

Being under obligation not to disturb this meeting, Lieutenant-Colonel Colenbrander moved his column for the time being to Marais' Farm, 20 miles north-east of Pietersburg, where he remained until the 3rd May.

On this date he again moved south to resume operations against Beyers, whose followers were once more reported to be working back to their old ground near Pylkop.

Marching by Chuwespoort with 600 mounted men, he reached the junction of the Malip's and Olifant's Rivers at daybreak on the 5th. From here he swept up the valley of the Malip's hoping to hem in some of the enemy against the 2nd Battalion, Inniskilling Fusiliers, who had been directed to move down from the north through Malipspoort upon Pylkop.

After some difficult fighting in very intersected country, a junction between the two forces was effected on the 6th May, when it was found that the enemy had been cut in two, and that half their number under Van Staden had retired west over the Pietersburg railway line, whilst the remainder, under General Beyers himself, were falling back east upon Haenertsburg and Oud Agatha. This latter party was pursued by our mounted troops for some distance, Colonel Colenbrander's Infantry remaining in the meantime to search for Boer stragglers in the kloofs of the Malip's Valley. One Boer killed, 21 wounded, and 101 armed prisoners were the result of these operations, which necessarily terminated on the 10th May with the arrival, under a flag of truce, of General Beyers on his way to the meeting at Vereeniging.

Colonel Colenbrander then returned to his former camp at Marais' Farm.

4. By the 7th April the number of troops destined to act from Klerksdorp against General Delarey had become so large, that I decided to send down Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Hamilton to assume control, upon the spot, of the columns under Major-General W. Kitchener, Colonel Sir Henry Rawlinson, and Colonel Kekewich, to which was subsequently added a new one formed under Colonel Thorneycroft.

Sir Ian Hamilton arrived at Vaalbank (116) on the 8th April, and on the 10th he moved south to the line of the Brakspruit, where he entrenched his force for the night in a position extending from Rooiwal (156) on the west, to Klipstapel (7) on the east, Colonel Kekewich being upon the right, Colonel Sir H. Rawlinson in the centre, and Major-General W. Kitchener on the left.

On the 11th April, Major-General W. Kitchener and Colonel Sir H. Rawlinson moved from their bivouacs in a south-westerly direction, whilst Colonel Kekewich was ordered to march down to the junction of the Brakspruit with the Hart River. Soon, however, after Colonel Kekewich had moved off in the morning a determined attack was delivered upon his advanced guard, which was commanded at the time by Lieutenant-Colonel Von Donop. The enemy advanced rapidly to close quarters in very compact formation, the Boers riding knee to knee, and in many places in two ranks, whilst their attack was supported by a heavy fire from skirmishers upon both flanks. Many of the men of our advanced screen in forward positions were ridden over by the enemy, who pressed on rapidly to within 700 yards of the main body and convoy, keeping up an incessant magazine rifle fire from their horses as they approached.

Here, however they were checked by Lieutenant-Colonel Grenfell's troops, which were at the head of the main body, the Scottish Horse,

5th Imperial Yeomanry, and South African Constabulary dismounting and moving forward steadily on foot to meet the coming charge. This was the crisis of the fight, and it was one which terminated quickly with the complete repulse of the Boers and the death of their Commandant Potgieter, who was conspicuous in leading the attack until he fell only 90 yards in front of our troops.

So far, however, it was only a repulse, but the arrival of Lieutenant-Colonel Briggs with the Imperial Light Horse, detached upon the enemy's right flank from Colonel Sir Henry Rawlinson's force, turned the repulse into a rout.

Sir Ian Hamilton, who had reached the field, now ordered Colonel Kekewich to laager his wagons, and to join with Sir Henry Rawlinson's troops in a pursuit down the valley of the Hart River. A message was also sent to Major-General Kitchener directing him to swing round towards Vleeschkraal (97), so as to intercept any of the enemy who might endeavour to escape towards Wolmaranstad.

The line of retreat of the main body of the Boers led along the road to Schweizer Reneke, towards which place the pursuit was maintained for fully 18 miles. It was productive of most satisfactory results, for Colonel Kekewich's troops were successful in overtaking and capturing two 15-pr. guns, one pom-pom, and an ammunition cart, whilst 10 other vehicles and 36 unwounded prisoners fell into the hands of our different columns; 51 dead and 40 wounded Boers were also found upon the scene of the attack upon Colonel Kekewich's force.

This concentration of the Boers at Rooiwal appears to have been an important one; 1,900 men having been collected by Generals Kemp and Vermaas (in the absence of General Delarey) for a supreme effort against Colonel Kekewich's column. In fact, the whole of the Boers in the Western Transvaal seem to have been suddenly concentrated to strike a prearranged blow, the complete failure of which is now known to have been most damaging to their morale.

On the 13th April, Colonel Kekewich returned to Middelbult (239), and Major-General Kitchener and Colonel Sir H. Rawlinson to Driekuil (134). From this line Sir Ian Hamilton organized an easterly sweep of all his troops back upon Klerksdorp, a movement which terminated at 7 p.m. on the 15th, and resulted in the capture of 64 prisoners of war, two cape carts, and some stock.

On the 23rd April the whole of Sir Ian Hamilton's force again marched out westward from Klerksdorp to undertake the systematic clearance and removal of growing crops and supplies from the district. It was felt that the period required by the Boers for the election of delegates at their different meetings in this part of the country might be usefully employed in this way.

In the first instance, Major-General Kitchener moved by Hartbeestfontein (624) to Rietfontein (280); Colonel Thorneycroft, with his newly-formed column, to Paardeplaats (189); Colonel Sir H. Rawlinson to Goedvoertzicht (264); and Colonel Kekewich to Knoppefontein (28). On the 1st May, Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Hamilton, with the columns under Colonel Sir H. Rawlinson and Thorneycroft, went out to Boeschoepfontein (169), where a very large quantity of mealies was found. On the 3rd May Colonel Kekewich moved south to Doornbult (112), and by the 6th the whole of Sir Ian Hamilton's troops had moved forward into a position facing west between Rooirantjesfontein and Korannafontein (146), preparatory to a combined sweep,