

Day 15 – Thursday, 3 December 1964

CHAIRMAN: This session of the inquiry is called to order. Call the next witness, Mr. Neil Isaacs.

NEIL ISAACS is sworn in and he states as follows:

RAMSAROOP: On Monday 25th May this year you were instructed by the Commissioner of Police to go to Wismar? What was your task?

ISAACS: My task was to assess the situation at Wismar and Mackenzie and report to the military forces to assist the Police and Volunteer Forces at Wismar and Mackenzie.

RAMSAROOP: When did you leave for Mackenzie?

ISAACS: I left Ogle Airstrip about one o'clock on Monday afternoon. I arrived about 1.45 p.m. at Mackenzie itself.

RAMSAROOP: What was your military assessment of the situation?

ISAACS: When I got there I had to do some check-ups and make my own assessments. I reported about 2.45 p.m. to Georgetown to Police Force control room advising the earliest dispatch of the troops that were standing by.

RAMSAROOP: What was the strength of the Police Force in that area at that time?

ISAACS: Operating at Wismar at the time of my arrival were one officer, two subordinate officers and 14 constables.

RAMSAROOP: On the 25th May, around 2.45 p.m. did you request the Deputy Commissioner to do anything?

ISAACS: Having made my assessments I contacted the control room and spoke to the Deputy Commissioner.

RAMSAROOP: Did you take any other measure in this direction in contacting the Commissioner to alert any other forces?

ISAACS: No sir. There were no other forces.

RAMSAROOP: Did you on arrival contact Major Langham and Assistant Superintendent Hobbs?

ISAACS: On arrival I went to Mackenzie police station to find out what was going on from Mr. Hobbs, the officer in charge, but he was at that time in Wismar. I therefore went over to contact him and Major Langham in order to get from them a clear picture of what was going on.

CHAIRMAN: About what time you contacted them?

ISAACS: About 2.15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN: What they told you?

ISAACS: They gave me a very brief account of what was happening so far. They told me that all the police and volunteers that were available at the Mackenzie and Wismar were out in the Wismar area.

CHAIRMAN: Were any arrangements made there to prevent outbreaks of violence in the Kara Kara area? We are at Wismar up to now?

ISAACS: Having got an idea of what arrangements were made, that had been in fact put into effect by Major Langham and Mr. Hobbs, I then left Wismar after asking Assistant Superintendent Lashley to augment a group there. I told Mr. Lashley to maintain the present arrangements for patrolling and duties

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generally, and I returned to Mackenzie with Major Langham and Mr. Hobbs. They then gave me a complete account at the Mackenzie police station.

CHAIRMAN: What was the account?

ISAACS: They pointed out that fires had been started and I could see they were in fact in progress, but there had been looting and there had been assaults committed on persons, and that they had arranged patrols in an effort to curtail the activities.

CHAIRMAN: Did they state what those patrols had to do?

ISAACS: The patrols were to cover the entire area with the purpose of preventing attacks on persons or property, and assist any person who might require assistance; basically that was their task. They also then told me that, in fact, people had been escorted to the hospital and Mackenzie, and so on. In fact, they gave me a general picture of what the Police Force had been doing up to that time.

CHAIRMAN: Did they tell you how the fires were started?

ISAACS: They told me that fires had been set to various places almost simultaneously; that they were unable so far to bump into any persons setting fires to buildings. Their orders were to apprehend any person or persons setting fires to buildings, and if necessary to shoot at them. But they just had not seen anyone setting fires to buildings. After the discussions I told them that I wished that they maintained at Wismar a maximum number of foot and mobile patrols, and that the patrols should consist of one N.C.O. and three men each, and that the orders be re-emphasised that they should open fire on any persons seen committing any acts of danger to life and property. In addition, they were to continue arrangements for the escorting of persons and protecting property as might be required, escorting of persons to hospitals where necessary and escorting of groups over to Mackenzie. In addition, at Wismar police station proper arrangements were made for recording all reports and receiving telephone calls. I confirmed the arrangements whereby guards were maintained in the compound at Wismar police station. I said these arrangements would continue at maximum until midnight when it would be necessary to reduce the number on the patrols, and then reinforce maximum strength at first light on the 26th at Mackenzie in view of the fact that I was told that there were rumours of attacks at Kara Kara and Rainbow City. The continuous foot patrol was to consist of one N.C.O. and three members of the Volunteer Force.

CHAIRMAN: Repeat that piece again.

ISAACS: I arranged for continuous foot patrol of three men of the B.G. Volunteer Force with one N.C.O.

CHAIRMAN: Were there any other arrangements you made?

ISAACS: Well, at that time Mr. Hobbs and Major Langham went to continue the patrol. I therefore called on the manager of Demerara Bauxite Company and had a short discussion with him. During this, I was told of the arrangement by Demba of the persons coming over from Wismar, and I also requested and received accommodation for the troops, two additional Lands Rovers for the use of Wismar – one for the use by police at the Mackenzie station and one for the transport for the incoming troops.

CHAIRMAN: Yes. Would you say that these arrangements were satisfactory?

ISAACS: In my opinion that was the only way one could cover the maximum amount of ground with the number of men available.

CHAIRMAN: What time the troops came?

ISAACS: Well, I went to the airport at 5.35 p.m. to meet the incoming troops. They arrived at 5.45.

CHAIRMAN: Where were they taken?

ISAACS: Well, I took them straight to their accommodation.

CHAIRMAN: Then what followed?

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ISAACS: I outlined the situation to the officer and requested that he put into the Wismar area as soon as possible the maximum number of men in parties of one N.C.O and three men in patrols. In addition he should carry two mobile patrols, one specially in the Kara Kara area and the other in the north Mackenzie area generally.

CHAIRMAN: What time did they reach Wismar – the British Army?

ISAACS: They crossed approximately at 7.00 p.m. and were told they should operate till midnight and the mobile patrol should work at the same time.

CHAIRMAN: After 7.00 p.m. there were many other incidents at Wismar?

ISAACS: Well, as far I remember, sir, I could see fires continuing throughout the night. From my observation there were a number of fires from the time of my arrival. But at the hours of darkness I had no report of looting.

CHAIRMAN: Or beating?

ISAACS: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: The next morning you saw fires?

ISAACS: In fact, there were fires until the next morning.

CHAIRMAN: At 8.00 a.m. in the Wismar area?

ISAACS: At this time there were army patrols riding in the Wismar area.

CHAIRMAN: Yes?

ISAACS: At 4.00 a.m. on the 26th the 2nd battalion of the troops arrived by river, and they were therefore able to take on the daylight patrol.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, after you went around the area, what impression did you form when you arrived at Wismar?

ISAACS: The next morning, sir, the place seemed very quiet as we drove around. We saw people but they always dispersed when we approached. We came across a couple of fires on the Wismar Hill, but we saw nobody there.

CHAIRMAN: Would that be the Half Mile area?

ISAACS: I can't say, but if I see a map I might be able to say. [*Having looked at the map, he agreed with the Chairman.*]

CHAIRMAN: What arrangements were made for the homeless people who were housed at the police station?

ISAACS: Well, the persons at the compound were subsequently moved to the Demba trade school and accommodated there. Some were accommodated at the sports club which virtually adjoins the trade school.

RAMSAROOP: How many persons were there?

ISAACS: Well, I enquired from one of the persons assisting in the operation and I was informed that there 950 persons at the trade school and about 100 at the sports club.

RAMSAROOP: Can you tell us what were the figures of casualties admitted at the Mackenzie Hospital?

ISAACS: I phoned the matron at 7.00 a.m. on the 26th May to give me a list of persons admitted or seen at the hospital. I collected these figures from her: Admitted – 42; Died – 2 (one had died on arrival at the hospital); Serious – 6 (including two shot by police); Raped – 4; Not serious – 30 (10 of whom were discharged on the morning of the 26th May).

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RAMSAROOP: In view of the range of activities on the 25th and 26th May, what was your opinion of the casualty list?

ISAACS: Well, I felt that the casualty list indicated two things: (1) good protection to civilians by the police and the B.G. Volunteer Force; (2) that persons who were responsible for the activities were not essentially bent on attacking persons, but property.

RAMSAROOP: When did you leave Mackenzie for Georgetown?

ISAACS: I left at 11.00 a.m. on the morning of the 26th May.

RAMSAROOP: Can you say how many shots and tear gas shells were fired by the police during the disturbances?

ISAACS: I cannot give the exact number, but I had two reports while at Wismar that the following officers fired shots and injured persons: Superintendent Lashley fired and injured a man; Detective Constable Roberts fired but no one was injured; Constable Norah fired and injured a man.

RAMSAROOP: During your short stay at Mackenzie-Wismar, did any East Indian people make complaints to you as to the conduct of the Police Force?

ISAACS: In fact, I spoke to two persons in the compound when I arrived. I can't tell you the name of the first person but he, at the station, said, "I am glad you have come." He told me that he was glad he was safe at the moment. We were not at the moment able to carry another person who requested to Mackenzie. I went around and had a look at the gathering but not many persons were around then.

RAMSAROOP: Mr. Isaacs, what is your opinion having restored the strength of the Police Force to its former strength in that area, and the extent of damage which was done to persons, would you tell us what is your opinion of the Police Force and their conduct in these circumstances?

