

[Change and variety were the duties devolving upon the "Commission of Peace and Order", the body primarily responsible for the government and control of the town under martial law.

[One of the first measures adopted by the members was the formation of an entirely new Fire Brigade. It has presumably been asserted that the new municipality granted to Johannesburg ^{affair and gave the town no real control} ~~was~~ ^{over its own arrangements} ~~was~~ a ~~mere~~ ^{sham}. How far such a statement is true may be gauged from the fact that so complete was the control of its officials over their respective departments

that when the clearance of British subjects came to be effected it was found that the Brigade was constituted, to a man,

Britishers. As things had happened this apparent national partiality on the part of the chief officer of the Brigade, ^{and a Captain in a colonial volunteer force,} himself a naturalised burgler, but previously a British subject, - was rather unfortunate, since, had there been

leaven of other nationalities amongst the men they would probably all have received permits to stay, whereas, under the circumstances, they were all refused, and ^{consequently} had to participate

in the general exodus. (However, the services of the new Brigade) are very seldom called into requisition; one of the most marvellous features about the fortunes of Johannesburg



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During she was being the extraordinary immunity from fires enjoyed by the town.

[The Commission was also entrusted by the Government with the organisation of a system of relief by the free provision of food stuffs, primarily for the families of burghers away on commando, then, as matters settled down and proper provision could be made for distribution and supervision, such of the special police as chose to apply were supplied, and eventually anyone, without exception, who could plead indigence, was supplied with at least mealie meal and salt. A large store in Rissik Street was taken by the Government, and here was stored large quantities of meal, flour and other food commodities, which were served out ^{periodically and} systematically by duly-appointed officials; the relief thus afforded proving not the least satisfactory organisation undertaken by the local authorities.

[With the view of reducing the number of wardens etc required at the gaols a large number of short sentence prisoners were released - the burghers amongst them being sent to the front and the hitlaunders deported across the border. This served the double purpose of reducing the chances of trouble

through ^{possible} an outbreak amongst the prisoners, and of furnishing extra men for the burgher army, including a number of the prison warders and other officials, who were thus released from their ordinary duties.

[One of the most extraordinary phases of the war was the way in which the Hittlanders threw in their lot with their "Boer oppressors" immediately war was declared. Indeed the Germans, as well as the Hollanders, had large and well equipped corps organised even before the actual commencement of hostilities. Following that went the ~~search~~ ^{the} formation of special corps. Over one hundred ~~men~~ ^{were} enrolled at Johannesburg within two days and left Pretoria for the front on Oct 16. Others were recruited from time to time until the corps numbered some 300 men.

This example was followed by the formation of French, American, Italian, Russian and - Irish corps! In fact the Irish corps was one of the first to take the field for the Boers, this corps ^{also} having been partly raised before the Declaration of war was made.

The Frenchmen and Italians ~~in~~ raised ^{special} corps of scouts and in that capacity undoubtedly rendered yeoman service in the Boer cause. But of all the Witkander element the two Irish corps were probably the most eager for fighting, the most strenuous in their support of the Boers, and the longest to stick to them - probably on the principle that "a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."

Scarcely less important service was rendered by Witkanders when, later on, the Boers began to manufacture their own shells and other ammunition; most of the men engaged at the two shell factories at Johannesburg being Austrians and Italians, with a sprinkling of Frenchmen, Russians.

Immediately on the declaration of war, the American, Netherlands, French, German, Italian, Russian and Scandinavian consuls advertised in the local papers the declaration of neutrality. Their respective governments, and warning ^{of those countries} subjects, to observe the same neutrality. Yet ^{his} notwithstanding, the above corps were raised and there is no

possible doubt that practically every European nationality was represented in one capacity or other in the Boer service during the war; surely a curious commentary upon the declaration of a prominent British Statesman that Great Britain had espoused the cause, not only of her own subjects, but of ~~all~~ the "kittens" of all other nationalities as well, in her quarrel with the Boer Government.

