

enemy force in occupation of Kissangire had failed.

This column, after its unsuccessful effort, retired to Maneromango and there entrenched.

The force was strengthened at first by the addition of some South African Infantry, and later by sending to it the 57th Rifles and a section of mountain artillery from the first division at Tulo. These last reinforcements joined the column on the 21st October at Mssanga, which was occupied.

Information at this time clearly indicated that the enemy, no doubt misled by native information of the movements of different detachments, very largely overestimated our strength at Mssanga.

On the 3rd November the enemy held Mkamba and Kissangire, and was patrolling actively to the north in the direction of the Central Railway.

On the 5th November Lieutenant-Colonel Willans was advised of the enemy's exaggerated estimate of our strength, and ordered by actively patrolling and in any other way possible to encourage the impression. In point of fact, the opposing forces at this point were practically equal in respect of numbers.

On the 6th a detachment was sent to Kongo, about 16 miles west of Mssanga. The strength of this detachment was 300 rifles and two machine guns, while remaining at Mssanga were 450 rifles, two guns, and four machine guns.

On the 18th Colonel N. H. M. Burne, D.S.O., took over command of the forces in this area from Lieutenant-Colonel Willans.

By the end of the month the enemy had occupied a third position at Kibesa, some 12 miles south of Mssanga, but though patrolling was active on both sides, and several attempts by the enemy to reach the Central Railway were frustrated, little more had occurred.

In the early part of December the heavy rains, which had fallen elsewhere, were prevalent in this area also.

On the 12th the Inspector-General of Communications, under whose orders the Mssanga force was acting, was warned of the coming general advance and instructed to arrange the advance of the columns from Mssanga and Kongo, and to consider the preparation of a third small column to co-operate from the coast in the north Rufiji Delta.

On the 16th December considerable activity by the enemy before Mssanga was reported, and all patrols were engaged on being sent out. The enemy advanced and drove in our picquet on the southern end of a ridge dominating the Mssanga camp and water and seized a considerable portion of the ridge. An engagement ensued, the enemy being reinforced, but on the morning of the 17th the attack had been repulsed, and he retired leaving some dead on the field.

Nothing else of importance occurred till the general advance, and the activities of our forces in this area were confined to watching the enemy closely with a view to obtaining early information of any retirement on his part.

#### *The General Advance Resumed.*

(9) By the 22nd December the preparations for an advance on all fronts were complete.

The period of preparation had been one of constant activity and continuous strain. It is not possible here to attempt any description of the varied work of the different services and

sections concerned. The records of the departments are available and furnish full information. I may, however, state that an intimate knowledge of all the circumstances of our position is absolutely essential to a correct and fair estimate of what was accomplished.

#### *Operations in the West.*

I shall deal first with the operations in the west under Generals van Deventer and Northey. In spite of heavy rains which had just fallen both were ready to advance on the 24th December in a combined offensive to drive the enemy over the Ulanga and Rufiji rivers.

Colonel Byron from Ssongea had attacked and dispersed the enemy on the 20th at Njamebenjo, and captured some stock and arms and a considerable quantity of native foodstuffs.

On the 25th December the troops of the Second Division encountered the enemy strongly entrenched east of Lukegeta Nek, and, while the attack was in progress at that place, the Mounted Brigade was sent from Makungwas to cut off the retreat of the enemy to the south and a force under Colonel Taylor moved from Boma Likininda's to the east of Muhanga to get astride the road at Boma Dwangire and join hands with the Mounted Brigade. The detachment at Njukwas was at this time held up by the flooded condition of the Lukosse river and was building rafts by which to try to effect a crossing.

The country generally was reported as very mountainous and covered with dense bush.

At the same time General Northey reported that the investment of the enemy's position at Mfrika was proceeding satisfactorily.

On the 26th he reported his forces as closing in on all sides of Mfrika, and that a portion of Murray's column was astride the Mfrika-Mahenge road.

On the same day General van Deventer reported that the enemy was in position at Magoma (Lukegeta Nek), but had lost his advanced position, and that his own troops were in occupation of a ridge in front of the main position held by the force opposing him. Colonel Taylor, on the previous day, had arrived within a few miles of Muhanga and the Mounted Brigade was in the vicinity of Makungwas.

On the 27th General Northey reported that he had occupied Mfrika on the previous day, the enemy having evacuated his position during the night of the 24th/25th and retired along the Mahenge road, having left a rearguard in position six miles east of Mfrika.

The report from the Second Division on this date was to the effect that the enemy had strongly resisted our advance on the previous day, 26th, fighting having been continuous. During the night of the 26th/27th our troops were pushed up to within 300 yards of the enemy's main position, but dawn on the following day found the position empty, the enemy having slipped away through dense bush during the night. General van Deventer expressed the hope that his troops near Muhanga might prevent the escape of the enemy, who, he reported, had suffered heavy casualties.

On the 27th the enemy tried to break through near Muhanga, but was driven back by the Mounted Brigade and engaged between the Lukosse and Lungwe rivers, and Taylor's column and the force at Magoma were pushed on to co-operate. The enemy again attempted