

available to enable an advance to be made into the Orange Free State. I hoped that the effect of such an advance, if adequately supported, would be to relieve the hostile pressure at Ladysmith, and between Ladysmith and the Tugela, and also between the Modder River and Kimberley. In pursuance of this policy, and with a view to facilitating offensive action as soon as the strength and organization of the troops at my disposal would admit of it, I directed Lieutenant-Generals Lord Methuen and Gatacre to remain strictly on the defensive. Lieutenant-General French, with his headquarters at Rensburg, was instructed to patrol the country round Colesberg, and to keep the enemy, into whose hands that place had fallen, from moving further to the south. Shortly after my arrival, the troops of the 6th Division, under Lieutenant-General Kelly-Kenny, reached Cape Town, and were despatched to Naauwpoort, one of the brigades being temporarily detached for employment under Lieutenant-General French. The duty assigned to Lieutenant-General Kelly-Kenny was to allay unrest and check disaffection among the Colonial population, and to open up the railway line as far as possible from Middleburg in the direction of Stormberg.

A subject which from the first attracted my special attention was the development and organization of the Colonial forces, of which I was inclined to think that sufficient use had not been made. I therefore arranged for one mounted corps to be raised by Colonel Brabant, to whom, with the approval of the High Commissioner, the rank of Brigadier-General has been given. Inclusive of this corps, it is intended to place a body of Colonial mounted troops, about 3,000 strong, under Brigadier-General Brabant's command, on Lieutenant-General Gatacre's right flank, for the purpose of guarding the eastern portion of the Colony and pushing back the enemy from the neighbourhood of Stormberg. The headquarters of this Colonial force will be at Dordrecht, where it will be in readiness to operate northward towards Jamestown. Two other regiments, designated at the particular request of the members "Roberts's" and "Kitchener's Horse," have also been formed, chiefly from men who have found their way to South Africa from various parts of the world. Additional corps are being raised by influential gentlemen in the Colony, and every encouragement and assistance are being given to the men who desire to enlist.

Shortly after my arrival the question of reinforcements had to be dealt with. I was reluctant to indent on the home Army for an 8th Infantry Division and an additional Cavalry Brigade, and I expressed the opinion that it would suffice to order out two more Line battalions (one from Malta and the other from Egypt), two companies of Mounted Infantry from Burma, and 13 Militia battalions from England for duty on the Lines of Communication. The failure of the second attempt to relieve Ladysmith may possibly necessitate the despatch of the larger reinforcement, which I was at first prepared to dispense with.

Since I have been here I have taken no steps to render active assistance to General Sir Redvers Buller, as he had a force at his disposal which seemed sufficient for the relief of Ladysmith, and, after being reinforced by the 5th Division, he had informed me that his task would not be rendered easier by a further addition to the number of his troops. More-

over, I had no troops to spare. The frontier of the Cape Colony was weakly held, and the attitude of a portion of the Colonists bordering the Orange Free State was in some cases doubtful, and in others disloyal. The conclusion I arrived at was that no sensible improvement in the military situation could be hoped for until we were prepared to carry the war into the enemy's country, and all my efforts have accordingly been exerted in that direction.

This plan was, however, attended with considerable difficulties. The two main roads leading from Cape Colony to the Orange Free State were held in force by the Boers at the points where those roads crossed the Orange River, and it seemed certain that the bridges over that river would be destroyed, if the enemy could be forced to retire to the northern bank. Moreover, I could not overlook the fact that, even if either of these routes could be utilized, the movement of an army solely by means of a line of railway is most tedious, if not practically impossible. The advantage is all on the side of the enemy, who can destroy the line and occupy defensible positions when and where they please. In a hilly, enclosed country, or where any large river has to be crossed, they can block the line altogether, as was proved in the case of Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen on the Modder River, of Lieutenant-General French on the Orange River, and of General Sir Redvers Buller on the Tugela.

A railway is of the greatest assistance, it is indeed essential to an army for the conveyance of stores and supplies from the base, and it is a most valuable adjunct if it runs in the direction of the objective, but, even then, a certain proportion of the troops must be equipped with wheel or pack transport to enable supplies to be collected, and to render the force sufficiently mobile to deal with many tactical difficulties which have to be surmounted owing to the greatly increased range and power of modern projectiles.

No organized transport corps existed when I arrived in South Africa. Some thousands of mules have been collected and a number of ox and mule wagons had been purchased, but what is known as the regimental system had been adopted, which consists in providing each unit with sufficient transport for its ammunition, baggage, and two or three days' supplies. Such a system may answer well enough for peace manoeuvres where the troops march short distances daily for a week or ten days, and where depôts are established in advance from which the regimental supplies can be replenished. But this system is quite unsuitable for extensive operations in a district where no food, and scarcely any forage can be procured, where advance depôts cannot be formed, and where all the necessaries required by an army in the field have to be carried for a considerable distance. It is, moreover, a very extravagant system, for during a campaign every corps is not required to be continually on the move. A certain number have to garrison important points and guard lines of communication, and for these transport is not needed. On the regimental system, the transport attached to such corps would remain with them, and would therefore not be available for general purposes, or, in the event of its being taken away from them, no one would be specially responsible for its supervision.

Major-General Lord Kitchener's experience