

difficult in Somaliland, required careful consideration. Additional supplies were ordered from India and an advanced dump established at Las Dureh (lat. $10^{\circ} 10'$, long. $46^{\circ} 0'$), where it was intended to collect three months' supplies and reserve ammunition for the whole force moving along the Eil Dur Elan—Eil Afweina—Jidali line. On the 8th November, the first King's African Rifles contingent (2 companies, 6th King's African Rifles), under Lieut.-Colonel J. S. Wilkinson, D.S.O., M.C., arrived and disembarked at Las Khorai and was moved up shortly afterwards to Musha Aied. Later, the wing 1st/101st Grenadiers (less two platoons left at Burao) was concentrated at Las Dureh. In the meantime, good progress was being made by Major H. Rayne, M.C. (temporarily transferred from the Administration to be Senior Supply and Transport Officer), in the formation and organisation of the Camel Transport Corps; and a number of companies were raised for immediate duty with the King's African Rifles and shipped to Las Khorai. This transport was recruited tribally in the districts through the administrative officer, and organised finally in 42 companies of 120 camels each. There can be no doubt that the voluntary collection of 5,000 burden camels under the hire system would have been an extremely difficult task, taking into consideration the fact that the Protectorate had been depleted in 1917 and 1918 of 10,000 burden camels required for the use of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, had it not been for the goodwill and co-operation of the Akils, and indeed the Somali tribesmen themselves. During this period the Director of Public Works, Mr. L. H. Macnaghten, had in hand the improvement of the Berbera-Burao road and was clearing a motorable track over the first 40 miles of the stage Berbera-Las Dureh which subsequently proved most useful. Medical arrangements for the local forces and all native followers, transport drivers, etc., were being organised with great care, forethought and ability by the Protectorate Senior Medical Officer, Dr. F. E. Whitehead. "Z" Squadron had their own medical unit under the charge of Wing Commander W. Tyrell, D.S.O., Royal Air Force Medical Service, the organisation of which was most complete and thorough in every detail.

7. Throughout November news as to the Mullah's movements and dispositions in the Jidali area was coming in, and, by the end of the month, his position had been accurately ascertained. He himself with most of his following and the Dervish leaders were in the *haroun* at Medishe, twelve miles north-west of Jidali; and the forts at Surud (lat. $10^{\circ} 43'$, long. $47^{\circ} 8'$), Jidali and Baran were occupied. Tale and the other Nogal forts were now but lightly held. The stock was reported to be in the "Guban" north of the Surud-Al escarpment and in the hills round Surud and Handeis. But large numbers of his rifles had been left behind under guard at Tale, for want of ammunition; and it was estimated that the Mullah's riflemen in the northern area did not exceed one thousand. It was impossible to come to any reliable conclusion as to whether the Mullah would receive information of the impending advance through his own intelligence agents or from partisans in Aden and Berbera and elsewhere. If so, the first intimation would probably be his precipitate retreat to the south. Consequently, we had to remain prepared to move at short notice from the

northern to the southern (Ain Valley-Noga) line until the date actually fixed for the advance, and this period was one of considerable suspense and anxiety. As already shown, every possible effort to preserve secrecy was being made, and not without success. But the manifold signs of activity, the collection of camel transport on a large scale at Berbera, the constant movement of supplies eastward, and the arrival of the King's African Rifles at Las Khorai, could not but tell their own tale to an intelligent and sharp-witted people such as the Somalis. News travels fast in Africa; and from mid-December onwards it was a question whether the conclusions drawn would or would not find their way to Medishe. Meanwhile His Majesty's ships "Odin" and "Clio" were closely patrolling our seaboard; and on the 8th December an armed dhow, posted off Mait and manned by naval ratings under command of a Sub-Lieutenant, intercepted under suspicious circumstances and drove off a native dhow approaching from the Arabian coast.

8. By the 12th December preparations were so far advanced along the Berbera-Eil Dur Elan and the Burao-Ainabo lines that there was no necessity to delay further the arrival of the main body of "Z" unit, Royal Air Force, then in Egypt. Accordingly a telegram was sent asking for the despatch of His Majesty's ship "Ark Royal," which had been made available by the Admiralty, to bring the main body and stores direct from Alexandria, and she arrived at Berbera on the 30th December. "Z" Squadron was now at the following strength: 32 officers and 164 other ranks Royal Air Force; 4 officers and 26 other ranks Royal Air Force Medical Service; one flight of aeroplanes (D.H. 9) with six spare machines. On the 18th December, 150 rifles, 1st/101st Grenadiers, had been ordered forward from Las Dureh to Eil Dur Elan, in order that work on the main advanced aerodrome might be undertaken at once and the forward movement of supplies from Las Dureh begun. On the 2nd January the second contingent King's African Rifles (1 Company 6th Battalion and 1 Company 2nd Battalion) under Major L. G. Murray, M.C., arrived and disembarked at Las Khorai. Now that the Royal Air Force unit was actually landed in the country and the aeroplanes were being erected, there was no need to delay further the formation of the Tribal Levy. I accordingly proceeded on the 1st January to Burao, where I had summoned a meeting of all the tribal leaders, and acquainted them with our intentions and asked for the co-operation of the friendlies on the following lines:—

(A) A force of 1,500 tribal rifles to be supplied to hold the line of the southern Nogal, the Akils and responsible leaders of the tribes supplying the men to accompany them in the field.

(B) The necessary food, water and transport to be provided by the Somalis themselves under tribal arrangement, Government assistance being confined to the issue of ammunition.

(C) The Levy to assemble at Ainabo not later than the 15th January.

After some demur as to condition (B) the Akils expressed their readiness to participate in the operations, and Captain Gibb, whom I had selected from the Administration for this command, to be assisted by Risaldar-Major Musa Farah, I.S.O., was instructed to proceed forthwith with the raising of the Levy. The