



THIRD SUPPLEMENT

TO

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TUESDAY, 5 JULY, 1921.

War Office,
5th July, 1921.

The following Despatches on operations and military affairs in Mesopotamia have been received by the Secretary of State for War:—

DESPATCH No. 1 (WITH APPENDIX).

From Major-General Sir George F. MacMunn, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O., Commanding in Chief, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, covering the period from Nov. 1919 to 17th January 1920, when he vacated the command.

General Headquarters,
Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force,
Baghdad,

17th January, 1920.

Sir,

In continuation of my letter of the 12th November, 1919,* which brought up to date an account of the operations of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force against the Arabs, Kurds and Persians during 1919, I have now the honour to forward a further report on the operations which have taken place between that date and to-day, before vacating my command in this country, and which operations, I trust, concluded for good yesterday.

* See London Gazette, No. 31813, 8th March, 1920.

2. The operations which have unexpectedly occurred consisted of:—

(a) Operations in a new direction against the Zibari Kurds resulting from the murder of Mr. J. H. H. Bill, Indian Civil Service, the Political Officer at Mosul, and his Assistant, Captain K. R. Scott, M.C.

(b) Operations against Ramadhan Shalashi on the Upper Euphrates, owing to his forcible seizure of Deir-uz-Zor and his imprisonment of the Civil Officials and the British Detachment there, and his subsequent advance against the British down the Euphrates.

3. The operations referred to in (a) concluded with the restoration of the Civil Power, a vindication of prestige and such punishment against the murderers as was possible.

The operations (b) resulted in the release of our prisoners and the defeat of the force of Arabs who first seized Albu Kemal, whence they were driven out and several days later returned to the attack of the town.

At the time of writing it would appear that this incident is closed, though on the Kurdish border there are still indications that Turkish intrigue is urging the Kurdish tribes east of Mosul to give trouble.

4. After the conclusion of the operations under Major-General R. A. Cassels, C.B., D.S.O., in October, against the tribes north

and north-east of Mosul, there seemed every prospect of peace for some period. Mr. Bill, Indian Civil Service, an officer of considerable experience on the North-West Frontier of India and in Persia, had only joined this administration a few weeks before and had taken over the post of Political Officer of the Mosul vilayet. This officer, whose desire to understand his district was very great, had, somewhat unexpectedly, departed into a distant portion, viz., the hills east of Aqra, where certain chiefs were preparing levies to keep order in the countryside. The district in question had been orderly and contented ever since our occupation, and had not been disturbed during the earlier operations; it was, therefore, with great surprise that I learned that Mr. Bill and Captain Scott, the Assistant Political Officer at Aqra, had been treacherously murdered after a visit to certain chiefs and Civil Headquarters, and the Gendarmerie at Aqra had been attacked. As it was essential to assert our prestige, I assembled a force of three battalions of infantry and a mountain battery of artillery at Aqra, under Lieutenant-Colonel F. H. Stapleton, C.M.G., and another column in the Anadia Plateau under Lieutenant-Colonel C. P. Wynter, D.S.O. The whole operations were in charge of Brigadier-General C. E. Lawrie, C.B., D.S.O., temporarily commanding the 18th Division. Both columns advanced through a most intricate and tumbled mountain country to the scene of the murders, meeting with only trivial opposition, as the tribes would neither stand nor attack the troops. All the villages concerned in the treacherous attack were visited, the two chief instigators, viz., Faris Agha and Sheikh Ahmed of Burzan, were outlawed, and the district and tribes placed in charge of suitable successors, and for the time being the general prestige of the administration has been restored. The Sheikh of Burzan's castle was destroyed. At the same time the persistent propaganda anent Enver Pasha's menace in the hills beyond the Armistice line, and his intention to advance with Turkish troops, is likely to have further disturbing effects.

5. The arrangements made for these operations were of an intricate and difficult character, and were very well carried out by Lieutenant-Colonel Stapleton, C.M.G., and Lieutenant-Colonel Wynter, D.S.O., and the staff of the 18th (Indian) Division, and I attach a list of names of Officers and non-commissioned Officers whom I recommend for mention in despatches and of certain non-commissioned Officers recommended for the Meritorious Service Medal,* also of certain Officers of the Royal Air Force, whose task among these mountains has always been most dangerous. The troops, who have all been engaged constantly during the summer, carried out these difficult operations in great cold and rain and with considerable endurance.

6. The incident at Deir-ez-Zor and the subsequent operations are far more important politically. Deir-ez-Zor is distant, on the Upper Euphrates, some 400 miles from Baghdad, and was included in the sphere of Mesopotamia on the withdrawal of the Turks as a necessity, *pro tem.*, for the maintenance of good order and for keeping open the ordinary trade and caravan route between

Baghdad and Aleppo. This route in normal times is constantly used by ordinary horse carriages and occasionally motor-cars, and is an integral part of the general mercantile organisation of Syria and Mesopotamia. At the special invitation of the inhabitants of Deir-ez-Zor, a Civil Administrative Staff was sent there early in 1919, local levies were organised, and to protect the road against raiders from the desert a military detachment of two armoured cars from the 6th Light Armoured Motor Battery was stationed there. For eight months this small centre maintained the districts and the routes in peace and order with the greatest ease, the next military post being far south at Ramadi, where a cavalry regiment was stationed. The eventual destination of this district has for some time been under discussion. The sequel of the events that occurred will be best understood if placed in the form of a diary:—

10th December, 1919.—Information received from Political Officer, Deir-ez-Zor, that there was serious trouble. He asked for light armoured motor-cars.

11th December, 1919.—Ramadhan Shalash, Arab Governor of Rakka, occupied Deir-ez-Zor, seized Treasury, and released all prisoners in civil jail. Imprisoned all military and civil officials and captured detachment light armoured motor-cars.

12th December, 1919.—Colonel H. G. Young, D.S.O., sent to command force on Euphrates, which was brought up to six squadrons and ten light armoured motor-cars. One battalion infantry sent to Fellujah and Ramadi. Cavalry advanced up river.

13th December, 1919.—Albu Kemal evacuated by civil officials and levies in view of advance of hostile tribes.

14th December, 1919.—All demobilisation and leave temporarily suspended.

15th December, 1919.—Colonel Young reported hostile advance appeared to be fizzling out, and suggested reoccupation of Albu Kemal.

18th December, 1919.—Copy of wire Emir Faisal to Zeid, disclaiming all knowledge of Deir-ez-Zor rising, received.

Telegram received from War Office, dated 21st November, which only arrived in partially cipherable form on 18th December, stating Deir-ez-Zor was not to be within British sphere.

19th December, 1919.—Colonel Young reached Anah. Air reconnaissance reported fired on by 100 rifles from Albu Kemal.

21st December, 1919.—Albu Kemal reoccupied with slight resistance. Two Indian other ranks wounded. Light armoured motor patrol proceeding towards Salahiyah encountered fifty camelmén and fifty horsemen, who, after short fight, retired to hills. One British other ranks wounded.

22nd December, 1919.—Colonel Young instructed that no regular troops were to advance beyond Albu Kemal except on reconnaissance and to strike any small forces coming within reach. Captain Boyes and representative of Ramadhan's party arrived Albu Kemal, bringing letter of explanation. Reported that 1,000 men are holding lightly entrenched position south of Deir-ez-Zor. Lieut. Tufiq arrived on behalf of Major Raouff, who has been sent as representative of Arab Government; stated latter would not

* Published in London Gazette, No. 31910, dated 21st May, 1920.

obey orders, and asked us to reoccupy Deir-ez-Zor. G.O.C. refused, and fixed new provisional frontier.

24th December, 1919.—G.O.C.-in-Chief's terms dropped in Deir-ez-Zor for Ramadhan, rehearsing outrage committed, repeating Emir Faisal's message, and demanding release of prisoners, and informing him that if they are released the fate of Deir-ez-Zor will await orders of Allies, and that G.O.C. would not attack him.

25th December, 1919.—Ramadhan agreed to proposals.

26th December, 1919.—Chamier and released party reached Albu Kemal.

30th December, 1919.—Colonel Young established frontier post of 60 rifles and four light armoured motor-cars. Colonel Young's Headquarters withdrawn, and Major Kemmis resumed normal command on Middle Euphrates.

7th January, 1920.—Insulting letter from Ramadhan received by Political Officer Albu Kemal, calling on him to withdraw, or have his throat cut.

Ramadhan sent appeal to tribes far within our area to rise and eject British from Mesopotamia.

News received of 500 Arabs moving down Euphrates from Deir-ez-Zor.

9th January, 1920.—G.O.C.-in-Chief sent message to Ramadhan that unless the advance cease he would consider his promise not to attack Deir-ez-Zor void.

10th January, 1920.—O.C. Albu Kemal reported Ramadhan is levying contributions from tribes in our area, and generally oppressing them.

11th January, 1920.—Albu Kemal was attacked by from 300-500 Arabs. A convoy coming in is only rescued after a sharp fight. Aeroplanes sent to relieve. Our Cavalry again move up Euphrates.

11th, 12th January, 1920.—Garrison beleaguered in Serai. Enemy heavily bombed and withdraw, after sustaining several casualties. Decided permanently to strengthen Albu Kemal as the only method of preventing spread of trouble down Euphrates.

7. The tribes in our own area south of Albu Kemal, encouraged by our action and by the advance of our troops, have taken up arms and are pursuing retreating enemy. For the moment the situation is quiet. Ramadhan's call to the tribes to rise has produced no further effect, but it is impossible to say yet what the general unrest may bring forth.

8. I am especially indebted to Lieutenant-Colonel (now Brigadier-General) Young, D.S.O., for his conduct of the negotiations with Ramadhan, and of Captain Mvilles, the Political Officer, attached to his Headquarters at Albu Kemal.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

G. F. MACMUNN,
Major-General,
Commander-in-Chief,

Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

APPENDIX:

(A) List of Troops. Zibari Operations.

Stap. Column.

1 Troop 11th Lancers.
26th Indian Mountain Battery.

45th Sikhs.

1/5rd Gurkha Rifles.

1/10th Gurkha Rifles.

1 Section 238th Machine Gun Company.

No. 13 Wireless Telegraph Pack Station.

2 Sections 38th Combined Field Ambulance.

1 Signal Section.

Lum. Column.

1 Squadron 11th Lancers.

1 Section C/336th Brigade, R.F.A.

1 Company 1/39th Garhwal Rifles.

Detachment Combined Field Ambulance.

Wyn. Column.

52nd Sikhs (less 1 Company).

Assyrian Battalion (less 2 Companies).

1 Sub-Section 238th Machine Gun Company.

1 Section 34th Indian Mountain Battery.

1 Section No. 8 Company, Sappers and Miners.

Detachment 40th Combined Field Ambulance.

Line of Communication.

2 Squadrons 11th Lancers (less 1 Troop).

1 Section D/336th Brigade, R.F.A.

1 Company 1/39th Garhwal Rifles.

Detachment 14th Light Armoured Motor Battery (Fords).

Detachment 119th Casualty Clearing Station.

(B) List of Troops, Euphrates Operations.

Young Column.

6th Light Armoured Motor Battery.

8th Light Armoured Motor Battery (less 1 Section).

Detachment 126th Baluchistan Infantry.

629 M.T. Company (less Detachments).

1016 M.T. Detachment.

118 Transport Company, Detachment.

31st Wing, R.A.F.

Line of Communication Troops.

2 Squadrons 22nd Cavalry.

10th Lancers.

126th Baluchistan Infantry, less detachment in Young Column.

DESPATCH No. 2 (WITH APPENDICES)

From Lieutenant-General Sir J. A. L. Haldane, K.C.B., D.S.O., Commanding-in-Chief, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, covering the period 18th January, 1920, to 30th June, 1920.

General Headquarters,
Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

Baghdad,
23rd August, 1920.

Sir,—

The despatch submitted by Major-General Sir George MacMunn, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O., dated the 17th January, recorded events up to time of his vacating the command of the Forces in Mesopotamia during that month. Major-General G. A. J. Leslie, C.B., C.M.G., replaced him from that time until my arrival from England on the 21st March, 1920, when I assumed command.

2. I now have the honour to forward a report on the military events which took place between the middle of January and the end of June in Mesopotamia and N.W. Persia.

3. These include:—

1. Operations on the Euphrates above Hit.
2. Operations against the Surchi and Zibari Kurds in the province of Mosul.
3. Minor aeroplane action against a recalcitrant tribe on the Lower Euphrates in the vicinity of Samawah.
4. Operations near Mosul and on the Baghdad-Mosul L. of C.
5. Events in N.W. Persia.

Each of these is described in a separate section.

4. In submitting this brief despatch I wish to bring to notice the admirable work of the troops and of the R.A.F. under extremely arduous conditions, varying from the snow and rain of winter to the intense heat of a Mesopotamian summer. They cheerfully responded to all calls on them; and these not infrequently had to be made when climatic conditions were at the worst. Despite this, the general health was surprisingly good. The light armoured motor cars, which were handled with dash and initiative, frequently proved a most disturbing factor to the Arabs. The transport was always hard worked, for the most part over roads which are only roads in name, and in spite of all difficulties a most efficient service was maintained.

It would be invidious to single out particular services and departments; and I am fortunate in being able to report that one and all, together with Commanders and Staffs, did not spare themselves to bring the operations to a successful conclusion.

5. I propose shortly to submit for consideration a list of the names of those whose services deserve recognition.*

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A. HALDANE,
Lieutenant-General,
Commanding-in-Chief,
Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force

I.—REPORT ON THE OPERATIONS ON THE EUPHRATES ABOVE HIT.

1. The series of operations on this part of the Euphrates began in December, 1919, when one, Ramadhan Shalash, occupied Deir-*ez-Zor*. His action was repudiated by the Arab Government, who, however, retained the town in accordance with a decision which had previously been reached by His Majesty's Government, and a provisional boundary was fixed on the line of the Khabur and continued south-westward across the Euphrates. In January, Ramadhan Shalash and his followers attacked Albu Kemal, but were repulsed, and withdrew. Our advanced troops then occupied Salahiyah, which is about midway between Albu Kemal and Meyaddin, the latter place being on the provisional boundary and held by the Arabs.

2. About the 15th January Maulud Pasha assumed the Governorship of Deir-*ez-Zor*. Anti-British propaganda from the Syrian side of the provisional boundary did not, however, diminish, and Maulud Pasha claimed that the true boundary should be at the Wadi Hauran, 180 miles down stream from Albu Kemal.

3. The tribes on the Mesopotamian side of the frontier, assisted by others from beyond

the border, now attempted to make our occupation of Albu Kemal and Salahiyah impossible by cutting the long exposed line of communications from railhead at Fallujah through Ramadi, Hit and Anah. A series of attacks was made on convoys on the 14th February, and on the 1st, 5th and 7th March.

On the first of these days a determined attack was made by some 400 Arabs on three platoons of the 126th Baluchistan Infantry. After severe fighting the Arabs were driven off with the loss to our detachment of thirty casualties, including one British and one Indian Officer killed, while the Arabs are reported to have lost 34 killed and many wounded.

4. On the occasion of such attacks, which are initiated by raiding bands of varying size, the temptation to the villagers in the vicinity to join in with the prospect of loot generally proves irresistible, and the numbers of the attackers swell rapidly.

5. On the 16th February, the camps implicated in the attack of the 14th were visited by a mobile column and destroyed, the Arabs withdrawing before our Cavalry.

6. On the 1st March, three troops of Cavalry, with four Ford Vans carrying Infantry with machine guns, escorted a party sent out to repair the telegraph line which had been cut. Near Nahiyah, half-way between Alqaim and Anah, they were attacked by 300 Arabs, losing one British Officer killed and two Indian other ranks wounded.

The attackers were beaten off with considerable loss.

7. On the 3rd March a Camel convoy returning from Salahiyah to Albu Kemal was attacked by 300 to 400 tribesmen. A heavy storm rendered the road impassable, and the convoy had to return to Salahiyah. While this operation was in progress the escort was attacked in force, but drove off the assailants with the loss of one British Officer, ten Indians killed and three Indians wounded.

8. On the 7th March, the same convoy again left Salahiyah, a mobile column of the 10th Lancers having moved during the night to a concealed position near the scene of the action of the 5th. The convoy was attacked and the concealed squadrons coming into action surprised the attackers and inflicted heavy losses on the Arabs, who left 60 dead on the field, while many more were reported to have been wounded. Our losses were one British Officer and six Indians killed; two Indian Officers and twelve Indian other ranks wounded.

