

I suppose that the positions are very easily defensible ~~in the~~

A Yes. I have been over the Dujailah Redoubt since we occupied it; it is immensely strong. They improved the defences after ~~they~~ ^{we} attacked and in the state in which I saw them they were much more formidable than they were when we actually attacked.

2797

2. How did we get into the fort

A. About a month after the relief of Kut had failed the Russians under General Baratoff came forward. General Baratoff instead of coming forward as he had been told to do to co-operate with us came forward then. The Turks apparently got a scare and suddenly one night took away the whole of their troops except the rearguard from the right bank. I at once pushed forward and seized the lim position - that was about the 20th May, I think, and I got into that before they had time to re-consider and alter their minds. I believe that afterwards the officer in command was very annoyed at their not having left a stronger rearguard; he intended simply to take away the troops that were there but to hold us up there for a bit. Whether or not their orders went wrong I do not know. Their cooking pots and barbed wire and everything were left on the ground. When I verified the fact that they had evacuated I pushed on the following morning and occupied that position, and that we are holding now. You see just below square No 38 Iman-el-Mansur. I had an advanced entrenchment there and an advanced entrenchment there. My main line was along here (the witness pointed on the map)

2798

2 Do we hold now a strong position

A A very strong position. There is the same difficulty

that

that the Turks had with regard to the water. We have had to try to organize the water supply and we have done it by putting ^{down} pumps and running the water by gravitation out more or less along the line of the Mahira Masus Canal and the Nasiriyeh Canal. We have dug a lot more wells and joined them up. Some months ago I asked for piping, and I believe it is being supplied, to run the water out from Sheikh Saad along where the tram line is coming, so that in the event of anything going wrong we shall have water.

2799 Q. Is Kut held by the Turks

A Yes

2800 Q. Is it very strongly held

A I do not think it is. When I left it was weakly held.

The Sanaiyat position was still being held

2801 Q. The Turks are holding the Sanaiyat position

A Yes

2802 Q. On the left bank

A On the left bank. We cannot get our steamers up beyond the Falahiyeh bend. We dominate all along the right bank of the river. We keep them off by snipers the whole way along the river and there are certain detachments of guns. Their line of communication comes through what is described as a marsh but it is ~~really~~ quite dry. We have driven them off that bank of the river ~~and we could~~. At the time that I left I was confident that we could sweep them out of the Sanaiyat position without very severe losses. I was told not to undertake any operation in which severe losses would be risked. If I had turned them out of the Sanaiyat position I should myself have had to hold a much longer line on the left bank than we are holding at the present moment. True the Turks

would

would have had to do the same but we were in no position and no state at that time to undertake any unnecessary offensive. We were in a much stronger position to hold the position that we were in. If we had gone forward we should have had to bring more troops over and used more troops on the left ~~bank~~.

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Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: What is the Turkish line of communications at Kut and at Sanaiyat with their base. How do they get their supplies down?

A. They get a lot of supplies down from Bedrai up to the north

2804 2. By land or by river

A. They come down by land to a place called ~~Bijala~~ ^{Djald}; they also get supplies down by river from boats that come down from Baghdad and Mosul

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Chairman: Do you think that our position would be a safe one if the Turks were strongly reinforced. Do you think there is any risk of our being pushed back?

A. It would take a lot of men to turn us out of that position. If the Turks were very strongly reinforced they could detail a force to strike our line of communications, but with the force that they had opposed to us when I left, which was not more altogether than 15,000 to 17,000 men, they had not enough men to do that with. It is a possibility that they could bring down a sufficiently strong force and maintain them, but we have always assumed that the Turks cannot maintain a very large force in the vicinity of Kut. The maximum that has been put is 6 Divisions. That is the most that they have ever had down there. We know our own difficulties in maintaining anything like that number, and, although the Turks does with much less than our troops, you have to have a lot of support for ammunition

and supplies for a force of 6 Turkish Divisions of about 30,000 to 35,000 men.

