

Mesopotamia Commission

Monday 21st August 1916

First Day

Members Present

- (1) The Right Hon Lord George Francis Hamilton G.C.S.I. (in the Chair)
- (2) The Right Hon the Earl of Donoughmore K.P.
- (3) Lord Hugh Cecil M.P.
- (4) Sir Archibald Williamson Bart. M.P.
- (5) John Hodge Esq M.P.
- (6) Commander Josiah C. Wedgwood M.P.
- (7) Admiral Sir Cyprian Arthur ^{George} Bridge G.C.B.
- (8) General the Right Hon. Sir Neville Gerald Lyttelton G.C.B., G.C.V.O.

Mr R. G. Duff, Secretary

General Sir Edmund George Barrow G.C.B. sworn
and examined

Chairman. Sir Edmund, we are a Commission appointed
 "for the purpose of inquiring into the origin, inception
 and conduct of operations of war in Mesopotamia,
 including the supply of drafts, reinforcements,
 ammunition and equipment to the troops and fleet,
 the provision for the sick and wounded, and the
 responsibility of those departments of Government
 whose duty it has been to minister to the wants
 of the forces employed in that theatre of war,
 and in consequence we have made certain
 demands on Departments, and you, as representing
 the Military Department of the India Office, are
 putting in certain documents?"

S.P.
 Please put them
 in the order
 indicated by
 these figures

a Yes

2. Q Will you just enumerate what they are? -

a Primarily, there is a statement ^{by} of the military Secretary of the India Office, which you have got. Then I am permitted to put in also, or to refer to, I do not know whether it is considered as before the Commission, a précis of the correspondence regarding the Mesopotamia Expedition. Then there are the various collections of telegrams. Collection of Papers relating to operations in Mesopotamia up to the 5th December 1915.

3. Q That is No 5

a Then there is, ~~an~~ Addendum to Collection of Papers relating to operations in Mesopotamia. Then there is what ^{there are telegrams subsequent to 5th December,} is called Supplement A, and Supplement B, - Telegrams and Letters regarding medical arrangements. Then there is a collection of private telegrams previous to the outbreak of War, Lord Hardinge's telegrams, but I do not know whether I am supposed to be submitting that or whether it is sent for convenience by Lord Hardinge.

4. Q I think you may take it that they are from the Secretary of State

a They have come from the Secretary of State

5. Q Will you put that in too, please

a Yes. Then there is, Collection of Telegrams that accompanied the Papers, ^{that were} presented to the House in connection with the Nixon-Lowmhead controversy

6. Earl of Donoughmore: Those were presented to the House, were they?

a Those were presented to the House, but we have the unparaphrased telegrams there in case they are wanted for reference. And on

Sat

Saturday we sent on the correspondence with the War Office and the Admiralty regarding the Mesopotamia Expedition, exclusive of correspondence regarding Stores and India Office equipment

7 Q That is on the way to us

A Yes, then there is a statement of what India has been contributing in Officers, troops and Establishments as well as war materials since the outbreak of war, and finally there is a Statement shewing the demands in connection with operations in Mesopotamia and the steps taken to meet them.

8 Chairman: Yes. now you have made a Statement which is contained in Paper N^o 3.

A Yes

9 Q We will take that for the purpose of examination as your evidence in chief

A If you please

10 Q And we will take it as you wish, paragraph by paragraph

A Yes

11 Q But in examining you, of course we shall have to refer both to the red papers and to your papers

A Yes

12 Q In the preliminary paragraph of your Statement you give your services

A Yes

13 Q You were for some years Secretary to the Military Department of the Government of India

A I was

14 Q Do you recollect whether at that period it was the practice of the Viceroy to see the Secretaries in the different Departments fortnightly

A Weekly

15 Q And the Secretaries then discussed

with him anything that they thought

ought to be brought specially to

his notice

A Yes.

Q And

Chapter 3 Bingham

16 Q And that was the ~~practice~~ understood practice
A It certainly was in Lord Curzon's time; I was only there as Secretary during Lord Curzon's time

17 Q Is that practice still in force

A I cannot tell you

18 Q Who is now military member of Council in India
A There is no such person now; there is no such official

19 Q He is alluded to once or twice

A Yes, but he has ceased to exist; that was part of what was called the Kitchner scheme

20 Q Then there is the Commander-in-Chief

A The Commander-in-Chief is the Army Member

21 Q ^{And} Nobody else

A Nobody else ^{representing} ~~is consulted on~~ military matters

22 Q Then here you have a Military Committee

A Yes, we have a Military Committee

23 Q Does that Committee meet

A It meets every week

24 Q These documents which have been put before us consist of three different classes of ^{communications} documents; they are headed either, Public, ^{Secret or} Private ~~or Secret~~

A All the private ones are secret too. The private ones are from the Secretary of State to the Viceroy; they need not necessarily go into the offices; they may have been drafted in the office

25 Q They are not filed ^{with} ~~in~~ the Department
A No, they are filed in the Private Secretary's Office

26 Q And the retiring Secretary of State or retiring Viceroy takes them with him

A As a rule I believe that is the case
2 Were

- 27 Q Were you originally consulted with regard to telegrams of any importance
 A Yes, I think on most of them I was consulted; I mean the private telegrams which came up here in connection with Military operations
- 28 Q But there is no record kept in your office
 A No
- 29 Q Is the Secret Committee still sitting at the India Office
 A No the Secret Committee has nothing to do with these military operations
- 30 Q In India the Viceroy has the same methods of communication with the Secretary of State, and the Commander in Chief also communicates with the War Office
 A Yes
- 31 Q Is that an independent source of inter communication
 A Quite independent of the India Office
- 32 Q Would the Viceroy know what the communications were that the Commander in Chief made
 A Not necessarily
- 33 Q And do you War Office in the same way correspond direct with the Commander in Chief
 A Yes
- 34 Q Then I think it is since your day, but there is a general staff now in India
 A Yes
- 35 Q And they I see correspond direct with the general staff here
 A That has always been the case, - it was not called the general staff when I was at Simla but there was always inter communication between what I may call the Military Headquarters Office the Commander in Chief's head quarters, and the War

War Office but mostly on matters of detail
 of operations that were being drawn up, - plans
 36 Q They would not take the initiative as regards
 policy

A Oh no

37 Q And I assume that this General Staff is under
 the Commander-in-Chief

A Absolutely

Page 6. Johnson
John Bingham.

38 Q Now we have to enquire into Expedition D. I should just like a little to clear the ground by getting rid of Expeditions A B and C.

A Expedition A was the expedition to Europe, Expedition B was the expedition to East Africa, and Expedition C was also to East Africa, but it was intended originally for garrison relief in the British colony.

39 Lord Hugh Cecil: In what British Colony?
A The British Colony of East Africa, while Expedition B was marked ^{meant} offensively.

40 Chairman: Will you just repeat that.
A Expedition A was the expedition to Europe, to France in fact; Expedition B was the expedition to East Africa but intended for offensive operations.

41 General Sir Neville Lytton: German East Africa.
A Yes. Expedition C was originally intended for the garrison of the colony, for defensive operations, but Expeditions B and C were merged at once and Expedition D was for the operations in Mesopotamia, those with which the Commission is now dealing. So that Expeditions A, B, and C really have nothing to do with this inquiry, subject to your ruling.

42 Q I see there are some papers that were presented in connection with the telegrams and communications which took place between ~~the Home Government~~ the Imperial Government, and the Indian Government in connection with these

-84-

Expeditions.

Q Is it the Viceroy's own telegrams that you refer to? Those are prior to the war.

43 Q That is No 9.

A Yes.

44 Q The attitude of the Indian government was then rather one of general protest against the demands which were made upon it.

A Yes, I think you may say so.

45 Q For instance, they looked upon the expedition to East Africa, as the Viceroy said, as a side show.

A Yes, he said that.