9. The result of this action was seen in the temporary cessation of attacks on convoys. Measures of reprisal were, however, taken during the following month against the tribes known to have been concerned in the attacks, and the tribesmen were driven off their fields, with the result that all tribal Sheikhs except those of one small section came in and accepted terms. These terms included the payment of a security for future good behaviour and a fine of rifles and money or grain in respect of past offences. Operations to prevent the resumption of agricultural work were continued against the section which had not submitted. These were continued until the loss inflicted upon them by the damage to their crops had exceeded the proportion of security

* Published in London Gazette, No. 32199, dated 20th January, 1921.

and fine which, had they submitted, they would have been called upon to pay.

10. On the 9th March, a telegram was received from Egypt stating that the Emir Feisul had sent a letter expressing regret at the Deir-ez-Zor incidents, and suggesting the assembly of a mixed Commission of British and Arab Officers in order to modify the provisional boundary so as to accord with tribal divisions. This proposal was referred to London, and an answer was received in a favourable sense on the 15th April.

11. Eventually, on the 5th May, the Military Commander and Political Officer on the Upper Euphrates met at Ashara the fully accredited representatives of Maulud Pasha, who sent word that he himself was unable to be present owing to illness. After outwardly friendly discussion, a point midway between Albu Kemal and Alqaim was accepted on both sides as the new provisional boundary. The Arab representatives, however, still claimed the Wadi Hauran as the true frontier. On the 6th May Salahiyah, and on the 8th May Albu Kemal, in accordance with the agreement, were handed over to the representatives of the Arab Government, and on the 9th May my troops reached Alqaim, where a detachment was temporarily left. The main column withdrew to Anah, where it arrived on the 11th May.

12. The activity of raiding parties, composed of tribesmen from the Syrian side of the border, continued. These parties, assisted by their knowledge of the country, would attack convoys, the first shots causing a stampede of camels, on which the peaceful husbandman of the neighbourhood would become an armed raider and swell the number of attackers. On the 7th May, such an attack was made on a convoy in the vicinity of Alqaim. In the ensuing fight losses were inflicted on the Arabs, while ours were inconsiderable. To locate or punish such bodies in the desert was a difficult task, the facilities for concealment were such that aeroplanes could seldom observe parties over whom they might pass. On the 11th May, however, a detachment of Cavalry surprised and scattered a raiding party near Alqaim, killing nine and wounding others. On the 12th May, some two hundred Arabs delivered an attack on a motor convoy at the Wadi Sufna, but with the effective co-operation of aeroplanes they were driven off with not fewer than 20 casualties. On the 14th May another attack was made by some 200 dismounted Arabs on two companies of Infantry escorting a convoy between Fuhaima and Haditha. The camels, as usual, stampeded, and threw their loads, but considerable losses were inflicted on the Arabs; who, coming to close quarters, were met with the bayonet. Our own casualties did not exceed in all 20.

13. On the 18th May, in consequence of these repeated unprovoked attacks, I telegraphed to Egypt to request the transmission to the Emir Feisul of a message recounting briefly what had occurred, and warning him that in the event of the continuance of these raids I reserved to myself the right to take reprisals against guilty tribes.

14. In order to reduce the strain on transport and to draw in an exposed detachment, the garrison of Alqaim was ordered to move on the 4th June to Anah. Information of this intention appears to have reached the Arabs, and the

opportunity to claim that our troops had been driven out of Alqaim and down the Euphrates to Anah induced a strong party of tribesmen to make an attack on Alqaim on the morning of the 4th. The date of withdrawal had, however, been changed to the 5th, and the attack was limited to a considerable volume of fire from ranges of 600 to 1,000 yards. The arrival of a convoy and escort to assist in the withdrawal completed the discomfiture of the attackers, who withdrew. Additional reinforcements were sent up and reprisals taken against the tribes concerned, who suffered considerably in consequence. On the 13th June the contemplated withdrawal was carried out unmolested. Up to the end of June the situation on the Upper Euphrates remained quiet, and the activity of raiding parties has been reduced.

15. For five and a half months in the snow of winter and the heat of June the troops on the Upper Euphrates have been constantly in a state of active operations. The work which they had to carry out admitted of no relaxation, and the strain on all ranks has been constant. The lack of local supplies necessitated frequent convoys, generally of hired camels, which, as already stated, stampeded at the first shot. Every convoy was liable to attack by numbers largely in excess of any possible escort. The endurance of the troops, their fine soldier-like qualities, and the successful manner in which, on every occasion, they have dealt with a numerous, well-armed and elusive enemy are deserving of high commendation.

APPENDIX "A."

The undermentioned troops were employed on operations on the Upper Euphrates during the first half of 1920:—

- Detachments 6th and 30th Squadrons, R.A.F.
- Headquarters, 51st Infantry Brigade.
- 5th Cavalry (relieved the 10th Lancers).
- 10th Lancers.
- 22nd Cavalry (2 squadrons).
- 96th Battery R.F.A.
- 45th Mountain Battery (1 section).
- 13th Field Company, Sappers & Miners (1 section).
- 67th Field Company, Sappers & Miners (1 section) (relieved the 13th Company).
- 126th Baluchistan Infantry.
- 80th Carnatic Infantry.
- 2/6th Jat Light Infantry (relieved the 126th Baluchistan Infantry).
- 1/10th Gurkha Rifles (less 1 section).
- 6th Light Armoured Motor Battery (less 1 section).
- 45th Pack Wireless Telegraph Station.
- Wagon Wireless Telegraph Station.
- 17th Divisional Signal Company (Detachment).
- 35th Combined Field Ambulance (Detachment).
- 129th Auxiliary Transport Company.
- 1016 M.T. Company.

II.—OPERATIONS AGAINST THE SURCHI AND ZIBARI KURDS.

1. In the autumn of last year, in the operations following on the murder of the two Political Officers north of Akra, a small

detachment was left near that place as a protection against raiding by the Surchi and Zibari Kurds. Unrest in this country continued through the winter, necessitating minor aeroplane operations to scatter gatherings threatening to disturb the peace.

On the 2nd April a large raiding party of Surchi, estimated at 300 strong, attacked a small convoy on its way to Akra. The escort of seventeen rifles defended themselves in the marshy ground until their ammunition was exhausted and they were rushed and overpowered. The survivors were carried away prisoners, but a few days later effected their escape and returned to Akra.

2. A mobile column, consisting of 170 sabres, two mountain guns and 500 rifles, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel G. B. M. Sarel, 11th Lancers, was immediately despatched from Mosul, with orders to occupy the village of Sardariah as early as possible.

3. Early on the 8th April the Surchi and Zibari, numbering in all some 400 rifles, made an attack on Akra, and were repulsed by the gendarmes and the garrison, but they remained on the ridge overlooking the town, whence they were driven on the next day by the mobile column, which had been diverted from its original objective. Bujil was bombed by aeroplanes on the 8th April. On the 12th Sardariah, the stronghold of Sheikh Raqib, of the Surchi, the leader of the outbreak, and on the 14th Kelana, were visited, the column meeting with small opposition.

On the following days various openly hostile villages were bombed, and on 16th and 17th April the mobile column visited Bujil and Kelati, strongholds of Chiefs, and defensible buildings in all places visited were destroyed, the column then returning to Akra.

4. Beyond the actual destruction of buildings of the leading men, little material damage was done. Flocks and herds had all been previously removed by their owners, while crops were too young to destroy and fruit trees were left undamaged. As the complete pacification of this area would have entailed long continued operations and military occupation, I decided that, as the tribesmen had had a salutary lesson, the column should now be withdrawn. This was effected by the end of April, a garrison of one battalion being left temporarily at Akra, and subsequently reduced.

5. A few minor bombing operations were continued up to the latter half of May in order to bring pressure to bear on a truculent Chief and break up gatherings. The operations of the column, under Lieut.-Colonel Sarel, constituted little more than a counter raid, and were well and successfully carried out, with the result that no opening was given to the tribesmen, and our casualties were small.

During these operations the weather conditions were trying, thunderstorms were of almost daily occurrence, and the men constantly wet, but these conditions had no ill-effect on the health or spirits of the troops.

APPENDIX "B."

The detail of units which composed punitive columns in April this year is as follows:—

11th Lancers, 2 squadrons.
34th Indian Mountain Battery, 1 section.

8th Company Sappers and Miners, 1 section.

18th Divisional Signal Company, 1 brigade section, part No. 1 section.

1/3rd Gurkha Rifles, 1½ companies.

1/39th Garhwal Rifles.

18th Divisional Light Trench Motar Battery, 1 section.

40th Combined Field Ambulance, 1 section.

18th Divisional Train, 8 troops, No. 114 Transport Company, S. & T., 3 troops, No. 116 Transport Company S. & T., No. 131, Auxiliary Transport Company, P. & D.

Subsidiary column, which moved in connection with the operations:—

50th Indian Mountain Battery.

No. 6 Company Sappers and Miners, 1 section.

106th Hazara Pioneers, 1 company.

1/3rd Gurkha Rifles, less 1½ companies.

Assyrian Battalion, 1 company and 1 squadron.

III.—MINOR AEROPLANE ACTION AGAINST A RECALCITRANT TRIBE ON THE LOWER EUPHRATES IN THE VICINITY OF SAMAWAH.

In September, 1919, the Political Officer at Diwanayah reported difficulties in dealing with the Sufran Tribe, who were inaccessible by land to troops or levies.

2. This tribe was guilty of repeated raids on neighbouring districts, rendering the outbreak of general inter-tribal disturbances difficult to prevent. The Sheikh of the tribe refused to come in to the Political Officer to discuss the best means of settling his tribe, the lawlessness of which began to spread to others. Political Officers were threatened and shot at, and every effort to restore order in the district by peaceful means failed.

3. It was finally decided to take action by air, but, owing to shortage of pilots and aeroplanes, this was not possible until the end of May. In the meantime the trouble spread. On the 24th May bombing commenced, but, news being received of the natural death of the Sheikh of the Sufran, was discontinued. The tribe now accepted terms, including the surrender of rifles and payment of a fine, but the operations were inconclusive, and the fine was not paid nor the rifles handed in except in part.

IV.—OPERATIONS NEAR MOSUL AND ON THE BAGHDAD-MOSUL LINE OF COMMUNICATION.

During the months of April and May, propaganda ostensibly in Nationalist and pan-Islamic interests developed strongly in the Mosul area between the Euphrates, Tigris and Khabur. Ex-Sheriffian officers and troops, probably finding themselves without employment under the Syrian Government, devoted themselves to fostering an agitation, and disturbances from which they hoped to draw profit for themselves. Raids were made on the Baghdad-Mosul line of communications and attacks on the railway, including one on the 23rd/24th May, which resulted in the wrecking of a train and some casualties, and local transport began to fail.

2. The Turkish Qaimmakam of Jazireh-ibn-Omar was actively employed in intrigues, by

which he hoped to induce the Kurdish tribes to the North to attack our detachments at Zakho and elsewhere, but, though the situation caused some anxiety, his efforts to effect his object failed. At the same time he was known to be intriguing with the Arab tribes, which were being stirred up from the Khabur. The country of the Surchi and Zibari Kurds was by no means settled, and occasional bombing raids to scatter gatherings continued to be necessary.

3. On the 26th May reports were received which definitely established the presence at Fadgham, on the Khabur river, of a Sherifian force, estimated at possibly 1,000, but more probably not exceeding 500 strong, with an attendant tribal force. This force was intended to move on Mosul in combination with other advances from the Euphrates against Shergat and the Mosul line of communication.

4. On June 3rd some 300 Shammar tribesmen attacked the town of Tel Afar, some 40 miles west of Mosul, and murdered all British officials. The local Gendarmerie Officer had deserted before the attack, and the inhabitants participated in the outbreak.

5. A section of light armoured motor-cars on reconnaissance, being informed by aeroplane of hostile gatherings, proceeded to Tel Afar on the 4th to render assistance to the small band of officials there, and, attempting to enter the town through very difficult ground, was ambushed, the entire crews being massacred.

6. On the 5th June a punitive column was despatched from Mosul. A considerable hostile body, including some 1,200 horsemen, whose objective was probably Mosul, was met and dispersed without serious fighting by the column, which arrived at Tel Afar on the 9th to find the place deserted. As much damage as possible was done to houses, which are built principally of stone, and to crops, though these were not yet mature, and so impossible to burn.

7. On the 9th June four determined attacks were made on the Baghdad-Mosul lines of communication, all of which were repulsed with losses to the attackers amounting to not less than eighty killed, besides wounded carried off.

8. Various incidents incline me to the belief that the events recorded above were part of a concerted scheme to subvert our authority in the province of Mosul. Nightly meetings were being held in secret in Mosul itself, and efforts were being made to arouse the religious fanaticism of the neighbouring tribes; and it is believed that the agitators hoped to bring about a simultaneous rising which would have led to the assassination of all Christians.

9. Constant air reconnaissance kept the local military commander informed of tribal gatherings, and these were bombed and machine-gunned whenever discovered. The Kurd country meanwhile remained quiet, but Arab raiding gangs continued their activities in the country to the immediate north-west of Mosul.

10. On the night of the 16th/17th June an attack was made on Baiji post, but was successfully beaten off without loss. Since then affairs have been outwardly quieter, but the possibility of similar breaches of the peace on the

Line of Communication, and possibly an attack on Mosul itself, still exists. Our casualties in the various actions between the 3rd and 10th June amounted in all to some 60.

11. The prompt action which was taken at Mosul immediately on the news of the outbreak, and the efficient organisation in that city and on the Line of Communication, brought to a rapid conclusion what would, if allowed to gain headway, have become a formidable rising.

APPENDIX "C."

The detail of units which composed Punitive Column in June this year is as follows:—

11th Lancers, 2 squadrons.

44th Battery, R.F.A., 1 section.

8th Coy., Sappers and Miners, 1 section and 1 sub-section.

18th Divisional Signal Company, 1 Brigade Section.

"A" Troop, 2nd Wireless Telegraph Squadron, 41st Pack Station.

1/39th Garhwal Rifles (less 1 Company).

14th Light Armoured Motor Battery, 2 sections.

40th Combined Field Ambulance, 1 section.

18th Divisional Train, 4 Troops: No. 114 Transport Coy. (S. & T.); Half Troop: No. 116 Transport Coy. (S. & T.).

Subsidiary Columns which moved in connection with these operations:—

(A) 14th Light Armoured Motor Battery, 1 section.

No. 8 Coy., Sappers & Miners, Detachment.

"C" Coy., 17th M.G. Battalion, 1 section.

(B) No. 2 Coy., Sappers and Miners.

(C) 11th Lancers, 50 sabres.
44th Battery, R.F.A., 1 section.
52nd Sikhs, 150 rifles.

(D) Subsidiary Column which moved out to establish a post at Tel Afar:—

11th Lancers, less 2 squadrons.

44th Battery, R.F.A., 1 section.

No. 8 Coy., Sappers & Miners.

52nd Sikhs, 2 companies.

"A" Troop, 2nd Wireless Telegraph Squadron, No. 43 Pack Station.

18th Divisional Signal Company, Detachment.

V.—EVENTS IN NORTH-WEST PERSIA.

On the fall of Petrovsk at the end of March the Volunteer Fleet on the Caspian Sea was deprived of a base, and with some remnants of General Denikin's Volunteer Army proceeded to Enzeli. In order to preserve Persian neutrality the Commander of the Volunteer Fleet was informed that his fleet would be allowed to enter Enzeli, only on condition that the ships should be disarmed and interned. These conditions were indignantly declined by the Commander of the Volunteer Fleet, who thereupon sailed for Baku, whence it was hoped that operations could be continued against the Bolshevik fleet. The Azarbaijan Republic, however, refused to admit the fleet to Baku, except on the condition that they

should accept service definitely under the Republic and become part of the Azarbaijan forces. This condition the Commander would not accept, and decided in preference to surrender the ships to the British from whom they had been received. After allowing those who so desired, including the remnants of the army, to leave the fleet, the ships returned to Enzeli, and there accepted the conditions, which, on behalf of the Persian Government, had been made to them. The crews and refugees were removed and the ships disarmed.

