

watching for any favourable opportunity for entering Cape Colony.

No trace, however, of the enemy could be found in this direction, and hearing that Nieuw-houdt had appeared upon the Modder River, Colonel Rochfort, on the 15th February, directed the whole of his columns to move north.

On the 17th February, Colonel Western was at Kalabas Bridge on the Riet; Major Gilbert at Vlakfontein, near Jagersfontein; and Major Driscoll moving north from the village of Luckhoff.

On the 21st February, Colonel Western and Major Gilbert arrived at Koodoesrand-Drift (on the Modder), and Major Driscoll reached Jacobsdal.

Colonel Western reported that, as he came north, he had been engaged with the enemy between Emmaus and Brandvallei Drift, on the Modder, and that the commando, which was probably Nieuw-houdt's, had again gone south.

In consequence, however, of information received from Lieutenant-Colonel Sitwell, to the effect that he was in the presence of a body of Boers near Boshof, Colonel Rochfort decided to continue his march to the north. Major Driscoll reached Boshof on 25th February, and the following day Colonel Rochfort arrived there with the other two columns. Major Driscoll had been engaged on the march at Simonsvallei, where he captured 6 prisoners, 100 horses, 80 mules, 150 cattle, 14 vehicles, and 2,000 rounds of small-arm ammunition.

Since 26th February, Colonel Rochfort has been undertaking operations between Boshof and Hoopstad, against a gathering of Boers, under Commandants Erasmus, Badenhorst, and Jacobs, which had been offering some resistance to Lieutenant-Colonel Sitwell's troops, and had recently attacked a convoy on its way to Boshof.

6. After the return of Piet Wessels, on 4th February, from the Midlands to the north-eastern district, the rebels of this part of the country remained in complete inactivity until the close of the month. Carefully avoiding our troops, and keeping to the hill tops in parties of 20 and 30, they have been experiencing, I understand, a gradually increasing difficulty in obtaining provisions and necessaries from their former friends and sympathisers.

Whether this diminishing popularity formed a contributory cause or not I cannot say, but on the 1st March, Fouché and Myburg made a sudden dash out of the district with some 200 followers, and, crossing the East London—Stormberg railway, made for the country to the south of Steynsburg, where their pursuit is now being undertaken by the columns under Lieutenant-Colonels Price and Baillie.

A few stragglers alone remain in the Burghersdorp—Barkly East—Jamestown triangle.

On the 16th February some 700 Boers, forming the main body of the rebels in the western district, were assembled about Bastaard's Poort, 30 miles E.N.E. of Fraserburg. Their capture of the convoy in this neighbourhood on the 5th of the month had, of course, encouraged them, and General French decided that the concentration must be broken up without delay, and that they must be driven north of the Lambert's Bay—Victoria West blockhouse line.

Our columns, under Major-General Stephenson, were disposed with this object by the night of the 16th upon a general line from Nelspoort Station, by Beaufort West, to Rhenosterfontein (15 miles north-west of Beaufort West), Colonel B. Doran being on the right, Lieutenant-Colonel Capper and Major Nickalls in the centre, and Colonel Crabbe and Major Lund on the left.

The advance commenced at dawn on the 17th, its general direction being to the north-west towards Williston. Slight resistance, however, was offered by the enemy, who, breaking up into three main parties, dispersed almost immediately our troops came into contact. A few Boers were wounded and captured on the 18th, amongst their number being Judge Hugo and Field Cornet Van Heerden, the former of whom has since died of his wounds.

Of the three parties of the enemy which retired as our columns approached, one consisting of 200 men under Malan, after doubling round Colonel Doran's right flank, was successful in passing eastwards over the railway into the midland district; another withdrew past Williston to the north-west; and the third, under J. J. Smith, broke through the blockhouse line, with some loss, to the north, and thence turned east to Van de Merwe's Dam, 15 miles north-east of Victoria West.

At the end of the month the position of our columns was as follows:—Colonel Capper and Major Nickalls at Walkraal (12 miles east of Williston); Colonel Crabbe and Major Lund at Gorras (30 miles east of Williston), and Colonel B. Doran, who had followed up J. J. Smith to prevent him crossing the railway into the midlands, some 12 miles north of Richmond Road.

The whole of the country between the railway line and the Clanwilliam—Williston—Carnarvon—Victoria West blockhouse line has thus been cleared.

The pursuit of Malan to the east was promptly undertaken by the column under Major Wormald, and two squadrons of the 9th Lancers. These troops had just succeeded in chasing the remnant of Kruitziuger's commando, under Louis Wessels, out of the midland district in a western direction, but they turned back after Malan as he passed the railway, and are now following him in the country to the south of Hanover.

Colonel Haig, during the past month, has been in charge of operations in the Clanwilliam and Van Rhynsdorp districts, where he has had at his disposal the columns under Lieutenant-Colonels Kavanagh and Wyndham. Several skirmishes have taken place, and on the 13th February Lieutenant-Colonel Kavanagh was able to surprise and rush Bouwer's laager, near the junction of the Doorn and Olifants Rivers, when 11 prisoners were captured, together with 60 horses, 7 mules, and some rifles and ammunition.

7. I beg to enclose list of Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and men whose good services I desired to bring to favourable notice in connection with recent operations.

I have, &c.,

KITCHENER, General,

Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa.