

Wheeler Freely

We might have to retire and that was one of the arguments which I think weighed most strongly with those who deprecated ~~the~~ ^{an} advance

3216 Q The operation you say was described as a "gamble" and it depended entirely on getting to Baghdad before there was a considerable concentration of Turkish troops, even so considerable a concentration as actually took place

A Yes; and on that point perhaps I may say that the information which reached the War Office proved to be considerably more correct than that which the Generals on the spot were able to obtain

3217 Q Is it a proper question to ask you, which members of the War Committee took which view

A So far as my recollection goes, I think that Lord Curzon was one of those who deprecated any advance

3218 Q He was for standing still

A Yes I think so. Lord Kitchener was in favour, as I have said, of a dash on Baghdad

3219 Q A raid and destruction.

A A raid, a dash and destruction, ~~it~~ destroying everything you could and then retiring, at any rate to Kut and possibly still lower down the river, or to some position ~~at any rate~~ which could be regarded as finally defensible, even if 60,000 or 80,000 Turks came to attack it

3220 Q You yourself were a raider

A I was a raider. I was dead against ~~any~~ occupation. I was more of a raider than anything else. I should not have minded not advancing at all, but I was captivated by the idea of a raid, and particularly of the capture of river craft

and

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and the destruction of stores

3221 Q What view did the Prime Minister take
A The Prime Minister was not present at that War
Committee. I was presiding over it in his absence

3222 Q And Mr Chamberlain?
A That is the one of the 21st October when most of the
discussion took place

3223 Q Mr Chamberlain?
A I cannot say at the moment

3224 Q We shall have him before us, so I need not press
that, Mr Churchill?

A I think that Lord Grey, Sir Edward Grey as he
then was, was strongly in favour of the advance
on political grounds from the idea of raising the
Arabs not merely in Mesopotamia but in ~~India~~ ^{Arabia}
in our favour; in fact in the hope of something
happening which has since happened, namely
the revolt of the ~~Sheikh~~ ^{Sheerif} of Mecca against the
Turks. If I remember rightly ~~it was in consequence~~ ^{the Lord Grey}
of one of those most in favour of the advance.

3225 Q Mr Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty ~~then~~
at the time I think.

A He was ~~on the whole~~ ^{on the whole} I think in favour of the
advance

3226 Commander Wedgwood What advance are you
talking of?

3227 Lord Hugh Cecil
~~Mr John Hodge~~: The advance to Baghdad

3228 Commander Wedgwood He was not on the War Committee
then

3229 Chairman Mr Balfour was First Lord of the Admiralty
then

Witness Mr Balfour was First Lord of the Admiralty, ~~but~~
Mr Churchill attended on that ~~particular~~ occasion

3230 Commander Wedgwood Did he?

A Yes

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a Yes, I am pretty sure he did

3231 Chairman: Was Mr Balfour there

a Yes

3232 Q What was his opinion

a He, I think, was rather in favour of the advance

3233 Lord Hugh Cecil: We may take it briefly that the two governing considerations were the confident opinion of the military men on the spot that they could do it, and the general political advantages

a Yes, I think that that is very fairly put

3234 Q That is the advantage in Persia, the advantage in Arabia, and the general gain of prestige which would be a set off against the disaster in the Dardanelles

a Yes; I think that that is an exceedingly fair way of putting it, if I may say so

3235 Earl of Donoughmore: There were these three views of the War Council. ~~the War Council~~ ^{was} it not the final decision that we were to go to Baghdad and hold it? Perhaps I ought to explain what is in my mind when I put that question. It is this: whereas everybody on the spot and in India ~~was~~ agreed that we were powerful enough to take Baghdad, ~~the~~ ^{but} two extra divisions were to be hurried up as reinforcements and to arrive not later than a month after we got to Baghdad in order to enable us to hold it

a That was Sir John Nixon's demand ~~and that at any rate he could not hold Baghdad~~

I remember that at this particular meeting on the 21st October Lord Kitchener expressed the view that two divisions could not hold Baghdad against 60,000 Turks. The decision reached at that particular meeting of the War Council was not, as a matter of fact, to make the advance

3236 Chairman: but to telegraph to ask the opinion of India
 The concluding orders run as follows
 at pages 42 and 43 of the Yellow Book.
 This is what the Viceroy says at the bottom of
 page ~~42~~ ^{42 in No 203} "I am confident that the right policy at the
 present time is to take the risk and to occupy Baghdad with the least
 possible delay, relying upon you to send the two divisions from France
 as quickly as possible to Mesopotamia. On this understanding I propose,
 unless I hear from you before Monday to the ^{contrary} ~~advance~~, to
 order Nixon to march on Baghdad ^{once}". The reply from the Secretary
 of State, which is a Cabinet Order (204) is: "Nixon
 may march on Baghdad if he is satisfied that
 force he has available is sufficient for

the operations".

Therefore, the proposal was not only to march
 but to occupy Baghdad
 That was not the sequel ^{to} the meeting of the
 War Council. The War Council did not meet
 at all on the 23rd October; it met on the 25th.
 It did not allude to Mesopotamia at all then.
 I think there is an error. If you look at the Red Book
 at page 38 you will see ^{that} "On the 23rd October another
 War Council was held, the result of which was
 the definite Order contained in the following telegram:
 That statement is not accurate as a matter of fact
 because no War Council was held on the 23rd
 October. The Order was sent, but it was not the
 result of a War Council."

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 72

3237 Lord Hugh Cecil When was the War Council held which
 did take the decision
 a Mr Chamberlain will tell you that more accurately
 than I can, but my impression is that he

felt justified from the general trend of the discussion ^{at} the War Council on the 21st October, after receiving the Viceroy's telegram, in sending this. ~~at the~~

3238 2 The Council you have described to us took place on the 21st

a Yes

3239 Commander Wedgwood: And arrived at no decision

a There were two, one on the 14th and one on the 21st, both of which dealt with Mesopotamia

3240 Lord Hugh Cecil: They arrived at no decision except to refer the matter to India

a Yes, to ask the Viceroy's opinion

3241 2 In the meantime the Viceroy's opinion arrived in Telegram N^o 200

a Yes

3242 2 And upon that Mr Chamberlain felt justified in sending Telegram N^o 201 ^{21st}

a Yes. The Telegram of the ~~21st~~ 21st October asks certain questions and says: "unless you consider the possibility of eventual withdrawal is decisive against the advance, all other considerations seem to us to render it desirable, and we are

prepared to order it." It was on the strength of that that the final Order went. That is from the Secretary of State to the Viceroy dated the 21st October. That is on page 38 of the Red Book

