

five or more of you, have liberty to report your proceedings under this Our Commission from time to time, if you shall judge it expedient so to do.

And Our further will and pleasure is that you do, with as little delay as possible, report to Us under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any five or more of you, your opinion upon the matters herein submitted for your consideration.

And for the purpose of aiding you in your inquiries We hereby appoint Our trusty and well-beloved Charles Clive Bigham, Esquire, Companion of our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Captain in Our Army, to be Secretary to this Our Commission.

Given at Our Court at *Saint James's*, the seventeenth day of *September*, one thousand nine hundred and six, in the sixth year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command.

*H. J. Gladstone.*

*War Office, 18th September, 1906.*

The following Despatches relating to operations in Northern and Southern Nigeria, and in the East Africa Protectorate, have been received by the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

Northern Nigeria.

Government House, Zungeru, 28th April, 1906.

Despatch relating to Field Operations.

My Lord,

I have the honour to forward the Acting Commandant's report on the operations in the Munshi country, of which he was himself in charge.

A quarrel between the Hausa and Nupe trading population of Abinsi and the local Pagan tribe of the Jukoms led to fighting, whereupon the latter called in the Munshis to their assistance. The traders were annihilated, probably about 80 were killed and 180 carried off as slaves. Though the quarrel was entirely one between natives, the traders rallied round the store and factory of the Niger Company, and the Munshis (I understand after some deliberation and not until next day) pillaged the store, and razed it to the ground. Abinsi is on the bank of the Benue, and at the moment of this fracas the Assistant Resident of the Muri province was on his way down to arrange the quarrels, which had recently occurred here between the traders and the local tribes. Two Telegraph Inspectors arrived in a steam canoe simultaneously with the outbreak of fighting, and assisted the traders to defend themselves until overpowered. The refugees crowded a barge containing very valuable telegraph and cable material, and sank her by their numbers.

2. I at once despatched a force of 100 men to ensure the safety of the navigation of the Benue, which is used by the Germans as well as ourselves, and I concentrated a strong force at Lokoja for the recovery of the captives and the property looted, and the punishment of the tribes concerned. The force left Lokoja on January 21st, and the arrangements made for its despatch

by canoes (this being the low-water season) were carried out by the Marine Superintendent, Mr. Elliott, with exceptional celerity and efficiency.

3. When joined by the advance party at Abinsi, the force consisted of 30 Officers, 15 British Non-commissioned Officers (including Medical), 633 rank and file, with 2 guns and 4 Maxims and 950 carriers, and was divided into two columns, under Lieutenant-Colonel Hasler and Lieutenant-Colonel Dobell respectively. The operations were restricted in accordance with your orders, to punishing these Munshis who were immediately concerned in the outrage, and recovering stolen property and captives; a Political Officer accompanying each column.

4. The enemy only offered a very desultory and half-hearted resistance, due probably to the size of the force, by which bloodshed was avoided. 38 captives were released and about 50 of the enemy were killed, our only casualties being one Officer and one soldier slightly wounded. The towns concerned in the attack upon Abinsi were destroyed. Lieutenant-Colonel Hasler describes the moral effect as having been so great that he is confident a single Company could with safety traverse the hitherto dreaded Munshi country from end to end, and in this view the Resident concurs.

5. I was compelled to recall the force in consequence of the disturbances at Sokoto, which at that time gave cause for very grave anxiety. No. 1 Column marched 312 miles in 12½ days; while the only half-company of No. 2 Column which was ordered to Zungeru returned by water, and covered the land march from the Niger to headquarters (83 miles) in less than 48 hours. This was at the hottest time of the year, and, in the former case, over one of the most difficult and precipitous pieces of country in the Protectorate.

6. The recall of the force prevented Lieutenant-Colonel Hasler from dealing with the Munshis on the north bank of the Benue, who had joined in the attack on Abinsi; and, as they were known to have a large number of captives and now assumed a truculent attitude, the Officer left in charge of the detachment at Abinsi marched upon the village of a chief who was known to have a number of captives and plunder, and who, according to the statement of a captive who had escaped, had murdered one of them in cold blood, and was preparing poison for his arrows in order to fight. A messenger sent to call upon him to release his captives was told that, if he returned again, his ears would be cut off and he would be made to eat them. He somewhat naturally declined to take a further message, and 50 soldiers advanced under Lieutenant Woods towards the village and were at once fired upon. The bush was dense and it was not possible to see what result the heavy firing had, but it seems probable that about a dozen Munshis were killed. The juju in the village was covered with blood, and a human arm was found in a hut. The village was destroyed and subsequently the captives were given up, after discussion (they said) by the Munshis as to whether or not they should kill them all. In all 72 more captives were released, making a total of 118 out of 163, which was the number missing as far as is known, in addition to the 76 actually seen to be killed. The result reflects credit on Lieutenant Woods.

7. Lieutenant-Colonel Hasler has brought