46 Q Then considerable pressure was brought to bear upon the Indian government to comply with the request of the Supreme government, and amongst other telegrams one went from the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith Asquith, to the Indian government.

A That is on page 7: "Following from Prime Minister."

47 Q Yes. The upshot of these communications so far as the government of India is concerned, is contained in the concluding paragraphs on page 8, and this is what they say: "His Majesty's government must remember that no such risks have ever been taken before. We are sending away more than half our regular Army, and we have nothing in this country to fall back upon. We cannot raise new forces because we have given up to the Imperial Army all our new rifles and practically

all

all our artillery, and owing to ~~the~~ number of our officers given to meet demands in England we are already very short and with no possibility of replacing them." That was the opinion of the Government of India on the 20th of September.

A Yes.

48. Q Then at that time war had not broken out between us and Turkey, and you in this red précis on the 26th of September, at page 1, write a minute on the situation.

A Yes.

49. Q That minute I think we ought to have read.

A The whole minute is not in the précis.

50. Q But I assume that all that is material is given there.

A There is a good deal of matter of detail that is omitted. In the précis I put in everything that is required for the consideration of the Cabinet, but I omitted all details about movements, and that kind of thing.

51. Q But all that deals with the despatch of the expedition as regards policy, is in it.

A Up to line 28, page 2 I think it is.

52. Q Would you just read it please.

A (Reading Colonel Munn): "All the onus point to war with Turkey within a few weeks or even days. Such a contingency need not alarm us unless

the

The Turks succeed in drawing the Arabs to their side. In that case they will probably proclaim a Jihad and endeavour to raise Afghanistan and the frontier tribes against us, which might be a serious danger to India and would most certainly add enormously to our difficulties and responsibilities. This shows how important it is ^{us to} avert a Turks-Arab coalition. It is known that Turkey has been ^{intriguing} negotiating right and left to win over the Arabs, and it is even said that Bin Saoud, the leading Arab Chief, has been induced to join the Turks. If this is true we may expect serious trouble both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt. I have discussed this aspect of the case with Major Shakespear, and he feels sure that Bin Saoud has not yet fully committed himself as his hatred of the Turks is too pronounced ^{to admit} of an easy surrender to their blandishments. Moreover, he is convinced that we have only to give some sure sign of our intention to support him, and the Arabs generally against the Turks, to turn the balance in our favour. How can we give such a sign? My solution of the problem is that we must give the signal before war breaks out, or it may be too late, and that the best way of doing so is to send a force from India to the Shatt-el-Arab at once. We can easily

easily do so at the present time without arousing any suspicion. Troops and arms are in readiness at Bombay. The Navy can convoy them to the mouth of the Gulf and the Expedition if despatched under sealed orders could arrive at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab without a soul knowing anything about its despatch for this purpose. On arrival the troops can be landed on Persian soil at Muham^merah or at Abadan Island, ostensibly to protect the oil installation but in reality to notify^{to} the Turks that we meant business and to the Arabs that we were ready to support them. So startling and ~~un~~ unexpected a sign of our power to strike would at once determine the attitude of the Sheiks of Muham^merah and ~~Kohit~~^{Koweit} as well as ~~the~~ of Bin Saoud, and the support of the Arabs would ^{utterly} ~~naturally~~ ~~destroy~~ destroy all prospect of Turkey's success either in Mesopotamia or in Egypt. With the Arabs on our side a J^ehad is impossible and our Indian frontier is safe from attack. The force that we might thus despatch in the first instance need not be large, as it will be perfectly secure from attack by the Turkish Division at Basra in its position on the left bank of the Shatt-el-Arab. I am of opinion that it might be limited to one Brigade of the 6th Division, two mountain batteries, ~~and~~ two companies

of Sappers. If war breaks out it will be ^{necessary} ~~present~~ to occupy Basra at once, and this force would not be ~~of~~ sufficient for such a purpose if the Baghdad troops had already ^{also} been brought down. This contingency might be provided for by bringing the necessary reinforcements later on to Basideh (Kishm) where they would be within two days sail of the Shatt-el-Arab. We should thus have a force more than sufficient to deal with any Turkish opposition south of Baghdad itself." Such results seem to justify fully the proposed action

Chaplin & Bryham

53 Q That ^{minute} ~~method~~ was considered by Lord Crewe

A Yes

54 Q Who approved of it

A I cannot tell you that, because in those days there was no War Committee and therefore I did not attend any Councils. I presume it was approved of by the Cabinet or perhaps by a Committee of the Cabinet but that I cannot tell you

55 Q But Lord Crewe telegraphed the purport of it to the Indian Government

A Yes

56 Q And the Indian Government so far as I can see made no objection to supplying that brigade

A No

57 Q Was it taken from ^{one of the other forces} ~~one of the other forces~~

A No. I might explain ^{in a parenthesis} that it was taken from the 6th Division which was originally told off for Expedition A, that is to say the one to France, but that was afterwards changed at Lord Kitchener's request. Lord Kitchener asked that another Division should be sent in lieu of the 6th Division; he had not apparently a very high opinion of the 6th at the time

58 Q There was that a further depletion of the Indian resources

A No, that Division had originally been mobilized, that is to say it was being got ready for active service; it was not a further depletion, it was simply a substitution

59 Q Then some discussion took place as to which would be from a combined political and military point of view the best place of landing

A Yes

- 4
 60. Q Yes
 A Yes Bahrein ~~is~~ was finally suggested? -
 A The anchorage of Bahrein.
61. Q Bahrein does not belong to us
 A No, but the Sheik is one of the ^{Truceal} Chiefs
62. Q We have obligations towards both the Sheik of Bahrein and Koweit? -
 A Yes, ~~and Bahrein~~ ^{and} all the ^{Truceal} ~~Council~~ Chiefs we have obligations towards
63. Q Are those obligations defined so as to necessitate our supporting them if attacked
 A I believe they are
64. Q That is a political question
 A Yes, but I believe that is so. Then I may state that Muhammerah is not one of the ^{Truceal} ~~Council~~ Chiefs; Muhammerah is really a Persian Chief - he belongs to the Persian Kingdom
65. Q He is a tributary of Persia
 A Yes, his territories are in Persia and he stands in quite a different position, but we have had very intimate relations with Muhammerah for a great many years it being an Arab State within the Persian sphere
66. Q Then as regards ^{the} oil, the oil pipe runs down the other gulf
 A Yes, it is refined at Abadan
67. Q Where is Abadan.
 A It is that island
68. Lord Hugh Cecil. Would it not be convenient if we had a little geographical explanation at this stage of all these places so that we might have them clear in our minds
The witness described the geography on the cartoon on the wall

The

- 69 Chairman Then the Shatt-el-Arab River is navigable up to Kurna is it
 I. It is navigable to full steamers up to Kurna
- 70 Sir Archibald Williamson. What do they draw
 a I think steamers drawing 13 to 14 feet can get up
- 71 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: Except under certain conditions
 I. Except when the conditions are ~~not~~ really bad
- 72 Lord Hugh Cecil At what seasons of the year are the conditions very bad
 a I do not think they are ~~not~~ very bad below Kurna at any season, but there are times in the year I believe when it sinks to 10 or 12 feet
- 73 I. What seasons of the year would that be
 a I think the worst season is about October and during the winter
- 74 Chairman Above Kurna the navigation of the river becomes much more difficult
 I. Very much more. I think ships like the "Odin" and the "Espiegle" go up to Kurna but they would not go beyond

Chairman

Admiral

5

75 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: You said something of the difficulty of navigation on the Euphrates before it joined the ~~Shatt-el-Arab~~ ~~Shatt-el-Arab~~ Karun

a Yes, that is always difficult. There is one branch of the Euphrates I believe, that is called the old branch and this is called the new branch. I do not think there is much difference between them they are equally bad, in fact, if anything the old branch is the better one

76 Chairman: Then the Expedition started, and with comparatively little difficulty defeated the Turks who were surprised and Basra was occupied on the 22nd November

a Yes

77 Q And the action then taken was supposed to have saved the oil wells at Abadan

a Yes

78 Q So that the first stage of the Enterprise was a very rapid and complete success

a Yes

Chairman: I think this completes the first part of the ~~relation~~ evidence and ^{it} will be a good place for other Commissioners to ask questions

79 Earl of Donoughmore: There are only two questions ^{I have} to put on this Part 1. One is concerned with what we call N^o 5, which is the first of the big Yellow Papers and it is N^o 6 in it on page 2.

