

ALL-INDIA CENSUS REPORTS.

847. *Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas: Will Government be pleased to furnish the Members of the Assembly with all-India Census reports?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: Copies of the Report and Tables of the Census of India, 1921, have been placed in the Library of this House both in Simla and Delhi where they are available to be consulted by Honourable Members. Government do not propose to supply all Members of the Assembly with copies.

THE PARSİ PIONEERS.

848. *Mr. N. M. Dumasia: (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether their attention has been drawn to a leading article in the "Indian Daily Mail" of February 23rd, 1924, under the heading of the Parsi Pioneers?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Battalion of the Parsi Volunteers which was distinguished by the title of the "Parsi Pioneers" and formed after the Bombay riots of 1921 was intended to be for local service only?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether it was not clearly understood from the beginning that the formation of a volunteer battalion exclusively of Parsis was intended to ward off local menace such as arose in Bombay on the occasion of the Royal Visit in 1921?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) Government have seen the article.

(b) and (c). No. The battalion was constituted under the Indian Territorial Force Act—*vide* Gazette of India Notification No. 2452, dated the 30th December 1921, and is, therefore, liable to general service in addition to local service. The battalion was never officially designated "Parsi Pioneers."

THE PARSİ PIONEERS.

849. *Mr. N. M. Dumasia: (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is not a fact that the title of the Parsi Pioneers was given to distinguish it from the Territorial Forces and whether the reasons for the special title were not publicly stated by Colonel Lavie?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Parsi Pioneers were given (i) British uniform, (ii) British food, clothing and accommodation, (iii) British ranks, (iv) Conveyance allowance on the British scale?

(c) Whether the Parsi Pioneers were not given training on the same line as that given to the Auxiliary Forces?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) As already stated, the title "Parsi Pioneers" was never given to the battalion officially. Its official title was originally the 1st (Territorial) Battalion, Bombay Pioneers. This title was subsequently changed to the 11th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers—*vide* Gazette of India notification No. 1993, dated the 1st December 1922. The battalion was formed as a Pioneer battalion at the request of the Parsi community of Bombay but the Government of India have no information of any public statements having been made by Colonel Lavie in this connexion.

(b) (i) Members of the Parsi battalions were given the same scale of uniform as members of the University Training Corps, that is, British.

(ii) Yes.

(iii) They use British ranks in the same way as the University Training Corps.

(iv) They receive the same conveyance allowance as the University Training Corps.

(c) No. They are trained on the same lines as the University Training Corps.

THE PARSİ PIONEERS.

850. ***Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that Colonel Lavie represented at the time of formation of the Parsi Pioneers that the battalion enjoyed the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by British territorial regiments?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether military authorities had authorised Colonel Lavie to make such representation as aforesaid?

Mr. E. Burdon: The Government of India have no information and are making inquiries the results of which I will communicate to the Honourable Member.

CONVERSION OF THE PARSİ PIONEERS INTO A TERRITORIAL BATTALION.

851. ***Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the military authorities have now decided to convert the Parsi Pioneers into an ordinary territorial battalion?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that such a decision has caused great discontent and irritation in the Parsi community?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that the Parsi Pioneers have declined to accept that decision on the ground that it is a breach of promise made to them?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) The conditions on which the 11th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers, was formed are given in the statement on the table. These terms were, I may mention, accepted by 8 leading Parsi gentlemen of Bombay, and Government see no reason why these terms should be altered.

The unit was constituted under the Indian Territorial Force Act and, therefore, already forms one of the units of the Indian Territorial Force.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Statement showing terms and conditions on which the 11th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers, was formed.

1. That a technical unit of the Indian Territorial Force be formed in Bombay from the Parsi community exclusively and recruited under the conditions laid down for the Indian Territorial Force generally.
2. That the rules should provide for the continuous training of this unit on lines approximating to those laid down for the University Training Corps.
3. That as such training would differ in character from that prescribed for the infantry branch of the Indian Territorial Force the Parsi unit should belong to another branch.
4. That the unit should be designated the Bombay Pioneer Battalion.
5. That the unit should be allowed the same choice as regards uniform as the University Training Corps (British).
6. That when called out or embodied for training or service it should be given a special scale of rations, the British service scale being suitable for this purpose.