



SUPPLEMENT

TO

The London Gazette.

Of FRIDAY, the 2nd of APRIL, 1920.

Published by Authority.

The Gazette is registered at the General Post Office for transmission by inland Post as a newspaper. The postage rate to places within the United Kingdom, for each copy, is one halfpenny for the first 6 ozs., and an additional halfpenny for each subsequent 6 ozs. or part thereof. For places abroad the rate is a halfpenny for every 2 ounces, except in the case of Canada, to which the Canadian Magazine Postage rate applies.

TUESDAY, 6 APRIL, 1920.

War Office,

6th April, 1920.

The following despatches on operations in Russia have been received by the Secretary of State for War:—

DESPATCH No. 1 (with Appendix).

From Major-General F. C. Poole, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces in Northern Russia, covering the period from 24th May to 30th September, 1918.

General Headquarters,
Archangel,

5th October, 1918.

My Lord,

I have the honour to forward herewith a report of the action of the North Russia Expeditionary Force from its inception on 24th May, 1918, up to 30th September, 1918.

According to orders received from the War Office, I proceeded to Murman, where I disembarked on 24th May, 1918, to assume command of the Allied Forces in North Russia. My in-

structions were to organise the Czecho-Slovaks, of whom there were said to be some 20,000 en route to Archangel and Murman, and these troops, together with any local troops I might be able to raise, were to form the bulk of my force, stiffened with a few Allied troops of whom I might ultimately hope to obtain about 5,000.

Situation at Murman on my Arrival.

On arrival at Murman, after discussing the situation with Rear-Admiral Thomas W. Kemp, C.B., C.I.E., S.N.O. White Sea, and with the various Officers of the Garrison, I found that the situation was as follows:—

1. Our forces were holding Murmansk with a detachment down at Kandalaksha, thus holding the Kola Peninsula. We also had a Naval detachment from H.M.S. Cochrane holding Pechenga, from which port they had lately driven out a force of White Finns. The rest of the railway line as far as Svanka was nominally held by detachments of the Red Army. Our troops had been landed at Murman to defend the port on the invitation of the Soviet Government of Moscow.

2. No Czechs had arrived at Murman, as through German intrigue they had all been prevented by the Soviet Government. Thus there was no hope of obtaining any help from this source.

3. All Intelligence reports indicated probability of an attack against the railway line by the White Finns, estimated strength about 20,000, at points about Kandalaksha-Kem and Petrozavodsk.

4. The actual Allied forces at my disposal were:—

(1) Landing parties from Allied Warships, about 500 men.

(2) A detachment of French scattered down the line, mostly invalids, about 300 men.

(3) About 1,400 Serbs, of whom many were sick and about half had no rifles.

(4) The Russian Red (Railway) Guards, about 1,200 men, in posts down the line as far as Svanka. Their fighting value was very doubtful, and also their attitude towards the Allies.

(5) About 500 Finnish Red Guards, who were in doubt whether to enlist in our service. Of these some 200 were suffering from scurvy and starvation.

(6) Any Russians I might be able to enlist.

It was thus obvious that our best chance of defence lay in the fact that the difficulties of the country, which is very boggy and with practically no roads passable in summer, rendered an advance against us an exceedingly difficult operation. The only feasible routes of advance were either along the railway, which is a badly laid single track line with a considerable number of easily destroyed bridges, or else by utilising the waterways, lakes and rivers, of which there are several feasible routes. In either of these cases the transport of large bodies of troops or of guns would be an exceedingly difficult operation, and at the ports themselves of Murman and Pechenga any hostile force arriving would necessarily come under fire of the ships' guns. This fact gave us, at any rate, confidence and moral support.

Arrival of Reinforcements.

On 29th May a reinforcement of 400 Royal Marines arrived in s.s. "Porto." This number was considerably magnified in local opinion, and created a very good political effect.

Arrival of Special Commissioner from Moscow.

About this time the Soviet at Moscow were apparently undecided as to whether to yield to German pressure and submit themselves definitely to their influence, or whether to throw in their lot with the Allies and recommence hostilities. In any case they sent up to Murman a Special Commissioner—Natzaremus—with full powers to act for them and conclude any agreement with the Allies. I had several conversations with him, but as his great anxiety before entering into any agreement was to obtain official recognition of the Moscow Soviet by the Allied Governments, for which of course we had no powers, we were unable to come to any decision. He stated, however, unofficially that the Soviet were determined to fight to defend the ports, and were sending up to Murman the Czechs and two divisions of Red Guards. On the same day we definitely heard from Moscow that there was no hope of getting the Czechs, as they were fighting the Bolsheviks at Penza.

Occupation of Kem.

On June 7th reports from Kem showed that the Finnish White Guards were advancing upon the town, and their advanced patrols were only some 40 versts away. As there was considerable local excitement, I decided to reinforce Kandalaksha with 150 Marines. I sent down Lieut.-Colonel Thornhill, D.S.O., in charge, with instructions to take on from Kandalaksha the armoured train and a force of Serbs and Marines and drive the White Finns out of Kem. I was induced to take this step partly because I was assured that Kem was a good recruiting ground, and that I should be able to raise at least 1,000 men there, and partly because of the effect on public opinion to reassure the waverers and to show that the Allies were in earnest. This force occupied Kem without opposition.

Warning from Moscow to Leave the Country.

On June 8th I received the first intimation that the central Government had definitely decided to throw in its lot with Germany against us. I was requested to attend a meeting of the Sovdep, where they read out to me a telegram signed by Lenin and Chicherin, pointing out that the occupation of Murmansk by the Allies was a breach of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, and that we were to be warned to leave the country at once. The Sovdep said that they were pro-Ally, and that they were most anxious that we should not leave. They implied that the result of this order would mean that Murmansk would break away from the Central Government and join the Allies. A telegram from Trotsky intercepted by our secret service ordered the Murman Sovdep to eject us by force.

Start of Recruiting Russians.

Up to this time efforts to recruit Russians had met with little success. The attraction of the Red Guards, with no work, no discipline, good food, and good pay, were infinitely greater than anything I was able to offer. On the 18th of June, though, I was able to interfere in a local riot and save the life of the Commissar of the Red Guard—one Zankevitch, who was about to be murdered by his men. He promptly enlisted to ensure his own safety, and started to obtain other recruits for me. I then inaugurated the Slav-British Allied Legion for Russians—officers and men who enlist under British discipline to fight to free Russia from German domination. Recruiting has never been a great success, as the voluntary system is foreign to Russian ideas. The Russian is accustomed to wait till he is ordered to mobilise, and, although I have personally talked to some hundreds of men who all realise the necessity of fighting for their country, in the majority of cases they say "as soon as we are ordered to mobilise we will come willingly." With the officers the case was different. These men as a class suffered terribly during the last year. Their self-confidence is undermined, their spirit is broken, and those who have managed to escape and reach our lines have as a rule been only too glad to join us. They are enlisted in a special Officers' Company, and form a valuable cadre for supplying officers for the Russian Army after mobilisation has been started.

Arrival of "Syren" and "Elope" Forces.

On June 23rd the "Syren" and "Elope" staffs and forces arrived—the former under Major-General Maynard, C.M.G., D.S.O., with a small force of one company Infantry, one machine gun company, and one company R.E. This force was detailed to remain in Murmansk, and General Maynard was to take over command of the troops in this area under my general supervision. Meanwhile the "Elope" Force, which consisted of Staff and Instructors under Brigadier-General Finlayson, C.M.G., D.S.O., was destined to accompany me to Archangel, which was the main base of operations.

Opposition from Central Government.

On the 28th June the intentions of the Central Government to eject us by force from Murmansk became evident. Agitation against the Allies was openly carried out and I found it necessary to take measures to disarm Red Guards who were being despatched against Murman from Kem and Kandalaksha. This work was admirably carried out under the supervision of General Maynard and Colonel Marsh, and the whole disarmament in this district was carried out with practically no opposition. Some 3,000 rifles, 1,000,000 rounds S.A.A., and seventeen machine guns were taken. I received news that Natzaremus, with 1,500 men, was advancing from Petrozavodsk against me, and I made arrangements to oppose him south of Kem.

Murman Soviet Declares itself Pro-Ally, and Breaks Off Relations with Central Government.

The immediate result of these events was that the Murman Sovdep now definitely decided to adhere to the Allied cause, and to sever relations with the Central Government at Moscow. Their reason was that they realised that the action of the Bolshevik Government was solely and simply at the bidding of Germany. They realised that Lenin and Trotsky had definitely thrown in their lot with Germany against the Allies.

At a mass meeting on 30th June it was proposed, and unanimously carried, that Murman and District would not obey the orders of the Central Soviet to drive us out of the country. They decided that they would defend Murmansk against the Germans, and they invited the Allies to co-operate and assist them. To this request the Allied Representations agreed.

Position at Archangel.

News received during the past few weeks from Archangel showed very clearly that German propaganda had made headway there, and that our landing would undoubtedly meet with opposition. Mines were laid at the entrance to the channel and the fortification of the Island of Modyugski was vigorously taken in hand. As my available troops were not sufficient to justify any attempt to hold Archangel in face of opposition, I decided to make no attempt until I was reinforced by the French battalion which was under orders to embark.

Situation in Kem and Soroka.

By the end of the first week of July the situation in Kem and Soroka was well in hand. The

garrison of Kem had been reinforced and the populace reassured. H.M.S. "Attentive" had been sent into the White Sea, and Captain Altham, R.N., by his energy and tact, had worked wonders. The Red Guards advanced north along the railway to within 15 versts of Kem, and then retreated southwards, burning the bridges behind them. We occupied Soroka with a small detachment from H.M.S. "Attentive," and the armoured train. After this I handed over the conduct of military operations in this area to General Maynard, whose report on his operations is attached. (Appendix I.).

Occupation of Archangel.

The entrance to the White Sea now being free from ice, I made all my plans for the occupation of Archangel at the earliest possible moment after the arrival of the French battalion, which reached Murman on 26th July.

By arming every possible officer and man of the "Elope" force, and with the French battalion and details borrowed from "Syren," I had for my landing force almost 1,500, which were, I considered, sufficient for the task. It was, naturally, a considerable risk; but as I could expect no more reinforcements before the end of August, and as the opposition to us was daily growing stronger, I considered that the risk was justifiable and decided to take it. I decided to commence with the capture and occupation of Modyugski Island, and then to push up the channel, via Economy, Solombola, Archangel, to Bakharitz, with my main force. I detailed Colonel Thornhill to proceed to Onega with a small force of Serbs and Russians, and to proceed by road on Oboserskaia, which he was instructed to reach at the same time as I entered Archangel, thus cutting the line and preventing the evacuation of rolling stock southwards. This force was unable to reach its destination, owing to the severe opposition encountered; but it fought most gallantly against great odds, and eventually withdrew to Onega, after having inflicted severe casualties on the enemy. It succeeded, however, in diverting a considerable force from my part, and thus was of considerable assistance to my operations.

I had decided to embark from Murman for this expedition on August 3rd; but on July 30th I received information from Mr. Lindley, who had just reached Kandalaksha, that the state in Archangel was so desperate that our friends there had decided that it was impossible to delay any longer, and that they had arranged for a revolution against the Government to start on the 31st, and that unless we could arrive very shortly after the outbreak it would be certainly suppressed. As I was most anxious to take advantage of any internal disturbances, I decided, after consultation with the S.N.O.—Admiral Kemp—that we would start the same night, with H.M.S. "Attentive," H.M. aircraft carrier, "Nairana," the French armoured cruiser, "Amiral Aube," the Trawler Fleet, and 400 soldiers, and that the remainder of the force should follow by midday on 31st. With this force I counted upon being able to overcome the opposition at Modyugski, considering that my seaplanes would very soon be able to silence the batteries should they open fire. Brigadier-General Finlayson proceeded in charge of the military portion of this force with Admiral Kemp, S.N.O., in H.M.S.

"Nairana." This force proceeded as fast as possible, as time was so important a factor, and arrived off the island on the morning of 1st August. The "Aube" had been delayed through striking a sunken wreck, so the "Attentive" and "Nairana" alone reached the rendezvous. The "Attentive" at once seized the lightship and demanded the instant surrender of the island. This surrender, after consideration, was refused, and the shore batteries opened fire. The seaplanes and "Attentive's" fire soon silenced the batteries, and the landing parties cleared up the island with very slight opposition. About thirty prisoners and some rifles and machine guns were captured, but the bulk of the garrison had fled to the south of the island and escaped. The armament consisted of seven 6 in. guns and six 6 in. howitzers. The enemy had been working very hard to complete their defences, and had our attack been delayed a few weeks longer the capture of the island would have constituted a very serious operation. By 10 p.m. we had finished clearing up the island and had made the minefields safe. We had also sent several seaplanes over Archangel to drop pamphlets and encourage our supporters. During the night the Bolshevik Government decided to evacuate the town, after having ordered two icebreakers to be sunk in the fairway to block our passage up the channel. On August 2nd the revolution planned by our supporters broke out at 4 a.m., and was completely successful. The Bolshevik Government was overthrown. The new Government cordially invoked our aid and declared itself pro-Ally, anti-German, and determined not to recognise the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. After some delay caused by exploring a passage between the sunken icebreakers, we were fortunate enough to find that there was just sufficient room to allow a passage for the ships. We then made a triumphal procession up the channel to Archangel, being everywhere greeted with enormous enthusiasm.

Meanwhile the enemy was retiring by boats up the Dvina and by trains down the railway. I organised at once forces to operate down the railway towards Vologda and up the Dvina towards Kotlas under the immediate command of Brigadier-General R. G. Finlayson, C.M.G., D.S.O.; who took up his headquarters at Isakagorka.

Vologda Force.

Of these forces the Vologda Force, under Lieutenant-Colonel Guard, D.S.O., occupied Oboserskaia on 4th September. This force consistently encountered most determined opposition. The enemy, assisted by German officers, was considerably superior in numbers, and by the destruction of all bridges, and occupation of strong defensive positions, was enabled to render our advance very slow. The country, consisting of practically nothing but forest and bog, presents the most extraordinary difficulties. This renders any attempt at a turning movement both difficult and slow. For a detachment to have to wade waist deep in bog, even on patrol work, is an almost daily occurrence. The success of this operation, which inflicted very heavy casualties on the enemy and took some 200 prisoners, reflects the very greatest praise on all ranks concerned.

This force is at the present time engaged in carrying out operations with a view to the occupation of Plesetskaia.

I have also occupied Onega with a small force of Americans and Slavo-British Allied Legion, under Lieutenant-Colonel Clarke, and have cleared up the country between Onega and Oboserskaia. I have also restored the overland telegraph line from Archangel-Onega-Soroka.

Dvina Force.

The Dvina Force was equipped and despatched under very great difficulties. We were short of ships, as the Bolsheviks had taken all the best and fastest ones. The few ships that we were able to collect were too weak to stand the strain of constant employment, and after a few weeks began to lead badly, suffer from engine troubles, and need constant overhaul. Moreover, the decks were too flimsy to stand the strain of the shock of discharge of the guns, and thus our guns were constantly going out of action at the critical period. In every "naval" engagement, therefore, in addition to being outnumbered, we also suffered from being out-paced and outranged. We also suffered from shortage of men. In the original expedition I despatched to reinforce the French 200 local Russian troops, of whom 40 were Poles. In inspecting this Detachment I found that the two N.C.Os. had both been N.C.Os. in the German Army, and had both been wounded fighting against us on the Western Front. Two more of the detachment were each short of one arm. They were taken to work machine guns with the one remaining arm. This detachment has done very good service, but the above will show some of the difficulties with which we had to contend. The force was originally under the command of Commandant Rangué, 21st French Battalion d'Infanterie Coloniale. This capable and gallant officer was, unfortunately, seriously wounded in an attack near Beresnik. He was replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel Josselyn, D.S.O., who is still in command. The force established itself at Beresnik—the confluence of the Dvina and Vaga rivers. On being reinforced with both ships and men, a most successful operation was carried out against the enemy, who were in considerable force on both banks of the river, and in considerable force also in ships. The result of these operations was that the enemy was completely routed and fled in disorder towards Kotlas, having lost heavily in men, material and prisoners. Four of his ships were sunk with heavy casualties by our fleet. The remainder were able to withdraw in safety, owing to the river having been mined. We have cleared both banks of the river as far south as Nijnitoimi. The enemy has sunk two lines of barges filled with sand, one about Troitsa Verkhotomski and the other near Krasnovorsk. Mines have also been laid to cover these blockages.

The approach of winter, lateness in arrival of stores, and shortage of tugs to tow the barges of supplies up the river have decided me not to attempt a further advance towards Kotlas until the spring.

This Force has carried out its operations, under most difficult conditions, to my entire satisfaction. All ranks have worked cheerfully and gallantly, and merit the highest praise.

Royal Navy.

I wish to put on record my appreciation of the work of the Royal Navy, and the hearty spirit of co-operation which they have invari-

ably shown me. I would respectfully mention the service of the following officer in particular, and I would request that his name be submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for consideration:—

Rear-Admiral T. W. Kemp, C.B., C.I.E.

It is difficult for me to express the gratitude which I feel for the loyal manner in which this officer has seconded all my efforts. I have worked with him in the closest co-operation for the past five months, and during the whole time he has been assiduous in his endeavours to help me in every possible way. To his skill as a Naval Commander much of our success in the occupation of Archangel is due.

I have brought to the notice of Admiral Kemp the names of various officers and men whose conduct has been particularly noticeable, and I trust that their names will be forwarded by him to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

General Remarks.

In considering the operations carried out by the forces under my command since our arrival at Archangel, I would point out that we have been confronted with many abnormal difficulties. These have been for the most part overcome solely by the display of energy, determination and good will, which has been displayed in a marked degree by all troops under my command.

I attach a list of names of officers and men whose work has been exceptionally valuable, with a view to their being considered for reward by His Majesty's Government.

I have the honour to be

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

(Sd.) F. C. POOLE, Major-General.

C. in C. Allied Forces in Northern Russia.

APPENDIX TO DESPATCH No. 1.

From General Officer Commanding, Allied Forces, Murmansk Region, to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Allied Forces, Northern Russia.

19th September, 1918.

SIR,—

1. I have the honour to submit the following report on the operations carried out by the Force under my command since its landing in Northern Russia on 23rd June, 1918.

2. On my arrival it was clear that Bolshevik influence was working strongly against the Allies both at Murmansk and at various other centres on the railway, and that a definite breach with the Bolshevik Government would probably be forced upon us at an early date. This breach occurred towards the end of June and was brought about as follows:—

3. On 27th June, whilst proceeding down the railway on a tour of inspection, I encountered unconcealed hostility from several Bolshevik officials, and on arrival at Kandalaksha found a party of some 300 armed Bolshevik Red Guard which was entrained and under orders to proceed to Murmansk. Further parties also were reported to be entraining for the north at Petrozavodsk and other stations. The danger of the presence on my lines of communication of considerable armed forces

which might at any time show open hostility to the Allies was obvious, and I therefore prevented the departure from Kandalaksha of the train conveying the 300 Bolshevik troops by a display of armed force, and detained the whole detachment, under the supervision of my Kandalaksha garrison. I then proceeded to Kem, where I arrived on 30th June. Here I met other train loads of Bolshevik troops moving north, and these I also felt bound to detain as a military precaution, the more so as I was informed that further troops accompanied by armoured trains were being despatched to the north from Petrozavodsk.

4. Whilst on my return journey to Kandalaksha I received definite news that a considerable Bolshevik force was moving against me from the south. I therefore issued orders for the disarming of the Bolshevik troops at Kem, instructed reinforcements which were being sent to Kem to disarm en route the Bolshevik troops at their main garrison centres on the railway, and proceeded myself to Kandalaksha to carry out the disarming of the Bolshevik Force already assembled there. The disarming was carried out successfully at all the centres determined upon, 60 machine guns and nearly 10,000 rifles being confiscated.

5. The above action resulted in the withdrawal southwards of other Bolshevik troops who were moving on Kem, a portion of whom retired on Soroka, burning several of the railway bridges between that town and Kem. These were repaired as rapidly as possible, but before railway communication could be re-established Bolshevik outrages at Soroka necessitated further Allied intervention. H.M.S. "Attentive" proceeded accordingly to Soroka on 6th July, and a detachment of my local forces was sent there also by sea. The Bolshevik troops withdrew on the appearance of H.M.S. "Attentive," after removing all supplies possible and burning a portion of the town. During their retreat they destroyed all railway bridges for a distance of some 25 miles south of Soroka. On my arrival, however, on the following day, Bolshevik disturbances were occurring on the outskirts of the town, and a landing party from H.M.S. "Attentive" was sent to confiscate arms found in the district. This was done successfully, about 700 rifles and large quantities of ammunition being seized.

6. It was evident, however, that Bolshevik influence was still at work at various points on the railway, amongst other indications being an attempt to derail my train. I was therefore forced to extend the disarming policy to all centres known to be disaffected, and in each case this policy was welcomed by the majority of the inhabitants.

7. After establishing myself along the railway I turned my attention to clearing Karelia of the numerous armed parties of Finnish White Guards which, under German leadership, had penetrated far into Karelia, terrorising the inhabitants and attempting to raid various points on the railway. This task I entrusted mainly to locally raised troops. The operations in Southern Karelia have already met with marked success, the Finnish White Guards having been defeated with heavy losses on many occasions, culminating on the 11th September with their complete rout at Ukhtinskaya, which for some time past had been their main base of operations. Our own losses in this theatre have been slight. This

success has been due mainly to the able leadership of Lieut.-Colonel P. J. Woods, D.S.O., Royal Irish Rifles, coupled with the bravery and determination of the Karelian troops under his command, who are fighting to free their own homes of the invader.

8. Simultaneously with the operations for clearing Karelia of the Finnish White Guard invaders I despatched a force of British and Serbian troops to the south-east of Soroka to disperse Bolshevik forces which were concentrating in that area. This force drove the Bolsheviks 40 miles south, inflicting on them appreciable losses in a number of minor engagements. In these operations also our casualties were light.

9. I append a list of officers and other ranks whose good services I wish to bring to notice.

Although the military operations during the period in question have been on a relatively small scale, they have been conducted over a very wide area, and in circumstances the reverse of favourable. Moreover, the administrative difficulties to be overcome have been exceedingly great, owing to an entire lack of ordinary facilities usually met with in a civilised theatre of operations, and to the adverse influences of an Arctic climate. I trust, therefore, that these considerations may be taken into account when considering for reward those whose names I send forward for recognition.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sd.) C. M. MAYNARD,

Major-General,

Commanding Allied Forces, Murmansk Region.

DESPATCH No. 2.

From Major-General C. M. Maynard, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Commanding-in-Chief, Allied Forces, Murmansk, covering the period from 20th September, 1918, to 28th February, 1919.

General Headquarters,
Murmansk.

1st March, 1919.

Sir,—

1. I have the honour to submit the following report dealing with the operations carried out by the Allied Forces under my command since 19th September, 1918, the date of submission of my previous despatch*—

Situation in the early Autumn of 1918.

2. Early in the autumn of 1918, and prior to the collapse of the Central Powers, my force was augmented by material reinforcements, and I commenced immediately to put into operation the plans which I had drawn up in anticipation of an increase in my fighting strength. In determining upon these plans I was influenced by three main considerations:—

(a) The necessity for retaining at, or in the vicinity of, Murmansk and Petchenga sufficient troops to ensure the safety of these ports against such attacks as calculation showed might reasonably be expected.

(b) The extreme importance of compelling Germany to retain in Finland the maximum

number of troops for as long a period as possible, thus preventing her despatching reinforcements from this Theatre to the Western Front.

(c) The complete difference in housing and transport facilities which would be brought about by the advent of winter.

This factor had to be kept in mind constantly, and forced me, in more than one instance, to dispose my troops in a manner other than that I should otherwise have decided upon in order that subsequent moves under trying climatic conditions might be avoided.

Defence of Murmansk.

3. I was compelled to retain at the Port of Murmansk itself a very considerable proportion of my troops for the purpose of furnishing the large permanent working parties necessitated by the lack of civilian labour. In addition, it was essential to provide numerous strong guards owing to persistent attempts at looting made by armed and unarmed gangs of Russians, and to keep in constant readiness a force of sufficient strength to quell local disturbances which, at that time, constituted a very real source of danger.

I relied on the above troops, together with such landing parties as could have been supplied by the Allied Naval Forces, as my general reserve in the event of an attack in force.

4. The situation of Murmansk is such that its all-round defence by a system of works and fortifications could have been undertaken only by a force many times larger than that at my disposal. The perimeter of any defensive system suitable to the strength of my available troops must have been in such close proximity to the inlet as to admit of the enemy bringing howitzer fire to bear on the town, wharf and shipping, whilst the configuration of the ground rendered such enemy howitzers immune from the fire of the guns of the Allied ships.

5. In these circumstances I considered it useless to attempt establishing a fortified zone around the port, and I distributed the remainder of the troops detailed for the protection of Murmansk in the manner best suited to an active defence.

With this in view I constructed a system of defensive works in the neighbourhood of the village of Kola (some six miles south of Murmansk) at the junction of the two main lines of approach—namely, the railways and the Tulema River. Here I stationed as large a reserve as I could afford, in addition to the garrisons required for the defences, my plan being to employ this reserve for attacking in flank or rear any force attempting to reach Murmansk by a detour either to the east or west. An outpost garrison was also established on the railway some twenty miles to the south sufficiently strong either to push back hostile reconnoitring parties or to delay the enemy and destroy bridges in the event of an advance in force.

6. I was, however, confronted with the difficulty that the transfer of my Kola reserve to the western side of the Kola inlet would occupy a very considerable time; and, although the enemy would have found it a hard task to force the crossing of the inlet from the west, Murmansk itself, including the quay and ships in the inlet, would have been at the mercy of any high-angle-fire guns which he might have been able to bring up to that side. I therefore com-

* Printed as Appendix to Despatch No. 1.

structed and garrisoned on the western shore of the inlet, in close proximity to Murmansk, two small defence systems of the bridgehead type, with the object of covering the landing on that bank of reinforcements from Murmansk sufficient to hold the enemy in check until such time as my Kola reserve should be able to cross the inlet.

7. Whilst hoping that the above preparations and dispositions would enable me to prevent the occupation of Murmansk by the enemy, it appeared highly desirable to take such steps as were possible to ensure my retaining a footing at some spot adjacent to the Kola inlet should I be forced to evacuate Murmansk, for thus I might still be in a position to prevent that port being utilised as a submarine base. I arranged accordingly that Alexandrovsk (on the western shore of the inlet and close to its mouth) should be the rallying point for all troops should I be driven from Murmansk, and collected there supplies, stores and ammunition sufficient for 2,000 men for one month. I also placed on board sailing ships and lighters additional stores ready for conveyance to Alexandrovsk should the necessity arise; reconnaissances were made and a defence system mapped out; and plans were drawn up for the conveyance to the rallying point of such troops as might have been driven back down the eastern side of the inlet. As the landing place of the Peterhead cable is at Alexandrovsk, I should have been able to maintain communication with England, and the anchorage facilities were found to be such as to promise better co-operation with the Navy than could have been ensured elsewhere.

Defence of Petchenga.

8. Even in summer it is not an easy matter to transfer troops from Murmansk to Petchenga, as there is at the latter place no quay alongside which vessels can lie, and it is only at high water that troops can land by boat or launch without wading through long stretches of deep mud. During the winter the harbour is icebound, and the landing and embarkation of troops become operations of very great difficulty. The land route between Murmansk and Petchenga is impassable for troops in summer without the expenditure of much time and labour, whilst during winter an arduous and circuitous track must be followed along which shelter is unobtainable except for very small parties.