2806 General Sir Neville Lytton: There are river difficulties too
 A. The river is very bad now and will be until February above Kut. It was very bad when General Townshend went up to Ctesiphon; he had great difficulties then.

2807 Lord Hugh Cecil: Too much water or too little?
 A. Too little. The river is very bad. It is much worse above Kut than it is below it as far as draught is concerned. If you remember, after the Battle of Sennar when General Townshend was endeavouring to follow up the retreating Turks, he could make very little headway with his steamers. That was at the end of September. Last year there was a very high flood, the river was abnormally high. This year it is low, there is not a big flood, and therefore I think it is to be presumed that the river this year is very much worse up there than it was last year. We had more difficulties earlier down below at places where there are shallows than we had last year.

2808 Chavinnaw: Does the navigation above Kut improve after October.

A. No; it will not improve until you get the flood down in January. You may have a few little rises in December, depending, of course, on whether they have much rain and on the kind of winter they have in Armenia. If they have a hard winter and frost there the river will probably keep low, but if they have a mild winter and a lot of rain there will be an early rise.

2809 Q We have a very considerable force ~~then~~ right up the Tigris.

A. Yes.

2810 Q What is their health like

A. When

39
21

A When I left it was very bad
General Sir Neville Lyttelton: When did you leave
On the 11th July

2812

Chairman: Will it get better

1. It ought to be getting better at the end of this month

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2. Looking at the question now from the sanitary, and military points of view, would you advocate holding the present position that we have got or going back

A. I should stick to the position. I recommended holding on to it after the relief of Kut failed, and I recommended it because of the moral effect on our own troops and also the moral effect on the whole country. My opinion then was, and I know that it is the opinion of Sir Percy Cox on the political side, that as long as we did not go back the effect of failing to relieve Kut would not be much on the tribes down below

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2. Then the effect on our prestige, and so on, is not as bad as might have been anticipated

A. It is certainly not as bad as it would have been if we had attempted to go back, and I think myself, - one is perhaps saying this because one has recommended holding the position, - that our prestige there has not suffered to any large extent by the failure to relieve Kut; on the other hand, the gallant defence that was put up has had a tremendous effect on the natives

2815

2. That is generally recognized

A. Yes, that is generally recognized. The Arabs as I have said say, "Oh, yes, you took Kut but you did not take it by fighting". In other words they say to the Turks, "The English turned you out of your position but you cannot turn the English out of theirs"

2816

2 Going back to what you have been telling us about those two battles, speaking generally the conduct of our troops, both native and European, has been good throughout, has it not.

A. Yes

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2. There was a little falling off in these two particular actions

A. Starting with the operations from the very beginning, the two Divisions that we had were excellent

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Commander Wedgwood: Those are the 6th and the 12th

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Chairman: Were they half native and half European

A. The composition was the same, one battalion British to three Indian. They had not been broken up by previous fighting, that is to say, they came out as complete units from India and had not had heavy fighting in Gallipoli or in France similar to that which the troops which I was operating with last year had had. They were very well found in officers, and the British officers had been acclimatised to the country. As an example, the average number of British officers who went sick last year from a climatic cause was about three per battalion, but this year the average that the British officer has lasted has been three months. That is the difference. All the officers who have come out recently have been mostly from England, young officers who have not had previous experience in a hot climate. The young Indian Army Reserve officers have stood the climate better than anybody else. They are mostly men who have been in India previously. They are officers who have joined since the war began. They know the language, and they have stood the climate a good deal better than the average officer who has come out from England. There are very few Indian

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2. Army Reserve officers, are there not

A. There

A. There are a good many.

2821 Commander Wedgwood: In India a civilian if he wants a commission joins the Indian Army Reserve of officers.

A. When I left the bulk of the officers were Indian Army Reserves

2822 General Sir Neville Lyttelton: Most of the officers go into the Army as a career and they do not naturally pass into the Reserve as in England.

