

Confidential

Mesopotamia Commission
Thursday 7th September 1916.

Fourth Day.

Members Present

The Rt. Hon. Lord George Francis Hamilton G.C.S.I., (in the Chair)

The Rt Hon the Earl of Donoughmore K. P.,

General the Rt. Hon. Sir Neville Gerald Lytton G.C.B., G.C.V.O.,

Admiral Sir Cyprian Arthur George Bridge G.C.B.,

Lord Hugh Cecil M. P.,

Sir Archibald Williamson, Bart., M. P.,

Mr. John Hodge Esq., M. P.,

Commander Josiah C. Wedgwood, M. P.

Mr R. G. Duff Secretary

(Sir William Garstin G.C.M.G. Sworn and examined

1746 the Chairman. You have been good enough to put in
a paper which we will take as your evidence
in chief.

a. If you please

NPS Approved the Secretary for this.

CHS-8

Chairman

ghe

Chairman: What is your exact position as regards the Red Cross Society and the Order of St John

A: I am a member of the Joint War Committee of the Red Cross and the order of St John, and I have been Director of Stores and Transport ever since the beginning of the war

1748 Q And you were authorised to act on behalf of both the Red Cross and the Order of St John ~~from~~ ^{after} the amalgamation

A. As a member of the Joint Committee

1749 Q. No application was primarily made to you for assistance from the Mesopotamia Expedition.

A: No, none at all.

1750 Q: It was the ~~only~~ ^{other} way

A: Yes, I did it on my own initiative.

1751 Q: Had you heard any rumours

A: Not at the time of my first cable. I knew there had been fighting, and that was all. As I think I have noted I sent also cables to the General in East Africa and the General in the Cameroons ^{about} ~~at~~ the same time

1752 Q I suppose the original idea both of the Red Cross Society and of the Order of St John was that the Government would undertake all that was necessary as regards sick and wounded and that their efforts would be supplemented by voluntary agencies

A. That is the essential idea

1753 Q. But in course of time it seems to me that both the Red Cross and the Order of St John are supplying a number of articles that you might almost call necessaries

A. May I give a little explanation?

1754 Q. If you please

A. That was the agreement on which we tried to work, but what we have found all through the war is this. At the beginning of the war, take France for example, when the very heavy rush came and the Transport broke down, we were on the spot and they were very glad, as Sir Alfred Keogh would be the first to allow, to take everything from us that we could supply. Then when things got easy and transport was organized we confined ourselves more or less to luxuries and comforts, and things of that kind, which were not down in the Schedule of the War Office. But what we ~~found~~ ^{find} almost everywhere, I think I may say, is, that whenever a sudden rush comes they are only too glad to take anything from the Red Cross to supplement what they have got.

1755

Q. And, of course, a feature of this war is that ~~these~~ rushes are very sudden and of very big dimensions as regards casualties.

A. Yes

1756

Q. You asked Sir John Nixon if you could help with Hospital supplies, and Sir John Nixon replied: "many thanks for your kind offer. Would most appreciate two good open motor launches, kerosene driven, to hold 6 persons for hospital work. If sent by first available boat would be invaluable". In reply to your offer the request was for motor launches

A. Yes

1757

Q. But that at once rather takes in things outside your offer

A. Absolutely outside what I suggested. When I sent the cable I was not thinking of motor launches or anything of that sort

1758

Q. I suppose you would lay it down that that should be provided by the Government

A. I do not think it is for us on ~~that~~ a question
of that sort to lay down anything. When
we were asked by the General for motor
launches we at once decided to supply
them or anything that anybody asks us
for. That is the principle we have always
gone upon

Q. Then

- 1759 Q Then further communications took place and the value of these launches was at once admitted
- A I have given the values in my general note, they vary a little; the average is about £800, - from £600 to £800
- 1760 Q How is it that you were able to supply these motor launchers so quickly
- A Well we have got an immense organization and I think I may say plainly that we ^{put} ~~applied~~ ourselves that we can supply anything now in the quickest ~~to the~~ possible time. I do not think anybody can supply quicker than our Red Cross Stores Department; we have it so well organized
- 1761 Q But I am struck with the alacrity of the response, because the request was on the 23rd July and you sent out a motor launch on the 1st August.
- A That is so
- 1762 Q Could the Government have done the same
- A That I cannot say
- 1763 Q There is no reason, is there, why they should not
- A I can give no opinion upon that at all; I know nothing about what the Government could do
- 1764 Q But you have no exceptional facilities for expedition
- A If I may say one thing we have no red tape, we simply treat directly with the manufacturers straight away, we are in touch with them all and they know that if we give them an order ~~that~~ it will be paid for at once, and so the whole business will go through at once. That is the way that we have always worked
- 1765 Q Then the exchange of telegrams goes on and I see telegram J on the 16th December, that was when Lord Roberts's Army was in retreat
- A Yes, I think it was about then
- 1766 Q In that telegram you ask if you can send anything

Nixon's

and General Nicholson's reply is: "Many thanks your wife of the 16th. Nothing required at present."

A Yes

1767 Q Then ~~so~~ far as one can judge from the papers you have laid before us the initiative in almost every instance was with the Red Cross and not with the authorities in Mesopotamia.

A I think that is so.

1768 Q Then you heard I suppose, in common with other people, rumours that the treatment of the wounded was unsatisfactory, and medical supplies were very deficient.

A We heard many rumours, very largely through letters that were shown to us, and in one instance that I mentioned a wounded officer came back. Of course in that case, if I may say so, we did an irregular thing; we are not supposed to supply ~~the~~ combatants at all; but ^{we} had such a deplorable account from this officer about the state of things there that we sent them for the sick and wounded of the ~~of the~~ four regiments. We ^{distinctly} ~~directly~~ labelled them to each Colonel of a regiment.

1769 Q And did they get their supplies.

A Yes.

1770 Q They were not stopped at Basra

A No they got them and they were most grateful

1771 Q Did you then in consequence of your experiences write or communicate ^{directly} with the officers commanding regiments rather than with the general officer commanding

A Only in that particular instance because as you see Sir John Nixon said he did not want anything. Then we heard of these four regiments whose names I give, and we also ^{saw} letters ^{from} of the wife of one of the officers speaking of the most deplorable state of the sick and

wounded

wounded; that they had nothing in the way of cover garments or anything. It was ~~wholly~~ ^{only} of course hearsay, - but we took it on ourselves, or rather I took it on myself, to send them out there on the chance of helping. I labelled them all ^{and} to the officers. I said ~~catalogue~~ ^{list} were for the sick and wounded of the regiments

1772 Q The ~~op~~ upshot of your operations is that you sent out about £112,000 worth of stores.

A Yes, and of course what I gave Colonel James I discussed with him when he was ^{going} out there, and what we sent to Colonel Bruce Porter was at his own request, mosquito curtains and things of that kind; and since our Commissioner has been out there we have sent out nothing except at his request. This was only a preliminary.

1773 ^{the} Chairman: You sent out stores as well as motor launches; that is to say you improved both the means of transport and also the amount of medical equipment.

A Yes
1774 Q You ^{then} and Mr. Riddale was sent out as your representative

A Yes
Q Preliminary to that Colonel Jay Gould had been appointed officer out there to act both for the Order of St. John in India and for ourselves. I have given the cables that passed between Sir John Hewitt ^{and} myself there. I am speaking also, I may say, as a member of the Indian Soldiers Fund Committee of which I am a member too, so Sir John Hewitt asked me to speak for them in this way. That is why I mention the correspondence that went on because the Indian Soldiers Fund for some time had been trying to get into touch with the force out there to see what they could supply and how they could help

1775 Q The Indian Soldiers Fund supplies comforts.
A Yes; but only for combatants and for Indian troops only.

25

1776 Q Then Mr Ridsdale on his arrival at Bombay suggested the appointment of a Red Cross Commissioner at Bombay

A Yes ^{and then} the agent for the Great ~~Eastern~~ ^{Indian Peninsula} Railway was appointed to that post.