ISAACS: Well, firstly at the time I arrived at Mackenzie, I had no real idea what extensive damage was done to the property which the number of fires caused, or to persons, until I got some details. My view is that even with the Police Force restored to its limit it was insufficient to deal effectively with the protection of both people and property. It was therefore decided to look after people rather than property. This involved protection of the police compound, transportation of evacuees across the river in a small boat, constant patrol in the area, and all of this had to be done by two police officers and fourteen constables.

SHEPHERD: And throughout the rioting these tasks were maintained?

ISAACS: We have police procedure in this case.

SHEPHERD: I think on the 25th May, Mr. Isaacs, on your arrival on the scene the entire book of entries was recorded? On the 26th I noticed only two entries, on the current affairs. Is this according to this police procedure?

ISAACS: There is a notice committed in my record. As far as I can see what was recorded was in fact the action taken.

SHEPHERD: How much support did you have?

ISAACS: Twenty-four at that period.

SHEPHERD: On Monday you were in company with Superintendent Lashley and five constables. This assistance immediately increased the numbers of the Police Force, like something from seventeen to twenty-three approximately. From your observation, were you satisfied within the limit of manpower available that the police had done everything within its power before you arrived?

ISAACS: Yes.

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SHEPHERD: And you returned the following day? Did you observe anything meriting criticism on the part of the volunteers or police?

ISAACS: Not from the point of view of the operation as such.

SHEPHERD: And your direction, Mr. Isaacs, was to open fire on the crowds while they were trying to put fire on the building, but not to crowds standing, or this would likely be a danger to life?

ISAACS: This would be against orders if constables would fire into the middle of the idle crowds, or curious inquisitive crowds.

SHEPHERD: Did you have an impression that there was a planned uprising between the two races at Wismar?

ISAACS: I am unable to give any evidence. I did not get an impression that there was an uprising which involved one race against another.

SHEPHERD: Have you any opinion of the cause of racial clashes between the races?

ISAACS: I do not know. I can't say. I feel that is in the background.

SHEPHERD: Mr. Isaacs we all know what B.B.B. means: because rapings, beatings and burnings wasn't a course to destroy every Indian life but to destroy properties?

ISAACS: Yes.

SHEPHERD: Having regards to your orders to the police is it correct to say that the loss of lives was surprisingly slight, having regard to the intensity of the outburst?

ISAACS: As I saw it, the fact that so many buildings were burned, in my opinion more injuries would have been inflicted on persons if this was the intention.

SHEPHERD: During the time you were there you didn't have any rest?

ISAACS: I didn't have any rest at all.

SHEPHERD: Had anyone complained about any lack of discipline in respect to the Volunteer or Police Forces?

ISAACS: No sir.

SHEPHERD: What is the position of the use of tear gas by ordinary constables?

ISAACS: Tear smoke may be used in any circumstances if it is considered desirable.

SHEPHERD: You didn't see more than a few crowds moving about?

ISAACS: This was the morning of the 26th. This was a crowd of people standing on the road outside the market. They were talking and there was no sign of activity.

SHEPHERD: At the time was it wise to use tear gas?

ISAACS: It was useless to use tear smoke.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Were you at any time in conversation with the Commissioner or any other official concerning the situation at Wismar while at West Coast Demerara?

ISAACS: No sir. From West Demerara I was told that there was some disturbance at Mackenzie.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When did you first hear of the situation at Wismar?

ISAACS: About 10.45 on the 25th I heard at the headquarters that a number of incidents were taking place at Mackenzie.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you think it would have been better to have all your men on point duty at Wismar rather than just having them on patrol?

ISAACS: There is something I always maintain, that no two persons must do the job in the same way.

PRATAP N. SINGH: On your arrival on Monday 25th, how many men were on patrol at Wismar?

ISAACS: I cannot give you the correct figure, but at 7 o'clock on the 25th, at the Wismar police station, there would have been two subordinate officers, about twenty constables. In the case of the B.G.V.F., I should say three officers, about seventy-five to eighty ranks. Of the Army, there would have been three patrols consisting one N.C.O. and three men each, which makes it twelve Army men.

PRATAP N. SINGH: On arrival at 1.45 p.m. on Monday 25th, did you know arrangements were made to fly the troops to Mackenzie?

ISAACS: I was told before I left.

PRATAP N. SINGH: On your arrival did you feel that without soldiers' help that the situation would not have been checked?

ISAACS: An assessment was essential before arriving at the conclusion that soldiers' help was necessary.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You think you would have needed more troops to deal with the situation?

ISAACS: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you come to the conclusion that even with the troops there you needed more men to deal with the situation?

ISAACS: No sir. The troops were on ground at 7.00 p.m. and I had to give them a chance to see what their effectiveness would be. I mentioned that from midnight to first light on the 26th the number of fires were much less, and then about one or two in the morning I was informed that the second platoon would be leaving Atkinson Field for Mackenzie and would arrive on the 26th.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What was the strength of Demba's police force?

ISAACS: Approximately about seventy-five to eighty.

PRATAP N. SINGH: I suppose that some of these men were members of the Volunteer Force?

ISAACS: No sir. That cannot be.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What training do they go through?

ISAACS: They get training in police subjects and drills

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you think if they could have been trained they could have assisted the police situation?

ISAACS: Not necessarily. They are employed for the safety of Demba's property.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you think a request could have been made?

ISAACS: Indeed, a request was made, but no request for the duty at Wismar.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Why not at Wismar?

ISAACS: Because I personally considered that they could not contribute enough for the purposes required.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many men did you have on guard at the Wismar police station who were armed?

ISAACS: On the point of being on guard, the guards were armed. The supernumerary constabulary are not trained on the point of arms.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: Did it ever come to your knowledge that Major Langham on the 24th had reported that he requested full embodiment of “D” company which was enough to handle the situation up there? Had it ever come to your knowledge?

ISAACS: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What is the strength of your mobile force up there?

ISAACS: One N.C.O. and three men.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you use the word mobile what do you mean?

ISAACS: Vehicles.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many vehicles do you have up there?

ISAACS: On my arrival there were two Land Rovers operating at Wismar and one from Demba. In the course of the afternoon as a result of my request I had two additional Land Rovers sent to Wismar.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did the vehicles have any V.H.F equipment?

ISAACS: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: At what time did you say you actually got over to Wismar?

ISAACS: A very short while after two.

PRATAP N. SINGH: At the time you got to Wismar did you see any crowds?

ISAACS: I saw groups of persons standing in the main street. They were also near the police station compound. Some were also in front of the market.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you patrol areas like Silver Town, Silver City, Kara Kara, One Mile?

ISAACS: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you at any time on the 25th go back to Wismar?

ISAACS: I went back later on, but I did not do extensive patrolling. I, however, visited some of the men.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Thank You.

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DRAYTON: The police at Wismar, are they in continuous contact with Georgetown?

ISAACS: They have a telephone line by which they normally speak to Mackenzie. Mackenzie has a radio set.

DRAYTON: Mackenzie has got a radio set?

ISAACS: That is so.

DRAYTON: Are you aware of any calls being made to Police Force control in Georgetown?

ISAACS: No sir.

DRAYTON: Round about 10.45 a.m. on the 25th May did they receive a call indicating widespread looting and arson?

ISAACS: No sir. Not that I am aware of.

DRAYTON: Well, Major Langham in an extract which he has presented to this Commission has stated that on or about 10.15 on the 25th due to the sudden significant grip of widespread arson and looting, and the apparent breakdown of law and order, resulted in a message being sent over. Now, I just wondered whether since the police at Wismar had made this telephone request at Wismar, whether Mackenzie would not have been contacted by Georgetown to indicate that there was a sudden and significant increase in widespread arson and looting.

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ISAACS: I do not know, sir. From what you have noted I do not know if it had been indicated to Mackenzie when troops had been asked to be sent up to Mackenzie.

DRAYTON: Was Mackenzie told of this so that they might have passed it on to Georgetown?

ISAACS: That is not indicated. I am not aware of this.

DRAYTON: At what time of Monday 25th May were you told that you might have to go to Wismar?

ISAACS: I think it was about 11.00 to 11.15.

DRAYTON: Were you told why?

ISAACS: I was told that there were a number of fires at Wismar and that there was a possibility that troops might have to be sent up, and I should go up and find out what the situation was.

DRAYTON: When did you come from West Demerara to Georgetown?

ISAACS: That morning, sir.

DRAYTON: What time did you arrive?

ISAACS: I think I crossed on the ferry boat. I can't remember the time. I think I crossed on the eight o'clock ferry.

DRAYTON: When you got up at 1.45 your job was to assess the situation at Wismar?

ISAACS: Yes.

DRAYTON: Did you every think at first that you would have to make a personal assessment of what was going on, rather to give priority to the appreciation of the situation by Major Langham and Mr. Hobbs and see for yourself what was going on?

ISAACS: Because in my opinion it would have taken far longer had I inspected the entire area.

DRAYTON: You agree that this would be second hand information?

ISAACS: Indeed, sir, from my point of view, it was first hand.

DRAYTON: How long would it have taken you to look around Wismar?

ISAACS: About one hour.

DRAYTON: Still you see it took you from 2.00 to 3.45 before you could have made the assessment on the basis of the second hand report from Mr. Hobbs?

ISAACS: It was not an hour to talk to Mr. Hobbs and make a reconnaissance of the area. It would have taken longer.

