



SUPPLEMENT
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War Office, March 28, 1879.

DESPATCHES, of which the following are copies, have been received by the Secretary of State for War from Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford, Commanding the Troops in South Africa.

From the Lieutenant-General Commanding in South Africa to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for War.

Pietermaritzburg,

Sir, February 23, 1879.

1. I HAVE the honour to report that I left the posts on the Lower Tugela on the 17th instant, leaving Lieutenant-Colonel Law, R.A., in command of the district pending Colonel Pearson's return from Ekowe.

2. Since the above date, reports have been persistently circulated by the Zulus living on the border of an unsuccessful attack by the King's forces on Ekowe, about the 15th February. Every endeavour that was made to sift the report only appeared to confirm it, and the Border Agents and Bishop Schröder eventually believed in its truth. On the 20th February, however, I received by telegram from Fort Tenedos the letter from Colonel Pearson, a copy of which I enclose, by which you will see that up to the 18th instant no attack had been made, and that there was not a shadow of truth in the reports. It serves, however, to show how little credence can be placed in native statements.

3. There can, I think, be little doubt but that the Zulu army has been called up to the King's, and is probably at this time on the move. Its destination is stated to be to attack Nos. 1 and 4 Columns, while Colonel Glyn, from Rorke's Drift, considers raiding there is probable. An attack by a large force on the colony is possible, but its probability, I consider, depends on the state of the river.

From what I have seen and can gather it appears to me that the most important stations are in a fair way to be properly defended, though in some cases I believe a want of rifles for Colonial Forces is represented to be felt.

4. It will be observed by Colonel Pearson's letter that he counted upon hearing again from me before moving a portion of his force back from Ekowe; as, however, Lieutenant-Colonel Law reports he cannot induce a messenger to undertake the perilous duty, I am unable to count upon his return, and until he does so, I am quite unable to take any initiative beyond the frontier on that line. The only troops I have available for a field force there, after furnishing the necessary garrisons for the colony, are five companies of the 99th Regiment.

At Rorke's Drift, four or five of the seven companies of the 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment are alone available for other than garrison duties. Two companies of the 4th Regiment, and draft of the 1st Battalion 13th Regiment, I have despatched to Utrecht so as to strengthen Colonel Wood's (No. 4) column as much as possible.

With the same view the five companies of the 80th Regiment have been removed to Luneberg, while detachments of various mounted corps, will, I trust, soon reach him.

5. At the request of the High Commissioner, I have directed Colonel Rowlands to proceed himself to Pretoria, where, I am informed, the presence of a Senior Officer is at present much needed.

6. I beg to enclose a printed summary of a report received from Commandant Schrembrucker, Luneburg, dated 11th Feb., which will tend to show the manner in which the Zulus carry on warfare. Commandant Schrembrucker at once took measures to follow up the marauders and to inform Colonel Wood.

7. Colonel Wood, on hearing of the inroad dispatched Lieutenant-Colonel Buller, C.B., with the force as per margin,* on the 13th Feb., from Kaabula Camp. This officer on arrival at Luneberg, found that Umbilen and Manyanyoba had taken part in the attack. He therefore sent a

* Frontier Light Horse, Captain Prior Commanding; 63 Non-Commissioned Officers and men Dutch Burghers; Mr. Puy's commanding, 33 men. Wood's Irregulars, Major Leek 1st battalion 13th Light Infantry Commanding Corps; 1st Battalion, Commandant Henderson, 319 Natives; 2nd Battalion, Captain Hook, 98 Natives,