"The force under orders is only intended to occupy Abadan, protect oil tanks and pipe line, cover landing of reinforcements, if there should be necessary, and shew Arabs that we intend to support them against the Turks, with warship at Mohammerah troops detailed are considered ample for above purposes. Should Turkey become

a belligerent, management of expedition will devolve on you, but instructions as to scope of operations will of course come from me". My question is only with the object of fixing the responsibility. I suppose that was never modified

a No, it was never modified

80 Q It remained as the system.

a Yes, because what Lord Crewe meant when he said "come from me" was that it came from the Government

81 Q It came from the Government at home

a Yes

82 Q It was laid down in October 1914 and continued and continues now?

a Yes

83 Q Except that the War Office took it on ~~and~~ it continued in the India Office until February 16th of this year

a Yes

84 Q The other point I wanted to ask you about is on the opposite page N^o 11 ~~is~~; there are the Instructions to Colonel Delaman: "I have the honour to send you herewith ^{one} sealed envelope containing: - (a) Plan of operations for the protection of British interests at the head of the Persian Gulf, (b) Plan of operations for the support of Muhammedrah. (c) Plan of operations in Turkish Mesopotamia". I do not know whether we ought not to see those instructions

a We have never received them

85 Q You have never seen them

a We have never received them from India

86 Q What I was anxious to know was, was there any

any question of Baghdad then.

A Not that I am aware of, but you will see further on in the Instructions given to General Nixon that he was ordered to consider it

87

Q That is a good deal later.

A Yes

88

Q But so far as you know - no, it is not fair to ask you even that. ~~because~~ These documents ~~you saw~~ ^{have been} never seen in London

A We have never seen them. "We send you herewith one sealed ^{envelope} ~~copy~~"; that is from the Chief of the General Staff to Colonel Delaman the Political Officer who was going in command at that moment - he had been already told off.

89

Q It was in command of the Force that was to be diverted

A Yes. We in London did not draw up the Plan of Operations, we simply gave the general scope of the operations.

90

Lord Hugh Cecil: Are the India Office or yourself able to speak at all for the military preparations that the Indian Government were making with a view to the various calls upon them

A No. I suppose we had a general knowledge, but we were not informed of the details. ^{There} was an ^{immense} ~~immense~~ amount of work to be done in connection with all these various expeditions and they did not telegraph over the details, they used to send us what were called ^{the} Mobilization arrangements, which was a printed paper showing the details of troops and the ships they were to go in, the

6

Commands, the Staffs and what you may call all the Elementary orders that every Expedition receives

91 Q Do you know whether the Indian Government took any steps to increase or improve their military establishments, especially their transport resources and military service

a Yes they did

92 Q Would you be able to describe at all to the Commission what they did.

a. I

A I think so

93 Q I do not mean merely sending troops to Europe but I mean the increase of their establishments
 A Yes, I can for instance, remember one thing straight away because we suggested it from here, - that all regiments should be raised to the strength of 1000. The regiments in India ~~was~~ ^{were} of varying strength from 600 to 912 and directly was broke out Lord Creme telegraphed out authorising them to raise every regiment to the strength of 1000 and I think the Cavalry to 750

94 General Sir Neville Lytton: Every native regiment
 A Yes

95 Commander Wedgwood from the Reserves
 A From the Reserves by recruiting. Then in the same way there were increases made to the establishments and transports

96 Lord Hugh Cecil You could not give us the details of that

A No I am afraid not. There is a paper here though which you have got showing it

97 Q That only shows what was sent does it not
 A It is the statement showing what India has been contributing

98 Q That does not show what preparations they made in India

A No I do not think it does in that form

99 Q ~~the~~ ^(after referring) Particularity the importance of it is in respect of transport of Medical Services
 A No, I am afraid we have not got it in Page 3

100 - Q of your statement you refer to the Arab chiefs of Muscat, Bahrein, Koweit and Muhammarah. Could you include in general terms about the area that those chiefs controlled

A The Muscat area is enormous; there is

7

101.

Q no map showing it
 I will put the question more simply: Did these chiefs control in any degree ^{the} territory north of Kurma? —

A No, none of them

102.

Q It is all south of Kurma? —

A Muscat is on the Arab Coast, you may call it the East coast of Arabia; Bahrein and Koweit are on the gulf on the Arab side. Koweit is almost marked at the extreme bottom of that map

103

Q It is really Muhammerah that is of importance
 A Muhammerah is at the junction of the same river ^{Karun} with the Shatt-el Arab

104

Q What I wanted to know was how far did the influence of the Chief of Muhammerah extend

A The chief of the Muhammerah's influence extends over all the Arab country, that is to say all the Arab speaking country - the whole of the country of the Arab tribes (pointing out the same). He has also got certain States on the Turkish side but you may say generally that his territory was entirely in Persia

105

Mr Hodge, I understand that the Commander-in-Chief would be responsible for the details, or at least his general staff would be responsible for the whole of the details of the expedition, under his supervision

A Yes, the general staff draws up the details; that is our particular job

106

Q And then they would requisition from this country for any deficiency

A Any deficiency that India cannot supply

they would have to requisition the India Office
for in the first place

107 Q I suppose it would not come within your
cognisance whether the India Office complied
with every requisition that was made
A We shall have a record of all that; it
is dealt with as the Chairman said by the
Director General of Stores; ~~the~~ ^{for all} requisitions for
materials. I am not talking of personnel,
but ships or motors or medicines and all
materials are dealt with by the Director
General of Stores at the India Office

108 Q Has it come within your knowledge that every
requisition was complied with
A No, because it was impossible to comply with
every requisition, England is not in a
condition to do so, the trade cannot supply it;
they say ~~that~~ "The Ministry of Munitions
has commandeered all this and we cannot
supply you". Then the Director General of
Stores goes up to the Secretary of State and
a letter is written to the Ministry of
Munitions and we ask them if they can
assist us

109 Commander Wedgwood Q I gather from these documents
that there was a certain amount of reluctance
to supply troops out of India, that you
had to press for it

A Are you speaking of the time before the war?

110 Q During this first period

A Yes

111 Q Had you had any difficulty in getting troops
for France as well as troops for this
Expedition

Q I cannot say we had any difficulty because they were simply ordered to provide ^{the} troops; they first of all said they were willing to provide two Divisions of Infantry and a Brigade of Cavalry for Expedition A.

112 Q May I ask whether that was a voluntary offer or a request

A At the very beginning of the war I think they were asked what they could do. I will not be quite certain, I do not remember whether they were asked but anyhow they at once responded that they could send two Divisions of Infantry and one Cavalry Brigade.

It did not say to France because it was not settled at that time; it was therefore called Expedition A. That was why letters were given because they did not know at the moment exactly how they would be employed.

Expedition A was to go to Egypt and there they would get their orders

113 Q And after that

A Then after that at the request of the War Office the Cabinet decided to send stronger forces from India and the Cavalry was made up to two Divisions of Cavalry, altogether, six Brigades, and there was also a large augmentation of the Artillery

114 Q And an extra Division of Infantry

A No, not for Europe, not at that stage. There were more regiments sent to Egypt

115 Q And after that every request for troops for Africa or for the Persian Gulf was met by objections to reducing the Garrison of India

A yes

A Yes after say about the middle of
September

116 Q So that even as late as the 15th of
March 1915, on page 20, they were
objecting

A Yes they had objected frequently

117 Q And they had definitely to order
them to send troops

A Yes

118 Q Did they take any steps to increase the
troops they had available in India

A Are you speaking of British troops?