2. At about 5.15 a.m. on the 18th May the garrison of Enzeli and Kazian awoke to the sound of shelling by the Bolshevik fleet, which had arrived during the night, and was firing on Kazian from the Caspian Sea. To avoid embroiling Persia in hostilities with the Bolsheviks our guns refrained from replying. At 6.30 a.m. an officer was despatched in a coastal motor-boat under a flag of truce towards the Flagship, but, possibly owing to the flag not being seen, the boat was fired on and obliged to return. A launch was then despatched, which met midway a Bolshevik launch, also under a white flag, and proceeded with it to the Flagship. By this time the fleet had closed in and fifteen Bolshevik ships could be counted.

3. At 6.50 a.m. the bombardment, which had effected little damage, slackened. Soon afterwards it was reported that a landing had been effected some five miles east of Kazian, a detachment sent to oppose this landing arriving too late to prevent it. The telegraph line was cut, and all attempts to send wireless messages were frustrated by jamming. The local Commander, Brigadier-General H. F. Bateman-Champain, C.M.G., was therefore cut off from all communication except by means of aeroplanes, two of which early in the morning he had ordered to proceed to Kazian from Kasvin.

4. At 11 a.m. intimation was received that

the Bolshevik Commander agreed to an armistice of two hours, but it was considerably later before he stopped his parties from landing, and eventually some 1,500 men were across the Kazian-Resht road. A motor hospital convoy en route for Resht had previously had a small skirmish before news had been received of the landing. Most of the cases, which fortunately were not serious, returned through the scrub jungle, the motor vehicles remaining in the Bolsheviks' hands, as well as eleven prisoners. These latter were released on the next day.

5. The armistice was later extended up to 8 p.m. in order to permit of the arrival of a reply from Teheran to a message which had been despatched by Brigadier-General Bateman-Champain. As the expected reply did not come, General Bateman-Champain was obliged to accept the Bolshevik Commander's terms. The number of ships had now increased to 23, whose weight of artillery was overwhelmingly superior to that which could have been opposed to it by the British force. General Bateman-Champain accordingly met the Bolshevik Commander Kajanov in Kazian, where the latter gave him to understand that the Bolsheviks, who were acting without orders from Moscow, had no ulterior designs against Persia or the British, but wished only to remove a potential danger to themselves by obtaining possession of the ships and ammunition of the interned Volunteer Fleet. Thereupon the detachment evacuated Enzeli and Kazian, first removing the greater portion of its stores, and by mid-day on the 19th May it arrived at Resht.

The casualties suffered were two Indian other ranks killed and five wounded.

6. On the 4th June, in accordance with War Office orders to withdraw the forces in N.W. Persia to the vicinity of Kasvin, the detachment moved to Menjil, where preparations were made to oppose an advance by the Bolshevik forces by the main road to Teheran.

APPENDIX "D"—CASUALTIES FROM 17/1/20 TO 30/6/20.

(1.) BRITISH OFFICERS:—

Rank, Name and Unit.	Date.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Murdered.	Died of Wounds.
Lieut. A. T. T. Bake, 126th Baluchis ...	14/2/20	1	—	—	—	—
Capt. J. C. Platts, 17th Cav., attd. 10th Lancers ...	7/3/20	1	—	—	—	—
Lieut. A. T. Oates, 10th Lancers ...	1/3/20	—	—	—	—	1
Lieut. E. F. J. Waters, 10th Lancers ...	5/3/20	1	—	—	—	—
Capt. MacDonald, 125th Rifles ...	12/3/20	—	—	—	1	—
Capt. H. Vaughan-Jones, Staff Captain 51st Brigade ...	28/3/20	—	1	—	—	—
Lieut. Frith, R.A.F. (17th Division) ...	18/3/20	—	1	—	—	—
Lieut. T. C. Crighton, 5th Cav., attd. 10th Lancers ...	11/5/20	—	1	—	—	—
Major J. E. Barlow, 22nd Manchesters (attd. Political Dept.) ...	3/6/20	1	—	—	—	—
Lieut. B. Stuart, R.F.A. (attd. Political Dept.) ...	4/6/20	1	—	—	—	—
Lieut. C. Smith, 2nd Northumberland Fusl.	5/6/20	1	—	—	—	—
		6	3	—	1	1

APPENDIX "D."—(continued.)

(2.) OTHER RANKS:—

	British Other Ranks.	Indian Officers.	Indian Other Ranks.	Followers.
Killed	14	2	89	1
Wounded	1	4	135	1
Missing	—	—	4	1
Missing, believed Killed	—	—	2	—
Died of Wounds	—	—	19	—
Prisoners	—	—	—	—
	15	6	249	3

DESPATCH NO. 3 (WITH APPENDICES).

From Lieutenant-General Sir J. A. L. Haldane, K.C.B., D.S.O., Commanding-in-Chief, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, covering the period 1st July, 1920, to 19th October, 1920.

*General Headquarters,
Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force,
Baghdad,*

8th November, 1920.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit a report on the operations which have taken place in Mesopotamia between the 1st July and the 19th October, 1920. The latter date has been chosen as the limit for the present report as, shortly before it, the main operations, which included the relief of several beleaguered garrisons and the recovery of prisoners, British and Indian, who had fallen into the hands of the Arabs, were brought to a conclusion.

(2) Operations are now in progress with the object of inducing those tribes who still maintain a refractory attitude to submit to the Government terms, and to recover control of certain areas in which the civil administration has been temporarily suspended. On the conclusion of these operations a further report will be submitted.

(3) In my despatch dated the 23rd August, 1920, in which I described the various operations that had been in progress in Mesopotamia and Persia during the first six months of the year, I referred to the intrigues which had impeded the pacification of the Upper Euphrates area and were responsible in some measure for the unrest, either open or concealed, in the former of these countries.

Causes of the Insurrection.

(4) The successive evacuation by our troops of Deir-*ez-Zor*, *Albu Kemal*, and *Alqaim*, on each occasion apparently under pressure of the Syrian Government; the delay in the conclusion of peace with Turkey and the nature of the peace terms when announced; our withdrawal from *Enzeli* and *Resht*, and reports of Bolshevik incursions elsewhere; the delay in settling the future form of Government for Mesopotamia; the prominence given in the West to self-determination and kindred precepts; external intrigues and internal agitation by self-interested persons; Arab Nation-

alist propaganda from outside; Press and Parliamentary utterances at home, and the religious element in *Karbala* and *Najaf*, who dislike the idea of any Government other than by themselves and repudiate rule by temporal power: all these factors, besides some local ill-feeling regarding matters outwardly small in themselves but of vital importance to the cultivator, had their share in laying the foundation stone of insurrection.

(5) Moreover, to the mass of the community in the rural districts, unmoved by politics but ever ready to respond to the call to arms of their sheikhs or hearken to the invocation of their religious leaders, the visible signs of our supremacy were gone. Our garrisons had been hastily demobilised, and, from motives of economy and other reasons, had been so reduced that the Arab, vain in his own conceit and led astray by the eloquence of agitators, who magnified our weakness and preached that we were busily engaged in evacuating the country, saw what seemed an advantageous moment for measuring his strength against our own and at the same time gaining profit from the pillage.

(6) The situation possessed elements of danger, more especially as, in the summer months after the crops have been gathered in, the Arab is free to devote himself to his favourite pastimes of fighting and plundering. Yet reports regarding the possibility of future trouble continued to be highly contradictory. One day information would be received that an early rising in a certain area was anticipated, and a few days later that our relations with the local sheikhs in the same area were excellent, and that for several months to come there was no probability of a breach of the peace.

(7) Even at this early stage of my tenure of the Chief Command in Mesopotamia I had come to the conclusion that, where we were dealing with a race so uncertain, and at times so ebullient, in temperament as the Arab appeared to be, it was impossible, even for those who had spent much time in the country and had for long been in close association with its inhabitants, to foretell with any degree of exactitude the events of the next 24 hours. This uncertainty, present in a far greater degree since the outbreak of the insurrection, has contributed materially to the burden of Military Command. At one time appeals for aid were made almost daily, sometimes arriving at the same time from widely separated areas, and to estimate cor-

rectly their respective merits was a task of not a little difficulty.

Outbreak of Disturbances.

(8) The arrest on the 30th June of a sheikh of the Dhawalim, a section of the Bani Huchaim tribe, by the Political Officer at Rumaithah for failure to repay an agricultural loan, and his forcible release on the same day by his fellow tribesmen, kindled the flame of insurrection on the Middle Euphrates. At first the rising appeared to be purely local in character, but some small successes gained by the insurgents over our troops in the Rumaithah district encouraged other tribes, more especially those who possessed no visible acquaintance with the Army of Occupation, to throw in their lot with the forces of disorder, and the area of disturbance soon included other parts of Mesopotamia.

Forces in Mesopotamia.

(9) At the time of the outbreak the troops under my command, exclusive of those in Persia, in transit, and sick (which amounted in all approximately to 4,800 British and 8,000 Indian) numbered in round figures 7,200 British and 53,000 Indian (vide Appendix I). Among the last two totals are included 3,000 British and 23,000 Indian troops employed on non-combatant duties in various Departmental Services. The number of followers in Mesopotamia and Persia at this time totalled 60,000, all of whom, except 5,500 who formed part of regimental establishments, were employed in Departmental Services and in Labour Companies.

The balance of 4,200 British and 30,000 Indian troops, consisting of units, many of which were below strength and weak in officers, formed the residuum at my disposal for garrisoning a country 90,000 square miles in extent, and guarding over 2,000 miles of river, rail, and road communication. The country, moreover, was then in what may be described as a volcanic condition, and there was a possibility of disturbances of varying magnitude breaking out in several localities at the same time.

(10) In addition to protective duties, guards were required for approximately 14,000 Turkish prisoners; the safety of British women and children, numbering 850 souls, and of some 41,000 Assyrian and Armenian refugees, had to be ensured; and a large amount of stores at the base, at Baghdad, and at Mosul and other centres, had to be safeguarded.

At this juncture, too, the mixed brigade, which normally would constitute my only reserve at Baghdad, was still in the Upper Euphrates area, where operations had been in progress for some six months, and was, in part, in process of withdrawal to that city.

(11) On the 1st July I had at my disposal as a mobile force some 500 British and 2,500 to 3,000 Indian troops, of which one battalion only was in a position to reach the Middle Euphrates area within twenty-four hours.

And here I should explain that, though the existence of several railways might lead to the supposition that troops in Mesopotamia can be moved from point to point with rapidity, this, in fact, is not the case owing to the insufficient and inefficient rolling stock and the lack of adequate European personnel necessary for rapid and smooth transit. Moreover, the diffi-

culties of the transport situation were aggravated for a time by the loss of four trains near Rumaithah through the cutting of the line. Mesopotamia, too, is a country devoid of roads in the established sense of that word. Some six or seven miles only of metalled road exist, and wheeled traffic and transport are forced to plough their way through dust or argillaceous mud according to the season of the year.

General Military Situation.

(12) Several tours which I made soon after assuming command of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, with the object of inspecting the troops and the country and determining to what extent detachments might be reduced in strength or number, forced upon me the conclusion that to shift troops in a country which, like a sheet of parchment, rises at any point where a weight is lifted from its surface, might not improbably tend to produce the very disturbances which I wished to avoid. Moreover, the strength of the troops in the various garrisons, as well as their efficiency, left something to be desired, and did not admit of any appreciable reduction. I, however, made a few alterations in the strength of the garrisons, besides ordering greater attention to be paid to defensive measures; but far from being able to abolish any detachments, I felt tempted to add to their number by holding points which I regarded as of strategical importance, whence the water required by the tribes for the irrigation of their crops could be controlled.

(13) I have already referred to the possibility of the outbreak of disturbances in more than one direction, and of this I had had some experience during my first three months in the country. It was apparent that I might be called upon at short notice to despatch reinforcements to any of the following localities:—

(a) Persia, whither I had already sent two British battalions, and for which country I was retaining as a further possible reinforcement two Indian battalions and some Field Artillery.

(b) Mosul, near which place disturbances had occurred in May and June, and where further unrest was anticipated.

(c) The Tigris or Euphrates lines.

(d) The borders of Kurdistan, an area always liable to disturbances in summer and autumn.

(14) To meet these possible requirements I had drawn from the Kirkuk area to Baghdad one battalion, and in addition I had a brigade of infantry, less one battalion, at Tekrit. The uncertainty of the general situation and the impossibility of fixing in advance the locality to which troops might have to be sent, were, I considered, sufficient reasons for leaving their distribution undisturbed and not at once concentrating all possible reserves at Baghdad.

The Arab Fighting Strength.

(15) As regards the fighting strength of the Arabs, and dealing only with those who actually took part in the insurrection, it is impossible exactly to assess their numbers. Roughly, they may be accepted as amounting to 131,000, of whom some 60,000 were armed with rifles (vide Appendix II.), but on no occasion on which our troops have been engaged have the numbers met exceeded 7,500 men. Since the days of the Turkish domination the

position with respect to arms and ammunition in the hands of the tribes has materially altered, and it is unfortunate that a general disarmament was not enforced before the considerable force with which we at one time held the country was withdrawn. In some civil divisions and in towns the enactment regarding illegal possession of arms was enforced, but the risks attendant on allowing many thousands of armed men to roam about the country seem not to have received the weight that they deserved.

(16) Possibly it was not realised what an important bearing this factor had upon the military situation, and how the settlement of blood feuds had made possible the added risk of tribal combination. Large quantities of arms and ammunition had found their way into the country, in addition to those looted during the war, picked up on battlefields and taken from deserters. The British occupation, too, brought much money into Mesopotamia and paved the way for large purchases of modern weapons besides the replacement of those of obsolete pattern.

The Outbreak of the Insurrection.

(17) I have stated that the outbreak began at Rumaithah on the 30th June. Thither 170 Indian ranks of the 99th Infantry and 138 of the 114th Mahrattas, with four British Officers, were immediately despatched. As a rule a force of this size would have amply sufficed to quell a local rising, but on the 4th July it became invested together with two British Officers, 153 railway personnel and 60 Indians, who were, or had taken refuge, at Rumaithah. Until the date of the relief the beleaguered garrison, 527 in all, had to supply themselves by periodical raids on the village. In carrying out these raids they were assisted by bombs dropped on the houses by aeroplanes, and some supplies of food and ammunition were provided by the same means.

Rumaithah—First Relief Force.

(18) By the 6th July a small relief force composed as follows:—

- 37th Lancers (1 squadron),
- 45th Mountain Battery (1 section),
- 45th Rattray's Sikhs,
- 99th Deccan Infantry (H.Q. and 5 platoons),

30 Kurdish levies, under the command of Lieut.-Col. D. A. D. McVean, D.S.O., and accompanied by a train carrying ammunition, food, and water, reached a point about 6 miles north of Rumaithah, after meeting with considerable opposition and delay owing to the necessity of repairing the railway line.

(19) Next day the insurgents appeared in numbers estimated at from 3,000 to 5,000. A gallant attempt was made to break through them, but Lieut.-Col. McVean, finding that they were closing round his force on every side, withdrew under cover of a dust storm, being closely followed up, and reached Imam Hamza, 20 miles north of Rumaithah, on the 8th July. The casualties sustained were:—

Killed.

British Officers	...	...	...	1
Indian other ranks	...	...	...	47

Wounded.

British Officers	...	...	...	1
Indian other ranks	...	...	...	166

Assembly of Troops for Operations.

(20) Meanwhile on the 3rd July I had ordered the reserve battalion at Baghdad to be replaced from the 18th Division, whose headquarters were at Mosul, and on the 4th warned the General Officer Commanding that division to hold the brigade at Tekrit in readiness to move by rail to Baghdad. On the latter date all railway bridges of importance were ordered to be guarded.

(21) On the 8th July, after hearing of the failure of the relief column to reach Rumaithah, I telegraphed to the War Office (telegram repeated to India) requesting that an infantry brigade and a battery of artillery might be held in readiness for despatch to Basrah; and was informed that this force could not embark before the end of July. On the same date I ordered to Baghdad the following units, which, as well as certain other British troops, had been sent to Karind in Persia, where the climate in summer is considerably more temperate than in Mesopotamia:—

- 1st Bn. Royal Irish Rifles,
- 39th and 131st Batteries, Royal Field Artillery,

and directed the 87th Punjabis to proceed to Hillah and the 1/116th Mahrattas from Tekrit to replace them at Baghdad.

On the 8th also, the General Officer Commanding the 18th Division was ordered to despatch from Tekrit to Baghdad:—

- H.Q. 55th Infantry Brigade,
- 1 (How.) Battery, R.F.A.,
- 2 Battalions Indian Infantry and certain details,

the 2nd Bn., Manchester Regiment, to be ready to follow if required.

