

and on the Kut-Baghdad Railway was begun. The work on the latter line, which was my main line of communication, and which had already received attention in so far as the protection of the important bridge over the Diyalah River was concerned, was to begin simultaneously from both ends. At first it could only be carried out slowly, but as troops arrived from India I was able to allot for the work the 1/12th Pioneers, 1/89th Punjabis, and the 2/96th Infantry.

(77) On the 5th September the 34th Brigade column, under Brigadier-General Coningham, was assembled immediately south of the Diyalah Railway bridge and began its advance next day. It consisted of the following troops:—

32nd Lancers (less 2 squadrons),
35th Scinde Horse (less 2 squadrons),
97th Batt. R.F.A. (less 1 section),
132nd (How.) Batt., R.F.A.,
Bridging train (1 section),
1/15th (Ludhiana) Sikhs,
45th (Rattray's) Sikhs,
1/99th Infantry,
1/10th Gurkha Rifles.

A smaller column, the 75th Brigade column, under Brigadier-General G. A. H. Beatty, C.M.G., D.S.O., and composed of:—

45th Mountain Battery,
9th Company, 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners,
3/9th (Bhopal) Infantry,
2/119th Infantry,
Detachment of the 122nd (Rajputana) Infantry,
1/12th Pioneers (2 companies),

was entrusted with the care of the Persian Line of Communication inside our border.

(78) The tribes in the Baqubah-Quraitu area are individually small, belong to no confederation, and so lack the cohesion and fighting qualities of those in the Euphrates valley. Moreover, they are not so well armed as are the latter. Consequently the resistance encountered by Brigadier-General Coningham was negligible. Shahraban was reached on the 8th, and a few days later his column and that of Lieut.-Colonel Greer came in touch.

(79) The railway line was repaired and provided with blockhouses, but traffic could not be resumed throughout the length of the line owing to the damage to one important bridge, which took some weeks to restore. Posts were now established at the heads of the five canals which distribute the waters of the Diyalah throughout a large area. By the 22nd August, the first train of married families from Quraitu reached Baqubah, and by that date most of the tribes in the disturbed area had sent in their representatives and had submitted to our terms.

(80) I now began to withdraw the troops to Baghdad and thence to Hillah in order to carry out the relief of Kufah, and while this movement was taking place I sent a small column to Deltawah, which for some time had been the centre of disturbances affecting not only Baqubah but also the railway line north of Baghdad. Punishment was inflicted on the inhabitants of this town, and a detachment of 200 Indian Infantry was left to keep order, but was eventually transferred, on the 15th October, to Sindiyah, on the Tigris, where its presence was expected to have a salutary effect,

and where it could easily be supplied by river from Baghdad.

(81) To keep order in the area from which I had withdrawn troops I left Brigadier-General Beatty with the undermentioned force, which included the garrisons of blockhouses:—

32nd Lancers (2 squadrons and machine-gun section),
13th British Mountain Battery, R.A.
45th Mountain Battery,
1/99th (Deccan) Infantry.
2/119th Infantry,

and some details, including a detachment of the 122nd (Rajputana) Infantry, which shortly left to join its unit in the North Persian Force.

(82) On the 17th September, part of this force under Lieut.-Colonel Greer was moved towards Kingarban, the branch railway to which place had been considerably damaged by the insurgents. The necessary repairs were effected, and on the 27th September a train reached Kingarban from Baqubah.

(83) In order to maintain pressure on the inhabitants around Hillah during the absence of my main force north-east of Baghdad, I had ordered Brigadier-General Walker's 55th Brigade column to be maintained in that area, but in considerably reduced strength. The column was thus limited to the following troops:—

37th Lancers (2 squadrons),
39th Battery, R.F.A. (one section),
131st (How.) Battery, R.F.A.,
2nd Bn., Royal Irish Rifles,
1/116th Mahrattas,
17th Machine Gun Bn. (Detachment),
39th Combined Field Ambulance (Detachment).

(84) I considered that this force would, with the power that could be exercised through our possession of the Hindiyah Barrage, suffice to occupy the attention of the insurgents. To ensure safe access to Musaiyib from the railway, and so facilitate supply, a line of blockhouses was constructed. Brigadier-General Walker's column carried out some punitive operations against the tribes east of the railway who had interfered with the despatch of supplies to Hillah. These measures were successful, the sheikhs implicated surrendering unconditionally, and on the 23rd September the column returned to Hillah, having fully justified my hopes as to its utility.

(85) Further north on the Euphrates the Zoba tribe had risen on the 14th August, after murdering the Political Officer, Lieut.-Colonel Leachman, two days earlier, and had cut off from Baghdad the troops at Fallujah and Ramadi. Although the garrisons of these places had, as already mentioned, been well furnished with supplies, I felt that some movement, however insignificant, towards reopening communication would, while my main force was north-east of Baghdad, occupy the attention of the tribes west of that place, who were still reported from time to time to be concentrating with a view to attempting a raid on our supply depôts.

(86) I therefore directed Brigadier-General G. A. F. Sanders, C.M.G., who had ably carried out the arrangements for the defence of Baghdad and the construction of blockhouses along several railway lines which diverged from it, to undertake the opera-