



SECOND SUPPLEMENT

TO

The London Gazette.

Of TUESDAY, the 18th of MAY, 1920.

Published by Authority.

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WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY, 1920.

Admiralty,
1st January, 1920.

Sir,—With the cessation of hostilities against the Bolsheviks in North Russia, consequent upon the final withdrawal of all British and Allied forces from Archangel and Murmansk on 27th September and 12th October, 1919, respectively, I have the honour to submit the following despatch relating to the Naval side of the operations during the period of my command as Senior Naval Officer, White Sea, from November, 1918, to October, 1919.

2. A short *résumé* of the Naval events in North Russia during the months preceding my arrival is, however, necessary in order to explain the situation as it developed during the time I was in command:—All British men-of-war, except the icebreaker "Alexander," were withdrawn from Archangel before the winter of 1917/18. In April of 1918 H.M.S. "Attentive" (Captain (actg.) E. Altham, R.N.) was selected, on account of suitability of size and draught, to go to Archangel as the ship of the Senior British Naval Officer at that port, when ice conditions should permit.

On leaving England Captain Altham had been given instructions that he was not to take warlike action to prevent munitions and stores being railed away from the port, but was in-

vested with wide discretionary powers. At the beginning of June, 1918, when the "Attentive" arrived at Murmansk, the political situation was already beginning to change. Whereas the local Government had hitherto been in agreement with both that at Archangel and the Central Government at Moscow as regards their attitude to the Allies, with the declaration of peace between Russia and Germany, the Central Government under pressure from Germany became hostile to the continued Allied occupation of Murmansk, and resented any proposal to send Allied forces to Archangel.

It was essential that we should remain in occupation of Murmansk and the Kola Inlet to prevent their use as a probable hostile submarine base. The same remark applied to the Pechenga Gulf, and to Archangel when the White Sea opened. Further, it was to the interest of the local population of these places that we should remain, as they were largely dependent on the Allies for food supplies. The Murmansk Government therefore decided to throw in their lot with the Allies and reject the authority of the Central Moscow Government.

In order to secure the port of Murmansk, it was necessary to hold the railway to the southward, and as soon as ice permitted the