

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 Diwaniyah was to some extent guarded, the line from Baghdad to the former place was, owing to lack of troops, wholly unprotected. On the 28th