

th Division, with a proportion of Mounted Infantry and Yeomanry.

5. Towards the end of March the Boer raiders under Kruitziuger in Cape Colony were being gradually driven by our columns towards the Orange River in the direction of Bethulie, and as it appeared that they might at any time be forced across, General Lyttelton recalled the troops under Major-General Bruce-Hamilton and Colonel Hickman from Dewetsdorp and Wepener, and so disposed them, in combination with Colonel Haig's columns, as to block any attempt to move northwards from the Orange River. By the 5th April the necessary arrangements had been made, but, with the exception of the return into the Orange River Colony of 300 Boers, Kruitziuger's forces made no general movement to the north. General Bruce-Hamilton, therefore, returned to the Dewetsdorp district. During this movement Lieutenant-Colonel Monro, with a detachment of 150 mounted men and a pompom, after two hours' fighting, cleverly effected the capture of a Boer convoy and 83 prisoners, including Commandant Bresler and Lieutenant Lindique of the Staats Artillery. Colonel Monro's casualties were one man killed and four wounded.

On the 13th April, Lieutenant-General the Honourable N. G. Lyttelton proceeded to England on leave, being succeeded in his command by Major-General Bruce-Hamilton. At the same time Colonel Haig was sent to take charge of operations in Cape Colony.

The subsequent operations of General Bruce-Hamilton's columns east of the railway up to the end of April resulted in the capture of 95 prisoners and 300 horses; many cattle and sheep were also brought in.

6. Major-General Elliott's force, as organized at Kroonstad under the scheme of redistribution, was ready to take the field by the 10th of April. At this time there were signs of a possible junction of the enemy's forces in North-West Orange River Colony and those in South-West Transvaal, and as the country about Reitzburg and Parys still contained supplies in some quantity, General Elliott was directed to move through this district. He met with very little opposition, and returned to the railway on the 20th, having thoroughly cleared all supplies from the neighbourhood.

General Elliott was then instructed to sweep the country east of the railway line, especially those districts beyond the Wilge River, where the enemy was known to have collected a large amount of stock and supplies.

The plan for this operation contemplated in its first phase a movement by parallel columns on a wide front, eastward beyond Heilbron. It was intended that the left or Northern Column when past that point should halt, while the other columns, wheeling to the left, should clear the country, the right passing east of Frankfort. The whole division, moving north in line, was then to press the Boers and their stock back on the Vaal River. In order to drive as many as possible of the scattered enemy into the sphere of General Elliott's operations, it was arranged that General C. Knox, concurrently with General Elliott's first eastward move, should send a column towards Reitz. Co-operation was also arranged on the north by stationing a force under Major Western, who had now succeeded to the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Williams's column, on the lower drifts of the Wilge River, while columns under Colonels E. Knox and Rimington moved from Heidelberg and Standerton respectively towards the junction of the Vaal and Waterval rivers.

These operations are now in progress, and I have already been informed, although not in detail, of large captures made by the several columns.

On his arrival at the Vaal, General Elliott intends to form his force along the river, facing south; then wheeling to the left, he will move his columns in parallel lines to the Natal border, his left following the course of the Klip River and his right passing south of Vrede.

7. In Major-General Charles Knox's sphere of operations Lieutenant-Colonel Pilcher's column was in the first instance employed in the country about Clocolan, Mequatling's Nek, and the Korannaberg, where he did much useful work, attacking and harassing the enemy whenever opportunity occurred both by night and day.

Lieutenant-Colonel Thorneycroft, who reached Brandfort on the 28th March, was employed in that neighbourhood for some days, surprising and capturing on their farms, by night, many armed burghers who having been disbanded from De Wet's commandos, were living at their homes.

On the 7th April, Lieutenant-Colonel Thorneycroft was moved towards Winburg to deal with a minor concentration of the enemy in that neighbourhood. This gathering dispersed on his approach, and after visiting the Tabaksberg district, he returned to Brandfort.

Subsequently, in accordance with the scheme for General Elliott's operations, General Knox occupied Senekal with his whole force on the 25th April. Lieutenant-Colonel Pilcher entered Reitz on the 28th, and found that the enemy had evacuated the town on the previous evening. On the 29th, patrols reported General Elliott's columns passing to the north of Reitz; Colonel Pilcher's purpose being therefore accomplished, he returned to Senekal. General Knox's force was then ordered to move to the railway.

8. At the beginning of March, General Sir Leslie Rundle's troops were holding Harrismith, Ficksburg, Bethlehem and Vrede. His mobile column under Major-General Campbell was in the vicinity of Standerton, temporarily reinforcing the troops under Major-General Wynne, and furnishing a small force, under Lieutenant-Colonel Inglefield, for escort duty on the Utrecht—Lunenburg line in connection with General French's movements in the Eastern Transvaal.

On the 9th March, General Campbell arrived at Vrede and withdrew the garrison to Standerton, his return march being rendered very difficult by the swollen state of the rivers and spruits.

The unavoidable delay which occurred in the completion of General French's movements on the Zululand border, prevented the return of these troops to General Rundle's district for some time, and it was not until the 10th April that General Campbell's column was again concentrated at Harrismith. As information then tended to show that Fouriesburg was once more a centre of Boer activity, and also one of the enemy's chief bases of supply, Lieutenant-General Sir Leslie Rundle arranged to move out from Harrismith and enter the Brandwater basin. General Rundle himself accompanied the column, which left Harrismith on the 19th April, for Bethlehem, and arrived there on the 24th. On the march he met with some opposition from parties of the enemy, amounting in all to 300 men, who persistently hung on the flanks of the force. After operating for four days round Bethlehem, General Rundle passed Retief's Nek on the 29th, and penetrated unopposed into the Brandwater basin, entering Fouriesburg on the 2nd May. He has com-