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# MESOPOTAMIA COMMISSION.

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MEMORANDUM ON  
THE MESOPOTAMIA EXPEDITION FROM OCTOBER, 1914, TO JUNE, 1915.

By THE MARQUIS OF CREWE, K.G.

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1. Having been responsible at the India Office for the conduct of the Mesopotamian Expedition from its inception up to the 27th of May, 1915, when I handed the Office over to Mr. Chamberlain, it is desirable that I should say something of the reasons which influenced us in sending troops to that part of the world at all, and thus apparently violating the canon of concentration of force, the soundness of which is generally admitted. The Commission will no doubt best obtain from the Military and Political Departments of the India Office the necessary details respecting the general communications that passed between London and India, so that I will confine myself to a more personal narration of what occurred.
2. The Commission will have been told that so early as the 11th of August there were evidences of hostility in Baghdad, and all through August and September the evidences accumulated of our failure to secure Turkey from German domination and of the increasing probability of war. I was deeply impressed by the importance of maintaining our interests in the Persian Gulf, and especially of making it clear to the Sheikhs of Bahrein, Koweit and Mohammerah, that they could rely on our continuing support. Although we knew less then than we do now of the extent and pertinacity of German intrigues in the East, we were well aware that their eyes were fixed, not merely on Baghdad, but on the head of the Persian Gulf, as the terminus of the Baghdad Railway; and, recognizing, as we did, that the German system of expansion has always consisted no less in sowing tares in their neighbours' fields than in cultivating their own, we felt that early assertion of our position would probably be necessary. It was clear that our failure to assist the Potentates I have mentioned and the other lesser Chiefs in that area might ignite a fire which would spread over the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, which might, perhaps, involve Mecca itself, and by setting Islam against us as a whole would in turn blaze into Persia and Afghanistan, with the final probability of exciting a Mohammedan rising in India.
3. I was also greatly affected by the imminent risk to the oil installation at Abadan, which is the outlet for the Oil Company's concession leased from the Persian Gulf, in which the British Government had secured the controlling interest for the benefit of the Admiralty. Of these two considerations the first was obviously the more important. I wrote privately to Lord Hardinge on 9th October, 1914, as follows: "Of the various objects to be attained by sending a force up the Gulf I have always regarded the moral effect on the Arab Chiefs as the primary, and the protection of the oil stores as the secondary. It is not as though the Navy absolutely depended on these last, when the order of importance might be reversed; and if the oil supply cannot be safeguarded without irritating Turkey's not unreasonable sentiments, they must take their chance of losing this particular source for the moment."
4. Accordingly a Brigade started for Bahrein on the 16th of October. The Government of India would have preferred to wait until we were actually at war with Turkey, from a feeling that this action might precipitate hostilities, and in order to maintain a correct international position as regards the Shatt-el-Arab. However, on the 5th of November war was declared; the expedition reached Abadan on the 7th, and after some sharp fighting on the 17th, Basra was occupied on the 22nd.
5. The capture of Basra marked the close of a definite stage in the campaign, and for the time being it secured the two objects of maintaining the credit of the British name with the Arabs and of ensuring the safety of the oil station at Abadan. It was impossible, however, not to consider whether, to make this success permanent, some further advance, at any rate within the limits of the Basra Vilayet, would not be required. On the 25th of November the Viceroy telegraphed privately that Sir Percy Cox and Sir Arthur Barrett, at Basra, had been studying the topography of a possible advance to Baghdad; Sir Percy himself expressing the opinion that such a step could not well be avoided. On the 26th I wrote privately to Lord Hardinge: "We are beginning to consider carefully what further steps, if any, the Persian Gulf Expedition can usefully take. In the absence of extensive power to reinforce we must not cut more cake than we can eat; the main necessity is to show the Arab world that we are in control and that we cannot be stirred by attack. This surely is more important than a continued advance, though some progress may be possible, especially with the object of safeguarding Persia from Turkish invasion." And on the 27th I sent a telegram, No. 1418, not authorizing the advance to Baghdad, but sanctioning a move on Kurna with such force as might be necessary. I added that at present we could not do more than assert

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our paramount claim at the head of the Persian Gulf. Kurna, being at the junction of the end channel of the Euphrates and of the Tigris, was to be occupied simply as a strategical post for the defence of Basra. The town surrendered on the 5th of December, and on the 10th I wrote to Lord Hardinge. We feel disinclined at present to authorize any move to Baghdad, or indeed beyond Kurna, until we know much more of the general attitude of the Arabs than we do at present. As it is we control the whole of the rich delta, and we outguard the friendly Sheikhs with practically no danger of a reprisal or a retreat. The dominant objection, to my mind, is the impossibility of reinforcing Sir Arthur Barrett, whatever happens. I assume that you hold steadily to the belief that the frontier cannot spare a man, and the Tochi incident enforces this view, though it has ended fortunately. So where are any more troops to come from? And one absolutely recoils from the thought of having to retire, possibly after heavy losses, unavenged. If Ibn Saud should make a real move and affect the tribes right up into Mesopotamia, a new situation might be created, but I am against a move for the present."

6. By the end of December it became clear that the Turks were heavily reinforcing their Mesopotamian Army, and within a month it became probable that the British force might be attacked from the Euphrates and also that the oil pipe line in the direction of Ahwaz might be menaced. Late in January I appealed to the War Office to assist in raising the strength of Sir Arthur Barrett's force to two Divisions, but little could be done at the moment, and as the threat against the Rover Karun was becoming serious, it became necessary to send further troops from India, as urged in my telegram, No. 1628, of the 5th of February, 1915; and on the 23rd of February I pressed the Government of India still more strongly, in my telegram, No. 1664. Some sharp fighting took place near Ahwaz in March, and there was also fighting near Shaiba and Gladu on the Euphrates line. In addition to the troops which India had with difficulty spared, an Indian Brigade was despatched from Egypt, raising the total strength, approximately, to two divisions, which we had regarded as necessary for safety and for the consolidation of the Basra position. These objects were secured by the actions of the 11th to 13th April.

7. Sir John Nixon had now succeeded to the command of the increased force, and among the instructions which he had received in India was a direction to prepare:—

- (1) A plan for the effective occupation of the Basra Vilayet.
- (2) A plan for a subsequent advance on Baghdad.