3243 General Sir Neville Littelton: You said that it was not brought to your notice, as far as you can recollect, that there were difficulties connected with the transport. There is a Telegram of the 28th February 1915 in which it is alluded to,

though
not

though a somewhat casual way. It is in the concluding sentence: "An ^{advance} at ^{some} time to Nasiri and Amara seems to me absolutely necessary if quiet is to prevail at Basra, but Barrett told me that his great difficulty is shortness of river transport. That is put ~~at~~ at the end of a longish telegram, so it was brought to ^{your} notice

a It was known to be a perpetual trouble. The character of the river was such that transport was always a very serious preoccupation of the General

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3244 2 It was not sufficient to stop him altogether, and it did not in fact, because he went on
a Yes

3245 Earl of Donoughmore: "you told us that your impression ~~was~~ with reference to Sir John Nixon's appointment ~~was~~ that it was unnecessary.

a Yes

3246 2 We have been a little misled by the fact that Telegram No 105 at page 51 of our Yellow Book is not complete but it is complete in the Red Book ~~out of~~. In the Yellow Book it stops at the words "can safely spare". It goes on "It will also be for your consideration whether with this increased force it would not be advisable to detail a General Officer and Staff to assist Barrett, who may find the executive command of the three Brigades concentrated in or near Basra too heavy a charge in addition to his other responsibilities. I think it would be quite unnecessary to constitute an Army Corps of two Divisions ~~under~~ under present conditions of the Force's distribution."

a Yes. I am glad to be reminded of that

3247 Chairman Thank you, Lord Crewe, I am sure that we are all very much obliged to you

The witness withdrew

Adjourned for a short time

Whelan

Major General Sir George Soringe K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

Chapter 3 Snell

3248

Chairman Sir George, ~~the~~ last time ^{we} got through the political ~~part~~ ^{throughout} and strategical part of the Campaign in which you were engaged. We now come to the Medical arrangements and the transport arrangements. The two seem to me to fit in so well that we had better take them at once I think
A Ye

3249

2 Now as regards the ^{medical} ~~arrangement~~ arrangements, you made a statement to Mr William Vincent which is attached to your evidence that at Nassiriyah you made a request for a stationary hospital but this was categorically refused

A For the equipment of a stationary hospital I think that I did not actually ^{ask} for a whole stationary hospital ^{but} for part of a stationary hospital - a certain number of beds. ~~a stationary hospital~~

3250

2 You make here a number of requisitions. We rather want to see ^{what went and how they were dealt with} to whom these requisitions ~~went~~ ^{to whom would} this request for equipment of a stationary hospital go

A It would first go to general headquarters at Basra

3251

2 What particular office at headquarters would it first go to

A To the D.A.2 M.G., General Hamilton at the time, and he ^{would pass} it on to the Medical Branch staff. At that particular time the Deputy-Director of Medical Services was Surgeon ^{General} ~~John~~ Hathaway. ~~He was the Deputy-Director of Medical Services~~ He was the Deputy-Director of Medical Services on Sir John Norton's staff. He succeeded Colonel ~~John~~ Hepier

3252

2 ^{What} That was the official communication in which this was refused

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1 A telegram

3253

2 From whom

A From myself

3254

2 You The refusal was in ~~the~~ a telegram

A Yes, the refusal was in ~~the~~ a telegram

3255

2 Signed by whom? Would it be the Medical Officer or the ~~Quartermaster~~ Quartermaster or ~~the~~ (Assistant Quartermaster-General)

A I could not say who signed it. Speaking from memory I could not say whether it came back from the

Deputy Director of Medical Services or whether it came back from the D.A. 2. M. G. It would be signed in each case by the G. H. Q, which is the official signature of the general headquarters

3256

2 What would you say upon the refusal; was it due, do you think, to want of equipment or was it due simply to the fact that the authorities did not think it necessary to give you a stationary hospital

A They wished to keep the stationary hospital ^{at Kurna} ~~for Kurna~~ at the junction of the Euphrates and the Tigris

3257

2 You came down that way, did you not

A From Barra?

3258

2 Yes

A Yes, subsequently I did

3259

2 Then you had to adjust your field ambulances so as to make shifts for a stationary hospital

A Yes - what I did was to get ~~was~~ a lot of beds made locally and mattresses made locally and make the best provision I could to supplement what the field ambulances could provide. The men were lying on the ground and I wished to try to make them more comfortable

3260

2 Did they suffer much in consequence of the refusal

A They were not as comfortable as they might have

have been. I would not like to say whether they suffered in health or not. That would be a matter for medical opinion, but they were not as comfortable as they could have been made ^{if} the equipment of the stationary hospital had been sent up to them

3261 Q Was the remainder of Statement A sent into Sir William Vincent

A Yes the remainder of it as printed

3262 Q How very soon after the expedition arrived in Mesopotamia the medical personnel was short, and in consequence a refusal was made to you to increase the ambulances connected with the 12th Division - was it not

A I commanded the 12th Division

3263 Q Look at page 6. You will see there was a difficulty in obtaining medical personnel to replace casualties, and in consequence there was not the addition made to the field ambulances which you asked for

A That was at Nasiriyah?

3264 Q Yes

A The point was this - I had with me at Nasiriyah during the operations only field ambulances for the operations and it was intended to evacuate all the wounded and sick direct to Basra. The intention was not to retain any wounded or sick with my force; but when the arrangements were being made for the advance up the Tigris which resulted in the occupation of Kut I was ordered to give priority to the fighting units of my force who were ordered to come round from the Euphrates to take part in the advance under general ^{direction} and therefore the few wounded that I had left and the sick had to be detained at Nasiriyah.

It was in order to accommodate these and make them more comfortable that I asked for the equipment of the stationary hospital which was at Kumma to be sent up. That was the refusal to which I referred in my statement

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Q Now what does a stationary hospital consist of - a certain number of tents I suppose
 A A certain number of tents and a certain number of beds and also changeoff of clothes for the men and sleeping suits

3266

Q What sort of tonnage would it take to ~~carry~~ ^{convey} it; can you give me a rough idea
 A I could not from memory; it is a good deal with all the tents but one steamer and its barge could have easily brought it all up

3267

Admiral Cyprus Budge One steamer of sufficiently light draught ~~to navigate the approach~~

A At that particular time the river was falling fast but we were still getting back the empty barges and steamers which were taking ~~the~~ ^{the} reinforcements for the Tyris line from the Euphrates; ~~and it was in that~~ I wanted to get the equipment ~~for my stationary hospital sent~~ which was then actually at Kumma ^{but} it was decided by headquarters to keep the equipment at Kumma and not take any away. I pointed out that the hospital was no good to me because I was not allowed to evacuate the sick and balance of wounded, as had been intended. ~~Down by that line~~

3268

Chairman You go on page 7 to say: "In the hot weather of 1915 a number of Medical officers and subordinates and other medical personnel were invalidated to India, and as none were available

to relieve them, those left had to do additional work, but the sick and general medical arrangements did not suffer". Why were there none available from India

A I cannot tell you

3269 Q That was the official reply

A Yes, We asked for more personnel as the medical personnel began to go sick, and the reply was that there ^{were} ~~was~~ none available.