A. There were a few officers in the Indian Army Reserve who had not been in the Army before who had joined the so called Army Reserve from more or less patriotic reasons. They used to do a little training rather like the Yeomanry do at home, a month's training a year. When the war broke out they set to work and largely augmented the Indian Army Reserve by taking civilians, not necessarily from Government service but from any service in India who were suitable for commissions. There were a large number from Volunteer Corps, a large number of planters and a large number from the Indian Civil Service and so on, and when I left they predominated to a large extent in the force.

2823 Q. That is very interesting. It is very different from the position here.

A. It is entirely different. They have had a little training, they have a little knowledge of the language and they are acclimatized. When I left battalions were being commanded by these fellows.

2824 Chairman. What sort of strength was there when you left

A. When I left, speaking from memory, there were 27,000 rifles and a total force of about 40,000 up there

2825 Q. We were told the other day that the number drawing rations was 142,000

A Not with me

2826 Q What would that number include

A That would include everyone in Mesopotamia with the forces

2827 Q A very large number of camp followers

A Yes, a large number, and transport men, and so on

2828 Sir Archibald Williamson: Would camp followers be included

A Yes, all camp followers, all officers' servants and everybody up there with the force draw rations. There is no other way of getting food.

2829 Q What would you estimate the number of regular soldiers at if 142,000 was the total.

A At the present moment you have one British Division out there and you have five, or practically five, other Divisions, so that you have practically six. None of those Divisions at the present moment, or when I left, had an average of more than 6,000 rifles per Division.

2830 Lord Hugh Cecil: That makes 36,000 rifles

A Yes, taking each Division

2831 Chairman: We were told that the number of sick conveyed to India during the month of July alone was 12,000 and that there were 17,000 more in hospital

2832 Lord Hugh Cecil: So that practically the whole Army is in hospital or on its way to England

A I lost from my Corps in the month of June 230 British officers, 2500 British ranks and 2200 Indian ranks and about 300 followers

2833 Chairman: From sickness?

A From sickness. They were invalided from sickness in the month of June

2834 Sir Archibald Williamson: How many does that total

A A total number of something over 5,000

2835 Q Out of?

A Probably including artillery and transport it would be 35,000 altogether

2836-2 ^{u1} Should I be putting it correctly ~~when~~ if I said that out of 35,000 men under your command 5,000 went sick in the single month of June

A Yes

2837 2. Or rather were sick in June, not went sick in June
A They were evacuated sick; they were sent down. I was losing at that rate in May and June

2838 Chairman: Sir Alfred Keogh had this letter from Major Treherne (letter handed to witness)

A That includes camp followers. I know that my figures are accurate. I have quoted them before. I used to have every week the numbers evacuated and every month, and I kept ^{kept} a very close eye on what the losses were. I had the totals.

2839 2 You say that your figures are correct

A Yes

2840 2. Assuming that your figures are correct as regards your own corps, would the figures there given be correct. You had 5000 evacuated?

A Yes

2841 Commander Wedgwood: Evacuated from Kuit. Some of them would stay in the country

Witness: I think that I can explain these figures. I can see what has been going on. My figures are the numbers sent down from the troops at the front at Anard and elsewhere. The previous month I had something like the same figures too; they were a little less and the previous month a little less. Those all go into hospital and after they come out of hospital they go into convalescent camps. We have found from experience that a very small percentage of the Indian ranks who go down the river and go into hospital ever come back to the ranks at all during the hot months. I think that the figures given include the evacuation of those who

who were sick in hospital. Taking the month of July they would clear out in that month a large number of those who had been evacuated in June and a large number of those who had been evacuated at the front in May, who were not getting better, no chance being seen of getting them back immediately to the ranks. I know that there was a large accumulation of men in those hospitals, because as I came through they were sending them off as fast as they could and I know that there was some congestion. This says that 12,000 were sent to India leaving 17,000 still in the various hospitals and ambulances. That would include those in the field ambulances with me and probably at least another 3000 would have been sick in ambulances when I left. That shows about the state that we were in. We could not clear our ambulances anything like as fast as we ought to have done. Then you have to take into consideration the troops on the line of communication and at Nasirijeh, and then you have the previous sick at Amard and in the convalescent camps all of whom were liable to go sick again. What strikes me is that 29,000 is an accumulation of about two or three months.