DRAYTON: When you spoke with Major Langham and Mr. Hobbs did you see a large crowd seriously interfering with the people?

ISAACS: I had been told of crowds milling there.

DRAYTON: Would it not be right to use tear gas to disperse a crowd?

ISAACS: No sir. Instructions would have to be given.

DRAYTON: There must be some common denominator in the use of tear gas?

ISAACS: The officer has to make a decision in his mind whether to use tear smoke or firearms.

DRAYTON: What possible measures would be taken for the dispersing of the crowds?

ISAACS: Well, sir, firstly you have to remove the crowd by dispersing them.

DRAYTON: Even if they are seriously interfering with people?

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ISAACS: You may arrest them for disorderly behaviour.

DRAYTON: This is the kind of answer I want from you.

ISAACS: For that reason there would be serious action taken.

DRAYTON: Do you know if any orders were made by Mr. Hobbs?

ISAACS: I cannot say, sir.

DRAYTON: There is this question that I want to ask you: Do you think that the image of the U.K. soldiers would have had more effect on the crowd?

ISAACS: Yes.

DRAYTON: From what you gather you therefore think that the police and volunteers connected to the area were to some degree ineffective?

ISAACS: They were of useful effect.

DRAYTON: If you had gathered volunteers from any other part of British Guiana and put them at Wismar in your opinion would they have been more effective?

ISAACS: Not really.

DRAYTON: It is just that they would have come from another area?

ISAACS: I think you got me wrong. The U.K. troops were on a stand-by basis as there was no state of emergency. They were not directly assisting the police or volunteers because there was no emergency. This was the first time that they would have been specifically asked to come to the aid of the police.

DRAYTON: Do you think if it were possible to get more police and volunteers armed in the same way as the British troops, they would have been just as effective?

ISAACS: On the question of effectiveness, I would say that it was rather unfortunate that the fires continued in spite of the presence of the troops.

DRAYTON: But with the same intensity?

ISAACS: No sir. The fires in my opinion reduced from midnight to daylight as against the morning of the 25th to midnight. But this pattern I found on the West Coast of Demerara particularly with respect to the burning of buildings.

DRAYTON: When you said that the casualty list was low did you mean fatalities or people who were injured?

ISAACS: Taking the number of houses that were burnt into consideration, I think that the casualty list of forty-two is comparatively low, since thirty of these were not serious.

DRAYTON: Would you say that the limiting factor to the length of the casualty list would be because the people who were beating and murdering did not have the weapons to inflict more serious injuries and thereby increase the number of casualties or probably fatalities.

ISAACS: I do not think so, sir. I have seen people badly injured by ordinary things like paling staves, and apart from this, a knife is a particularly serious weapon.

DRAYTON: While in conversation with Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Langham, did you get the impression that people were equipped with weapons?

ISAACS: No. But many people had knives and cutlasses in their homes for domestic purposes.

DRAYTON: Have you been in the area before?

ISAACS: Yes, previously.

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DRAYTON: Would your jeep need a jerry can?

ISAACS: Not necessarily.

DRAYTON: I apologise for asking you for such small details but would the occasion to use jerry cans arise?

ISAACS: Yes. This occasion may arise.

DRAYTON: But this is not a practice?

ISAACS: Well, the last time I used them was in 1959.

DRAYTON: And you would hope that things had not deteriorated since then.

ISAACS: Well. . . .

Thank you.

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MACDONALD: You mentioned that when you returned to Mackenzie one thing you gave was orders to guard the station compound. Why was this?

ISAACS: I got the impression that the people in the compound were dissatisfied.

MACDONALD: This would not be because of the danger expected from the crowd around the station?

ISAACS: Well, in view of the fact that these people had all left their premises and had all been escorted to the police station and would have been escorted to the riverside, I felt it was desirable to have a guard over them.

MACDONALD: In spite of the fact that patrols in the area were adequate, considerable numbers of fires were being lit. Was it because the burning was spontaneous?

ISAACS: Well, I asked Mr. Hobbs and Major Langham how they were handling the situation, especially in respect to the safety of houses. I was told that in some instances policemen had seen smoke coming from houses and had put the fires out, but they never could spot the arsonists. Some people were in the habit of dampening their houses, if any one close to it was on fire. I was told that suddenly while on patrol, the policemen would, upon looking back down the road, observe a building on fire. It was their opinion that kerosene had been splashed on the floor and/or on the walls. This act would take a short time and the person could move out without being spotted. For this reason they said it was hard for patrols to see the arsonists.

MACDONALD: Don't you think that the buildings destroyed would have required more than the normal amount of petrol or kerosene kept in a house, if the fire was to be effective?

ISAACS: As far as I am aware many householders make use of kerosene for their stoves, lamps, and other uses.

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MOOTOO: Mr. Isaacs, is there a record kept at the police station of the amount of kerosene or gasoline used?

ISAACS: There is one at Mackenzie and one at Wismar.

MOOTOO: One at each place?

ISAACS: Certainly.

MOOTOO: When you went over to Wismar did anybody express surprise at the suddenness and intensity of the outbreak of violence?

ISAACS: Not subsequently. One of the people was rather surprised.

MOOTOO: Were there police officers who expressed surprise?

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ISAACS: Yes. Mr. Hobbs.

MOOTOO: When did he express this surprise?

ISAACS: Just about the 25th.

MOOTOO: On the first day you arrived at Mackenzie, can you give us an idea of the number of refugees who were in Wismar police station? Can you remember?

ISAACS: At Wismar, there were approximately 150 persons.

MOOTOO: And at Mackenzie?

ISAACS: At Mackenzie there were about thirty to forty at the most.

MOOTOO: Have you any idea how many people were rescued during your stay there?

ISAACS: The actual figures I can't remember at this stage, but approximate number of persons who were accommodated at the trade school and the sports club at about 11.00 that night was about 950.

MOOTOO: Have you any idea of the number of houses which had already been set on fire before you arrived?

ISAACS: On the morning of the 26th we made an effort to determine the position but without avail.

MOOTOO: Do you feel that if you had arrived at Wismar about five or six hours earlier you would have managed to save more people and houses?

ISAACS: I can't honestly say.

MOOTOO: You would have been able to do so if you had been earlier. I suppose that this is hypothetical. You said that you thought that if the people intended to kill they would have killed and they would not have destroyed property?

ISAACS: In this case I feel that the intention was to destroy property and not to attack persons.

MOOTOO: So you feel that the plan was to destroy property and not lives?

ISAACS: Yes.

MOOTOO: You knew anything of this plan before?

ISAACS: I mentioned that I was not aware of this plan. But I saw property being destroyed and I assumed that they meant to destroy property and not lives.

MOOTOO: If it was a spontaneous attack there would have been a serious attack on both property and lives. From the figures we have, we see that mainly properties were destroyed and not lives.

ISAACS: I do not think that everybody was after property.

MOOTOO: There could have been an arrangement that property should be destroyed and not lives. It looks as if the spontaneous attackers would have destroyed both lives and property.

ISAACS: They could not have had the intention to attack persons as well as property.

MOOTOO: But the last figure suggests some arrangement?

ISAACS: Well I don't know that.

MOOTOO: Did you give orders while you were there that the Indian policemen in Wismar or Mackenzie area should be protected?

ISAACS: I do not think so. I rather think that Mr. Hobbs said that the Indian policemen should do inside duty rather than outdoor.

MOOTOO: Why do you think he made that arrangement?

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ISAACS: As I can see it, we had more jobs to do inside and, as the situation was becoming tense, I think that was his main reason.

MOOTOO: Have you any figures of persons who were attacked before the arrival of British troops?

ISAACS: No, but I think Mr. Hobbs should have.

MOOTOO: Do you think that the British troops had been in the country long enough to know Wismar?

ISAACS: A policeman was attached to each patrol.

MOOTOO: Would it have been better to have police and volunteers rather than soldiers?

ISAACS: I had most of them at West Demerara.

MOOTOO: Could you have sent the British troops to West Demerara where you need not have known much of the area?

ISAACS: There were already troops in West Demerara and it would have taken too long to get the police from West Demerara to Mackenzie.

CHAIRMAN: The policemen were interested in saving lives more than property?

ISAACS: That decision had to be made at a certain time.

CHAIRMAN: There were a number of injured persons who were brought in and they had to leave their homes to be protected by the police. Is this true?

ISAACS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Have you any report on the number of Indians injured on the 25th or 26th?

ISAACS: I am not aware of this.

CHAIRMAN: Could you say if there was any retaliation by the Indian people?

ISAACS: I am not aware of the details. There might have been a retaliation.

CHAIRMAN: There is evidence that one man, Mr. Ramjattan, had a gun and while someone was attempting to set fire to his house, he came down with his gun and the arsonist escaped. Later the policeman came and took him away, that is, the man from the building and also another man who was with him, to the police station. How would you assess the conduct of this policeman? Don't you think that this man had a right to protect his property?

ISAACS: As I said, I don't know the circumstances of this case. I would have to know the detailed facts before I could answer. I know that I was asked to make arrangements to ensure that Ramjattan was moved to Wismar police station for safety. I am pretty sure of it and, in fact, I instructed Mr. Hobbs that he should be escorted to Wismar police station and looked after there.

CHAIRMAN: Did you receive any request from Mr. Ramjattan to be removed?

