

Governor-General's Office,
Sudan Government,
Khartoum, 19th January, 1919.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward for Your Excellency's information a despatch describing the general situation in the Sudan during the war, together with some account of military operations undertaken and the services rendered by the Egyptian Army and Sudan Government to the Imperial Forces.

The first two years of the war are dealt with, so far as concerns military operations, in Your Excellency's despatch to the Secretary of State for War, which was dated August 8th, 1916*. In order to describe the general situation during that time I am including in this despatch the report which Your Excellency wrote and left with me at the time of your departure from the Sudan to take up the post of High Commissioner in Egypt.

This report accordingly forms the first part of the despatch, and describes the internal position in the Sudan at the outbreak of war, the general trend of events, and the nature of the contribution made by this country and by the Egyptian Army to the Imperial cause up to the autumn of 1916.

His Excellency

General Sir F. R. Wingate,
G.C.B., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., K.C.M.G.,
D.S.O.,

His Majesty's High Commissioner
in Egypt,
Residency, Cairo.

Report by the Governor-General on the general situation in the Sudan during the first two years of the war.

1.

On the outbreak of war the British Army of Occupation in Egypt assumed responsibility for the maintenance of order and the protection of that country from foreign aggression; whilst the Egyptian Army, assisted by the small permanent British garrison at Khartoum, assumed a similar responsibility with regard to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

The forty-six garrison and military posts within the area of approximately 1,000,000 square miles comprised in the latter country have been supplied from the following regular units:—

British.

- 1 battalion infantry (Territorial or New Army).
- A detachment (65 of all ranks) R.G.A.

Egyptian Army.

- 4 batteries and 2 garrison artillery companies.
- 1 squadron cavalry and 3 companies of mounted infantry.
- 12 infantry battalions.
- 6 companies camel corps.
- 4 double-companies Arab battalion.

In connection with the operations in Darfur, reinforcements of 1 battery and 1 Egyptian battalion were brought to the Sudan from Egypt.

* Printed in the London Gazette, No. 29800, of October 25th, 1916.

The total regular force (British and Egyptian) thus comprised a little over 14,000 of all ranks.

To the above may be added six companies (approximately 660 rifles) of semi-regular, native, "territorial" troops in garrison of certain southern districts, and a provincial police force of some 3,925 rifles, mounted and dismounted, nearly all of whom have received elementary military instruction in drill and musketry. With the exception of a sprinkling of British, Syrian and Coptic officers, the *personnel* of the military and police forces is almost exclusively Moslem.

The administration of the Sudan, exclusive of the *personnel* of the various technical and Central Government services, has been carried out by some 110 British officers and civilians distributed in the various provinces.

The Christian population, comprising British and other Europeans, Copts and Syrians, but excluding the small British garrison, does not exceed 6,500, which is less than one-fifth per cent. of the total population of the country. Of the latter total roughly 66 per cent. represents the Moslem population: the remaining 34 per cent. is composed of Pagans.

The first news that Great Britain was at war possessed little significance to the bulk of the native population of the Sudan, which was pre-occupied with the prospect of an excellent harvest after a series of lean years, and passed almost without comment outside the larger towns and more sophisticated urban communities. In these latter, however, idle and ill-informed speculation, stimulated by a crop of ridiculous rumours, soon produced sentiments of alarm and unrest which, had they not been checked by the immediate return to the country of myself and all officers and officials from leave in England, would have provided a fair field for the activity of those professional and pseudo-religious propagandists whose influence in a semi-civilised country is so baneful and extensive.

As soon as the preliminary alarm had subsided the various measures, military and administrative, which the external situation (and more especially the contingency of Turkey engaging in war against the Allies) required, were initiated.

It was essential, in the first instance, to disabuse the native mind of the conception, which was being insidiously introduced from external sources, that the British power was on the wane, and most of the preliminary measures taken were directed to this end. No outward changes were made in the normal course of the administration, enterprises which had been undertaken for the development of the country were not abruptly closed down, and British officers and officials were made to understand that it was their duty to retain their appointments, whether with the Army or under the Civil Government, until and unless their services could be spared. The experience of the past two years has very fully vindicated the wisdom and necessity of this policy.

A rigid censorship of the press and telegrams which, as the evidences of enemy propaganda multiplied, was subsequently extended to all correspondence, and a careful search of passengers and baggage at the frontier stations were enforced. An active counter-propaganda, directed against Germany and her allies, was instituted; and means were taken