

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