ISAACS: This request originated from Georgetown and I understood from Mrs. Ramjattan that we were requested to do so. I cannot remember exactly when the instructions for removal were given.

CHAIRMAN: Fortunately, it would be when you visited the Wismar area.

ISAACS: If it had been after, I don't know. I visited Wismar pretty quickly after my arrival. I went across and later came back over. I also spoke to Superintendent Hobbs as there were a number of details to be fixed.

CHAIRMAN: But on the first trip you didn't request that?

ISAACS: No, not immediately on arrival; that was subsequent.

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CHAIRMAN: When you went down to Wismar and saw the situation, did you take control of it?

ISAACS: No. My immediate task was to recommend if British troops were necessary. My first task was a very brief look and to get Major Langham and Mr. Hobbs to give me a picture of what was happening.

CHAIRMAN: Did you take over control after?

ISAACS: I was the senior officer on the spot, and at times you must have somebody who is superior in office to control arrangements.

CHAIRMAN: While you were being briefed was a map of the area used?

ISAACS: I keep a map and subsequently used one of these maps on the arrival of Major Goodbody

CHAIRMAN: From that map were you able to locate the Indians were beaten?

ISAACS: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: We are grateful to the British Army for submitting this rough sketch. We don't have any from the police. In that case it would have been quite comprehensive. Now, the red dots represent houses that were destroyed. You would see three fairly large concentrations of Indian population – One Mile, Half Mile, Silvertown, and Silver City. That is the Wismar area. With men at your disposal, if you had a map and such information that these places were occupied by Indians, would you have planned a different type of operation, that is, posting guards around the area, rather than just sending out patrols?

ISAACS: No sir. Looking at this, I think I would not agree that it was spread over a specific area or areas. I think you have visited Wismar, so you know the terrain, and you also know the nature of the terrain itself. These houses are set in certain areas, but the terrain did not permit the action suggested, and the same applies to other places to be protected. To look after all this collectively would be a difficult task, except by patrolling, that is, unless you have a virtual unlimited amount of troops.

CHAIRMAN: There is a constabulary force at Demba. Did you think it necessary to ask for assistance for more men in that constabulary?

ISAACS: I used some of them. They were not trained to use arms.

CHAIRMAN: Not to use arms, but to strengthen the patrols.

ISAACS: In my opinion, it was desirable that men should be armed in view of the burning that was continuing with persons setting fires to buildings. If called on to stop immediately and if resisting or running away to avoid arrest, the escapee should be shot.

CHAIRMAN: Instead of having three policemen on patrol, one policeman and two constables will be just as effective as three constables. All three need not be armed for the frequent patrols. There would be more patrols going around the area, not one policeman and two constables. You would have had a greater number of patrols to go around the area.

ISAACS: Yes sir. I did not consider doing this because I did not consider that it would have worked out properly.

CHAIRMAN: It could not work?

ISAACS: It could not work properly, sir.

DRAYTON: Who was in charge of Mackenzie?

ISAACS: The constable on duty.

DRAYTON: Where was Mr. Hobbs at that time?

ISAACS: He was in charge of the police operations in the Wismar area.

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DRAYTON: Don't you think that under the circumstances it would have been better for Mr. Hobbs to have been in Mackenzie?

ISAACS: I do not think so. He was very busy organising the operations at Wismar.

DRAYTON: I agree with the good organising that he was doing, but don't you think it would have been better for him to be at Mackenzie to keep in constant contact with Georgetown?

ISAACS: I do not think so, sir. He could not have done it.

DRAYTON: Okay. He himself would have to give evidence in this connection. Don't you think that if the British troops had been there earlier more houses and lives would have been saved?

ISAACS: I do not know.

SHEPHERD: You said in answer to Mr. Pratap Singh that the majority – twenty-four men of the B.G.V.F. – had been on patrol on the 24th. Had you any complaint from Major Langham about the limited embodiment?

ISAACS: No sir.

SHEPHERD: You were operating on the West Bank area?

ISAACS: I was in West Demerara.

SHEPHERD: How long?

ISAACS: I was there for some time.

SHEPHERD: During your stay did you say that the Indians were killing the Negroes?

ISAACS: Well, I would say it was half and half.

SHEPHERD: Half and half?

ISAACS: Yes.

SHEPHERD: So, therefore, you would say that every action had a reaction?

ISAACS: You are quite right.

SHEPHERD: But troops were operating at that time?

ISAACS: Yes.

SHEPHERD: You had express instructions to rescue Mr. Ramjattan?

ISAACS: That was one of the messages passed on to me.

SHEPHERD: By whom?

ISAACS: It came from the Force Control.

SHEPHERD: And you gathered that Mrs. Ramjattan was concerned about the safety of her husband?

ISAACS: Yes.

SHEPHERD: Demba supernumerary constables were used in the area in small numbers and drove vehicles. Did you have in mind that the Demba supernumerary constables were used by Demba to protect her property?

ISAACS: Yes.

SHEPHERD: No further questions.

DRAYTON: At what time did you receive this message?

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ISAACS: I really do not know.

DRAYTON: Roughly?

ISAACS: I should say probably about 5.00. It might have been an hour earlier.

DRAYTON: Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN: Court is adjourned for fifteen minutes.

ROHIT PERSAUD is sworn in, and he states as follows:

RAMSAROOP: Mr. Persaud, you are attached to the Georgetown Hospital?

ROHIT PERSAUD: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: And where do you live?

ROHIT PERSAUD: 253 David Street, Kitty.

RAMSAROOP: Have you chart in relation to persons who were injured around the 23rd-25th of May from Wismar and Mackenzie? Do you know when these persons were admitted?

ROHIT PERSAUD: One Lenard Gobin of Wismar, Demerara. The date of his admission was on the 28th May, 1964 and he was discharged on 4th June, 1964. The same person came in again to the hospital on **June 1964 and was discharged on the 24th June, 1964. The address he gave them was Middleton Street, Campbellville. The second is Baby Sookram; the address is Eccles, East Bank Demerara. The date of admission was on the 27th May and discharged on the same day – 27th May, 1964. Another is Dhamattie Sookram; her address is Eccles, East Bank Demerara. Date of admission – the 27th May; date of discharge – 1st June, 1964. [Editor's note: ** The date is illegible in original text.]

RAMSAROOP: Mr. Persaud, do you have in your possession a record of persons who were injured and killed following the "Sun Chapman" incident on the 6th July this year? Have you any record in the office?

ROHIT PERSAUD: Only of whom came to the hospital and were treated.

RAMSAROOP: And there were records of dates that East Indians died in the Wismar area?

ROHIT PERSAUD: Let me make it clear. The record of deaths occurring in the hospital is kept. We have a report.

RAMSAROOP: That is what I am enquiring of.

CHAIRMAN: The doctor in Georgetown was sent to Mackenzie Hospital to help perform post mortem examinations. Are the records kept at Mackenzie Hospital?

ROHIT PERSAUD: Probably the doctor who went up there kept that record.

RAMSAROOP: Before leaving kindly give us that document.

OSCAR EDWARD CARMICHAEL is sworn in, and he states as follows:

RAMSAROOP: Your full name is?

CARMICHAEL: Oscar Edward Carmichael.

RAMSAROOP: You are a Superintendent of Police?

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CARMICHAEL: Yes, I am.

RAMSAROOP: Where are you presently attached?

CARMICHAEL: Mackenzie, Demerara River.

RAMSAROOP: On Monday the 6th July, 1964, you arrived at Mackenzie at 5.15 p.m.?

CARMICHAEL: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: Why did you go there?

CARMICHAEL: I went there for the purpose of taking up command of the district from Superintendent Oscar Hobbs.

RAMSAROOP: At about 5.40 p.m. on the 6th July while you were with Mr. Hobbs did you receive any report or telephone call?

CARMICHAEL: No, not me. Mr. Hobbs. And he told me something.

RAMSAROOP: What did he tell you?

CARMICHAEL: He told me that a report was given to him of an explosion on the "Sun Chapman" launch plying between Georgetown and Mackenzie.

RAMSAROOP: What happened to the "Sun Chapman"?

CARMICHAEL: The report was that there was an explosion.

RAMSAROOP: Can you remember where the explosion took place?

CARMICHAEL: In the vicinity of Huradia.

RAMSAROOP: And did you do anything after hearing this?

CARMICHAEL: Both of us left and got confirmation of the report. On our arrival at Mackenzie we were told that there were survivors at Wismar. We were about to leave Mackenzie for Wismar when I observed persons running in various directions and I advised Superintendent Hobbs to have every available man on duty on the street. We had the report confirmed from Wismar by telephone that the "Sun Chapman" had sunk and a number of lives were lost, and having that report we left for the Army headquarters at Watouka, where I met the Army Commanding Officer, Major Goodbody, and he was told of the report. We decided to call a curfew. The Army then imposed the curfew, and all members of the Volunteer Force and Police Force were on the streets.

RAMSAROOP: On Tuesday 7th July did you visit the scene of the incident?

CARMICHAEL: Yes. I began a search for the missing bodies but I was unsuccessful on that day. I was however successful on the following day.

RAMSAROOP: When you got back to Mackenzie what was the condition?

CARMICHAEL: On the 6th July, I saw people running. They seemed to be incensed.

RAMSAROOP: They belonged to any particular group?

CARMICHAEL: Yes. Negro group.

RAMSAROOP: What did you observe?