2842 Chairman: Would 142,000 be the number rationed per day?
 A There are not anything like 142,000 fighting men. It would mean the total force. I do not know where the figures came from.

2843 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: The Viceroy says that the number was increased from one Brigade to seven Divisions.
 A I had with me four Divisions. There was one Division at Nasirijeh, which is five, and they were forming another Division out of units which used to be in

the 6th and 12th Division before on the line of communication.

That is a total of 6 divisions

4th
2844 Q Then there were cavalry

A There were two cavalry brigades

2845 Lord Hugh Cecil: It comes to just short of seven divisions

A. Each Cavalry Division is supposed to have anything from a regiment up to a brigade with it. I do not think you can call that another Division.

2846 Commander Wedgwood: Nominally it is seven Divisions. Two surrendered at Kut and you have parts of those two divisions still

A They have been amalgamated into one

2847 Commander Wedgwood: Yes

2848 Sir Archibald Williamson: What do you estimate the number of troops in Mesopotamia at now leaving out camp followers

A. I take 6 Divisions at anything from 5000 to 7000 men

2849 Q. About 36,000 rifles

A About 36,000 rifles. Then there would be six Brigades of field artillery. There would not be more than 250 men each left in those; and then you have your corps artillery

2850 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: There were the Royal Engineers?

A There were a certain number of Stappers and Miners

2851 Lord Hugh Cecil: What would two cavalry brigades come to

A. The one with me when I left was 1500. I should say with regard to effective fighting men that there were not more than 45000

2852 Sir Archibald Williamson: Does that include the sick?

A It would not include those evacuated from the troops

2853 Commander Wedgwood: It would include those admitted to hospital, not those evacuated down the river

A. The figures I give are what I may call my effective strength - the troops that I should expect to turn out if I had a parade.

2854 Lord Hugh Cecil: I do not see how we get at the
142,000

Witness, I do not understand it.

2855 2. I rather think that it must be a mistake at I fancy that sailors and everybody ^{would be} ~~are~~ included everybody who was drawing rations. There are not ^{effective} troops so that extent.

2856 General Sir Neville Lyttelton: Do you think that the 12,000 includes men who have been counted more than once

A. No

2857 2. The 29,000 takes a great deal of explaining
A. I think that they have taken the accumulation of sick in two months

2858 Earl of Donoughmore: It is the number actually in hospital some of whom were admitted previously.

2859 Commander Wedgwood: We were told that the rate was 12,000 a month. Of the 45,000 how many would be white troops

A. I had one British Division and a battalion of each brigade and then artillery. The ration scale would be about equal.

Honour William Hall
Shortland Writer

Admiral

2860 Admiral Sir Cyprin Bridge. The 142,000 you said were described as ration strength, that would mean everybody

A. Yes, that would mean everybody

2861 Q Political officers and their servants

A Yes, it means everybody, — sailors and everybody drawing rations, and practically everybody drawing Gov. ernment service is drawing rations, labourers, coolies, sailors and the rest

2862 Sir Archibald Williamson Are there many Arabs working for us

A There are Arabs working on the boats; there are a certain number of Arabs working at Amara and a certain number working at Basra

2863 Q And they would be on the ration strength

A. I do not know; but if they were with me they would be, because they could not be fed in any other way. I do not know what the conditions at Basra were about ^{feeding} fighting but as a rule all the natives who were employed drew rations

2864 Q. But at any rate the fact remains that you had a force of 35,000 in June, and of that force you lost 5000 by sickness in that one month

A. Yes

2865 Lord Hugh Cecil: I want to ask you one question about this point before us of one month. Do you understand the 142,000 to relate to the same sort of people as the 12,000 and the 17,000. Otherwise it has no ~~significance~~ significance at all; if these two could not be people in hospital and could not be people evacuated in India there is no significance in the figures.