This by no means involved an immediate reconsideration of the decision, stated in my telegrams of the 27th and 28th of November, 1914, not to advance beyond Baghdad. This still held good, and at that time the Viceroy wrote to me privately, on the 2nd December, that he and the Commander-in-Chief had independently formed the same opinion on Sir Percy Cox's proposition. After pointing out the disadvantages of Baghdad as a defensive position, and the difficulty of maintaining a line of communication of upwards of 500 miles, Lord Hardinge observed: "To avoid undue risk, it would, in the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, have been necessary to have a whole division in Baghdad and another on the line of communications, to keep them open in the first instance, and also ready to reinforce Baghdad if attacked. . . . In the absence, therefore, of extraneous assistance, those political advantages, which are really considerable, that might accrue from the capture and occupation of Baghdad, must be subordinated to the military objections that would be involved in such a course." Nobody will dispute the reality of those political advantages, or the glamour attaching to the capture of a Turkish collapse elsewhere made European mind, and still more in the Eastern; and the possibility of a Turkish collapse elsewhere made it prudent to examine the possibilities of such an advance should it ever become feasible. In the course of April the position of the pipe line still caused some anxiety, and General Nixon asked for another cavalry brigade, including a British regiment. On the 24th of April, I telegraphed (No. 1812) that General Nixon must understand "the Government will not sanction, at this moment, any advance beyond the present theatre of operations. . . . If after smashing enemy in Karun direction it is possible to advance to Amara with view to establishing an outpost which will control tribesmen between there and Karun and so contribute to security of pipe line, I should be prepared to accept such a proposal, provided it is supported by you; but I deprecate any plan involving undue extension and possible demands for reinforcements. Strategically our present position is a sound one and at present we cannot afford to take risks by unduly extending it. We must play a safe game in Mesopotamia."

8. Towards the end of April, General Townshend, in command of the 6th Division, proceeded to Kurna, while General Gorringe—with a slightly smaller force—drove the enemy out of Arabistan, and enabled the activity of the oil fields to be resumed. The Admiralty attached the greatest importance to this, and on the 24th of May I telegraphed that the protection of the pipe line was to be regarded as a matter of extreme urgency. The advance of the 6th Division up the Tigris played some part as a combined operation with General Gorringe's march to Ahwaz; but independently of this the advantage of holding Amara had for some time appealed to those on the spot. Those substantial advantages are clearly stated in Sir Percy Cox's telegram, No. 12b, of the 3rd of January, 1915, addressed to the Government of India. I fully recognized their reality, and most of all that deriving from the nearness of Amara to the Persian frontier, which would place its garrison on the flank of any Turkish forces advancing on Southern Persia or Arabistan.

9. At the same time my recollection is quite clear—and it is confirmed by reference to the correspondence—that personally I agreed to this further advance with no enthusiasm. I had certainly had in my mind that in due course the whole of the Basra Vilayet would be occupied and administered, but

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the approach of summer in what is understood to be the hottest country in the world, seemed to demand at any rate the postponement of operations in which a certain number of Europeans would be employed. And although up to this time no complaints had reached us regarding the transport or the medical service, I was aware that already a heavy strain was placed on the resources of the former, and therefore dreaded any extension of the lines of communication. Nor was I unaware—as is apparent from my telegram, No. 1812, of the 24th of April—that the arrival in Mesopotamia of a new corps commander and a new divisional commander, each of whom enjoyed a reputation for activity, must inevitably make the advantages of an advance appear more prominent than they might have to such a General as Sir Arthur Barrett who, while fulfilling his duties to my complete satisfaction, and showing no want of necessary energy, evidently belonged to the cautious order of commanders. As a further consideration I did not feel sure that the Government of India and their Military advisers fully appreciated the inability of the War Office further to reinforce the Mesopotamian Army; while it was still more likely that the Generals on the post were not only unaware of this, but also may have supposed that India, at a pinch, might further assist them. I desire to make it clear, however, that I accept the fullest personal responsibility for the advance to Amara, and I have no doubt that were the circumstances to be repeated I should again act as I then did. It was, in the main, a decision on military grounds, and I have always strongly held that a taste for amateur strategy is the most dangerous that a Minister can acquire. So I accepted the local view, and it may fairly be argued that had His Majesty's Government declined to do so, the recent Turkish attack on Persia might easily have been precipitated at a period when it would have been infinitely more dangerous to the Allies.

10. On the 27th of May I handed over the charge of the India Office to Mr. Chamberlain, and I observe that, while confirming the instructions for a modified advance along the Tigris, he explicitly limited it to the occupation of Amara, on the ground that this was as much as the force was sufficient to undertake. General Townshend's brilliant occupation of Amara took place on the 3rd of June, thus closing a further chapter in the history of the expedition.

11. At this point my individual responsibility for the Mesopotamian operations was closed, although my share in it as a member of the Government, with some special knowledge of the facts and conditions, naturally continued. For the next two months, however, I was in charge of the Foreign Office in the absence of Sir Edward Grey, who was unable to attend to any business, and I consequently did not, at the time, follow as closely as I otherwise might the ensuing military operations. Speaking generally, however, I can say that a study of the papers gives me no reason to suppose that had I remained at the India Office, I should have recommended the Cabinet to sanction a different course from that which my successor advised them to adopt.

September 8th, 1916.

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Chairman: General Barrow gave very full evidence and we have got on the minutes the memorandum which he wrote on the 14th ~~December~~ <sup>September</sup> which stated at length the reasons for sending the expedition to Mesopotamia, and ~~was then~~ <sup>why</sup> ~~accepted~~ <sup>of me</sup> those views and telegraphed at once to the Viceroy and ~~then~~ suggesting them

A: <sup>Yes,</sup> That memorandum was the sequel to a great many conversations and discussions we had had on the subject, and the possibility had also been considered by the Government as a whole

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Q. And I suppose we may take that as an accurate summary of the policy <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ you wished to pursue

A: Yes

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Q. From that paper I gather that although the protection of the oil pipe was one of the objects, it was not the primary object of the Expedition

A: I agree

3041

Q. Then the Expedition started and it was very successful, - it captured Basra without very much difficulty.

A: Yes, there was a tolerably ~~sharp~~ <sup>sharp</sup> fight before they got to Basra on a small scale; they defended themselves

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Q. Then as soon as they got to Basra apparently Sir Percy Cox and the military officers there expressed a view as to the advisability, if possible, of going on to Baghdad

A: Yes

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Q. Then you demurred to this but after some consideration you ~~thought~~ <sup>though</sup> that Kutna might be occupied as offering a good strategical post for the defence of Basra

A: Yes, that was the military opinion, and I saw no reason to combat it

3044 Q Then the result of our action ~~was~~ in Mesopotamia was that the Turks moved up very considerable reinforcements

A. Yes

3045 Q: And the oil pipe became in danger and the authorities at home, I think ~~both~~ the Military Authorities as well as the India Office, thought it imperative that there should be a reinforcement sent from India

A: Yes

3046 Q: And that extra force was sent and successful actions were fought, and then Sir John Nixon was suddenly appointed to the command of the augmented force

A: Yes

3047 Q: The supersession of Sir Arthur Barrett and the appointment of General Nixon was rather a surprise was it not

A: Yes. So far as I was competent to hold or to express an opinion on the subject of a military appointment, I felt that there was no particular reason for it. Sir Arthur Barrett had done his work quite well. He is a general of good practical experience, not as I understood of the dashing school of officers, but very safe and as I understand, very competent. Holding the views that I did about the desirability of caution and having a general prepossession against advancing, at any rate in a hurry, I felt sorry that the change was made. I understood that the force now having reached the dimensions of an army corps the Government of India wished to send one of their Army commanders to take charge of it. I confess that at the back of my mind

there was an idea, which I have never desired to confirm, that one of their high commanders Sir James ~~Wilson~~<sup>Willcocks</sup> having obtained the command of the Indian Force they were anxious, if possible, to find some work for Sir John Nixon who was known to be a good and active officer, and that that may have biased them in the direction of making the change. I felt, and I think it was also felt by the Military Department at the India Office, - that the prospect of going slow, which was what I desired and what they desired, was ~~something~~<sup>somewhat</sup> compromised by sending a new officer who would naturally be biased in favour of doing something active after taking up his command; and therefore, to put it shortly, if the matter had been in the discretion of the India Office the change would not have been made