CARMICHAEL: I saw them running in various directions going towards the riverside.

RAMSAROOP: Did you see them doing anything?

CARMICHAEL: No.

RAMSAROOP: Was there any damage done to property owned by Indians?

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CARMICHAEL: Yes. In about an hour after a report was made I collected two dead bodies from the “Sun Chapman” and on my arrival at Mackenzie mortuary, I saw the dead bodies of a man and boy of East Indian origin.

RAMSAROOP: Would you say that this was a racial clash?

CARMICHAEL: That would be a very difficult question for me to answer.

CARTER: Mr. Carmichael, do the Demba constables have any kind of training?

CARMICHAEL: That would be a very difficult question for me to answer.

CARTER: Now, who assigns the duty to these men?

CARMICHAEL: The inspector of the Demba constabulary.

CARTER: Who pays the men?

CARMICHAEL: The Demerara Bauxite Company.

CARTER: The Demerara Bauxite Company makes payment individually?

CARMICHAEL: Yes, weekly payment.

CARTER: What was the primary function of the constabulary?

CARMICHAEL: They protected properties of the Demerara Bauxite Company.

CARTER: Do you know anything of the training they received?

CARMICHAEL: They do drills.

CARTER: Are they taught to use firearms?

CARMICHAEL: Not to my knowledge.

CARTER: Do they do any riot drills?

CARMICHAEL: I have never seen them doing any riot drills.

CARTER: With regard to discipline, who is the officer in charge of this?

CARMICHAEL: I am responsible for that.

CARTER: And you would impose the penalty is necessary?

CARMICHAEL: Yes. And then it is confirmed by the Commissioner of Police.

DRAYTON: Would you describe a member of the constabulary to be sticking his nose into another policeman’s business if he gets a report that some offence is committed and he takes it upon himself to go and investigate?

CARMICHAEL: I would not think so.

DRAYTON: You think that he would be quite in order?

CARMICHAEL: Yes.

DRAYTON: This inspector of the Demba constabulary, is he appointed by the police or is he recruited as an inspector by Demba?

CARMICHAEL: Demba.

DRAYTON: On the question of recruitment, the people recruited for the Demba force have to conform to the requirements for recruits of British Guiana Police Force?

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CARMICHAEL: They don't.

DRAYTON: So the question of height does not exist, so anybody could be recruited for this service provided they satisfy the requirement so the Demba authorities?

CARMICHAEL: Yes.

DRAYTON: Has an officer in charge of the area seeing these arrangements work well?

CARMICHAEL: He does.

DRAYTON: Do you think there is any need for modification of these arrangements because it seems to be a very special type of arrangement peculiar to the Demba concern?

CARMICHAEL: I do not think that such an arrangement exists elsewhere. Demba which is a large concern is the only company that requires a constabulary of that strength.

DRAYTON: Do you think it works well?

CARMICHAEL: It does. We try to implement as we think fit.

DRAYTON: Do you think there should be any change in the arrangement or any improvement in this system, because you have the people? It is a very peculiar system where you have the people recruited by Demba being paid by Demba but subject to the discipline of the British Guiana Police Force, and with the right to arrest people on territory that is not private property, namely Demba, so it is a strange arrangement. I am just trying to find out from you whether you think there should be any change in this?

CARMICHAEL: I do not think so at the moment.

DRAYTON: Would these people have the power to arrest as members of the constabulary in Georgetown, for example?

CARMICHAEL: I think under the ordinance when you are sworn in you have the full powers to arrest.

DRAYTON: Do they at any time carry firearms?

CARMICHAEL: No.

MACDONALD: Would you, as superintendent in charge of the division, have the power to take authority over all at any time? In other words, to call them under your direct command?

CARMICHAEL: No. I must first seek the permission of the Demba authority.

CHAIRMAN: Now, just one or two points. What time did you receive the message that there was an explosion on board the "Sun Chapman"?

CARMICHAEL: About 5.45.

CHAIRMAN: Would you say that immediately after racial violence broke out?

CARMICHAEL: I am of the opinion that the violence preceded the confirmation of our report.

CHAIRMAN: So racial violence was before you received your report?

CARMICHAEL: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: What time was the curfew introduced?

CARMICHAEL: About 7.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN: On that day were there casualties as a result of reprisals because of the sinking of the "Sun Chapman"?

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CARMICHAEL: About an hour after that I learned that there were two or three casualties and later on, three.

CHAIRMAN: How many people would you say suffered injury as a result of the reprisal? Between the 6th and 7th there were five persons whose injuries were the result of the reprisal and were fatal?

CARMICHAEL: Yes. That is correct, but I don't know how many received injuries.

CHAIRMAN: There is a report here by Dr. Davies-Webb. He said that the survivors were advised to go home to their relatives, remove their clothes, and have a hot meal and go to bed. The police reluctantly agreed with this. Do you have any information on this matter?

CARMICHAEL: I am not aware of that.

CHAIRMAN: [*Reads from Dr. Davies-Webb's report*] "The battered East Indians caused particular mirth during the several times they were treated. It became necessary to clear the crowds from the hospital and to post sentries over the East Indian patients on two or three occasions. When the police seemed unwilling to remove the crowds from the vicinity of the wards, British troops had to be called on for assistance." Do you know of this?

CARMICHAEL: I am not in a position to say.

CHAIRMAN: Did your policemen respond to your instructions readily?

CARMICHAEL: Yes, they did.

MACDONALD: When was it that you actually took command of the division?

CARMICHAEL: On the 20th July.

MACDONALD: So your relationship between the 6th and the 20th was one of advice and consultation?

CARMICHAEL: As a matter of fact I was at the scene of the sinking of the Sun Chapman.

MOOTOO: Can you please give us the number of arrests you made on that day?

CARMICHAEL: I am afraid I can't tell, but approximately there were arrests made for three murders.

MOOTOO: Were there any homes set afire on the 7th?

CARMICHAEL: I would not be able to say.

MOOTOO: There was no arson on that day?

CARMICHAEL: As I said, on the 7th I was at Huradia.

MOOTOO: Did you have any reports of arson?

CARMICHAEL: Yes, there were reports.

MOOTOO: How many?

CARMICHAEL: Between four to six.

MOOTOO: Was there any looting?

CARMICHAEL: No, there was none.

MOOTOO: What was the result of this? How many families evacuated to Georgetown?

CARMICHAEL: About one hundred persons.

MOOTOO: About one hundred persons?

CARMICHAEL: Yes.

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MOOTOO: Thank you very much.

—
CARTER: And who is the present inspector of the Demba constabulary?

CARMICHAEL: His name is Inspector Young.

CARTER: Did he have police training?

CARMICHAEL: He is not in the Police Force. He rose from the ranks of the constabulary.

—
SHEPHERD: You do not know how this plan of the Wismar area came into existence?

CARMICHAEL: No. it was in the custody of the subordinate officer at Wismar. It was prepared by the Army.

—
RAMSAROOP: You would not be able to say specifically how many Indian families returned to their homes before the Sun Chapman incident?

CARMICHAEL: About one hundred persons returned to their homes.

RAMSAROOP: You mentioned that there were two Indians from Demba. Were these the two that returned?

CARMICHAEL: These were the two that returned.

RAMSAROOP: Did you see Robert Jordan around the 6th July?

CARMICHAEL: No.

RAMSAROOP: Thank you very much.

—
CONSTABLE GAJRAJ MANGRA is sworn in, and he states as follows:

CHAIRMAN: Your name please?

MANGRA: My name is Gajraj Mangru.

CHAIRMAN: You are a police constable, number 6643, stationed at Mackenzie?

MANGRA: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: Can you recall something around the 25th May this year – that is, you were given orders to be confined indoors at the Wismar police station?

MANGRA: I was never confined to Wismar.

RAMSAROOP: Were you ever at the Police station on May 25th this year?

MANGRA: No. I was on duty on the 25th of May at Leonora.

RAMSAROOP: I don't quite understand you. You were at Leonora on the 25th? And then what happened?

MANGRA: I was flown from Ogle to Mackenzie with Assistant Commissioner Neil Isaacs, Superintendent Lashley and four other men.

RAMSAROOP: When you got to Mackenzie what happened?

MANGRA: When we were going across I saw twelve houses on fire.

RAMSAROOP: Yes, after that?

MANGRA: We left with four other policemen.

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RAMSAROOP: Can you give the names to me?

MANGRA: 6788 Persaud, 6736 Longhorn, 6606 Noble and 6673 Muffet.

RAMSAROOP: Yes?

MANGRA: We went to the Mackenzie police station and there I assisted in taking about five hundred evacuees to the Wismar and Mackenzie trade school. I was detailed for further duty with the British Army to patrol the Mackenzie area. I patrolled until about midnight. During that time I saw fire across at Wismar, and the people who came across by boat were assisted by the police and taken to the station, the trade school and Mackenzie sports club.

RAMSAROOP: Was there any further operation?

MANGRA: Not until the next day. I had patrol duty at the station.

RAMSAROOP: Were you there on the instruction of Mr. Hobbs?

MANGRA: I was detailed to do normal police duties.

RAMSAROOP: Why?

MANGRA: The normal police duties. I cannot question my senior officer.

RAMSAROOP: Was there any personal attack on you while you were assisting the evacuees?

MANGRA: No. I was not threatened or abused.

RAMSAROOP: Thank you.