I preferred, therefore, to strengthen the Petchenga garrison and to treat it as a self-contained force, rather than to hold the defences lightly and trust to reinforcements from Murmansk arriving in time in case of need. As there were many indications of the enemy's intention to attack Petchenga in the autumn of 1918 the furnishing of the garrison, which I considered it necessary to detail for its defence, constituted a severe drain on my resources; the more so as it had been decided to withdraw H.M.S. "Cochrane," complements from which vessel had formed the original garrison and for many months had been the mainstay of the defence. I judged, however, that my decision was fully justified, since, with carefully prepared position and supplies for seven months, I could rest assured that the garrison was capable of carrying out its allotted task without reinforcements from me, unless attacked in overwhelming strength in men and guns.

Necessity for offensive action.

9. It was evident that no purely passive action on my part would induce Germany to retain in Finland troops which she was desirous of transferring elsewhere. If, therefore, I was to succeed in my effort to prevent the despatch of German reinforcements from this theatre to the Western Front it was necessary for me to undertake offensive operations, or at least to produce the impression that such was my intention.

Apart, therefore, from the troops required to complete and man the local defences of Murmansk and Petchenga, and to hold important points on my line of communication, I employed all my available forces in a manner calculated to spread the idea that offensive operations were in contemplation. Increased activity was displayed both in northern and central Karelia, detachments being pushed forward boldly towards the Finnish frontier, and steps being taken to improve the communications running westward from the railway. To the south I occupied Soroka and commenced to repair the railway bridges (destroyed in July, 1918, by the Bolsheviks) between that town and Olimpi. In addition, certain long-distance patrols were furnished with false orders purporting to be signed by Staff Officers of high rank, and making mention of large formations.

Arrangements, which it is believed proved successful, were made for these to find their way into the enemy's hands.

It would appear that the above measures met with some success; for I have in my possession a copy of the instructions issued to a German agent in which the importance is impressed on him of ascertaining the number of divisions operating in this area, their composition, and the commander of each. Moreover, it has been ascertained on trustworthy authority that General Von Der Goltz, so far from being willing to transfer troops from Finland, sent forward continued demands for reinforcements.

These small operations, with a view to giving an impression of an impending offensive, were carried out to a very large extent by local troops, who had been enlisted and trained by British officers since the arrival of my force, and whose previous military experience, if any, had been of the most limited nature.

Situation after the Armistice.

10. The signing of the Armistice of 11th November, 1918, removed simultaneously one of the main causes of the presence of my troops in this region, and the threat of attack by vastly superior forces with which I had been faced during the preceding 4½ months. Despite my efforts to force Germany to retain her troops in Finland, the need for reinforcements to check the Allied advance in France proved too pressing, and a large proportion of the German troops in this theatre had been withdrawn by the commencement of November. By the middle of that month all danger of the establishment by Germany of submarine bases in Northern Russia had ceased, together with any possibility of an attack on Murmansk or Petchenga by German troops. The situation, however, continued to be one of anxiety; for considerable numbers of Finnish White Guards were concentrated near the eastern border of Finland, and strong parties were still in occupation of portions of Russian Karelia. More-

over, there was every indication that Bolshevik attempts to organise an efficient fighting force were meeting with no small measure of success.

11. The change in my military situation resulting from the collapse of Germany necessitated corresponding alterations in my dispositions. These included a reduction of my Petchenga garrison and a redistribution along the railway of both departmental and fighting troops; and all these moves had to be carried out when the grip of an Arctic winter was already making itself felt. Simultaneously with the above transfer of troops and stores I had to take in hand the exceedingly important task of organising, equipping and assembling my winter mobile columns. This was a matter of no small difficulty, owing to the unavoidably late arrival of many essential stores, and to the time occupied in unloading, sorting out and despatching to the various organising centres the mass of special equipment required.

As there is no precedent for the formation of such mobile columns in the annals of the British Army I have placed on record in full detail the organisation which I adopted, and which practical experience has proved satisfactory. This is embodied in the pamphlet accompanying this despatch.*

Present Situation.

12. As a result of continued pressure exercised by my troops on the White Finn and Bolshevik forces since the autumn of 1918 (details of which are given in paragraph 20) the whole of the Murmansk region to as far south as the 64th parallel has been cleared of enemy troops; the Bolsheviks have been driven south of Segeja (60 miles south of Soroka) with severe losses; and the Soroka-Onega route has been opened up and guarded; thus ensuring communication by land with Archangel.

Owing, however, to increased Bolshevik activity in the neighbourhood of Archangel, I have had to despatch thither considerable reinforcements. This has necessitated the withdrawal of further troops from Petchenga, and additional alterations in my dispositions on the Murmansk side. These changes, together with the transfer by land of the reinforcing units for Archangel, have had to be carried out in the face of many transport difficulties, and under the most severe Arctic conditions.

13. The state of disorganisation and unrest in this district, resulting from Bolshevik misrule and the sabotage which found open expression for some time after the expulsion of the Bolshevik armed forces, are at length commencing to disappear. There still exists, however, a strong undercurrent of Bolshevism, which is evidenced by agitations and strikes, and by persistent efforts to foment trouble between the Allies and the local population. At times this has culminated in demonstrations of active hostility, such as the destruction of railway bridges and attempts to derail trains, but the measures which I have been able to enforce have checked materially these open acts of violence. At the same time, the necessity remains for guarding against their recrudescence, whilst I have also to take strict precautions to prevent the frequent and bold attempts at looting made by Russian gangs, whose action is often connived at by the local railway and other authorities. I am thus compelled to furnish large guards over stores,

and strong escorts for supply trains which, in addition to being unpopular forms of duty, drain the strength of my fighting force.

14. I am also faced with the task of combating and counteracting a far-reaching scheme of propaganda, engineered by the Bolshevik leaders at Moscow. This scheme embraces the inclusion of highly trained propagandist agents in each batch of former Russian prisoners of war returning to their homes. It was my original intention to prohibit the return of any such prisoners, but the Governor-General did not consider himself justified in acquiescing in this step, in view of the demands for recruits for the new Russian Army. I have therefore instituted a very strict system of search, control and surveillance, with drastic penalties for non-compliance with instructions. This, I hope, will result in the detection of propagandists, or at least in rendering their efforts nugatory, whilst those in whom the Russian authorities can place reliance will be available as recruits.

The importance attributed by the Bolsheviks to the spreading of dissatisfaction amongst my British troops is evidenced by the virulent anti-Allied pamphlets, printed in English, which have been discovered recently within my lines. I am taking steps to put a stop to this method of Bolshevik propaganda.

In order to counteract Bolshevik influence in territory outside that occupied by my troops, I have constantly extended the activities of my own propaganda department, and have now inaugurated an Inter-Allied Bureau from which I trust to obtain good results.

15. One of my chief sources of anxiety has been the maintenance of railway communication with my southern garrisons. At the time of the Bolshevik withdrawal a large number of railway employees joined the Bolshevik forces, and many more fled to the south subsequently, owing to my inability to feed and pay them. Those who remained were for the most part discontented and sullen; strikes were frequent; the repair of locomotives ceased; and during the whole of last summer the upkeep of the permanent way was totally neglected—a neglect which is bound to have a most disadvantageous effect on traffic so soon as the thaw commences. With my small railway staff it has been impossible for me to take over the working of a line some 500 miles in length. But I have put into operation a satisfactory liaison system at the more important centres between my officers and the Russian officials; have taken in hand to a limited but useful extent the repair of locomotives by my own men; and have organised my few drivers and firemen as emergency crews on the various sections of the line.

16. In a Force such as that under my command, comprising units of many nationalities, all operating at a great distance from their home bases, administrative difficulties are necessarily accentuated, whilst possibilities of friction are increased correspondingly. It is therefore satisfactory to be able to state that my administrative machinery has run far more smoothly than I had reason to anticipate, and that, by the exercise of a little give-and-take on the part of all concerned, no serious cause for dissatisfaction or misunderstanding has arisen. For this I am indebted in no small measure to the tact and broad-mindedness of the respective commanders of Allied contingents.

* Not reproduced in the London Gazette.

17. It is also a source of great gratification to me to be able to report that the relations between the Allied Command and the local Russian Government are now on a highly satisfactory footing, and that the Governor-General of the Region is co-operating with me in the most cordial and whole-hearted manner. This co-operation, which it was impossible to secure during the first five months of my operations, is already bearing fruit in an increased feeling of content amongst the local population and the various Government officials, and I am confident that it will have far-reaching results in ensuring smooth working in the mobilisation of the local Russian forces now being taken in hand, and in the settlement of the many delicate political problems with which we are confronted.

18. Taking climatic conditions into consideration, the health of my troops has been good. During the winter months, with their lack of daylight, there has been a somewhat marked tendency towards inertia and depression, resulting in loss of nerve and will-power; but every effort has been made to combat this tendency by the provision of such forms of entertainment and recreation as my limited resources and opportunities allowed. With an increase in the hours of sunlight I hope for a still better record of health; but the advent of spring will prove an anxious time. This is owing mainly to an entire absence of any drainage system throughout the country, and to the apparent impossibility of convincing the Russian working classes of the necessity for ordinary sanitary precautions. My Sanitary Officers are, however, making all possible arrangements to cope with the situation.

19. I have gone somewhat more fully into the conditions ruling within the area occupied by my Force than is customary in a despatch of this nature. The circumstances, however, are very exceptional, and I should not be doing justice to the work of my troops if I failed to bring to notice the difficulties with which they have to contend.

Owing to the extreme shortage of civilian labour, I have been compelled to employ a great proportion of them on permanent working and building parties, and on similar tasks of an uncongenial nature; their accommodation has not always been as suitable as I could have wished; the climate is severe, and trying even to the most healthy; leave to England is necessarily rare; local amusements are confined entirely to such as we are able to provide; any movement of troops by rail is attended by great discomfort, owing to the shortage of suitable rolling stock; and, during the winter, transport by sea and road entail unusual hardships. Moreover, my men have been surrounded for many months by an atmosphere of disorder, dissatisfaction and lawlessness, which cannot but affect adversely even the best disciplined troops.

Military Operations.

20. The military operations carried out since the date of my last despatch, and leading up to the existing situation, have been briefly as follows:—

On 28th September, 1918, Finnish troops, reported to be the advance guard of a large force, drove in my outposts near the Norwegian frontier to the west of Petchenga. As telephonic communication between the outposts and Petchenga had been cut, and as I had received

persistent reports of an advance in strength by German and Finnish troops, I ordered the immediate despatch to Petchenga of a portion of the reinforcements already detailed for that garrison. These were landed within thirty-six hours. In the meantime, however, my outposts had rallied, and succeeded in driving back the enemy without calling for support. The Finnish troops remained in contact with my covering force for some days, but withdrew finally without further offensive action. Since this occurrence there have been no signs of enemy activity in the Petchenga region.

By the end of September, 1918, my troops operating from Kandalaksha had cleared of White Finn forces the whole area lying between Kandalaksha and the Finnish frontier, and in October they commenced to push forward in a south-westerly direction towards Lake Pyavozero. They succeeded in driving the enemy from a number of posts occupied by him, and in a small but decisive action on the western shore of Pyavozero Lake finally compelled the only remaining formed body of enemy troops in Northern Karelia to retire across the Finnish frontier. This series of minor operations was carried out almost entirely by my Finn Legion, under the leadership of British officers and non-commissioned officers. As there were no tracks in this area suitable for wheel transport, the question of supply presented many difficulties. These, however, were overcome by the institution of a system of water transport, supplemented by carriers.

Meanwhile, a force based on Kem, and consisting chiefly of Karelians, was clearing the country between Kem and the western frontier of Karelia. This force met with strong opposition, the White Finns in this locality being in considerable strength and under German leadership. The successes gained by it, and mentioned in my previous despatch, were, however, continued, the enemy suffering heavy losses both in personnel and material, and only a small remnant contriving to make good its escape across the frontier. Transport difficulties proved even greater than those experienced by the Kandalaksha columns, since the force employed was not only larger, but was operating further from its base. That these difficulties were surmounted successfully speaks highly for the grit and determination of the Karelian troops engaged.

Thus, by the end of 1918, the whole of Karelia to as far south as an east and west line drawn through Soroka had been cleared of White Finn troops; frontier posts had been established; and my two forces, operating respectively from Kandalaksha and Kem, had gained touch.

Early in January reports were received that the Bolsheviks had established a headquarters and recruiting centre at Rugozerskaya, sixty-five miles south-west of Soroka. As this village was situated in an area from which I hoped to draw future recruits for the Russian Army, I decided to send a strong patrol to ascertain the truth of the report; to gain all intelligence possible; and, if the report were true, to drive out the Bolsheviks should this prove practicable. The enterprise was carried out on 16th January with rapidity and skill by a mixed contingent of Canadian and Karelian troops. Rugozerskaya was found to be held by the enemy, but was captured by a surprise attack, the whole garrison being

accounted for, either as killed or prisoners. In view of recruiting possibilities, and the tactical importance of securing a footing on the flank of the enemy's line of communication, I established in the village a permanent post, found by my Karelian Regiment.

I had for some time contemplated the advisability of a sudden and simultaneous attack on the enemy's posts on the railway to as far south as Segeja. From the intelligence at my disposal I knew this to be a feasible undertaking, but, as I was averse from a raid only, and was anxious to hold Segeja should the enterprise prove successful, the question arose as to whether I was justified in thus extending my obligations. I placed before the War Office my reasons for thinking that this justification existed, and the attack was sanctioned, the decision regarding my remaining in occupation of any advanced positions I might gain being left to my discretion. The operation was carried out on 18th February and met with complete success. Every post was captured, and the enemy suffered heavily, his casualties in killed and prisoners alone amounting to 150, or nearly half the estimated strength of his garrison, whilst much booty, including machine guns and rolling stock, fell into our hands. It is certain, too, that further severe losses were inflicted, since enemy reinforcements arriving by rail were subjected to such close and heavy machine-gun fire that they were unable to detrain, and it was with great difficulty that the train was able to withdraw. On the following day the Bolsheviks made a determined effort to recapture Segeja, their infantry being supported by gun fire from an armoured train. The attack broke down, heavy punishment being once again inflicted; and latest reports point to a general enemy withdrawal of some 15 miles. Our casualties were exceedingly slight. The details of the enterprise were arranged by the G.O.C., 237th Infantry Brigade, and the several attacks were carried out by British, Canadian, Serbian and Russian detachments, all of whom displayed high qualities of courage and endurance.