3270 Q That was the Headquarters' reply

A The reply from headquarters - not from India. I would not correspond with India

3271 Q Did headquarters apply to India

A I believe so, but I do not know for certain

3272 Q The reply from India you think was that there were no more available

A I could not say. The reply to me from general headquarters was that there were no more available. I believe that they ~~had~~ asked for more from India but I do not know; I cannot swear that it was so

3273 Q Lt Frederick Williamson From the time that you asked for three additional medical officers until the time that you got a reply to the effect that there were no more available, had there been time to get an answer

A Yes, certainly by telegram. All I can say is that I asked headquarters for more and they said "very sorry but none available," or words to that effect

3274 Q Cucircuscu You think that the sick and wounded did not suffer either during the operations at Ahwas or on the Euphrates line

A From shortage of personnel?

A Yes

3275

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Yes

B3

A I do not think they did. I do not mean to say that they were made as comfortable as they would be in a European warfare, but under the circumstances I think they had all reasonable comfort and I do not think that at that time they suffered appreciably from shortage of personnel because extra orderlies were at that time available. In those days the regiments had a relatively large number of trained men who had been trained as orderlies and it was a question of going to the units and asking for the ~~detached~~ men.

3276

Courtmaster Wedgwood May I imperfect a question here? There is a letter to Colonel Yate M.P. about the Hastings casualties ^{being} three times as great as reported in the answer in the House: "No means of clothing the wounded men evacuated to Basra in dozens absolutely naked, just ^{put} down on the bare decks of ships because there was not a mattress or a blanket to be had in the hospitals in which to wrap the wretched fellows, who implored the Medics to give them covering against the heat, but could not be provided with it, and the wretched doctors quite inadequate to deal with the cases, forced to leave their patients thus because they couldn't stop to watch them in such misery". I want to know whether you ever heard anything of that at all. It is dated August ~~the~~ 15th. It says "I read with much interest the answer given by Mr Chamberlain in the House to a query by Sir G Scott Robertson in the Daily paper about 27th July about Mesopotamian affairs. Such a magnificently worded prevarication it would be hard to beat" etc.

That is the part about Nasiriyah. I should call it
 A very highly coloured myself. The day after the fight
 and the following day I visited those hospitals
 down at the base. I went round and saw what
 was actually going on, and I arranged for extra orderlies
 to be detailed to supplement the orderlies in the
 hospital in order to give them extra help. ~~They~~ ^{they} were
 short handed of course. They had a large number
 to deal with, but ^{all} with the sick and wounded that
 were in hospital were attended to, and to say that
 the medical officers had to turn away because
 the men were in such suffering is not, in my
 opinion, true

3277 2 The tangible complaint is here is that they had
 not mattresses or blankets

I never have them with a field ambulance.
 The person who wrote that does not know what
~~we had to take~~ you take with you on service

3278 Earl of Donoughmore Did they lie on stretchers

I ~~yes~~ ~~but~~ they were in E-P tents on stretchers on
 the ground. Extra blankets and so on were
 provided for the troops. It was not ~~not~~ ^{cold} weather
 at that particular time. ~~and~~ They were fed all
 night long by men I specially detailed. They were
 made as comfortable as they could be on service

3279 Commander Wedgwood What were the casualties at
 Nasiriyah; were they larger than ~~reported~~ ^{notified}? It says
 "three times as great as reported in the House"

I expect ~~that~~ ^{that} is an exaggeration
 I do not know what was reported in the
 House

3280 Chairman I have the Vincent Kingley report and this
 is what they say as ~~to~~ ^{regards} the Euphrates
 operations from June to July 1915 under General
 Gorringe

Gallinger "The medical arrangements were in our opinion deficient. The medical units which accompanied the force did not include either clearing or stationary hospitals and were insufficient ^{to deal promptly or satisfactorily with the large numbers} of sick and wounded." ~~That pragmatically endorses what you say in rather a~~ ^{strong language.}

Yes. The point I referred to in my previous evidence was that we had no clearing hospital. We had no stationary hospital, ^{It} which was intended to evacuate ~~them~~ direct by steamer straight to Basra. That was the original intention of General Headquarters when I left - that I was to evacuate all my field ambulances direct to Basra or to Kurma where there was a stationary hospital.

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3281

I They go on to say: "We have definite proof that the available staff could not cope with the work, that many of the wounds became septic, and that a certain number of the patients did not receive sufficient attention. The evidence of the officers at the base, who received the patients ~~at~~ from Nasiriyah, also supports this statement - indeed it has been said that many of the sick who arrived at these operations up the euphrates came to the hospitals in a very bad state" 2. That would be outside your knowledge, I suppose. You would only know how they were ~~supported~~ started.

a I only know ~~as~~ how they were ^{started} ~~supported~~. Within 48 hours we got all the wounded off on the "Mefidieh" and the other steamers and where they left all those put on board the steamers had been attended to but the night after the fight a large proportion of them were in the first aid ~~posts~~ posts. It was too late at night to attempt to move them and they were more comfortable in the first aid ~~posts~~ ^{posts} than they could have been if they had been brought ~~directly~~ ^{in the middle of the night} in the darkness back into hospital.

hospital. I visited the first aid posts the morning after the fight. The men were all very comfortable and they were all looked after as well as the medical officers could ^{look after them} under the circumstances I think, and the remainder of the evacuation from the first aid posts was ~~completed~~ ^{completed} on the morning after the fight.

3282 2 They go on to say: "We are satisfied that the officers on the spot did all that was possible to prevent suffering and to promote the comfort of their patients but the fact is that the medical staff, the accommodation, and the supply of comforts, were alike insufficient. The wounded in this action, were evacuated to the base in ordinary river steamers ~~with~~ ^{with} unprovoked medical personnel and equipment."

Yes

3283 2 That is the report as regards the wounded at Naffringah. Then as regards Ahway on the Karun river this is what they say: "The arrangements for the treatment of the sick and wounded were not, in our opinion, as good as they might have been. The medical establishment with the force ~~was~~ ^{was} two field ambulances plus two sections of a cavalry ^{field} ambulance and two part of a clearing hospital. During the march to Amarah, one field ambulance and the clearing hospital remained at Ahway, and four sections of a field ambulance were posted at Ellah. One British and one Indian section of a field ambulance marched with General Goringe's force to Amarah. The number of wounded, either at Ellah or elsewhere, was very small, but there was a good deal of sickness during the operations and the medical arrangements though possibly the best that were feasible, were not satisfactory in some respects. The field ambulance at Ellah was

used as a stationery hospital and with accommodation for 100 patients had to treat as many as 250 on one occasion. The hospital and field ambulance at Akway were also overcrowded. The field ambulance at Akway, according to the evidence, had to treat from the 27th of May up to the first week in August, an average of 375 patients, British and Indian daily. Indeed these operations illustrate, very clearly, the dislocation in the medical organisation to which we have already referred in criticising the general arrangements. The difficulties of the medical services were further increased as the personnel was from time to time depleted by the detailing efforts of officers and men for convoy duty, and by sickness and other causes. ^{Now} ~~Now~~ was the accommodation provided for all the patients suitable". Do you endorse that or not.