A. My total ration strength was 142,000. My ration strength when I advanced to the relief of Kut was something like 55,000. I had not got 55,000 fighting with me or anything like it, including near

in hospitals, sailors and all kinds of people

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Q. But might all those 55,000 have come into hospital; may they have been, so to speak, eligible for hospital

A. Practically

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Sir Archibald Williamson. Out of that 55,000 what percentage were fighting men

A: I think 35,000 were my effective strength of fighting men, if I recollect aright, when I started. I have not got the figures down but from my memory, I think it was 35,000

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Q It would be correct to say perhaps that one third of the total force would be non-fighting men

A. After you had taken off the transport and all the officers' servants, the men in hospital, and all the field ambulance people, that is about right

2869

Admiral Sir Gyprian Bridg: I want to ask you one question. How many officers were in supreme command in Mesopotamia one after the other since the beginning

A: Sir Arthur Barrett first —

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Q: But he did not go there at the very first, did he

A: Yes. General ~~Delamain~~ Delamain commanding one of his Brigades was the first to land; the remainder of the Division then landed in November, I think it was, after Sir Arthur Barrett, and Sir Arthur Barrett remained in supreme command out there until the arrival of Sir John Nixon in April 1915. Sir John Nixon remained out there until the beginning of January 1916 when Sir Percy Lake took over

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Q That is Sir Arthur Barrett, Sir John Nixon and Sir Percy Lake

A Yes

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Q. In a space of one year and nine months

A: Yes, in one year and nine months

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Sir Archibald Williamson: Sir Percy Lake is still in

command

Command

Q. No, I believe General Maude is commanding at the present moment

2874 Q. ~~And~~ Has Sir Percy Lake left

A: I believe he has left Mesopotamia, only just recently

2875 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge. That will be another in supreme command

A: Yes

2876 Chairman, Sir Percy Lake, you say, has left quite recently

A: I left on the 11th July, but I believe Sir Percy Lake has actually left Mesopotamia and General Maude is commanding at the present moment

2877 Q. Has Sir Percy Lake left permanently or on leave

A: I believe permanently

2878 Q. General Maude is the general who wrote you that letter

A: Yes

2879 Lord Hugh Cecil: Are you home on leave

A: No, I was ordered home - I handed over my command.

2880 Q: You were under Sir Percy Lake

A: Yes

2881 Q. You were not in supreme command

A: No

2882 Sir Archibald Williamson: Has Sir Percy Lake left owing to sickness or has he been superseded

A: I have not been told officially but I believe he has been replaced

2883 Q. Of course we can get the information

A: I only know that I was told when I got home that he had been told that he had to go

Earl

2884 Earl of Donoughmore: Were your casualties replaced, ^{and you} ~~the~~ your experience in the whole campaign were ~~the~~ ^{the} casualties as a rule replaced, ^{pretty} ~~very~~ quickly or did your fighting strength dwindle

A My fighting strength always dwindled; I got no reinforcements at all practically during the operations for the relief of Kut. I lost 11,000 ^{men} and I was 10,000 short

2885 Q you remained 10,000 short.

A Yes.

2886 Q The only other question I want to ask is what about ammunition; had you plenty of ammunition all through the fighting

A I had as much ammunition as the transport could bring up

2887 Q I know

A If I had had more transport I would have used more ammunition. I never ran out of ammunition but the difficulty was to get sufficient transport for all the ammunition I should like to have used

2888 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: You ~~had~~ ^{did not} run out, because you economised

A I had to economise, because for instance when I started operations I said I must have 100 tons of ammunition a day, and they asked me how I wished it and they told me that they could send a certain amount of transport.

I said I must ^{have} 100 tons of ammunition a day coming up so that I can feel I can ^{use it;} ~~use it;~~ that was kept up all the time it was ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ person. I used about 250 tons the first day and so on; so that I never felt that I had unlimited ammunition, but the shortage was not of ammunition but in the transport

2889 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: You were always brought up against the consequences

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2890 A Yes

Chairman. Here is one question I should like to ask, to get our minds clear. You are not alarmed about the military position of our troops in Mesopotamia

A I am not at the present moment at all alarmed. I had a letter by the last mail from an officer who was my General Staff officer, in which he told me that the Turks were feeling the heat very badly at the present moment

2891 Q Then what do you say as to this. You see the army in Mesopotamia had a series of very great successes in the early stages

A They had

2892 Q And in fact, looking at the difficulties with which they had to contend, the record is a very remarkable one up to this advance on Kut

A Yes.

