

War Office, April 11, 1902.

**T**HE following Despatch has been received from Lord Kitchener, G.C.B., &c., Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa:—  
From Lord Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War.

Army Head-Quarters, South Africa.

SIR, Pretoria, 16th March, 1902.

I have the honour to forward herewith Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen's report on the engagement which took place on the 7th instant, between Tweebosch (247), and Leeuwkuil (23) in the Lichtenburg District.

I have, &c.,  
**KITCHENER, General,**  
Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa.

From Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen to the Chief of Staff.

SIR, Klerksdorp, 13th March, 1902.

I have the honour to inform you that, with the object of preventing the force under General Delarey from moving northwards to the Marico District through the gap between Lichtenburg and Mafeking, I sent orders to Colonel Kekewich, C.B., at Wolmaranstad, to send a column towards Rooirantjesfontein where he would meet a column under Major Paris, Royal Marine Artillery, from Vryburg.

I, at the same time, directed Colonel Rochfort to cross the Vaal from Orange River Colony, and to move northwards by the Bamboo Spruit, or the Harts River, and thus drive General Delarey towards the columns which were heading for Rooirantjesfontein.

2. Colonel Kekewich informed me, on 2nd March, that he was sending a column, consisting of 1,600 mounted men, lightly equipped; while Colonel Rochfort wired that the command would contain about 1,000 mounted men.

3. The column under Major Paris, which I accompanied, consisted of the following units:—  
5th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, 184 men under Captain Jennings.

Cape Police (including Special Police), 233 men under Major Berangé.

Cullinan's Horse, 64 men under Captain Cullinan.

British South African Police, 24 men attached to Cullinan's Horse.

4th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, 1 section under Lieutenant Venning, D.S.O.

1 pompon, "GG" Section, under Captain Geoghegan, Royal Field Artillery.

These units did not belong to Major Paris' column, but were an addition, placed under his command.

Major Paris' column before the fresh units were placed under his command at Vryburg:—

86th Company Imperial Yeomanry, 110 men.

Diamond Fields Horse, 92 men.

Dennison's Scouts, 58 men under Captain Browne.

Ashburner's Light Horse, 126 men under Captain Ashburner.

38th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, 1 section under Lieutenant Nesham.

1 pompon, "D," Field Artillery.

1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, 200 men under Captain Montagu.

1st Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, 100 men under Lieutenant Paul.

The Infantry were attached to the columns at Vryburg.

4. My written instructions to Major Paris were that I should give him daily the direction of the march, and the time of starting for the following day; in case of any fighting, that he should look

after the Mounted Brigade, and that I would stand by the guns and Infantry, and give him general instructions.

The mounted troops were the best horsed force that I have yet had under me, added to which the Cape Police, under Major Berangé, held an exceptionally high reputation, as did also the local corps. I remarked to Major Paris on leaving Vryburg, that I could not believe in the numbers given to me. He again made enquiries, and satisfied himself that the numbers were correct.

5. I informed Colonel Kekewich, by wire, that I should reach Rooirantjesfontein on 7th March.

6. 2nd March.—The column under Major Paris left Vryburg at 5 A.M.; the Supply Column, consisting of 39 ox wagons, and the baggage of 46 mule wagons; owing to heavy rains which had fallen during the night the last wagon did not reach O'Reiley's Pan, a distance of 13 miles, till 5 P.M. I therefore at once sent a message to Colonel Kekewich to inform him that I should be one or perhaps two days late at Rooirantjesfontein. I had previously informed him that the position of the enemy had rendered it necessary for Major Paris' column to bear more to the north-west towards Polfontein (254).

7. 3rd March.—Owing to the animals being exhausted by the previous day's trek, the column was only able to reach Grootpan (Bestersfarm), a distance of six miles. During the march the Police, forming the advance guard under Major Berangé, killed three local rebel Boers, by name Steyn, Bester, and "Janson."

8. 4th March.—At Grootpan I heard that large droves of cattle and Van Zyl's (rebel) commando had moved eastwards towards Doornbult (197). That morning Major Paris' column marched to Graspan, two miles beyond Mooiplatz (244 B), a distance of 13 miles, where there was plenty of water. As there had been no rain in these parts it was very doubtful whether, if I trekked by Klipdrift (188), as I had told Colonel Kekewich I intended to do, I should find water at Vaalkop (183), or Rietvlei (279).

9. 5th March.—I therefore moved to Boschpan (68) in the morning, which I found all but dry, and in the afternoon to Barberspan, a distance of 21 miles, where there was plenty of water. Here I was informed that there had been rain at Leeuwkuil (95), and that there certainly was water at Leeuwkuil (23).

10. 6th March.—The column moved off at 5 A.M., the ox convoy having moved at 4 A.M. The whole force reached Leeuwspruit (232) about 7.30 A.M. Here I sent on a detachment of Cape Police to Leeuwkuil (95) to make certain of the existence of water.

There had been some sniping at the rear guard by about 100 of Van Zyl's commando, and seeing some confusion, I went back myself, sending at the same time for the section of the 38th Battery.

I found the men forming the rear screen, which consisted of the 86th Company Imperial Yeomanry, very much out of hand, and lacking both fire discipline and knowledge of how to act. There seemed to be a want of instructed officers and non-commissioned officers. Van Zyl's commando being accurately shelled by the section Royal Artillery, eventually retired and moved round our right flank to Tweebosch (247), while the column halted at Leeuwspruit (232).

On receiving information, that there was no water at Leeuwkuil (95), I decided to move to Tweebosch (247), where Van Zyl's commando had taken up a good position in the bed of the Klein Hart's river.