119 Q Both British troops and coloured troops

A For British troops they were entirely dependent upon what
England

Wheeler Bingham

England could do

120 Q Are there not 143 000 ^{white} male adults in India
a No, not male adults. I think there are 143 000
males

121 Q The War office say male adults
Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge; that statement is
corrected, it says old men and children and
not adults

The witness: It does not mean 143,000 able bodied men

122 Commander Wedgwood: No, not fit for service but
143 000 males, some of whom may be children
a No, that was a statement made in correspondence
with the War office

123 General Sir Neville Lyttelton: It is on page 7 of no 11
at the bottom of the page

a Yes and you will see I answered that question

124 Q It is cut down very considerably
a yes, what I put was: "Further, I am to observe
that it is scarcely correct to say that we have
a white population of 150 000 on which to
draw for defensive purposes. The actual
figure given in the Census Report (1911) is
143,974 males". That is five years ago

125 Q Does that mean including the British troops
in India

a No, apart from that

126 Commander Wedgwood: Does that include the
Civil servants

a Yes, it includes every body not on the
Military Establishment

127 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: And missionaries

a Yes, all missionaries; and aliens, a very large
number

128 General Sir Neville Lyttelton: And a large number
of Eurasians

a Yes, among that 143000 males there were a considerable number of Eurasians who claimed to be Europeans

129 Commander Wedgwood: But ~~are~~ there ^{are} Eurasians in addition to that

a Yes there are Eurasians in addition to that figure

130 Q You have 33 battalions of Eurasian troops, volunteers

a No, we may have 33 battalions but they are not all Eurasians, a large number of them in some corps would be mightily offended if they were called Eurasians

131 Q They are volunteers.

a Yes

132 Q 33 battalions

a Yes

133 Q ~~They~~ ^{who} have not been called up yet

a But they are always available for repressing local disturbances

134 Q But they have never been called up for defensive purposes to assist in replacing other troops

a They do replace other troops because we rely very much on the Volunteers at places like Calcutta and Bombay, and the big towns where there is an Eurasian population. At Madras there is practically nothing else

135 Q But they have never been called up

a They have not been mobilized because that would interfere with their avocations in civil life very much. But then you have the whole population, all the people out in India the white population have all got their definite work. & Large numbers of them are Government

- 10
- 136 Q In British East Africa all the Whites are under compulsory service
 a Yes
- 137 Q In British East Africa you have called up Government servants as well
 a Yes, but in India they are in large business houses, banks, manufactories and such like; the whole business of the country would collapse if we mobilized every man
- 138 Q That is what they said here, is it not
 a Yes, but you have here a large reserve in women and in men over 41 and in unfits. You have not got any ^{one} of those reserves in India. The white women in India, as you know are a very small proportion, - at all events you cannot put them on to do munition work
- 139 Q They could take the place of White employees as they have done in East Africa for instance
 a I should say not
- 140 Q Anyway it never occurred to the Indian Government to increase their forces from White or Eurasian inhabitants of India
 a Yes it has; they have opened recruiting in India to a very large extent, to a much greater extent than formerly, to both the Europeans in the country and to the Eurasians; have been recruited either into British regiments or there have been special subsidiary formations; for instance they have, say, an extra platoon added to each battalion of Eurasians and an extra section of Cavalry and so on

- 141 Q In the South African war they provided separate units. In this war they have provided nothing except a volunteer machine gun company, the North Western Machine Gun Company
- A Yes
- 142 Q You say, here that you suggested that they should bring up all Native regiments to a thousand strong; you suggested that from this end
- A Yes, and they have done so and since then they have given them authority at their request to go on increasing and some regiments are now as much as 1300 strong
- 143 Q Have they taken any steps to raise additional bands of Sappers, ~~and~~ Pioneers.
- A Not additional ones
- 144 Q You have not suggested that from your side
- A No, because ^{I do not think they could.} they have increased the strength
- 145 Q Merely the strength of existing units
- A Yes
- 146 Q They have raised no fresh units of Pioneers
- A No
- 147 Q And you have not suggested it. I suppose I would not come within your purview to suggest it, the Indian Government itself would suggest it.
- A The Indian Government itself would suggest it if they thought it practicable
- 148 Q And they have not suggested it. Nor have they raised any fresh medical units have they
- A Yes I think they have, Ambulance Bearer Corps. I think at all events they have largely increased the establishment and I think they have increased the number of units
- 149 Q Then Mr Stodge was suggesting that the

requisitions could not then be met from home here, did you suggest that they should make any guns out there?

a They do make guns out there

150 Q. Have they increased the establishment of heavy batteries

a Their establishments of heavy batteries in men or guns?

151 Q. Both in men and guns

a No, because the establishment of men in heavy batteries can only be increased from this country, and as regards guns I do not think we can produce big guns, anything over the 18 pounder in India

152 Q. They have taken no steps to get the machinery to produce them.

a No

153 Lord Hugh Cecil: Are there any Native Artillery men in India? The Artillery is entirely in the hands of Whites is it not?

a No, not the Mountain Artillery; there are 10 batteries of Mountain Artillery who are Natives

154 Earl of Donoughmore: White gunners and native drivers are they not?

a No, those are called British Mountain Batteries; the British Mountain Batteries consist of white gunners and native drivers; ^{the} Indian Mountain Batteries are both Indian gunners and Indian drivers

155 General Sir Neville Lyttelton: There is only a small proportion of Mountain ^{Artillery} drivers in India

a Only 10 batteries

156 Commander Wedgwood: And no steps were

taken

taken to increase those Mountain Batteries.
a No, I think there would be great difficulty in
doing so

157

Have you made any sort of enquiry whether
they could raise the number of artillery units
a I do not think they could find officers for
the purpose ^{them} I think it would be impracticable.

12

Wheeler

Q Among

158 Q Among the civilians in India could you not have got officers.

A We have taken them into the Indian Army Reserve, where they are more useful probably with infantry than with ~~the~~ highly technical branch like ~~the~~ artillery.

159 Q Most of them are civil engineers in some sort of trade.

A We employ those in technical duties.

160 Q Have you taken any steps to get more coloured people in the railway service to free the whites.

A Yes, I believe a great number; as many as could be spared have been spared by the Railway Department.

161 Q They say somewhere here that they could not raise any more troops because they have not got the rifles.

A Yes, it may have been so.

162 Q Have they taken any steps to get rifles - besides requisitioning.

A I think you had better ask the Director General of Stores that.

163 Q Anyway, you have not instigated them from this side to do more for themselves except in so far as raising the troops to the strength of a thousand instead of 600 to 900.

A No.

164 Q It has not been your duty to get them to make more military preparations there up to now.

A They have been urged to make every preparation they could.

165 Q Have they been ^{urged} ^{asked} to supply more ammunition, for instance.

A Yes, they have been ^{urged} ^{asked} to supply a great deal of ammunition for other forces, for instance, Force B, which is East Africa, was supplied largely from India.

166 Q Do you know whether there has been any building of fresh factories, or whether they are simply using the full capacity of existing factories.

A I think only the latter. I may say that the Volunteers are so far mobilised that they are always ready for local expeditions.

167 Q When they can be spared for that service.

A If there was local danger the civil authorities on the spot would call them out. They are frequently called out in peaceful times.

168 Q Do you think you could let us have a statement some time of what local unmobilised forces there are in India.

A I can tell you roughly at once; I should think about 41,000.

169 Q And that is all infantry - not artillery at all.

A "The strength of the Volunteer Force on which they base their estimate was 42,027. This strength is now, February 1915, only 42,543."

170 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: Would you mind going on?

