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War Office, 7th August, 1903.

The following Despatches relative to the operations of the Somaliland Field Force have been received from Brigadier-General W. H. Manning:—

From Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, Commanding Somaliland Field Force, to the Secretary of State for War.

Berbera,

Sir,

23rd December, 1902.

I received your telegram No. 1 of the 18th instant at Berbera, on the morning of the 19th instant. I left Berbera by His Majesty's ship "Pomone" on the evening of the 19th instant and proceeded to Aden in order to endeavor to obtain sea transport for the Obbia Force, and arrived at Aden at 9 A.M., the 20th instant.

I was fortunate in finding the steamship "Haidari," one of the Haji Kasin line of steamers, in Aden, and leaving for Bombay that evening, in ballast. I therefore arranged with the Senior Naval Officer (Captain Bethell, Royal Navy) to inspect the ship as to her fitness for transport work. She was found suited in every way, being a ship used for the pilgrim traffic to Jeddah from Bombay.

I asked the agent to wire to India that I would charter the steamer for the voyage to Obbia, allowing one day to load at Berbera and four days to unload at Obbia. A reply was received that evening from Bombay saying that the owners would accept 15,000 rupees (£1,000) for the voyage; with this offer I closed. The charge is very moderate. I left Aden in His Majesty's ship "Naiad," at 9 A.M. on the 20th instant, and arrived at Berbera on the morning of the 21st instant. The "Haidari" arrived at 4 o'clock on the evening of the 21st instant, and commenced loading from dhows at once, the dhows having been loaded up during the day. Six months' rations, ammunitions, guns, and all stores were

put on board by noon on the 22nd, and the whole of the troops were embarked at 1 P.M. the same day. The "Haidari" sailed at 5 P.M. for Obbia, which place she should reach by daylight on the 26th December, 1902.

The work of embarkation under difficult conditions in such a short space of time is due to the invaluable help rendered by Captain Bethell, Royal Navy, and the officers and men of His Majesty's ship "Naiad," who took in hand all the arrangements.

At Aden, two lighters have been taken up for disembarkation work at Obbia. These lighters left Aden, in tow of His Majesty's ship "Pomone," for Obbia on the evening of the 21st instant, and should reach Obbia the same day as the "Haidari."

I have had a further three lighters prepared in case of necessity at Aden, and His Majesty's ship "Speedy" will tow these down to Obbia if they are required.

The Senior Naval Officer, Aden, has wired to the Persian Gulf asking the British Resident there to send to Obbia six large dhows, and I have wired to the Commissioner, Mombasa, asking him to send up the two lighters at Kismayu in tow of the "Juba," and also 12 dhows from the East Coast to assist in disembarkation. This should be sufficient to deal with everything arriving later at Obbia.

I have already telegraphed my movements. His Majesty's ship "Speedy's" return from Obbia will enable it to be decided as to whether further disembarkation facilities are required at Obbia, and since I shall await her return in Aden, I shall be able to arrange these matters before leaving for Obbia.

The base at Obbia will be ready to land troops by the 7th January.

I have, &c.,

W. H. MANNING, Brigadier-General,
Commanding Somaliland Field Force.