

and the 3rd (Indian) Division, less one brigade already at Semakh, was in process of taking over from the 10th Division similar work in the hills further east. The 10th Division had commenced to concentrate in the Ramleh area.

The 53rd and 60th Divisions in the Ramleh area were being withdrawn to Egypt, by sea and rail respectively, and the brigade of the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division detached, under Chaytor's Force at Amman, was about to rejoin the rest of the Division at Surafend, preparatory to the move of this Division to Rafa. One Australian Light Horse Regiment and a battalion of the 20th Indian Infantry Brigade (at Jerusalem) remained at Amman.

2. The terms of the armistice which concerned my command prescribed the surrender of all garrisons in Syria and the Hejaz, the withdrawal of all Turkish troops from Cilicia, and the immediate demobilisation of the Turkish Army, except such as might be considered necessary by the Allies for the maintenance of order. The Allies were to control the railways, and to occupy the Taurus Tunnel system; and had the right to occupy any part of the Armenian Vilayets in case of disorder occurring. The disposal of the arms, ammunition and equipment of the Turkish Army was to be decided by the Allies.

3. The Turkish commanders adopted from the first an attitude of obstruction to the execution of the terms of the armistice.

My first concern was to obtain the withdrawal from Syria and Cilicia of the Turkish Army east of the Taurus, with which my troops had been engaged up to the conclusion of the armistice.

On November 12th my conditions for the withdrawal of his army, in compliance with the armistice terms, were communicated to Nihad Pasha, who had succeeded to the command of the IIInd Turkish Army. I laid down a withdrawal in three stages, to be completed by December 15th, by which date the whole Turkish Army was to be west of Bozanti, where it was to demobilise.

I subsequently agreed to an extension of this date to December 26th.

The Turkish command first pretended ignorance of the terms and duration of the armistice; and then attempted to interpret the terms in a sense directly contrary both to the letter and spirit of the armistice. Finally, after all possible excuses for procrastination had been exhausted, the Turkish withdrawal commenced on November 29th.

Alexandretta had been occupied by a battalion of French troops on November 14th, the Turkish garrison of the town only evacuating it after repeated refusals to do so had been met by a threat that a landing would be made by force if the town was not instantly evacuated.

During the withdrawal, Nihad Pasha again attempted to evade the terms of the armistice by leaving behind large numbers of armed soldiers in the guise of gendarmerie, with the object of embarrassing the Allies and obtaining Turkish control of Cilicia. The withdrawal to Bozanti was eventually completed within the time limit fixed; not without further attempts by the Turkish Commander at delay and evasion.

Occupation of Cilicia.

4. To protect and secure control of the Bagdad Railway on the withdrawal of the Turkish

Army, I ordered the French detachment under my command to establish posts along the railway from Islahie to the Taurus Tunnels.

In accordance with the above, two battalions of the French Armenian Legion disembarked at Mersina during the third week in December, and proceeded, together with the battalion which had already disembarked at Alexandretta, to establish posts along the Bagdad Railway, from Islahie to Bozanti.

I also ordered a commission of officers to proceed to the Taurus Tunnels to examine their condition and report on the work necessary to maintain them. A battalion of Pioneers and a field company, Royal Engineers, were subsequently sent to the Taurus to assist in the maintenance of the tunnels, which had not been completed and still required to be lined.

5. The policy adopted by Nihad Pasha of leaving behind large numbers of Turkish soldiers in Cilicia as "gendarmerie," and the agitation which he and his agents encouraged, resulted in producing a disturbed state in Cilicia. The presence of Armenian troops, who were naturally mindful of the wrongs suffered by their countrymen in the past, accentuated the unrest between the Turkish and Armenian elements of the population. Collisions between Turks and Armenians were frequent; and at the beginning of January I decided to reinforce the troops in Cilicia by sending there a British Brigade and Cavalry Regiment. Owing to shipping difficulties, this brigade did not reach Cilicia before the middle of February. It relieved, along the railway, the detachments of the Armenian Legion, which were then concentrated by battalions at central points. The arrival of this brigade and the gradual weeding out and reduction of the Turkish gendarmerie restored confidence and security.

Extension of occupation North and North-East of Aleppo.

6. To the north and north-east of Aleppo I took similar steps to secure control of the railway and to ensure law and order in the surrounding districts.

In this area, too, the Turks were extremely obstructive. Ali Ihsan, Commander of the VIth Turkish Army, which had retired from Mesopotamia to about Nisibin, adopted a similar policy to that of Nihad Pasha in Cilicia. He attempted to evade the demobilisation terms by maintaining large armed bodies under the name of gendarmerie; and endeavoured by propaganda to create an anti-British and anti-Armenian spirit in the country beyond the immediate occupation of my troops.

The result of this propaganda showed itself in a general feeling of insecurity among the inhabitants; continual reports and threats of impending Armenian massacres came in; and it was evident that only military occupation of the principal towns and firm action with regard to Ali Ihsan would avert serious outbreaks.

I accordingly ordered the occupation of Killis, Aintab, Marash and Urfa, as soon as supply arrangements would permit, and the establishment of posts along the Bagdad Railway as far as Arab Punar. I also demanded the removal from his command of Ali Ihsan.

To enable the Desert Mounted Corps to carry out these movements the 28th Infantry Brigade from the 7th Division was ordered to join the Desert Mounted Corps.