

as to the provisions necessary in the future for the peace of the Protectorate.

I am hopeful that decisive results may destroy the power of the Mullah for further hostile action.

I have, &c.,

W. H. MANNING, Brigadier-General.

Commanding Somaliland Field Force.

From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force, to the Secretary of State for War.

Head-Quarters, Somaliland Field Force,  
SIR, Galkayu, 27th April, 1903.

1. I have the honour to report progress since my last despatch.

2. On the 10th instant I decided to utilize the time which must elapse before the arrival of the remainder of the troops and supplies from Galkayu, which were due on the 17th instant, by sending forward a strong reconnaissance to endeavour to discover the road to Wardair, and, if possible, to occupy that place, since, from native information, I gathered that the Mullah had abandoned both Wardair and Walwal and had retired to the west or north-west.

3. In order to make this move, which I had hoped would bring me within striking distance of the Mullah, I had ordered up every available man and all available camels. I felt that this advance was the limit to which I could proceed, since the state of camel transport would not permit of any further prolongation of my lines of communication, and I had hoped, by occupying Wardair, to be able to seize a number of the enemy's camels.

I had arranged for the arrival of 350 of the 2nd Sikhs and 70 3rd Battalion King's African Rifles at Galadi on the 17th instant, so that, on the return of the reconnaissance, I should be able to advance on Wardair with nearly 1,000 men.

4. I ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe with the following troops, taking six days' water and supplies, to proceed in the direction of Wardair, starting on the 10th instant:—

|                                  | Men. |
|----------------------------------|------|
| 1st Bn. King's African Rifles .. | 120  |
| 2nd Bn. King's African Rifles..  | 280  |
| 5th Bn. King's African Rifles..  | 50   |
| 2 guns .. .. .                   | 20   |
| Mounted Infantry .. .. .         | 50   |
| Total .. .. .                    | 520  |

I enclose a copy of the instructions issued to Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe.

5. I heard from Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe on the 13th instant to the effect that he had reached Gumburu, 44 miles distant, without encountering any opposition, but that he believed he was on the wrong road for Wardair, and would endeavour to discover the right road.

On the 14th instant, not having heard from the reconnaissance again, I presumed that Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe had found the right road and had pushed on, or might be retiring. Knowing that his water could only last to the 16th instant, I decided to send after him a water convoy with some extra rations. I, therefore, despatched to him 1,600 gallons of water under an escort of Captain Vesey and 50 rank and file, 2nd Sikhs, to meet him, or, if he had pushed on, to form a water post at Gumburu.

6. I heard again from Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe on the morning of the 16th instant to the effect that he had fallen in with some horsemen of the

enemy on the 15th instant, and that some skirmishing between his Mounted Infantry and the horsemen of the enemy had taken place.

During this skirmishing Lieutenant Chichester unfortunately had been killed. Colonel Cobbe also informed me that, rain having fallen, he had collected some water, and was able to remain out some days longer, as he had, up to the time of writing, failed to find the road. He also informed me that the enemy was apparently in some strength in front.

7. I decided to reinforce Colonel Cobbe and to order him to retire, as I considered it would be wiser to advance by a route to the north, which, according to native information, was the direct road to Walwal and then to Wardair. I accordingly detailed a party of Mounted Infantry and Infantry to proceed to Gumburu to join Colonel Cobbe's party, with directions to that officer to return.

8. Before this reinforcement could leave I received on the night of the 17th instant a despatch from Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe, dated the same morning, informing me that he feared some reverse had occurred to a detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Plunkett who had been sent out to bring in a company of the 2nd Battalion King's African Rifles, who were out reconnoitring.

There were no details in this despatch, and I was not aware of the seriousness of the fighting which had occurred, but I decided at once to move forward to Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe's assistance, taking with me all available troops, and to bring in his column.

9. I left Galadi shortly after midnight, on the 17th—18th instant, taking with me—

320 2nd Sikhs,

60 3rd Battalion King's African Rifles, and sending on ahead 100 Mounted Infantry, under Major Kenna, with orders to endeavour to push on into Gumburu. With this party I sent instructions to Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe, informing him that I was advancing to Gumburu, and that, if practicable, he should fall back on me on the morning of the 19th instant, by which time I hoped to be within 12 miles of Gumburu.

10. Successive messengers, despatched by Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe on the morning and afternoon of the 17th instant, reached me on my way out from Galadi, to the effect that Lieutenant-Colonel Plunkett's force had been overwhelmed, and that Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe was holding his zariba with the remainder of his force.

11. I marched 20 miles by the morning of the 18th instant; I halted here for the day, and sent on messengers to Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe.

At 1 A.M. on the 19th instant, I received a message from Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe saying that the mounted infantry had reached him at 1 P.M. on the 18th, and that he intended marching out of Gumburu on the morning of the 19th. I therefore decided to send back the whole of my transport, except water, to Galadi, to form a zariba at the camp I was in, and to leaving the water there under strong guard, marching myself towards Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe with 250 of the 2nd Sikhs. In case Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe's retirement should be molested, I would then be unencumbered with transport, and able to be of great assistance in effecting the retirement.

12. I marched 12 miles on the morning of the 19th, and halted about 10 miles from Gumburu, where I received a message from Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe to say that he was on his way and would be up to me shortly.