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C.O
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REC'D
SEP 16 SEP 15

H of Commons.

1915

15 Sept.

Military operations

Last previous Paper 35078.

HQC
35078

Mr. Peto. — To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he can give any information as to the military operations in the vicinity of Aden; and whether he can arrange for fuller information to be made public more frequently as to operations in East and West Africa, and other spheres of minor military operations. [Tuesday 21st September.]

~~Mr. Peto~~
Mr. J. Fisher.

To the Secretary of State for the Colonies
with J.O. & W.O. that there
will be no answer.

H. J. R.

18/9/15

The Secy for the Colonies is
responsible for the inf. which has
been sent to the Press regarding
the operations of Porten Cumber's
force in the Cameroons.

Next subsequent Paper.

HQC
49438

Four such notifications have been
issued since the beginning of June

On 15th June. Surrender of Garua
 On 17th July. Occupation of Ngamindere
 On 18th Aug. Long semi official account
 of surrender of Garua
 On 2nd Sept. Occupation of Gaschaka &
 Konticha

If Mr Bonar Law takes this question
 as far as N Cameroons is concerned,
 he might refer Mr Peto to the
 above, which cover all recent
 events of the slightest importance there
 except the ^{partly} unsuccessful attempt on
 Mora - papers about which are in
 circulation & the little action at Garua
 (A) 16/9/15

? too late to be used
 16.9

JS 16.9.15

AS-12.16.9.

Niger Dept
 East Africa Dept

The S of B wishes to answer this
 question. I have asked the I.O. what
 he should say about Aden. Will you
 please draft a reply to the rest of
 the question?

JS
 17.9.15

~~Mr. Peto~~
 Sir G Fiddes

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Then? reply

"The only military operations
 under my control are those in the
 North of the Cameroons and on
 the Nigeria-Cameroons border.
 Notifications regarding the progress
 of these operations appeared
 in the Press on June 15th, July 14th,
 Aug 18th & Sept 2nd, and I
 propose to continue to issue
 such notifications when there is
 information available which is of
 sufficient importance to publish
 and which can properly be
 made public.

"The military operations of
 the Cameroons Expeditionary Force
 in the South of the Cameroons
 and the operations in East
 Africa are under the control
 of the War Office. As regards
 the latter, I may refer my

hon friend to the reply given by
my other hon friend on Sept 14th to
the hon member for East Edinburgh
and to the notification which
appeared in the Press on Sept 17th

A. J. H. 17/9/15

H. 2. R.
17/9/15

3507

attent

Sept W.O. concurrence

in this

to Harding
with Head

So G. Fildes asked me to
refer to the S.D.S. for instructions
as to the line to be taken. Please
see my minute on memo attached the
S.D.S. reply. Will you please
make any alterations or additions
necessary in the lines he suggests?
(The J.O. are sending over their
contribution).

Feb. 20. 9. 15.

I submit a fresh draft
as regards the Cameroons 11

A. J. H. 20/9/15

Official Report

Monday 21st September

MR. BONAR LAW. I am informed by
the Secretary of State for India that there
have been no military operations at Aden
since the re-occupation of Sheikh Othman,
to which a communique was issued on
the 26th of July last.

As regards operations in the North
the Cameroons and the Niger
Cameroons border negotiations were referred
in the Press on 19th June, 12th July,
19th August and 2nd September, and it is
no further news of any importance at
present.

In the Sudan also the situation has
presented active operations.

In East Africa the military situation
has not changed and with the exception
of some engagements of patrols (such as
that referred to in the War Office state-
ment published on 10th September) there
has been no fighting in the area during
the last two months.

In Abyssinia also the situation has
been in the same state.

On the 11th of the Niger the Cameroons
border negotiations have been referred to
in the Press on 19th June, 12th July,
19th August and 2nd September, and it is
no further news of any importance at
present.

In the Cameroons also the situation has
been in the same state.

(I think you
- Rhodesia
have to be
mentioned)

hon friend to the reply given by
my other hon friend on Sept 14th to
the hon member for East Edinburgh
and to the notification which
appeared in the Press on Sept 17th

3507

- copy
attached

A.J.st 17/9/15

H. J. R.

17/9/15

? Set with concurrence
in this

W. Harding
W. Reed

Sir G. Fries asked me to
refer to the S. & B. for instructions
as to the line to be taken. Please
see my minute on points attached, the
S. & B.'s reply. Will you please
make any alterations or additions
necessary on the lines he suggests?
(The J.O. are sending over their
contribution).

(I think Mr
- Roden
have to
mention)

R.B.

Mr. Bonar Law,

I have asked the India Office to tell me what you can say about Aden in reply to this question, but the Colonial Office find some difficulty in drafting an appropriate reply to the rest of the question.

The military operations referred to, except these in the north of the Cameroons and on the Nigerian-Cameroons border, are under the control of the War Office ^{and} the India Office, and the question can only be squarely answered, ^{if say so, either} that these operations are under their control and that the question of giving information must be decided by them, or that you are prepared to endeavour to arrange with them that ^{fuller} further information shall be given. You will realise that the question covers, not only operations in East and West Africa, but other minor military operations, which would, I suppose, include those at the head of the Persian Gulf and perhaps even those on the north-west frontier of India.