The capture intact of the 400-foot span bridge over the Segeja River (the last of any magnitude between that place and Petrozavodsk), and the opportunity now opened up for rebuilding the bridge over the Onda (20 miles to the north), which is of equal span and was destroyed by the Bolsheviks last July, are matters of very great importance. Had the operation not been carried out before the end of February, it is certain that at least a year must have elapsed before railway communication with the south could have been reopened.

21. Of the Allied troops under my command, the Serbian battalion has proved an invaluable asset since the commencement of my operations, and has never failed to display fighting qualities of the highest order.

There has been little scope for the employment of guns, but the French Artillery Brigade has been the backbone of my artillery strength from the outset.

Circumstances have forced me to employ the Italian Expeditionary Force almost entirely at the base and on my line of communication. Here all ranks have carried out in a most praiseworthy manner the uncongenial but all-important tasks, on the successful performance of which depends the efficiency of the troops in the fighting line.

Of my own troops, those of the small contingent who accompanied me originally merit a special word of praise for their staunchness during more than eight months of campaigning under exceptionally trying conditions; whilst the Canadian detachment has gained distinction on many occasions by its pluck and resourcefulness.

22. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation of the cordial manner in which Rear-Admiral J. F. E. Green, C.B., the Senior Naval Officer, White Sea, and his staff have lent me their willing assistance in the many matters necessitating co-operation between the sea and land force.

23. I attach lists giving the names of officers and other ranks whose good services I consider worthy of recognition. Further, I have had the pleasure of bringing to the notice of The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty certain officers and other ranks of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines who have been attached temporarily to my command, and have performed meritorious service.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most Obedient Servant,

(Sd.) C. M. MAYNARD,
Major-General,

Commanding-in-Chief, Allied Forces,
Murmansk.

DESPATCH No. 3.

From: Major-General Sir W. E. Ironside, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., lately Commanding-in-Chief Allied Forces, Archangel.

To: The Secretary of State for War, War Office.

War Office,

1st November, 1919.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the following report on the operations carried out by the Allied Forces under my Command during the period from 1st October, 1918, to 11th August, 1919:—

1.—Period before the European Armistice.

The main objectives of the Allied Force, which had landed in North Russia during the summer of 1918, were:—

(a) The reconstruction of any available Russian or Allied Forces in Russia to oppose Germany.

(b) The prevention of access to the sea through Archangel and Murmansk should the Germans continue their advance into Russia.

On landing in October, 1918, and on taking over Command from Major-General Poole, I found a Provisional Government installed under the Presidency of M. Tchaikovsky.

The Allied Forces available were as follows:—

(a) Contingents from Great Britain, France, America, Italy and Poland, numbering 14,000 men.

(b) Russian Forces numbering 1,500, consisting largely of returned prisoners of war.

(c) Slavo-British Legion, numbering 3,000, consisting of refugees of all nationalities.

At the moment it was impossible to forecast what might happen in Europe, but it was certain that the Archangel Force would be cut off for eight months by ice, and every effort was devoted to securing the position, increasing the Russian Forces, and filling the food, ammunition and clothing depôts at Archangel.

I cannot speak too highly of the Supply and Ordnance Authorities in England and Archangel for the manner in which the safety of the Force was ensured. The bringing in of stores under convoy of icebreakers, manned by the Royal Navy, was carried out by the Naval Transport Service under great danger to the crews concerned. That the Force was never short of anything essential is a result which speaks for itself.

2.—Period after the European Armistice.

The Port of Archangel began to freeze up in the first week of November, before the declaration of the Armistice, and it was then too late to withdraw the force until the port opened again.

The Bolshevik Forces, which, at the original landing, had been small in number, increased rapidly in strength and organisation. The most active propaganda was carried out amongst the rank and file of all the Allied Contingents by the enemy, and discontent showed itself in many places.

The British Contingent, thanks to the efficiency of its officers and the systematic physical training, which was found possible even under Arctic conditions, behaved magnificently. Many of the men were of low category, but they withstood the hardships they had to undergo with courage and spirit.

3.—Russian Mobilisation.

The objective of the Force at Archangel had now become the organisation and training of the Russian Forces, so that, with the opening of the port in June, 1919, the Russian Government might be in a position to continue the struggle by itself. Mobilisation was ordered in October, 1918, and proceeded quietly, there being few absentees. Training was under the supervision of British Officers, and the results achieved were excellent. I cannot speak too highly of the young officers sent out from England for this purpose. They raised, organised and trained the Russian Forces to a total of 25,000 men, and earned the respect of the Russians with whom they served.

4.—Winter Campaigning.

As the winter drew on the Bolshevik efforts to turn the Allies out of Archangel became stronger and stronger. The Allied Forces were often hard put to it to maintain their extended positions against superior forces. But during March and April we were successful in breaking up the final Bolshevik attacks with great loss, and the safety of the Force in Archangel was assured.

The passing of over 2,000 men of General Maynard's Murmansk Force as reinforcements from Soroka to the Archangel front by land route, a distance of 400 miles, using local sleighs, was a military achievement of which all could well be proud.

Fighting took place in over 80 degrees of frost, and, despite the Arctic conditions, the men carried out their duties magnificently.

The Bolshevik operations can be divided into four phases, as follows:—

(1) *Dvina River Offensive* (4th October-15th November, 1918).

A strong offensive after heavy bombardment by river gunboats during October and November immediately preceding the freezing of the Dvina. Matters were once or twice critical, but, frost intervening, the weak Allied Forces were given a respite. The defeat of our forces was prevented on one occasion by the exceedingly gallant behaviour of the drivers of a Canadian battery; on the 11th November they turned out and annihilated a strong enemy force which had got round the rear of our forces and threatened them with capture.

(2) *Shenkursk Offensive* (19th January-10th March, 1919.)

Our forces, practically Russian and American, had been pushed forward to this town, the most important after Archangel in the Northern Region. They were, from a military point of view, too far advanced, but it was decided for political reasons to maintain them there during the winter.

The evacuation undoubtedly raised the enemy's moral, and for a time his continued attacks against our Vaga front were the cause of great anxiety.

(3) *Offensive to cut off Dvina Force* (25th January-5th April, 1919.)

This took the form of heavy attacks against Tarasevo, Shred Mekrenga and Morjegorskaya. Our forces were forced to evacuate Tarasevo, but the enemy suffered heavy defeats at Shred Mekrenga and Morjegorskaya. Actions at these places were successful owing to the personal bravery and power of leadership of Major G. H. Gilmore, D.S.O., M.C., and Lieut.-Colonel J. W. Carroll, C.M.G., D.S.O., respectively. On several occasions the position was critical at both places, and it was solely due to the energy of these officers that our whole line had not to be withdrawn, which would have meant the collapse of the Dvina Force.

(4) *Vologda Railway Offensive* (16th March-18th April, 1919).

This started with a surprise attack against the village of Bolshe Ozerke, when the garrison of French troops and French Foreign Legion was overwhelmed. Had the enemy attacked on the railway at the same moment it is possible that the railway front would have collapsed. An attack against Volchenitsa was beaten off by Russian troops, and the situation settled down.

5.—Arrival of Relief Force.

The arrival of General Grogan's and General Sadleir-Jackson's Brigades enabled me to free all those who had spent a winter in North Russia and to ensure the disengaging of our forces when the time came to do so.

6.—Summer Operations.

During the Spring it was hoped that a junction with the forces of Admiral Kolchak could

be carried out near Kotlas, on the River Dvina. If this could have been effected the stability of the North Russian Government and its forces would have been secured and the withdrawal of the Allied troops carried out without difficulty. Owing to the retreat of the Siberian forces, however, it was soon evident that this hope could not be realised. Nevertheless, it was still intended to carry out an offensive on the Dvina as far as Kotlas, with the object of occupying the Bolshevik river base at that place. If this could have been reached and the enemy's river craft, wharves, depôts, etc., destroyed, the withdrawal of the Allied troops down the Dvina to Archangel could have been carried out without danger of any serious interference from the Bolsheviks. But, owing to the abnormally low water in the Dvina, which prevented our flotilla proceeding so far up the river, this project had to be abandoned and a disengaging blow struck at the enemy with a more limited objective.

With this intention an attack was carried out on the Dvina under Brigadier-General Sadleir-Jackson on 10th August. The attack was a complete success, very well carried out, and executed with a minimum of losses. All objectives were taken, and the advance ended with the capture of Puchega and Borok, 20 miles from our original position. We captured 2,296 prisoners. The enemy's casualties were estimated at 1,200 killed and wounded, whilst our losses were thirty-seven killed, eighty-five wounded and twenty-two missing. On the other fronts operations were limited to disengaging our troops and substituting Russian troops and Russian administration for the existing British organisation.

The extremely successful operations of Jackson's Brigade on the Dvina freed that front completely, and I was able to report to Lord Rawlinson on his arrival as Commander-in-Chief, North Russia, that evacuation could be successfully carried out according to the plans already submitted.

7.—Mentions.

I wish to make special mention of the following:—

Brigadier-General H. Needham, C.M.G., D.S.O., who has directed the Administrative Services with complete success under very difficult circumstances.

Brigadier-General R. G. Finlayson, C.M.G., D.S.O., and Brigadier-General C. C. Graham, D.S.O., the Commanders of the Dvina forces.

Colonel R. P. Crawley, M.V.O., D.S.O., R.A.S.C., for the direction of the Supply Services. The forces were never short of food under most difficult conditions of warfare.

Major A. W. Coxon, A.P.D., for his single-handed work in directing the payments of the various contingents.

Lieut.-Colonel R. S. D. G. Stokes, D.S.O., O.B.E., R.E., ably seconded by Lieut.-Colonel Morris, U.S. Engineers, in the direction of all engineering work.

Amongst the Officers of the Allied Contingent I wish to make special mention of:—

Major Brook Nicholls, U.S. Army, for his stirring work through the winter.

Brigadier-General Wilds P. Richardson, U.S. Army, for his energy and tact in directing the evacuation of the American Forces.

Colonel Donop, French Army, for his help in all the *liaison* between the British and French troops.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,
(Sgd.) E. IRONSIDE,
Major-General.

DESPATCH No. 4.

(With Appendices A and B.)

From General Lord Rawlinson, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., A.D.C., Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces in North Russia, covering the period 10th August to 12th October, 1919.

11th November, 1919.

Decision of H.M. Government to withdraw British troops from North Russia.

In the spring of 1919 H.M. Government decided to withdraw the British troops from North Russia before the arrival of the winter ice closed again the ports to shipping.

This decision once taken, the question arose as to the best method of putting it into execution.

It was important to keep clearly in view two main objects. The first was that the actual operation of withdrawal, always attended with difficulties, should be conducted at the smallest possible cost to ourselves both in life and material. Secondly, there was the obligation which we owed to our Russian Allies of placing them in a favourable position to continue successfully the struggle against Bolshevism after our departure.

Judged from any sound military standpoint, it was evident that the surest way of attaining this dual purpose was to inflict a severe blow on the enemy forces at some period previous to our final withdrawal. Such an operation, if successful, would not only enable the withdrawal of the British troops to be effected unmolested, but would raise the morale of the Russian forces and strengthen their powers of resistance at what must necessarily be a critical time.

The forces at the disposal of Generals Ironside and Maynard were, however, few in number and composed of low category men selected originally as unsuitable for service in France, and further severely tried by the rigours of an Arctic winter. The despatch of reinforcements was necessary before the operations imposed on us by the decision to withdraw from North Russia in the autumn could be undertaken. Two infantry brigades, under the command of Generals Grogan and Sadleir-Jackson were sent, accordingly, in June to the Archangel front to effect the relief of the tired troops and generally strengthen our position.

The value of this relief force was soon to be demonstrated, for it was the presence of these tried brigades which saved the situation when in July serious mutinies occurred among the Russian battalions on the Dvina and Onega fronts. The important part they played in the operations which eventually ensured the successful conduct of our withdrawal will be apparent in the course of this despatch.

Appointment and Instructions.

His Majesty's Government having decided to withdraw all British troops from the northern front, I received, on August 2nd, instructions to proceed to North Russia, and on my arrival assume command of the British and Allied troops operating in that theatre.

The intention of H.M. Government, as communicated to me, was the withdrawal of all British troops before the winter set in.

The evacuation of all Allied troops would take place at the same time.

My special task was to co-ordinate the movements of General Ironside and General Maynard on their respective fronts in co-operation with the Senior Naval Officer of the White Sea Fleet, who, though not under my command, would endeavour to meet my requirements as far as the exigencies of the service permitted.

The North Russian Government having expressed the intention of maintaining themselves and their troops after the departure of the Allied forces, I was authorised to afford them all possible assistance compatible with the safety of the British and Allied troops and the arrangements necessary for their timely evacuation.

With this object in view I was at liberty to co-operate with the troops under my command in such operations as the North Russian forces might undertake, and which, in my opinion, were calculated to achieve their purpose and facilitate my withdrawal. I was further authorised to hand over, at my discretion, military equipment, arms, ammunition, stores and supplies to the North Russian Government before my departure.

Departure.

I left England on August 4th for the North Russian front.

Summary of Military Situation on North Russian Front.

At the date of my departure, military operations in North Russia were being conducted by independent commanders in two distinct theatres separated from each other by the White Sea. These theatres will for convenience be called the Murmansk front and the Archangel front.

(a) Murmansk Front.

On this front a Composite Force, under the command of Major-General Sir C. C. M. Maynard, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., consisting roughly of 7,000 Allied troops (5,000 being British) and 9,000 local levies, was in occupation of the ice-free ports of Peohenga and Murmansk, and guarded a long line of communication extending south along the Murman railway through the White Sea ports of Kandalaksha and Kem as far as the northern extremity of Lake Onega, where a short and strong front was held.

The enemy forces were estimated to number some 5,800 men, and occupied a position astride the railway in the area between Lakes Onega and Ladoga. They were based on Petrozavodsk and Petrograd.