2893 Q Things have not gone so well and the climate is very bad. What should you say of ^{the} moral of the army; do you think it is at all affected by the failure to relieve Kut

A Of course we have suffered heavy casualties and the men have suffered a good deal from ill health and so on, but I would not say that the moral of the army has suffered from the failure to relieve Kut, because I think we always felt that we were a better man than the Turks, that we have always had to do the attacking and with equal numbers, and so far as the spirit of the men went I think right away through the operations it was excellent.

2894 Q Even up to the end.

A Right up to the end. But they were worn out by continual fighting not only with the Turks but with the floods. It was not that their moral was bad but

but the men were done. I had no reinforcements to bring up ~~up~~ behind and to bring in fresh troops; they had been fighting continuously for 6 days and the men were done — exhausted, that was it

2895 Q We, of course, are the receptacle of a very large number of complaints, as you may imagine

A Yes

2896 Q As your papers show and as we all know there has been very considerable mismanagement and want of organization as regards transport and conveyance of supplies. Do you think that there is a feeling at all among the men in Mesopotamia that they have been neglected and forgotten by the higher authorities

A I think that there has been a feeling throughout the force that we were, as we used to put it, a sideshow and nobody's child. ~~You will remember~~ Last year, I think about this time of the year, we had not had any potatoes or fresh vegetables beyond what we could get ^{for} some months, we certainly had not seen a block of ice or anything like ^{that}, and the Austen Chamberlain made a remark in the House that the troops were well supplied with ice and fresh vegetables and fruit and so on; and I think we thought —

2897 Q Some rather plain language, I suppose

A; ^{yes;} and latterly too, of course, the troops that came from France could not but compare the conditions and they used to say, well why cannot we have the same conditions and why cannot more be done — I mean "nobody cares a damn"; that is what I think was the kind of feeling certainly among the British troops. I think among the Indian troops, especially latterly, they were not affected by the climate to anything like the ^{same} extent & and I should say that their moral

was relatively higher when I left than the moral of certainly the 13th Division of the new army, the British Division; because they were not feeling the heat to ~~the extent~~ anything like the same extent. And I would like to exemplify my point about the difference between the troops that we had the first year and the second year as regards standing the climate. Very shortly before I left I went round a battery which was composed almost entirely of men who had come out from India, they were one of the old batteries. I asked them how many men they had got sick and with a certain amount of pride they said ~~that~~ they had got three out of the whole lot

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2898

2. The whole lot would be how many

a About 150 including drivers and every one. The next battery to that was one of the new Army batteries and they had not got 50 men ^{fit} for duty; these was the difference. When you get down to weak numbers like that it means ~~more~~ ^{more} work for everybody, and the general moral cannot help suffering

2899

2 And the climate I suppose is very trying

a The sun is very trying. The climate is all right for two months in the spring and two months in the autumn.

Commander Wedgwood And if you have ~~sufficient~~ ^{decent} tents

a. In the hot weather for five months the sun is very very powerful. The E.P. tent with double fly, the two flies, is no good to you there in those five months, unless you have got your hat on, between 9 o'clock in the morning and 5 o'clock in the evening

2900

Earl of Donoughmore: Unless you have your hat on in the tent

a Yes.

