

that I must do my best with the naval forces at my disposal, together with the assistance of such units of Allied Military Commissions, etc., which *rendezvoused* at Murmansk from time to time for despatch home.

The same process applied to Pechenga, the nearest important Russian harbour to the Norwegian boundary. In order to hold Kola inlet it was necessary to hold Pechenga, since the occupation of the latter by a hostile force would have turned it into a German submarine base. Finland was then dominated by Germany, and the possession of Pechenga affording a northern outlet was a Finnish aspiration. All indications tended to show that a German Finnish movement against the place was in contemplation.

With these considerations in view I begged to be sent an armoured cruiser and 500 Royal Marines. Accordingly H.M.S. "Cochrane" was sent and reached me on March 9th. She was to be followed by French and American armoured cruisers, both of which were to come under the British command. Later on, both these ships took their full part in operations ashore and afloat, and I was indebted to their captains for much sound advice on various matters. The detachment of Royal Marines did not reach me until later, but the arrival of the "Cochrane" enabled me to make immediate dispositions for the defence of Kola and Pechenga. A small body of R.E. officers and men which she brought, trained in demolitions work, rendered good service, as the nature of the surrounding country made the Murman Railway the only avenue of hostile approach. In the meantime a force of 300 French Artillerymen had collected at Murmansk, and it was believed that a similar number of Serbians were available at Kandalaksha.

On arrival of "Cochrane" an armoured train manned by "Cochrane" and 150 French Troops was despatched to Kandalaksha under command of Chef de Bataillon Molier of the French Army. Their orders were to hold Kandalaksha, to collect and organise all friendly elements, to regulate the passage of armed men in the direction of Kola, and if unable to hold the position to retire to Murmansk, destroying the line behind them. Though their position was often critical, this force held the post until the arrival of reinforcements in June, and the opening of the White Sea relieved the situation, and their presence at Kandalaksha assured Murmansk against surprise.

At the same time a landing party from H.M.S. "Glory" and "Cochrane" was put ashore at Murmansk, and the necessary arrangements made for the guns of the ships to assist in the defence. The general arrangements were under the Rear-Admiral Commanding, while Colonel Mercier of the French Army was in immediate command ashore. On May 2nd information reached me that a German Finnish attack on Pechenga was threatened. The arrival of the French armoured cruiser "Amiral Aube" on March 19th enabled me to detach the "Cochrane" for its protection. The "Cochrane" arrived at Pechenga on May 3rd, blasting her way through the ice. A landing party was put ashore, and a defensive position prepared. Scouting parties of friendly Finns were organised and sent out to the Norwegian frontier. On May 12th the position was attacked by

some 400 Finns on skis, with two guns. The attack was repulsed with loss to the enemy. Later on the defence of Pechenga was taken over by a detachment of the force commanded by Major-General C. C. M. Maynard, C.M.G., under Colonel G. S. McD. Elliot. The "Cochrane," however, remained as a support until her return to England in November.

The above affords a general view of the situation until the arrival on May 24th of Major-General Sir F. C. Poole, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., who took over the command on shore. From that date onward the Navy remained in constant co-operation with the military forces under his command. At my request all Naval elements serving ashore came under the Army.

Local Conditions at Murmansk.

On my arrival I found the command invested in Rear-Admiral C. P. Ketlinsky of the Russian Navy. He was assassinated on February 10th, and thereafter things were in the hands of the Murmansk Soviet. The Soviet in its turn was dominated by the Bolshevik element of the seamen and Red Guard, numbering some 1,200 men. The landing of armed parties in March, as above related, stabilised the situation in this respect. The economic situation was very bad. Cut off from the usual sources of supply from the interior, White Sea, and Norway, the province was in danger of starvation.

Steps were taken to relieve the distress from Allied sources. The presence of many hundreds of Allied refugee subjects, who had escaped to Murmansk from the interior and were awaiting transport home, was a constant source of anxiety. The circumstances under which many of them had effected their escape was a very plain indication of the latent hostility of the Central Government.

My relations with the Central Soviet Government may be summarised as follows:—Early in March I received a message from them asking me to co-operate with the local authorities in preserving the integrity of the Northern Provinces. In June the same Government sent me a peremptory summons to withdraw all Allied warships from Russian waters.

On April 25th I was authorised to make the following official statement to the Murmansk Soviet:—

"Great Britain has no intention of annexing any part of Russian territory, and will continue to assist in defence of district against outside aggression with such forces as can be spared, and will maintain friendly relations on basis of mutual advantage to both sides. Great Britain will view with greatest concern any severance from Russia of the district lying to the north and east of Finland. The Allies have never entertained any annexational intentions either in Siberia or in any portion of the Russian dominion."

Naval Position.

In accordance with the practice of former years, the bulk of the Naval forces on the station had left for England on the closing of navigation. On January 1st, 1918, the following Naval forces were at Murmansk and Kola Inlet:—

British.

H.M.S. "Glory" (Flag), Captain Robert W. Glennie, R.N.
8 Trawlers.