Little activity had been shown on this front throughout the winter, but General Maynard had gradually eaten his way forward during the early summer, until he was able from his positions in the neighbourhood

of Kyapaselga to threaten Petrozavodsk, whence an advance on Petrograd presented no great difficulties.

The country in which our front line was now established was admirably adapted for defensive purposes. Further, the inhabitants displayed distinct anti-Bolshevik tendencies, so that the danger of a successful advance northward on the part of the enemy, even if attempted at all, was extremely remote.

The chief difficulty which confronted General Maynard on this front was the adequate protection with the small number of troops at his disposal of the single line of railway which formed the main communication with his base at Murmansk some 500 miles distant.

(b) Archangel Front.

On this front Major-General Sir W. E. Ironside, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., commanded an Anglo-Russian Force of approximately 37,000 troops, of whom 13,000 were British, and was opposed by the Bolshevik Sixth Army, the strength of which was roughly 33,000.

The area occupied by General Ironside's force, the headquarters of which were at Archangel, stretched from Onega on the White Sea, Obozerskaya on the Archangel-Vologda railway, Seletskoe on the Yemtsa River, Kitskaya on the Vaga, Troitsa on the Dvina to Pinega due east of Archangel on the Pinega River.

Owing to the physical features of the country, which consisted almost entirely either of virgin forest or long stretches of impassable peaty swamp, locally termed "tundra," operations had been confined to the districts bordering the River Dvina and its tributaries, and astride the Archangel-Vologda railway, which further provided the only practical means of communication.

The Dvina is a large river, navigable for 300 miles up as far as Kotlas, and with an average breadth of about one mile. Its tributaries on which operations were taking place were:—

(a) The Yemtsa, which is crossed by the Archangel-Vologda railway about 20 miles north of Plesetskaya, and flows north-east, joining the Dvina 100 miles from Archangel.

(b) The Vaga, which flows due north through Shenkursk into the Dvina 50 miles above the Yemtsa.

(c) The Pinega, which flows due west from Pinega town and joins the right bank of the Dvina 50 miles from Archangel.

The Allied forces on this front had experienced some difficulty during the winter months in maintaining their positions against the Bolshevik attacks, but the arrival in June of Generals Grogan's and Sadleir-Jackson's brigades not only stabilised the situation, but placed General Ironside in a position to deal the enemy a severe blow as and when the opportunity should occur. The value of the presence in North Russia of these reliable troops was felt when in July two serious mutinies broke out.

The first of these occurred at Troitsa on the Dvina River on July 7th among two companies of the 1st Battalion of the Slavo-British Legion, recruited originally from

Bolshevik deserters and prisoners, and known as "Dyer's Battalion."

The mutiny, the result of a careful Bolshevik plot, was promptly quelled, and the battalion disarmed, but before discipline was restored five British and four Russian officers had been murdered.

A second and more serious mutiny broke out on July 20th among the troops of the Russian National Army holding the Onega sector of the Archangel front. No previous indication of disaffection had been shown, but Bolshevik propaganda was found subsequently to have been carried out on a wide scale, with the result that the whole of the district, which included the town and port of Onega, was handed over by the mutineers to the enemy.

The situation was critical for several days, and, had it not been for the presence of a compact force of British troops, and the prompt manner in which General Ironside handled his available resources, the safety of Archangel itself would have been seriously endangered.

As it was, the Allied forces holding forward positions on the Dvina River and the Vologda railway found the presence of a large hostile force on their western flank a standing menace to their communications with Archangel.

The Commanders of the Allied Forces on both fronts had patiently pursued for some time a declared and consistent policy. This policy was so to organise the Russian civil administration and train the local levies as to render them capable of independent action when later they would be deprived permanently of British leadership and guidance.

Arrival at Archangel.

After a short stay of a few hours at Murmansk, during which I was able to make an inspection of the port, I arrived at Archangel on August 11th.

Policy recommended to the North Russian Government.

My plan for the co-ordination of the withdrawal of the British forces from the Archangel and Murmansk fronts depended to a large extent on the decision which General Miller should reach with regard to the general conduct of the campaign after our departure. The real question he had to decide was whether he would continue to defend both the Archangel and Murmansk fronts, or, simultaneously with our withdrawal, evacuate Archangel and concentrate all his available resources on the western shores of the White Sea.

A careful study of the situation as described in the reports and appreciations of Generals Maynard, Ironside and others, had convinced me that his best and safest course of action from the military point of view was to evacuate Archangel, while maintaining his position on the Murmansk front.

I was anxious, however, before deciding definitely on the nature of the advice which I should tender to the North Russian Government, to make myself acquainted at first hand with General Miller's political and military views as well as those of the commanders on the spot.

I, accordingly, not only discussed the situation very fully and in all its aspects with

Generals Ironside and Maynard (who had come over from Kem for the purpose) and Mr. Hoare, the acting British Commissioner at Archangel, but also took the first opportunity of approaching General Miller on the question of the defence of both fronts after our departure.

These conversations only served to strengthen the conclusions I had already formed in my own mind, and I decided to recommend General Miller to agree to the following proposals:—

(a) The abandonment of the defence of Archangel after our departure.

(b) The evacuation to other parts of Russia of those amongst the civil population who might be victims of Bolshevik reprisals.

(c) The transfer of the North Russian Government to Kem or Murmansk.

(d) The concentration of all the best elements among the Russian troops for the defence of the Murmansk front.

Arguments in favour of the complete evacuation of Archangel.

The reasons, both military and political, which influenced my opinion can be briefly stated.

In the first place, the strategic importance of the Archangel front had been greatly reduced by Admiral Koltchak's forced retirement. Any hope of a junction with his Army at Kotlas before the winter had been necessarily abandoned, with the result that small advantage would be gained by a further advance up the Dvina with no definite objective in view.

On the other hand, a successful offensive southward along the Murman railway would not only place General Miller in a position to threaten Petrograd, but would enable him to join hands with the Army of General Yudenitch in combined operations for its capture.

Secondly, as a result of conversations with Generals Maynard and Ironside and a careful study of the reports of their subordinate commanders, I had reached the following general conclusions:—

(1) That the troops which would be at General Miller's disposal after our departure were inadequate for the task of defending both fronts against a sustained offensive on the part of the enemy.

(2) That there was danger of the spread of Bolshevism.

I therefore doubted very much General Miller's ability to defend his widely extended lines, should the enemy attack his troops on either front with any determination after our departure.

His chance of making a successful defence would, in my opinion, be greatly improved by the transference of the reliable elements among the Archangel forces to the Murmansk front, where, as I have pointed out, he would also find himself in a more favourable position to take the offensive should an opportunity present itself later.

It is true that the abandonment of Archangel would constitute a moral as well as a physical loss which the enemy would no doubt exploit to the full, but I felt that the risk incurred by an attempt on the part of the North Russian Government to defend that town, endangering as it did the lives of women and children, could not be justified in the face

of the strong military argument for concentration on a narrower front.

Further, provided we had taken the precaution of removing those portions of the civil and military population irretrievably committed to the cause of anti-Bolshevism, I very much doubted whether the enemy would resort to excesses after assuming unopposed the government of the district.

Decision of North Russian Government to defend Archangel after our Departure.

I lost no opportunity of pressing my views both on General Miller and the civilian delegations which waited upon me to request a postponement of our departure.

On August 19th, however, General Miller and the leading representatives of the North Russian Duma, though still urging me most strongly not to withdraw the British troops, informed me of their decision to defend Archangel.

Arguments based on the recent improvement in the morale of the Russian troops, the successful inauguration of a recruiting campaign, and the gradual weakening of the Bolshevik forces in the Northern theatre were advanced in support of this decision, but I was convinced that General Miller and his colleagues were chiefly influenced by the receipt of orders from Admiral Koltchak to hold Archangel at all costs, and feared the loss of prestige which would be entailed by the surrender of Archangel at the moment when General Denikin was gaining important successes in the south.

They did not realise the rapid spread of a powerful Bolshevik propaganda both in the country districts and in the town of Archangel itself.

As a consequence, they were unwilling to admit the difficulties of the position in which they would find themselves after British support had been withdrawn, or to appreciate the fact that the great majority of the population regarded the possible triumph of Bolshevism in the Northern region with indifference, if not with favour.

Importance of undertaking offensive operations previous to withdrawal.

In considering the problem which confronted me I had from the first been impressed by the necessity of undertaking offensive operations on both fronts.

To extricate troops in contact with the enemy is always a delicate operation, and in the case of our withdrawal from North Russia the difficulties were increased by the fact that the enemy not only knew of our intention to withdraw, but was in a position to forecast with accuracy the date when that intention would be put into execution.

It was, therefore, of great importance so to weaken our opponents as to render them incapable of seriously hampering our retirement, and I considered that to deal them a blow previous to its commencement would be the surest method of securing this result.

I had, accordingly, before leaving England cabled to both Generals Ironside and Maynard instructing them to make preparations to carry out a limited offensive on their respective fronts with a view both to facilitating our own withdrawal and also raising the morale of the Russian troops and placing them in as favourable

a position as possible to carry on the campaign after our departure.

I had at the same time arranged for the dispatch to North Russia before the end of August of two battalions of infantry, two companies of machine guns, artillery and engineer personnel and five tanks. This force would constitute a general reserve under my orders ready to deal with any further mutinies that might occur or to meet an unforeseen emergency.

Effect of victory on Dvina Front.

On my arrival at Archangel I received news of a very successful operation carried out on August 10th on the Dvina River front. British and Russian troops, under the command of Brigadier-General Sadleir-Jackson, had attacked the enemy, gaining all their objectives.

The greater proportion of six enemy battalions were killed, captured or dispersed, and over 2,000 prisoners, 12 field and many machine guns taken.

This victory had important consequences. Their severe losses in men and material placed the Bolshevik forces on this front temporarily out of action, and there appeared every chance that our withdrawal down the Dvina would be carried out unmolested, provided it took place before the enemy had time to recover.

The result of our attack on the Dvina strengthened my determination to deal the enemy a similar blow on the Murmansk front.

I accordingly instructed General Maynard to prepare a plan of operations for my approval, informing him that I would place at his disposal an infantry battalion, the personnel of two R.F.A. batteries and one field company R.E., these troops forming part of the general reserve, due to arrive in North Russia before the end of August.

General plan for co-ordinating our withdrawal on both fronts.

On my arrival at Archangel I communicated to Generals Ironside and Maynard my general plan for the co-ordination of the withdrawal of the British troops on the two fronts.

The troops on the Archangel front would be withdrawn first. Simultaneously with the commencement of this operation an offensive would be launched on the Murmansk front, to be followed immediately by the withdrawal in their turn of the Allied forces engaged.

I decided that General Maynard's troops should proceed by rail to Murmansk, where they could await in security the arrival of the shipping necessary to transport them to England.

I considered this method of withdrawal preferable to the alternative, which was to embark the troops at Popoff, at the mouth of the Kem River, owing to the unsuitability of that harbour for ships of deep draught.

It was possible, however, that a breakdown on the railway, or some other emergency, might necessitate the use of the sea route, and I therefore gave instructions for a plan of embarkation to be prepared, which could be put into operation should the occasion demand.

As General Maynard had expressed anxiety with regard to the safety of his long line of communication in view of the very limited number of British troops at his disposal, I arranged with Rear-Admiral Green, S.N.O., White Sea Fleet, for the monitor "Erebus"

to be stationed at Popoff when she reached North Russian waters, as well as the battalion of marines which had already arrived.

Approval of General Ironside's plan for Evacuation of Archangel.

The plan which General Ironside had drawn up for the withdrawal of his British troops, and the evacuation from Archangel of personnel, both British and Allied, together with Russian civilian refugees, was excellent and had my entire approval. It had been carefully worked out and was sufficiently elastic to meet all eventualities. His scheme of operations provided for the retirement of his troops by successive stages to the inner defences of Archangel, a distance of ten miles from the town itself, which position they would hold until their final embarkation.

I fixed September 1st provisionally for the commencement of the operation. Should, however, the water in the Dvina river be insufficient to allow of the passage down to Archangel of the monitors and other naval craft (which was more than probable owing to the exceptional dryness of the season), the retirement could be postponed provided the final embarkation was completed by September 30th.

The decision of General Miller to defend Archangel had the effect of considerably simplifying the various administrative problems connected with our withdrawal, especially those arising from our obligation to provide shipping for all such as could reasonably demand evacuation.

Though it was difficult to estimate accurately the numbers who might desire to leave, and the possibility of a panic at the last moment had always to be considered, I was very hopeful that the ships placed at my disposal by the Admiralty would be sufficient to transport practically all Russian refugees direct either to South Russia or the Baltic Provinces, and that the administrative difficulties entailed by the housing and feeding of a large number of helpless towns-people in the inhospitable region of the Kola Peninsula would be avoided.

Summary of Events.

The story of the five weeks which preceded the final withdrawal of the Allied troops from North Russia can be grouped under two main headings:—

- (1) The operations undertaken by Generals Miller and Ironside with my concurrence and support on the Railway and Onega fronts.
- (2) The offensive conducted by Generals Maynard and Scobeltsin in the neighbourhood of the Lijma Gulf.

I have already pointed out the important relation which a successful offensive on the Murmansk front would bear to the safe conduct of our withdrawal, and the main object which the main operations were intended to serve. The purpose of the Russian offensive on the Archangel front, however, and more particularly the rôle played in it by British troops, requires some further explanation.

Postponement of date of withdrawal from Archangel Front.

General Miller had been anxious for some time to commence an offensive on an ambitious scale on the Onega and Railway fronts. Though I had at first felt grave doubts with regard to the wisdom of such a venture in view of the further dispersion of his forces which

an increase in the perimeter of the Archangel defences would necessarily entail, a development in the situation towards the end of August convinced me that a limited offensive undertaken in the early days of September would not only serve to raise the spirits of the Russian troops, but would also materially assist in covering our eventual retirement.

The continuous fine weather had caused the Dvina to fall several feet, and I felt in consequence some anxiety with regard to the withdrawal of the naval craft.