1777 Q Then the agent for the Great ~~Eastern~~ ^{Indian Peninsula} Railway was appointed to that post.
A Yes, Major Heppel was appointed by Lord Willingdon the Governor of Bombay

1778 Q Then I suppose all the stores that he arranged to be transhipped from Bombay to Basra were carried in Government transports or ships employed for that purpose.

A That I could not tell you. I think they went by the British Indian Steam Navigation Company. Where we could get a transport going direct to Basra we sent our things by that, but in a good many cases ^{we} could not do that, and I could not tell you what ships they went in.

1779 Q Then there were vessels other than those commandeered by the Government running between Bombay and Basra

A I think so, but my responsibility rather ended when I had ^{sent} stores out from here. I am in charge of the central stores and we send them to our Commissioner. I know they got to Basra and that is all I know, but how I do not know.

1780 Q Then Mr Ridsdale apparently cabled for a large assortment of equipment including ice-making machines, refrigerators, ~~deflectors, literature, games, cigarettes,~~ hammocks, and carrying chairs.

A Yes
~~Q And I assume those are~~

1781 Q I assume that those are part of the necessary equipment of a well organized hospital

A I should hesitate to give a reply to that. I do not think they are down in the War Office Schedule

I should ^{say} that they are rather more luxuries but I would not like to commit myself to that. But when we were asked for them all we considered was that ^{our} Commission, asked for them our duty was to send them.

1782 Q Then Mr. Ridsdale reported to you that the lack of transport was the root of the difficulties

A Yes, again and again; in all his letters and in all his cables it was the same thing

1783 Q ^{From} Basra I assume up the river

A From Basra up the river.

1784 Q And in order to ^{diminish} ~~diminish~~ those deficiencies he suggested that there should be fresh motor ambulances sent out

A Yes

Garden to Kingham

1785 Q. And those were sent out and I think in one of the papers here it says that they were commandeered

A. They were sent over ^{at once} to us. I ought to explain that those motor ambulances were a gift, I think it was from the Cinematograph Managers, they only remained in the possession of the Red Cross, I should say, for about a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes, because they were handed over in the presence of the King to the Red Cross, and the Red Cross handed them ^{over} to the War Office at once, and they were sent out. The value of that convoy was about £30,000, and they were sent out at once. They were ordered with the help of our experts but we had nothing more to do with them than that. I just mention that they were sent out. I have not included them in the value

1786 Q. Then did Major Hepper go up ^{to} Basra ^{from} Bombay

A. No, he remains at Bombay entirely. We have our own Commissioner at Basra, Colonel Jay Gould.

1787 Q. So far as you know Major Hepper never was at Basra.

A. I think I can say absolutely that he never was. He is agent for the Great Indian Peninsular ^{Railway} Company and goes backwards and forwards for the government to Simla and Bombay ^{at times} and I think he remains entirely at Bombay

1788 Q. Now you have had great experience in many ways and I suppose you have thought a good deal ~~at~~ over the shortcomings of this Mesopotamian Expedition so far as the treatment of the wounded is concerned, and the transport; have you anything to say as to what your opinion was of lack of transport

A. It is of course very difficult for me to give you a reply to that. I have got my ideas very strongly about what should have been done, but I do not know that my ideas are worth anything.

4

1789 Q. I think we should very much like to have your ideas

A. Speaking briefly it seems to me that the Tigris ought

to be, or is as well known in India as the Nile is in Egypt. We know that the Tigris is a snow fed river, it is either in full flood when it spreads all over the marshes, or it is so low that hardly any boats can go up. It seems to me that the first thing that any man who is thinking about a campaign would consider would be how you can best get over that difficulty, because your army must be hung up in one way or the other, or both, unless you have boats of sufficiently low draught to take you up a very low river like the Nile; that is the problem we are always dealing with on the Nile; there you have either ^{have} to have some means, when the floods are out, of getting your transport up through the marshes or not to undertake the Expedition at all.

1790 Q: The Tigris is a very difficult river

A: It is ^{very} twisty and very shallow. I have never seen it, but I have read all about it, and have had it described, and it is very similar to the Nile in its conditions, except that I understand it is much narrower and perhaps more twisty, and it wants boats with independent paddle wheels or independent screws to get round.

1791 Lord Hugh Cecil: You speak of the Tigris ~~above~~ above Kerna.

A Yes

1792 Q Below Kerna it is navigable

A: ^{the} Shatt-el-^{I understand} Arab is navigable. It seems to me if I may say so that if they had gone up to Kerna, which they could have made perfectly impregnable and then carried a light railway up the river, the army could have gone up by railway as they did in the Soudan ^{and} all the difficulties would have been surmounted. That is only my own opinion and I do not say that my opinion is worth anything

1793 ^{the}

Chairman: There is a similarity, you think between this expedition and ^{the} an expedition up the Nile

A. To my mind that is so.

1794 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge. In ~~1878~~ 1896

the A In ~~1878~~ 1896

1795

Chairman's

Q. I suppose you have never studied the Tigris sufficiently, to be able to say, whether it is possible, when it is very low, to get boats of sufficiently small draught to navigate it.

A. I have not personally, but Mr Ridsdale who has been out there ^{has} told us very plainly, what he thinks can be done here in the way of boats; and Colonel Jay Gould has told us that with boats 2 feet 9 to 3 feet, provided they have ~~the~~ independent paddles or independent screws, that is to say, so that each can work independently of the other to get round corners, they can get up. I do not personally know the Tigris at all, but I have seen so much of that kind of river on the special reach of the Nile up south of Assuan, and so many times have come back up and down in those stern-wheelers or those paddle-wheelers, that I think it is entirely a question of independent action; you get on to a sandbank and you deliberately put your boat on to the sandbank and allow it to swing round, working the paddles separately, and the boat gradually ~~twists~~ ^{swings} round and surmounts it; and in the same way getting up. I have not described it very well, but it is a very remarkable performance that all the boatmen on the Nile do with those shallow draught boats.

1796

Q. Do you know whether the Tigris has been surveyed or would the survey ^{be} ~~be~~ in the hands of the military authorities.

A. I do not know that, but, of course, for a great many years there have been Political Officers, or Engineer officers, up there I imagine; at any rate an immense amount has been written about it and I presume the Government of India has

the

the full accounts of it all, but that I am not competent
 1797 ^{the} to give an opinion about
Earl of Dounglinsore: There are only two questions I want
 to ask you. In the telegrams which have been
 referred to which went on, if one may use the phrase,
 from July 1915 until Christmas, you were making offers
 to Sir John Nixon and being, of course, thanked, but
 told that nothing was required.

