

employment overseas without involving considerable risk. At the same time it was recognised that in the event of an emergency threatening the integrity of the Empire, the Government of India might be called upon to accept this risk with the object of adding to our strength at the decisive point: the Army was therefore organised and equipped, as far as was compatible with its main role, so as to be capable of affording ready co-operation in such direction as His Majesty's Government might indicate. Only a few days before the outbreak of war, the conclusion had been arrived at and communicated in a despatch to the Secretary of State that, provided conditions were normal in India and on her frontiers, the Army Council could usually rely on India to provide a force of two divisions and one cavalry brigade, and that, in circumstances of special urgency, it might be possible, though at some risk, to provide an additional division.

1914.

4. The outbreak of war occurred at an inconvenient juncture for purposes of mobilisation and the despatch of forces overseas. A large proportion of the British troops were located in summer quarters in the hills, in many cases at long distances from the railway; the Indian troops were largely on leave; and a large number of British officers were at home on furlough, 530 of whom were detained on the outbreak of war for employment under the War Office. Moreover, the incidence of the monsoon season was a severe handicap to Indian troops, the bulk of whom had never before crossed the ocean. In spite of these difficulties no time was lost in mobilising the required forces and requisitioning the necessary sea transport.

5. The first request for troops received from His Majesty's Government was for two Infantry divisions and one cavalry brigade for garrison duty in Egypt and the Soudan. The 3rd and 7th Divisions and 9th Cavalry Brigade were accordingly mobilised and made ready for despatch overseas; but, in informing the Secretary of State of these arrangements, it was urged that the relegation of these troops to garrison duty would be keenly felt by the men themselves, and that it was most desirable from every point of view that India should be represented on the European front. The destination of the contingent was accordingly changed to Marseilles. At the same time a request was received for a complete cavalry division, and subsequently for a second cavalry division, instead of the one cavalry brigade originally asked for; these were at once placed under orders, and the first convoy transporting the contingent to France sailed from Bombay on the 25th August, *i.e.*, within 3 weeks of the declaration of war. The bulk of the force had disembarked at Marseilles before the end of September, and less than a month later were in action in Flanders. The total strength of the original contingent despatched to France amounted approximately to 16,000 British and 28,500 Indian ranks.

6. A request was also received within the first few days of the war for the preparation of a mixed force, including six battalions, to deal with German East Africa, and for three additional battalions for the protection of Zanzibar and the Mombassa-Nairobi railway, the operations of the latter being controlled

by the Colonial Office. The despatch of the former was somewhat delayed by shortage of shipping and the difficulty of providing naval escort,—(the German cruisers *Emden* and *Konigsberg* were at this period at large and the former had appeared off Madras on the night of the 22nd-23rd September)—but the force eventually arrived at Mombassa on the 31st October, and sailed for Tanga next day. One of the three battalions for British East Africa sailed on 19th August, and was in action at Tsavo on 6th September. With the arrival of the remaining two battalions the two forces were amalgamated under one command. The strength of these two contingents, which contained a large proportion of Imperial Service Troops, amounted approximately to 1,500 British and 10,250 Indian ranks.

7. In the meantime, the threatening attitude of Turkey had made it necessary to take steps for the protection of the Abadan pipeline, and it was decided to despatch a brigade of the 6th Division (which had been mobilised in anticipation of further demands) to demonstrate at the head of the Persian Gulf, without, however, taking hostile action. This brigade embarked on the 16th October, and arrived at Bahrein on the 23rd. With the declaration of war against Turkey a week later, the brigade was ordered to take Fao, and a second brigade was placed under orders to support it. The remainder of the 6th Division sailed for the Shatt-al-Arab on the 20th November. The strength of this advanced guard of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force amounted approximately to 4,500 British and 12,000 Indian ranks.

8. A further commitment was accepted by the Government of India in despatching to Egypt, at the request of His Majesty's Government, a force of six infantry brigades (including one composed of Imperial Service troops) and one Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade. While *en route* to Suez one of these infantry brigades took part in the action at Sheikh Said on 10th November. These troops, numbering approximately 1,500 British and 27,250 Indian ranks, disembarked in Egypt during November and December. A small Indian contingent also co-operated with the Japanese in the attack on the German naval base at Tsing-tao in North China.

9. In addition to the organised forces despatched to France, East Africa, Mesopotamia and Egypt, 32 British Infantry battalions and 20 batteries of artillery, aggregating 35,500 British ranks, were sent independently to England to facilitate the expansion of the army at home, and were gradually replaced by 35 Territorial battalions and 29 Territorial field batteries. The small residue of the pre-war British regular garrison was concentrated in formations on the North West Frontier, while the Territorial units underwent a course of intensive training. These latter fully proved their fighting value during the later stages of the war; but for the time being they had much to learn as regards warfare under the novel conditions of a country like India. Thus, by the close of 1914, India was maintaining four overseas forces amounting in the aggregate to over 100,000 men of all ranks, and had in addition exchanged 35,500 of her best British regular troops for an equivalent number of semi-trained Territorials with inferior armament and equipment. Moreover, the stock of rifles in India had been reduced