As regards the accommodation there had been a brigade entrenched ^{there} ~~the~~ day before and the huts or dug outs that they ^{had} made were utilised to put the sick and wounded in, and I think myself they were better in those dug outs than they would have been in tents. I know they were cooler, because when I went round and saw them there they were far more comfortable than in the E. P. tents. There was no other accommodation, and it would have been difficult to provide any other accommodation at all except tents, and certainly the dug outs were far and away cooler than the tents although not ideal hospitals. They had been dug out during the previous two months after the custom of that part of the country to get down ~~underground~~ ^{underground} because you are very much cooler down ^{underground} than you are in a tent above ground. The accommodation was not on ~~the~~

~~the~~ European lines but I think it was all that they could reasonably expect. I saw the men in hospital myself and I do not think that they suffered from any unreasonable discomfort.

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3284 Lord High Cecil There are two statements that may be made. You may say that people do not suffer ~~unreasonably~~ unreasonably in the circumstances or that they do not suffer at all. Which is your statement?

A Not unreasonably. Where you have no electric fans or proper things to keep flies away, and so on, the men naturally have to suffer a certain amount of discomfort.

3285 I But what you say in the paper is that the wounded did not suffer in any way. That would be going rather too far, would it not? Look at the bottom of page 6 of Statement A. You say you saw that the wounded did not suffer during the operations?

3286 I Yes. "The medical personnel were very hard worked for a short time. The presence of a clearing hospital would have made matters easier for the personnel". It is rather an over statement if it not to say that the wounded ^{did not suffer} in any way.

I will divide now, if I may, the wounded who were evacuated away immediately after the fight and the few that remained. The ones ^{who were evacuated} immediately after ^{the fight} were put into far greater comfort at Basra and on the hospital ship than ~~any that~~ could have been provided at the time immediately after the fight. Therefore by getting them away quickly I do not think they suffered from not being put into a clearing hospital. As regards the few that could not be evacuated and the sick they did suffer for want of the stationary hospital for which I applied

Chaplin

3287

Sir Archibald Williamson It has been stated that ~~at~~ ^{at Nauri} there was one building that was in more or less good repair and that the wounded were in this building for a time and ~~that~~ ^{that} they were ~~taken~~ ^{turned} out of that building to make room for the General or his Staff. That statement is incorrect. I went into a tent myself and never went into a building at all. None of the wounded were put ~~in~~ ^{into buildings} at Nasiriyah because the places were so filthy that my Medical Officers strongly recommended that we should keep all the wounded and the sick outside. The hospital ~~or~~ ^{was} pitched ^{up-stream} at Nasiriyah on a very good and clean site which was selected by ^{my} Medical Officers and which I agreed to. There was only one building, it is true, which it would have been possible to occupy but I ~~decided~~ visited that myself the day after the occupation ^{and it} was in a filthy state and ~~that~~ it took us something like three weeks to get it clean enough to keep troops in.

3288

Sir Archibald Williamson I am very glad that I have given you the opportunity of answering that question.

3289

Chairman Now Sir George, I think that we had better put rather general questions to you as regards the transport arrangements. I understand that from the beginning to the end the real difficulty was lack of transport.

a That was at the bottom of the whole thing

3290

2 You think ^{that} there was a certain similarity between this campaign and the campaign ~~of~~ on the Nile

a A very great similarity

3291

2 Though the river was much more difficult here, I assume, than in the case of the Nile

a I would not say that. On the Nile you have cataracts, but on those rivers you have not cataracts. There is not a stone or rock in the whole river.

Therefore, from the navigation point of view, personally I do not think it is half as difficult as the navigation on the Nile. You have no cataracts at all and no rocks

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3292 General Sir Neville Liffelton: We did not go through the cataracts to get up to Khartoum a no, but we went through ~~the~~ ^{Shabluka} ~~Shabluka~~ if you remember - rather a nasty place

Shabluka

3293 Sir Archibald Williamson: I take it that your point is that there was no break in the communication from the mouth of the river ~~until the ultimates~~ and I think that the navigation of the Tigris is easier, taking it as a whole, than that of the Nile as a whole.

3294 Chairman: It rises and falls very frequently, does it not, and there is great uncertainty?

a ~~no~~. In the case of the Nile you get the flood beginning to come down in June. That is the first sign of the flood coming. It then rises and slightly falls, and rises and slightly falls until you get on a maximum. In the case of the Tigris the river begins to show little signs of rising in December. It did last year, but there was no appreciable rise until January, and then it began to rise after heavy rain very rapidly, and then it went down again ^{almost} ~~of course~~ to the lowest, and then it began to rise and went up in a succession of rises until it got to its maximum

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3295 Sir Archibald Williamson: Is the maximum in July? a The maximum of the Tigris is in May and the maximum of the Nile is, as a rule, at the end of August and the beginning of September

3296 Chairman: I suppose you found an extraordinary contrast between the arrangements made for the Nile Expedition and the arrangements made

for the Tigris Expedition so far as transport is concerned

a Yes, I did

3297 2 At Basra there was an absolute ~~lack~~^{block} of stores, was there not

a Rather a tremendous ~~lack~~^{block}. First off when I got out there there was not such a ~~block~~^{block} because the Force was very much smaller, but latterly during the last year there certainly always was a large accumulation of everything at Basra, and Basra itself, by reason of the creeks which run up at right angles to the bank of the river, was a very bad place to have them unloading the stores. There was very bad lateral communication along the banks

3298 2 Had Kurna better accommodation or is the draught too low

a You can run small steamships right up to Kurna. The Navy used to have one of their gun-boats a little way above Kurna. Speaking from memory there is a draught I think of about 15 feet up to Kurna and the gun boats, that is the sea-going gun boats, used to be able to go up to Rotah which is some few miles above Kurna and also as far as Chibashi on the Euphrates. There was sufficiently deep water for that

3299 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge; At all seasons

a At all seasons. It is a tidal river and the difference in the height of the river at Kurna at high tide during the lowest part of the season and at high tide during the highest flood ~~is~~^{is} nothing like so large as it is higher up. Speaking from memory, I should say that the difference between

the highest tide when the river is at its lowest and the highest tide when the river is at its highest is about four feet. I have not the actual data; I am speaking purely from memory. Coming back I made very careful inquiries from the Captain of the British India boat that I came ~~in with~~ ^{back on}. He had been working the Persian Gulf for 15 years and he had been up to Basra frequently during that time. He told me that at all seasons he would have no difficulty in taking his ship up to Kurma, but with only half a load.

