

India Office, January 25, 1881.

THE following General Order by the Government of India has been received at the India Office:—

GENERAL ORDER.
MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

Fort William, the 24th December, 1880.

FIELD OPERATIONS.

No. 693.—HIS Excellency the Governor-General in Council is pleased to direct the publication, for general information, of the following correspondence and Despatch relating to the march of the division under the command of Major-General R. Phayre, C.B., for the relief of the garrison of Kandahar, in August and September last:—

From Colonel W. M. Lees, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, to the Adjutant-General in India.—(No. 9117-K, Kabul Field Operations, dated Fort William, the 27th November, 1880).

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter, No. 6261-A, Kabul, dated the 3rd November, 1880, forwarding Major-General Phayre's report of the march of the division under his command for the relief of the Kandahar garrison, which has been laid before his Excellency the Governor-General of India in Council.

2. In reply, I am to state, for the information of the Commander-in-Chief, that the Governor-General in Council concurs with his Excellency that the report is most interesting, and shows that good work was done under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

From Colonel T. E. Gordon, for Adjutant-General in India, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department.—(No. 6261-A,—"Kabul,"—dated Simla, the 3rd November, 1880).

I AM directed by the Commander-in-Chief to forward, for submission to Government, Major-General Phayre's report* of the march of the Division under his command for the relief of the Kandahar garrison.

His Excellency considers the same most interesting, and as showing good work done under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

From Major-General R. Phayre, C.B., Commanding at Kandahar, to the Adjutant-General in India, Simla.—(No. 45, dated Kandahar, the 16th October, 1880.)

HAVING been directed to submit, for the information of his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India, a report of the march of the Division under my command for the relief of the Kandahar garrison, I have the honour to state that the news of Brigadier-General Burrows' defeat reached me at Quetta on the morning of the 28th July last, and in the course of a conversation which I held with General Primrose at the telegraph station shortly afterwards, I learnt that the outposts on the line of communication from Abdul Rahman, inclusive, had been ordered to fall back on Chaman at the northern foot of the Kojak Pass, about eighty miles distant from Kandahar.

2. It happened that the difficulties in the way of the prompt movement of troops on the line of communication in question were at that time exceptionally great, owing to the whole tract of country from Sibi to Kandahar (about 241 miles)

being destitute of grain and forage, from a drought of nearly two years' duration, in addition to which the hot season was at its height, and at severally places between Quetta and Kandahar the water-supply was scanty and brackish.

3. These and other causes had obliged us, some time previously, to remove the bulk of our transport cattle from the line to a distant grazing-ground, to withdraw all superfluous commissariat and transport establishments, and place the carts and material generally under repair at central workshops until the opening of the season; consequently, when the necessity for resuming active operations suddenly occurred, our transport had to be re-organized and augmented, our line of communication stocked, weak points placed in a defensible state, and a sufficient force concentrated before any forward movement could be made.

4. The troops nearest at hand to meet this sudden emergency were the 9th and 24th Regiments of Bombay Native Infantry, then en route up the Bolan Pass, and the force noted in the margin*, employed in protecting the Nari Valley railway line. The latter, together with the services of Lieutenant-Colonel J. G. Lindsay, R.E., and his staff of Royal Engineer officers, were at once placed at my disposal, and I was thus enabled to act promptly to the front between Quetta and Chaman by occupying the Gazaband and Kojak Passes,—strengthening and fortifying intermediate posts,—and by holding in check the Kakar and other Pathan tribes, who, on hearing of the Maiwand defeat, lost no time in collecting their fighting men to attack convoys and prevent supplies of grain and forage from being brought to the line of communication. Their designs, however, were happily frustrated by the rapid concentration of the troops named on Pishin; for, although the Kojak Pass had been occupied by a strong body of Atchakzais, and the telegraph line between Chaman and Kila Abdulla entirely destroyed by them, they were driven out by the combined operations of the detachments as per margin,† with a loss of 50 killed, after two days' skirmishing; since which time they have never attempted to re-occupy the pass. Nor did they succeed in injuring any outpost in the northern portion of the assigned districts, though Kach was attacked by about 2,000 tribesmen, and the reported gatherings of other large bodies in Shorawak and on Toba for combined attack on Kushdil Khan, Dina Karez, Segi, Gulistan, and Kila Abdulla rendered it necessary to hold them in check by constant movements of troops. The fact is that, having been beaten by detachments of Native Infantry in the open field at Kojak, Dina Karez, and Kach, the tribes were little inclined to face strong, well garrisoned intrenchments.

5. Simultaneously with the progress of these operations north of Quetta, it was arranged, in communication with Army Headquarters in India, that a complete Division, detailed below, should

* Colonel F. Roome commanding.—2 mountain guns, 8 troops of cavalry, 1 regiment of N.I.; Thal-Chotiali Force. 3 companies of Bombay Sappers and Miners, 1 squadron of cavalry, 2 regiments of N.I. (16th and 27th).

† From Chaman Garrison—Lieutenant-Colonel F. S. Iredell, 16th Regiment Native Infantry, commanding. Major R. Westmacott, Road Commandant; Major R. Wace, R.A., commanding two guns, No. 2 Mountain Battery; with detachments of the 16th and 19th Regiments Bombay Native Infantry, and a detachment of the Poona Horse. From the Kojak Position—Lieutenant-Colonel L. H. Sibthorpe, 9th Regiment Native Infantry, commanding. Lieutenant A. Keene, R.A., commanding two guns of No. 2 Mountain Battery; detachments of Sappers and Miners, and the 9th Regiment Native Infantry. Lieutenant-Colonel J. G. Lindsay, C.R.E., and Lieutenant W. W. B. Whiteford, R.E., Adjutant.

* No. 45, dated 16th October, 1880.