

# PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

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CLOSED  
UNTIL

11/17

C0537/772

To remain Secret to remain Secret

EAST AFR. PROT  
UNION OF  
SOUTH AFRICA  
5525

5525  
REC'D  
REC'D 3 FEB 16

Secret

Colonial Office  
1916  
3 Feb.  
Last previous Paper.  
470  
5520f

German East Africa  
Telegraphic corresp. with Lord Buxton  
and Sir H. Smith-Dorrien.

To War Office 4 Feb.

Mr Buxton  
Mr Reid  
Sup. Kider directed that this be  
registered for record. P. 14?  
W. 14. 3/2/16  
at once  
H. J. R.  
3/11/16  
Mr Buxton  
Pl. see Mr Butler's minute on  
ship in line.

Next subsequent Paper.  
1) Ser. 5783 O.S. 2f.

Pl. to Mr. ...  
Further paper re corresp.  
etc. ...  
3/2/16

Mr. Michtig

10 -

I borrowed this from

you. Will you please  
send to the W.O. a

copy of today's Secret  
telegram to Lord

Buxton about the command

in East Africa so that  
we have a copy to

send to Col. Hankey

done  
JAB

3.2.16

4

Copies of Lord Buxton's  
telegrams sent to the  
Prime Minister & to  
H. S. of B. for War.

2.2.16

1.50 p.m.

SECRET

From General Smith-Dorrien to War Office.

(Handed in at Naisenberg)

31st January, 1916,

5.50 p.m.

S.S. 1026.

It is the opinion of the doctors that I shall not be sufficiently restored to health to reach East Africa in time to take charge of the operations before the rains commence, that is, before the middle of March. This would not matter if the instructions given to me by the War Office are adhered to and the attack on the Kilimanjaro position is postponed until after the rains. There is, however, another factor to be taken into consideration: I am informed by the Governor-General that if the attack on the above position is postponed until after the rains, the effect of the long delay may react adversely on recruiting and also on the political situation in this country. I regret that I have not sufficient local knowledge of the military situation in British East Africa to justify my advising the War Office as to the advisability of this attack before the rains but I do think that by 1st March there will be sufficient troops to enable it to be carried out, although units from South Africa would be very highly trained and one infantry brigade only has been recruited up to establishment since my arrival and also the two 6" howitzer batteries and the naval guns and the motor vehicles fitted to carry water will not arrive in time to be used before the rains. Before coming to a decision there must also be taken into consideration the fact that any military set back in East Africa before the rains would do more political harm in South Africa than postponement of the offensive until after the rains. If the War Office decide on the operations against Kilimanjaro position before the rains, the Government will refer as to the commander for in

P. Operations

From General Smith Corrier to War Office

Handed in at Zulzenberg

1st March 1905

5.50 p.m.

S.D. 1085.

It is the opinion of the doctors that I shall not be sufficiently restored to health to reach East Africa in time to take charge of the operations before the rains commence that is before the middle of March. This would not matter if the instructions given to me by the War Office are adhered to and the attack on the Kilimanjaro position is postponed until after the rains. There is, however, another factor to be taken into consideration: I am informed by the Governor-General that if the attack on the above position is postponed until after the rains, the effect of the long delay may react adversely on recruiting and also on the political situation in this country. I regret that I have not sufficient local knowledge of the military situation in British East Africa to justify my advising the War Office as to the advisability of this attack before the rains but I should think that by 1st March there will be sufficient troops to enable it to be carried out, although units from South Africa cannot be very highly trained and one infantry brigade only has been recruited up to establishment since my arrival and also the two 5" howitzer batteries and the naval guns and the motor vehicles fitted to carry water will not arrive in time to be used before the rains. Before coming to a decision there must also be taken into consideration the fact that any military set back in East Africa before the rains would do more political harm in South Africa than a postponement of the offensive until after the rains. If the War Office decide on the operations against Kilimanjaro position before the rains, a difficulty will arise as to the commander for in

November

November last two officers were sent by the Union Government to report on the situation in East Africa and their report was adverse to General Tighe having a broad enough mind & sufficient experience of dealings with considerable bodies of mounted troops that the Union Government are very emphatic in their desire that General Tighe should not hold the supreme command and in favour in that opinion as some of his tactical views do not appear to me to be sound. It is not easy to suggest a remedy unless General Smuts were appointed to command: he is on the spot and could reach ~~reach~~ East Africa quickly and is in touch with military situation in that country. On the other hand, if offensive operations are not to commence until after the rains, I would suggest that General Tighe should remain in command until I go up to East Africa in March. With the exception of Simpson-Baikie, who leaves here this week to join him, he has the whole of my staff working under him already.