The 1/10th Gurkhas were at this time marching from the Upper Euphrates to Fallujah en route for Baghdad; whilst the 86th Carnatics, which had arrived from India in relief, and the 13th Rajputs, on their way to the base, were detained at Baghdad.

On the 10th July the 1st and 7th Dragoon Guards were ordered to move from Karind to Baghdad.

Second Rumaithah Relief Column.

(22) The object of the above movements was to provide force of sufficient strength to carry out the relief of Rumaithah with the least possible delay.

The force, which was assembled for this purpose at Diwaniyah by the General Officer Commanding the 17th Division, was placed under the command of Brigadier-General Coningham, C.M.G., D.S.O., Commanding the 34th Infantry Brigade, and was composed as follows:—

- 37th Lancers (1 squadron),
- 97th Batt., R.F.A.,
- 132nd (How.) Batt., R.F.A. (less 1 section),
- 45th Mountain Battery,
- 61st Co., 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners,
- 2nd Bn., Royal Irish Rifles (51st Infantry Brigade),
- 45th Rattray's Sikhs (52nd Infantry Brigade),
- 87th Punjabis (55th Infantry Brigade),
- 99th Deccan Infantry (less 1 Co.) (34th Infantry Brigade),
- 1/116th Mahrattas (55th Infantry Brigade),

1/10th Gurkha Rifles (51st Infantry Brigade),

17th M.G. Bn. (2 sections),

besides certain details.

The 86th Carnatics were sent to the 17th Division to form part of the line of communication troops.

(23) Neither time nor troops were available to permit of guarding the railway line from Hillah to Diwaniyah and further south throughout its length, and the mere supply with food and water of the numerous detachments that would have been necessary for the purpose, and the provision of material for defence works were impracticable. Garrisons were, however, left at both these places, and posts were established at railway stations and other points of importance, such as the wooden bridge over the Hillah branch of the Euphrates at Jarbuiyah. But the protection proved inadequate. Marauding parties, under cover of darkness, succeeded in tampering with the line, and the concentration was in consequence delayed.

(24) At this time it was evident to me that the operation which was about to take place was an extremely hazardous one. I was committing practically the whole of my mobile force to an undertaking which involved its transfer to a distance of 150 miles from Baghdad, with ill-guarded communications, and with every prospect that those tribes which had not already risen or who bordered the line of march would do so before the Rumaithah garrison could be extricated. In fact, there was a prospect of the force being cut off and having to fight its way back to Hillah during the hottest season of the year, while further embarrassed by almost insurmountable food and water difficulties.

(25) These and other considerations prompted me on the 15th July to ask for the despatch, as soon as possible, of the troops which I had demanded from India on the 8th, and I added a request that a full division might be held in readiness. On the 18th July, from motives of economy, I qualified my earlier telegram in so far as to suggest that the remainder of the division should not be embarked until demanded.

On that date the greater part of the Rumaithah relief column was concentrated close to the railway about 16 miles north-west of that place. With it was a train carrying reserve ammunition, water, rations and medical requirements. It was expected that, owing to damage to the railway line, the force would be obliged to part company with the train some time before arriving at its objective, and, as transport for carrying supplies was limited, the relieving operation had necessarily to take the form of a rapid dash to Rumaithah and an equally rapid withdrawal.

(26) On the 19th the column advanced, being greatly belated owing to the necessity of repairing the railway line, and shortly after mid-day reached a point some six miles north-west of Rumaithah, when the insurgents came in view. They were standing in groups which were in all estimated at 5,000 men on a front of 3,500 yards along a canal embankment. Their main position, which was not at first discovered, was some 200 yards in front of the embankment which was held as a second line, both positions being directly across the line of march of the column.

At 1.10 p.m. General Coningham attacked, but the determined opposition of the insurgents and the strength of their position defied the gallant efforts of the 45th Sikhs and the 1/116th Mahrattas.

At 5.50 p.m. the 1/10th Gurkhas, who had been sent on from Diwaniyah to join the column, together with two guns of the 87th Battery, R.F.A., and a section of the 17th M.G. Battalion, arrived on the scene, and were at once put into action in order to secure access to the river before dark.

The casualties during the day had been fairly heavy, amounting to—

Killed.	
British officers	2
Indian other ranks	32
Wounded.	
British officers	2
Indian other ranks	150

Those of the enemy, as far as killed are concerned, were ascertained later to number 150.

(27) At night the Column Commander was faced with a somewhat disquieting situation. The insurgents had checked the advance and half of the gun ammunition had been expended. The infantry had suffered through their march of 12 miles across the desert, carried out in great heat and dust, and followed by a stiff fight and a shortage of water. It was essential, however, to attack again at daylight, and preparations to do so were made. But, fortunately, the opposition on the 20th was to be much weaker, and on that date the 1/10th Gurkhas, with the troops which had accompanied them on the previous day, succeeded in reaching the river and establishing a force on the further bank. The insurgents, finding that their flank was turned, evacuated their position, and as they fell back were severely bombed by aeroplanes and punished by machine gun fire.

Relief of Rumaithah.

(28) On the same day the 37th Lancers entered Rumaithah, and on the 21st the garrison were withdrawn, the wounded being quickly evacuated.

Through the Political Officer I intimated to the insurgents that their severely wounded would be treated at Samawah if brought to that place, as I felt that the tribes had been misled by their religious and other leaders, and that, having effected the relief of Rumaithah, hostilities might possibly be brought to a conclusion, provided those implicated in the local rising submitted. A month later, in order to regularise the position as regards any Arabs that might be captured, I issued an order that the usual laws and usages of war were to be observed, and a clear distinction was to be made between those who fell into our hands in action and those who acted in a treacherous manner.

On the 22nd, during the withdrawal, the rearguard was attacked under cover of a thick dust storm, and some confusion was created. Order was soon restored, and the column continued its march, reaching Diwaniyah on the 25th.

Intended Relief of Kufah.

(29) My intention, which had been com-

announced on the 19th to the General Officer Commanding the 17th Division, in whose area the above described operation took place, was to send a mixed column, including two battalions of infantry from Hillah, to Kif as soon as possible after Rumaithah had been relieved. These troops would be followed by others from Diwaniyah, and the relief of the detachment of the 108th Infantry Regiment at Kufah, which had been placed there to overawe Najaf, and which, in some measure, ensured the safety of the line of communication of the forces employed south of Hillah, would be carried out.

(30) By the 23rd, however, the situation had changed for the worse, and on the morning of that date I told the General Officer Commanding the 17th Division, who had come to Baghdad to see me, that the mixed column which I had arranged should proceed to Kif must be increased by two additional battalions. At the same time I impressed upon him the necessity for concentrating without delay at Hillah all troops which were south of that place.

Force sent towards Kif.

(31) On the 23rd July, the Officer Commanding troops at Hillah, on the urgent representation of the Political Officer, that a display of force was necessary to prevent the disaffection spreading to the Northern Bani Hassan, the southern section of which tribe had broken out and occupied Kif, despatched the following troops to a point some six miles south of Hillah:—

- 35th Scinde Horse (2 squadrons).
- 39th Batt., R.F.A.
- 2nd Bn., Manchester Regiment (less 1 company).
- 1/32nd Sikh Pioneers (1 company).
- 24th Combined Field Ambulance (1 section).

(32) The General Officer Commanding the 17th Division, to whom the movement was reported, gave definite orders that the troops were not to proceed further than the distance named, and that their camp was to be entrenched. The column found, on arriving at its destination, that the water was brackish, and its Commander was ordered from Hillah to move next day 8 miles further along the Kif road. The watering of the animals of the column on the morning of the 24th, which had to be done at a distance of from three to four miles from the camp, occupied several hours, and not until 9.15 a.m. was the march resumed. The heat was great, and the troops, especially the British, reached their camping place in a very exhausted condition.

(33) At 5.30 p.m. the insurgents began to appear, and later attacked the camp in some numbers, apparently intending to surround it. The Column Commander, who had been instructed before leaving Hillah to retire, in order to avoid becoming engaged with superior forces, and who was pressed to do so by the Political Officer, who stated that the tribes in rear would now rise, unwisely decided to withdraw.

(34) By the time the necessary arrangements had been made it was dark, and as the column filed out of the camp it was attacked by the tribesmen, who were reinforced from every village in the neighbourhood. The transport stampeded and much confusion ensued, and the Arabs, closing in, inflicted heavy casualties. Many of those of the 2nd Bn., Manchester

Regiment, who formed a flank guard, lost their way, and fell into the hands of the Arabs. The rearguard, composed of the 35th Scinde Horse and a company of the 1/32nd Pioneers, held the insurgents at bay, and the 39th Batt., R.F.A., with its guns firing in turn in every direction, fought with the utmost gallantry. The column was followed to within nine miles of Hillah, when the Arabs drew off and allowed it to continue its march unmolested.

(35) Our losses consisted of 20 killed, 60 wounded, and 318 missing, many horses and much transport. The majority of the casualties occurred in the 2nd Bn., Manchester Regiment. One 18-pounder gun fell into a deep canal, and though every effort was made to extricate it it had to be abandoned, and fell into the hands of the Arabs.

The General Situation at Baghdad and elsewhere.

(36) The news of this reverse, which spread rapidly far and wide, increased the gravity of an already serious situation. All tribes in the vicinity of Hillah at once rose, as well as others, whose hostility added to the insecurity of the railway communication with Diwaniyah.

I had decided on the 23rd to withdraw from that place, as information had reached me that the Rumaithah sheikhs, who had shown indications of submitting, had come under the influence of the Shamiyah tribes, which had broken out on the 14th. It appeared, therefore, no longer necessary or desirable to hold Diwaniyah. There, as I have already stated, were assembled practically all the troops available for active operations, and the urgent need for concentrating them at Hillah, 53 miles to the north, without a moment's delay, was now stronger than ever.

(37) On the 25th July I directed the General Officer Commanding the 17th Division, who had suggested coming to Baghdad to see me regarding the proposed operations towards Kufah, to proceed at once to Hillah and organise the defence of that place, and I reiterated my orders regarding the rapid concentration there of all troops. I also ordered the Jarbuiyah bridge over the Hillah branch of the Euphrates, which was a post of vital importance on the railway line, to be made specially secure.

(38) At this time the safety of Baghdad had become a matter of concern to me. In order to protect the European inhabitants from an internal rising, a defence scheme had been in existence for some time, which, by request of the Military Governor, could be put into operation at short notice; but to secure the city and its environs from external aggression was a far more difficult problem. Its inhabitants were understood to number approximately 200,000, many of whom were more or less disaffected and were only waiting encouragement from outside to rise.

(39) The problem, however, did not end there. Protection was essential for the Citadel, which is situated on the north side of the town and which was in a somewhat dilapidated condition, as also for a large number of scattered establishments, such as depôts and stores of all kinds (some highly inflammable), workshops, hospitals, railway stations, rolling stock, a large electrical power station, water pumping station, and the military dairy.

(40) In view of the reduction in strength of

the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force which it was proposed to effect towards the end of the year, the impossibility of sparing sufficient troops to guard this important military centre and the necessity for economy, I had decided to take no steps in the matter beyond settling in my own mind, in general terms, how I would deal with the problem should the necessity to do so arise. I had, however, soon after I assumed command, ordered the aerodrome, which is situated on the opposite side of the river to that on which the troops were camped, and which covers a large space of ground, to be provided with suitable defences and guards, and it was owing to this precaution that an attempt to burn down the sheds after the insurrection had begun failed.

(41) On the 26th and 27th July, accompanied by my Chief Engineer, Major-General E. H. de V. Atkinson, C.B., C.M.G., C.I.E., I fixed upon the approximate sites for a series of earthworks around Baghdad. By the middle of August, thanks in great part to the tireless energy of Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Carey, C.M.G., D.S.O., Director of Military and Public Works, some 40 brick blockhouses, which replaced the earthworks at first hastily constructed, had sprung up on a perimeter of 16 miles, and as material became available the whole was enclosed by a continuous wire obstacle. These blockhouses had a marked effect on the demeanour of the inhabitants, and served to diminish crime, not only in the city itself but in its immediate vicinity. Moreover, instead of requiring several battalions for the defence of the place, I was able to reduce the garrison and spare more troops for active operations.

(42) In order as much as possible to restrict the area enclosed by the blockhouses, I terminated our tenancy of the Daurah Cantonment, and in 48 hours shifted to safer quarters the many thousand tons of stores and camp equipment there. I further arranged for the bridge of boats, which connected that cantonment with the smaller one on the left bank of the Tigris known as Hinaidi, to be moved closer to Baghdad so as to allow of the quick transfer of reserve troops from bank to bank.

The Citadel was repaired, and the large quantity of ammunition and other valuable war material stored there was no longer left at the mercy of evilly disposed persons.

(43) As the internal condition of the city was not satisfactory, Military Courts were established, and proclamations issued prohibiting the holding of seditious meetings, and restricting movement in the streets by night.

The position of Baghdad, previous to the construction of defences, was highly dangerous, and I therefore, on the 26th July, ordered the 53rd Infantry Brigade, less the 1/3rd Gurkhas, which was at Baiji on the line of communication to Mosul, to be sent to the capital forthwith, where it was more suitably placed as a general reserve.

(44) In order still further to add to my reserve I had sent on the 15th July for two squadrons of the 32nd Lancers from Kirkuk, and warned the troops on the Upper Euphrates to be prepared to assemble at Fallujah, where they would be within reach if required. The withdrawal of these latter troops was, however, considered for political reasons to be undesirable, and an arrangement was come to with the Dulaim

tribe, which has remained loyal throughout the disturbances, whereby their head sheikh, in return for a subsidy, undertook to garrison Hit until such time as it could be re-occupied. Our troops in that area remained at Ramadi and Fallujah, care being taken that they were provided with sufficient supplies to maintain themselves for several weeks in case of interruption on their line of communication.

(45) The general situation at this juncture was so menacing that, on the 26th July, in addition to the ten battalions which were understood to be coming as reinforcements from India, I pointed out that a second division might possibly be required, and on the 30th added that it should be mobilised. Following this request it may here be stated that, at later dates, as the situation continued to develop in an unfavourable manner, I asked for, and was furnished with, three British and seven Indian battalions. Besides these troops a battery of Horse Artillery and an Air Force squadron were added to my force. The total reinforcements of infantry amounted to:—

British, 1,937 rifles.

Indian, 11,889 rifles.

I should add that the Government of India accepted the patriotic offer of Lieut.-Colonel His Highness the Maharaja Sir Jagatjit Singh Bahadur, G.C.S.I., of Kapurthala, to furnish a battalion of Imperial Service Infantry, which did useful service.

(46) On the 26th July, the Commander-in-Chief in India telegraphed offering to relieve me of a considerable number of Turkish prisoners, an offer which, subject to War Office approval, I gladly accepted. Eventually these prisoners were shipped direct from Basrah to Constantinople, the last contingent sailing on the 15th August. In order to ensure the safe custody of these prisoners, who were distributed in several localities as working parties, the greater part of a brigade of infantry had been absorbed, but by concentrating them a reduction in strength was effected. I now decided to dispense entirely with regular guards and replace them with armed labour. Gradually the Director of Labour, Colonel F. D. Frost, C.B.E., M.C., to whose energy the credit of the execution of the scheme is due, trained some 2,500 volunteers from Indian Labour Corps, a few of whom had had military experience. These men were regularly attested for a period of six months, and when not required for guarding prisoners did useful service in certain blockhouses on the lines of communication and in guarding depôts and other establishments.

(47) On the 26th July also I ordered all defence vessels to be mobilised, when it was brought to my notice that the plates having been removed from their more vulnerable parts, they were penetrable by rifle fire. This defect was shortly afterwards rectified. On the 27th, Commander C. H. Jones, D.S.O., R.N., who was passing through Baghdad on his way from Persia, offered me his services, subject to Admiralty approval, which was soon forthcoming, and I placed him in charge of the Mesopotamian Floating Defences.

(48) Before turning again to the occurrences in the Hillah area, I should mention that although the railway between that place and Diwanayah was to some extent guarded, the line from Baghdad to the former place was, owing to lack of troops, wholly unprotected. On the 28th

July I occupied, with two companies of the 13th Rajputs. Mahmudiyah, from which place reports of a concentration for an attack on Baghdad had been received. On the evening of that date the last train (an ammunition train) that was to reach Hillah from Baghdad for some weeks got through safely, the line behind it being out at night. On the 2nd August I ordered this line to be protected by blockhouses, the construction of which was to begin from both ends and to be pushed on as rapidly as labour and troops for garrisons became available. This work could not begin until the 6th August.