Two monitors, M.25 and M.27, were still in a forward position, and, though they had been lightened by the removal to barges of the guns and the heavy parts of the engines, a rise of nearly two feet must take place before they could pass down over the bars.

I was particularly anxious to save the whole of the naval flotilla, and, in the hope that the river might rise again in the next fortnight, decided to postpone the date for the commencement of General Ironside's withdrawal to September 10th.

As it was calculated that the last defensive line around Archangel could be reached within five days from the commencement of the operation, there was no fear of any failure to complete the evacuation before the end of September.

The postponement of General Ironside's withdrawal had, however, this important consequence. It allowed time for the enemy to recover from the effects of General Sadleir-Jackson's victory on August 10th, and, should he do so, the main purpose which we had set out to achieve would be defeated.

I felt that such a contingency must be avoided at all costs, and, with this end in view, agreed to support General Miller's project for a general offensive on the Railway, Seletskoe and Onega fronts to be launched in the last days of August. I hoped that these operations would fill the gap between the Dvina attack and the date now fixed for our withdrawal, and serve the same purpose of temporarily weakening the enemy and facilitating our retirement as was intended by the offensive in course of preparation on the Murmansk front.

I made it clear, however, to General Miller that, though his enterprise had my full support, British participation would be confined to the employment of not more than two companies of infantry.

Russian Offensive on Railway and Onega Fronts.

The purpose of the offensive operations originally proposed by General Miller was to gain the line Verkhotoimski—Shenkursk—Tarasovo—Plesetskaya—Onega.

The Russian battalions on the Dvina and Vaga Rivers were, however, too weak both in numbers and moral to permit of the realisation of so ambitious a project, and General Miller was compelled to modify his plan to suit the true facts of the situation.

As a result, the idea of an offensive on the Dvina and Vaga was abandoned, and the plan of operations restricted to the capture of Tarasovo and Plesetskaya (on the Vologda Railway), while it was further hoped by detaching a force to block the head of the Onega Valley east of Plesetskaya, to bring about a retirement of the Bolshevik forces from Onega town and district.

General Miller was anxious that simultaneously with the attack on the Railway front troops should be landed to co-operate with Colonel Daniloff's detachment in an advance on Onega town, and he requested my assistance for this purpose.

I consented to the employment of British troops in this enterprise so soon as I was assured of the success of the main operations. In the meantime, I arranged with Rear-Admiral Green for a naval demonstration, to take the form of a bombardment of the town and port of Onega and a feint at landing troops preparatory to their occupation.

I considered that this display of strength might be sufficient alone to achieve General Miller's main object and prevent the enemy from reinforcing his troops on the railway front, even if it did not compel him to evacuate the Onega Valley altogether. The demonstration was carried out on August 29th and 30th.

Operations commenced on the 29th August with a simultaneous advance of independent columns on the Railway and Seletskoe fronts.

The main attack down the railway, in which the Russian troops were supported by two companies of Royal Fusiliers (which included many Australians) was a complete success in its initial stages, and resulted in the capture of the village and station of Emtsa with ten guns and over 500 prisoners. Later in the day, however, the enemy succeeded, with the aid of several armoured trains, in driving back the Russian troops who had relieved the Fusiliers in Emtsa village, and the ground lost was not finally recovered until the evening of August 30th.

On the Seletskoe front the village of Kodish, 15 miles east of Emtsa, was captured with some 90 prisoners, but an attempt to advance east of Mekherenga River met with no success.

On September 1st the enemy delivered a skilfully planned and determined attack on Bolshoi Oserke, a village situated on our flank and rear 15 miles west of Obozerskaya. Its defeat by the two British companies which had attacked with such success on August 29th, coupled with the effective bombing operations carried out by our airmen, enabled the Russian troops to recover from the check which they had suffered, and to continue their advance on both fronts.

In the meantime, Colonel Daniloff's detachment on the Onega front had not been idle. Nijmozero, on the Onega—Archangel road, was occupied without opposition on September 4th, and the column advancing along the coast road, supported on the flank by our monitors, entered Onega on the 10th.

By September 10th, the date fixed for the commencement of our withdrawal, the Russian forces had succeeded in reaching the general line Tarasovo—Sheleksa—Onega, and the enemy appeared to be evacuating the whole of the Onega Valley.

General Miller was naturally elated at the successes gained by his troops, and especially at the retirement of the enemy on the Onega front.

He informed me that he had decided to hold the general line Onega—Onega Valley—Plesetskaya—Tarasovo—Beresnik (at the junction of the Vaga and Dvina Rivers) after our withdrawal. It was true that this line had not yet been reached along his whole front, but he considered the Russian morale to be good, and expected further successes.

I, myself, was quite satisfied with the result of the offensive, the success of which, due in large measure to the effective bombing of the enemy's defensive position and lines of communication carried out by our aeroplanes, had exceeded my expectations.

The ease with which large tracts of country had been regained had done much to raise the morale of the Russian forces and increase their confidence in themselves at the critical moment when the departure of the British troops was about to put their fighting abilities to the proof.

At the same time, the operations had served my purpose of so distracting the enemy during the period which intervened between the Dvina attack in August and the commencement of our withdrawal in the second week of September, as to make it improbable that he would find himself in a position to hamper seriously our retirement.

As we shall see, my confidence was justified by the event, and, save for a short-lived outburst of activity on the Dvina and Pinega fronts between September 6th and 10th, the difficult operation of extricating our troops and handing over the defence of the front to the Russians was accomplished without serious hindrance on the part of the enemy.

Offensive on Murmansk Front.

I now come to the second of my two main headings, the offensive operations undertaken by Generals Maynard and Scobeltsin, in the neighbourhood of the Lijma Gulf.

As I have pointed out, it was all-important that the operations, if they were to achieve their main purpose, should immediately precede the date fixed for the commencement of the withdrawal of the Allied troops, and that no long period should intervene between the two events, as had happened on the Archangel front in the case of the Dvina offensive.

Under my general plan for the co-ordination of operations on the two fronts our offensive was timed to take place simultaneously with the initial stages of General Ironside's withdrawal.

The date for the commencement of this operation was now fixed for September 10th, and I therefore decided that General Maynard's main attack should be launched on the 14th. This would allow sufficient time for the final objective to be reached and consolidated, should the operations prove successful, before it became necessary to withdraw the Allied troops which had taken part in the battle.

Under the scheme originally proposed these consisted of a Serbian battalion, two companies of the East Surrey Regiment, and the 6th Battalion, Royal Marine Light Infantry.

The Marines had, however, been engaged in preliminary operations, and General Maynard was anxious to reinforce the small British force detailed to take part in the main attack with the remaining two companies of the East Surreys.

I accordingly agreed to replace these troops on the lines of communication by transferring two companies of the 2nd Battalion, Highland Light Infantry, from Archangel, and instructed General Ironside to this effect.

In view of the limited number of troops at General Maynard's disposal, and the length of his lines of communication, I had in the first instance advised General Scobeltsin, the Russian Commander on the Murmansk front, to hold a defensive line around Medvyejya

Gora after our departure, and suggested that the operations to be undertaken before our withdrawal should be of the nature of a raid on a large scale, no attempt being made to hold the ground won.

I was unable, however, to obtain his consent to this limitation of our offensive action. He assured me that the morale of the Russian troops would be adversely affected by a retirement, even though voluntary, from positions which they had once captured, and advocated an advance of some forty miles to the line of the Suna River.

It is true that, provided the Shunga Peninsula was clear of the enemy, this line would provide the Russian Commander with a short and strong front to hold during the winter months, but the advance would entail a further extension of his already dangerously long lines of communication.

Further, the security of the position was altogether dependent on the permanent command of Lake Onega, for the Russian left flank could be effectually turned at any moment by an enemy landing near Lijma or at Vatenavolok, a contingency which, as we shall see, was actually realised.

I was anxious, however, to meet the wishes of General Scobeltsin as far as possible, and consented to joint operations to gain the Suna position being undertaken, though I made it clear that the arrangements already decided upon for their withdrawal would prevent any Allied troops operating south of the Nurmis River.

The plan of operations drawn up by General Maynard entailed the advance down the railway of two columns, composed of British and Allied troops, with Russians in support.

Simultaneously with the main advance flanking detachments of Russian troops would move against objectives on the railway further south in order to prevent the destruction of bridges and the escape of the enemy's more northern garrisons.

In addition, a third column, starting from Svartnavolotski, twenty-five miles west of the railway, had orders to take Koikori and proceed by a more westerly route on Konchozero.

General Scobeltsin was in general command of the Allied forces.

The offensive was launched on the 14th September, and in the case of the railway columns, met with considerable success from the start.

Lijma was taken without difficulty, and by the 16th the Allied troops had occupied the line of the Nurmis after sixty hours' continuous fighting.

In the meantime, however, the third column had remained practically stationary in front of Koikori. The village was defended with some determination, and the Russian troops appeared unable to push home their attacks.

The failure of the third column had far-reaching results on the whole operation, and destroyed any chance there might have been of reaching the line of the Suna River.

But, though the offensive had not met with complete success, its main object had been achieved. The morale of the Russian troops was good, and the severe loss inflicted on the enemy, amounting to nearly 1,000 prisoners and a large quantity of stores, had ensured the safe withdrawal of the Allied troops.

Withdrawal of British troops from Archangel Front.

As the date for the commencement of our

withdrawal approached there were unmistakable signs of renewed Bolshevik activity along the whole of the Archangel front.

The resistance to the Russian advance on the Railway and Seletskoe fronts had stiffened, and between September 6th and 9th frequent attacks were made on our advanced positions on the Dvina.

This sudden outburst of energy convinced me that the enemy had to some extent recovered from the effects of General Sadleir-Jackson's victory in August. The attacks on the Dvina, though easily repulsed, had been launched with determination, the tactics and leading of the Bolshevik troops were reported as good, and there was every indication that our opponents not only had reliable information as to the date of our withdrawal, but intended to follow it up.

The offensive attitude of the enemy was not confined to the banks of the Dvina.

Since September 7th he had displayed considerable activity on the Pinega front.

His efforts to surround our troops and cut off their retirement down the river had been frustrated, however, by General Grogan's skilful employment of his aircraft. These not only gave timely information of an enemy concentration, but succeeded in inflicting by means of bombs and machine guns such severe casualties on the Bolshevik forces, which were attacked while crowded together on river barges, that they fled in all directions in a state of panic and demoralisation.

Though the Bolshevik attacks on British troops had met with little or no success, I felt some anxiety lest the powers of resistance of the Russian troops might be put to too severe a test, should the enemy continue to attack with determination after our withdrawal.

With regard, however, to the successful conduct of our own retirement I had no misgivings. Even if the Russian defence broke down I was confident that the minefield above Troitsa and the demolitions which we should carry out on the railway as we withdrew would effectually delay for some days, if not weeks, the advance of any large body of the enemy, and by that time all British troops would have safely embarked.

As events turned out, except for a sharp brush with the enemy at the junction of the Vaga and the Dvina owing to the failure of the Russians to cover the retirement of our troops down the former river, the operation of withdrawal on the several fronts was carried out strictly in accordance with the programme and practically without incident.

General Sadleir-Jackson commenced to withdraw his troops during the night of the 9th/10th September, handing over on the 16th the command of the Dvina front to the Russians who were holding the line Beresnik-Prilotski.

By September 22nd all British troops had reached their positions on the inner defences of Archangel, and a most difficult military operation had been successfully accomplished.

The withdrawal of the Naval flotilla had also proceeded according to plan, though, as I had feared, the exceptional dryness of the season defeated every effort to save the monitors M.25 and M.27. They were blown up on September 16th.

Completion of Archangel evacuation.

Before giving an account of the final embarkation I must briefly summarise the progress which had been made in the evacuation from

Archangel of civilians of various nationalities and Russian refugees.

The policy adopted was to offer passages in the first place to all who might be the victims of Bolshevik reprisals on account of assistance rendered to us during the term of our occupation. In addition other applications for evacuation were favourably considered provided a Board of Intelligence Officers appointed for the purpose were satisfied of their genuineness.

In no case was a passage refused which passed the required test.

Many availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them to proceed to the Black Sea or Baltic Provinces, but on the whole the poorer classes did not come forward in the numbers expected. As a result, when the last ship detailed to carry civilians left Archangel on September 25th the total numbers evacuated had not reached six thousand.

As the date fixed for the final embarkation of the British troops approached it was evident that the anxieties of General Miller correspondingly increased.

Though the fronts were reported to be quiet and the enemy appeared to have generally abandoned his recent offensive attitude, he was apprehensive lest a section of the inhabitants of Archangel, who had Bolshevik tendencies or were otherwise ill-disposed towards his government, should seize the opportunity created by the departure of the British troops to riot and wreck the public buildings and shops of the town.

I was, of course, unable to accede to his request that British troops should be left behind to garrison Archangel.

I was anxious, however, to do everything in my power to assist the North Russian Government at this difficult period, and agreed to hand over for the maintenance of order two of the tanks which had been sent from England as part of my general reserve.

I was under a distinct obligation to leave the North Russian Government in a position to continue their resistance to Bolshevism after our departure, and, accordingly, instructed General Ironside to hand over such supplies, equipment, and stores as were both immediately available and at the same time, in my opinion, adequate to meet their requirements in the near future.

The story of the final evacuation of Archangel can be briefly told.

The arrangements made by General Ironside in consultation with Rear-Admiral Green for the withdrawal of his troops from the Archangel defence, and their embarkation on board ship under the protection of the Royal Navy, were skilfully planned and exceedingly well executed.

That the operation was carried out without the loss of a man, and that no single instance of a conflict between British and Russians has been recorded, testifies both to the efficiency of the staff work and the admirable conduct of the troops.

By 2 p.m. on September 27th the Allied evacuation of Archangel had been successfully completed, and by 6 p.m. on the same evening all transports had left the mouth of the Dvina homeward bound.

Withdrawal of British troops from Murmansk front and completion of evacuation of Allied troops from North Russia.