Have wired a copy of this telegram to the Governor-General.



against Kilimanjaro position before the rains, a difficulty will arise as to the commander for in November last two officers were sent by the Union Government to report on the situation in East Africa and their report was so adverse to General Tighe having a broad enough mind or sufficient experience of dealings with considerable bodies of mounted troops that the Union Government are very emphatic in their desire that General Tighe should not hold the supreme command and I concur in that opinion as some of his tactical views do not appear to be to be sound. It is not easy to suggest a remedy unless General Smuts were appointed to command: he is on the spot and could reach East Africa quickly and is in touch with military situation in that country. On the other hand, if offensive operations are not to commence until after the rains, I would suggest that General Tighe should remain in command until I go up to East Africa in March. With the exception of Simpson-Baikie, who leaves here this week to join him, he has the whole of my staff working under him already.

Have wired a copy of this telegram to the Governor-General.

A  
12

IMMEDIATE.

CONFIDENTIAL.

**TELEGRAM.**

Decypher of a telegram from the Governor<sup>Gen.</sup> of the Union of S Africa  
received at the Colonial Office the 31<sup>st</sup> day of January 1916  
at 11.3 p.m.

Private & Personal Smith Dorrien  
has communicated to me telegram he is  
despatching to War Office today in regard  
to his illness and command. I shall  
see General Botha and J.C. Smuts tomorrow  
and will then telegraph fully. Meanwhile  
trust no decision will be come to.

Buxton

IMMEDIATE.  
CONFIDENTIAL.

**TELEGRAM.**

Decypher of a telegram from the Governor <sup>General</sup> of the Union of S. A.

received at the Colonial Office the 1<sup>st</sup> day of February 1916  
at 8.45 p. m

Secret My telegram private & personal of 31 Jan 7.

With a view out of consideration for General Smith-Dorrien I have refrained from communicating with you since his arrival in regard to German East Africa position and the view we take of the War Office instructions he received. Smith-Dorrien's unfortunately illness has prevented us from discussing the position with him; but BAIKIE Chief of Staff came up here and was personally fully informed of the views of General Botha, J. C. Smuts and myself. But in view of Smith-Dorrien's telegram of yesterday to the War Office we think that in justice to ourselves we should put you in possession of our views.

We were much disturbed and alarmed on arrival of Smith-Dorrien to learn that War Office had definitely instructed him to postpone any considerable or active operations until after the rainy season. This policy of War Office appears to us to be a serious mistake and fraught with grave disadvantages.

We believe that on military grounds an early advance would be most effective; and that forces which will be at the disposal of the S. O. C. in February would be amply sufficient for purposes of a general offensive. That even assuming the maximum estimate of enemy's forces is correct the main operations might be well advanced before the rains. Further that operations once begun the rains would not necessarily constitute a

bar to their continuance.

On the other hand we feel strongly that a deliberate delay except as regards minor operations until June or July will have serious adverse effects.

(1.) It will cause great disappointment and discontent and <sup>(I suspect)</sup> morale amongst Union and especially the burger forces. They will fail to appreciate any good reason for the delay.

(2.) It will involve retention in East Africa of the forces for the most part ~~of~~ unoccupied during unhealthy season. This will lead to much sickness amongst the men and to almost certain loss of many if not all the horses and the rapid success of campaign depends largely on the efficiency of the mounted force.

(3.) The delay will add enormously to the cost.

(4.) Politically delay and its consequent results will be most damaging to the prestige of Union Govt. and play into the hands of disloyal sections.

I must point out also that the instructions of the War Office appear to be a reversal of intentions of H.M.G. as we understood them here. We believed last autumn when the Union Govt. was asked to provide a large force for German E. Africa that H.M.G. contemplated early operations there. (See your telegram ~~for~~ for instance private and personal of Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>) Union Govt. took prompt and successful action to meet this view. If it had been known that no early forward movement was intended it would have been more expedient to delay recruitment and preparations here.

You will recollect also that the chief reason why J.C. Smuts was unable to accept the offer to take command was that operations were to take place ~~at~~ early in the year when the House of Assembly was sitting.