A. That is so.

1798 Q. Then in January, you approached the India Office direct,
 did you not

A. Yes, because there had been a great deal of talk,
 and I went to see Mr. Chamberlain about it.

1799 Q. I only wanted to make that clear, because there is
 evidence before us that you approached the India
 Office in January, but it must not be forgotten that you
 had been active six months before, because you
 had been in communication with the authorities
 on the spot, not the India Office

A. That.

1800 Q. That is so as a matter of history

A. Yes

1801 Q. Then the only other question is this. You sent out stores
 roughly to the value of £112,000

1802 Q. ^{A. Yes.} But that is a very small percentage of what
 you sent out all over the world

A. Yes, I handled over a million pounds worth of stores
 in my particular Department.

1803 Q. Therefore you would have had no difficulty in supplying
 a good deal more than you were asked to supply

A. None whatever I should say

1804 Q. Because there it is a small force compared with
 what you are considering in other parts of the world

A. Yes

- 1805 Q. Are any offers or requests coming in now
 A. Very little. Since that cable of Colonel Jay Gould's that I mentioned in which he asked us not to send out anything more unless he cabled for it, he has only made one demand for about £3000 worth of stores, which went out at once, within a week.
- 1806 Q. Therefore you might assume ^{from} that that things are not required
 A. And from his letters too, and from Mr Ridsdale's letters, I gather there is a tremendous amount of stores collected at Basra that they cannot get up the river, and that for our own stores, or our advanced store at Amara, Colonel Jay Gould made arrangements, or rather Mr Ridsdale made them first to carry on, to take them up in our motor launches. Since that, of course, there has been great difficulty because the Army commandeered all those ^{motor} launches.
- 1807 Sir Archibald Williamson understood that the Army wished to commandeer all the Red Cross motor launches

A. Yes

- 1808 The Chairman: There is a letter in which it is stated that as soon as the launches arrived they were commandeered by the Medical Department
- A. There is a series of cables that came from Colonel Jay Gould asking if we would emphatically support him in saying that he had complete control of the motor launches. That raised a very difficult point and a very delicate point as regards our relations with the Army because, as Lord Doughtymore knows much better than I do, in France our relations as regards motor launches were very strained, and it is a very similar thing there. So I sent him a very carefully worded cable.

I did not think it necessary to put it into my papers here, but really what I said was, certainly the launches are under your control subject, of course, to the conditions laid down as regards the functions of the Red Cross and their relations with the Army, that the Red Cross is only supplemental to the Army. The situation eventually got more acute. Difficulties took place, and I got a second cable from Colonel Jay Gould asking about it and from Sir Pardey Lukis, who I think is Director General of Medical Services in India, asking whether these launches were to be directly under Red Cross control or under Army control. It was a very difficult question to put a reply down to in writing, it must be left largely to the tact of the man.

I have Colonel Jay Gould's original letter here of which I gave you a copy, but I missed out one very strong sentence which he quotes here in which he says: "The Inspector General of Communications took away all my second men in the boats and said he was not going to help the damned old Red Cross. He apologised afterwards." I thought it better to omit that.

6
1809 Q. According to this statement, so valuable were the steam launches that as fast as they arrived they were taken away from the Red Cross who bought them for the purpose of bringing up stores and they were utilised for the sick and wounded

A. Yes, there is the original letter (handing in the same)

1810 Lord Hugh Cecil: How much of this letter has been put in
A. All of it but what I have missed out in pencil

1811 General Sir Neville Lyttelton: I see Sir John Nixon asked for these motor launches for hospital work

A. Yes. The first ones we sent out to him we gave him absolutely. Then we provided the crews and are paying for the crews of our launches that we have

1812

sent out still, even though the Army takes them all.
Earl of Donoughmore: There were 19 of them, were there not
 Yes, and we have got another 10 or 15 ready now
 but we have not sent them out yet because we are
 just waiting to hear whether they want them or not

1813

Sir Archibald Williamson: Perhaps you will just make
 this clear. It does seem clear that these launches
 that were sent out for Red Cross work have been
 diverted to other works.

A. I would not say that. I think it would be most
 unjust and unfair because an angry man writes certain
 things about it, to say that they were not used
 for anything but hospital work. I feel sure myself
 that they were used by the Army for hospital work.

1814

Q. They were sent out for purposes connected with
 sick and wounded and were used, ^{as I understand,} for purposes
 other than those

A. That I would not like to say. I do not think
 there is any evidence to show that they were used
 for other purposes.

1815

Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: Are we likely to get evidence
 on that point

A. That I could not say. I should think it was extremely
 doubtful. I can only communicate you see with
 Colonel Jay Gould on the spot, but Mr. Ridsdale could
 tell you. There has evidently been a great deal of
 friction.

1816

The Earl of Donoughmore: It may only be a quarrel about
 control, whether the Red Cross people or the military
 people were to have control

A. I think so.

1817

Lord Hugh Cecil: Am I wrong in supposing that under the
 Hague and Geneva Conventions anything that went
 from the Red Cross must not be used for combatant
 purposes.

1. That is so

1818

2. And if these motor launches were worked by the Red Cross they could not have been used for any purposes which were strictly combatant purposes

1. Certainly not

1819

2. The probability is, therefore, that they were used by the Army for purposes kindred to Red Cross purposes but under Army control

1. I have no reason to suppose anything else, but they are the only means which the Red Cross ^{had} ~~has~~ of getting up our stores from the base at Basra up to our advance store at Amara as we wanted them and Mr. Ridsdale instituted a transport service with them, so I understand him to say, but whether they were taken away or not it is a little difficult to say. We get these letters weeks after the cables come in. These cables came in long ago. There was evidently friction between the two bodies ^{over it} and ~~as~~ that we cabled back. I could have brought copies of the cables, ~~but~~ ^{if} they would ~~not~~ have been of any use. I hope this matter is settled by this time and that they are working smoothly, as we have heard nothing more since the cables passed between us. This letter only arrived two or three days ago, long after the matter has been settled, or at least I hope so

1820

2. So far as this statement before us goes it goes to ^{show} ~~say~~ that it is being done

1. Judging from the cables that came from Colonel Jay Gould, - and that letter is the sequel to his cables, - there evidently was considerable friction, but what it was about it is a little difficult to know. I think myself that a little tact would probably smooth over all that question.

2. What

2. What I wanted to bring out was that if these motor launches have been used for combatant purposes they would have had to be formally changed, - the Red Cross would have had to be wiped out

A. Yes, certainly

1822 Q. That is not a very probable thing to have happened.

A. There again I am speaking from hearsay. I have no evidence to prove it except hearsay, but a man from the Flying Corps came and said that they had taken the Red Cross off one of our launches, I do not think that is enough to go upon.

1823 Q. But it is enough to indicate a point to be enquired into. I have only one other very ~~of~~ brief question. We may take it, I suppose, that you heard nothing alarming before the 17th July, 1915

A. Absolutely

1824 Q. And that is the beginning

A. I only saw what I saw in the papers - that there had been fighting

1825 Q. Neither privately, nor through the papers did you ^{hear} get anything alarming before that date

A. No

1826 Q. In the following months your alarm constantly increased

A. Yes

1827 Q. Can you fix approximately the date when that began

A. I could not remember, I am afraid; it was mostly from letters, people continually bringing letters to me from relations out there, and people out there giving ^{them} very harrowing accounts

1828 Q. Would it be a very great labour to you to look through Colonel Jay Gould's correspondence and see if there is anything that would be of value to the Commission

A. It would be a very easy thing for me to do, but I think I have already extracted everything. I went through it

it very carefully, and Mr Riddale's letters too. I thought Mr Riddale would probably give his own evidence, and he could say anything more direct than just his letters

1829 Q. Have you been in the habit of making enquiry from time to time as to the present condition of things, from Colonel Jay Gould

A. Yes, certainly

1830 Q. Do you think you could furnish the Commission with any answers to questions that you may get on that subject from Colonel Jay Gould.

A. I do not think I have anything very recent, because you see it takes such a tremendous time to get letters. A cable is so much easier that we do nearly everything by cable now, because the Eastern Telegraph Company send all our cables free, and we do everything by cable.