The withdrawal of the Allied troops from the

line of the Nurmis river had been successfully accomplished when the enemy achieved an initial success which, had it been followed up, might have involved a portion of the Russian Army in serious disaster. On the morning of September 25th a Bolshevik force, having succeeded in obtaining the temporary command of Lake Onega, effected a landing at Vatenavolok, and occupied Lijma village, thus turning General Scobeltsin's left flank and threatening his communications at a vital point. The position of the Russian troops further south appeared to be perilous, but no attempt was made by the enemy to cut their line of communication along the railway, and General Scobeltsin was permitted to withdraw his advanced troops at his leisure and establish himself securely on the line Lijma-Kavgora.

The situation, however, on our long and vulnerable line of communication along the Murman railway was causing me considerable anxiety, when, on receiving news on September 20th of the serious illness of General Maynard, I appointed Brigadier-General H. C. Jackson to carry out the withdrawal of the Allied troops.

The presence of parties of Bolsheviks and Red Finn deserters had been reported east of Kandalaksha, and a small detachment of British troops, sent on September 22nd to effect the arrest of certain suspicious characters at Kolvetsky, had been attacked while landing from boats and failed in its mission.

In order to support a stronger force which General Jackson was dispatching to Kandalaksha to clear up the situation at Kolvetsky and protect the Murman railway, I arranged with Rear-Admiral Green for the monitor "M. 23" and the seaplane ship "Nairana" to be placed at his disposal.

Further, in view of the inconvenience which would be caused at this stage through the cutting of the railway line by some party of evil-disposed marauders, I instructed General Jackson to accelerate the programme for his withdrawal, and at the same time arranged for the embarkation of a portion of his troops at Popoff and Kandalaksha.

Before leaving Archangel I had urged on General Miller the desirability of opening negotiations with the Finnish Government in order to obtain their active support in the organisation of the Russian resistance to Bolshevism on the Murmansk front.

The appearance of Red Finns in the Kandalaksha district provided another argument in favour of Finn co-operation, and I advised both Mr. Ermoloff, the head of the Russian Civil Administration in the Murmansk theatre, and General Scobeltsin to seize the earliest opportunity of approaching the Finnish Government with a view to inducing them to send two companies of White Finns to round up the small body of Red Finn deserters who were endangering life and property in that region.

As it was important that some troops should be found in the meantime to relieve the British and French garrisons under orders to depart, I consented to the retention of two Serbian companies for some days on the lines of communication.

On my arrival at Murmansk I found the arrangements for the final evacuation of the Allied forces well advanced, and by the evening of October 3rd the force which had been collected at Kandalaksha, having accomplished its mission, had left by sea and rail for the north.

That the acceleration of General Jackson's railway programme was a wise precaution was apparent when reports were received on October 5th of the burning of several railway bridges between Kandalaksha and Murmansk by Red Finn deserters. At one time I felt some anxiety lest the two Serbian companies, retained temporarily as garrisons at Kem and Kandalaksha, might be unable to continue their journey north in time to embark on the transport detailed for their evacuation.

The repair of the bridges, however, was effected with commendable promptitude by Russian Railway Engineers, and the whole Serbian battalion was concentrated at Murmansk by October 12th.

The progress made with the embarkation of the troops was so rapid that the end of the first week in October saw my task approaching completion. I, accordingly, decided to leave Murmansk on October 8th, handing over the supervision of the final stages of the evacuation to Brigadier-General Jackson.

In the meantime, the refitting of the naval craft for the voyage home had proceeded smoothly, and Rear-Admiral Green was able to arrange for the naval evacuation of North Russian waters to coincide with the departure from Murmansk of the last ships conveying British and Allied troops.

By the evening of October 12th the withdrawal from North Russia of the Allied forces, both naval and military, had been completed.

Conclusion.

When considering the best method of carrying out the task entrusted to me, I placed before myself two objects. It was my endeavour, in the first place, to ensure that the operation of withdrawal was conducted with the greatest possible economy, both in men and material; and, secondly, to render the North Russian Government all possible assistance in the struggle against Bolshevism which they had determined to continue after our departure.

The measure of success achieved I attribute to the satisfactory result of the offensive operations undertaken during the period immediately preceding our withdrawal. They not only enabled the commanders on both fronts to extricate the Allied troops and hand over a strong defensive line to the Russians at small cost,* but, further, had the equally important result of instilling a spirit of confidence and determination into all ranks of the Russian Army at a critical period.

In conclusion, I desire to bring to your particular notice the services rendered by Major-General Sir C. C. M. Maynard, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., and Major-General Sir W. E. Ironside, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., who, after experiencing the rigours and depressions of an Arctic winter, commanded their respective forces with great tact and determination, in face of many anxieties and under exceptionally trying local circumstances.

Further, they deserve high credit for the skilful manner in which the details of the final withdrawal were worked out and executed. On the accuracy of their calculations depended not only the safety of our own troops, but the success of our Allies after our departure. Owing to the illness of General Maynard the actual conduct of the retirement from the Murmansk front was entrusted to Brigadier-General H. C. Jackson, C.B., D.S.O. He deserves high commendation for the successful performance of a delicate operation of war.

I desire, further, to place on record my appreciation of the valuable and loyal assistance I have at all times received from the members of my own Staff. Brigadier-General S. E. Holland, C.M.G., D.S.O., by his complete military knowledge and habitual foresight and breadth of view, has performed the duties of Chief of the Staff to my complete satisfaction, whilst Brigadier-General G. N. T. Smyth-Osbourne, C.M.G., D.S.O., as head of the Administrative Services, has by his wide experience, his sympathy for departments and formations, and his consummate tact and discrimination ensured the smooth working of the military machine. I am much indebted to both these officers.

In combined naval and military operations, such as those entailed by the withdrawal of our forces from North Russia, the rôle played by the Royal Navy is of vital importance. It is not too much to say that without its wholehearted and cordial assistance my task could not have been successfully performed. The harmony and good comradeship which at all times existed between the sister Services, whether on the River Dvina, on Lake Onega, at Archangel, or during the final embarkation, ensured smooth and efficient working, and, in my view, formed one of the most prominent and gratifying features of the operations in North Russia. This highly satisfactory state of affairs was primarily due to the personal influence and characteristics of the Naval officers concerned, and I desire to record my very cordial thanks to Rear-Admiral J. F. E. Green, C.B. (S.N.O., White Sea), Commodore R. Hyde, C.B.E., M.V.O. (P.N.T.O., Archangel), and Captain E. Altham, C.B. (S.N.O., River).

To the Royal Air Force, and particularly to the Seaplane Service, a high measure of credit is due. Their indefatigable energy and daring, under conditions which were always hazardous, and sometimes attended by almost insurmountable difficulties, were not only valuable to the General Officers immediately concerned, but were in complete accordance with the high reputation and great traditions of the Royal Air Force. My special gratitude is due to Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Grey, D.S.O., Lieutenant-Colonel L. Tomkinson, D.S.O., and Lieutenant-Colonel R. J. Bone, D.S.O., and all officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Royal Air Force under their command.

(Sgd.) RAWLINSON,
General,

G.O.C.-in-C., North Russia.

* NOTE.—The total British casualties from August 10th until the final evacuation in October amounted to 44 officers and 277 other ranks, and of these a very small proportion were killed.

APPENDIX A to Despatch No. 4.

From Major-General Sir C. C. M. Maynard, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Commanding Allied Forces, Murmansk.

To General Lord Rawlinson, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., A.D.C., General, Commanding-in-Chief, North Russia.

War Office, London, S.W. 1,

25th October, 1919:

Sir,—

1. I have the honour to submit the following report relative to the operations carried out by

the Allied and Russian Forces under my command in the Murmansk Region from 1st March, 1919 (the date of submission of my last despatch) to the final evacuation of Northern Russia by the Allies in October, 1919.

Summary of Operations.

2. Throughout the period under review the operations of the Murmansk Force met with continued success, the Bolsheviks being driven back from the line of the Segeja River to the southern extremity of the Shunga Peninsula—a distance of 120 miles—and an area of over 10,000 square miles being wrested from them and placed under an orderly and welcome rule. Our losses throughout were slight, whilst the enemy suffered heavily, our captures including over 2,500 prisoners, six guns, some seventy machine guns, many thousand rifles, engines and rolling stock, and large quantities of ammunition and other warlike stores. In addition we captured in open fight three enemy armed vessels, whilst four more were sunk.

The most satisfactory of all results obtained, however, was the creation of a Northern Russian Army, which, if properly handled, promises to be capable of dealing successfully with any Bolshevik attempt to regain power within the Murmansk Region.

General Review of the Situation in March, 1919.

3. Although it was not until July that definite orders were received by me for the evacuation of all Allied troops from Murmansk before the coming winter, the probability of a decision on these lines being reached was known to me early in March. One of the main considerations affecting my policy during the spring and summer was, therefore, the necessity for raising a purely Russian force sufficiently strong to hold the Red Army in check and to maintain law and order behind the fighting front after the withdrawal of the Allies. A close study of the situation, however, revealed that no hopes could be entertained of raising such a force solely from material drawn from the area already occupied, for the available man-power admitted only of the enrolment of some 2,500 recruits, after making the minimum reductions required for the staff of the Railway Department and for labour at the base and on the line of communication. Moreover, the inhabitants of the area from Soroka northwards were for the most part of a turbulent class, and greatly under the influence of Bolshevik propaganda.

It was thus apparent that my main object could not be attained by adopting a passive attitude, and I therefore submitted to the War Office a scheme for a limited offensive, having in view an advance to the line Medveyjya Gora—Povenets at the northern extremity of Lake Onega. Such an advance, in addition to combating Bolshevik and anti-Allied propaganda, and opening up for recruiting a country the inhabitants of which were strongly anti-Bolshevik in sentiment, would have the following strategic advantages:—

(a) The occupation of the line selected would block all main avenues of approach to the north.

(b) My front would be considerably shortened.

(c) The extent of country to be watched by me to the west would be much reduced

owing to the proximity of the Finnish frontier.

This scheme received eventual approval, but whilst it was under consideration disturbances within my lines coupled with enemy action forced me to undertake preliminary operations under the winter conditions still obtaining.

Preliminary Operations.

4. Early in March my most advanced troops were holding the line of the Segeja River, together with villages on the lines of approach from the south twenty to thirty miles distant from the railway on either flank. My force, however, had been considerably weakened during the winter by the despatch of many of my British units as reinforcements for the Archangel front, and advantage of this was now taken by Bolshevik agitators to stir up unrest within my lines. This unrest became very widespread, and reached a head during the first week in April, when risings were planned at all centres of importance on my lines of communication. These risings, in which the extremists of my Finn Legion were seriously implicated, had been arranged in collaboration with the leaders of the Bolshevik forces, and were to take place in conjunction with a Bolshevik attack from the south. Thanks, however, to early and accurate information, it was found possible to deal satisfactorily with the internal situation before any attack in strength from the south could materialise, and a weak effort to drive us from Segeja was easily frustrated. As, however, the enemy was concentrating in considerable force at Urosozero with the evident intention of making a further and more determined attempt it was decided to forestall him by carrying out a surprise attack on 11th April. This proved completely successful, a severe defeat being inflicted on the enemy and Urosozero being occupied by us. This victory produced most satisfactory political results, and it threw great discredit on anti-Allied agitators, and persuaded many waverers to cast off definitely their allegiance to the Bolshevik cause.

Advance to Medveyjya Gora.

5. The decision regarding an advance to the northern extremity of Lake Onega having been left by the War Office to my discretion, orders were issued to put into effect the plan already drawn up for the occupation of the Medveyjya Gora—Povenets line. This was briefly to the effect that the operation should be carried out by three columns moving on an initial front of some 60 miles, and that an advance should be made in two bounds (A) Urosozero to Meselskaya and (B) Meselskaya to Medveyjya Gora.

(A) Urosozero to Meselskaya.

The right column, consisting of locally enlisted troops under British officers, was directed to clear the western and southern shores of Lake Segozero and protect the right flank of the force.

The centre column, composed mainly of British troops, was ordered to advance rapidly down the railway; whilst the left column, which consisted almost entirely of Russian troops, protected the left flank.

The advance commenced on 1st May, and the centre column occupied Meselskaya on 3rd May, after 48 hours' continuous fighting. The

capture of this village threatened seriously the lines of communication of the enemy on the west of Lake Segozero, and they withdrew rapidly, making good their escape to the south. The left column, after overcoming considerable opposition, established itself 20 miles east of Meselskaya.

(B) *Meselskaya to Medvyejya Gora.*

A pause of some days now ensued in order to accumulate the supplies and ammunition required, and to repair the damage done by the enemy to the railway during his retreat.

On 15th May the advance was continued by the three columns, which were now operating on a front of 35 miles, and by the night of 18th/19th May the centre column was within five miles of Medvyejya Gora. Here, however, the resistance offered by the enemy increased, and it was not until 21st May that the town was captured by a combined attack of British, French, Italian, Serbian and Russian troops.

According to plan, the right column, marching round the west of the enemy's main position, reached the outskirts of Medvyejya Gora on the early morning of 21st May, and by its threat to the enemy's line of retreat materially assisted the advance of the centre column. The left column occupied Povyenets on 18th May after several days' desultory fighting.

Comments on Foregoing Operations.

6. The above advance of over 60 miles was made across a wild area of forest, marsh and lake, in which such tracks as existed were almost impassable for wheeled traffic at that time of the year.

The Murmansk-Petrograd railway, consisting of a single line, is the main channel of communication through the area. It is extremely vulnerable owing to the large number of wooden bridges which carry it over the waterways, and the wholesale destruction of these by the enemy during his retreat impeded the pursuit of the centre column and added greatly to the difficulties of supplying its advanced posts.

The maintenance of the flank columns presented even greater difficulties, however, since all supplies and ammunition had to be conveyed for over 100 miles by tracks wholly unsuited to wheeled transport, and along which every bridge and culvert had been destroyed.

Operations were necessarily confined almost entirely to the attack and defence of localities covering such roads and tracks as were in existence, the enemy usually occupying entrenched positions, the flanks of which rested on a lake or marsh. The difficulty of carrying positions of this nature without undue sacrifice was increased by the impossibility of employing any considerable force of artillery. With the centre column, however, field guns were employed on railway mountings constructed in the local workshops and proved of great assistance.