The first sensation in Johannesburg, as elsewhere throughout the country, in connection with the war was the drawing of first blood by the Boers by the destruction of the armoured train sent out from ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~army~~ ^{army} by the ~~boer~~ ^{boer} ~~reverse~~ ^{reverse} inflicted upon the British arms at Dundee. The next and greater sensation was caused by the ^{more serious} ~~greater~~ reverse they themselves ^{suffered} ~~incurred~~ at Blauwslaagte. The excitement over this affair was ~~at~~ the more intense from the fact that the majority of the men comprising General Hock's command were Johannesburg men, with some few from Krugersdorp and Pretoria.

With reference to the assertion so frequently made, that the Boers persistently understated their casualties after the various engagements it is a curious fact that the first reports of the ^{fight} ~~at~~ ~~Blauwslaagte~~ ^{at} ~~Blauwslaagte~~ published in Johannesburg, made



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COMMANDEERING BEDS FROM HOTELS.

the affair out to be far worse than it subsequently proved to have been. And I have found since I have been able to compare the returns made by the Boers of their casualties after the various engagements, with the estimates of Boer losses published in the English papers that the former have almost invariably been the more correct; in fact, the latter have often been simply grotesque in their wild assertions as to the numbers of Boers ~~put~~^{put} hors de combat on ^{each} occasion.

A curious proceeding in connection with war in the Transvaal is what is known as "commandeering," a word which covers a wide range of procedure. Not only are the soldiers commandeered by their Fieldcornets to go out to fight, but by the law of the country, the Government as the right, in time of war, to ^{seize} ~~commandeer~~ ^{seize} every ~~individual~~^{adult male}, irrespective of nationality, to the extent of £15, in either cash or goods. Should more than that amount be commandeered from any person, the difference is either paid in cash at the time, in the case of goods being commandeered, or, as is generally done, a receipt for the goods, indicating ^{the amount} ~~the amount~~ to be paid for them is given by

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commandeering officer on behalf of the Government, and a settlement is effected after the war is over.

A more simple and effective method of obtaining the means of war it would be difficult to conceive, particularly as there is no limit to the amount which may be commandeered from any individual, firm, or company. Thus, the whole of the horses belonging to the tramway company, numbering some two hundred, were commandeered in three batches; leading, at first, to the running of trams at intervals of from

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forty to fifty minutes instead of only a few minutes previously; then to the restriction of the service to the main route, and finally, on the last batch being appropriated, to the suspension of the ~~service~~^{traffic} altogether. However, as by that time, there were very few people left to patronise the trams, no great hardship ensued from the discontinuance of the service.

most other things commandeered were beds from hotels, hats of convicts being used for the purpose of conveying them and caps for them in the accounts, viz. that you note a notable instance was the commandeering by the

Government of the whole of the September output of gold from the mines, amounting in value to only half-a-million sterling; a coup which

created a profound sensation throughout south Africa
and, doubtless, in Europe as well.

Unfortunately, the general commandeering of
the money and goods taking place at the commence-
ment of the war, afforded an opportunity for acts of
the most bare-faced highway robbery, for many
unscrupulous rascals, posing as officials duly author-
ized by the Government thereto, and displaying a piece
of paper with something in Dutch written thereon,
which nine out of ten of their victims did not under-
stand - boldly proceeded to commandeer the cash from
the pockets of all and sundry in the public thorough-
fares. In this way many hapless Nittlars were
deprived of the few pounds they still possessed and had.

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In consequence, to leave the town absolutely penniless.
On these facts becoming known to the authorities, Commandant
Luthe at once issued a notice forbidding commandeering
by any persons in the streets, and warning storekeepers and
others from whom goods might be ^{requisitioned} ~~commandeered~~ to satisfy
themselves as to the authority of the persons commandeering
before delivering up their goods.



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