1831 Q. The point is this: we have had some disquieting indications as to the present state of things and we would like to know whether you have any information as to whether the present state of things is materially better

A. I have had nothing of that kind, - ^{that} ~~that~~ is as much as I can say from Colonel Jay Gould, - nothing disquieting at present

1832 Mr Chariman: Nothing to show that things have not improved.

A. Nothing to show that things have not improved.

1832 A Q. Or anything to show that they have improved

A. No

1833 - Lord Hugh Cecil: He does not say one way or the other

A. No

1834 Mr Hodge With respect to the motor launches, have you got
to wait until they are made ~~or~~ after you ^{order} them

A Oh yes, we only have them made to order

1835 Q How long does it take from placing the order until
you get them supplied

A I would not like to tell you that at this moment, I
might make a mistake. As regards the first two that
we sent out so quickly, we searched round about and
we heard of two and we bought them ourselves

1836 The Earl of Donoughmore Already made

A Yes, I should hesitate to give any time

1837 M^r Hodge Would you say three months

A A couple of months I should say, but I am speaking
offhand because we have always got a lot on hand.
Ever since we sent the first lot we have been putting
orders out and having them ready so, that they have
been going out in an almost continuous succession.
I could get you the information in ten minutes if I
went to my office

1838 Q In your original evidence you mention you could
get them very much quicker than the India Office

A Yes, I think so, and be quicker in placing them there

1839 Q And as we have a great deal of evidence in
addition to your ^{own} as to the difficulties of transport,
it would be interesting to know whether you can get them
within three months of placing the orders

A As you are on the question of quickness may
I mention a matter that happened about two months
ago - The India Office wrote to us and asked whether
we could supply hospital equipment, stores and
transport up to the value of between £5000
and £6000. "Will you send them to us quickly
and promptly" (The order was purely for the Government)
"on repayment by us". We at once wrote to say
that

that we could supply them, and they wrote and accepted it at once most thankfully. That was for stores like crockery, hospital furniture of that sort. But we actually supplied the India Office with over £5,000 worth and were simply used as a purchasing medium

1840 Q That is an example of how they can dispense with red tape when they choose

A I have all the particulars with regard to it, letters and everything; and they were very grateful to us for doing it

1841 Q And of course the Government with their authority could have got them made much quicker than you could

A That I will not presume to say

1842 Q Sir Archibald ~~Hugh~~ Williamson I see that on the 13th October 1915 Sir John Nixon telegraphed "Indian troops here amply served in matter of comforts by India"

A Yes, that is the combatants of course; we do not touch the combatants

1843 Q Did you telegraph asking whether combatants required comforts

A No, but I understood that he meant it to be for combatants. Was not that in reply to Sir John Hewitt? I think that was to the Indian Soldiers' Fund which ~~was~~ only refers to combatants. I mention that as being a member of the Indian Soldiers' Fund Committee

1845 Q That has nothing to do with sick and wounded

A No

1846 Q Then ~~departing from~~ ^{departing from} ~~that~~ ^{that} is it the case that on the 22nd December 1915

Gordon F. Dingham

- d
- 1847 Q: Sir Parkey Lukis telegraphed "No information regarding adequacy of hospital supplies in Mesopotamia?"
A: Yes, that is in one of ~~the~~^{my} Appendices
Q: That is a telegram from the Viceroy dated the 22nd December
A: Yes
- 1848 Q: Should not Sir Parkey Lukis have known from his official position. Is it to your mind a satisfactory answer that he has no information
A: It is very difficult for me to give an opinion. I have an opinion, and a very strong opinion about it, but I really think everyone here knows it
- 1849 Q: Then on the 23rd December 1915, curiously enough the Viceroy apparently cabled for supplies
A: Yes
- 1850 Q: The next day
A: Yes, that is decidedly curious, because there was one telegram from the Viceroy on the 22nd and one on the 23rd
- 1851 Q: Then I find in one of the Appendices, page 2, item 3, the Viceroy cables for articles on the 23rd December
A: There are ^{two} cables from the Viceroy ^{one} on the 22nd and one on the 23rd
- 1852 — General Sir Neville Lytton. Both on page # 2
A: Yes
- 1853 — Sir Archibald Williamson: On one date the official states, no information of any shortage and on the following day the Viceroy telegraphs for supplies
A: Yes, it struck me as very curious
- 1854 Q: Then on the 28th of the same month, December, the Commander in Chief, Sir John Nixon sent a telegram. Did that say nothing was required
A: That was his cable to me
- 1855 Q: On the 28th of December is it the case that Sir John Nixon

Nixon cabled that nothing was required

A. Yes. "Many thanks your wire of the 16th. Nothing required at present. If anything needed in future will not hesitate to ask you"; that is in my first Appendix

1856 Q. Can you account for Sir Parkey Lukis having no information and Sir John Nixon cabling that nothing was required

A. I would not attempt to give an opinion

1857 Q. Then on September 16th 1915 the Red Cross sent a cable I think to Sir John Nixon asking him if ~~we~~ he required motor ambulance boats - telegram J. - page 1: "Do you require motor ambulana boats."

A. Yes

1858 Q. Did you receive any reply

A. No, we received no reply to that but that did not surprise us because he was up the river at that time and it is quite possible that the cable never reached him. Anyhow we never received a reply

1859 Q. Supposing it did not reach him did you offer to send anything that was required

A. I have given all the cables that passed

1860 Q. I will put it in another way. You had already offered and two launches had been accepted

A. Yes

1861 Q. And at the same time, or previously, you asked whether there was need of any more or anything else

A. Yes, on the 16th of August "please wire required stores when needed". I never got a reply to that

1862 Q. And you distinctly asked about motor ambulana boats to which you received no reply

A. That is so and I may say that we put the boats in hand but we did not send them out quite at that time

Then
Q. ~~on~~

- 1863 ^{Then on} Q. On the ^{27th} 2nd February this year there is a telegram from Sir John Hewitt "There is grievous need ^{in Mesopotamia} ~~Nixon~~ of barges for wounded light draught motor-launches etc"
- A. Yes
- 1864 Q. Still you had nothing from Sir John Nixon
- A. Had not Sir John Nixon left by that time?
- 1865 Q. Then from the Commander-in-Chief
- A. No, nothing at all; we had nothing more from the Commander in Chief
- 1866 Q. Then again on the 13th of May Mr Ridsdale sent a letter. ~~and~~ Mr Ridsdale writes "They are short of motor boats and various articles that ordinary foresight should by now have been able to provide"
- A. Yes
- 1867 Q. That foresight had been lacking
- A. Apparently so, certainly
- 1868 Q. Although it was suggested by you
- A. I gather so
- 1869 Q. Some of the articles had been suggested
- A. I gather so
- 1870 Q. You refer in your information that you have given us, to a hospital ship that you are preparing
- A. Yes
- 1871 Q. ~~Do~~ You propose to send that in parts to Bombay and have it re-erected in Bombay
- A. We have had a great deal of difficulty about that question and are still under difficulty. The last order from the War Office has been that we are not to be allowed to put it together at Muhammerah and they have arranged that we are to put it together at Bombay
- 1872 Q. Muhammerah means Abadan
- A. Yes up at the head of the Persian Gulf. at Muhammerah itself. I think Abadan is the port.

But there has been a great deal of trouble and we said that we would only send it by sea from Bombay to the Persian Gulf if the War Office would guarantee us against loss, - if they would insure it, because about 50 other vessels have been lost on that voyage

1873 Q: Can you describe to us this hospital ship. to cost £15,000. She is ^{she} steam

A: Yes. steam twin screws, everything of the very latest that we can give, - ice machines and everything. She is 150 feet long; she is very much of the type of those that the Admiralty are building to send out

1874 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: Light draught

A: Under three feet or just three feet

1875 Sir Archibald Williamson Side wheels

A: No, the Admiralty designer advised twin screws. There is a great deal of discussion, because as I said ^{so} long as they work ~~or~~ alternatively either one or the other would get up the river. But she cannot get out now before December, I am afraid. She is starting this month in pieces for Bombay where she will be put together

1876 Q: £15,000 does not seem to me a large figure for a well equipped ^{hospital} ship of any size

A: She is 150 feet long - I forget her ^{draught} ~~depth~~, but she is the exact type of one the Admiralty are ^{sending} ~~building~~. The money for it was given by the United Provinces in India through Sir John Hewitt

Q Are

1877 ~~Q~~ There are ~~the~~ workshops at Abadan belonging to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company

A Yes, I know that.