—
SHEPHERD: Constable Mangra, you did not patrol on the Wismar side?

MANGRA: No sir.

SHEPHERD: Your duties were limited to the Mackenzie side?

MANGRA: Yes.

SHEPHERD: When you said that you were detained by the senior officer, you mean that you were detained for duty at the police station?

CHAIRMAN: Not “detained”, “detailed”.

SHEPHERD: I am sorry. I thought he said “detained”.

MANGRA: Yes.

SHEPHERD: You are an East Indian?

MANGRA: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Did you gather that you were sent to the Mackenzie area to keep duty for your own safety? Or perhaps you did not know anything?

MANGRA: I do not know.

SHEPHERD: Thank you.

—
PRATAP N. SINGH: Were you threatened or abused by anybody at the station?

MANGRA: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Were any complaints made to you by the evacuees on their arrival at Mackenzie that the police at Wismar were not cooperating with them?

MANGRA: No.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you hear any discussion among the people which make you to believe that they were dissatisfied with the way the police were dealing with the Indians at Wismar?

MANGRA: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What did you hear?

MANGRA: They said that the police were not taking proper action.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Yes?

MANGRA: They felt that the people should have been shot.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you heard this conversation did you say anything?

MANGRA: They were not speaking to me.

PRATAP N. SINGH: I know that. But you were present.

MANGRA: I said nothing.

—

MOOTOO: When you got to Mackenzie were you armed?

MANGRA: Yes. I had a rifle and twenty rounds of ammunition.

—

MACDONALD: Before you were transferred to Leonora, where were you stationed?

MANGRA: Ituni.

MACDONALD: So you knew the Mackenzie area well?

MANGRA: Yes.

MACDONALD: How long were you there?

MANGRA: Two years.

MACDONALD: Did you at any time feel the tension in the area and think that it would have happened in the way it happened?

MANGRA: No.

MACDONALD: When were you at Ituni?

MANGRA: I was there in November 1963 to March or April 1964.

MACDONALD: Thank you, Constable.

—

CONSTABLE MANGROO** is sworn in and he states as follows: [Editor's note: ** The full name is illegible on the copy of the transcript.]

RAMSAROOP: You are Constable 6047? Stationed where?

MANGROO: I am stationed at Kitty police station.

RAMSAROOP: On the 25th May this year were you at Mackenzie?

MANGROO: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: Were you detailed to do anything on that day?

MANGROO: I was detailed for duty at the inquiry office at Mackenzie police station.

RAMSAROOP: Can you tell us why you were so detailed?

MANGROO: I was detailed by Superintendent Hobbs.

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RAMSAROOP: Why you were so detailed?

MANGROO: I went to Superintendent Hobbs and he told me that there was ethnic trouble in the district and all East Indian policemen must be reserved to Mackenzie police station.

RAMSAROOP: No, this was the 25th. On the 24th did you assist any evacuees from Wismar-Christianburg or Mackenzie area?

MANGROO: No sir.

RAMSAROOP: While you were at the station did you speak to any of the evacuees there?

MANGROO: No, I didn't speak to them.

RAMSAROOP: Have you heard from any other source whether there were complaints directly against the members of the Police Force or the Volunteer Force?

MANGROO: No, they made no complaints.

RAMSAROOP: Do you think it was on account of your personal safety you were detailed duties which were mainly indoors. Is that your opinion as an officer?

MANGROO: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: Why do you think so?

MANGROO: Because there were racial disturbances in the area.

RAMSAROOP: Who were taking part in these disturbances?

MANGROO: I don't really know.

RAMSAROOP: You didn't hear anything?

MANGROO: I heard something. Yes.

RAMSAROOP: You don't know who were the people taking part in these disturbances?

MANGROO: I can't really say who were taking part.

—

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you hear any conversation among the people expressing dissatisfaction at the way the police at Wismar-Christianburg were treating them?

MANGROO: I don't know.

—

MOOTOO: Were you on patrol during that time either on the 24th or 25th May?

MANGROO: I was on duty at the police station from 1.00 a.m. until 6.00 a.m. on the morning on the 25th.

MOOTOO: Were you on patrol duty after that?

MANGROO: I was on duty at the police compound, not outside.

MOOTOO: Either on Monday morning or any other time did you hear people making any threats to you?

MANGROO: Nobody made any threats to me.

MOOTOO: Do you walk when on patrol duty?

MANGROO: No.

MOOTOO: When you were on patrol duty, were you armed?

MANGROO: No.

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MOOTOO: Where were you on duty?

MANGROO: I was on duty in the police compound.

MOOTOO: When was that?

MANGROO: After the disturbances, I was on duty in the station. The refugees were in the station and were being protected.

MOOTOO: Did you think it was dangerous for you to go out on the 25th?

MANGROO: Yes.

MOOTOO: Why. Did any East Indian police go on patrol on the Monday 25th May?

MANGROO: No. We were in the station.

MOOTOO: So I understand, Mr. Mangroo, you were on patrol?

MANGROO: In the district.

RAMSAROOP: What race you belong to?

MANGROO: East Indian.

RAMSAROOP: You said you were told to be in the police station that there were clashes. Then the clashes would be between Negroes and East Indian people?

MANGROO: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: That is all. Thank you.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT LASHLEY is sworn in, and he states as follows:

RAMSAROOP: You are presently stationed at the Brickdam police station? On the 26th May of this year at about nine o'clock where were you?

LASHLEY: I was at Wismar.

RAMSAROOP: When did you arrive at Mackenzie?

LASHLEY: I arrived in Mackenzie about three o'clock on May 25th, and shortly afterwards I crossed over to Wismar police station where I was instructed to take a party of men and go in to the district because there was an outbreak of violence.

RAMSAROOP: What did you investigate?

LASHLEY: About 4 o'clock I was in the Silver Town area when I noticed smoke coming from the vicinity of a building owned by one Mohamed Hackim. I went closer to the alley and I noticed there were several people running inside the building. They were breaking windows and they appeared to be trying to set the building on fire. I fired two rounds from my revolver.

RAMSAROOP: What crowd of people did you see trying to set fire to the building?

LASHLEY: Negroes. The men apparently escaped through the front of this building. The building then went up in flames and was completely destroyed.

RAMSAROOP: Following that, what else happened?

LASHLEY: I made a report to Wismar police station in the hope of getting assistance. There was none because everybody was on some mission.

RAMSAROOP: So you went back on your line of duty?

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LASHLEY: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: What did you observe?

LASHLEY: There were many people on the streets. Some were inside their homes?

RAMSAROOP: These people were they mainly who?

LASHLEY: East Indians. I had cause to even direct them to the station compound where they were being looked after. My patrol worked continuously for one hour. I was in the Silver Town area when I saw a crowd of people on the Silver Town public road in the vicinity of Chan Ho's grocery. It was a large crowd – between 200 and 300 people. I called out to them to move but they didn't move. I fired two shells of tear smoke to disperse them.

RAMSAROOP: Did you personally use that?

LASHLEY: I personally.

RAMSAROOP: How many shells?

LASHLEY: Two shells.

RAMSAROOP: Now this crowd that was outside Chin Ho's grocery was about how many?

LASHLEY: 200 to 300.

RAMSAROOP: Did the crowd disperse when you used the tear smoke?

LASHLEY: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: Following that day what did you do?

LASHLEY: I continued with my patrol. I was engaged in sending help to the people, sending out patrols and checking them when they came back. I myself went out on a few occasions and assisted in clearing the streets.

RAMSAROOP: Could you remember if there was any looting on that night?

LASHLEY: I cannot remember definitely if there was any looting.

RAMSAROOP: So you continued your patrol during the night. Now, what were your activities on the 26th?

LASHLEY: The patrols throughout the night continued. They were one continuous operation while I was returning to the station.

RAMSAROOP: Which station?

LASHLEY: Wismar police station. There were a number of people outside the Wismar market which is just in the vicinity of the station. I noticed there was some unusual activity, and I went to see what was happening, as I got closer, I saw a number of people running from the market into the public road with articles in their hands.

RAMSAROOP: Looted articles?

LASHLEY: I presumed them to be looted articles. I called on one particular fellow to stop, and as the crowd dispersed I concentrated my efforts on this fellow.

RAMSAROOP: Do you remember his name?

LASHLEY: Lloyd Fitt.

RAMSAROOP: What was he carrying?

LASHLEY: He was carrying a box which he threw away as he ran, and I caught him.

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RAMSAROOP: What happened after?

LASHLEY: I continued my patrol.

RAMSAROOP: What were you engaged in?

LASHLEY: In protecting people and as much as possible, keeping the crowd on the move. Throughout that time there was a number of beatings, especially on the public roads which occurred when the police was at the time elsewhere. Shortly after when numbers of people concentrated in a particular spot, there might be a fire and there would be looting in the vicinity.

RAMSAROOP: So the established pattern was that crowds concentrated at different times in different spots?

LASHLEY: Not in particular; this is general. There were a number of things that happened. I cannot remember them all.

RAMSAROOP: Around 6.00 p.m. you were on mobile duty together with two men of the Devon and Dorset Regiment?

LASHLEY: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: What happened next? By the way were you on duty that day?

LASHLEY: Yes, while I had left the station to announce to the people that a curfew would be imposed in that district that night from 8.00 p.m.

RAMSAROOP: You approached Chin Ho's shop. Did anything happen?