(49) On the afternoon of the 3rd August a serious fire, due to incendiaries, occurred at the main Mechanical Transport Depot, the entire headquarters' reserve stock of spare parts and tyres for the Expeditionary Force being destroyed before the flames could be extinguished. I thereupon ordered all Arab labourers to be discharged from Government employment and sent a general warning throughout the country for special precautions to be taken against incendiarism. The order regarding the employment of Arab labour was shortly afterwards modified so as to admit of skilled labour being retained.

The Concentration at Hillah.

(50) Meanwhile the concentration of troops at Hillah was in progress, an operation on the successful issue of which I felt that our tenure of Mesopotamia, and with it our position in North-west Persia, hung. The necessity for avoiding any delay had been expressly laid down in my order, as I felt it possible that the insurgents, who had already displayed their predilection for the destruction of railways, might go a step further and make all movement by that means impossible. To make use of the railway was essential, as six days' rations for the whole force, which included 1,120 railway personnel, water amounting to 23,000 gallons, sick, and a large quantity of ammunition had to be carried, for which the available road transport was quite insufficient.

(51) The force was commanded by Brigadier-General Coningham, C.M.G., D.S.O., and was composed as follows:—

- 37th Lancers (two squadrons),
- 97th Battery, R.F.A. (less one section),
- 131st (How.) Battery, R.F.A.
- 132nd (How.) Battery, R.F.A. (one section),
- 45th Mountain Battery,
- 61st Company, 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners),
- 45th (Rattray's) Sikhs,
- 87th Punjabis,
- 1/99th (Deccan) Infantry,
- 1/10th Gurkha Rifles,
- and certain details.

As the force leaving Diwaniyah on the 30th July proceeded north to Jarbuiyah, it was joined by troops from various posts on the line of communication, namely:—

- 131st (How.) Battery, R.F.A. (one section),
- 114th Mahrattas (1½ companies),
- 1/116th Mahrattas (one company),
- 1/32nd Sikh Pioneers (less 1¼ companies),
- 108th Infantry (½ company),
- 86th Carnatic Infantry.

(52) On the 31st July a force of 500 mounted and 1,500 dismounted Arabs, which was following the column along the left bank of the Euphrates, was engaged by artillery fire at 1,000 yards' range, and suffered heavily.

(53) On the 5th August, on approaching Jarbuiyah bridge, the insurgents, who were in strength, were engaged by the 1/10th Gurkhas, who crossed to the left bank of the river, and the 1/99th Infantry, and suffered heavy casualties, 200 dead being counted. Up to this date an average of only 5½ miles a day had been covered. This slow rate of progress was due to the damage caused to the railway line, which, between Guchan and Jarbuiyah, had been systematically destroyed. In places stretches of a mile or more had been torn up and removed. The repair material carried on the train soon became exhausted, and the only means by which the train of sixty trucks, which had increased to five engines and over 200 trucks at Guchan, could advance, was by picking up rails and sleepers in rear, transporting them to the front, a distance of over a mile, and then relaying them. Moreover, a road alongside the railway to allow of the movement of guns and transport had to be made throughout almost the whole distance traversed.

(54) From Jarbuiyah, on the 6th August, while work on the railway north of that place was in progress, punitive operations were carried out, and on the 7th, after leaving as garrison the 86th Carnatics, one section 45th Mountain Battery, and one section Sappers and Miners, the column continued its march.

(55) On the 8th August troops from Hillah, with a construction train, went out to meet General Coningham's column, and the two forces joined hands at 11 a.m., after encountering slight opposition. The line between the point where the two columns met and Hillah had been badly damaged for 3,760 yards. This section was restored by 4.45 p.m., and at 10.15 p.m. the trains of both columns reached Hillah, bringing in all civilians, sick and wounded. Next day the remainder of General Coningham's column reached Hillah.

(56) The operation of withdrawing the force from Diwaniyah, which had occupied eleven days under the most trying weather conditions, reflects the highest credit on the skill and resolution of the commander and the endurance of the troops.

Attacks on Hillah.

(57) The effect of the reverse on the 25th July had soon made itself apparent in and near Hillah. The Albu Sultan tribe rose on the 28th and destroyed the railway line south of that place. On the night of the 27th/28th July Hillah was attacked, and on the night of the 31st July/1st August the insurgents broke into the town, but were driven out by the gallantry of the 8th Rajputs. The attack was made in considerable force, and the Arabs lost heavily, leaving 149 dead on the ground.

Operations North of Hillah.

(58) In anticipation of the return of General Coningham's column to Hillah, I had given orders for certain operations to begin directly that event occurred. With this object two columns were prepared as follows:—

- 55th Brigade Column, under Brigadier-General H. A. Walker, C.M.G., D.S.O.

32nd Lancers (less two squadrons),
97th Battery, R.F.A. (less one section),
131st (How.) Battery, R.F.A. (less one section),

45th Mountain Battery,
2nd Battalion, Manchester Regiment,
8th Rajputs,
87th Punjabis,
Details of the 114th and 1/116th Mahrattas,

1/32nd Sikh Pioneer (one company),
and certain details.

The second column was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel H. L. Scott, D.S.O., M.C., 1/10th Gurkha Rifles, and consisted of:—

35th Scinde Horse (two squadrons),
97th Battery, R.F.A. (one section),
131st (How.) Battery, R.F.A. (one section),

1/99th Infantry,
1/10th Gurkha Rifles

Both columns contained troops taken from General Coningham's force, which was badly in need of rest. The situation, however, was not one that permitted of delay, and the first of the columns assembled at the northern outskirts of Hillah on the afternoon of the 9th, the date on which General Coningham's column arrived at that place, that under Lieut.-Colonel Scott following in the same direction on the 10th.

(59) I had decided to operate next in a northerly direction for the following reasons. I anticipated that the insurgents would conclude that my next effort would be to relieve the garrison of Kufah, which had been invested for nearly three weeks, and would not be found in strength north of Hillah. Kufah, I knew, was well supplied, and its situation gave no cause for anxiety. On the other hand the defences of Baghdad were still incomplete, and even after the arrival on the 10th August of the first reinforcing battalion from India, the 2/7th Rajputs, which had landed at Basrah on the 6th, the capital would be inadequately garrisoned. Frequent reports had come in regarding concentrations on the right bank of the Tigris, which, it was understood, were a prelude to an attempt to capture Baghdad, and I neither felt justified in again hazarding my limited force at a distance from the capital nor exposing the latter to the risk of a *coup de main*. It was essential, too, to repair and blockhouse the railway line from Baghdad to Hillah before putting into execution the plan for the relief of Kufah, as supplies of all kinds would be required at Hillah for that operation, besides a bridging train from Baghdad to ensure a passage across the Euphrates, which at Kufah is 250 yards in width.

(60) Another strong reason which actuated my decision was the importance of securing the Hindiyah Barrage, whence the waters of the Euphrates could be controlled, as well as the town of Musaiyib, which lies some eight miles further up the river. The capture of these two places would give me command of two important crossings over the Euphrates, the possession of which had allowed the insurgents to conduct with impunity raids against the railway from the country which lies to the west of the river.

Occupation of the Hindiyah Barrage.

(61) On the 12th August, after some diffi-

culty regarding water at Khan Nasiriyah at this the hottest period of the year, the 55th Brigade column occupied Musaiyib. Some opposition was encountered both on that and the previous day, but a bold advance by the 2nd Bn., Manchester Regiment, forced the insurgents to retire with loss. At Musaiyib the 8th Rajputs were left as garrison, and on the 13th August the insurgents, who stood between the column and the Hindiyah Barrage, were driven off, and that important locality was occupied and placed in charge of the 2nd Bn., Manchester Regiment, with a section of 18-pounder guns.

(62) On the 14th August and following days punitive measures were undertaken by both General Walker's and Lieut.-Colonel Scott's columns, the latter force throughout the period of its absence from Hillah covering the construction of blockhouses thence along the railway, similar work being carried out from Baghdad towards that place. Several Arab concentrations were driven off and casualties inflicted.

(63) On the 19th August the first train was able to proceed from Baghdad to Hillah. On the 23rd and 24th August respectively the 55th Brigade column and Lieut.-Colonel Scott's column returned to Hillah, which during their absence had been subjected to several attacks, more especially on the 21st, when the Arabs were repulsed with heavy loss, the 45th Sikhs, as usual, distinguishing themselves by their gallantry and resolution.

(64) I was now in a position to operate for the relief of Kufah, and, from a purely military point of view, I should have preferred to continue putting pressure on the insurgents who inhabit the country south of Baghdad. Here it was clear that the focus of the insurrection was to be found.

Events elsewhere, however, made it advisable and, indeed, imperative, to transfer the troops to another area, where I proposed to begin operating on the 1st September:

Operation South-East of Hillah.

(65) While preparations for this operation were in progress, such troops as could be spared were given a few days' rest, and on the 26th August I moved the 34th Brigade column, under Brigadier-General Coningham, from Hillah in a south-easterly direction. The column, which contained two battalions that had taken part in the operations which led to the capture of the Hindiyah Barrage, was composed as follows:—

32nd Lancers (less two squadrons),
39th Batt., R.F.A.,
131st (How.) Batt., R.F.A. (less one section),
67th Company, 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners (one section),
45th (Rattray's) Sikhs,
1/99th Infantry,
1/116th Mahrattas,
1/10th Gurkha Rifles,
1/32nd Sikh Pioneers (one company),
17th Machine Gun Bn. (one section),
2nd Euphrates Levy (three troops),
and certain details.

(66) It will be remembered that I had left a post at Jarbuiyah to protect the important railway bridge at that place. The Arabs had tried by floating burning matter down the river to set fire to it, but their attempts to do so had failed. The bridge would be of

value should I later on be in a position to re-occupy the country between Hillah and Samawah, and, if destroyed, would take several months to rebuild. But the continued spread of the insurrection and the proclamation of a Jihad or holy war by the Chief Mujtahid of Karbala about the 6th August showed that this project would have to be deferred for some months. I therefore ordered the withdrawal of the post. This was effected, and on the 29th August Brigadier-General Coningham's column reached Hillah, having been opposed on the first day of its southern advance by 2,000 Arabs, who were driven off by the cavalry and Euphrates levies, after which he carried out some punitive operations.

Operations North-East of Baghdad.

(67) Meanwhile, the transfer of troops to which I have referred had begun, a transfer which necessitated a temporary suspension of active measures in the Hillah area.

(68) On the 6th August, signs of unrest in the area north-east of Baghdad showed themselves. These were followed by attacks on the railway line, and from the 9th August the train service from Baghdad to Quraitu and Kingarban ceased. Troops were not available in sufficient strength to suppress the rising in its initial stage, but the energetic action of Colonel J. H. F. Lakin, the officer commanding the Persian Line of Communication, who made the utmost use of the very small force which he hastily collected, prevented the spread of the disturbances beyond our border into Persia. As the railway line near Baqubah had been cut and the presence there of insurgents in some strength was reported, I sent from Baghdad on the 10th a small mixed column under Brigadier-General H. G. Young, D.S.O., commanding the 7th Cavalry Brigade, the despatch of which removed my last reserve at Baghdad.

(69) The moment was an inopportune one for weakening the garrison of Baghdad, as reports, to which I have already referred, had been received of possible attacks not only from the west, but from the north. The police, too, had selected the 12th August for the arrest of certain agitators, and on the night of that date an outbreak was predicted and the internal defence scheme was ordered to be put into operation. It was important, however, if possible, to suppress without loss of time the first signs of the insurrection in an area which had so far escaped contamination.

(70) Brigadier-General Young's force consisted of:—

- “A” Batt., R.H.A., Chestnut Troop (one section),
- 1st (King's) Dragoon Guards (about 100 sabres),
- 7th (P.R.) Dragoon Guards (about 100 sabres),
- 16th M.G. Squadron (one section),
- 50th Mountain Battery (one section),
- 1st Bn., Rifle Brigade,
- 1/94th (Russell's) Infantry (at Baqubah, 1½ companies).

(71) The concentration of this force at Baqubah was delayed owing to railway difficulties, but before daylight on the 12th August the column, less the 1st Bn., Rifle Brigade, which I ordered to be left at Baqubah, whence it could be recalled quickly to Baghdad if required, proceeded some 18 miles towards the

south-east and destroyed a village which had harboured some of the marauders. Unfortunately, owing to some shots fired by Arabs in the early morning, which caused a stampede of mules and resulted in the loss in the dark of some machine-gun and transport animals, the action of this column, which had accomplished all that was required of it, had not the desired effect and tended to encourage the tribes in the Baqubah area. The column was withdrawn to Baghdad where, owing to the unrest, its presence was urgently required. But on the 14th August, the 1/15th Sikhs, which had arrived from India on the afternoon of the previous day, were sent to reinforce the small garrison of the railway bridge over the Diyalah, near Baqubah, and protect the wireless station at that place. Here also was the Assyrian refugee camp, but as it possessed a considerable number of armed men, it was in a position to protect itself.

(72) The unrest north-east of Baghdad now spread, and by the 25th August practically all the tribes in the Diyalah division became implicated in the rising, and lawlessness and disorder spread as far north as Kirkuk and later on to Arbil. Several of our posts on the Baghdad-Quraitu line and the branch line to Kingarban were attacked and temporarily cut off.

(73) On the 20th August, the Acting Civil Commissioner had informed me that the forces in the disturbed area with which I would have to deal might soon rise to 10,000, that quantities of arms were being bought in Persia by the insurgents, and that the tribes across our border in that country would in all probability join forces against us.

(74) As the situation was now one which might conceivably involve the safety of the whole of the married families at Karind and Sar-i-mil I ordered these camps to be concentrated at the former place, arrangements for defence to be made, and supplies to be collected. As regards defence there were 1,000 British troops, mostly young soldiers, at Karind, and there was no cause for anxiety regarding supplies, which are readily procurable in Persia.

It was in these circumstances that I decided to transfer troops from Hillah to re-open the Persian Line of Communication, and to defer the relief of Kufah.

(75) While the necessary forces were being concentrated a small column under Lieut.-Colonel F. A. Greer, C.M.G., D.S.O., 1st Bn., Royal Irish Fusiliers, consisting of:—

- 13th British Mountain Battery,
- 1st Bn., Royal Irish Fusiliers (who were brought by mechanical transport from Kasvin),
- 1/94th (Russell's) Infantry (3 platoons),
- 79th Carnatic Infantry (150 rifles),
- 15th Light Armoured Motor Battery (1 section),
- 50 Irregular Horse (Persian Kurds),
- Some Sappers and Miners and other details.

reached Mirjanah on the 1st September after some opposition, and did useful work in repairing the railway line. The 1/15th Sikhs, in anticipation of the arrival of the troops from Hillah, occupied Baqubah and the railway station, expelling a number of insurgents who had taken possession of the palm gardens round the town.

(76) On the 22nd August the construction of blockhouses between Baghdad and Baqubah

and on the Kut-Baghdad Railway was begun. The work on the latter line, which was my main line of communication, and which had already received attention in so far as the protection of the important bridge over the Diyalah River was concerned, was to begin simultaneously from both ends. At first it could only be carried out slowly, but as troops arrived from India I was able to allot for the work the 1/12th Pioneers, 1/89th Punjabis, and the 2/96th Infantry.

(77) On the 5th September the 34th Brigade column, under Brigadier-General Coningham, was assembled immediately south of the Diyalah Railway bridge and began its advance next day. It consisted of the following troops:—

32nd Lancers (less 2 squadrons),
35th Scinde Horse (less 2 squadrons),
97th Batt. R.F.A. (less 1 section),
132nd (How.) Batt., R.F.A.,
Bridging train (1 section),
1/15th (Ludhiana) Sikhs,
45th (Rattray's) Sikhs,
1/99th Infantry,
1/10th Gurkha Rifles.

A smaller column, the 75th Brigade column, under Brigadier-General G. A. H. Beatty, C.M.G., D.S.O., and composed of:—

45th Mountain Battery,
9th Company, 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners,
3/9th (Bhopal) Infantry,
2/119th Infantry,
Detachment of the 122nd (Rajputana) Infantry,
1/12th Pioneers (2 companies),

was entrusted with the care of the Persian Line of Communication inside our border.