1878 Q And it is the case, is it not, that they are putting together about 200 launches there

A So I have heard

1879 Q Do you know what has led to that hospital ship being put aside for other work

A I think they wanted to keep us out of it. We have a single firm here to put our boat together, and I think, but there again I am only speaking from hearsay, — anyhow the difficulty came, we were told that we were not to be allowed to put her together there, and the War Office distinctly ordered that it should be put together at Bombay

1880 Q Was it too late to have orders given from the Government that it shall be put together there

A No, she has not ~~been~~ started yet

1881 Q There is no physical difficulty in doing it

A None whatever. Colonel Jay Gould has ^{arranged for} slips for putting ~~together~~ and everything for putting it together

1882 Q The risk of sending her from Bombay with the draught would be very great

A Yes, I asked the War Office to insure not only the ship but the personnel going in her, if she goes for £20000, which they agreed to as between Bombay and Basra

1883 Q But the mere insurance is not enough; you do not have the vessel if she is lost

A No

1884 — The Earl of Donoughmore. Is this the War Office or the India Office

A The War Office now; the India Office have nothing to do with it

1885 Sir Archibald Williamson on the telegrams you proposed to send with regard to ~~the~~ stores being adequate

Jagjy Bm

now both at Basra and up the river, would ~~assume~~
only ^{I presume} cover the stores supplied as it were by the Royal Army
~~Corps~~ Medical Corps, the Department of the War Office.

A I think if I cable to Colonel Jay Gould it ~~is~~ will only
apply to the stores under his superintendence, that is to say our
stores. I should doubt whether he will give any reply as to
whether the Army is well supplied by the Army itself. He is an
officer of the Indian Medical Service you see

1886

Q. But we have been told that ^{the} medical Department of the
Army only has charge of surgical instruments, drugs
and things of that sort, and that with regard to such
articles as blankets, ~~food~~ ^{food}, condensed milk, ice making
machines and things of that kind, it depends on the
Army Ordnance and has nothing to do with the medical
side of ~~the~~ Army Administration

A That I do not know at all

1887

Q Then your telegrams would not cover any of those
necessary things

A We have sent out ice ^{making} machines and blankets and
those things ourselves, - a lot of them

1888

Q But that is not from the Army point of view
under the Medical Department

A That I do not know

1889

Q Could you not amplify your cables so as
to cover something more than strict drugs
and instruments

A I am quite prepared to do so. I do not
mind in the least. I am prepared to cable anything
to him whether he will reply to it or not. His
position is a little difficult, he is acting for us
but at the same time he is an officer of the
Indian Medical Service.

Admiral

1890

Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge: Why are you sending a hospital ship; are they short of hospital ships?

A I understand they are very short.

1891 Q That is the reason.

A I ~~believe~~ ^{understand} so. They are sending three of their own which have not gone yet from here. The Admiralty are constructing them, and I understand they are going by steam the whole way.

1892 Q And you are sending one in order to make good ~~the~~ an unquestioned shortage of hospital ships.

A We gather so. Anyhow our Commissioner, Mr. Riddale, originally told us that a hospital ship was wanted and would be extremely useful.

1893 Q Can you give the Commissioner an idea of what the delay would be, quite independent of the risk gloss between sending the ship to be put together at Muhammerah (or at Abadan) or going to Bombay to be put together and then going to the Tigris.

A That depends upon ~~so~~ very many points. If we could but get her into a transport and send her direct to the Persian Gulf, which we can arrange to do, a very considerable amount of time would undoubtedly be saved, I should say several weeks, provided also that there was no obstruction or difficulty put in the way when she got there; not by the military authorities in the least, they are only too ready to help I think, but it is very much in the hands of one firm; it is a close borough in the hands of a certain firm who do everything connected with that port I understand, and there are ^{ways} ~~ways~~ of making it extremely difficult for you to get your ship put together without anything happening.

1894 Q You had provided for that too.

A Colonel Jay Gould had arranged, so he informed us, everything about slips and putting it together. But there has been a long correspondence about it, and it has been dragging very much, and the last order of the War Office we thought of

better

better just to accept; it was a distinct order to send it out to Bombay and put it together there.

1895 Q Has it been regarded as part of the work of the Red Cross Society to provide hospital ships

A: Yes they have done so in the Mediterranean, certainly at the beginning. Now they are also so well equipped and so well provided that it is like everything else: at the first rush we are found useful for that sort of thing and afterwards it is not required

1896 Q I suppose your motor launches are of a different type; some can convey the sick personnel and some ^{the} medical stores.

A Yes they are. So far as possible we are now sending large ones that will take a certain number of wounded as may be required

1897 Q You said just now that although you were not personally acquainted with the river Tigris you knew that it had been under observation, so to speak, and within the knowledge of India for a good many years, but that you were not aware whether they had any survey of it. So far as navigation of a snow fed river goes, a river some times in flood and some times very shallow, and which no doubt changes its channels from time to time, would a survey in the form of a chart be of any use for the navigation

A. Every survey that you got would be of use. Certain portions of the channels and shoals might change from time to time but a general survey of the river would be of use undoubtedly. I presume there must be such a thing in India; Mesopotamia is not altogether an unknown country. When I was speaking of a survey my general idea was of the general conditions of a river under those circumstances.

1898 The Chairman. Is Sir Parkeylukis a civilian

A. No, I think he is Director General of the Army Medical

Service

Service in India

13
1899

Q. Is ~~the~~^{he} President of the St John's Ambulance Association

A. Yes he was, and now we have got a branch of the Joint War Committee formed in India with the Viceroy as president and Sir Parkey Lukis as Chairman, that has been formed about three months ago and we sent them out £30,000 worth

1900

Q. How does that work

A. It has only just begun. The Viceroy Lord Chelmsford asked us to do it

1901

Q. Then you are associating public money and private subscriptions for the same purpose

A. It is to work out there as we work here. India finds large amounts from private subscriptions, - not from public money entirely. India was entirely working the St John's Ambulance and the idea is now, - it was the Viceroy's own suggestion to have a branch of the War Committee, which ~~is~~ what we call the two Societies amalgamated, working in India as they are working here; and of course we could do nothing but agree to that cordially

Mr. Hill follows

Signed Walter Hodgson
(Northard write)

Lord

Wheeler & Seale

1902

Lord Hugh Cecil ^{he} ~~is~~ D.M.S. or D.G.M.S.

a I think he is D.M.S. but I could not say because I do not ~~think~~ know. The Viceroy I think would not quote him in a cable like that unless he was referring to him as Director General of whatever he is Director General of

1903

2 It is a member of the Indian Government a ^{practically} absolutely every body established in India is an official, whether belonging to a charitable society or not

The Secretary: He is Director General I.M.S.

1904

^{the} Chairman ^(to the witness) Thank you. I do not think that we have any more questions to put to you. You will make a note of the one or two points that we have asked you to let us have information about

a Yes. I have taken a note of the cable to Colonel Jay Gould which you asked me to send and which I will send myself; also the information about the motor launches. Shall I send ^{notes} them to Mr Duff?