3048 Q Then associated shortly afterwards with Sir John Nixon was General Townsend

A Yes

Q Who

3049-3054

3049 Q Who had a high reputation as a fighting pushing officer  
A As a fighting pushing kind of General. And that did I con-  
fess make me a little nervous of developments

3050 Q I suppose you have no reason to believe that the change  
made was for the purpose of accelerating an advance  
but was simply in the ordinary course of army selection  
A Yes, I fully accepted that view, and I had no  
reason whatever to assume that the Government of  
India desired to make a change

3051 Q Then, Sir John Nixon having ~~conceded~~ <sup>succeeded</sup> to the com-  
mand, received instructions from the Commander <sup>in</sup> Chief  
in India <sup>that</sup> he was amongst other things to ~~be~~ prepare  
a plan for the effective occupation of Basra and  
even a ~~secondary~~ plan for a subsequent advance on  
Baghdad

A Yes

3052 Q Were you not rather taken aback at these instructions  
A Put in the rather crude form in that way I confess  
that I was. It is quite true that the possibility of  
an ultimate occupation of Baghdad had been in  
everybody's mind. The Government here I think had  
contemplated it as a very attractive possibility,  
but I confess that when it came to the actual  
preparation of a plan I was rather taken aback.  
On the other hand, it is difficult to say that all  
possibilities ought not to be examined, and in  
the event of a Turkish collapse it ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> <sup>well</sup> no  
~~no~~ doubt to be prepared

3053 Q Then shortly afterwards you gave up your post  
A At the end of May I gave up my post

3054 Q And you telegraphed to the Indian Government  
on the 25<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> April (it is your last record)  
a communication which ended up with these words:  
"Strategically our present position is a sound  
one

one and at present we cannot afford to take risks by unduly extending it. We must play a safe game in Mesopotamia"

3055 Q Yes, that was my telegram  
Q You gave up in May, and then shortly afterwards a request was made, which I think emanated from Mesopotamia and India, to be allowed to advance to Amara

A That was just before I ~~decreed~~<sup>sanctioned</sup> the advance to Amara

3056 Q I mean the advance to Kut-el-Amara

A The advance to Amara was sanctioned by me. I take complete responsibility for the advance to Amara

3057 Q Then I think it was in the month of July that sanction was given to <sup>the</sup> advance to Kut, and Kut was captured on the 29<sup>th</sup> September

A Yes.

3058 Q So that one advance was made subsequent to your giving up office

A Yes

3059 Q Then in October the question of going on to Baghdad was raised

A Yes

3060 Q What was your post subsequent to that of Secretary of State for India

A I became President of the Council but I remained a member of what was then called the Dardanelles Committee, which was in fact the War Committee

3061 Q And did you give your own personal attention to the reports that were made as regards the advance in Mesopotamia, or did that merely come before you as one of the Cabinet

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I think I saw rather more papers and paid rather closer attention to them than most of the members of the Cabinet, from having held the India Office. During the summer I was in charge of the Foreign Office for two months, and therefore had not time to do very much else and so there was a certain gap in my close attention until about the end of July, but after that I devoted a good deal of attention to it and saw most of the papers, perhaps rather more than most members of the Cabinet

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3061 Q Was the War Committee then appointed

A Yes, it was still at that time spoken of as the Dardanelles Committee. The small War Committee, the existing one, was not appointed until the following Spring. General Barrow gave us evidence at

3062 Q

very considerable length as to <sup>the</sup> successive minutes and memoranda which he wrote and which the general staff wrote, and up to the 6<sup>th</sup> August the War Office and the India Office were practically in agreement as to the risk involved by an advance on Baghdad

A Yes

3063 Q

Then apparently pressure or further suggestions came from India and according to the papers for the first time the Dardanelles question came to the front

A Yes

3064 Q

Then there was a further paper drawn up by the general staff ~~that~~ <sup>which</sup> was very ~~the~~ balanced

A Is that the paper of the 6<sup>th</sup> October?

3065 Q

The 14<sup>th</sup> October I think it is

A Yes

3066 Q

And you also had information, not very reliable, that it would be possible for a very large body of

of Turks to be assembled at Baghdad in the course of the next two or three months

3067 A Yes, 60,000 I think was the number named  
Q 60,000 was named. Then a Departmental Committee was appointed, of which Sir Thomas Holderness was Chairman, and on which the Foreign Office was represented

A Yes

3068 Q They ~~there~~ answered various questions and they made a suggestion that it might be advisable to advance

A Yes

3069 Q Then came the question of what reinforcements would be necessary if an advance was made

A Yes

3070 Q And it was laid down that there must be at least two Divisions

A Yes

3071 Q The Indian Government I understand right throughout were in favour of the advance to Baghdad

A Yes so we gathered all through

3072 Q Both the Commander in Chief and the Viceroy

A Yes. I think they were impressed by the great political advantage of the capture of Baghdad, and also by the effect ~~of policy~~ <sup>on Persia</sup>; both those considerations evidently weighed with them, and so far as the military opinion was concerned, which of course was not that of the Viceroy but that of the Commander in Chief and his advisers, they appeared to consider it a feasible military operation

3073 Q We understand <sup>that</sup> the general impression among <sup>the</sup> military men both here and in India was that we could take Baghdad by a coup de main though it was doubtful whether we could hold it. ~~When~~

A Yes

44s. When we discussed the matter at the War Council there were some differences of opinion. Lord Kitchener was strongly in favour of a raid on Baghdad with the capture of a certain amount of river shipping which was known to be there and the destruction of large military stores, followed by an immediate retirement. He was not in favour of attempting to hold Baghdad for any time because he believed <sup>that</sup> a Turkish concentration was bound to follow in sufficient force to make it impossible for us to hold it permanently. His view was that a dash of that kind, provided the retirement was immediate, would in no way be damaging to our prestige. It was generally agreed, of course, that to occupy Baghdad, and still more to attempt any form of administration and then to leave it would have been regarded as a ghastly failure all over the East; but Lord Kitchener's definite view was that a dash of that kind which might have some important military results would not be so regarded.

But some experienced members of the Council thought differently and disliked the idea of going and retiring at all. Those members would, undoubtedly, have preferred to remain at Kut or, more generally, to retire on Amara and make a line there. Personally, on the whole I favoured the idea of a raid but <sup>not</sup> an attempt at occupation. I was always against any attempt to take Baghdad and hold it.

3074 2 Now, so far as I can judge, there was no change in the military situation between the date when the Intelligence Department and the India Office authorities were against the expedition and the date at which the expedition was sanctioned.

