

to a very low figure by demands from the field and by the transfer to the War Office of a large number which were under manufacture in England. The number of mobile guns had similarly been reduced from 474 to 270, and necessitated the reorganisation of batteries on a 4-gun basis.

10. This situation was rendered possible in a large measure by the absence of serious disorder on the frontiers. His late Majesty the Amir of Afghanistan maintained an attitude of strict neutrality, which was reflected in the attitude of the frontier tribes generally. Sporadic attempts to stir up fanatical feeling were, however, reported towards the close of 1914 from the Tochi Valley and the Mohmand country (involving the employment of a part of the 2nd Division); some minor punitive operations were also rendered necessary on the North-East Frontier to deal with some long-standing unrest among the Kachins. In spite of the entry of Turkey into the war, occasioning grave concern among the Muhammadans of India, the internal situation remained calm, and though a few isolated signs of unrest manifested themselves in different parts of the country, these were for the most part traceable to German influence and propaganda, and were promptly dealt with. Viewed as a whole, the general situation within and on the borders of India appeared to justify the risk which had been taken in depleting the country of so important a part of its armed strength and in introducing so large an untrained element into the British garrison.

11. As the Government of India are aware, the outbreak of war had been the signal for a remarkable and spontaneous demonstration of enthusiasm throughout the country, accompanied by practical expressions of loyalty in the shape of offers of assistance of every kind. Ruling Chiefs placed their troops and treasure unreservedly at the disposal of the Government, and a constant stream of gifts in money and kind flowed in from every section of the community. There was, in fact, a general rally of every grade of European and Indian society. The ladies of India found an outlet for their energies in the various associations which were formed for the relief of distress, the care of the sick and wounded, and the provision of comforts for the troops in the field. A number of Indian gentlemen came forward to offer their assistance in safeguarding the interests of the Indian soldier on service by enquiring into petitions received from the field, attending to the needs of his family, and in various other ways; and a number of others offered their services in the task of explaining the issues of the war to the more ignorant classes, steadying public opinion, and combating hostile intrigue and propaganda. These and various other activities, in which much unobtrusive but valuable service was rendered by individual workers, continued to develop in scope, volume and effect throughout the whole period of the war.

#### 1915.

12. In many respects 1915 was the most critical period of the war as far as India was concerned. The outstanding feature of the year was the growing importance of the campaign in Mesopotamia, involving a steadily increasing demand for men and material at a time when the armed forces of the country had been

reduced to a dangerously low level. The year was, in fact, one of strenuous endeavour to comply with demands which constantly threatened to outpace the ability of the country to meet them. During the year contingents from India were engaged in France and Belgium, in Egypt, in Gallipoli, in Mesopotamia, in South and East Persia, in East Africa, in the Cameroons, in the Aden Hinterland, in Somaliland and on the North-West and North-East Frontiers of India, besides garrisons at several colonial stations. The mere enumeration of these theatres will convey some idea of the complex nature of the problem which confronted those responsible for the provision of the necessary men and material.

13. The rapid expansion of the British Army at home made it possible towards the close of the year to release the Indian Army Corps from France. The Corps had helped to tide over an anxious period, and had fought at Festubert, Neuvechappelle, Loos and the Second Battle of Ypres; but now that British troops were available to take their place, it was felt that they could be used to better advantage under more congenial climatic conditions. Their employment in a theatre nearer India would, moreover, effect an appreciable saving in sea transport and generally ease the administrative difficulties inseparable from the maintenance of a force so far from its base of supply. The Corps accordingly embarked in November and December for Mesopotamia. The two cavalry divisions were, however, retained in France.

14. From the small beginnings narrated in paragraph 7, the 1915 campaign in Mesopotamia assumed a character of the greatest importance to India, since its reaction was felt all over Persia, and, indeed, throughout the East. Moreover, it was in this direction that India, by reason of her geographical position, could contribute most effectually. It is outside the scope of this brief review to trace the sequence of events which led up to the gradual development of the operations; these are already well known to the Government of India. Suffice it to say that early in the year urgent representations from His Majesty's Government led to the increase of the force from one Division to the strength of two divisions and one cavalry brigade; one infantry brigade was obtained from Egypt, but the remainder of these additional troops were provided from India, and reached Basrah by the end of March. In the autumn, two more brigades were sent from India, and towards the close of the year the leading units of the Indian Army Corps from France began to arrive in the country. The provision of these additional formations from the depleted garrison of India was a matter of grave concern, and was only made possible by the promise of His Majesty's Government to send a number of British Garrison Battalions from home for second-line duty in India. By the close of the year the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force had grown from the strength of a single division to over 50,000 fighting men.

15. It was soon apparent that the Expeditionary Force in German East Africa would continue to draw largely upon India for men and material. Some of the units which had suffered severely in the early stages of the campaign were withdrawn to India and replaced by fresh units, and four additional battalions were despatched during the year. But the chief burden imposed by the East African campaign at this period, and, indeed, throughout the