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TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER, 1918.

*India Office,
Whitehall, S.W. 1.
26th November, 1918.*

The following despatch from His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India on the work of the Army in India and of the Civil Departments of the Government of India and of Civilians in connection with the War has been received from the Government of India:—

No. 17445-1.

ARMY HEADQUARTERS, INDIA.

Simla, the 20th August, 1918.

From
His Excellency General Sir Charles
Carmichael Monro, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,
Commander-in-Chief in India.

To
The Secretary to the Government of India,
Army Department.

SIR,—

Although the time has not yet arrived for publishing full details regarding the assistance rendered by India towards the prosecution of the war, and though this despatch does not purport to be a complete narrative of India's effort in this respect, I have the honour to sub-

mit, in continuation of my despatches of the 9th March, 1916, and 23rd July, 1917, which dealt with minor operations, a brief account of the work done in India, including the Native States, during the first three years of the war.

2. The declaration of war, on the 4th August, 1914, found the Army in India distributed to meet normal hot weather conditions. The bulk of the British troops were temporarily located in the hills, a large percentage of the Indian troops were on furlough and the usual proportion of civil and military officers were on leave out of India. Immediate steps were taken for the despatch of expeditionary forces overseas. The first convoy sailed for France on the 25th August, 1914, and it was followed at a few days interval by others, conveying troops not only to Europe, but also to East Africa, Egypt and Mesopotamia.

3. In order to meet the urgent demand for trained soldiers which arose during the winter of 1914-15, the British forces in India were further depleted by the despatch to England of a number of Regular units, so that, by the beginning of 1915, the British garrison was largely composed of Territorial troops sent to replace the Regulars withdrawn. Besides providing guns and rifles for the equipping of the New

Armies, India lent the services of a large number of officers who were on leave in the United Kingdom when war broke out and were retained there for the training of the newly raised troops and for staff and other duties under the War Office.

4. During 1915, attempts were made by the enemy through various sources to create disaffection in the Indian Army, and provoke internal disorder. These efforts were successfully checked owing to the loyalty of the troops and the prompt assistance rendered by the Indian Police, who displayed great courage and efficiency in the performance of their difficult duties.

5. The necessity for the despatch of large drafts of officers and men overseas to replace wastage in the units fighting in France, Gallipoli, Egypt, Mesopotamia, East Africa, and the Cameroons, caused a very heavy strain on the Indian Army. The substantial assistance rendered at this juncture by the Nepal Durbar, in placing a contingent of their troops at the disposal of the Government of India, proved, therefore, most timely. The Prime Minister of Nepal also placed the services of his son, General Sir Baber Shum Shère Jang Bahadoor Rana, K.C.I.E., at the disposal of my predecessor. The untiring efforts of this officer have been of the greatest assistance, while the Nepalese troops have proved a valuable addition to our strength, and have materially assisted in the task of maintaining order on India's frontiers, notably in connection with the operations in Waziristan in 1917.

6. Meanwhile, the various expeditionary forces dependent on India continued to expand. The force in Mesopotamia, which had originally consisted of one division, had increased considerably. Moreover, owing to Turkish incursions into the Aden hinterland, it had become necessary to increase the Aden garrison so as to ensure the safety of that fortress. In addition, several minor operations had to be undertaken on the North-East and North-West frontiers as well as in Sistan and Waziristan.

7. The maintenance of these forces entailed a heavy drain on India, not only in men but also in munitions, medical equipment, and supplies. To meet these demands, every endeavour was made to develop all available resources. With the assistance of the Railway Board, steps were taken in 1915 to supplement the manufacturing capacity of the ordnance establishments by organising munition factories in railway and other workshops. These efforts proved so successful that by the end of 1916 the monthly output of shell alone had increased 1,200 per cent. In addition to the manufacture of munitions, the Railway Board assisted in the provision of railway material, river craft and machinery, and in the recruitment of technical personnel.

8. The reorganisation of the force in Mesopotamia preparatory to the advance on Baghdad, the development of the port of Basrah, and the provision of a large river flotilla for service on the Tigris, created fresh demands on India necessitating extensive changes in the organisation of sources of supply. The Indian Munitions Board was accordingly constituted, and early in 1917 it assumed responsibility for the construction of river craft and the provision of railway material, engineering stores, machinery, tools, timber, textiles, hides and

electrical plant, not only for the forces overseas, but also for those serving in India. It subsequently took over the control of the Ordnance, Clothing and Boot Factories and of various industries directly connected with the manufacture of army requirements. These activities were in nowise affected by the decision, arrived at early in 1916, to place the control of operations in Mesopotamia directly under the War Office, and they have continued to expand and develop ever since, entailing constantly increasing demands on the resources of India.

