

their occupation of Labej, Turko-German propaganda in Abyssinia, the pro-Islamic tendencies of Lij Yasu culminating in the wholesale massacre of Somalis in the neighbouring town of Harrar by Christian Abyssinian soldiers—these and other events could not but react most unfavourably on the credulous and somewhat fanatically disposed Moslems of this Protectorate. Isolated and uneducated, the Somali naturally judged the course of events in the outside world by the measure of our success in dealing with the local Dervish menace. The policy of coastal concentration, which had admittedly shaken our position, had only been abandoned early in 1914; and with the reoccupation of the interior and the re-establishment of our control prestige had to be built up afresh. The outlook was scarcely encouraging, as the absence of reinforcements from outside the Protectorate necessarily entailed a defensive policy on our part, while the Dervishes were in a position where they could launch a raid at will at any point on a front of some three hundred miles extending from the Makhir Coast to Galadi. How well the local forces dealt with this difficult situation in an inhospitable country with few resources may be judged from the narrative which follows.

3. The number, disposition, and composition of the troops varied from time to time. But the force generally available for all purposes, that is, to meet Dervish aggression in the east and to maintain order within the administered area in the west, consisted of 500 Somaliland Camel Corps, 400 Indian Contingent (of whom 150 were mounted and attached to the Camel Corps), and 400 Temporary Garrison, Indian Infantry; total 1,300. In addition, some 320 Somali Illaloes (irregulars) were employed as scouts and to form tribal posts in the outlying areas. The mounted troops, organised on a basis of 1 Indian and 2 Somali Camel Companies and 1 Somali Pony Company, were concentrated as far as possible at Ber and Burao to form a striking force; and the Indian Infantry provided garrisons for Las Khorai, Las Dureh, Burao, and Hargeisa.

4. After the capture and demolition of their forts at Shimber Berris in February, 1915, the Dervishes were driven out of the Ain Valley and retired to their main positions at Tale and Jidali; but they held a series of small advanced forts or block-houses covering these two positions and their grazing grounds. It was our object to confine them to this area and to afford protection to our friendly tribes behind a line drawn roughly from Ankhon on the sea coast through Eil Dur Elan to Badwein at the eastern extremity of the Ain Valley, and thence south-west to the southern border at a point where it is intersected by the 46th degree of longitude, a front of some 200 miles. The mounted troops constantly patrolled the protected area behind this line to ward off attack, and on occasions advanced beyond it for purposes of reconnaissance; and they so impressed on the Dervishes a sense of their range, mobility, and endurance that projected raids were frequently abandoned almost before they were launched. Most valuable, too, during the whole of this period were the services of the Illaloes, who, inured to privation and hardship and displaying often the greatest dash and gallantry, were engaged in continuous minor fighting with small Dervish parties, over whom they eventually acquired a marked moral ascendancy. But a defensive

policy of this character, dictated by circumstances, left the Dervishes with the initiative and, with this advantage, they were sometimes able to effect successful raids against our friendlies, and to make good their retreat with the captured stock. In spite of this, it may be said that the results of the defensive policy exceeded expectations. The number of successful raids was reduced to a minimum and on several occasions severe punishment was meted out to the raiders.

5. The most important actions fought by the mounted troops during this period against formed bodies of Dervishes were those (a) at Endow Pass in October, 1917, and (b) at Ok Pass in March, 1919, both in the north-eastern area of the Protectorate.

(a) On the 6th October, 1917, information was received at Burao that a Dervish force, estimated at 400-500 men, had raided the friendlies in the neighbourhood of Las Dureh. The Camel Corps, moving out at a strength of 10 British Officers, 347 rifles, and 6 machine guns, under the command of Major G. R. Breeding, D.S.O., Reserve of Officers, reached Eil Dur Elan on the morning of the 8th October, and pressing on the same day picked up the tracks of the raiders at a point 27 miles further east by sunset. The column moved off again at 1.30 a.m., as the Dervishes were reported *zawi-baed* only 20 miles ahead. Captain H. L. Ismay, 21st Cavalry, Indian Army, with 150 pony rifles and 2 machine guns, was ordered to push ahead rapidly and act as circumstances demanded, the remaining camel rifles and machine guns under Major Breeding moving up as fast as possible in support. On coming up with the Dervishes, Captain Ismay found they had driven the stock through two very difficult passes which they were holding. Using the irregular levy accompanying the troops to create a diversion against the western (Aglub) pass, he attacked the eastern (Endow) pass which was held by some 300 Dervish riflemen, who had taken up a strong position on the crest of the pass and in the caves to cover the withdrawal of the raided camels. The action commenced at 9 a.m. on the 9th October, and at 10 a.m. Captain Ismay was joined by Major Breeding and the remainder of the force. After five hours' sharp fighting, during which heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, chiefly by machine-gun fire, the caves were cleared and the Dervishes dislodged from their position. But they were evidently still determined to resist our advance, and Major Breeding decided that he would be unable to reach the summit of the pass with his animals before nightfall. There was thus little chance of overtaking the raided stock, which, on reaching the plateau, would be driven off rapidly, and the force, with but two days' rations in hand, was already 140 miles from its base at Burao, having traversed this distance and fought the action in four days. Accordingly he reluctantly decided that further pursuit was impracticable. The Dervishes had been very severely handled, and in addition to some 70 killed and an unknown number wounded, a good many rifles—most valuable to the Mullah—had fallen into our possession. Our casualties in this action were one British officer and nine other ranks wounded. In his appreciation of this operation the