A "More over many of the best officers and men have volunteered for active service out of India, so that no appreciable reduction

reduction in troops allotted to internal defence appears advisable"

171 Commander Wedgwood: you have not any schools for officers here I suppose, for training up people to be officers.

A Yes, we have got schools for training officers for the Army.

172 Q Who are they training - are they training volunteers.

A No, they are training young candidates from this country; for instance, the boys who used to go to Sandhurst to go to the Indian Army, go chiefly to Quetta and Wellington. ~~A~~ Certain numbers still go to Sandhurst, but at the very beginning of the war the War Office wrote over and informed us that they would want Sandhurst entirely for training our own officers. We had a meeting with the War Office at the Military Secretary's office, and ^{when} I pointed out the objections to that. I said that we must at all events have a certain proportion, and they agreed that a certain proportion was advisable, but it was a very small proportion they agreed to. Then I suggested that we should ^{start} schools in India, - to begin with, one school at Quetta and the War Office agreed to that. Then we telegraphed out authorising them to start a school for training officers.

173 Q You do not know the size of it at all.

A Yes, 100 boys, and they go out every six months. Then there is another school at

13

at Wellington.

174 Q There is only one other thing I want to ask; ^{you} Could we have the figures some time of the European population between 18 and 50, and the Eurasian population between 18 and 50

A I do not know whether we can get it out from the Census reports.

175 Q I do not want the ages; I want to know what the figures are.

A I do not think the Census reports differentiate between ^{the} ages.

Lord Hugh Cecil: They do in England.

Witness: If we can get the figures you shall have them.

176 Commander Wedgwood: Only the approximate figures.

A Yes.

177 Lord Hugh Cecil: Were there any internal disturbances on the frontier up to November 5th?

A Up to November 5th, no, I think not; if there was anything it must have been very small.

178 The Chairman: But there were apprehensions.

A Yes.

179 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: If that statement from the Census is put before the Commission, I suggest that there should be added to it the number of people who have been taken away from the Volunteers and from ~~the~~ potential Volunteers for service in the Army.

A Yes, for ^{the} purposes of the Army. You want to know how many Volunteers

have

20

have been mobilised?

180 I especially officers.

A certainly

181 Commander Wedgwood: How many have been given permission from the Indian Army Reserve of officers.

A yes; we shall have to telegraph out to India for it.

^{the} Chairman: What Commander Wedgwood really wants to know is what are the unexhausted resources.

Commander Wedgwood: yes.

Sir

183

Sir Archibald Williamson. I see that you prepared a Minute on the 24th of August but there is no reference to what it contained. A. I thought I should probably be asked that. I am afraid that paper is lost. It was at the very beginning of the war, it was highly secret and it was shown only to Lord Crewe - I mean that I prepared it for Lord Crewe. I have made frequent efforts to find ~~it~~ it since and I do not know what has become of it; it may be that it is buried somewhere in one of Lord Crewe's

documents

184

Q: Can you give us any ^{information as to} ~~indication of~~ the nature of it

A: It was very much on the lines of the Minute of the later date which you have

185

Q: The Minute of the 26th of September
A: Yes; ~~that~~ ^{it} was pointing out the danger to the Indian Frontier. It was ^{all} ~~only~~ in manuscript and I never made a copy. We were frightfully rushed in those days. To the best of my recollection Lord Crewe asked me for a Minute on the subject and I wrote it out and whether I ever got it back or not I cannot tell you

186

Q: May I ask you whether the original idea of going to Mesopotamia at all originated in India, or in this country

A: As you speaking of what took place after the war broke out?

187

Q: After the 24th of August

A: After the outbreak of war on the 4th of August the idea of sending troops

- 14
188
- ✓ to Mesopotamia originated in this country ^{but} of course India had for many years ^{had to} contemplated the possibility of sending troops to regions like Southern Persia and Mesopotamia and had no doubt prepared plans
- 189
- Q But the idea of sending a military force to the Persian Gulf or rather to the Shatt el Arab originated in this country
- A Yes
- Q By the 21st of August I see that the Government of India contemplated sending two Majestic ships "Odin" and "Lawrence" to Shatt el Arab
- A Yes I believe for half a century past they have been in the habit of sending ships of war right up to Basra
- 190
- Q And in September they ^{contemplated sending} ~~said the~~ deploys to protect the oil refineries
- A That would be a new thing because the oil refining had only lately been carried out by the government
- 191
- Q Did they carry out what they contemplated
- A No I think not I think the "Odin" and the "Espiegel" went up ^{on to} Muhammerah and the other to Basra. That would be more I imagine as a protection for the European community in those places. If there had been riots ^{or outbreaks there} all the European women and children in Basra ^{and} Muhammerah would have taken refuge in those ships
- 192
- Q That took place I believe at the end of August or the beginning of September
- A Yes I imagine so
- 193
- Q Was it necessary to have those ships there at all

?

A To send the "Odin" and the "Espiegle"?

194 Q Yes!!

A No that would be part of the ordinary routine; we had been accustomed to send up the Shatt-el-Arab for certainly over half a century

195 Q Then the initiation of this ^{idea of sending} ^{and for the oil fields,} protection for the natives, really was Indian
A Sending natives for protection, - not the oil wells

196 Q The oil refinery is at Abadan

A Yes

197 Q But it was apparently intended to send some ^{separately} on the 21st of August; I do not know whether they were sent

A No they were not

198 Q Two ships were sent instead

A Two ships went I am not sure to this day whether the two ships went to Basra and Muhammerah or whether they lay off Basra and Abadan. I should think probably they lay off Muhammerah where there is a better anchorage

199 Q At any rate the Indian Government's idea originally was merely to send two ships to protect the Europeans at the port over here

A That was probably the object with which the ships would go there. At that time we were not at war with Turkey and war with Turkey was not contemplated

200 Q And after it became obvious that we were likely to be at war with Turkey the initiation of this campaign was with

with this country.

15/2017

Q I only want to ask you one other question. You have told us that you have not got copies of the Communications which passed between the Military authorities in India and the General Officer Commanding in Mesopotamia.

202 A Where do I say that?
Q To General Delamain in his Instructions I beg your pardon, those were instructions given by the General Staff to the General.

203 Q The General Staff in India
A The General Staff in India to General Delamain. ~~I~~ I say that we have not got them?

204 Q I understood that
A We may have received them since but I am not quite certain.

205 Q I see on the 1st of April the Secretary of State telegraphed to the Viceroy "In view of possible debates in Parliament I should be glad to have full information as to the Communications which passed between the Military authorities in India and the General Officer Commanding in Mesopotamia".

206 Q Yes we had not them any more at that time.

207 Q But we have them since
A If you have got them they have come since; and they are ancient history; and I probably have not seen them.

207 Earl of Dornborough If you have them we might see them.

208 Q Yes
A Yes
Sir Archibald Williamson I gather that this included General Delamain.

signed Walter Hodgson
Shorthand writer

our full follows
Cueyler

A I am afraid that I misled you. We have the instructions to General Delam^{ain} October 1914 is the date in India I see, but there is nothing to show when this was received.

209 Chairman: I may be wrong but I think you said that you had not them at the time that the troops went.

A At the time that the troops went we certainly had not them.

210 Q Did you say that you had not them at all. I do not remember.

A I rather think that I did say so.
211 Earl of Lond Doughmore: Never mind ^{as long as} we can get them?

A Yes, we have them here. Do you want them at this very minute?

212 Q No. They can be put in at some time amongst our documents.

A Very well.

213 Sir Archibald Williamson: Are they lengthy.

A No, only two or three pages of print.

214 Q With regard to the general scope and management of military affairs from India and this country respectively I understood that the Indian Government control military affairs in the Persian Gulf and as far as Aden.

A Yes.

215 Q That seems to be the limit. East Africa does not come within their scope.

A No: that is under the War Office.