Could

Could you indicate on what lines you would
like a reply drafted?

Feb

18 9 15

Smthg like this

I am informed by the S. G. S. for London
As regards operations - those reports and
the memo have been received and
2nd & 2nd dates there is no further
information to communicate.

I shall be inclined to give the late
part of the matter unless a reply is
wished.

That is the case of the S. G. S. and of course
to respond only

September 17

FIGHTING IN EAST AFRICA.

BRITISH SUCCESS NEAR MAKTAU

The following communication was issued by the War Office last evening:

On September 14 a strong enemy patrol surprised eight miles south of Mukhan by 60 British and 150 Indian infantry. After a sharp fight the enemy fled, leaving one white and 81 natives dead on the field, besides wounded. Our casualties were three dead and eight wounded. Many rifles, much ammunition and all kit was captured by our men.

7. The

[illegible]

Copy.

Downing Street,

20th September, 1915.

My dear Creedy,

Mr. Peto has a question down for the Secretary of State for the Colonies tomorrow as to military operations.

I enclose a copy of the reply which Mr. Bonar Law proposes to make. The India Office have not yet told me how to fill in the blank at the beginning but I understand that it will be merely by a reference to the latest published statement about Aden with the remark that there is nothing further to tell at present.

Will you kindly let me know by telephone first thing in the morning whether you concur in the terms of the reply so far as the African operations are concerned?

Yours ever,

(Sd) F.G.A.BUTLER.

Copy.

Downing Street,

153

20th September, 1915.

My dear Creedy,

Mr. Peto has a question down for the Secretary of State for the Colonies tomorrow was to military operations.

I enclose a copy of the reply which Mr. Bonar Law proposes to make. The India Office have not yet told me how to fill in the blank at the beginning but I understand that it will be merely by a reference to the latest published statement about Aden with the remark that there is nothing further to tell at present.

Will you kindly let me know by telephone first thing in the morning whether you concur in the terms of the reply so far as the African operations are concerned?

Yours ever,

(Sd) E.G.A. BUTLER.

20th September 1915

Dear Butler

The answer to the part of Mr. Peters
question down for tomorrow would deal with
Aden might be:

"There have been no military operations
" at Aden since the re-occupation of Sheikh عثمان
" as to which a communiqué was issued on
" 26th July last "

I attach a copy of the communiqué in question
and also of the previous communiqué which was
sent from here to the Press Bureau on the 16th for
publication on the 16th

Yours sincerely

G. Walton

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COMMUNIQUE sent to Pres Bureau 26th Feb

Sheikh Othman, which in the withdrawal of our troops to Aden had been temporarily abandoned, was reoccupied on Wednesday, the Turks being easily expelled and pursued for a distance of five miles. Sheikh Othman is now securely held, and the civil population is fast returning. The Turks are still near Lahej, but are said to be suffering from sickness. Total casualties in the affair of Wednesday amounted to about 250 on both sides.

COMMUNIQUE (Sent to Press Bureau 9th July)

In consequence of rumours that a Turkish force from the Yemen had reached the frontier of the Aden Hinterland and was advancing towards it, the General Officer commanding at Aden recently despatched the Captain Tregon to reconnoitre. They reported the presence of a Turkish force with 40 guns and a large number of Arabs, and fell back on Lahej, where they were reinforced by the advance guard of the Aden Moveable Column, consisting of 250 rifles and two 10-pdr. guns. Our force at Lahej was attacked by the enemy on the 4th July by a force of several thousand men with 20 guns and large numbers of Arabs, and maintained its position despite the enemy's artillery fire until night, when part of Lahej was in flames. During the night some hand to hand fighting took place, and the enemy's attacks on our front were beaten off, but the enemy also commenced shelling us. Meanwhile the remainder of the Aden Moveable Column, marching towards Lahej, but was delayed by water difficulties and heavy rain. It was therefore decided that the small force at Lahej should fall back. The retirement was carried out successfully in the early morning of 5th July, and the detachment joined the rest of the column at Birnawir. The troops, however, were suffering considerably from the great heat and shortage of water, and their difficulties were increased by desertion of transport followers. It was therefore decided to fall back to Aden, and this was done without the enemy attempting to follow up. Our losses included three British officers wounded, names will be communicated later, and took one Turkish officer (a Major) and 13 men prisoners.

HOPE EAF
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DRAFT Reply to
Petio's Question

MINUTE.

Mr. A. J. Harding 20/9

Mr. Read 20

Mr.

Mr.

Sir G. Fiddes 20

Sir H. Just.

Sir J. Anderson 20

Mr. Steel-Maitland.

Mr. Bonar Law.

Approved

I am informed by
the SOs for India
that there have been
no military operations
or action since the
reoccupation of Sheikh
Othman, as to which
a communique was issued
on the 26th of July
last.

as regards operations
in the North of the Cameroons
and on the Nigeria-
Cameroons border,
notifications were
published in the
P. M. on June 15th

Approved
H. B. 20/9

W.O. have telephoned
convenience

2/10/15