Commander Wedgwood: Even the E.P.

a Yes, and therefore, as you can imagine, to have troops out

out in the sun between 9 o'clock in the morning and 5 o'clock in the afternoon ~~it~~ has an enormous effect upon them, ~~it~~ cannot help it and then the sun gets into the men and although they may not suffer immediately from heat stroke or sunstroke it has an effect which eventually makes them go sick

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Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge. And that would be aggravated if they were not properly fed

A It would be aggravated if they were not properly fed and of course by their conditions of being able to rest and that means having good shelter from the sun

2903

2 You said just now that during a certain period they had no potatoes and no green vegetables

A That is so

2904

2 Was ~~there~~ ^{there} any importation for the use of the Army ~~for~~ of food from Australia, - any cold storage

A There was no cold storage, but as regards ^{the} potatoes the reason is that they will not stand the climate. If you ship them during those months they are all bad by the time they get to you

2905

2 Unless they are in cold storage

A Unless you have cold storage

Wint



Sir

Garden of Kingham

2906

Sir Archibald Williamson: Are there no high grounds where the climate would be better, to which you could send the troops for recovery

A: Not in our immediate vicinity, not in the valley but of course there are up in the hills; there are hills about 140 miles away on the north side of the Tigris up at ~~Bedra~~^{Bedrai}, and all round those hills you have an entirely different climate where our aeroplanes used to carry out reconnaissances round there they used to say ~~that~~ it was as good as a change of air to have a fly round there because they got a bit of cool air but down in the valley you get back into the heat

2907

Q Is there no possibility of sending the troops behind where the oil fields are, into the mountains there, for recuperative purposes

A It is very difficult country; you want to improve your transport arrangements to send them there, and it is very hot there. There is ~~some~~ high ground in the hills but it is a good distance off

2908

Chairman. And I see the population is not very quiet or safe there

A: No

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General Sir Neville Lyttelton: Have you anything to say about drafts; you got drafts of sorts both British and Indian

A: Yes

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Q. But not in sufficient quantities

A The difficulty is in getting them from Basra up the river. You could get them as far as Basra all right, but the congestion all along has been at Basra. For instance it was proposed directly after the operations for the relief of Kut failed, to make up my three Indian Divisions to 10,000 each. They had the men ready to leave in India, ^{they told us,} to send to me but they could not get

them

them to me

47/1911

Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge. That is to say they could get them to Basra but they could not get them beyond

A: They could not get them beyond Basra at that time. For three months in the year you cannot march the troops owing to the floods, but in the remaining part of the year I have always maintained that there is no reason why the reinforcements should not be a continuous stream marching up the banks. I have always urged that, ^{and} instead of having large rest camps at Basra I have always maintained that the troops should be in a continual stream marching up the banks and if that had been done and thoroughly organized we should have made a much better use of our transport than we did

2912

Sir Archibald Williamson: Were the troops short of food

A. When I started ^{the} operations on the 5th April I had 7 days reserve supplies in hand. At the critical time of the last attack at Sun-ai-yat I had two days reserves in hand. The result of that was that very often during the last stage of operations the troops were short of this, that, and the other, because when you run it as fine as that it is impossible to get supplies out through the flooded ground, or to send reinforcements.

2913

Q You should have had reserves of food for longer than two or seven days

A: We ought to have had 30 days supplies before we started from Shaik Saad but then the transport could not get there. I had arranged my plan of operations for the advance to put out depots of supplies south of Um-n-el-Brahn about 8 miles out. If I had been able to have done that after I had captured the first part of the enemy's position I could then have changed

my base on to there and brought the whole of my force round and turned his right flank with my whole force

2914 Q. Then it is quite likely that the men who were wounded were very short of suitable food

A. Yes, rations were always short

2915 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, Rations, you say, were always short

A. Yes; I mean that during those operations there was a shortage because of its being cut so fine.

We had only 7 days when we started and it was down to two days during part of the operations; in fact any idea of putting out depot supplies had to be knocked entirely on one side. I had not the supplies to put out

2916 General Sir Neville Lytton: You talked of the Turks being a containing force holding ^{one} ~~any~~ flank; which flank were you thinking of

A. I think down immediately behind

2917 Q. Our left flank

A. Yes. It is a thing they might do in winter but they could not do it during hot weather for two reasons, first the heat and second the floods. We opened the banks of the river below Shaikh Saad and flooded the whole of this country here so that they could not use it

The witness withdrew

Adjourned to Thursday next at half past ten o'clock

Walter Hodgson
Scribe and Writer.