A No, there was none

3075 2 But political considerations seemed to me to have



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have crept in. Perseus was in a disturbed state, I think  
he had been a failure and it was present

I think to the minds of the  
political officers that if possible

~~that~~ we ought to attempt some

coup. Is that correct?



heavily

A That I think weighed <sup>heavily</sup> in India with the Indian Government so far as ~~they~~ <sup>I</sup> could judge, and it <sup>also</sup> ~~always~~ undoubtedly had its effect here. There was a feeling, as you have said, that it was necessary to assert ourselves somewhere, and I think in the mind of the Government the sentiment also existed that the Allies, not so much the Governments as the Countries of the Allies, were beginning to say that we were not doing much anywhere and that, not really so much for our credit as to keep them in good spirits, we should try to make a move of this kind. The advance to Baghdad was certainly regarded by many as a considerable gamble; I remember the phrase being actually used at one Council; but it was considered to be one which it was worth while to undertake

19  
3076 Q The actual word gamble was used

A. The actual word gamble was used, I remember, by one of my colleagues

3077 Q As regards yourself, it seems to me, from your minute, assuming as I do that it is an accurate representation of your views, that you were doubtful and you dreaded an extension of the lines of communication

A. Particularly

3078 Q. Are you quite correct then in saying here that it was in the main a decision on military grounds, because it seems to ~~us~~ <sup>us</sup> that political considerations came in very largely

A. I think that sentence may not have expressed entirely what I mean. It is quite true that political considerations had a great effect but the military authorities were very confident that it was a feasible operation

3079 Q ~~At any rate~~ <sup>Then</sup> the advance was made and the <sup>Turkish</sup> ~~Turkish~~

~~Turkish~~ reinforcements arrived before we expected them, and in fact anticipated the arrival of the two Divisions whose despatch alone justified the advance on Baghdad

A. Yes, that was so

3080

Q And that being so the advance was converted into a retreat with a very large proportion, of course, of wounded.

A. Yes

3081

Q. And your apprehension as regards the strain on the transport became realised, and that was <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ cause of what was called the Medical breakdown, - the Transport breakdown

A. Yes

3082

Q. Now we have got practically two enquiries to make, one as regards the inception and conduct of the campaign, and the others as regards the Transport and Medical treatment. Up to the time when you left the India Office had you had any complaints about lack of food or insufficient medical treatment

A. No, I can recollect none, and I am pretty confident that I am correct in saying that up to the end of May no complaints had reached us either as regards ordinary transport or as regards medical comforts. Of course the proportion of wounded had been very small up to that time

3083

Q In comparison with what it was subsequently

A. Yes, in any one action

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Q But you had some apprehension about the sources of transport

A. Yes, but that was merely founded on a general belief that the Tigris was an exceedingly difficult and inconvenient river, partly from its numerous windings, and partly from its habit

of

of being in flood at one time and des-  
 parately shallow at another for the purposes  
 of transport. But looking back I think  
 I had assumed that there would be an  
 abundance of native craft for all purposes  
 of ordinary transport although I knew  
 that for transport to the Shatt-el-Arab  
 the very shallow draught vessels such as  
 would be required, particularly armed  
 vessels, it would be a dangerous and diff-  
 -icult matter to cross the ocean, as indeed  
 afterwards proved to be the case because  
 several were sunk.

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3085 Q. It appears to me looking through the correspondence that whilst the military authorities in India were reluctant to send the reinforcements demanded to clear the Karun River and to strengthen our position there, after they had seen that force ~~of~~ <sup>and</sup> General Viscov, their general ideas were in favour of advances

A That appears to be the case

3086 Q. I do not say ~~that~~ there was pressure but the inclination was to go on rather than to go back

A Yes, I think that is so

3087 Q. During the time that you were at the India office you had no warning or hint that the transport was deficient or that Basra was blocked up with supplies which could not be sent up the river

A No, none

3088 Q. Not an indication of that difficulty reached you & I have no recollection of any.

3089 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge. I want to go back for a minute please, because it is connected with the advance on Baghdad, to the question of Sir Arthur Barrett. Was the proposal of advance on Baghdad, which appears to have been originally started, so far as we have it before us in evidence, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November by Sir Percy Cox, put before ~~of~~ <sup>by</sup> Sir Arthur Barrett and did he, or did he not, object to it.

A I am afraid I cannot answer that question. Sir Arthur Barrett undoubtedly made some appreciation at the same time of the possibilities of an advance to Baghdad but I do not remember

its substance or what view he took. I have no reason to suppose that he did NOT contemplate an ultimate advance to Baghdad, but I have no recollection of what he said at the time on the subject

3090 2 You are not able to tell us whether he was generally in favour of advance about the time it was made, whether it should be made or not, No, that I am afraid I cannot tell you.

3091 2 - The reason why I am asking the question is, to put it quite bluntly, that I want to know whether Sir Arthur Barrett's supersession was due to the influence of political officials who were the first to recommend the advance, ~~and not~~ <sup>and not</sup> to purely military conditions

A I have no reason whatever to think so. Sir Arthur Barrett's health had become somewhat affected and I think the Government of India or the military authorities there, thought that he was disposed to be somewhat inactive and also to dissipate his forces too greatly.

3092 Lord Hugh Cecil: You do not think they were anxious to have a commander who would go on to Baghdad?

A I have no reason to suppose it at all

3093 General Sir Neville Lytton: It is a fact, is it not, that the Government of India strongly pressed for the recall of the Indian troops which had been sent to the Imperial Government for East Africa

A Yes, they did. The force which was originally sent to East Africa was not a very important or efficient one; it was composed largely of Imperial Service troops

3094 2. Not altogether

21  
3095 A No not altogether

Q There were ~~13~~ <sup>or 15</sup> 14 battalions altogether

A Yes. That was not the original force that went to East Africa. The original force that went to East Africa included only the Punjabi Rifles, one Rajput battalion and a certain number of Imperial Service Troops including Kashmir, afterwards they were reinforced

3096 Q I am speaking of the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1915

A Yes

3097 Q You say ~~that~~ there was a considerable number then of Imperial Service Troops

A Yes

3098 Q Who might have been of very great importance in Mesopotamia, but the point is, what were the considerations do you know which induced the Home Government not to accede to this request for the withdrawal of troops from East Africa for the purpose of employment in Mesopotamia

A So far as I recollect representations were made from East Africa ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> at that time there was not a little danger of invasion of British East Africa from German <sup>East</sup> Africa and they begged therefore that no troops might be withdrawn. It was thought that the effect on the Native population might be bad and that any appearance of abandoning the East Africa Expedition, whether it was wise to undertake it originally or not is quite another question of course, would be a serious matter. Perhaps I may mention that the Government of India, so far as I am aware, always rather resented the employment of Indian troops

for the East African Expedition  
 3099 Q What I was rather trying to get at was  
 whether it is clear that East Africa was a  
 rather more important ~~and~~ Ride Show than  
 Mesopotamia on the face of it

ture

A It was thought very undesirable to appear to  
 abandon it, it once having been undertaken

3100 Q Was General Napshere Commanding it

A He was commanding it

3111 Q At all events it was held at home that it was  
 more important to leave troops in  
 East Africa than to divert them to Mesopotamia

