



SUPPLEMENT

TO

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TUESDAY, 20 JUNE, 1916.

War Office,
20th June, 1916.

The following despatch has been received by the Secretary of State for War from Lieutenant-General The Hon. J. C. Smuts, Commander-in-Chief, East African Force:—

General Headquarters,
East Africa,
30th April, 1916.

MY LORD,—

In accordance with your instructions, I assumed command of His Majesty's Forces in East Africa on the 12th February, and sailed from South Africa on that day.

I arrived at Mombasa on the 19th of February, and was met there by Major-General Tighe, who explained to me fully the situation in East Africa and the steps he had taken to push forward all preparations for an operation in the Kilimanjaro area before the rains. I decided to visit immediately the two proposed lines of advance by Mbuyuni and Longido, and to make a personal reconnaissance in company with General Tighe.

As a result of this reconnaissance I cabled your Lordship on arrival at my General Headquarters in Nairobi on 23rd February that I was prepared to carry out the occupation of

the Kilimanjaro area before the rainy season, and received your sanction on 25th February.

2. It will, I think, assist a clear understanding of this despatch if I here briefly recapitulate the outstanding features of the military situation in East Africa, and also the steps recently taken by General Tighe towards the development of the advance into German territory which was made possible by the arrival of the reinforcements from South Africa.

At the commencement of 1916 the German forces in German East Africa were estimated at some 16,000 men, of whom 2,000 were white, with 60 guns and 80 machine guns. They were organised in companies varying from 150 to 200 strong, with 10 per cent. of whites and an average of two machine guns per company.

The enemy occupied a considerable tract of British territory. At Taveta they had established a large entrenched camp, with an advanced position at Salaita (El Oldorobo), an entrenched camp at Serengeti, and an outpost at Mbuyuni, the latter places thirteen and seventeen miles respectively east of Taveta. At Kasigau they maintained a garrison of 500-600 rifles with the object of delaying our concentration by blowing up the Uganda railway and the Voi-Maktau railway. Their numerous attempts to accomplish this end were uniformly futile. In the coastal area they maintained a