(78) The tribes in the Baqubah-Quraitu area are individually small, belong to no confederation, and so lack the cohesion and fighting qualities of those in the Euphrates valley. Moreover, they are not so well armed as are the latter. Consequently the resistance encountered by Brigadier-General Coningham was negligible. Shahraban was reached on the 8th, and a few days later his column and that of Lieut.-Colonel Greer came in touch.

(79) The railway line was repaired and provided with blockhouses, but traffic could not be resumed throughout the length of the line owing to the damage to one important bridge, which took some weeks to restore. Posts were now established at the heads of the five canals which distribute the waters of the Diyalah throughout a large area. By the 22nd August, the first train of married families from Quraitu reached Baqubah, and by that date most of the tribes in the disturbed area had sent in their representatives and had submitted to our terms.

(80) I now began to withdraw the troops to Baghdad and thence to Hillah in order to carry out the relief of Kufah, and while this movement was taking place I sent a small column to Deltawah, which for some time had been the centre of disturbances affecting not only Baqubah but also the railway line north of Baghdad. Punishment was inflicted on the inhabitants of this town, and a detachment of 200 Indian Infantry was left to keep order, but was eventually transferred, on the 15th October, to Sindiyah, on the Tigris, where its presence was expected to have a salutary effect,

and where it could easily be supplied by river from Baghdad.

(81) To keep order in the area from which I had withdrawn troops I left Brigadier-General Beatty with the undermentioned force, which included the garrisons of blockhouses:—

32nd Lancers (2 squadrons and machine-gun section),
13th British Mountain Battery, R.A.
45th Mountain Battery,
1/99th (Deccan) Infantry.
2/119th Infantry,

and some details, including a detachment of the 122nd (Rajputana) Infantry, which shortly left to join its unit in the North Persian Force.

(82) On the 17th September, part of this force under Lieut.-Colonel Greer was moved towards Kingarban, the branch railway to which place had been considerably damaged by the insurgents. The necessary repairs were effected, and on the 27th September a train reached Kingarban from Baqubah.

(83) In order to maintain pressure on the inhabitants around Hillah during the absence of my main force north-east of Baghdad, I had ordered Brigadier-General Walker's 55th Brigade column to be maintained in that area, but in considerably reduced strength. The column was thus limited to the following troops:—

37th Lancers (2 squadrons),
39th Battery, R.F.A. (one section),
131st (How.) Battery, R.F.A.,
2nd Bn., Royal Irish Rifles,
1/116th Mahrattas,
17th Machine Gun Bn. (Detachment),
39th Combined Field Ambulance (Detachment).

(84) I considered that this force would, with the power that could be exercised through our possession of the Hindiyah Barrage, suffice to occupy the attention of the insurgents. To ensure safe access to Musaiyib from the railway, and so facilitate supply, a line of blockhouses was constructed. Brigadier-General Walker's column carried out some punitive operations against the tribes east of the railway who had interfered with the despatch of supplies to Hillah. These measures were successful, the sheikhs implicated surrendering unconditionally, and on the 23rd September the column returned to Hillah, having fully justified my hopes as to its utility.

(85) Further north on the Euphrates the Zoba tribe had risen on the 14th August, after murdering the Political Officer, Lieut.-Colonel Leachman, two days earlier, and had cut off from Baghdad the troops at Fallujah and Ramadi. Although the garrisons of these places had, as already mentioned, been well furnished with supplies, I felt that some movement, however insignificant, towards reopening communication would, while my main force was north-east of Baghdad, occupy the attention of the tribes west of that place, who were still reported from time to time to be concentrating with a view to attempting a raid on our supply depôts.

(86) I therefore directed Brigadier-General G. A. F. Sanders, C.M.G., who had ably carried out the arrangements for the defence of Baghdad and the construction of blockhouses along several railway lines which diverged from it, to undertake the opera-

tion of reopening communication with Fallujah. The force at his disposal was extremely limited, and the work was frequently interrupted by attacks on the construction parties, but by the 24th September communication was restored with Fallujah, that place and Ramadi being already in touch. Shortly afterwards I directed the troops at Fallujah to take over the garrisons of the blockhouses between that place and Baghdad, and to construct a post to command the regulators of the Saklawiyah canal. The restoration of communication with the Upper Euphrates had a beneficial effect not only on that area but among the tribesmen who are settled between Samarra and Baghdad.

(87) Three days earlier the last of 173 blockhouses on the Kut-Baghdad line was completed, and as certain defences had by this time been constructed at important points on the Tigris, the main line of communication from Baghdad to the Base could now be regarded as secure.

Operations for the Relief of Kufah.

(88) As I wished to impress that part of the country in which I was now about to operate, by displaying as many troops as possible, I reduced the garrisons of Musaiyib and the Hindiyah Barrage to one battalion, while a force of similar strength was allotted for the defence of Hillah. I also withdrew from Ramadi, on the Upper Euphrates, the Headquarters, and 2 squadrons of the 5th Cavalry, and as that area was now quiet, replaced on the 9th October the garrison of Hit, which post, as already mentioned, had been held by the loyal Dulaim tribe pending our re-occupation.

(89) It was necessary to leave troops north-east of Baghdad, where propagandists were reported to be busily engaged in trying to renew the disturbances, to continue there the process of restoring order, and to ensure compliance with the terms that had been issued. For this purpose, and excluding the detachment at Deltawah, I left under the command of Brigadier-General Beatty the following troops, which included those necessary for guarding the railway line:—

- 32nd Lancers (less 2 squadrons),
 - 13th Mountain Battery, R.G.A.,
 - 40th Mountain Battery,
 - 1st Bn., Royal Irish Fusiliers and M.G. Co.,
 - 1/94th (Russell's) Infantry,
 - 2/119th Infantry,
 - 99th (Deccan) Infantry,
- and certain details.

(90) The number of troops at my disposal was now, for the first time, sufficient to admit of operating simultaneously in strength in two directions, and by doing so it was expected that the insurgents would divide their forces. One of the objectives was to relieve the garrison of Kufah and to recover our prisoners at Najaf; the other to occupy Tuwairij and threaten Karbala, which lies some 12 miles to the west.

(91) The columns were composed as follows:—

- 55th Brigade Column—Brigadier-General H. A. Walker, C.M.G., D.S.O.
- 35th Scinde Horse (less 2 squadrons),
- 37th Lancers (2 squadrons and machine gun section),

- 39th Battery, R.F.A.,
- 97th Battery, R.F.A. (1 section),
- 131st (How.) Battery, R.F.A.,
- 45th Mountain Battery (less 1 section),
- 61st Company 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners,
- 67th Company 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners (less 1 section),
- No. 49 Pack Wireless Set,
- Cable Section,
- Detachment Bridging Train,
- 2nd Bn., Manchester Regiment,
- 2nd Bn., Royal Irish Rifles,
- 8th Rajputs,
- 1/15th (Ludhiana) Sikhs,
- 87th Punjabis,
- 1/116th Mahrattas,
- 108th Infantry (less detachment at Kufah).
- 1/32nd Sikh Pioneers,
- "C" Company, 8th Machine Gun Bn. (less 2 sections),
- 39th Combined Field Ambulance,

53rd Brigade Column—Brigadier-General G. A. F. Sanders, C.M.G.

- 5th Cavalry (less 2 squadrons and machine gun section),
- 2nd Battery, R.F.A. (less 1 section),
- 132nd (How.) Battery, R.F.A.,
- 45th Mountain Battery (1 section),
- 9th Co., 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners,
- No. 46 Pack Wireless Set,
- Cable section,
- Detachment Bridging Train,
- 2nd Bn., East Yorkshire Regiment,
- 1st Bn., Rifle Brigade,
- 3/9th (Bhopal) Infantry,
- 13th Rajputs,
- 1/12th Pioneers,
- "C" Co., 8th Machine Gun Battalion (1 section),
- 24th Combined Field Ambulance.

(92) As all operations that take place in Mesopotamia depend on the supply of water, and as troops moving along the Hillah-Kif road are forced to rely on what is carried by channels running westward from the Nahr Shah canal, special arrangements had to be made. It was decided that the Kufah force should march in two columns, one column along the canal which, in order that it might serve as a line of supply and to prevent the closing of the channels carrying water to the Kif road, was to be guarded by blockhouses at intervals along its banks. The other column would follow the Hillah-Kif road, which is a track superior to that along the canal, and crosses the channels at points where, as obstacles, they are less formidable than further eastward.

While following this road the column would be in a position to close the channels running to the westward of it to the inconvenience of the inhabitants on that flank.

(93) Before the date fixed for the advance on Kif and Tuwairij, and while the troops required to move against the latter place were assembling, an operation was undertaken on the 6th and 7th October to secure the dense belt of palm trees which stretches from Hillah to a point 2½ miles distant, where the Nahr Shah canal leaves the Euphrates (Hillah Branch). Strong opposition was encountered on the 7th, but after 3½ hours' fighting the 2nd Bn., Royal Irish Rifles, and the 8th Rajputs

(less 2 companies), supported by the 1/15th Sikhs, broke through the insurgents' position, causing them heavy loss. Our casualties on these dates amounted to 18 killed and 68 wounded.

(94) On the 11th October the troops of the Kufah and Tuwairij columns, being now assembled, carried out operations to clear the flanks of their subsequent lines of advance, and on the 12th they moved towards these places.

The 53rd Brigade Column reached Tuwairij on the same date, blockhouses being constructed along the 12 miles traversed. Stubborn opposition was encountered at the Jarjiyah canal, half a mile short of the objective, and the 2nd Bn., East Yorkshire Regiment and the 13th Rajputs, who had been sent forward some time earlier to support the cavalry and guns, drove back the insurgents, light armoured motor-cars sharing in the action.

(95) At Tuwairij a further stand was made by the tribesmen, who set fire to the boat bridge which crosses the Euphrates at that point; but the Sappers and the 13th Rajputs, pushing on, extinguished the flames and occupied the town. In this action aeroplanes co-operated with effect, as they had done on many similar occasions, attacking the insurgents as they streamed back towards Karbala. The Arab loss this day in killed was estimated at 200. Our own was inconsiderable.

(96) This operation north-west of Hillah led, on the 16th, to the submission of Karbala and the acceptance of our terms, and while negotiations were in progress punitive action was continued in the neighbourhood.

(97) The operations of the 55th Brigade column were equally successful. On the 12th, that portion of the column which marched along the Kif road was opposed by some 2,000 Arabs, who were driven off by the 87th Punjabis, the cavalry and guns working on their flank. On the 14th, a smaller body, which held the canal bank north-east of Kif, was disposed of by the 1/116th Mahrattas, supported by light armoured motor cars, and the town was entered. Here the column which had constructed blockhouses along the Nahr Shah canal united with that which marched along the Hillah-Kif road. To cover the construction of a bridge, the 2nd Bn., Manchester Regiment, was at once ferried across the Euphrates in pontoons, but the width of the river falsified reports, and was found to be considerably greater than was anticipated. By 9.30 a.m., however, on the 16th, the whole force had crossed and resumed its march on Kufah.

(98) At 8 a.m. on the 17th October the northern outskirts of the town were reached, and the insurgents were found to be holding it in strength. The 35th Scinde Horse, making a wide turning movement to the west, cut the Kif-Najaf road and charged the insurgents, sabring 27 and causing other casualties by Hotchkiss gun fire.

(99) Meanwhile, the infantry rapidly advanced through the palm gardens, ably assisted by low-flying aeroplanes. In the front the 108th Infantry, the balance of which regiment formed the beleaguered garrison, led, closely followed on their right by the 2nd Bn., Manchester Regiment, and on their left by the 1/15th Sikhs. The insurgents turned and fled, pursued by aeroplanes, and at 9.30 a.m. Kufah was relieved.

(100) The garrison (786 personnel and 176 animals), which was commanded by Captain

G. Dowling, 108th Infantry, whose unit (490 all ranks), formed the fighting force, and who was ably helped by the Political Officer, Major P. FitzG. Norbury, had been besieged for 90 days. Through the foresight of the latter officer, large stocks of food had been laid in and defences constructed before the investment began. The insurgents, making use of the 18-pounder gun captured on the 24th July, had harassed the garrison and set fire to the town, and disaster was only averted by the gallantry of some of the defenders, whose losses during the siege were 25 killed and 27 wounded, the former figure including two British officers.

On the 18th Najaf submitted, and on the 19th 79 British and 88 Indian prisoners were handed over.

Operations for the Relief of Samawah.

(101) At this point it is necessary to turn to the operations in what is known as the River Area, which is comprised roughly within a triangle bounded by the rivers Tigris, Hai, and Euphrates, and to which, for convenience of command, the town of Samawah and the line of communication thereto were added in August. The disturbances, which began at Rumaithah at the end of June, spread southwards, and displayed themselves mainly in attacks on the railway line, which was repeatedly damaged and as repeatedly repaired.

(102) At this time the only regular troops on the Euphrates between Jarbuiyah and Basrah were the garrisons at Samawah, Ur, and Nasiriyah. At Samawah there were 2½ companies of the 114th Mahrattas and a small detachment of the 2/125th Rifles and 2/129th Baluchis, and at Nasiriyah three companies of the 2/125th Rifles. At Ur, the railway junction for the latter place, was a company of the 2/125th Rifles, less one platoon. I had every intention of withdrawing the garrison of Samawah, but to have done so before reinforcements arrived from overseas would almost certainly have precipitated events and led to other powerful tribes joining in the insurrection. Had this occurred, Basrah, which was my base, and which, like Baghdad, has its numerous military establishments distributed over a wide area, and possessed a garrison inadequate for more than essential guard duties, would have been in danger of attack. And further, a rising of tribes in the region between the Tigris and Euphrates, on both banks of the Shatt al Gharraf, would have led to disturbances on the Tigris, which would have imperilled my sole line of communication with the base. As the weeks went by, and the prospect of an outbreak in this area trembled in the balance, Political Officers had to be withdrawn by aeroplane from the territory of the Muntafiq. One of these officers pluckily returned to his post, when for a brief space the situation seemed slightly better, but soon again had to be extricated by the same means.

(103) The situation was highly critical, and several times I was definitely informed that in the course of a few days some of the tribes of this powerful confederation were certain to revolt. Jihad was being preached with frenzied fervour by the numerous emissaries from the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala; parts of the country were in an uproar, and at any moment there might be thrown into the scale on the insurgents' side the majority of the Muntafiq, which possesses approximately 43,000 rifles.

Much as I should have liked to concentrate at Nasiriyah some of the reinforcing troops, the first battalion of which had arrived from overseas on the 6th August, I felt debarred from doing so until communication with that place could be made secure. To have assembled a force there might possibly have helped to keep the tribes in check, but should these troops, at a distance of 140 miles from Basrah, become invested, their relief by land must be an operation difficult and slow, and one for which a force far exceeding my resources, present or prospective, would be essential.

I therefore made the place itself secure by strengthening the garrison, and on the 1st September ordered the defences of the railway line from Nasiriyah to the Base—the more important sections first—to be proceeded with.

(104) For military reasons it proved fortunate that, unlike those in other areas, the tribes of the Shatt al Gharraf were much less under our administrative sway. There the Pax Britannica had not found its way to the same extent, nor had blood feuds been compounded and the road made smooth for tribal combination. Internal strife at length showed itself, probably encouraged by the paramount sheikh of the Abudah tribe, who wields great influence, especially round the Shatrah and to the south, and who, refusing to pay heed to all appeals to join in the Jihad, continued to maintain a friendly attitude and kept his followers in order. The situation thus became alleviated, but the marsh Arabs, who are to be found on both banks of the Euphrates south-east of Nasiriyah, and who had raised their banners on the 1st September, remained a menace to the railway thence to Basrah.

(105) Meanwhile, about the middle of August, the insurgents began the investment of Samawah, the defences of which were too extensive for the garrison, and comprised four separate localities, which included a post at the railway station. Supplies for a month for the garrison and railway personnel were put into the place with difficulty by the river route at the end of August; and, though I hoped to effect the relief a month later, I ordered as a precaution that from the 1st September half rations only were to be issued. Prior to that date, and until the investment, the garrison, aided by defence vessels and so-called armoured trains—which were only partially protected, but carried a crew, and in some cases a gun—had continually harassed the hostile Arabs in the vicinity. One of these trains was based on Samawah, and during the investment remained at the railway post until the garrison was withdrawn to the main camp.