Opinion attributed in Smith-Dorrien's telegram to the War Office to me is fully shared by General Botha and J.C. Smuts. They also agree entirely in the advisability of sending this telegram and its terms.

Buxton

A  
12

IMMEDIATE.  
CONFIDENTIAL.

TELEGRAM.

General

Decypher of a telegram from the Governor of Union of S Africa

received at the Colonial Office the 1 day of February 1916  
at 7.45 p. m

Very private & personal. My telegram sent of today  
Smith-Dorrien <sup>is</sup> has been very ill. Doubt myself if he will be  
really well enough to undertake campaign even if delayed and  
he would probably knock up again if he went.

During last fortnight I have with Smith Dorrien's knowledge been  
discussing with General Botha & J.C. Smuts question whether if HMG  
desired it J.C. Smuts should undertake command in the event of  
Smith Dorrien relinquishing it.

Smith Dorrien first suggested J.C. Smuts might undertake command  
provisionally pending his recovery. General Botha and J.C. Smuts found  
great objection to this and Smith Dorrien agreed.

If however command had to be relinquished by Smith Dorrien J.C. Smuts  
if desired would under the circumstances undertake it though immediate  
objections to his doing so still hold good. But he could only undertake it  
if he were given free hand to make early forward movement if  
after arriving in country he still believed it feasible

Buxton

sent in copies  
4 20  
15  
1876

DRAFT telegram from the Colonial Office to South Africa

*Mr. Smith-Dorrien*  
I send following telegram as result of meeting of War Committee this morning.

On receipt of Smith-Dorrien's telegram of <sup>11 January</sup> instant, His Majesty's Government realised necessity of replacing him and had contemplated deputing Lieutenant-General Hunter Weston with Brigadier General Hoskins as Chief of Staff but if his political engagements permit His Majesty's Government will gladly appoint General Smuts, and would propose to detail General Hoskins an officer who knows the country and has wide experience of native troops to act as his Chief of Staff. General Smuts would of course receive from the War Office such instructions as may be necessary from time to time regarding the conduct of the campaign as in the case of Commanders in all other theatres.

As regards question of commencement of operations on a considerable scale, the War Committee decided that operations were to be confined before the rains to such measures as were necessary for security of British territory on Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's representations that the forces for more extended operations could not be assembled in time, that it was most important to avoid the risk of anything in the nature

nature of a reverse in view of previous events in East Africa, and that the extent of country and strength of enemy's positions were such that the campaign would last into rainy season which on grounds of effect on health of troops was inadvisable.

If on arrival General Smute after full consideration recommends campaign with object of decisive defeat of the enemy before the rains begin in early April, the War Committee is prepared to agree, but it must be pointed out to General Smute that it is of the first importance that such a campaign should not be begun until he is assured that he has the necessary means to bring it to a successful conclusion. Failure to complete operations at this stage might lead to very unsatisfactory results.

In B 2.  
The word small like can do 7  
was to be located in the paper

17

10 Downing Street  
Whitehall S.W. 1

Draft Tel. from C.O. to A. Freeman  
I send following telegram to General Smuts  
On receipt of telegram of 5/8/1918  
H.M. Govt realized necessity of replacing  
him and had contemplated departing  
~~Brigadier Hooker~~ to Gen. Hines, Boston  
\* but if his <sup>own</sup> political engagements  
permit H.M. Govt will be glad to  
approve the <sup>appointment</sup> of Gen. Smuts,  
and would <sup>prefer to</sup> detail ~~him~~, Gen. Hooker  
an officer who knows the country  
and has wide experience of native  
trips to act as <sup>his</sup> C.G.S. Gen  
Smuts would of course receive  
~~such instructions~~ for Ulster  
such instructions as may be necessary  
from time to time regarding <sup>the</sup> conduct of  
the campaign as in the case of all  
campaigns in all other theatres.



The War Committee is prepared to agree to the appointment of General Smuts to command in East Africa if his political engagements permit.

The War Office propose to send Brig.-General Hoskins, an officer who knows the country and has had wide experience of native troops, to act as his Chief of the General Staff.

As regards question of commencement of operations on a considerable scale, the War Committee decided that operations were to be confined before the rains to such measures as were necessary for security of British territory on Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's representations that the forces for more extended operations could not be assembled in time, that it was most important to avoid the risk of anything in the nature of a reverse in view of previous events in East Africa, and that the extent of country and strength of enemy's positions were such that the campaign would last into rainy season which on grounds of effect on health of troops was inadvisable.