A That was the conclusion the War Office  
 reached

3102 Q Oh! the War Office reached it

A Yes I mention the War Office because the  
 East African Expedition was at that time  
 under the charge of the War Office and the  
 Mesopotamian Expedition was not

(22)



22

3103

Sir Archibald Williamson: I think you mentioned that Lord Kitchener telegraphed direct to the Commander in Chief in India

A. Yes

3104 Q. Did he telegraph direct to the Commanders in the field in Mesopotamia

A. No, not until the time when the War Office took over the Expedition

3105 Q. Then had Lord Kitchener telegraphed to the Commander in Chief in India about the possibility of going to Baghdad

A. I cannot recollect; you will get that from Sir Beauchamp Duff no doubt.

3106 Q. Did Sir John Nixon see Sir Beauchamp Duff before he went to Mesopotamia.

A. That I cannot tell you. I do not know

Q. So

3107 Q So far as you know there was no personal interview between Sir Beauchamp Duff and Sir John Nixon before he went to Mesopotamia

A Not that I am aware of

3108 Q you are not <sup>in a</sup> ~~the~~ position to tell us <sup>than</sup> the nature of the communications between Lord Kitchener and Sir Beauchamp Duff with regard to the policy of an advance up the river

A No, I cannot

3109 Q Nor to tell us whether there were any preparations made through the India Office for an advance ~~through~~ <sup>to</sup> Baghdad during the time you were Secretary of State

A No. It was contemplated as an ultimate possibility, but I cannot say that we made any special provision for it

3110 Q Nor did the India Office suggest to India the making of any ~~pre~~ preparations such as the preparation of transport

A No

3111 Q So that so far as you know up to May no preparations were ~~made~~ in fact made for ~~the~~ advance to Baghdad

A Not specially made for that particular purpose so far as I know

3112 Q I see in your statement you say that Sir Arthur Barrett fulfilled his duties to your complete satisfaction and showed no want of necessary energy.

For Mr. Hill's use

Walter Hodgson  
Shorthand Writer.

Did

Wheeler & Snell

John W. Hodgson

Q Did you express anything of this to India when the change <sup>being</sup> was made

a Yes. According to my recollection I said that I did not see any reason for superseding Sir Arthur Barrett except so far as his health might be concerned. I was told that he had suffered considerably from the climate

23

3113 2 The Super<sup>addition</sup> took place before you knew of it

a Yes

3114 2 It was ~~complete~~ <sup>in fact</sup> accompli before you had ~~enforced~~

a My sanction was not required <sup>an opportunity of expressing an opinion</sup>

3115 2 You had no opportunity of expressing an opinion before it was done

a I am inclined to think that I heard of it before it was actually done, but my recollection is not quite certain upon that point. But in any case I had no veto

3116 2 Is the Secretary of State as a rule consulted as to the appointments to these important posts

a The Army Command - yes - and he would be certainly informed beforehand of a change of this kind, but <sup>an</sup> the appointment of this kind actually rests with the Viceroy and his military advisers in India and the Commander-in-Chief

3117 Chairman: The practice ~~of the~~ was dispensed with in this case, was it not? You say that it is the practice to consult the India Office before such appointments are made.

Q In this case it was dispensed with? ~~My impression~~

A My impression is pretty clear that I heard <sup>of the</sup> that suggestion before the appointment was actually made, and I said that I saw no reason for it

3118 Sir Archibald Williamson: Prior to the appointment you had expressed the opinion that you saw no reason for <sup>it</sup> consulting the India Office

a Yes



to say that if we had supposed that Russia would obtain complete influence in Armenia and in Kurdistan we should have regarded the ~~prospect~~<sup>prospect</sup> with some uneasiness unless we had a parallel influence at the head of the Persian Gulf

24

3125 - 2 That was when you authorized the Expedition originally  
a I do not think that that was a factor in producing the Expedition. It is true, but I do not think that at the time it was in our minds as a reason

3126 2 It did not affect you when authorizing the advance to Amara  
a No, certainly not

3127 2 It did not affect the Cabinet in authorizing the advance on Baghdad  
a I have no reason to suppose that it did

3128 2 ~~Commander Wedgwood~~ we have heard from the Red Book a certain amount of evidence that it did influence Sir Percy Cox and the Political Department

a I should think very likely

3129 2 It would influence the Indian Government more than it would influence the Secretary of State here?

a I do not think it would influence the Indian Government.

It would influence a number of the servants of the Indian Government both Civil and Military because it is a curious fact, and it has often been a subject of friendly observation both between the Russian Government and ourselves, that a great number of the Military, and Civil servants of both Governments cannot get out of their minds the idea that, on the one hand Russia is the enemy and on the other that England

The old tradition which was deep in the minds of everybody in India was that the one thing to be guarded against was an advance ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> the North West Frontier, and ~~that~~ <sup>there was the question of</sup> the maintenance of Afghanistan as a buffer ~~between~~ <sup>and</sup> the spread <sup>dread</sup> of any form of Russian influence in Persia is naturally hard to eradicate.

3130 2 It affects ~~the~~ <sup>opinion</sup> military ~~speculations~~ <sup>in</sup> India and political opinion in India more than it affects people at home here ~~undoubtedly~~

3131 2 ~~It~~ <sup>undoubtedly</sup> may possibly have had something to do with the appointment of Sir John Nixon and General Townsend

a I should not think so. I should find it very hard to believe that that opinion ~~existed~~ <sup>existed</sup> in any degree in the mind either of Lord Hardinge or Sir Beauchamp Duff who would be the people responsible for that appointment

3132 2 The Indian Government in India <sup>more</sup> was on the advance side than the Indian Government here was?

a I do not think that Lord Hardinge was

3133 2 (could you say the same of the military authorities

a I think that they were more sanguine ~~about~~ <sup>about</sup> the military possibilities than the military authorities here were

3134 2 And at the same time ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> were not very helpful in the way of troops or supplies

a Well, as regards troops they had been very heavily drawn upon. It is evident, I think, ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> you will have seen from the correspondence all through that from the first the Government of India kept complaining ~~about~~ <sup>almost</sup> bitterly of the demands ~~that were~~ <sup>that were</sup> made on them in different directions. From the very first, as I have already said,

they acceded not cheerfully to the sending of an expeditionary force to France, but it cannot be denied that the demands made on India by the War Office at that time were of a very stringent sort. By far the larger proportion of the Indian officers who were on leave in the ordinary course ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> India were detained here and sent to train the new Army. The Indian Medical Service was drawn on very ~~heavily~~ <sup>heavily</sup>, and there is no doubt that Lord Kitchener took the view that India must not complain if the heaviest possible drafts, or indeed barely possible drafts, were made upon her in all directions, and he took precisely the same view of the denudation of ~~Chairman~~ British troops in India. I quite well

remember his going so far as to say on one occasion that even if we lost India through a miking it would be ~~the~~ better than —

3135 2 ~~One must. we are not~~ <sup>Better than</sup> losing England

a It would be better ~~we are not~~ ~~it is~~ than losing the fight in France, because the one could be repaired — you could reconquer India, whereas, if <sup>we were</sup> finally beaten on the Continent of Europe, the Empire, including India, would be done for

