

War Office, April 16, 1901.

A DESPATCH from Earl Roberts, K.G., G.C.B., to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for War, War Office, London, S.W.

SIR, London, 2nd April, 1901.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 9, dated Johannesburg, 15th Nov., 1900, I have the honour to bring to your notice the excellent work done during the campaign up to the 29th November, 1900, by the various Departments of the Army which have contributed so much to the success of the operations in the field.

In my former despatches I have testified to the admirable bearing and devotion of all ranks, and their cheerful endurance of the many privations and hardships of the war, and it is now my pleasant duty to bring forward the names of some of those who have in their several capacities, whether civil or military, most prominently distinguished themselves, or whose services have come under my personal observation.

In a later despatch I propose to deal with officers and other ranks of the regular forces whose names have been brought forward by General Officers under whom they have served, and with all ranks of Militia, Imperial Yeomanry, Volunteers, Indian and Civil Lists, and I trust that the inevitable delay in publishing their names will not affect the date of the promotions or rewards that His Majesty's Government may be pleased to confer upon any of them.

Lines of Communication.

The organisation and working of the lines of communication, exclusive of Natal, have been entrusted to Lieutenant-General Sir F. Forestier-Walker, K.C.B., C.M.G. The difficulties may best be appreciated by a reference to the following facts:—(a) The lines of railway to be guarded aggregated 2,017 miles in length. (b) Up to the 24th October, 1900, there had been despatched to the front over the military systems a total of 7,920 officers, 193,656 men, 148,948 animals, 411 guns, 3,012 vehicles, and 360,028 tons of stores and supplies. (c) Two expeditions had been made against rebel forces in the districts lying to the north-west of Cape Colony. (d) Local defence for the whole of the important places in Cape Colony had been organised, and Town Guards and District Mounted Corps formed. The above only represents a fraction of the duties that have come under the control of the G.O.C. lines of communication, and that all has been so successfully accomplished is due to Lieutenant-General Sir F. Forestier-Walker and his able assistants, especially Colonel J. K. Trotter, C.M.G., and Major H. du Cane, R.A.

Disembarkations.

The arduous work of disembarking the troops, supplies, stores, remounts, and mules, and embarking the many thousands of sick, wounded, and discharged men reflects the greatest credit upon Captain Sir E. Chichester, C.M.G., R.N., and the staff at each of the four ports, Capetown, Port Elizabeth, East London, and Durban.

The magnitude of the task can be realised from the following figures, compiled for the period from the commencement of the war up to the 31st October, 1900:—

	Embarked.	
	Men.	Animals.
Capetown	31,519	349
Port Elizabeth ..	3,276	42
East London	2,902	350
Durban	31,425	3,143
Total	69,122	3,884

	Disembarked.	
	Men.	Animals.
Capetown	187,976	52,941
Port Elizabeth ..	25,895	46,004
East London	28,134	36,800
Durban	69,969	43,832
Total	261,974	179,577

Government Railways.

My thanks are especially due to Mr. C. B. Elliot, Mr. T. R. Price, and the staff of the Cape Government Railway, as also to Mr. D. Hunter and the staff of the Natal Government Railway. It is not too much to say that the successful carrying out of the enormous railway transport operations is mainly due to the very willing aid afforded by these gentlemen and their hard-worked establishments.

The Director of Railways Department.

The difficult and arduous work performed by this department reflects the greatest credit upon all concerned. The Orange River Colony and Transvaal Railways, embracing a length of 1,130 miles under the title of the "Imperial Military Railways," were taken over by this department as the country was occupied by Her Majesty's Forces, and on the 30th September, 1900, a staff of 17,874 officers and men was employed by it. From the outbreak of hostilities up to the 31st August, 1900, these railways had carried 177,000 passengers, 86,000 animals, and 520,000 tons of goods. All temporary repairs in the Cape Colony, Transvaal, and Orange River Colony were carried out, with a few exceptions, by the Military Railway Staff. Up to the 31st October, 1900, these temporary repairs included the restoration of 75 bridges, 94 culverts, and 37 miles of line. A detail of the general advance from Bloemfontein to Johannesburg, a distance of 265 miles, will give some idea of the expedition with which repairs were effected. The period during which the advance was being made was from the 3rd May to 11th June, 1900, in which space of time the following temporary repairs were executed:—

27 bridges,
41 culverts,
10 miles of line,

including seven deviations, varying in length from 200 yards to two miles.

From 6th June to 15th November, 1900, the Imperial Military Railways were more or less seriously damaged by the enemy on 115 occasions, but all such damages were promptly repaired, and did not materially affect the working of