acting Prime Minister Ilsley, to which they were agreed.

Alderman Hosterman asked if the forces would be allowed to use live ammunition to which the Solicitor replied that it would be up to the D. O. C. to decide that.

The Solicitor stated that if any Alderman is approached and asked by merchants what he must do to recover his losses he should advise him of two things he should do (1) To notify the Insurance Company at once and (2) Make an honest inventory of stolen goods.

Alderman Adams stated that we have made every effort to ask the authorities to make every preparation for this affair. I think we know who to blame.

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Moved by Alderman Burgess, seconded by Alderman
Batson that this meeting do now adjourn. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned. -

5:45 P. M.

J. E. Ahern,
CHAIRMAN.

W. P. Publicover
City Clerk