216 Q Has any consideration ever been given to the grave burden falling on India in the case of a war such as this ⁱⁿ at Mesopotamia and the possibility of India undertaking the

the responsibility of such an expedition as this and carrying it on its own shoulders. A I think not. I do not think that we ever contemplated until quite recently the possibility of being at war with Germany and Turkey, as allies. Until quite recently we have always looked on the Turkey as a friendly power, and therefore I do not think that any plan of operations was ever drawn up by the General Staff here or by the General Staff in India which took that into contemplation; in fact, even as late as September, and, I think, almost the beginning of October—certainly September—the Turks were protesting by all their Gods that they would not.

16

217 Q I suppose that the Indian military authorities had not bent their thoughts towards preparing at all for an expedition of this magnitude to a distant place away up a shallow river. A No; they certainly had never contemplated that.

218 Q I suppose that it might almost as well have been contemplated from this end as from India.

A If you read further in the statement you will see that when the force went to Mesopotamia, it was only intended to occupy a certain definite area the area below the confluence of these rivers

219 Lord Hugh Cecil: Below Kurma.

A Yes.

220 the Chairman: Kurma came afterwards.

A Originally it was intended to occupy Basra to

221

to protect the Abadan ^{and} Shatt-el-Arab
 General Sir Neville Lytton: I suppose that you have considered the question whether it was wise to send Mussulman troops to fight against the Turks.

A In the force as originally constituted, most of the regiments were ~~called~~ Mahratta Regiments. We purposely, I think, kept that division in hand with a view to sending them because they were largely composed of what we call Hindu troops. There was one regiment in the division which was very largely composed of Mussulmen - the 20th Punjabis.

222

Q The Mussulman regiments are a very important section of the Native Army and very efficient, are they not.

A I wish they were. Unfortunately most of the regiments are organized on what is called the class company system and you cannot divide them. The 20th had half Mussulmen and half Hindus. Most of the regiments that went with the original force to Mesopotamia came from the 6th Division, and I know there was one regiment - my own - ~~with~~ ^{whose} was entirely Hindu - the 7th Rajputs. There were several Mahratta regiments consisting of six companies of Mahrattas and two of ~~Mohammedans~~ ^{Mohammedans}. Previously it was six companies; now three and one.

" 223

Q To go to the volunteers you said that in Madras especially they were very largely composed of Eurasians.

A Yes.

- 224 Q In your opinion, with the experience of the war that we have had, would those troops have been fit to face the climate or the fighting.
- A No.
- 225 Q It would have been practically no good, although thousands of them were raised.
- A It was very sound to keep them in India for local purposes to relieve other troops.
- 226 Q To guard railways, bridges and so forth.
- A Ye. In many places we could get on without British troops at all if we had volunteers. Take Bangalore, or Madras itself.
- 227 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: Since the great development of oil production in the Persian Gulf and especially since ^{the Admiralty and} the British Government have, so to speak, become virtually the proprietors, has it not been considered as a sort of necessary item in the military policy of India to be ready to protect the oilfields.
- A I do not remember when the oil was taken over by the Admiralty. My memory does not go back to that.
- 228 Q Not long before the war began there was great difficulty about getting oil.
- A I do not think it had been generally considered by the Government. I remember submitting a Minute on the subject at the time, in the India Office, pointing out that it was all very well to take over the oilfields, but ^{that} that would involve the military necessity of protecting them.
- 229 Q I rather wanted to know whether it was in the mind of the Indian Military Authorities when

when they were generally contemplating the possibility of operations outside India. Would that be one of the things which they had in their mind

A They had had very little time to consider that particular point because it had only just come up

230 Q You put it down as one of the reasons. A Yes, it was one of the reasons. We had heard that distinctly. The Admiralty pressed it on us and in the India Office we considered that it was necessary.

231 Q Another reason which you have put down is our attitude towards the ^{Sheiks} ~~Chiefs~~. The territory of the Sheik of Koweit is absolutely contiguous with Turkish territory is it not.

A Yes.

232 Q Is ~~it~~ ^{he} under the Turks.

A He used to be.

233 Q He is now semi-independent.

A He is now quite independent.

234 Q When the Turks went into the War, which was foreseen as far back as August, as we see by the telegram, would it be likely that they would, if not prevented, make an attack, so to speak, on ~~the State~~ ~~of~~ Koweit.

A The Turks?

235 Q Yes.

A I think it would be very likely. They had a long standing quarrel with Koweit and that was one of the reasons. It was a question of the protection of our truceal chiefs

18

chiefs, in which I include Muhammerah, though not a crucial chief, and we felt bound to assert ourselves in these regions.

236 Q Is not the Koweit anchorage very important.

A It is a very good anchorage.

237 Q It is about the only good one that there is, is it not.

A Yes.

238 Q In view of future railway developments it might increase in importance.

A I believe that the general consensus of opinion now is that Basra is the best.

239 Q I want to point out that the reason that you gave for going there was to some extent a reason of a material kind.

A I do not think that weighed very much at the time because after all the railway seemed a long way off.

240 Q I suppose you think from what you said that we were morally bound.

A We were certainly morally bound to protect these chiefs.

241 Lord Hugh Cecil: Which are they besides Koweit.

A Muscat is rather out of the sphere. Then you have Bahrein, and there are others - petty people. The two important ones are Bahrein and Koweit. On the north side of the gulf there is ^{the chief of} Muhammerah which is very important.

242 Admiral Sir Cyprian Budge: The Chief of Koweit, the Chief of Muscat, and the Chief of Bahrein can be protected from the Turks very largely, if not completely, by the Navy.

A: The

7
 A The Turks could not get at them.
 Koweit and Bahrein ~~were~~^{are} the two
 who mattered.

243

Q Are you of opinion that we were absolutely bound to go to protect Koweit.

A Yes: I think that we should have lost face tremendously if we had not done so, and the Arabs would certainly have thrown in their lot with the Turks.

244

Q It was a sort of Belgium over again.

A Yes: and, in my view our going to these regions has kept the Arabs in hand all this time. There is a very important personage, Benousti, one of the great central Arabian Chiefs who has come into alliance with us.

245

Lord Hugh Cecil: Broadly speaking does he belong to the area that we are speaking of now.

A Yes: he is nearer to this area than to the Mecca and Medina areas.

246

Q Would he come into the subsequent part.

A He would come in more to the first part.

247 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: I was dealing with why we went to Mesopotamia at all. I think that this would fairly come within that section. What is the Department or body responsible for the provision of river transport

A. In Mesopotamia?

248 Q. Yes

A. You mean for the first operation?

249 Q. Yes

A. The Indian Marine

250 Q. We should have to get from them information about the arrangements made for river transport

A. Yes

251 Q. I do not want to go beyond section 1

A. We know practically the ships in which the expedition sailed because we have lists of those

252 Q. Would the Admiralty and the Transport Department have any responsibility for the conveyance of the Expedition beyond a convoy

A. No, certainly not at that stage

253 Q. It would be the Marine Department of the Indian Government?

A. Yes. No doubt we could give you information as to the ships that were originally employed. We know the ships in which the different regiments went and that kind of thing

254 Q. It may not be particularly important at this stage but as we go to further sections of your evidence, we shall probably find it more important to know more about the river transport. What was the definite object, so to speak, in going to Mesopotamia - what was the plan of campaign.