42
3300 Chairman Did the accumulation of supplies keep on increasing at Basra

a Yes, it kept on increasing. As the ~~accumulation~~ ^{force} increased ~~so~~ the accumulation increased at Basra

3301 Q When did you leave Basra last

a On the 15th July, I think it was

3302 Q Did you see much improvement there in the ~~system~~ ^{where you were there} organization upon what it was before

17
a I was only three hours there. There were 16 sea going ships all waiting to be unloaded. I was told by the ~~same~~ ^{the Captain of} Captain of the boat that I ~~last~~ ^{last} went back by the "Pandora", that the ~~majority~~ ^{majority} of those boats did not expect to be taken in hand and unloaded until the first week in August. That was practically three weeks. The accumulation at the time that I came there, as compared with the state of affairs in the previous December, which was the last time before that I had been in Basra, was very much greater. There was ^{here} nothing like the accumulation of ships, and the reinforcements that were arriving at that time were dealt with as a rule within 48 hours

3303 Q So things really were worse

a They had got worse

3304

2 The only means of relieving this congestion is either by improving the land transport or improving the water transport. Now take the land transport first. You put forward a scheme and that scheme was rejected on the ground that the ~~depths~~^{floods} of the rivers at their highest level ~~the depths~~ would prevent the system you suggested. What do you say about that.

a ~~That was the sailing boat I think~~. I would not say that it was entirely rejected, but it was not put into universal use as I had recommended

3305 2 Have you any doubt that a really competent transport officer, with plenary power and authority to spend a certain amount of money in improving the communications, could not effect great improvements

a I have no doubt that great improvements ~~could~~^{should} ~~be~~^{have been and could} ~~be~~^{have been} effected during the first twelve months and so on in proportion afterwards

3306 2 What is the difficulty; what stops these improvements from being made

a Well, I have seen the telegrams that went between General Head Quarters and India. I am afraid that ~~all~~^{what} I know is hearsay. One thing which I believe largely and certainly in the first year militated against any improvement in the efficiency was the uncertainty as to the future. No statement of policy could be given and the general feeling I think was that the government had not decided whether to take over the country or not, and consequent on that no money was going to be expended on improving anything towards permanent occupation

3307

2 That is to say that there was reluctance to spend money on improvement of transport which would

at all partake of a permanent character
 a Yes. I will give you a case in point. No improvement
 in the unloading wharves for the ships was made
 until December 1915. When the reinforcements of
 two divisions were coming out, then, and not
 till then, was that taken in hand. That is to say
 that as long as we had only two divisions there,
 although the accommodation was bad and congested for
 stores of every kind being unloaded, no attempt
 was made to improve the facilities for unloading
 until the latter part of December 1915. beyond making
 temporary stages and so on. There was no building

43

3308

Chairman who is in charge of the wharfage and the
 embarkation and disembarkation generally
 a It is all under the Inspector General of Communications
 He has under him the Commandant of the Base who
 is locally responsible for the local work, but the
 general organization of the communications is
 directly under the Inspector General of Communications

3309

2 Who was he at that time
 a General ~~Patterson~~ Davison

3310

Commander Wedgwood: He would order anything in
 connection with additional warehouses or additional
 wharfage

a Yes

3311

Chairman Was there any body of engineers down
 there capable of improving the wharfage or making
 roads.

a They were short staffed always there

3312

2 Were ~~there~~ any civilians brought from India, +
 civilians ^{engineers} or others

a Only a ~~part~~ Indian Army Reserve. There were one
 or two officers in the Public works who had been
 taken into the Indian Army Reserve as engineers

officers who were out there but beyond that the work was done entirely by the Chief Engineer and the military personnel of such military troops as were left there

3313 Q Samson: to put a personal question to you: Supposing you had been put in authority there with ~~special~~^{plenary} power ^{and power} to spend a considerable sum of money, do you think that you would have got things better in a short time?

A I think I should

3314 Q Do you think that it is the fear of spending money that has been the cause of the congestion and the blocking? A I think that it is uncertainty of the future to a great extent, and ^{also} lack of knowledge as to what ought to be done to a certain extent

3315 Q But looking at the expenditure, because we have a very large force there, £20,000 or £30,000 or £50,000 of expenditure would make a prodigious difference, would it not, in transport?

A Yes, it would certainly

3316 Q Now, taking some of your suggestions, you say that you bridged over all the creeks on the Euphrates and the Tigris

A That was to get the reinforcements up when they arrived - the 3rd and 7th Divisions

3317 Q How far did you bridge the Tigris up? A It was bridged right up to Amara

3318 Q Commander Wedgwood Every creek?

A Every creek

3319 Q Chairman You did that in ten days

A Yes

3320 Q Could they march all the way?

A Yes

3321 Q Did they march?

A Some of them marched. They did not make use

of the road to anything like the extent that it could have been made use of because of the ~~craz~~^{craze} for hurrying the reinforcements forward - largely, I always understood ^{from} General Townshend having said that he could not hold on after the 20th January.

44
3322 Lord St Hugh Cecil You are now dealing with January 1916
a Yes

3323 Chairman You say that the existing number of native boats which are called "~~ambulances~~" ^{"mahailas"} was not properly organized.

a No. I think I had better explain exactly how I came into that part of the work at that particular time. When Sir John Nixon was retiring from Chesphion he had General Davidson with him at Kut, and communication was cut between Kut and Amara. I was at Amara. General Davidson and Sir John Nixon could not get down because the Turks had cut communication. Aovic was sent to me telling me to at once proceed to Basra to organize the despatch of reinforcements. My suggestions were asked as to accelerating the despatch of reinforcements, as General Davidson, Inspector General of Communications, had made out that he could only forward a brigade a month or something to that extent. I will not say actually that, but it was something very small

3324 Sir Archibald Williamson Forward up to Amara?

a Yes, up to Amara. I wired at once that ~~to make the road~~ ^{to make the} that I knew that the road was all right for marching, as one of my battalions had recently marched from Kut to Amara and that I proposed to bridge the creeks. The order came down for me to carry on and to at once proceed to Basra. I organized the arrangements for the bridging as I went down and in ten days

the road was open In the meantime Sir John Dixon and General Davi^hffson had arrived. I handed over the work which I had started to General Davi^hffson impressing on them at the time the necessity for making more wharves for unloading the ships ~~which~~ I had already ~~had~~ recon^hnoitred ^{and I considered that} ~~is~~ the only way in which to deal with the large number of ships that were coming in and the increase of stores. On those recommendations they set to work and began to increase the wharfage at Mag^hill which is a place just above Basra where the Bag^hdhad railway has been started to be laid by the Germans