(106) On the 10th August one of the defence vessels, the "Greenfly," ran aground some five miles above Khidr, and all efforts to move her failed. The crew, consisting of one British officer, 4 British and 30 Indian ranks, remained on board, beset by hostile Arabs on both banks; and when rations began to fail, food was several times dropped by aeroplanes, and at great risk a small proportion was picked up by the crew. The process of delivery was attended by such danger that, after several aeroplanes had been damaged and one shot down, the pilot and observer being murdered, I ordered that no further attempts to supply the crew in this manner were to be made, and that heavy bribes were to be offered to any Arab who would undertake to smuggle food on board. The relief force, but for disturbances

on the North-West Frontier of India, which delayed the arrival of troops and obliged me to postpone the advance for a week, could have reached the vessel in time to effect a rescue, for she held out till the 4th October. Some of the crew are prisoners in the insurgents' hands, but it is feared that the British portion lost their lives.

(107) On the 2nd September I appointed my Chief Engineer, Major-General E. H. de V. Atkinson, C.B., C.M.G., C.I.E., to take command of the troops, pending the arrival of Major-General G. Cory from England, which were to carry out the relief; and on the 18th September, as soon as Brigadier-General Coningham could be spared from the operations north-east of Baghdad, I sent him to command the actual relieving troops. These I specially selected, as it was important in view of the tribal situation to make success a certainty. Lest the opposition should prove to be severe and a call have to be made for troops beyond those that were allotted—the number of which had to be limited by water facilities—I ordered that 12 of the 20 battalions, most of which had now arrived from overseas, should, if required, be at the disposal of the commander of the relief force. To have drawn to Baghdad the units not wanted in the first instance for the relief, though they would have helped in the operations in the vicinity of that place, might possibly have been followed by their forced return to the River Area, a transfer which would have involved considerable delay. As events turned out, the precaution of retaining them in the River Area proved to be unnecessary.

By the 23rd September all arrangements for the advance of the relieving force were completed, and, while awaiting the arrival of the remaining troops from overseas, the construction of blockhouses from Ur towards Samawah was begun.

(108) On the 1st October the force under Brigadier-General Coningham left Nasiriyah, being composed as follows:—

- 10th (D.C.O.) Lancers (2 squadrons),
- 10th (How.) Battery, R.F.A.,
- 13th Battery, R.F.A.,
- 69th Co., 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners.
- 8th Bn., M.G. Corps (2½ sections),
- 1st Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry,
- 3/5th Gurkha Rifles,
- 3/8th Gurkha Rifles,
- 1/11th Gurkha Rifles,
- 3/23rd Sikh Infantry,
- and certain medical and other details.

In addition to the above, and shortly after the column left Nasiriyah, I despatched from the Hillah area 1½ companies 114th Mahrattas, who arrived in time to take part in the operations for the relief of their unit.

The line of communication in front of Nasiriyah and the defence of that place were in charge of Brigadier-General A. le G. Jacob, C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., A.D.C., and from Ur to Basrah under Brigadier-General A. I. R. Glasfurd, C.M.G., D.S.O.

(109) As the railway line which, beyond Daraji, was known to require extensive repairs, is, except at Khidr, at some distance from the Euphrates, the column was accompanied by two trains, each train carrying 30,000 gallons of water in tanks, besides numerous other requirements. In addition a protected train, with a 13-pounder gun, a machine gun, and a

searchlight, formed part of the column, as also a blockhouse train which, based on Ur, carried sufficient material for 10 blockhouses, a number which it was intended daily to construct.

(110) On the 6th Khidr was reached, a strong force of insurgents being driven off by the 3/5th Gurkhas and 3/23rd Sikhs, who inflicted upon them losses which included 47 killed.

(111) From the 7th to the 9th punitive action was taken against the tribes on both sides of the Euphrates, who were known to be responsible for the ill-treatment of the crew of the defence vessel.

(112) By the 12th the railway was repaired and blockhouses built as far as Hadbah, 4½ miles short of Samawah, which was reached that day by the column. The insurgents, in strength exceeding 7,000 men, were reported to be holding a strong position running through palm gardens and walled enclosures.

(113) On the 13th the column attacked, and, greatly assisted by the guns, succeeded in forcing back the insurgents, who were driven from the palm groves by the 1/11th Gurkhas, supported by the 1st Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and fled northwards. Their casualties included 80 killed, of whom 20 were drowned. Our casualties from the 1st to the 18th October, including those of the "Greenfly," only amounted to:—

	Killed or died of wounds.	Wounded.	Missing.
British Officers	0	1	1
British other ranks	5	15	4
Indian Officers	0	0	0
Indian other ranks	6	14	24
Followers	0	2	0
	11	32	29

(114) On the 14th October the column, which had halted outside Samawah on the previous night, entered that place without opposition, the repair of the railway allowing the trains to arrive at 11 p.m. As the tribes gave no signs of responding to a proclamation calling upon them to submit, punitive measures were begun on the 17th, and the railway line was repaired and blockhouses were built to Barbuti bridge, which is about two miles north of the town.

(115) The garrison of Samawah, which was commanded by Major A. S. Hay, 31st Lancers (attached to the 114th Mahrattas), and numbered 670 in all, had suffered little by their two months' siege beyond casualties, which were as follows:—

	Killed.	Died of wounds.	Wounded.	Miss- ing.
British Officers	1	0	6	1
British other ranks	0	0	4	3
Indian Officers	0	0	4	1
Indian other ranks	10	2	58	39
Followers	3	0	16	9
	14	2	88	53

(116) The camp had been attacked from time to time, but from the 28th August the insurgents concentrated their attention upon the railway station post. Possibly they knew that the water supply in tanks was limited and that what was obtained from a well was brackish and unfit to drink. The situation was such that on the 1st September Captain D. P. B. Russell, M.C., 10th Lancers, who commanded both post and armed train, reported that he must withdraw to the main camp, and arrangements were made accordingly to cover his re-

tirement by troops from the camp, supported by aeroplanes.

(117) On the 3rd September the withdrawal began under cover of the troops from the main camp, who advanced to a point ¼ mile from the station, and the armed train, on which were Captain Russell, 30 sowars of the 10th Lancers, Captain J. W. Pigeon, I.M.S., and some sick, followed as rearguard. Unfortunately, after proceeding a short way towards the covering troops the engine for some unknown reason failed. The two officers on the train were seen to leave, and, disregarding their personal safety (so survivors state), go to each truck in turn and order everyone to run to the covering troops. But the Arabs, who had closely watched the proceedings, realising that the engine was disabled, rushed up in thousands from some gardens bordering the town 200 yards away, and overwhelmed those who were with the train. The covering troops fought their way back successfully to camp, and the casualties inflicted by them and by the crew of the train are understood to amount to 216 killed and 334 wounded.

Information having reached me that there was a post at Barbuti bridge I ordered it to be withdrawn at the same time as the railway station was evacuated. This operation was effected without loss.

Operations North of Baghdad.

(118) When the insurrection broke out in the Euphrates valley there was a strong probability that it would spread north of Baghdad, where disturbances had occurred in May and June. At that time by promises of gifts of arms and ammunition and other inducements external propagandists had striven to incite the Kurdish and Jezireh Arab tribes to take hostile action against us, and it seemed certain that their efforts would shortly be repeated, as indeed they were. Fortunately the country lying north of Baghdad and that which is known as the Mosul vilayet provide less material for the incendiary than the regions further south, and it was hoped that the small force under Major-General T. Fraser, Commanding the 18th Division, would suffice to maintain the area in order. That this hope was justified is, I consider, due to the bold and able manner in which that officer handled his men, who by constant movements in small bodies prevented or immediately suppressed disorder. The vigilance of commanders of posts, escorts and columns, and the cordial co-operation with the political authorities went far towards the attainment of this satisfactory result.

(119) To describe in detail the various incidents that occurred in this area would be to throw them out of their true perspective in relation to the larger operations that took place elsewhere. Some of these incidents, all of which were dealt with satisfactorily, included numerous raids on the railway line, which caused interruption of communication on one occasion lasting for a fortnight, attacks on posts and on Samarra, into which a small garrison was thrown, the rescue of a train of Assyrian refugees on their way to Mosul for repatriation, in which the 1st Bn., Rifle Brigade, took part; and the withdrawal to Samarra from Kirkuk of certain officers' and soldiers' wives and children by motor vehicles across 100 miles of desert, a precautionary measure when, owing

to the rising north-east of Baghdad, garrisons were becoming isolated.

(120) At that time I extended the responsibilities of the General Officer Commanding the 18th Division by handing over to his charge the south Kurdistan border and all posts of the 17th Division as far south as Kingarban. This arrangement, which was necessary owing to the severance of communication between Baghdad and Kirkuk, worked satisfactorily.

Events in North-West Persia.

(121) The events in North-West Persia during the period under review may be dismissed in a few sentences. As already stated, I intended, on the representation of the General Officer Commanding the North Persian force, to strengthen that force, but, after studying the question on the ground in June, I countermanded my orders by telegram from Kasvin. Although later several skirmishes took place between our advanced troops and those of the Bolsheviks, my orders precluded me from allowing the General Officer Commanding to deliver a blow in force, and the situation in North-West Persia is now practically as it was in June.

(122) On the 18th August, despite the further appeals for troops, I withdrew the 1st Bn., Royal Irish Fusiliers, to assist in the operations north-east of Baghdad, at a time when the Persian Cossacks were reported to be pushing the Bolshevik troops northwards towards Enzeli. It was clear then, as always, that the decisive rôle must be played in Mesopotamia, and that on our success or failure there depended our position in North-West Persia.

Some Local Considerations.

(123) From a perusal of the events above described it will be evident how ill-prepared Mesopotamia was for a rising of a nature so extensive. Communications in all directions were at the mercy of the insurgents, and even if before the outbreak the necessary posts along them had been made, the forces in the country were inadequate to provide garrisons to hold them. The position, too, was not improved by the fact that a large reduction of the forces in Mesopotamia had only recently occurred through demobilisation and a proportionate restriction in the area occupied by stores, hospitals, and other establishments necessary for their up-keep and well-being had not followed. Whether this anomaly was overlooked or was allowed to stand because of the considerable expense involved in any change and the early prospect of a further reduction of the forces I do not know; but the extensive areas laid out for cantonments at Baghdad seem to show that no internal trouble on a large scale was anticipated. During the period that efforts have been in progress to suppress or restrain the insurrection much labour and attention have consequently had to be devoted to matters subsidiary in a sense, yet some of them vital in their bearing on the problem. Lines of communication have had to be secured involving the construction of blockhouses at intervals along the rivers, roads, canals and railways for a distance in all amounting to nearly 600 miles; Baghdad and other important centres have had to be defended and works erected at other points; rail-

way and telegraphic line repairs have made unceasing demands on personnel; supplies have had to be hurried by river, rail and road, and sometimes even carried by aeroplane to ensure that no garrisons which might be isolated should be unable to maintain themselves until relieved. In addition to these demands, and in spite of the disturbed condition of the country, the British married families and Turkish prisoners have been evacuated overseas from Basrah, while a number of Assyrian refugees, totalling many thousands, have been removed by rail and road to Mosul, whence their repatriation is now in progress.

Work of the Forces and Staff.

(124) In forwarding this despatch I desire to express my indebtedness to the Naval Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, who assisted me by placing at my disposal a party of officers and men of the Royal Navy for manning patrol vessels on the Tigris between Kut and Amara, at a time when I could ill have spared troops for the purpose.

(125) The Royal Air Force under the Command of Wing Commander C. S. Burnett, C.B.E., D.S.O., Commanding Mesopotamian Wing, Royal Air Force, have during the operations above described co-operated with the Army both in attack and defence, constantly reconnoitring almost every part of Mesopotamia. Twenty-eight tons of bombs were dropped and 74,000 rounds of ammunition fired from machine-guns on insurgent concentrations, camps and convoys and hostile villages. Communication was maintained with outlying and besieged garrisons; ammunition, food, medical comforts, wireless spare parts, and on one occasion a 13-pounder breech block were conveyed to isolated posts.

(126) At the time of the outbreak of the insurrection the Royal Air Force were re-equipping two squadrons with new types of machines, and have since erected machines for two new squadrons. The difficulty of maintaining four squadrons in the field has been accentuated by the number of machines damaged by rifle fire, no less than 41 having been temporarily disabled by this cause and eight lost in hostile country.

(127) The devotion to duty of officers and airmen in climatic conditions of the most trying nature has been beyond praise.

(128) I wish to bring to notice the services of the undermentioned officers of my staff who deserve special mention:—

Brevet Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) J. H. K. Stewart, D.S.O., General Staff, whose extensive knowledge of Mesopotamia and its inhabitants, acquired during four years passed in the country, has been of great assistance to me. He is possessed of excellent ability, and among his marked characteristics are industry, sagacity, loyalty and sound judgment.

Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) P. O. Hambro, C.B., C.M.G., Brigadier-General in Charge of Administration, is a clever and thoughtful officer, who has made himself master of the numerous and intricate problems of administration in which Mesopotamia abounds, and has dealt successfully with one and all under circumstances of considerable difficulty.

Major-General E. H. de V. Atkinson, C.B., C.M.G., C.I.E., Chief Engineer, whom I

placed in temporary command of the 6th Division during the operations for the relief of Samawah. His careful arrangements for the advance of the force over a waterless country where the railway had been seriously damaged, resulted in a complete success. I am also indebted to this officer for his advice and assistance in questions connected with defence.

Major-General O. R. A. Julian, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E., has been unsparing of himself in his constant attention to the health and comfort of the troops and married families. The operations have been carried out in an average shade temperature of 107.9 degrees, but so excellent have been the sanitary and other arrangements that the sick rate has been remarkably low. The evacuation of sick and wounded by road, rail and river has been accomplished smoothly and efficiently.

(129) I am indebted to the several branches of the staff and departments whose work, executed in trying climatic conditions, has materially contributed in bringing about the satisfactory stage at which operations have now arrived. Among these the two following have come more particularly under my notice:—

The Signal and Telegraph Services.—The 2nd Wireless Squadron has maintained communication over an area of 200,000 square miles, and has carried out its functions with success under great difficulties. The work done by the Telegraphic Department in effecting repairs and maintenance, often under fire,

has been extensive and continuous, and is deserving of high praise.

The Railway Directorate, which passed to the Civil Administration on the 1st April, 1920, has rendered every assistance in its power, in spite of considerable casualties. The personnel continued at their posts in a most laudatory manner in their endeavour to secure the maintenance of the administrative communication services of the army.

(130) I desire to express my admiration of the manner in which the Political Officers of the Civil Administration remained at their several stations, and by their steadfastness and courage helped to stay the insurrection in some areas and to avert it in others.

(131) On the whole the Levies have exceeded my anticipations regarding that force, and wherever they have been commanded by a British officer in whom they trusted they have remained staunch.

(132) I propose shortly to submit for consideration a list of names of those whose services deserve recognition.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. HALDANE,

Lieut.-General,

Commanding-in-Chief,

Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

APPENDIX I.

STRENGTH AND DISTRIBUTION OF TROOPS IN MESOPOTAMIA AND PERSIA.

	British.	Indian.	Followers.
Total Strength (approx.)	12,000	61,000	60,000
Non-Combatants	3,000	23,000	60,000
Balance—Combatants	9,000	38,000	—
<i>Deduct—</i>			
Sick	700	1,000	—
In Transit	600	1,000	—
In Persia	3,500	6,000	—
Total deduction	4,800	8,000	—
Balance—Combatants in Mesopotamia	4,200	30,000	—
Composed of—			
Sabres	—	2,900	—
Bayonets	2,900	23,700	—
Gunners	1,300	3,400	—
	4,200	30,000	—

Distribution—

At Mosul.—1 Brigade, less garrisons of Zakho, Dohuk, Akra, Tel Afar, Hamman Ali, Qaiyarah

At Baiji.—1 Brigade, less details British Battalion at Karind and garrisons at Shergat, Qaiyarah, Ain Dibbs, Hadranayah, Hadra, and protection of communications to Mosul.

At Tekrit.—1 Brigade, less details British battalion at Karind, garrison at Samarra and protection of railway and 1 Battalion at Baghdad.

Kirkuk Area.—1 Brigade, less details British battalion at Karind and garrisons at Arbil, Altun Kupri, Bazian, Chemchamal, Kingarban, and L. of C. posts Kingarban to Kirkuk and 1 Battalion at Baghdad, drawn in to provide mobile reserve for possible disturbances

APPENDIX I.—continued.

Distribution—continued.

Upper Euphrates.—1 Brigade on operations at Anah, which had been in progress for over six months, and holding L. of C. posts Fallujah, Ramadi, Hit and Haditha. British battalion in Persia.