The absence of aircraft during this advance was felt severely.

Situation after Capture of Medvyejya Gora-Povyenets Line.

7. The success which had attended the Allied and Russian arms did much to stimulate the mobilisation of the Russian Forces, and many recruits were obtained from newly occupied territory. It was therefore decided to concentrate in the forward area such units of

the Russian Northern Army as had received sufficient training, whilst every effort was made by the provision of schools of instruction and by the attachment of Russian officers to my Staff and to various departments to build up a Russian force which should develop into an efficient fighting machine capable eventually of taking over from the Allies the entire conduct of operations.

In the meantime a seaplane base and aerodrome were established at Medvyejya Gora by the R.A.F. units recently arrived from England, and a lake flotilla was formed of such motor-boats as I had been able to collect, repair and man, pending the arrival from home of more suitable and efficient craft with trained personnel.

The situation at this time was complicated by the presence of Finnish Volunteers in the neighbourhood of my right flank. These had crossed the frontier of Finland at the end of April, and had attacked the Bolsheviks in the Olonets region. They met with considerable success in the first instance, and advanced to within striking distance of Petrozavodsk, their most northerly detachments being in touch with my troops early in June. Various political considerations, however, prevented me from taking full military advantage of their co-operation, and later on they were driven back by the Red Forces, and ceased to be a material factor in the local situation.

By the end of May my positions around Medvyejya Gora and Povyenets had been consolidated, and a very successful start made in the raising of partisan troops along the eastern shore of Lake Onega. Moreover, in response to an appeal from the inhabitants of the Shunga Peninsula, which lies to the west of the northern half of the Lake, a detachment of Russian troops had been sent across to the Peninsula by water from Povyenets with reserve supplies of rifles and ammunition for the arming of the population. This proved the commencement of a widespread anti-Bolshevik movement which played an important part in subsequent operations and yielded eventually a very large number of recruits for the Northern Russian Army. It is hardly too much to say that the eviction of the Reds from the Shunga Peninsula and its occupation by Allied troops were mainly responsible for raising the loyal Russian Forces to a strength sufficient to enable them to undertake single-handed with a reasonable prospect of success the defence of the territory already won by them with Allied assistance.

Advance from Medvyejya Gora.

8. In its initial stage our occupation of the Shunga Peninsula gave cause for no slight anxiety. For communication with it was open only by water and, owing to my lack of reliable motor craft, the Bolshevik flotilla was able to render this communication most precarious. In view, therefore, of the important results likely to be obtained by the exploitation of our success in the Peninsula, I decided to endeavour to open up communication with it by land, and entrusted the task to Russian troops. These troops, however, failed repeatedly in the attempt, and their "moral" fell so low that there was grave danger of a complete breakdown of the whole Russian military organisation. British troops were therefore brought up, and, by a series of small but

decisive victories succeeded in establishing secure communication by road from Medvyejya Gora to the Peninsula.

This period proved exceedingly critical for the newly-formed Russian Army, for Bolshevik propaganda was very active in its ranks, and it appeared doubtful whether it would be possible to cope successfully with the state of dissatisfaction that existed. I determined, therefore, to follow up the successes recently gained, in hopes of thus restoring the confidence of the Russian soldiers, and by a further advance, bringing them into more direct touch with the strongly anti-Bolshevik peasantry of the south. Orders were issued accordingly for a forward move of some 15 miles by Allied troops to the line Svartnavolotski—Tivdiya—Kyapeselga—Shunga, which was occupied on 5th July after a number of sharp engagements in which the enemy lost heavily.

This further success, coupled with unremitting efforts to raise their "moral," had a most salutary effect on the Russian forces, which from now onwards showed a steady improvement in discipline and fighting capacity.

Position at the end of July.

9. On 23rd July news was received of a serious mutiny amongst Russian troops of the Archangel force, one of the results of which was the occupation by the Bolsheviks of the town of Onega. This constituted a threat to my communications about Soroka which could not be ignored, and I was forced to detail a mixed force to watch the approaches along the southern shore of the White Sea. This force had several successful skirmishes with the enemy, who finally evacuated Onega under combined naval and military pressure.

Meanwhile the position on my southern front was as follows:—

(a) The Bolsheviks had received strong reinforcements and, having driven back the Finnish Volunteers towards the frontier of Finland, were threatening to assume the offensive against my Force.

(b) My lake flotilla, now reinforced by personnel and material from home, had already won several victories over the far more powerful Bolshevik fleet, and in conjunction with the R.A.F., rendered the command of the northern portion of the Lake secure.

(c) In the Shunga Peninsula the anti-Bolshevik movement was spreading rapidly.

(d) East of Lake Onega Russian troops had advanced 30 miles, driving enemy detachments before them.

Having regard to the position outlined above, and in view of the approaching withdrawal of all Allied troops, it became necessary to decide the policy which it would be in the best interests of the Russian forces to adopt.

The Russian Authorities were rightly opposed to any retrograde movement, and I did not consider that a further general advance was practicable, without the employment of Allied troops, and these I was prepared to use only for a final blow immediately prior to our departure. It was therefore determined that the existing line should be firmly held, and that raids on a bold and extensive scale should be carried out by sea, air and land, in order to mislead the enemy and prevent him assuming the offensive.

This policy met with complete success, many of the raids—especially those combining flotilla and seaplane action—securing most satisfactory results.

Assumption of Chief Command by General Lord Rawlinson.

10. General Lord Rawlinson arrived at Murmansk as Commander-in-Chief, North Russia, on 9th August. At a conference held by him the policy I had adopted was approved generally, and it was decided that a portion of the reinforcements due shortly from England should be placed at my disposal to enable me to strike a blow at the Bolsheviks just previous to our withdrawal. Meanwhile, however, conditions in the Shunga Peninsula appeared so favourable as the result of our raiding policy, that sanction was given for Russian troops to endeavour to clear the whole Peninsula, and this was accomplished successfully by 19th August. This was followed by further successful action in the islands south of the Peninsula and also on the eastern shores of Lake Onega, whilst the enemy's communications were more than once cut by the destruction of important railway bridges both by raiding parties and by aircraft bombs.

Offensive Prior to Withdrawal.

11. The orders for the offensive prior to withdrawal, though drawn up by me with the concurrence of the Commander-in-Chief, were issued in the name of the G.O.C. Russian Forces under whose orders all Allied troops detailed for the operations were placed nominally. This was done in order that credit for the success which was anticipated should go to the Russian Commander, and thus increase his prestige and raise the "moral" of his men, whilst the eventual handing over of the whole front to the Russians would also be facilitated.

The final objective to be aimed at by the Russian Army was the line of the Suna River, which involved an advance of some 40 miles; but in order to conform with plans already drawn up for our withdrawal no Allied troops were to operate south of the Nurmis River.

The main advance was to be made down the railway by British troops, with Russians in support, coupled with flanking movements against objectives further south timed so as to prevent the destruction of railway bridges and the escape of the enemy's more northern garrisons. The troops employed on one of these flanking movements were conveyed by water from the Shunga Peninsula and achieved a very striking success. In addition to the main advance it was intended to move a considerable Russian force from Svartnavolotski by a more westerly route, but owing to the unexpected strength of the enemy's resistance in this theatre the attempt to push home the attack along this route was abandoned.

On the railway front, however, the operations met with complete success, and the line of the Nurmis was occupied on 16th September, after 60 hours' continuous fighting. During this phase the Bolshevik losses were very heavy, and, in addition to nearly 1,000 prisoners, we captured a large quantity of supplies, rolling stock and war material. After consolidating our position the Allied troops were withdrawn gradually, and by 20th September the whole conduct of operations was handed over to the Russian authorities.

The success, not only of our final offensive, but also of our advance down the railway for 120 miles southwards, was due in no small measure to the skill and energy displayed by Brigadier-General G. D. Price, C.M.G., who was in immediate command of the Allied troops on my southern front during the whole period dealt with in this report.

Final Evacuation.

12. On the withdrawal of the Allied troops from the fighting front I was compelled by ill-health to give up temporarily the command of the Murmansk Force, and the final evacuation was carried out under the direction of Brigadier-General H. C. Jackson, C.B., D.S.O., in accordance with previously arranged plans. These worked smoothly, although towards the close of our railway movements several bridges between Murmansk and Kandalaksha were burnt by Bolshevik sympathisers, and the presence of a party of freebooters near the last-named village necessitated punitive action. Any further risk, however, was avoided by arranging for direct troopship sailings from Kem and Kandalaksha respectively in the case of those units which were the last for evacuation.

Administrative Services.

13. Throughout the whole period under review the work thrown on the Administrative Staff has been heavy and varied. For it has included not only the necessary services for British, Allied and local troops, but also the economic administration of the whole occupied area (sanitation, labour control, etc.) the equipment of the newly-raised Russian forces and provision for their future needs, and the organisation and training of the Russian administrative services.

Owing to the lack of roads and of fixed transport establishments no system of supply on orthodox lines was possible, and it was found necessary to devise special expedients to meet the requirements of each stage of the operations. The railway was utilised to the fullest possible extent, and provided the equivalent of second-line transport for columns operating in its vicinity; but in all cases the necessity arose for the laborious building up of forward supply dumps before each successive advance. For this purpose, and for the daily replenishment of supplies with the troops, all forms of transport were used, pack transport, travois, local carts, W.D. vehicles, horse, reindeer and dog sledges, boats, and, in the later stages, light Ford box vans.

The organisation and training of the Russian administrative services proved a task of considerable difficulty, owing to an entire lack of Russian officers with any knowledge of administrative or departmental duties, and progress at first was slow and disheartening. By the time of our withdrawal, however, the Russians were able to take over all administrative arrangements with little noticeable dislocation or inconvenience.

Political.

14. The political problems with which I have been confronted and the means adopted by me for dealing with them have been reported already, and further reference to them now appears unnecessary.

The relations between my Headquarters and the local Russian Authorities have always been

most friendly, and the various officers commanding Allied contingents under my orders have invariably lent me their loyal support.

15. I wish to take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to Rear-Admiral J. F. E. Green, C.B., for the ready and valuable assistance lent me at all times by the Royal Navy.

The gallant work of the lake flotilla in face of heavy odds calls also for special reference; whilst it is difficult for me to express adequately the debt I owe to the extraordinary zeal, courage and skill displayed by the R.A.F. units serving under me.

16. I enclose lists giving the names of officers and other ranks whose services I consider worthy of recognition.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd.) C. M. MAYNARD,

Major-General,

Commanding Allied Forces, Murmansk.

APPENDIX B to DESPATCH No. 4.

From Major-General Sir W. E. Ironside, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Commanding Allied Forces, Archangel.

To General Lord Rawlinson, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., A.D.C., General, Commanding-in-Chief, North Russia.

War Office,

1st November, 1919.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the operations carried out by the Allied Forces under my command during the period 11th August, 1919, to 27th September, 1919.

1. I had already received instructions telegraphically from you, on your appointment in England as Commander-in-Chief North Russia, to carry out any necessary offensive operations, with a view to disengaging the forces under my command and carry out a complete evacuation. I was able to inform you on your arrival of the successful operations on the Dvina carried out by General Jackson's Brigade.

2. The efforts of the British training staff had organised and trained a Russian force of between 20,000 and 30,000 men of all ranks, sufficient in themselves to continue the defence, but in my opinion it was doubtful whether they had sufficient moral to stand by themselves.

3. The chief problems before me were:—

(i) The disengaging of British troops on all fronts and their substitution by Russian troops.

(ii) The substitution of a Russian Military Administration for the existing British one.

4. In accordance with the pre-arranged plans, already submitted to you, sufficient stores to take the Russians through the winter were handed over and the remainder shipped to England. All those persons desirous of leaving Archangel, and who had a call upon the British Government, were shipped to their various destinations. Work was exceedingly heavy and the Administrative Staff was tried to its utmost.

5. The withdrawal and final evacuation of the British forces was effected without the loss

of a man and was completed by September 27th, 1919.

6. I wish to call special attention to the final simultaneous embarkation of 8,000 fighting men, an operation which was only rendered possible through the magnificent work of the Royal Navy.

7. During this trying period all ranks of the Navy and Army behaved with great tact and forbearance, and not one single case of collision with the Russian Forces occurred.

8. I wish to make special reference to the following:—

Rear-Admiral J. F. E. Green, C.B., Senior Naval Officer, White Sea;

Commodore R. Hyde, Principal Naval Transport Officer, Archangel;

Captain E. Altham, C.B., Senior Naval Officer, Archangel River Expedition;

for their whole-hearted and efficient co-operation.

Brig.-General A. J. Turner, C.M.G., D.S.O.;

Brig.-General G. W. St. G. Grogan, V.C., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.;

Brig.-General L. W. de V. Sadleir Jackson, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.;

Lt.-Colonel R. E. Lavie, D.S.O., Durham Light Infantry;

the Commanders of detached Forces.

Brig.-General H. Needham, C.M.G., D.S.O., for his direction of the administration.

Colonel G. St. C. Thom, C.B., C.M.G., Army Medical Service, for direction of the medical care of the Forces.

Colonel C. A. Fisher, D.S.O., Army Ordnance Dept., for the most efficient direction of the evacuation of Army stores.

Lt.-Colonel Robin Grey, D.S.O., for his direction of the Royal Air Force, and for his courage and determination during the period of his command.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sd.) E. IRONSIDE,

Major-General.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

To be purchased through any Bookseller or directly from
H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:

IMPERIAL HOUSE, KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C. 2, and 28, ABINGDON STREET, LONDON, S.W. 1;

37, PETER STREET, MANCHESTER; 1, ST. ANDREW'S CRESCENT, CARDIFF;

23, FORTH STREET, EDINBURGH;

or from E. PONSONBY, LTD., 116, GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN.

Printed under the authority of HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
By Wyman & Sons, Limited, Fetter Lane, London, E.C. 4.

Tuesday, 6 April, 1920.

Price Four Pence Net.