LASHLEY: I saw a number of people on the roads. Some were on the Silver City public road and some were in the cross streets. I announced the curfew and as I was doing so I noticed some people coming from within the grocery and I called on them to stop.

RAMSAROOP: Were they coming out with empty hands?

LASHLEY: Some with empty hands, and some with various articles.

RAMSAROOP: You shouted you said?

LASHLEY: Yes. I called on them to stop and the crowd continued to run. I then got out of my Land Rover and so did the two soldiers of the Devon and Dorset Regiment, and I again called on them to stop. Many people were still running out of the grocery and smoke was coming from the inside of the grocery's bottom floor. No one stopped and there were about three fellows who were at the entrance of the grocery. They had some stuff in their hands. One of them went back inside and as he was about to exit out I fired at him.

RAMSAROOP: With what did you fire?

LASHLEY: My revolver.

RAMSAROOP: Did you hit him?

LASHLEY: Yes, and he fell.

RAMSAROOP: Did you know his name?

LASHLEY: Yes, it was Gussie English.

RAMSAROOP: Did you report this?

LASHLEY: Yes. I reported the matter immediately to the station. As a matter of fact, I took him to the Land Rover and then conveyed him to the station.

SHEPHERD: You say you were on duty at 1.45 p.m. on Monday 25th which is a Monday. What about Tuesday and Wednesday? You were on duty those two nights?

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LASHLEY: Yes sir. Right through the Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

SHEPHERD: And Thursday the 28th?

LASHLEY: Well, I was on duty until Thursday evening.

SHEPHERD: Did you have much sleep?

LASHLEY: I had no sleep at all.

SHEPHERD: No sleep at all?

LASHLEY: No sir.

SHEPHERD: And do you recall that at any time you were told to save lives of people rather than their properties?

LASHLEY: As far as I know, no discussion had been taking place whether you should look after the lives or the properties.

SHEPHERD: Was this decision that you made from your own mind or was this from a higher officer?

LASHLEY: It was a decision I made.

SHEPHERD: You made a personal decision before the order was made to save lives rather than properties?

LASHLEY: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: And a curfew was made on Tuesday night?

LASHLEY: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Was a curfew made on Wednesday and Thursday nights?

LASHLEY: Well, I am not sure whether it continued.

SHEPHERD: Was any report made to you personally regarding the curfew?

LASHLEY: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Were you satisfied that the number of men you had with at Wismar was adequate to cope with the situation?

LASHLEY: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you discuss this with any of the senior officers?

LASHLEY: I discussed it with Assistant Superintendent Hobbs

PRATAP N. SINGH: That was what time?

LASHLEY: It was in the evening of the 25th May.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You discussed this with Mr. Hobbs?

LASHLEY: It was a general discussion.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What time did you have this discussion that the men you had could not cope with the situation?

LASHLEY: I cannot really say.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Was it around eight to nine o'clock in the night?

LASHLEY: It was around dusk.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: You agree it was about eight to nine o'clock?

LASHLEY: Around then.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did additional patrols arrive?

LASHLEY: I cannot remember,

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you know whether this was communicated to Neil Isaacs?

LASHLEY: Personally, I don't know.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you know if Mr. Hobbs did it?

LASHLEY: No sir, I don't know whether he did it.

PRATAP N. SINGH: But one thing you know – you did get reinforcements?

LASHLEY: We got reinforcements because the military came.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When they arrived there, do you think there were sufficient men to cope with the situation?

LASHLEY: When the military came, the situation was relieved.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How did you know?

LASHLEY: It depended on how quiet the situation got.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What time did you think this situation changed?

LASHLEY: I can't remember.

PRATAP N. SINGH: About what time approximately?

LASHLEY: You are referring to the situation changes?

PRATAP N. SINGH: On the 27th when the military arrived, you still had not enough to cope with the situation?

LASHLEY: They were enough to cope with the situation.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Mr. Lashley, you are the assistant superintendent, and you have a number of British troops at Mackenzie and Wismar?

LASHLEY: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: I am talking about the 26th.

LASHLEY: I don't now about that sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many men went on the 25th? How many do you think were there?

LASHLEY: I can't say.

—
SHEPHERD: There was a platoon.
—

PRATAP N. SINGH: Oh, there was a platoon?

LASHLEY: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Can you say how many policemen, how many volunteers were there? They were in your command?

LASHLEY: I would say about forty-five to fifty.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: Were there ninety-seven volunteers embodied?

LASHLEY: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many were in Wismar? How many do you think?

LASHLEY: Taking an assessment on the 26th, I believe there were forty to fifty men.

PRATAP N. SINGH: With the platoon of Devon and Dorset, do you think you had enough men there?

LASHLEY: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many men came from Georgetown? Was it thirty-five men of the Devon and Dorset?

LASHLEY: Around that.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many men were in the platoon? Do the number of men in a platoon vary?

LASHLEY: I do not think so,

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many men are in a platoon?

LASHLEY: I am not certain. About thirty-five.

PRATAP N. SINGH: The evidence is that there was one platoon at Mackenzie.

LASHLEY: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: I am not sure how many were at Wismar.

LASHLEY: Nor am I.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you think you had enough men to handle the situation?

LASHLEY: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you indicate this fact to the Assistant Commissioner of Police?

LASHLEY: No sir, not on the 26th. I cannot recall having spoken to the Assistant Commissioner on the 26th.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What of Mr. Hobbs?

LASHLEY: I cannot recall having seen Mr. Hobbs on that day.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you get in touch with any of them?

LASHLEY: The lives of the people were my major concern.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you got into the police station did you try to get in touch with Mr. Hobbs or Mr. Isaacs to tell them that things were out of hand?

LASHLEY: I assumed that they knew this.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Was assistance brought in?

LASHLEY: No sir, not to my knowledge.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Were additional volunteers sent?

LASHLEY: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Was there no reinforcement after the platoon arrived?

LASHLEY: I am not aware of any.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many men did you shoot during the incidents at Wismar?

LASHLEY: I shot two men.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: Who were the men?

LASHLEY: Samuel Payne and Fitt

PRATAP N. SINGH: When Lieutenant Wishart was with you, whom did you shoot?

LASHLEY: Samuel Payne.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you receive any threats from the Payne family?

LASHLEY: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You know, however, that Wishart's wife was threatened by a man who alleged that he was Payne's father.

LASHLEY: I heard of it.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you saw the men breaking into the shop what did you do?

LASHLEY: I never said that I saw men breaking into a shop.

PRATAP N. SINGH: I am sorry. You said that they rushed into what was Hackim's place?

LASHLEY: They were already in the building.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How far from them were you when you discharged your revolver?

LASHLEY: About twenty-five yards away.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many men did you see?

LASHLEY: About three or four.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Now, you said that it came to you mind that they were about to set the building afire?

LASHLEY: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: In what direction did you discharge your firearm?

LASHLEY: In the direction of the men.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You were not successful in hitting any of them?

LASHLEY: I cannot say. I never saw them after that.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Thank you.

—

DRAYTON: Where were you stationed prior to being sent to Mackenzie?

LASHLEY: I was in Alberttown at that time.

DRAYTON: Were you alerted to go to Mackenzie?

LASHLEY: I was ordered to stand by at about 9.00 a.m. to go to Mackenzie.

DRAYTON: Who alerted you? The Commissioner of Police?

LASHLEY: No, Mr. McGill Smith.

DRAYTON: What reason did he give for asking you to stand by?

LASHLEY: He said that I should be ready to go to Mackenzie at a moment's notice.

DRAYTON: Did he tell you of the trouble in the area?

LASHLEY: He mentioned that there was a wave of violence.

DRAYTON: Did he give you the impression at nine in the morning that the situation was serious?

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LASHLEY: That it might become serious.

DRAYTON: Now, Superintendent Lashley, on the night of the 24th May did you get any information whether officially or unofficially of the trouble at Wismar?

LASHLEY: No.

DRAYTON: So it came to you as a complete surprise on the morning of the 25th when Mr. McGill Smith spoke to you?

LASHLEY: No, it did not come as a surprise.

DRAYTON: When he spoke to you and apprised you of the situation at Wismar, were you not surprised?

LASHLEY: No, it came as no surprise to me. I expected anything to happen at any time in any part of the country, especially at Wismar.

DRAYTON: Who else was accommodated in the aeroplane besides you and the Assistant Commissioner of Police?

LASHLEY: There were five ranks who were originally stationed at Wismar but had been withdrawn from the area.

DRAYTON: What time did you get to Mackenzie?

LASHLEY: I can't remember; probably at about 2.30 or maybe 1.30 p.m.

DRAYTON: What did you eventually do after arriving at Mackenzie by plane?

LASHLEY: I went to Wismar with three of the men.

DRAYTON: Did you go to the police station with Assistant Commissioner Neil Isaacs?

LASHLEY: I can't remember.

DRAYTON: When you arrived at the airstrip what happened?

LASHLEY: We never touched the airstrip. We landed in the river and went to Mackenzie station.

DRAYTON: How did you go?

LASHLEY: We went in two vehicles.

DRAYTON: Do you know where Mr. Isaacs went?

LASHLEY: When I arrived at the station he was there.

DRAYTON: Were you immediately sent over to Wismar?

LASHLEY: Yes.

DRAYTON: What time did you get over to Wismar?

