

Banbury was not listed among the towns mentioned in the Commons deliberations, though locally a number of youths – described as larrikinns by the Chief Constable – led by an ex-soldier named Arthur Castle, were held to be responsible for much of the rowdiness and damage. Castle, who had earned the soubriquet ‘Jimmy the whip,’ was taken before the magistrates and found guilty of being drunk and disorderly. He was fined eleven shillings, in default of which he was sentenced to seven days in gaol. Having neither home or possessions he was soon on his way to Oxford to serve his sentence. In the meantime his friends got up a public subscription and soon had sufficient funds to secure his release after two days. On his return to Banbury, Castle was met at the station by a huge crowd of friends and admirers and escorted to the town centre accompanied by his supporters singing *For he’s a jolly good fellow*. It was obvious the man regarded by the police as the ring leader of the disaffected had come to be perceived by some as the people’s champion.¹¹

The handling of the Castle incident did not mark the end of the disturbances, but at least in future those accused of rowdiness and wilful damage could expect a prompt response from the authorities and a stern sentence. Generally the outlook seemed to be extremely promising.

If the Boers could be ejected from the towns and other strategic centres, it was only a matter of time before the war ended. News of the relief of Pretoria in late May was interpreted by many as a symptom that the war’s end in sight. *The Times*, for instance, in a column headed ‘Fall of Pretoria,’ assured its readers in the following words:

‘The news we chronicle this morning will be hailed with exultation throughout the British Empire. The war is practically over. The British flag is by this time flying at Pretoria.’¹²

With the likelihood of an early peace, the political atmosphere cooled considerably. The incidence of violence, such a noticeable feature of the early months of 1900, gradually diminished. The *Banbury Guardian* in its review of 1900 stated explained

‘...the rejoicing in connection with the victories of the Army were made the occasion of some street disturbances, but they were promptly dealt with and did not assume a serious aspect...’

¹¹ *Banbury Guardian*, 8 March 1900.

¹² *Banbury Guardian*, 31 May 1900.