1905 2 ~~Chairman~~: If ~~you~~ you please

a The reply from Colonel Jay Gould may take some time to obtain. Sometimes he is up the River

1906

Lord Hugh Cecil Anything ^{to the Commission} of interest that comes to your knowledge you will send to us without being asked to do so

a Certainly

1907

Sir Archibald Williamson All cables sent ^{would} be read by the authorities I suppose

a I should imagine so

1908

^{the} Chairman We will clear the room

(The Room was cleared)

S. Pica

K.C.B

14/11
1909

Sir Arthur Hertzog sworn and examined

Chairman Sir Arthur, you have been for some years Political Secretary ^{of the India office}, have you not

a Yes

1910

Q And ~~one~~ of the functions of the Political Department to which you are Secretary comprise not only ~~common~~ Political movements or anything relating to the native Princes ~~prejudices~~ in India but also a number of ^{foreign} questions outside the boundaries of India

a Yes

1911

Q Would you describe that part of Asia outside India which specially comes under your purview

a It is practically the whole of Asia to which the foreign relations ^{of India} extend - Arabia, Mesopotamia, as we call it ^{now} New Turkish Herat, Persia, Baluchistan, ^{Chinese} Afghanistan, Turkestan, Tibet ~~and~~ to a certain extent the Border Provinces, ~~the Border Provinces~~ of China and Siam. Some of these are ~~for~~ primarily dealt with by the Foreign Office; the India Office is ~~second~~ concerned in them all and my Department deals with questions arising with ^{regard to them.}

1912

Q In certain cases the jurisdiction is mixed, - ~~such~~ ~~is~~ in Persia for instance

a Yes

1913

Q The opinion of the Indian Government is taken on ^{Persian} ~~central~~ questions, but I think that the appointment is made by the Foreign Office

a The appointment of Minister is made by the Foreign Office. In Southern Persia the Consuls are all Indian officials

1914

Q ^{on with regard to} The Persian Gulf and all the territory abutting on ~~any~~ the officials there report directly to the Indian Government

a Yes; there is a dual relationship with regard

to Consuls. They are under the Foreign Office as
 Consuls General or Consuls and ^{they} report to ^{the Foreign} ~~that~~ office,
 but as ^{political} ~~between~~ of officers ^{they} report to the Government
 of India. The Political Resident ^{at} Baghdad is
 Political Agent and Consal General. ^{Qua} ~~the~~ Consul
 General ^{he} is theoretically under the Foreign Office
 and corresponds with them direct on some matters. ^{Qua} ~~the~~
 Political Resident ^{he} is under the Government of India
 and reports to them

1915 Q Sir Percy Cot on any political questions reports
 direct to the Government of India

1916 Q Yes, in normal times. ^{Now circumstances are}
^{different}. He is now chief political officer to the
 General Officer Commanding, and his relations
 with the Government of India to that extent are
 no longer direct

1917 Q ~~Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge~~ ^{British} Indian influence is
 dominant all down the Persian Gulf, and there
 are certain Chiefs with whom we have friendly,
 if not treaty relations

1918 Q ^{Yes} ^{Will you} enumerate those please
 at the bottom of the Gulf on
 A ~~beginning at the~~ ^{time of the relief of the Arabian}
 side the Sultan of Muscat is the most important.
 Then there are about five Chiefs whom we call
 crucial Chiefs ^{because} we have treaties with them under
 which they are obliged to maintain peace, ^{then} ~~working~~
^{working up the coast} ~~up the coast~~, Howel is at the top of the Gulf. There
 are a number of people unimportant individually in between.

1919 Commander Wedgwood: The whole of the Coast is under
 treaty with us, is it not
 A Every chief on the Southern Coast is under treaty
 with us?
 A ^{under} a treaty of some kind or another. Muscat is

independent. The others are more or less protected. Every one of them is under some kind of treaty relation with us

15
1920 7/6

Chairman: The two leading Chiefs are the Sheikh of Koweit and the Sheikh of Mohammerah

a Yes, ~~the~~ Koweit on the Arabian side and ^{Mohammerah} ~~Mammerah~~ on the Persian side

1921

For many years there has been a sort of conflict between the authority of the Turkish ^{Government} ~~the State~~ and the British Government as far as those two Chiefs are concerned.

a Yes; ~~the~~ ^{Mohammerah} ~~Mammerah~~ was once conquered by Turkey and Turkey has ~~not~~ always had designs on ^{Mohammerah} ~~Mammerah~~ in consequence. ^{the Sheikh of} Koweit has always regarded himself as being independent entirely but the Turks have persisted in regarding his territory as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. We have supported the Sheikh and that has brought us constantly into conflict with the Turks

1922

The same condition would apply to M ^{Mohammerah} ~~Mammerah~~

a Yes; he is a ~~Persian~~ subject, a subject of the Persian Government

1923

Does he acknowledge that

a Yes, he acknowledges that. He holds his Province there under a particular kind of tenure from the ^{Persian} ~~Turkish~~ Government and theoretically he is hereditary Governor of it

1924

There is a powerful Chief inland

a Yes, two in fact - the Amir of ^{Nedj} ~~the Amir~~ of _____ and his hereditary rival Ben Raschid of Hai the Chief of the ^{Chamir} ~~Shamir~~ tribe farther to the north

1925

Lord Hugh Cecil would you shew us on the map the places you refer to

(The witness pointed them out)

Q Hedj is an enormous distance of freight down in the middle of Arabia

A Yes. He has been brought into relations with us quite recently owing to the fact that he ejected the Turks from the coast districts and the Province of El Hasa just south of ~~the~~ Howeit. That brought him on to the Persian Gulf and he then became a Gulf power to a certain extent and we were obliged to take account of him; otherwise, we have always regarded the politics of the interior of Arabia as outside our sphere of interest altogether.

1927 the Chavman ^{is} the River up to Basra recognized as Turkish property or is it international

A It is a Turkish river that is to say the water way has been recognized as belonging to the Turks

1928 Q Have we not some rights of navigation up there

A Yes

1929 Q We destroyed a fort some time ago just at the mouth

A Yes. There is a long history of the question of the navigation on the Tigris and ^{the} Euphrates. The waters of the Shatt are navigated by the shipping of all nations but above Basra there was a monopoly

1930 Q Just going back to these Sheikhs we have binding relations with them?

A Yes, as I have explained in my statement

1931 Q Would you go so far as to say that they are actual treaties

A No, they are not actual treaties. They are given to the Sheikh of Howeit in the form of a letter from the Political Officer speaking in the name of His Majesty's Government. "I am authorized by His Majesty's Government to inform you", or something of that sort.

16
1932

Q Have we any special interest on the Karun River
A We have no particular rights on the Karun River,
we are interested in keeping the water way open
for purposes of trade

1933

Q ~~And~~ we have almost a monopoly have we not
of the Steam navigation on the Karun
A There is practically no steam navigation on the Karun
until the last few years we had a monopoly of all
navigation there in ~~fact~~ ^{effect} but the Germans have
recently got a footing there too

1934

— Commander Wedgwood: where?

A On the Karun River. The firm of Funkhaus have
started running boats

1935

— The Chairman Whom did we make a contract with ^{with regard to} oil

A The Persian Government are ultimately the body.
We had contracts with all sorts of people, with
the Baktiaris and with the Sheikh of ^{ohammarah} ~~Mansur~~ as
regards rights in their respective territories

1936

Q Contracts with regard to the use of the oil and
contracts as regards its protection

A Yes

1937

Q This part is almost always a storm centre I suppose
A Yes, it is a source of a great deal of friction

1938

Q If a disturbance breaks out it may radiate out from
that centre in various directions

A Yes. In time of peace when men's minds are not
usually excited, no; but at a time when unrest
is in the air, yes. The flame would spread very
rapidly, through the common religion, although
some of them are Shiaks and some of them are
Sunis.

