

the enemy—probably also to errors of judgment and want of administrative capacity on the part of Sir Charles Warren. But whatever faults Sir Charles Warren may have committed, the failure must also be ascribed to the disinclination of the Officer in supreme command to assert his authority and see that what he thought best was done, and also to the unwarrantable and needless assumption of responsibility by a subordinate Officer.

7. The gratifying feature in these despatches is the admirable behaviour of the troops throughout the operations.

I have, &c.,

ROBERTS, Field-Marshal,
Commander-in-Chief, South Africa.

From General Sir Redvers Buller to the Secretary of State for War.

(Through Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, G.C.B.,
Commander-in-Chief, Cape Town.)

Spearman's Hill,

SIR, 30th January, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that General Sir Charles Warren's Division having arrived at Estcourt, less two battalions, 10th Brigade, which were left at the Cape, by the 7th January, it moved to Frere on the 9th.

The column moved as ordered, but torrents of rain fell on the 9th, which filled all the spruits, and, indeed, rendered many of them impassable for many hours. To forward supply alone took 650 ox wagons, and as in the 16 miles from Frere to Springfield there were three places at which all the wagons had to be double spanned, and some required three spans, some idea may be formed of the difficulties, but these were all successfully overcome by the willing labours of the troops.

The 4th Brigade reached Springfield on the 12th in support of the mounted troops who had surprised and seized the important position of Spearman's Hill, commanding Potgieter's Drift, on the 11th.

By the 13th all troops were at Springfield and Spearman's Hill, and supply was well forward.

On the 16th a reserve of 17 days' supply having been collected, General Sir C. Warren, in command of the 2nd Division, the 11th Brigade of the 5th Division, the Brigade Division Royal Field Artillery, 5th Division, and certain corps troops, including the Mounted Brigade, moved from Springfield to Trichardt's Drift, which is about 6 miles west of Potgieter's.

I attach Sir C. Warren's report of his operations.

On the night of the 23rd, General Warren attacked Spion Kop, which operation he has made the subject of a special report. On the morning of the 25th, finding that Spion Kop had been abandoned in the night, I decided to withdraw General Warren's force; the troops had been continuously engaged for a week, in circumstances entailing considerable hardships, there had been very heavy losses on Spion Kop. I consequently assumed the command, commenced the withdrawal of the ox and heavy mule transports on the 25th; this was completed by midday the 26th; by double spanning the loaded ox wagons got over the drift at the rate of about eight per hour. The mule wagons went over the pontoon bridge, but all the mules had to be taken out and the vehicles passed over by hand. For about 7 hours of the night the drift could not be used as it was dangerous in the dark, but the use of the pontoon went on day and night. In addition to machine guns, six batteries of Royal Field Artillery, and four howitzers, the following vehicles were passed:—

ox wagons, 232, 10-span mule wagons, 98, 6-span, 107, 4-span, 52; total, 489 vehicles. In addition to these, the ambulances were working backwards and forwards evacuating the sick and wounded.

By 2 p.m. the 26th, all the ox wagons were over, and by 11.30 p.m. all the mule transports were across and the bridge clear for the troops. By 4 a.m. the 27th, all the troops were over, and by 8 a.m. the pontoons were gone and all was clear. The troops had all reached their new camps by 10 a.m. The marches averaged for the mounted troops, about 7 miles, and for the Infantry and Artillery an average of 5 miles.

Everything worked without a hitch, and the arrangements reflected great credit on the Staff of all degrees; but I must especially mention Major Irwin, R.E., and his men of the Pontoon Troop, who were untiring. When all men were over, the chesses of the pontoon bridge were so worn by the traffic, that I do not think they would have lasted another half hour.

Thus ended an expedition which I think ought to have succeeded. We have suffered very heavy losses, and lost many whom we can ill spare; but, on the other hand, we have inflicted as great or greater losses upon the enemy than they have upon us, and they are, by all accounts, thoroughly disheartened; while our troops are, I am glad and proud to say, in excellent fettle.

I have, &c.,

REDVERS BULLER,
General Officer Commanding.

From Lieutenant-General Sir C. Warren, to the Chief of the Staff.

Hatting's Farm,

SIR, 29th January, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to make the following report on the operations on the north side of Tugela, west of Spion Kop, from the 17th to the 27th of January, 1900:—

1. On the 8th January field orders were published constituting the 10th Brigade of the 5th Division a Corps Brigade, and placing the 4th Brigade in the 5th Division. The 5th Division thus constituted marched from Frere on the 10th instant, arriving at Springfield on the 12th instant.

2. On the 15th January I received your secret instructions to command a force to proceed across the Tugela, near Trichardt's Drift to the west of Spion Kop, recommending me to proceed forward, refusing my right (namely Spion Kop) and bringing my left forward to gain the open plain north of Spion Kop. This move was to commence as soon as supplies were all in, and the 10th Brigade (except two companies) removed from Springfield Bridge to Spearman's Hill.

3. I was provided with 4 days' rations with which I was to cross the Tugela, fight my way round to north of Spion Kop, and join your column opposite Potgieter's.

4. On the 15th January I made the arrangements for getting supplies, and moved the 10th Brigade on the following day; and on the evening of the 16th January I left Springfield with a force under my command, which amounted to an Army-Corps (less one brigade), and by a night march arrived at Trichardt's Drift, and took possession of the hills on the south side of the Tugela.

5. On the 17th January I threw pontoon bridges across the Tugela, passed the Infantry across by ponts, and captured the hills imme-