Hillah Area.—1 Brigade holding posts as follows:—Samawah, Diwanayah, Hillah, Kufah, one battalion at Baghdad and British battalion in Persia.

At Baghdad.—2 Battalions (L. of C.) on guards, P. of W. and depôts; 1 Hillah Area Battalion on guards, P. of W. and depôts; 1 Battalion Tekrit Area on guards, P. of W. and depôts; 1 Kirkuk Area Battalion.

On Tigris Line and Basrah.—Three L. of C. Battalions holding Kut, Amarah and Basrah, and guarding Prisoners of War.

Non-Combatants consisted of—

	British.	Indian.
R.A.S.C. and Supply & Transport ...		
Ordnance	1,800	20,000
Works		
Medical, Veterinary, Remounts, Accounts, Military Police, Camps and Depôts and Miscellaneous	850	2,400
Labour	200	580
Inland Water Transport	150	20
	<u>3,000</u>	<u>23,000</u>

Followers include—

R.A.S.C.	8,600
Medical	7,000
Ordnance	1,100
Works	7,000
Veterinary	700
Remounts	1,600
Labour	17,500
Inland Water Transport	11,000
Regimental and Miscellaneous	5,500
	<u>60,000</u>

APPENDIX II.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE SHOWING TOTAL STRENGTHS, BY AREAS, OF TRIBES WHICH PARTICIPATED IN 1920 INSURRECTION.

Area.	Date.	Number of Armed Men.	Rifles.		Remarks.
			Modern.	Old, but serviceable.	
Lower Euphrates ...	30/6/20	2,500	500	1,000	
” ”	2/7/20	16,300	2,500	6,200	
Middle Euphrates ...	20/7/20	16,500	2,200	6,000	
” ”	24/7/20	48,100	4,630	19,795	
” ”	30/7/20	16,270	800	3,000	
Lower Euphrates ...	30/7/20	4,350	680	1,600	
Diyalah Division ...	9/8/20	1,600	200	100	
Baghdad-Fallujah Mufraz Area ...	12/8/20	7,500	900	2,050	
Diyalah Division and Kirkuk-Kifri Area ...	12/8/20	14,300	2,800	2,990	
Samarra Division ...	24/8/20	600	175	75	
” ”	30/8/20	3,000	1,245	365	
GRAND TOTALS		131,020	16,630	43,175	

APPENDIX III.

STATEMENT OF REINFORCEMENTS RECEIVED FROM INDIA.

Unit.	Total Combatant Strength.	Date of Arrival.	Where sent to on Disembarkation.
2/7th Rajputs	807	6th August ...	Baghdad.
2/123rd Rifles	642	10th August ...	Nasiriyah.
1/15th Sikhs	618	10th August ...	Baghdad.
10th Howitzer Battery	164	16th August ...	Nasiriyah.
1/12th Pioneers	736	17th August ...	Kut-Baghdad L. of C.
2/96th Infantry	782	17th August ...	Kut-Baghdad L. of C.
3/23rd Sikh Infantry	699	18th August ...	Nasiriyah.
2/117th Mahrattas	649	20th August ...	Nasiriyah.
11th Field Co.	183	23rd August ...	Baghdad.
63rd Field Co.	160	23rd August ...	Baghdad (but sent back to Basrah).
69th Field Co.	169	23rd August ...	Nasiriyah.
2/116th Mahrattas	511	25th August ...	Baghdad.
2/89th Punjabis	750	26th August ...	Baghdad-Kut L. of C.
3/70th Burmans	540	31st August ...	Basrah.
"C" and "D" Cos. 8th M. G. Bn.	330	2nd September ...	Baghdad and Nasiriyah. H.Q. 17th Bde., R.F.A., and 1 battery ordered to Nasiriyah. Two 18 pdrs. to Baghdad (subsequently retained Basrah).
13th Battery, R.F.A.	143	7th September ...	} and 1 battery ordered to Nasiriyah. Two 18 pdrs. to Baghdad (subsequently retained Basrah).
26th Battery, R.F.A.	140	and	
92nd Battery, R.F.A.	145	14th September ...	
1st Bn. K.O.Y.L.I.	574	8th September ...	Nasiriyah.
"F" Battery R.H.A.	210	9th September ...	Baghdad.
2/153rd Rifles	780	18th September ...	Basrah.
63rd Palamcottahs	635	18th September ...	Basrah.
3/124th Baluchis	730	18th September ...	Nasiriyah.
2nd D.C.L.I.	673	23rd September ...	Basrah.
2nd East Yorkshire Regt.	707	23rd September ...	Baghdad.
3/5th Gurkhas	656	24th September ...	Samawah relief column.
3/8th Gurkhas	495	24th September ...	Samawah relief column.
1/11th Gurkhas	570	24th September ...	Samawah relief column.
2/11th Gurkhas	826	28th September ...	Reserve for Samawah relief column.
Kapurthala Infantry	410	29th September ...	Basrah.

APPENDIX IV.

LIST OF CASUALTIES REPORTED FROM 2ND JULY TO 17TH OCTOBER, 1920.

	Killed.	Wounded.	Died of Wounds.	Missing.	Prisoners of War.	Died whilst P. of W.
British Officers	19	43	2	* 5	—	—
British Other Ranks	28	57	5	*136	79	1
Indian Officers	7	39	4	* 4	—	—
Indian Other Ranks	243	1040	100	*278	74	—
Followers	15	49	2	* 28	11	—
	312	1228	113	*451	164	1

TOTAL 2,269

* Believed killed.

APPENDIX V.

ESTIMATED INSURGENT CASUALTIES FROM 1/7/20 TO 18/10/20.

Date.	Operation.	Estimated number of insurgent casualties.
1/7/20 to 28/9/20	Operations in Samawah—Khidr area preceding and including siege of Samawah	700
6/10/20 to 17/10/20	Relief of Samawah and subsequent operations ...	700
5/7/20 to 5/8/20	Siege and relief of Rumaithah, and subsequent withdrawal from Diwaniyah to Hillah	2,250
20/7/20 to 18/10/20	Attacks on Hillah and operations Hillah area ...	2,100
13/8/20 to 18/10/20	Operations on Hindiyah Barrage—Musaiyib—Yusufiyah area	400
20/7/20 to 17/10/20	Siege of Kufah	800
11/10/20 to 17/10/20	Relief of Kufah	150
14/10/20 to 18/10/20	Re-occupation of Tuwairij area	800
8/9/20 to 29/9/20	Operations in the Diyalah Division and Kirkuk—Kifri area	450
24/8/20 to 28/9/20	Bombing raids and other minor operations in the Samarra area.	100
TOTAL		8,450

NOTE.—These figures are compiled from the following sources of information :—Reports from local Commanders; Dead bodies actually counted; Burials at holy cities; Reports from agents and information supplied by surrendered insurgent leaders.

DESPATCH No. 4 (WITH APPENDIX).

From Lieutenant-General Sir J. A. L. Haldane, K.C.B., D.S.O., Commanding-in-Chief, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, in continuation of Despatch No. 3 dated 8th November, 1920.

Baghdad, 8th February, 1921.

SIR,

In continuation of my despatch dated the 8th November, 1920, I have the honour to submit an account of the further operations for the suppression of the insurrection and the measures adopted to punish the tribes who took part in it.

(2) In my earlier despatch I drew attention to the large quantities of arms and ammunition which were in the possession of the tribes, by means of which they were enabled constantly to menace the peaceful settlement of Mesopotamia, and the desirability of taking every opportunity to disarm them. The total disarmament, however, of the inhabitants of a country such as this, even if it were to be occupied in strength in all directions for a considerable time, would be a question of great complexity. Indeed, if it were possible to effect disarmament, the open nature of the borders of Iraq, the impossibility of guarding them, and the large profits and small risks attendant on the trade of gun-running would speedily cause fresh supplies to flow in and replace the vacuum that would be created. So far as the insurgent

tribes were concerned, it seemed possible, by imposing heavy fines in rifles and ammunition, to deprive them in great measure, if not entirely, of what they value above all other possessions. To do so would serve as an object-lesson to tribes in other parts of the country who had not risen, and would demonstrate the nature of the treatment which would be meted out should they, at any time, be tempted to take up arms against the Government:

(3) Thus we should have to deal with—

(a) Tribes who had been friendly and who had assisted during the operations.

(b) Tribes who had remained neutral.

(c) Tribes inhabiting inaccessible marsh country, whence they issue only for purposes of raiding.

(d) Tribes who inhabit border regions, where arms for their protection are a necessity.

(e) Nomad tribes who pass a portion of the year in Mesopotamia and then move their families, flocks, and herds beyond its borders.

(f) The Kurdish tribes.

(4) No two of these tribes could be considered under the same heading, and each would require different treatment. I consulted the High Commissioner on the subject, and his opinion was that the question of a general disarmament must be left to the Arab Government, and that it would be undesirable to

extend my operations in that respect beyond the actual insurgents.

(5) As there still seemed a possibility of the insurrection spreading beyond its present limits, should the idea prevail that a general disarmament was in prospect, it was arranged that that terminology should not be used, but that, when issuing terms, the fines inflicted should be such as to amount practically to the deprivation of all serviceable arms and ammunition.

Where these were not forthcoming by specified dates demands would be enhanced and punitive action would follow; but in lieu of an unpaid residue, sums which considerably exceeded the market value of the articles would be accepted.

This procedure, in the case of tribes from whom more than they possessed might happen to have been demanded, would encourage the surrender, in place of money payments, of arms and ammunition bought from neighbouring tribes. Besides these terms, which tended towards disarmament, other and secondary demands, which included the restoration of and repayment for damage done to Government property and the refunding of unpaid revenue, would be made.

(6) The time, however, though imminent in some places, had not yet arrived for a declaration of the terms of submission, as the conditions governing operations had so far only admitted of limited areas being visited by our troops. No sooner, therefore, had the garrisons of Kufah and Samawah been relieved and full freedom of action been secured than columns from the 17th Division were sent to Karbala and Najaf, while the 6th Division began systematic operations on the Lower Euphrates.

(7) A description in detail of the movements of the several columns, some large, some small, which at one time numbered twelve, and which operated without pause, not only in the Hillah and Samawah areas but on the Upper Euphrates and east of the Tigris towards the Persian frontier, would be tedious and difficult to follow. It will suffice to say that large areas, in some of which our troops had never before been seen, and where in the past Turkish troops never moved, have been visited, roads made and repaired, railways restored, and tribes coerced to tender their submission. The operations have taught the Arab that no physical difficulty can prevent our troops from penetrating to his most inaccessible abode. In no instance has it been found impossible to reach any village in the difficult areas traversed, nor have any obstacles sufficed to interfere with the rationing of troops in outlying districts or the carriage of their tents and other requirements. Almost every form of transport has been utilised—metre and narrow-gauge railways, motor, horse and pack, paddle steamers and native craft of all kinds, from 50-ton boats to canoes capable of carrying only four men over areas flooded to a depth of less than one foot. In some cases great difficulty was experienced in inducing tribes to send in their representatives, while in others the inhabitants fled *en masse*, leaving no one with whom to treat. In such cases, however, the claims of agriculture eventually brought them back, when the enforcement of the terms could be carried out.

(8) As it was important to secure payment of all fines at as early a date as possible, I instructed Divisional Commanders in that sense, and impressed on them the necessity for

displaying the utmost firmness in their dealings with the tribes, as any sign of weakness or relaxation in the terms laid down would cause delay and react unfavourably on other tribes whose country had not yet been visited. Moreover, it was certain that unless fines were actually collected during the presence of our troops in the area, every excuse would be forthcoming for non-payment later on. To leave troops dispersed in many areas while waiting for the completion of the terms was inevitable, but the guiding principle, now as during the operations described in my earlier despatch, was that of employing only minimum forces in less essential areas, while sending strong columns where their presence would have the greatest effect.

(9) As in some areas the tribes continued to maintain a contumacious attitude, minor collisions occurred from time to time, and in these areas and others systematic action by the Royal Air Force, working in conjunction with the troops, was applied.

(10) In other areas where payment was withheld, and from which troops had had to be withdrawn for work elsewhere, the reappearance of a column usually produced the required effect, and where greater pressure was necessary flocks of sheep and herds of cattle were impounded as hostages and the dwellings of sheikhs prepared for demolition. These measures generally brought about an early and complete submission.

(11) It may be here noted as a point of interest that the inherent respect of the Arab for the "strong hand" is such that in areas where a few months ago no European could travel without taking his life in his hands, not only will hostility not be shown at the present date, but the British soldier will be received with outward manifestations of goodwill.

(12) As areas became settled and fines were paid I gradually weakened, and then withdrew, the posts on certain lines of communication, and also reduced the garrisons at some centres. By this means I was enabled to give all units in turn a brief but well-earned rest, and despatch to India a few of those whose turn had arrived to be relieved.

(13) I was enabled also during the latter half of January to assemble two columns, one at Nasiriyah and the other at Kut, each consisting of five battalions of infantry, with cavalry and artillery, with the object of visiting the intervening country, which is inhabited by the powerful Muntafiq confederation. Although with few exceptions this confederation had maintained a peaceful attitude during the insurrection, it was desirable to show troops in an area in which British troops had not previously been seen and from which our communications on the Tigris and Euphrates could be threatened. As certain minor sections of tribes had been implicated in the recent hostilities, advantage would be taken of the presence of the column to inflict and collect fines of rifles. The column from the North, dependent chiefly upon water transport, was delayed in its march owing to the fall to a very low level of the Tigris, which caused the Gharraf to become unnavigable. The columns met, however, at Karradi on the 23rd January, and returned thence to Kut and Nasiriyah, having been received with great respect and friendliness by the inhabitants, who were much impressed. The rifle fines imposed were

paid, and the effect of the operation has been most favourable.

(14) Thereafter on the 3rd February a column was despatched from Nasiriyah to visit Suq-ash-Shiyukh, whence early in the insurrection the Political Officer had been obliged to withdraw owing to a threatened outbreak.

(15) This brought to a conclusion the operations which had been in constant progress for seven months. Besides the visitation of the areas to which reference has already been made, fines as follows were collected:—

- Rifles, 63,046.
- Small Arm Ammunition, 2,904,513.
- Cash, Rs. 767,763. (See Appendix.)

(16) Prior to the insurrection, according to a careful but necessarily rough estimate, it was computed that the actual tribes involved were in possession of 59,805 rifles, an estimate which was regarded by the Political Officers in some areas as excessive. That the tribes should have paid in rifles or money in lieu thereof, amounting in all to figures exceeding those attributed to them, may be accepted as a measure of their defeat and the realisation of their inability to withstand our arms.

(17) The process of extracting the fines has been long, tedious and difficult, but I am satisfied that it has been carried out with the utmost expedition possible. In this connection I desire to express my appreciation of the manner in which Brevet Colonel (Temporary Major-General) G. A. F. Sanders, C.M.G., Commanding the 17th Division, has carried out his share of the difficult task. The energy, tact, and firmness with which he has applied, in his extensive area of operations, the policy laid down have had results which exceed my anticipations and surpass my hopes.

(18) In conclusion, I wish to thank the Staff at General Headquarters, the Staff at the Base, and that of Formations, the Royal Air Force, and the troops who by their combined efforts have brought about so satisfactory a result.

I have the honour to be,
 Sir,
 Your obedient servant,
 A. HALDANE,
 Lieut.-General,
 Commanding-in-Chief,
 Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

APPENDIX.

RIFLE AND SMALL ARM AMMUNITION FINES.

Original estimate of rifles in hands of insurgent tribes as given in Appendix II. of despatch of 8th November, 1920, 59,805.

Surrenders up to 4th February, 1921:—

	Modern Serviceable Rifles.	Other Serviceable Rifles.	Unserviceable Rifles.	Unclassified Rifles.
Lower Euphrates	967	1,103	217	375
Middle Euphrates	16,289	31,106	6,134	1,371
North and North-west of Baghdad	2,543	2,625	316	—
TOTAL	19,799	34,834	6,667	1,746

GRAND TOTAL 63,046

Total Small Arm Ammunition surrendered 2,904,513

Money received as substitute for deficiency in rifle and ammunition surrenders... .. Rs. 767,763

Modern rifles are defined as breech loading magazine small bore rifles, .315 calibre or less made for firing nitro-propellants.

Serviceable rifles are those which, though not necessarily attaining Ordnance standard, are fit for effective use by tribesmen.

Unserviceable rifles are those which, though used by tribesmen, are dangerous to the firer or ineffective.

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