If on arrival General Smuts after full consideration recommends campaign with object of decisive defeat of the enemy before the rains, the War Committee is prepared to agree, but it must be pointed out to General Smuts that it is of the first importance that such a campaign should not be begun until he is assured that he has the necessary means to bring

begin in early April

A *... ..*  
*operates*

bring it to a successful conclusion. ~~A~~ *... ..*  
at this stage ~~would~~ have the worst possible  
effect. *... ..*

*Very ... ..*

Sent in cypher 4 20 pm  
February 3rd 1916  
Spence

20

TELEGRAM. The Secretary of State for the Colonies to the  
Governor-General of the Union of South Africa.  
(Sent. in cypher. 4 20 pm. 3rd February, 1916.)

---

Private and Personal. *With reference to my*

*Secret Telegram of today.* Our General Staff think it of the utmost  
importance that Hoskins should go as Chief of Staff  
and I feel sure this will be agreeable to General  
Smuts. Please let me know as soon as possible  
whether General Smuts can undertake the command.

BONAR LAW.

Private Post

Can you stay ~~in~~

think it

important that Morris

should go as chief of staff

but since this is not

agreed to by the staff

<sup>please</sup> you will let me ~~know~~

know as soon as possible

whether the staff can

mediate the case.

CO. 5825

Cap

U.S.A.F.

22

4 Feb 1916

Secret

DRAFT

Re Sec

W.D.

MINUTE.

Mr. G. 4/2/16

Mr. ~~Anderson~~ 4-2-16

Mr.

Mr.

Sir G. Fildes

Sir H. Just.

Sir J. Anderson.

Mr. Steel-Maitland

Mr. Bonar Law

I am the to transmit  
 to you the ...  
 before to me ...  
 enclosed copy of a ...  
 which has been sent to  
 the Gen. Sec of the ...  
 of Africa as regards  
 the command of the  
 force in ~~Africa~~ East  
 Africa and ~~the~~ future  
 operations in that  
 theatre.

(SD) HJR

To eq. v. r. of. 3 Feb  
 - 5825 Done

Conson

already done  
89m 4/2/16

War Office,  
Whitehall,  
S.W.

4th February, 1916.

The Director of Military Operations presents his compliments to the Permanent Under Secretary for the Colonies, and would be much obliged if he could have as soon as possible, for the information of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, a copy of the telegram sent yesterday to the Secretary of State, embodying the decision of the War Committee with regard to the question of the Command in East Africa.

fr  
J.M.O.

The Permanent Under Secretary  
for the Colonies.  
Colonial Office.

two Botany

two ~~Rest~~ 5

in 5 rides 5

25

to see

Apr 5, 1916

SECRET

From Earl Kitchener to General Sir H. Smith-Dorrien

Cape Town

5.10 p.m.

4/2/16.

12843 cipher. Reference your S.D. 1083 of January 31st.

I very much regret to hear that your health will not permit of your proceeding to East Africa. As it is very necessary that a Commander should proceed at once, the War Committee has decided to make arrangements for an officer to take your place. I will inform you who is selected as soon as possible.

PRINTED.

C.2. Copy to S. of S.  
C.I.G.S.  
M.S.I.  
M.O.I.a.  
D.C.I.G.S.  
D.M.O.  
M.O.I.  
D.S.D.  
Colonial Office



SECRET.

27

Extract from the Proceedings of a Meeting of the War Committee held on February 3rd 1916.

COMMAND IN EAST AFRICA.

In view of the necessity for replacing General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, whose state of health does not enable him to continue in Command of the operations in East Africa, it was decided that this Command should be offered to General Smuts. The Colonial Office to communicate this decision to the Governor-General.

WAR OFFICE,  
WHITENALL.  
S.W.

8. 2. 16

My dear Butler,

We had a telegram from S. J.

despatched at 3.40 on Saturday asking  
whether he could come home by the mail  
leaving on the 12<sup>th</sup>. I replied myself on  
Sunday morning saying it was all right

we had telegraphed on the 4<sup>th</sup>

saying we feared he would have to be succeeded  
He replied, in the telegram referred to above,  
"I realize no other decision is possible."

I think it is all in order now,  
but many thanks for letting us know of Lord  
Beaton's telegram. Yours ever  
H. C. G. C.

