

VI. THE PERIOD FROM THE 1ST OF JULY TO THE 15TH OF SEPTEMBER INCLUDING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF PEACE TERMS TO THE TRIBES.

26. Land and air operations carried out since the end of April had resulted in the submission of the Tori Khel and the improvement of the situation in South Waziristan, but conditions in Waziristan were not yet normal, nor had the maliks regained control of the irresponsible elements. The Faqir of Ipi was still at large and continuing his hostile propaganda. Although no formed bodies of tribesmen remained in the field, several small gangs of irreconcilables continued minor hostilities, such as the sniping of camps and piquets at night and outrages on roads.

27. Since large scale opposition had ceased, it was now possible to commence a programme of new road construction as a measure of effecting the ultimate pacification of the country. The area enclosed by the Central Waziristan road has always been largely inaccessible owing to lack of communications, and has seldom been visited by columns. The tribal sections of that area, both Wazir and Mahsud, are intractable and have been seriously implicated in the present disturbances. Thus the construction of roads in their country was considered desirable in order to render control simpler and to provide channels for economic development. With these ends in view it was decided to construct four roads into the Shaktu Valley; from Dosalli in the North, the lower Khaisora valley in the East, Ahmedwam (near Sorarogha) on the South and Razmak in the West, all of them connecting in the neighbourhood of Ghariom. The total length of these roads is approximately ninety miles and they are being constructed by troops, by contract labour from local and extraneous tribes and by four road construction battalions which were specially enlisted.

28. The construction of these roads led to some local dissension among certain tribal sections and also to an undercurrent of opposition amongst the younger members of the tribes who were opposed to any penetration of their country. These feelings were exploited by the Faqir of Ipi, the sniping of camps and piquets continued in all areas, and towards the end of July his followers began to increase. On the 30th of July, therefore, an area was proscribed round the locality where he had established his headquarters, on the borders of Mahsud and Bhitanni country. As a result, the Faqir moved westwards to Shawal, an area which lies between Razmak and the Durand Line. Here he held numerous tribal meetings and exhorted the tribesmen to continue hostilities. This anti-Government propaganda led to some excitement and uneasiness, but at this juncture Government announced to the Mahsuds the terms of the peace settlement. These terms were received with submission and served to allay, to a great extent, feelings of suspicion and uncertainty.

29. At the beginning of September, however, the situation in South Waziristan again became disturbed owing to the renewed activity displayed by Mullah Sher Ali, a supporter of the Faqir of Ipi. Although his efforts to attract support from the Ahmedzai Wazirs met with little response, he was joined by bad characters from various Mahsud sections.

Attacks were made on khassadar posts in the area south of Kaniguram and a gang of Mahsuds raided a village in British territory. In consequence of these offences, action was taken against the village which Sher Ali was using as a base, and areas were proscribed in the Upper Baddar and Main Toi valleys where he was recruiting his gangs. Action was also taken by the Razmak and Bannu Brigades against selected hostile villages adjacent to the proscribed areas. No opposition was met, the hostile elements dispersed and the tribesmen in the proscribed areas made their submission. Later certain other offending sections of the Mahsud tribe were warned that, unless their members were immediately withdrawn from hostile gangs, action would be taken against them. This warning had the effect of bringing about their submission, and Government terms were complied with by the 21st of September.

30. On the 10th of September, Government terms were announced to the Tori Khel Wazirs. The orders given were accepted by the representative assembly with submission and the fine of rifles imposed was paid in full.

VII. ACTION AGAINST THE BHITANNIS.

31. The Bhitanni tribe inhabit the area east of the Mahsud country on both sides of the administrative border. Throughout these operations the Bhitannis had contributed contingents to the hostile forces; they had been prominent in raiding into the settled districts of Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan and they had allowed free passage through their territory to raiding gangs composed of Mahsuds and other tribes. At the end of April a Bhitanni jirga was informed that unless they produced certain hostages as security for future good behaviour, their country would be proscribed. This warning proved entirely effective, and by the 3rd of May all hostages had been surrendered except for those of one section, whose khassadars were suspended. At the beginning of June, air action was taken against three Bhitanni villages as a punishment for their complicity in raiding into the settled districts, and against a fourth village to secure the surrender of three kidnapped Hindu girls who were subsequently released. In July the raiding had lessened owing to the energetic action of military and civil forces engaged in patrolling and policing the large and scattered areas of the Derajat, but there was a recrudescence of these outrages in August owing to the renewal of anti-Government propaganda by a certain Din Faqir, Bhitanni. Accordingly on the 20th of August a warning was issued to the tribe that unless all kidnapped persons were returned by the 27th of August, an area north of the Shuza River, excluding a strip of some five miles in width immediately west of the administrative border would be proscribed. The warning had no effect, and air action commenced on the 30th of August, and was still being carried out on the 15th of September when this despatch closes.

VIII. OPERATIONS BY THE ROYAL AIR FORCE.

32. During the period covered by this despatch operations of the following types were carried out by the Royal Air Force:—against tribal forces closely and actively engaged with our troops; against hostile fortified villages; and against proscribed areas. In the two latter