A. As stated in my statement, on page 3 there were four reasons

- 255 Q. But what was the objective
 A. The objective in the first instance was Basra
- 256 Q. And not beyond.
 A. Not beyond. They were clearly told ⁵⁰ - Basra and the protection of the Abadan installation
- 257 Q. There were the four reasons which you mentioned
 A. Yes
- 258 Sir Archibald Williamson: Was it the town of Basra or the vilayet
 A. The vilayet of Basra extends so within a few miles of Kut-el-Amara
- 259 Q. It was the town of Basra?
 A. Yes. The region below - it is not a delta - the confluence of the Euphrates and the Tigris. The Euphrates and Tigris, as you see from that map in front of Lord Doughty, form a very great protection to any troops at Basra. No one can attack them at Basra except by a very tedious operation round by the Karun or by Shaiba through the Desert as they eventually came
- 260 Q. Can large steamers go to Basra.
 A. It all depends on the bar. Steamers up to 16 feet can be taken over. The Admiral knows better than I do about it
- 261 Q. Surely more than 16 feet
 A. I would not like to answer that question because I really forget, but I know that some of the big steamers cannot go over the bar. One or two of the hospital ships have had to stay outside, for instance, and that has been found very inconvenient
- 262 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: On the map supplied to us they only show two fathoms, that is 12 feet

20 Q On the bar? That is ^{at} low water, I suppose
 263 Q There is a good deal of rise, is there not?
 A I do not know what the rise is

Cham ²⁶⁴ #2. Now we have arrived at Basra and our next stage is Barjasia

A Yes

265 Q. Having arrived at Basra, on the 25th November the Viceroy sends a telegram at page 11, No. 56, which begins thus: "General Officer Commanding and I are studying the topographical details bearing on the question of advance to Baghdad in case that course be decided on". Then it goes ~~it~~ on, and he points out that the effect of the recent defeat has been very great and that if the advance is made before it wears off and while the cool season lasts Baghdad will in all probability fall into our hands very easily. That is sent on by the Viceroy who wishes to consult the Commander-in-Chief before he expresses an opinion on it. Then the Secretary of State I observe almost immediately telegraphs - on the 27th November - "We are not disposed to authorise an advance to ~~Kurna~~ Baghdad at present, but as soon as General Barrett is ready to do so we sanction an advance to Hurma with a Brigade or such portion of his force as may be necessary for the operation". Then Hurma is captured on the 9th December

A Yes

266 Q. An estimate is given by the Chief of the General Staff at page 14, No. 66, of the forces of the Turks at Baghdad

A Yes

267 Q. Then comes a telegram from the Secretary of State.

It is suggested in the telegram to which I have referred that there should be the occupation of what I think is the triangle, Nasiriye, on the Euphrates

Yes

268

Q. And that was supposed to give a good strategic position

Yes

269

Q. Although the advance was somewhat difficult
A. There were a good many difficulties. Lack of water in the Euphrates was one of the difficulties. That was the principal difficulty. It was supposed to be very unhealthy but it has not proved so, as a matter of fact

270

Q. That is sanctioned on the ground that occupation of the triangle would give complete control, and influence the Arabs on either side of the Euphrates. Then in a telegram, No 70, the Viceroy subsequently to that telegraph to the effect that Turkish troops coming from Mosul and Baghdad are returning from Syria: "This may lead eventually to our having to face superior numbers in Mesopotamia". Have these telegrams been paraphrased

Mosul

A. No, these telegrams have not been paraphrased

271

Q. I will take the substance. ~~No 70~~, Information was conveyed to the Indian Government that there might be superior numbers of Turks in Mesopotamia and that we must be most careful not to disseminate our forces without strong military reasons. Then further information is obtained as regards the number of ⁱⁿ Turks and on the 25th of January, telegram No 73 the Government of India mobilize the 12th Brigade

Yes.

272 Q. Then there is a side show on the Harun which somewhat alarms the authorities on the spot and there is an appeal to the War Office for eight ~~battalions~~ battalions to be sent

A. Yes, I remember that

273 Q. The War Office in a telegram of the 5th February, N^o 87, decline. They say that they cannot do it

A. Yes, the War Office express inability

274 Q. The next step is that the tribes loot and shoot holes in the pipe line and there is a little disturbance at Akway, and the Indian Government and the authorities on the spot are alarmed but still the Indian Government cannot send troops. Then on the 3rd March N^o 99, at page 19 the Indian Government state that the position is alarming and they may be attacked. Then India appeals to the Admiralty for troops and they are declined

A. Yes

275 Q. Then on the 3rd March the Indian Government press for some troops from East Africa

A. Yes, telegram N^o 99

276 Q. Yes, the same telegram. That is declined. Then there is a Cabinet Council apparently and they suggest sending a Brigade of Territorials to India

A. The Cabinet Council suggest that?

277 Q. And the Indian Government naturally object to having untrained Territorials

A. Yes

278 Q. Then on the 5th March this telegraphic correspondence between the Indian Government and the Imperial Government ends. The Secretary of State takes a very strong measure and directs the

Indian Government to send troops to Mesopotamia and goes so far as to relieve the Viceroy of responsibility for the consequences of a further reduction of internal defences.

A Yes, I remember all about that

279 Q. The Indian Government then sent another Brigade

A Yes

280 Q. How much is a Brigade

A Four battalions

281 Q. 4000 men

A No, not with Indian Brigades. It is a little over 3000 men. The Indian battalions go into the field about 750 strong and the British battalions 850

282 Q. A Division is what

A Three Brigades plus Artillery and Cavalry

283 Q. About 10,000 men shall I say

A Counting Artillery, Cavalry and Sappers - 12,000 to 14,000

284 Lord Hugh Cecil: Does a Brigade include no Cavalry and Artillery

A An Infantry Brigade includes no Cavalry and Artillery

215 {Chairman: How many divisions go to an Army Corps

A It varies - anything from two to four. Some of the Army Corps in France I think have four divisions.

286 Commander Wedgwood: Some of these divisions were two-brigade divisions.

A No. 6th Q The 6th had was only two Brigades.

A No, the 6th had three ^{divisions} They started with one brigade, and the second followed and arrived before they went to Basra. The first brigade was to occupy Abadan and the second was to come up in case we went on to Basra, and it arrived before the fighting took place.

The third did not arrive until after Basra.

288 {Chairman: When you talk of a division here you mean 10,000 or 12,000 men.

A Certainly.

289 Q Three divisions mean 30,000 ^{men} at least.

A Yes: nearer 40,000 men.

290 Q When the Indian Government undertakes to send a Brigade or a division, ^{I suppose} it is assumed that they send the Complementaries, such as the ^{every thing connected} medical sections.

291 a yes ^{if they are all on a fixed scale} There would be so many complementary sections with the brigade. When I answered just now I meant the fighting units in the brigade.

292 Q would you be good enough to furnish us with a short statement of what the sectional units would be.

A Yes. Do you want me to tell you that at once?

Frederick

3/2 293

Chairman: We would rather have it on paper I think.

General Sir Neville Lyttelton: The Mobilization Tables will give it.

294 the A Yes

Chairman: Supposing that a division was short of complementary sections would it be the duty of the authority sending it to say so. It is their duty to provide whatever is necessary. If they send short of the necessary establishment or what is ordinarily considered the proper establishment, it would, I think, be the duty of the General Officer Commanding to point it out to the authorities sending the Expedition. They might give reasons for not doing it or they might say "we are going to send them, and you will get them shortly."

295 Lord Hugh Cecil: Can you show the difference between an Indian division and a British division such as is operating in France. A Yes, I can do that at once. ~~Any~~ ^{The} Indian brigade consists approximately of 3,000 fighting men ~~in~~ and the British brigade consists of 4,000 men

296 Q Irrespective of medical sections and the like. A Yes, always irrespective of medical and supply units.

297 Q Are the supply units the same. A They differ in constitution. They are natives in one case and Europeans in the other. In this country they are for motor transport and in India they are chiefly for pack transport.

L. Could

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298 Q Could the differences in equipment and the like be shown

A Yes, but the conditions are so very different.

299 the Chairman: The Indian Government respond to pressure and send out a sufficient force to make up an Army Corps.

A Not at that stage. You are dealing with March and April, my Lord?

300 Q Yes.

A First of all there was a brigade sent out, and then later on, in April, the other two brigades came. At the battles of Barjasia and Shaiba, and that series of battles, one of the other brigades actually reinforced ^{on} the field of battle.