3325 Sir Archibald Williamson ^{Can} The steamers come along the wharves there

a Yes

3326 2 No lighters are needed

a No. At high tide they can come along there. I said to General Davi^hffson "The crux of the thing is to organize Mag^hill for unloading the ships and they started to work to organize and ^{to} improve the piers and so on at Mag^hill ^{Nothing} ~~knowing~~ that during the whole twelve months ^{that} we had been in occupation of the country had been done up to that time to improve Mag^hill at all. Mag^hill is about 2 1/2 miles above Basra

3327 Chairman ^{that you allude to} The next two points I will take in their inverse order. You say ^{that} there was ~~not~~ attempt made to increase the number of existing steamers nor were means taken to construct barges. You seem to think that steamers could have been built locally

a Yes, built on the spot; I am certain they could ^{have} been ^h

3328 2 That is if their engines were sent out,

a Sent out as completed sections on board ships and with

145

with the staff to build them

3329

General Sir Neville-Lyttelton: You mean put together out there

a Yes, exactly the same as the steamers that were sent up the Nile. They were put together in one case in England and in the other case in Cairo and then taken to pieces, put on the railway, sent up part of the way by railway, put on to the steamers and ~~put~~^{back} again on to the railway and on to steamers again, and then on to the railway again and then unloaded without any appliances whatever except sleepers, rails and fatigue party. ~~They~~^{They} ~~were~~^{were} built on the Nile close to the bank with only those appliances

3330

Chairman: The Tigris had one considerable advantage over the Nile, in that at the base of operations you had wharves which were open to sea tonnage. ~~It had~~

~~As you had~~^{we} great advantages and also the advantage of a tide.

If you can put your sections together and float them on to the ~~ways~~^{ways} at high tide, ~~and~~^{with regard to} they pull them up, you have the whole of the tide to help you to get the sections when bolted together on to the ways and a very short way then to pull them in order to get underneath to complete the rivetting. On the Nile we had no tide. We had to ~~pull~~^{bolt} the sections together and they had to remain as they were, bolted together until it was afterwards possible to take the steamers bodily out and complete the rivetting of one section to another. Therefore I maintain that on the Tigris you have greater facilities in every way, and especially as you ~~would~~ have had a sea going ship alongside with cranes and steam derricks to lift the weights and a floating workshop alongside

3331 Commander Wedgwood: The responsibility for that would also rest on the Inspector General of Communications I think that the Quarter Master General in India or the Head Quarters Staff would be responsible for the organization of the despatch of the steamers and barges and the arrangements for putting them together

3332 Q The Head Quarters Staff in India
A Yes

3333 Sir Archibald Williamson: Have you been at Abadan
A Yes

3334 Q Is not that the head establishment of the Oil Company
A Yes

3335 Q Have they not ~~for~~ workshops there
A Very poor workshops. Some ~~of the~~ steamers and some barges had been built there when I came through and we had only to develop that or a similar place to build as many steamers and barges as we wanted

3336 Q ^{Is it not a fact that before} ~~Before~~ the war took place at all several river steamers and barges were built there?
A It is a fact, ~~that~~ ^{and} the Sheikh of Muhammerah built his own steamer

3337 Chairman They were put together there
A Yes

3338 Sir Archibald Williamson There is a supplement to that in the workshops at the oil field itself where a number of engineers are
A The workshops up in the fields are very bad. I have not been, but one of my Staff went there and also at Ahwaz there was very little in the workshops at all, ^{as} I know to my cost. I am ^{rather} ~~reluctant~~ in going to Ahwaz on getting help from the workshops for repairs ~~if I wanted~~, but I found that they were very badly served. In the oil fields

themselves

themselves I do not think the shops had anything that they could have sent down to help us without stopping the work going on there

3339

2 Is it not the case that at the oil fields workshops there are always steam hammers, always lathes, ~~and~~ always riveters and men accustomed to handling metal of all sorts. There is a staff is there not

a a very small staff at Ahwaz. They are very good at pipe-laying

3340

Lord Hugh Cecil: Was any attempt made to ~~send~~ build or put together steamers

a not until lately

3341

2 What do you call lately
a They began building last Spring; I could not tell you the actual date. Previously to that ten new ^{gun-}boats were ~~sent to Abadan~~ ^{built at} Abadan. They started to build those in the Summer of 1915. I do not exactly know the month. They were turning them out at the rate of one a fortnight. My own views at the time were, and I previously expressed them, that we did not want gunboats so much as steamers, and the thing was to arm the steamers afterwards. Steamers were the first requirement. If instead of building those ten gunboats they had built ten powerful river steamers it would have been the greatest possible help to the Expedition

3342

Chairman his regards barges, that is easier. ~~There~~ would have been no difficulty about building them at all, would there
a no difficulty at all

3343

2 Have they built any barges there
a when I came ^{through} ~~there~~ they were building some

but I cannot tell you in what numbers.
They have taken steps I know to build a large
number more

3344 Q You also say that the Indian Government sent
out a lot of sea-river steamers

a Yes

3345 Q And a good many of them foundered
A Several foundered both coming from the Nile and in
the Red Sea and coming from India.

3346 Q Were those ~~of the~~ that did arrive ~~and~~ properly
manned? Had they crews that understood ^{their own} ~~in the~~ ^{business} ~~the~~ ^{work}
A I have no first-hand ^{knowledge} ~~with~~ ^{with} regard to that at all

3347 Q We have dealt with steamers, ~~and~~ we have dealt
with barges and we have dealt I think with
the boats of the country. Now ~~do~~ ^{we} come
to land transport; you think that it would
not be impossible or very difficult to lay a railway
a No

3348 Q Was that the general opinion of people out there
who had any expert knowledge

a I believe so - of every one that I have discussed it with

3349 Q There actually was a considerable amount of
material at Basra which had been prepared
for the Baghdad railway, was there not?

a Not a great amount; a certain amount was there

3350 Q Have you any authority for the assertion ^{that} ~~of~~
the Turks are laying a line from the north
from Baghdad down towards Kut,

a Not from Baghdad - to Baghdad - the ~~from~~
Constantinople Railway. They have been working
as hard as ever they could and getting
through the mountains through the tunnel
past Alexandria ^{extra}. The railway is about half
way from Alexandria ^{extra} to Baghdad, I believe

(100) ~~99~~ ^h That

4) That they have been working hard we know from many sources on that railway even since ~~the~~ the war started and before the war started

- 3351 2 Now coming to personnel you say that the men in charge of the steamers lacked experience, and one said that he had come from Archangel. Is it a fact that one Captain said that. A That is what he told me. I asked him on the steamer when he began to blunder
- 3352 2 Do you think that if more native crews had been employed there would have been fewer accidents

A ~~If they had employed steamers~~ if they had employed Serangs or Reises to navigate the steamers I am certain in my own mind that ^{the} navigation would have been very much better done than by handing it over to an inexperienced white personnel who could not speak the language, who could not say anything themselves to the native sailors, ~~and~~ there was frequent misunderstanding in consequence and they had no river experience.