LASHLEY: It was after two o'clock.

DRAYTON: You went to the station?

LASHLEY: Yes.

DRAYTON: When did you see the Assistant Commissioner of Police again?

LASHLEY: I can't remember if I saw him again before night-fall.

DRAYTON: Did you see Mr. Hobbs at Wismar?

LASHLEY: Yes sir.

DRAYTON: Did you see him at Mackenzie?

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LASHLEY: I can't remember.

DRAYTON: Do you remember seeing Major Langham when you arrived?

LASHLEY: I can't remember.

DRAYTON: What time did Major Langham get to the police station?

LASHLEY: He may have been there before me.

DRAYTON: Do you remember seeing Major Langham at the Mackenzie police station when you arrived?

LASHLEY: No. He came afterwards.

DRAYTON: What time did you see Major Langham at the police station?

LASHLEY: Just after we arrived.

DRAYTON: And so the Assistant Commissioner was present at the time with Major Langham?

LASHLEY: I can't remember.

DRAYTON: There is one other thing. Did you use tear smoke?

LASHLEY: Yes.

DRAYTON: On one occasion?

LASHLEY: No, on several occasions.

DRAYTON: Did your patrol have the necessary equipment on that day?

LASHLEY: I can't say, because there were several patrols, and I was working at the time with the organisation of patrols.

DRAYTON: When you went out towards a crowd, did the crowd disappear?

LASHLEY: I can't remember,

DRAYTON: When you saw the crowd, did you deal with it at the time?

LASHLEY: I had to assess the situation on my arrival with respect to what had happened from the actual appearance of the crowd.

DRAYTON: Crowds could be assisting in arson and beating and so on?

LASHLEY: I had this impression a few hours after.

DRAYTON: If you saw a crowd what would you do to disperse them?

LASHLEY: The first thing is to talk to the crowd, and if they don't move, then the use of tear smoke becomes necessary. At Wismar I observed the dispersal prevented incidents from occurring.

DRAYTON: Therefore, don't you think that this crowd dispersal should have been one of the major concentrations of the police and volunteers?

LASHLEY: That depends on the situation.

RAMSAROOP: This was your assessment of the situation?

LASHLEY: At the time, but not after a few hours.

RAMSAROOP: One of the major duties at that time was to break up a crowd. What is the normal procedure to disperse a crowd? In the first, second and third place, a crowd that is gathered in such a large number is in your opinion likely to cause trouble. How would you deal with them?

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LASHLEY: I would go immediately to them, to discuss first of all their dispersal. If the crowd persists I would talk, and if they don't disperse I would again warn them and use tear smoke to disperse them.

DRAYTON: Suppose they still don't move?

LASHLEY: I would have to use a tear gas bomb. The third thing I would do is to fire in the crowd.

DRAYTON: How would you fire?

LASHLEY: In the air, wherein the crowd will disperse.

DRAYTON: You said you would use tear smoke?

LASHLEY: Yes.

DRAYTON: And you would have thought more people would have used tear smoke, including the police and the volunteers on that particular day?

LASHLEY: On the 25th?

DRAYTON: On the 25th and 26th we had evidence that limited tear gas was used. What is your opinion? Do you think much more tear gas should have been used to disperse these crowds? As you say, the assessment obtained by you after your arrival, a crowd gathered and incidents were likely to occur. Do you think more tear smoke should have been used?

LASHLEY: Yes.

DRAYTON: Did you communicate this to anybody, after a few hours, when yourself and Mr. Simon and one other person used tear gas equipment?

LASHLEY: I can't say so. At the time I can't recall anybody else but Sergeant Chalmers and myself having tear smoke.

MACDONALD: Those crowds which you saw on the 25th and 26th May, would you describe them as a simply an idle crowd?

LASHLEY: Yes, most likely, because they gathered around for no purpose.

MACDONALD: In the circumstances, when you did see smoke was there any difference between those particular crowds? The idle and the hostile crowds?

LASHLEY: Well, the difference wasn't in behaviour. Maybe, there could have been something occurring in the area at the time.

MACDONALD: Could you tell me of the others that were with you?

LASHLEY: I cannot remember definitely. One was Lieutenant Wishart, but there were other members of the Volunteer Force.

MACDONALD: Would it be normal to have two officers on one patrol?

LASHLEY: It wasn't normal.

MACDONALD: Is there any special reason why this was so?

LASHLEY: I was coming back through Silver City to rejoin a number of patrols. Lieutenant Wishart and his patrol were coming in the same area, and I went ahead of them.

MACDONALD: On the 25th, which was a Monday, was it a rainy day?

LASHLEY: I remember it being wet at Mackenzie, but I cannot remember if rain was falling.

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SHEPHERD: Do you remember which of these days were wet?

LASHLEY: I cannot remember.

SHEPHERD: Did the wet weather cause any discomfort in any way?

LASHLEY: Yes.

SHEPHERD: Was your uniform wet?

LASHLEY: At times.

SHEPHERD: The use of tear smoke or gas – is it usually issued to constables?

LASHLEY: We try to issue shells and tear smoke guns to inspectors and Subordinate Officers.

SHEPHERD: Were there any grenades issued?

LASHLEY: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Did you ever see a patrol without a corporal?

LASHLEY: I cannot recall seeing any patrol without a corporal.

SHEPHERD: No other person in your patrol was armed with tear gun? On how many occasions did they use tear guns?

LASHLEY: On one occasion; on the 26th.

SHEPHERD: What was the cause of that?

LASHLEY: This was at Silver City, First Alley. There were a number of people in the vicinity who were burning houses.

SHEPHERD: Do you know the circumstances under which the patrols were working?

LASHLEY: No.

SHEPHERD: Were you with them?

LASHLEY: Sometimes.

SHEPHERD: Did you tell them they were not using enough tear smoke?

LASHLEY: No sir.

SHEPHERD: Why didn't you tell them?

LASHLEY: Because those officers had used tear smoke.

SHEPHERD: When did you make this decision?

LASHLEY: That was some time later.

SHEPHERD: Did you continue to use tear smoke?

LASHLEY: Yes, I did.

SHEPHERD: You felt it would have been better?

LASHLEY: Yes.

SHEPHERD: Were they armed with tear smoke guns?

LASHLEY: Hardly likely.

SHEPHERD: Then, in the light of after knowledge, you now believe that you should have used more tear smoke?

LASHLEY: Well, I am of the opinion that I should have used tear smoke at Wismar.

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SHEPHERD: What suggestion did you make? Did you think they were not using enough tear smoke? When did you arrive at this conclusion?

LASHLEY: It was around the second day.

SHEPHERD: But after that, you increased your use of tear smoke?

LASHLEY: Yes.

SHEPHERD: So when you said more tear smoke should have been used, you meant on the first day, in the light of after knowledge, you should have used more tear smoke?

LASHLEY: No sir.

SHEPHERD: When you said that more tear smoke should have been used, were you referring to other patrols?

LASHLEY: In some cases.

SHEPHERD: Which patrol?

LASHLEY: Well, I don't exactly know which was the section.

SHEPHERD: Well, you do not know the position with regards to the other patrols? You were around there, weren't you?

LASHLEY: Not always.

DRAYTON: Who is responsible for the issuing of tear gas equipment, which includes shells, pistols, etc.?

LASHLEY: The station.

DRAYTON: Was there during that whole day of the 25th a person sitting down in the station who would be responsible for matters such as this?

LASHLEY: No sir.

DRAYTON: The personnel would constantly change?

LASHLEY: No sir. It would be the station sergeant who normally is responsible for this duty, but in view of the circumstances, it was possible that he had been on other duty.

DRAYTON: Who was responsible on the 25th for the issuing of tear gas equipment, grenades, etc.?

LASHLEY: I would not know whether the responsibility could have been thrown on the shoulders of any single person, except the officers in charge.

DRAYTON: There were grenades at the station. Would it be possible for us to know how many?

LASHLEY: I would not be able to say.

DRAYTON: But there would be a record available?

LASHLEY: Yes.

DRAYTON: And there would be a record of how many tear gas shells were used on that day?

LASHLEY: Yes.

DRAYTON: Where would this be kept?

LASHLEY: The officer in charge of the division would normally be in a position to produce this information of the number of grenades used and tear gas shells.

DRAYTON: Thank you.

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SHEPHERD: You say the station sergeant is normally in charge, but is it not the station sergeant who used to convey the decision to the Commissioner, and if the tear gas is to be issued, he should ask for it to be issued. Isn't that so?

LASHLEY: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Thank you. That is all.

—

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Lashley. You may step down. Could you state the reasons for your request of having the Premier here, Mr. Shepherd?

SHEPHERD: It is a question of the command of the security forces, and since this is a public inquiry involving the security forces, it is for you to investigate these forces, comprising partly of Imperial troops and partly of locally recruited troops. The command of the security forces rests within the responsibility of the Imperial government and the local government. All these factors are by no means clear when the evidence was given. It seemed by no means clear where is the division, and even on examination it was by no means clear how Imperial forces could be disposed of, once they were requested by the civil power. A request was to be made and indeed was responsible for their coming into play. It was to maintain internal peace and order. Within the personal knowledge of the Premier, I wish to question him as to his view of the division of responsibility between the Imperial government and the British Guiana government to the maintenance of peace and order.

CHAIRMAN: We will let you know the position tomorrow. We will adjourn for today.

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