Ismael

I Have

1939 Q Have you any evidence that the ^{German} ~~German~~ has been ^{intriguing} ~~enters~~ much in this district during the last ^{few} ~~two~~ years

A Are you speaking of Mesopotamia or the whole area

1940 Q Of the whole

A It depends on what you call ~~enters~~ ^{intriguing}. They have been working very hard to establish their commercial position there and in a few years by the aid of ~~the~~ the subsidised steamship line they have been very successful and they use that ^{position} to get into political relations with various chiefs. They have tried to but without much success, because the Sheikhs about there are all in such close relation with us and so loyal to us generally speaking, that if they get a communication from a German Consul or anything of that kind they refer it to the British Political Office at once

1941 Q By intriguing I meant trying to stir up hostility or resentment against British influence

A Not before the war

1942 Q You have no evidence of that

A I do not think that we could say so. There was a certain amount of evidence at Muscat. Muscat subjects trade with German East Africa and before the war there were certain contacts and groups between Muscat and German East Africa which after the war began we discovered were rather of a hostile intent. For some time before the war ~~was~~ rebellion against the Sultan of Muscat had been going on and there is reason I think to ^{believe} ~~think~~ that that ^{was} fomented by Agents from German East Africa

1943 Q The entry of Turkey into the war, to use a ^{vulgar} ~~figure~~ ~~of~~ expression, put the fat in the fire

A Yes

Chapter 3 Small

1944 Q It was supposed to be necessary in British and Indian interests to make a move in order to secure our position along the rivers Tigris and Euphrates

A Yes

1945 Q We have had a précis prepared for us which General ^{Barrow} ~~Barrow~~ presented. Have you seen it

A Yes

1946 Q Do you remember the original minute which General Barrow put forward

A Yes

1947 Q Were you consulted as regards that
 O No; at that moment I was away. It is the month of September

1948 Q Yes, page 2. We need not go through the argumentative part ^{of it} I think. I will ^{take} the conclusions:
 = Action such as proposed "would check ~~German intrigues~~
 (1) checkmate Turkish intrigues and demonstrate our ability to strike. (2) It would encourage the Arabs to rally to us, and confirm the Sherifs of Muhammerah and Howeit in their allegiance. (3) It would safeguard Egypt, and without Arab support a Turkish invasion is impossible. (4) It would effectually protect the oil

installation at ^{Abandan} ~~Abandan~~. You generally agreed with that ~~I see~~

A Yes entirely

1949 Q Faou the Expedition was sent under the How when did Colonel Cox appear on the scene and make suggestions about Baghdad. Was it ^{soon} afterwards
 O The first suggestion I think was the 23rd November ^{at} page 10 of the Red book as far as I remember ^{is} the first time that anybody ever mentioned

Bag

Baghdad

1950

Q "The General Officer Commanding ^{and} ~~have~~ ^{are} studying the topographical details bearing on the question of advance to Baghdad in case that course be

decided upon"

The telegram is headed "Private". Is it the practice for the Political Department to send and receive private telegrams

A No. The Political Department only sends and receives official telegrams. This telegram would have been received by the Secretary of State direct and sent by the Viceroy direct

1951 Q The Political Department sends secret and official telegrams

A Yes

1952 Q Is a private telegram such as the recorded in your department

A I do not think that this particular one is on record. Occasionally the Secretary of State places one on record, but it is open to him not to do so. It is his private property

1953 Q As a rule I suppose they are not recorded

A No, generally ^{speaking} not

1954 Q Are there any private telegrams from Colonel Cox to the Secretary of State

A No, none at all I think. Nobody telegraphs privately to the Secretary of State except the Viceroy

Am

and the foreigners

1955

* you have been long enough in the Office to know whether the practice of political agents telegraphing privately to the Treasury is of modern origin & we do not often hear of it but whether they do or not, I do not know. & telegram sent in that way would not in the natural course be sent here

1956

I suppose that the system of private telegrams has ~~been~~ ^{I think} greatly increased in recent years & yes it has ^{so} certainly

1957

I These private telegrams need not necessarily go to the Political Committee & No they need not go to anybody

1958

I Except the person to whom ^{they are} sent & yes; they are deciphered ordinarily by the private secretary to the Secretary of State and are treated as entirely personal

1959

I The idea ~~that~~ ^{of the advance on} Baghdad was started in this telegram and then there were various proposals made for the advance of our Expedition * We have gone through those ^{so} ~~very~~ carefully that it is not necessary to go through them again until we come to the final advance to Baghdad. I think ^{that} in the meantime, there had been, if not pressure, ^{on the fact} ~~any~~ ^{some} insistence on the part of Colonel Cox, that it would be desirable to move on to Baghdad

I do not think so. I do not think we heard as far as I can remember, about Baghdad again very definitely until after the capture of Kut-el-Arnaha

1960

I Then the question arose if I may say so in its entirety ^{as to} whether we should go on.

A Yes

18
1961
1962

+ Yes
2 You are familiar with the ^{Red} Book I presume
+ Yes

2 General Barrow submitted a Minute of the 4th October in which he deprecated, under existing conditions, advancing to Baghdad. Did you see that Minute
+ again at that particular moment I was away.
I returned to ^{the} office on the 6th October ~~and~~ the Minute was referred to the Political Department, and their views were invited on it and our views were put forward on the 6th

1963 ~~Chairman~~ ~~There were further meetings held~~
The Earl of Dounghmore He understood that ~~it that went to~~ ^{one} ~~on~~
on the ^{cabinet} 5th on the 5th

1964 ~~The Chairman~~ Or the 4th
The Earl of Dounghmore The ^{afternoon} ~~evening~~ of the 4th or the morning of the 5th

Witness I do not know

1965 Chairman I think ^{that is} ~~you are~~ right (20 the witness
~~Earl of Dounghmore~~ The ~~telegram~~ went to India
on the 5th

~~Chairman~~ I think it was the 4th
~~Earl of Dounghmore~~ And another on the 5th

~~Chairman~~ There were considerable doubts in the Military authorities minds as to the advisability of this advance, and then after there had been ~~these~~ opinions given from ^{the} military point of view an interdepartmental committee was appointed, of which the permanent Secretary of the India Office was Chairman

+ Yes

1966 2 You were ^{you} on that Committee
A No ^{but Sir} ~~Mr~~ Thomas Holderness was the only ~~from~~ India Office representative I think, except that I suppose Sir Edmund Barrow was there. I was not

1967

a member of the Committee
 Lord Hugh Cecil Sir Thomas Holderness was the
 political representative of the India Office. ~~He was~~
 He was the Chairman and the Permanent Under Secretary
 768 Chairman
 There was a Committee of seven, four Naval
 and Military officers and three civilians
 Yes. The Committee had before them the Political
 Department's memorandum on the question of the
 advance and that is all that I had to do
 with the Committee

1969

Is that in these papers
 It is not printed in extenso; it is referred
 to on page 36. It says "The Committee also
 had before them a memorandum" etc. and so on

1970

Lord Hugh Cecil Was that substantially the sense as
 is contained in Part III of your statement
 Yes

1971

circumstances you sum up by saying "We are bound to
 take risks whether we go to Baghdad or stay
 where we are. But political considerations
 appear to point decidedly towards
 the adoption of the bolder

course"

to Political Secretary and advising the Secretary of
 State on political questions you I assume would be
 mainly governed by political considerations, leaving
 it to the military men to put the ^{military} "objections"
 Yes

2 That

- 1972 Q What is your general attitude
 A Yes
- 1973 Q Unless I suppose, it seemed to you that there was an unreasonable risk or a likelihood of military failure
 A Yes: I should say anything that I thought it necessary to say of course, but naturally I should confine myself to political aspects
- 1974 Q Do you recollect what was the idea among political ~~men~~ ^{men} at the India Office at that time as to the practicability of taking Baghdad. Was it believed that it could be easily done
 A We were dependent entirely on what Sir John ~~Richardson~~ ^{Morton} told us. He saw ^{that} he thought ^{that} he could do it and he was the man on the spot. We had no means of judging.
- 1975 Q It has been suggested to us that there was no doubt that Baghdad could be taken, but where the doubt arose ~~is~~ ^{was} whether Baghdad could be held; does that tally with your recollection
 A Yes
- 1976 Q Is the Political Committee in existence
 A Yes but these subjects are not referred to it. The Secretary of State deals with them personally
- 1977 Q Who are the Political Committee
 A The Political Committee are General Sir Charles Egerton, Sir Arnold White, Sir Charles Bailey and Mr Shepherd
- 1978 Q What is referred to the Political Committee
 A Ordinarily questions affecting Native States and Frontier questions, questions relating to Afghanistan, ^{and} questions in which India is more immediately concerned. Questions where