3136 2 You finally had to order them to send troops as we did

3137 2 Did ~~they agree~~ it occur to you that they were rather inclined over there to put the interests of India before the interests of England

a I sometimes thought that they put the interests of India too high, but I should be slow to blame them for so doing. It is the natural tendency of every Department ~~and of~~ <sup>and of</sup> every part of the Empire to put its own case high, and it is the business, I suppose, of the Central Government to allocate

the

the different measures of responsibility and <sup>to settle</sup> the precautions which have to be taken in different parts of the Empire. The Government of India were quite right in my opinion in insisting on three divisions being kept at full strength on the North-west frontier

3138 2 In insisting on it

a Yes, to guard it

3139 2 Or, <sup>in</sup> recommending it

a ~~well~~ <sup>in</sup> insisting on the necessity. They are not in a position to insist on anything against the Government here, but insisting on the supreme importance of it I mean

3140 2 Is it not the natural tendency of people in charge of dependencies to look after the interests of their dependencies more especially

a Surely

3141 2 and is it not the duty of your Department to see that the other point of view is put before them.

a Undoubtedly

3142 2 Did you ever do that

a Frequently

3143 2 Can you point to anything here suggesting that they should pay more heed to the needs of the Empire and less to the needs of India

a I should not have thought of putting it in that way. What we did was to insist on their sending away a large number of troops <sup>to</sup> ~~in~~ different parts of the world which they would have preferred to keep at home

3144 Admiral Sir Cyprus Bridge I think you said that the Government would take all responsibility

a The Government took the responsibility clearly

3145 Commander Wedgwood: That was in regard



to that particular order, but did you ever write privately or telegraph to say that you thought that India was taking too narrow a view of the war

a Oh yes, I did indeed. I will not say that I used that expression; ~~in~~ fact I am pretty sure that I did not use it, but I did point out on several occasions that although I quite appreciated their view and that they had to guard against the possibility of a great internal rising with possible destruction of life, at ~~at~~ the same time they must be prepared to run what they believed ~~was~~<sup>to</sup> be considerably risks in the interests of the Empire. That I pointed out to them quite categorically

3146

Commander Wedgwood: A very well known medical man who died in Mesopotamia deals very caustically with the extraordinary fame of pretending that India is not at war. This is in April 1916

3147

Lord Hugh Cecil: May I put it in this way: there was a certain provincialism of outlook in India. They treated the crisis rather as though it were an extreme form of a frontier campaign than as though it were a world-wide war for which there was no precedent.

a Yes; I do not think that that is an unfair criticism. Of course it was not easy for them to look at the whole business precisely from the point of view from which we do here

Commander

Chapman 3 Shell

3142 Commander Wedgwood The same ~~man~~ <sup>medical man</sup> expressed the view that India <sup>practically</sup> cannot be relied on for anything. <sup>That was as</sup> late as May the 30<sup>th</sup> this year. He ~~said~~ states also that Indian slackness is everywhere. Can one justly say, ~~if that is the view~~ <sup>two years after</sup> ~~from the year~~ ~~of~~ the beginning of the war, ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> Indian Government was taking its proper part in the world's war

Q I think that the number of men, including officers of all kinds, ~~that~~ ~~were~~ sent from India after considerable pressure in certain cases was placed upon the Government of India, ~~to~~ <sup>contribution</sup> constituted a very full ~~contribution~~ <sup>contribution</sup> indeed to the world's war quite equal to that of any of the self-governing Dominions, if not to that of this country itself - making of course allowance for the complete difference of circumstances

3149 2 You do not think that if you were in the position of the Secretary of State for India again for ~~the~~ <sup>the first</sup> year of the war you would take more stringent measures in India to make them do their work

A No I do not think that I should have expected them to do more than they did in the first year of the war. In fact the promptitude with which the force was sent to Europe - which was of course their main contribution - was I thought worthy of ~~all~~ <sup>much</sup> admiration, and the arrangements for looking after that force, particularly the medical arrangements, were I think generally satisfactory.

~~The~~ The medical service in France and for the wounded in England was I think extremely well organized. Speaking generally in reply to Commander Wedgwood's question I should say and as having been Secretary of State at the time, I should say that I had no complaint to make of what India actually did during the first year of the war

3150 Q I have you not complained to make as to what they omitted to do

A No not at that time

3151 Q Neither <sup>with regard to</sup> the loan question, nor ammunition, nor supply nor transport

A I am speaking of course of what actually happened when I was Secretary of State

3152 Q They raised no loan while you ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> Secretary of State, did they

A No, but we did not ask them to

3153 Q They made no ammunition while you were Secretary of State, did they

A I am not certain

3154 Q They ~~made~~ <sup>made</sup> no exceptional ~~attempts~~ <sup>efforts</sup> to make ammunition?

A I am not certain whether they began to, I think probably not because it was before the Mesopotamia Expedition had reached Caze Dineurwin, and the ammunition for the Indian force in Europe was supplied from here

3155 Q They did not ever <sup>mobilise</sup> replace their volunteer troops, did they, while you were Secretary of State?

A Yes, they began to but I cannot tell you precisely when ~~they raised~~ <sup>They mobilised a</sup> ~~a~~ very small force of volunteers as you know of varying value. ~~did and continued~~

3156 Q ~~and continued~~ <sup>to clamour</sup> for more Territorials to be sent from home

A ~~It~~ They asked to have, although they did not get, the full equipment of new Territorial troops to replace the Regular Divisions which were taken away from India. They took the view that a certain portion of European troops having been by the wisdom of the authorities here allocated to India for the purpose of internal defence, that proportion ought not to be reduced. They have had to submit to a considerable reduction in numbers and

no  
 27 1 ~~all~~ results have followed. I am quite prepared to admit that in my opinion they were somewhat unduly nervous of the effect of a reduction of the British Army in India, but it is an alarm which I think would have been shared by most officials who felt themselves responsible for the safety of a large mixed population.

3157 2 When they got these troops they did not put them on the frontier <sup>but they put them</sup> ~~behind the lines~~ <sup>behind the lines</sup>; they kept ~~them~~ three divisions on the frontier.

A. They 3158 2 Those were regular troops. They have been replaced now to some extent by ~~bordered~~ Territorials.

3159 2 Now, yes - They did not <sup>mobilise</sup> ~~replace~~ the dockyards to build boats, did they?  
 I do not think they had any means of doing so.

3160 2 "by means of doing so" - do you mean any Act of Parliament?

A. No; I mean that their shipyards are on a very small scale.

3161 2 But ~~do~~ <sup>have built</sup> they ~~build~~ war ships? <sup>For example</sup> ~~so~~ they must be able to <sup>build barges</sup>. The Bombay dockyards surely are good enough for building barges.

I you are speaking of barges for Mesopotamia?

3162 2 Yes.  
 I cannot tell you when they began building any barges for Mesopotamia. I do not know.

3163 2 They have not even yet <sup>mobilised</sup> ~~started~~ their factories or their dockyards, or at least they had not during your period taken any steps to <sup>mobilise</sup> ~~service~~ industry in the country ~~throughout~~ <sup>throughout</sup> India.