- 3353 2 Now supposing, Sir George, you had carte blanche what suggestions would you make? What would you do now to ^{improve} ~~make~~ the transport. I gather ~~gather~~ from your evidence and also from ~~that~~ of others that the improvement that has taken place ~~recently~~ is very small. I believe that a large number of barges have been built in England and ~~they are~~ ^{have been or are} being sent out

A I do not know the actual figures, but the Quarter Master General whom I went to see

on arrival told me that a very large number were being sent out. That is as regards barges. As regards ~~the~~ steamers, they are also building more steamers. I forget the numbers but they are taking the matter in hand, and the Quater master ^{General} told me that by the end of October he ~~could~~ ^{hoped ^ to} have a very different state of affairs out there as regards barges and steamers

3354

I and the wharfage
a I could not say with regard to that

3355

2 It is not much use developing the transport if you do not also increase the wharfage facilities
a If you have the barges there you can off. load. ~~at~~ ^{the} point that I have urged ^{all through} ~~with~~ has been missed. Basra was ^a suitable for a base for a small expedition but an unsuitable base for an Expedition such as we have been lately engaged on. When this Expedition became more than two Divisions the base was India. India alone was the base, and the line of communication started from Bombay and went right up to the troops, and Basra then ^{ought} ~~was~~ only been considered as a post on the line of communications, an intermediate depot ~~of~~ supplies, and no more supplies should ^{have} ~~be~~ sent ^{out} from India than could have been taken right through up the Tigris or the Euphrates plus what is required for Amara as an intermediate depot or Kurna or Basra as the other intermediate depot. With the enormous sea transport power that we have there was no necessity to accumulate ~~large~~ supplies or stores or drafts or anything at Basra. It was far better to have accumulated them at or in the vicinity of Bombay and

28

Star

Karachi.

~~Karachi~~ ~~India~~. The two points have every facility for embarking and disembarking, and in close proximity to Deolali Bombay you have an excellent climate at Deolali ^{Surat} and ~~Poona~~ ^{Poona} where troops could have been ^{moved} ~~kept~~ and of convalescents and so on concentrated. To dump everything down at Basra with the neck of the bottle at the other end caused enormous waste of transport

48
3356

Commander Wedgwood: You say "the neck of the bottle at the other end." Where do you mean a ~~gap~~ ~~not~~ ~~road~~ between Basra and the troops was the neck of the bottle

3357

I am sorry to interrupt you
a for instance, reinforcements ~~to~~ ^{would} arrive at Basra and be kept ~~at~~ there two months before they could be sent on from Basra forward. Those reinforcements in the case of Indians would have been far better kept in their own depôts to continue their training. It was quite impossible to continue their training at Basra, and the climate was not as good as that of the depôts which they had left. Those reinforcements reached me at the front in many cases two months after they had arrived at Basra and in far worse condition in regard to discipline and training than when they had arrived at Basra. They had been knocking about there doing practically nothing for two months, very often employed on coolie work making embankments and making ~~paths~~ ^{bunds} to keep the water out

3358

General Sir Neville Liffelton But Basra must be a base because of the necessity of trans-shipment of everything ~~transshipment~~
a no, excuse me, only as an intermediate depôt

I ^{look on the} ~~line~~ line of communication as from Bombay right through. ~~Call Halfa Basra~~

3359 Q You would not have sent anything to Basra unless you had heard that the ^{authorities} ~~authorities~~ were ready to pass it on

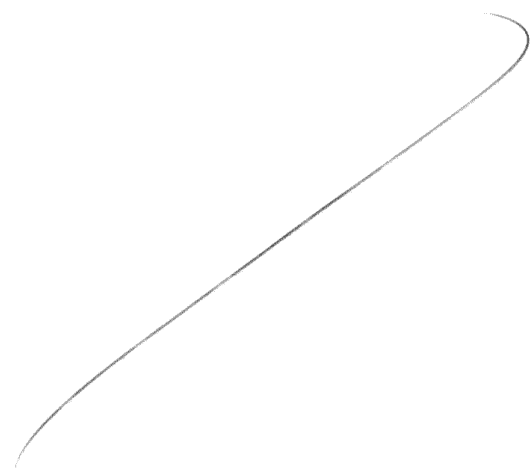
A Yes

3360 Commander Wedgwood: You would not land anything at Basra but would tranship it from the ocean going steamers into the barges

A Yes, and then straight on

3361 Sir Archibald Williamson Ocean going steamers ~~are~~ being very short ~~it~~ was not possible for ocean going steamers from England, from France and ~~from~~ ^{from} Bombay to fit ⁱⁿ at the moment.

A. Six of the British India Steamers were taken up at ~~steamers~~ the beginning of the War and they have been ~~gradually~~ ^{habitually} in use in the Persian Gulf ~~business~~ ever since the Expedition started, and those six steamers are more than ample to bring ~~any~~ requirements ^{that} ~~that~~ we wanted, and all reinforcements that could not come directly forward from Bombay and ~~carried~~ ^{Karachi} in those steamers could have been unloaded in Bombay and accommodated in a better climate than we could accommodate them in.



2 You

W. Miller 30

Chapter 3 Snell

3362 Q You suggest that the European shipments should have gone to Bombay
 A Yes, into the docks where you have every facility to deal with them

3363 Chairman What is roughly the tonnage of these ^{six} vessels -
 \$6000 tons?

A Not as much as that; I should say 3000 to 4000 tons. They are small boats and they can go right up to Kurma with a half load

3364 Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge I respect of ~~the~~ scantiness or abundance of ocean-going transport ~~the~~ stuff got to Basra but your point is that you did ^{not want it sent} ~~not ask for us~~ there until it was required

A That is it. It was ~~when you~~ no good blocking Basra and there was loading and unloading ^{necessity} when there was shortage of labour at other parts, and ships were kept there for weeks and months when they were badly wanted elsewhere

3365 Archibald Williamson How many lighters would you require to take 3000 tons from the steamers when received from Bombay

A One lighter were taking about 100 to 150 tons

3366 Q Each of the barges

A Yes. It is about 10 steamer loads ~~at the time~~

3367 Q 10 steamer flotillas

A Yes

3368 Chairman One steamer can tow about six barges can it not
 A No - only two big barges

3369 Earl of Donoughmore You like to have ^{six} ~~three~~ barges attached to a steamer so that while they are towing two the other four can be ^{loading or} ~~unloading~~ ~~loading~~

A Yes. My point is this. Supposing here is the ship and

and there is the place where I want supplies, and here are my six barges - two there and two there and two there. The ship takes those up and drops them down. She takes up two previous empty ones and brings them down. In the meantime the others are being loaded, so there is no waste of steamer power.