- 1979 Q International relations are ^{more} concerned as a rule are kept by the Secretary of State and treated personally by him
- 1979 Q When do I understand that papers relating to questions of this kind are not circulated to the Political Committee
- 1980 Q a No
- 1980 Q They go straight to the Secretary of State
- 1981 Q They go straight to the Secretary of State
- 1981 Q and do not go to the Council
- 1981 Q No
- 1982 Q How long has that been the practice
- 1982 Q Well really, I hardly know. It has been the practice for a very great many years - In recent years the ~~Department~~ ^{tendency} has grown, and the number of papers not referred to the Political Committee has probably increased, because the number of international questions which come before the India Office in one form or another has increased
- 1983 Q Is the ~~same~~ ^{Secret} Committee made use of at all for sending secret telegrams to India, ~~the same~~ ^{Secret}
- 1983 Q A The ~~same~~ ^{for secret} Committee in the Political Committee.
- 1984 Q It is the same thing
- 1984 Q Then practically the clause under which the Secretary of State can send secret telegrams is not much availed of
- 1984 Q On the contrary it is very much availed of. He sends secret telegrams
- 1985 Q But they are private
- 1985 Q A His ordinary telegrams are secret. Things which are not ^{communicated} common knowledge to the Council are ^{marked} "Secret"
- 1986 Q We are thinking not of private telegrams

but of secret telegrams at the moment
 + Yes. Just now you were speaking of private
 telegrams

1987 Q In this case no secret telegrams were ~~sent~~ ^{sent}
 and the Council were not consulted

+ The Council were not consulted ^{things which are} ~~the telegrams~~
^{marked} "Secret" ~~things which are marked~~ ^{Some are}
 things which are not communicated to the Council

1988 Q Yes I know. On page 37 is a very long
 telegram to the Viceroy. That is private?

+ Yes

1989 Q Over the page there is a very long and
 important telegram. That is private too

+ Yes. Nearly all the correspondence on this
 subject was done in the Military Department
 and I ~~personally~~ ^{really} had nothing to do with it.

1990 Q Certain outside considerations came in as regards
 the advance on Baghdad. Apparently from the
 correspondence laid before us the expectation to
 Gallipoli was under consideration. Did that come
 into your mind at all

+ Yes it did to this extent - that the evacuation
 of Gallipoli would naturally have a very bad
 effect and it became the more necessary than
 if possible to ~~counteract it~~ to do something
 that would counteract it

1991 Q ~~And~~ Things generally were not going well in
 Persia

A No; the situation in Persia was becoming
 very critical

1992 Q The political officers were afraid that if we
 did not advance on Baghdad, the position
 would get worse and they also I think
 were of opinion that if we were forced

20

~~presently~~ ^{precipitately} to retire, the situation would get worse

Yes

1993 Q Those predictions have not been ~~realized~~ realized. However they, although we have had to retire from Ctesiphon.

A There has never been a debacle

1994 Q But you were all afraid that a retirement in that part of the world or any failure to achieve a victory would have a detrimental effect over a very large area of territory. We have had to retire and we have lost very heavily, but the results have not been as unfavorable as you anticipated.

A No. As regards Mesopotamia the effect has been that the tribes where the Turks are in possession, have remained Turkish and the tribes on our side, where we ~~were~~ ^{are} still in possession have remained on the whole loyal to us. There has been a certain amount of trouble ^{from} through some of them such as the Montefiks. If we had gone on and had placed it beyond all doubts that we were masters there, they would probably have joined us, but as things have turned out they are waiting to see who is going to win, and have inclined to the Turks rather than to us. In Persia the situation was saved by the Russians entirely. I have no doubt whatever that if the Russians had not been able to advance as they did and as we had no reason to suppose they would be able to because it was a very risky business ^{the position} ~~it~~ would have been very different.

1995 Q ~~At~~ Erzeroum.

A No, the advance in North Western Persia.

1996 Lord Hugh Cecil What is the date of the Russian advance into Persia which is referred to in the concluding paragraph

1997 Commander Wedgwood: They occupied Kermanshah in February 1916

The witness Yes but before then they had advanced in sufficient strength to have an effect

1998 Q When did the German Legation leave Teheran.
A I think in November, and they had by then advanced in sufficient strength towards Teheran to make Teheran untenable by the Germans

1999 The Chairman ^{this} It is a leading question: ~~but you were~~ ^{you would} contend I suppose ^{that} the unfavourable consequences that you thought would ensue from defeat or rapid retirement have been counteracted

by the Russian advance
A Yes, by the ~~Russians~~ in Persia

2000 Q In Persia
A Yes; entirely

2001 Q This is a military question but you have probably considered it: Do you think that the advance on Baghdad drew the Turkish troops to such an extent as facilitated the capture of Erzeroum

A I would not like to say. I have not the data for forming an opinion; but I should ~~think~~ ^{not} have doubted it

2003 Q It is rather outside your province
A Yes ~~quite~~. Undoubtedly our being where we were held a large number of Turkish troops who would have ^{been} otherwise available for the campaign in Armenia, that is indisputable but whether the advance to Baghdad

in itself influenced those operations I could not say. I should think that it is ^{invaluable} ~~valuable~~ ^{rather} ~~rather~~ ^{one} ~~one~~

2004 Q

The position in Persia was rather a ^{parlous} ~~parlous~~ ^{one} ~~one~~

A Very much so. The Germans had it all their own way. Persia was ^{covered} ~~covered~~ by bands of Germans and Austrians who were ~~scattering~~ ^{scattering} gold and recruiting scallywags.

2005

Commander Wedgwood Organised by the German ^{Consuls} ~~Consuls~~ ^{and} ~~and by officers who had come into Persia from Baghdad who had been sent in regular organised missions. There were four or five missions we have heard of since~~

2006

The Consuls when were they sent

A They were making their way into Persia from the spring of 1915 onwards

2007

Q They did not go into Persia previously to the outbreak of the War

A No not before the outbreak of the war

2008

Commander Wedgwood The Consuls were there

A The Consuls of course were there. They were organised into about five parties I think it was, each of which had their own objective and their own sphere and ~~as has~~ ^{has} been mentioned the Russians had had to ~~evacuate~~ ^{evacuate} ~~Kermanshah~~ Kermanshah and Hamadan, and ~~we~~ ^{we} had had to ~~evacuate~~ ^{evacuate} Shiraz and had lost even ~~Kerman~~ Kerman

2009

Q To what do you attribute the failure to reach Baghdad. I assume it was a more rapid mobilisation of Turkish troops than had been anticipated

A Yes; apparently the Turks were much stronger than we had been led to believe

Whether

Whether our own advance was as prompt as it might have been, whether time was not lost I do not know. Of course as a ^{civilian} ~~Cavalry~~ I am not in a position to judge but it has always seemed to me that from the 3rd of October when the advance was first suggested by General Nixon to the 15th of November, which was the date when the advance really began, was a very long time

2010

Q If they had acted more promptly, you think they might have got into Baghdad

A It is possible

2011

Q You recollect that the ^{Intelligence} ~~Indian~~ Department estimated that there might be 60,000 Turks probably concentrated near Baghdad in January 1916

2012

A Yes something of that kind I think
Q Had you any information from Political Intelligence sources

A No none recalled

2013

Q You only ~~recalled~~ other information
A Yes

Chaplin

Admiral