301 Q It turned rather a doubtful contest into a victory

A Into a decisive victory.

302 Q That victory rehabilitated ^{us} all down the line, and therefore we were in April in the position of having won a considerable victory over the Turks with General Nixon in command. How many men were there.

A Six brigades of infantry and a brigade of cavalry.

303 Q General Nixon arrived when.

A On the 9th April. He actually arrived while the battles were being fought.

304 Q Then at page 23, No 113 General Nixon gives details concerning the battle, and he gives a very high character to the Turkish troops - well-trained and brave; their machine guns well concealed and trenches admirably

sited

13/4
664
sited and so on. It was pretty clear that the class of troops we were then fighting against was better than those that we had been fighting before?

A I am not so certain that it was at that particular stage. They got better after Kut-el-^{Amara}~~Amara~~ really. They were part of the original Mesopotamia Army Corps. They may have been better equipped than we expected but they were the same class of men.

305 Q They are called Turkish. with regard to their nationality would they be mostly Arabs.

A I believe that there was a very large proportion of Arabs in the regiment.

306 Q I assume that the Anatolian Turk is the better fighter.

A Yes, undoubtedly.

Order to Snell

24

665

307

Q: Then General Nixon takes with him certain orders from the Commander-in-Chief. Will you look at page 23. I want to know the orders which General Nixon took with him. The orders which he had were to acquaint himself on the spot with the present situation and submit a plan for the effective occupation of the Buora vilayet, ^{and} a plan for the subsequent advance to Baghdad. Were you aware at the India Office of those instructions

A: No, we have never seen them

308

Q: Was the Viceroy aware of them? I suppose that you cannot answer that

A: I comment on it just below. I say that the advance on Baghdad went rather beyond the Secretary of State's intentions and indeed his telegrams of the 27th and 30th November distinctly precluded the contingency of an advance to Baghdad; nevertheless a Commander in Chief has to consider all possible ~~or~~ eventualities and a subsequent advance to Baghdad* was just such an eventuality as had to be studied and therefore Sir Beauchamp Duff was justified in including the preparation of a plan in his Orders. I prepared this for the Government and ^{not for this Commission.}

309

General Sir Neville Lyttelton: Is it correct to say that the first mention of Baghdad came from Colonel Cox

A: Yes

General Sir Neville Lyttelton: Page 11 of the Yellow Book, 25th November

310

Chairman: If a General got such very definite instructions, no matter what they were issued for, do you not think they would make a very deep impression on him

A: Do you ask for my opinion?

311 Q Yes

A. I am bound to say that I think that it would have been more discreet not to have included it but I think that a Commander in Chief in India who had to prepare for all eventualities was justified in telling him to draw up a plan. He must have known that some such possibility might hereafter occur and it would never do for the General and the authorities in India to be unprepared with a plan. If later on they had been ordered by the Government to go to Baghdad they might have said "we have not anything ready. We must consider it." I think that it was justifiable but I am not quite sure that it was discreet to tell General Nixon at that moment. I rather put it into his head, I think

312 Q Taking a general survey of the ^{précis} position, the Home Government pressed the Indian Government to supply forces which they were very reluctant to do, but on the other hand the Indian Government had a much more ambitious programme than the Home Government had as regards the advance in Mesopotamia?

A. Lord Hardinge can answer that

313 Lord Hugh Cecil: That is the impression given by the

^{the} précis

Chairman: Yes

Witness: I am certain that at that time and long after October ¹⁹¹⁵ ~~15th~~, we had no idea of going to Baghdad Earl of Donoughmore. It was between the 4th and 5th October that the question began to be raised

A. Yes

314 Sir Archibald Williamson: The 24th March is not the first suggestion

A. No

315 Q. It would be unfair to state that this was the

inception

inception of the idea of Baghdad because it was not.

~~Q: But the fact~~
A: No it was not

316 Q: It was previously discussed

A: Yes

she
Chairman: Here is a direction given by a Commander in Chief to a subordinate

317 Lord Hugh Cecil: Did you say that the Viceroy was unaware

A: No I did not say that the Viceroy was unaware. I said that we were unaware

318 Sir Cyprian Bridge, was it not reported by telegram

319 she
Chairman: This actual instruction was not reported by telegram?

A: No. These instructions came to us afterwards by post - some time afterwards

Adjourned for a short time

320 Chairman (to the witness) We have got to the point where General Nixon has arrived with instructions and a considerable battle ^{has been} won, and ~~was~~ ^{we are} already in occupation and there is practically an Army corps there

A: Might I make it quite clear in case I was misunderstood that Sir Beauchamp Duff was quite justified in asking for that plan of operations because you see the General Staff has always to prepare plans for all eventualities. That was a possible eventuality and so he gave instructions for the preparation of a plan. I think that I am correct in saying that a General Staff is bound to be in that position

General Sir Neville Lyttelton: Yes. I was chief of the General Staff and it was quite within the sphere of our duty to prepare plans of campaign for any eventuality that she might turn up

(Witness) That is why I purposely alluded to it in the précis.

In case any members of the Government should misunderstand the action taken by Sir Beauchamp Duff, I pointed out that it was justified

Mr. Hodge: I should imagine that even we laymen understand that

Sir Archibald Williamson: It was not the General Staff preparing; it was the General in active command

A: Yes, quite so
Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge:

321 Q: We are now on Part 2. I see that as early as the 10th December 1914 the Chief of the General Staff in India reported that it was known in India that Turkish reinforcements were on their way to Baghdad. That is Number 5 page 14, Telegram No 66.

A: Yes

322 Q: Then again Number 70 on page 14, 2nd January 1915 a telegram from the Viceroy to the effect that the Turks in Baghdad and Mesopotamia are being reinforced

A: Yes

323 Q: At page 16, Number 81, the Secretary of State telegraphs out about a concentration of Turks in Mesopotamia

A: Yes

324 Q: That is about a month later so that it was known certainly before the end of 1914 that the Turks were receiving considerable reinforcements

A: Yes

325 Q: Page 18, Number 88, 12th February 1915 - Secretary of State informed the Viceroy that the War Office could not provide reinforcements, but India must provide them herself

A: Yes

326 Q: Then again on page 19, Number 96, 26th February 1915, the Secretary of State informed India that there was again a concentration of Turkish Troops

A: Yes

26

327

Q: So that going back earlier than the end of February 1915 there was repeated information going to India that there was a considerable addition to the Turkish force

A: I do not think enough was known about it to say that there was a considerable addition

328

Q: I want to know whether it was a large addition

A: The information we got, was, of course, from secret sources. After they had passed certain points they were lost sight of and therefore the reinforcements might have been going to Mesopotamia or they might have been going towards ^{Armenia-} ~~Armenia~~ to oppose the Russians. After they leave the ^{region} ~~highway~~ of Aleppo, speaking broadly, there are two roads which go in different directions from that point, so that you could not say where they were going.

329

Q: One might almost say that there was a concurrent re-inforcement of our own forces in Mesopotamia going on at the same time

A: Yes. It was ~~there~~ during that period that the second Division came and the Cavalry Brigade

330

Q: By the end of the first quarter of 1915 we had fully two Divisions and a Cavalry Brigade

A: We had two Divisions and a Cavalry Brigade by the end of April

331

Q: Look at Page 19, Number 97— a telegram from the Viceroy of the 28th February 1915. That is as far as I can make out the first mention in any document put before us ~~as to~~ of insufficiency of river transport. The last sentence is the first reference to that in any of the documents that we have before us

A: Yes, it is printed wrongly "Nassri"; it means Nasiriyeh: "an advance at some time to Nasiriyeh and Amara seems to me absolutely necessary if quiet is to

prevail at Basra, but Barrett told me that his great difficulty is shortness of river transport." At that date they had no orders to go beyond ~~that~~. Kurma.

Q That