A. No. I think that the mobilization of industry for war purposes would have been a very much more difficult affair in India than in England.

No

We did not find it altogether easy, as you know here

3164

2 It is more difficult here, <sup>is it not, surely. You,</sup> ~~and~~ ~~surely~~ ~~you~~ do not have the same difficulty in India which was the biggest difficulty here

1 But the number of engineering works in India is not very large, <sup>as</sup> you know

3165

2 You still adhere to the statement that if you were Secretary of State over again in that period you would not try to fidget them up

1 If I had known what I know <sup>now</sup> with regard to the duration of the war, although I was always one of the people who believed <sup>it</sup> would be long, ~~it~~ <sup>is</sup> quite possible that I might have taken some different steps in this direction, or if I had foreseen the scope which the Mesopotamia Expedition would assume. Perhaps I might have <sup>one</sup> ~~made~~ remark about something which I should <sup>have</sup> liked to do and which I was always in favour of doing but was unable to do. I personally strongly pressed ~~the~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> all the Indian Army Council troops except one Cavalry Division to be taken away from France at the end of the summer of 1915 so that they ~~could~~ <sup>should</sup> not any of them go through a second winter. That was done to some extent but it was not done nearly as soon as I desired.

I pressed it very strongly on the military authorities but the new armies had not begun to arrive in any quantity like their full strength and it was thought undesirable to diminish the sum total of the forces there. Personally I should have liked to have removed more troops as early as possible in 1915 after their first winter and sent them to Mesopotamia so far as troops were required <sup>there</sup>

3166

2 That would not have meant getting any more out

of India, would it  
No it would not have meant that. I mention that ~~as~~  
as a ~~statement~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~which~~ I desire to make in respect of the  
troops

28

3167

2 You do not think that you ~~could~~ have got the  
military authorities in India to <sup>do</sup> more  
No I think not. I think <sup>that</sup> if you look at all the  
figures you will see that the abstraction of both  
troops and services from India <sup>was</sup> very large

Chairman: I think that we had better clear the room.

The Committee-room was cleared

3168

Chairman In your evidence you stated that you thought  
that India, looking at the <sup>members</sup> ~~quantity~~ of men which  
she ~~had~~ supplied, had done <sup>her</sup> ~~her~~ duty in that respect  
Yes

3169

2 When we come to equipment, do you think that  
the military authorities and the Government of India  
realised the gravity of the situation sufficiently to  
cause them to go outside the ordinary avenues  
of supply and mobilise their productive resources  
for war purposes  
I think that practically no preparation had  
been made in India for anything except Indian  
Campaigns, that is to say Campaigns of the  
kind which have ordinarily been conducted by the  
Indian Army

3170

2 But up to the time you left office had the  
supply ~~of~~ authorities and transport authorities

of the Indian Army shown any exceptional energy in trying to develop resources which were ~~not usually~~ <sup>usually tapped</sup> for military purposes

Q No I should say not, and I should conclude that they had not thought it necessary <sup>that</sup> they had <sup>not</sup> supposed <sup>that</sup> heavy demands would be made on them for supplies or transport or equipment outside India

3171 2 Even although the Mesopotamian Expedition got to large dimensions and they pressed on an advance, they did not seem to appreciate what that advance would entail on them as regards equipment and transport

A No. I am afraid it must be admitted that that is so. That is the view that I have always taken - that the provision of transport did not run hand in hand with the military movements

3172 3 In fact they adhered to the routine and the amount of supplies which might have been necessary for a frontier campaign

A Yes; I think that is a <sup>fair</sup> way to put it

3173 4 For Archibald Williamson there is <sup>quite</sup> ~~not~~ a considerable quantity of iron produced in India. I do not know whether you know if that has ever been taken control of by the Government as it is in this country

A Not that I know of

3174 5 I have the barge building establishments been taken over

A Not that I am aware of

3175 6 Have the oil-fields of Burma been taken over

A No, they have certainly not been regularly taken over. I do not know what arrangements have been made about priority of supply, but that you would get better from somebody ~~else~~ <sup>else</sup>

3176

Possibly you  
 Mr. ~~Jones~~ Hodge ~~you~~ do not know whether the steel works in India are working <sup>in the making of</sup> shells or not  
 + No, I do not know at all

3177

2 That does not come within your personal observation  
 + No; for instance I do not know whether the Tata Iron works are making Munitions of War or not; I have no knowledge

3178 2

\* When an advance was sanctioned to go on to Baghdad, if the General <sup>Officer</sup> ~~Commander~~ made that advance prematurely or without sufficient transport facilities, the responsibility would be his  
 Q It would clearly be his duty to <sup>point out to</sup> the Government who gave the order for the advance what facilities he was possessed of ~~not~~ merely military, not merely fighting facilities but also transport facilities in order to justify him in obeying the order

3179 2

Assuming that the advance was authorized and he found that his transport facilities were deficient, it would be his duty to ask that that should be made good by the Government  
 + Yes

3180

2 If he failed to do that and advanced without, and <sup>if a</sup> ~~disaster~~ occurred the responsibility would be purely then the ~~the~~ Commander-in-Chief's?  
 + Except so far <sup>as</sup> ~~that~~ it was the duty of the military authorities who gave the order, or of the Government who gave the order, to ascertain that the facilities were sufficient

3181

2 Then that means <sup>that</sup> ~~whenever~~ gave the order must accept a share of the responsibility if the advancing Army was incompletely equipped  
 + To my mind, + yes

3182

2 Did you hear anything before you ~~left~~ <sup>dejected</sup> office of the breakdown of the transport <sup>at</sup> ~~Metropole~~ <sup>as</sup> ~~Metropole~~  
 well



well as the Medical Service

3183 Q No; so far as I know there had been no breakdown of the transport up to the end of May

2 So that the Commanding officer had not made the India office here acquainted with the fact that there was a breakdown

3184 Q Well, I ~~had~~ <sup>have</sup> no reason to suppose that there had been a breakdown up to that time

2 But as a matter of fact you know now that there was a breakdown, do you not

3185 Q No, I think that everything got to Basra that was required. Basra was then not merely the base but ~~was~~ the centre of the Expedition and I have no reason to suppose that when the force went to Amara, which was as soon as I was concerned with it, it was insufficiently supplied

2 Was there no breakdown of medical equipment or ~~transport~~ <sup>transport</sup> at Amara

3186 Q Not that we ever heard of

2 Lord Hugh Cecil <sup>not</sup> ~~had~~ before the advance to Amara

3187 Q No, not that we ever heard of

2 Sir Archibald Williamson I think on that point if you look at page 5 of General Goring's evidence he says that in the winter of 1914-15 he urged the building of more steamers. ~~It~~ That does not seem to have reached the India office

3188 Q I have not seen that evidence

2 Mr John Lodge I have not in my mind the date that you demitted office; was it after or before the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1915. ~~It~~ What date did you ~~demit~~ <sup>demit</sup> office as Secretary for India

3189 Q On the 27<sup>th</sup> May

2 Of this year?

3 Of last year

3190 Q Then I must ask Mr Chamberlain these questions  
 A Yes, you would have to get most of that from  
 Mr Chamberlain