3370

Chairman Your ~~next~~ ^{opinion} is that the Royal Indian Marine had not the necessary experience of river transport to overcome the difficulties

A That is the opinion that I formed. They had quite as much as they could do to look after Bombay and the sea going part between Bombay and Basra

3371

2 Were they running the river transport

A They were not running it otherwise than fitting out the ships

3372

2 They were controlling it

A Yes, they took up the ships and fitted them out and did all that part of the work. There is ^{not} a large amount of personnel to ^{draw from} and they had to go outside and get a large number of people from all sources to fill up the ranks

3373

2 It has been alleged in certain quarters that the Indian military authorities have not mobilised properly the resources outside their ~~original~~ ^{ordinary} range and scope. Is that your view

A It is my view both as regards river personnel and railway personnel

3374

Mr. Tugh. said And as regards ^{also} ~~railway construction~~ ^{also} the materials for railway construction

A Yes

3375

Chairman ~~But you~~ ^{Would you} make this criticism, that the Indian military authorities have been trying to run this very large expedition on the lines of a frontier force

Well, that is how it seemed to us - that they did not seem to grasp what was wanted, or if one may say so, ~~not~~ ^{to think} big enough. I had some experience at the beginning of the war at Bombay and ~~of course, can tell you~~ their ideas as to what was required seemed to us entirely inadequate. Latterly full powers, or very large powers, of spending have been given to the Brigade Commander at Bombay and he ~~has~~ ^{has} been made practically independent, and he ~~was~~ for the last year has been carrying out an enormous amount of improvement in the way of hutting ~~and so on~~ and hospitals and so on but not by the order of the Indian Government. He has got covering authority after he has done it

50

3376

Chairman Was he to get it or has he got it
 It was to get it afterwards. In other words the direction did not come from Simla but they afterwards approved what was done locally

3377

I All embarkation and disembarkation at Simla is, I suppose, under the Quartermaster General's Department

3378

To you
 I Is he located at Bombay at all
 Up to the time that I left - that was in March 1915 - the then Quartermaster General came down there ~~with~~ ^{on sick leave} ~~young~~ ^{body} for about four or five days but not to do any work. That is the only time that he came down while I was there. I asked General Knight who was commanding at Bombay when I came through and he told me that nobody had been down since I left: so I believe that the Quartermaster General has not been down on more than that one occasion which I referred to I am only speaking from hearsay

I left there myself in March 1915
 3379 2 I there ^{there} anybody ~~asked~~ on his behalf with plenary
 power at all
 + The general commanding at Bombay has been given
~~special power~~ plenary powers

3380 2 That you have just told us but he has no
 special knowledge of transportation
 + He has no special knowledge of transportation. He
 is dealing with all ~~the~~ the accommodation at Bombay
 itself. He is not doing anything with the transportation
 other than seeing the troops on board ship and arranging
 with regard to those who
~~for those~~ that come off for that accommodation ^{inward}
 then + Dispatch

3381 General Sir Neville Lyttelton he has a deputy Quarter Master
 General on his staff to help him; has he not
 + He has a staff officer - Subaltern Commandant

3382 Chairman: 2 Did you make a statement as to how long it took
 to build a steamer that was required for draught
 purposes on the Tigris
 + No I did not

The secretary that was Sir William Garstⁱⁿ, my Lord
 3383 Chairman Sir William Garstⁱⁿ gave evidence the other
 day and he is a great authority
 + Yes I know him well

3384 2 He said that these flat government boats
 were ~~stern-~~ ^{stern-} wheelers. ~~that there~~
~~should be two wheels~~

3385 Sir Archibald Williamson he meant two side wheels
 not stern wheels

Witness: + You can have two wheels astern. You can have
 the wheels cut in halves, so to speak, so
 that they revolve differently. We had them on
 the Nile with the boats which were built
 and they are much handled in that way

I always recommended their building that class of boat
 as against the side wheel paddle because of the
 room taken up in the ~~narrowest~~ ^{narrowest} part by paddles,
 and ~~two~~ ^{two barges} ~~are~~ ^{outside}, they ~~they~~ take up even so,
 much more room than if you have the stern
 wheel behind. ^{For} some reason which I do not know the
~~the~~ local Captains on the Niger dislike the stern wheels
 and they much prefer having the paddle boat
 with the wheels in that way, ~~and~~ they put a barge ~~one~~ ^{to} on
 each side and they bump from one bank ~~into~~ the other
 and they use the barges to protect the ~~paddles~~
 51 paddles from getting damage. It is what you may call very
 rough-and-ready navigation

3386 Chairman - Sir William's point was that they were separate
 to you, they are more handy. If they get on sand banks
~~and~~ they negotiate the sand banks by some
 curious process. You recommended that ~~that~~ ^{type}.

3386A to Yes, I recommended those but the people on the
 Niger who had been using them ~~for that reason they~~ preferred
 the others. I do not think it matters much ^{as long}
 as you get a powerful boat and a long draught.
 The paddle boats are very handy where the paddles
 are independent. It is a question of whether you
 have the paddles behind or forward

3387 Commander Wedgwood They are very convenient as long as
 you have a sufficient supply of barges to sweep
 up on each side of the river

to Well, they have no rocks in the Niger; it is
 all mud. If they were navigated in the same
 way ^{on the Nile} ~~I imagine~~ the steamers would very soon be
 knocked to pieces

3388 Chairman You have given us very valuable evidence.
 I ~~can~~ ^{may} put ~~the~~ ^a general question, perhaps not a
 very pleasant one to answer: To what do you attribute
 this

this sort of paralysis that seems to have taken those responsible for the management of the Expedition. Do you think it came from ignorance or from obstruction or what

I It is rather difficult for me to say. I was not ~~opposed~~ behind the scenes and it is ~~rather~~ ^{really} difficult for me to ^{know what to} attribute it to

3389 Q First of all do you think that the higher authorities in India fully grasped all the local conditions and difficulties

A I do not think that they did

3390 Q Even now do you think that they have

A I do not know

3391 Lord Hugh Cecil There were plans ~~of~~ ^{by} operations ~~from~~ ^{framed,} ~~you~~ were there not, ~~at~~ ^{by} ~~from~~ headquarters in India

A I believe so

3392 Q You did not see them

A No, I did not see them

3393 Q You do not know therefore how far they dealt with the questions of transport and supplies

A No, I do not

3394 Chairman In your judgment transport has been the governing factor right throughout

A Absolutely. It is exactly the same as in the Nile Campaign

3395 Commander Wedgwood If you had been on ^{the} headquarters staff at Simla where they were originally discussing the Expedition and how they should equip it, you would have insisted on the importance of transport then

A Yes - build steamers ~~built steamers~~ build barges and follow that up with the ~~river~~ railway.

3396 Q Was there any such ^{suggestion} ~~consultation~~ before the Expedition started on the part of those responsible