

road Kalam-Maji became almost totally impassable to M.T. and 2/4 K.A.R. was immobilised at Maji for over a month.

There is no doubt that our occupation of this area had a quietening effect on the Merille, but, since the withdrawal back to Lokitaung, there have again been some signs of truculence.

PART III.—GENERAL

Political.

77. It will be recalled that owing to my fears regarding the possibilities of unfortunate incidents on first entry into Addis Abeba, I had impressed on the Italians the necessity of leaving what in their opinion was a sufficiency of armed men for guarding their civilians during the period my troops were entering the town. On entry into the city it was found that some 10,000 armed men had been left, an indication of their own fear of reprisal for what was proved, on examination of the prison records, to have been a ferociously harsh rule. The greater part of this armed force was police, but two whole Blackshirt battalions were also discovered. Most of the town, which is large and straggling, was surrounded by wire and a ring of blockhouses, and permanent machine-gun posts were sprinkled throughout the area. In addition, on the hills above, covering the main roads into the town, were a ring of forts, all full of armed men. It was quite impossible, without seriously prejudicing military operations, to provide protection on this scale from my troops, nor indeed was it necessary. It was therefore decided to retain two Nigerian battalions in Addis Abeba which in any case would have been the minimum required for the defence of the place, and to pursue a policy of gradual disarmament of the Italian police, replacing them by Ethiopians as and when they could be trained. The Italian civil population had been scattered all over the town, so I also arranged for them to be segregated into three areas.

It was satisfactory to find that my fears of lawless elements amongst the Ethiopians getting out of hand were ungrounded. The Ethiopians behaved with admirable restraint, and except for minor instances of looting, no major incidents on their part took place. Not so with the Italians, who, civilians and police alike, were in a highly nervous condition. Within the first 48 hours of entering the town two shooting incidents on the part of the Italians occurred. The perpetrators were brought to trial before the Military Courts.

78. These incidents convinced the authorities in Addis Abeba that the danger of leaving the Italians their arms was greater than what might be expected from other sources. The disarmament programme was therefore pushed on with all speed, and by the end of April no more Italian police were left in the town, other than a few unarmed wardens in each of the segregated areas. Their place was taken by a number of trusted Abyssinian police employed by the Italians, and a further number drafted in and given three weeks training. A sprinkling of British officers and N.C.O.s had been provided by E.A. Force for this purpose. This work was carried out under Colonel A. A. Hayton, D.A.P.M. of E.A. Force, who had recently arrived from South Africa, where he had had considerable experience in police matters. He accomplished this most difficult

task in very delicate circumstances with calm and efficiency.

79. Meanwhile the armed Italians in the outer ring of forts had been replaced by Ethiopian patriots sent in by the Emperor.

It was felt, in spite of previous customs and traditions, that no armed men of any sort should be allowed in the town. Even the troops when walking out left their arms behind. Armed Ethiopians from outlying districts left their arms at the police stations round the perimeter of the town before being permitted to enter.

80. Before the campaign started it was not apparent that Addis Abeba was going to be entered by the "back door." Both the patriot activity under the Emperor in the Gojjam and the operations proceeding against Keren were many hundreds of miles nearer the heart of Abyssinia than E.A. Force, and appeared to offer the most favourable chances of entering the city. As a result, both the Military Mission to organise the Emperor's offensive movement, and the political organisation (Occupied Enemy Territory Administration) to administer Abyssinia or such parts of it as were captured, were based on Khartoum. With the entry of E.A. Force into Addis Abeba and the occupation by the troops of the greater part of Abyssinia, it was clear that some form of reorganisation would be required. The Emperor was at Debra Marcos and touch with him was most easily maintained through Addis Abeba. It was, therefore, decided to transfer the Deputy Chief Political Officer, Abyssinia, and his staff to Addis Abeba, to work under me, with of course direct reference to the Kaid in connection with matters regarding the area in which his forces were operating. This action gave me a direct link with the Emperor and placed the onus of dealing with him on me.

81. The instructions which I had received were to the effect that I was to establish an Administration in those parts of Abyssinia I had occupied, and that I was to deal with the Emperor on the lines of the statement made by the Foreign Office at the time of the Emperor's entry into Abyssinia. The text of this statement is produced here.

"H.M.G. would welcome the reappearance of an independent Ethiopian State and will recognise the claims of the Emperor Haile Selassie to the throne. The Emperor has intimated to H.M.G. that he will need outside assistance and guidance. H.M.G. agree with this view and consider that any such assistance and guidance in economic and political matters should be the subject of international arrangement at the conclusion of peace. They reaffirm that they have no territorial ambitions in Abyssinia. In the meantime the conduct of military operations by Imperial forces in parts of Abyssinia will require temporary measures of military guidance and control."

The interpretation of this final sentence was a matter of considerable discussion with the Emperor who was always on the look out for any measure which would infringe the Sovereignty which he claimed. The question will be referred to again later.

82. From the moment my troops entered Addis Abeba I was being pressed continually by the Emperor to permit his return to the capital