9. At the outbreak of war, several Volunteer units undertook to replace or supplement, for as long as might be necessary, the Regulars in certain garrisons, in which employment they rendered excellent service. The Volunteer Force, as formerly constituted, has since ceased to exist and has been reorganised as the Indian Defence Force. The passing of the Indian Defence Force Act in 1917, rendered military training compulsory for all European British subjects in India between the ages of 16 and 50, thus bringing their military obligations more into line with those required of their fellow citizens in other portions of the Empire. These increased obligations have been accepted in a soldierly and patriotic spirit and officers and men have spared no effort to improve their military training. The efforts made to develop and improve this force have been attended with success and, though only recently constituted, it has attained considerable efficiency.

10. The regimental and departmental recruiting agencies which before the war had sufficed to provide the small numbers required for the maintenance of peace cadres, were found incapable of meeting the increased demands arising from war wastage, the creation of many new units and the recruitment of labour on a considerable scale. The formation of a Central Recruiting Board was accordingly decided on in 1917 and its work has been conspicuously successful. Thanks to the willing assistance rendered by Local Governments, all sources of recruitment have been systematically exploited, with the result that, besides raising recruits for the combatant ranks on a greatly increased scale, large numbers have been enlisted for Indian Labour Corps overseas as well as for various technical services.

11. The sick and wounded despatched to India from oversea theatres of war, as well as those invalided from Waziristan and other theatres of frontier operations, have been adequately and sympathetically cared for. A number of war hospitals have been formed, other hospitals have been expanded and improved, and Ruling Chiefs and others have generously provided hospitals and convalescent homes in Bombay and elsewhere, in which everything possible has been done for the comfort of the sick and wounded. The satisfactory health of the troops, both in the field and in India, affords striking testimony as to the value and efficacy of these measures and the skill, forethought and administrative capacity of the Medical Services.

12. I desire to place on record my high appreciation of the services rendered to the Army in India by Local Governments, Civil Departments and various public bodies such as Railway Administrations, Port Trusts and Municipalities, besides many shipping companies and private firms.

13. The help rendered by the Finance Department, and more especially its Military Finance Branch, has been of the highest value, and I readily acknowledge the promptitude with which it has met all military demands. The Commerce and Industry Department, including the Railway Board, has rendered valuable aid in respect of railways, shipping and the working of the postal and telegraph services. The Home Department has been most helpful in measures affecting the maintenance of internal security, in encouraging recruitment for the army from the police, and in releasing medical officers in large numbers from civil employment for service with the troops. The Revenue and Agriculture and Public Works Departments have assisted in various ways, the former in the collection of supplies and the latter in the release of officers and subordinates for army service.

14. My thanks are due to the Foreign and Political Department which has always maintained most cordial relations with the Staff at Army Headquarters; to the Army Department which has been called upon to deal with a great increase of business and has worked with the Headquarters Staff in the closest co-operation; and, lastly, to the Marine Department which has been responsible for the fitting out, repair and coaling of numerous transports and hospital ships, and the embarkation and transportation of large numbers of troops who have been conveyed to their destinations overseas with promptitude, comfort and safety.

15. This despatch would not be complete without a special acknowledgment of the spontaneous and generous assistance afforded by Ruling Princes and Chiefs, as well as by the British and Indian communities throughout India, in the contribution of men, money and material towards the prosecution of the war. A similar acknowledgment is due in respect of the services rendered by the Indian Branch of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the British Red Cross Society, the Imperial Indian Relief Fund, the Provincial War and Relief Funds, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association, and the various organisations formed in every province to supplement the equipment of hospitals and provide comforts for the troops, in the work of which ladies and gentlemen, both official and non-official, have laboured with conspicuous devotion.

16. A list of those whose services have been of particular value, and whose assistance and work I desire to bring specially to notice, forms the subject of Appendix I. of this despatch.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

C. C. MONRO, General,
Commander-in-Chief in India.

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