3191 Lord Strathclyde There appears to be considerable <sup>division</sup> ~~deficiency~~  
 of responsibility in conducting these operations. Am I  
 right in saying that before any important decision <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~  
 taken the Secretary of State and the Cabinet ~~are~~  
 are consulted

A Yes

3192 Q The Commander-in-Chief and the Navy <sup>are</sup> ~~was~~ consulted  
 A Yes

3193 Q And of course the Commanders on the spot

A Yes, that is so, or was ~~at~~ at the time

3194 Q For example, in such a matter as the decision  
 to advance to Amara the suggestion emanated from  
 Sir John Nixon

A Yes

3195 Q ~~That~~ <sup>It went to</sup> ~~was~~ ~~made~~ ~~by~~ ~~you~~ to Sir Beauchamp Duff  
 A Yes

3196 Q By him it was approved I gather

A So far as my recollection goes, I have no reason  
 to think not

3197 Q The Government of India fully assented to Sir John  
 Nixon's recommendation

A Yes

3198 Q Then it came to you

A Yes

3199 Q Was <sup>it submitted by you</sup> ~~that statement~~ ~~ever~~ made to the War Council  
 or to the Cabinet

A Yes

3200 Q Does not that system rather tend to make each  
 person think that the full weight of the  
 decision does not lie on him

A Yes, I think that it ~~propo~~ probably does,

and it was no doubt ~~apparently~~ <sup>partly</sup> for those reasons that the conduct of the expedition was taken away from India and given to the War Office here

3201 Q And now only two authorities would be consulted - the people on the spot, ~~the~~ the Commanders on the spot, and the War Office here

3202 A Yes, and if necessary the War ~~Office~~ Committee

Q The Indian Government would no longer come in - at that time <sup>had</sup> the War Office no indirect voice in these decisions - Lord Kitchener and his advisers

A Yes, they undoubtedly knew what was intended and proposed, and I have already told you of the system of private communication between Lord Kitchener and the Commander-in-chief which kept him informed on these matters, and ~~of~~ <sup>all</sup> the important papers from the military department at the India Office were communicated to the general staff

3203 Q Are those communications between Lord Kitchener and Sir Beauchamp Duff recorded anywhere  
A Not that I know of

3204 Q They were private communications  
A They were private communications. I am not sure whether any of them exist at the War Office or not, but Sir Edmund <sup>Barrow</sup> ~~Parrett~~ would know

3205 Q None of them appears to have been laid before this Commission at all I think. Can you say shortly why, in your judgment, it was necessary to advance to Amara in the hot weather in May and June rather than postponing that advance till later in the year

A I think that what influenced the military authorities in wishing to advance then, and precisely the same objection <sup>occurred</sup> ~~offered~~ to me at the time -

3206 Q I think it is mentioned  
A I was not very keen about the advance

31

I think it was partly the fear of an attack on Basra by way of the Euphrates side which influenced them and partly the idea of ~~getting~~ further control over the route to the oil-fields

3207

2 When you say that you would not have acted differently, would not you make an exception about this point of the advance to Amara. If you had to do it over again, would you <sup>not</sup> ~~not have~~ postponed the advance until later in the year?

+ You mean if I had known what I know now? I should have felt great difficulty at any time in vetoing or asking the Cabinet to veto a proposal which was agreed on by the different military authorities both there and at home

3208

7- At the time of the advance to Amara and earlier was any question of constructing a railway brought to your notice, either on the Euphrates or on the Tigris

+ I have no recollection of its being mentioned at all

3209

2 The idea did not occur at all in any of the discussions to which you were a party  
+ I have no recollection of it whatever

3210

I May I call your attention to a telegram which we numbered I think 11 in what we call the Yellow Book. The date is the 8th of October 1914. It is a telegram from the chief of the General Staff in India to Colonel W.S. Delamain. It is on page 3 of the document which we call No 5 (handing a document to the witnesses). There are three plans of operations mentioned in that telegram. ~~Three plans appear to be these three~~  
~~and I should be obliged if you would look at them~~  
~~(A pink document was handed to the witnesses)~~  
+ They are the Indian General Staff's plans for an advance as far as <sup>Muhannurah</sup> ~~as far as Amara~~ ~~Mohammara~~

3211 1 There are evidently the three that are mentioned  
 2 Now as far as you know were plans of a similar character made for the subsequent advances to Amara to Kut and to Baghdad

I do not know; I cannot recollect

3212 I To illustrate the importance of the point you see that there is a ~~note~~<sup>note</sup> of the normal transport for Indian purposes, or something of that kind in one of those pages. The point which I am anxious to put to you is this. Did the India Office exercise any supervision over the planning of the military operations, and especially over the transport plans, or was that left wholly in the hands of the Indian authorities and the authorities on the spot

It was left wholly in the hands of the authorities on the spot so far as the demands were concerned. I have no recollection that the Military Department at the India Office made any recommendations about transport. They may have done so but I have no recollection of it. ~~I should think~~<sup>Certainly</sup> that I never did so myself because the conduct of the operations was confided to India itself

3213 2 It strikes a ~~not~~<sup>of the papers</sup> reader ~~of the papers~~ that there is a certain inconsistency between the ~~minute~~<sup>minute</sup> or comparatively minute discussions that go on about the number of troops to be sent and the total silence about transport, which the event has shown is quite an important matter

a I think that that is due to the fact that other expeditions were going on, and that the demands of Europe and East Africa had to be considered, and also ~~the~~<sup>no more</sup> purely political reasons

reasons <sup>as to</sup> ~~and~~ how many troops it was necessary to leave in India. I think it safe to say that if the Mesopotamia Expedition had been the only one, India would have had practically a free hand as to the number of troops to send and what troops they should be. I think that ~~accounts for why there is talk about troops and ~~do~~ not talk about transport~~ <sup>accounts for why there is talk about troops and ~~do~~ not talk about transport</sup>

32

3214 2 One or two questions about what you have told us <sup>as to</sup> ~~about~~ the War Committee's decisions in reference to Baghdad. I gather that there were in the War Committee three opinions

3215 2 <sup>if or</sup> ~~there were those~~ <sup>in favour of a raid</sup>, those in favour of standing still at Kut or at Amara and those in favour of going to Baghdad and <sup>stopping</sup> ~~staying~~ there as long as they could

a I think everybody had to admit the possibility that if the Turks made a really great concentration against Baghdad we could hardly hope to get a large enough force there to prevent the necessity of retirement. It was always a matter of discussion as to whether the Turks would be likely to withdraw a number of troops either from the Constantinople neighbourhood or from Syria in order to make a practical certainty of relieving Baghdad. The whole Turkish Army was supposed to consist of something like 600,000 troops and if they could have collected 200,000 or 250,000 troops at Baghdad, <sup>supposing that</sup> ~~with~~ transport and subsistence when they got there <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ possible, it is quite clear that no force that we were in a position to send could have defended Baghdad against them, and therefore even those who favoured going to Baghdad with the intention of staying there were always obliged to admit that if the Turks turned their minds to Baghdad and to Baghdad mainly we

Chaplin