29

Decipher of Tel from Genl  
U.S. Afr. Sect. CO. 3-43 M 2 Feb 1916

---

Private and Personal for your  
information. Smith D. up to Sunday  
had not heard a word from the War  
office. The only information that he had  
so far received was through me!

(Paraphrase sent to Creedy.)

8.2.16

IMMEDIATE  
CONFIDENTIAL.

**TELEGRAM.**

Decypher of a telegram from the Governor <sup>General</sup> of the Union of S Africa  
received at the Colonial Office the 8 day of Feb 1916  
at 7.15 a. m  
Clear the line  
Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> Private & personal

It appears that General Hoskins organized and commanded  
the National Scouts during Boer war

I feel bound to state that if this comes out it will seriously  
undermine his moral authority as Chief of Staff with Union forces  
especially burghers.

The National Scouts are despised as traitors and are now  
for the most part rebels or extreme nationalists.

Smuts thinks this should be brought to your notice, though he  
does not press for any action as qualifications of Hoskins in other  
respects seem quite exceptional.

Berston

Copy

Downing Street,

32

8th February, 1916.

Dear General Robertson,

I enclose copy of telegram received from Buxton about Hoskins and copy of reply which I propose to send if you approve.

I have tried to word it in such a way as to make it almost certain that Smuts will not interfere with the appointment of Hoskins while he will share the responsibility for it. I understand from Lord K that you are sending particulars to enable me to reply to Buxton's last message about rank, etc.

Yours very truly,

(Sd) A. Bonar Law.

P & P.

The W.C. as I have  
 mentioned at length in  
 volume 2. There is a  
 thing of ~~it~~ and  
 we do not think that  
 is the operation in Egypt  
 Africa where he would  
 go down his long  
 command Natural

I sent word ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~visit~~ <sup>visit</sup>  
his mother but on such  
a point I must wait  
for the best of you.

I gather from his letters  
that he still appears  
of nervousness but  
and I shall be glad  
if you will ~~write~~ <sup>write</sup>  
~~write~~ <sup>write</sup> to him

**TELEGRAM. The Secretary of State for the Colonies to the  
Governor-General of the Union of South Africa.**

(Sent, in cypher,

8th February, 1916.)

---

**Private and Personal.**

The War Office as I have indicated attach great value to Hoskins being Chief of Staff and we do not think that in the operations in East Africa where he would go direct his having commanded National Scouts would much affect his position but on such a point Smuts must be the best judge. I gather from his telegram that he still approves of Hoskins going and I shall be glad if you will confirm this.

**BONAR LAW.**



TELEGRAM. The Secretary of State for the Colonies to the  
Governor-General of the Union of South Africa.

(Sent, in cypher, 8th February, 1916.)

---

Private and Personal.

The War Office as I have indicated attach great value to Hoskins being Chief of Staff and we do not think that in the operations in East Africa where he would go direct his having commanded National Scouts would much affect his position but on such a point Smuts must be the best judge. I gather from his telegram that he still approves of Hoskins going and I shall be glad if you will confirm this.

BOHAR LAW.



8/2/16

Dear Mr. [Name]

I understand our military security  
has already sent you a draft telegram  
~~from~~ <sup>for</sup> committee to take a more  
effective security at present & to amend  
the forms in G. A. [Name] I enclose a  
revised draft, for your approval,  
regarding [Name], but if you still  
prefer your draft I would not object

Yours truly  
W. W. [Name]

Telegram

From - The Secretary of State for the Colonies

To - The Governor-General of the Union of South Africa

-----  
*Private & personal Your Telegram of 17th Feb*

Hoskins did not organize the National Scouts though he was ordered by superior authority to command them and of course could only obey The War Office as I have indicated attach great value to Hoskins being Chief of Staff and we do not think that in the operations in East Africa where he would go direct his having commanded National Scouts would affect his position and we are glad that Smuts does not press for any action I gather from this that he still approves of Hoskins going and I shall be glad if you will confirm this as Hoskins is here waiting to start

*Please convey to Smith Dorrien my personal regret at his unfortunate illness.*

*Bonar Law.*

*(The S. of S. accepted this version in preference to his own, adding the last paragraph)*

31

Decypher of Telegram from  
Governor-General, Union of South Africa,  
recd. C.O. 3.40 pm. of Feb. 1916.

---

Private and personal your telegram  
of 8<sup>th</sup> February Hoskins. J. C. Smuts  
will be very glad to have him.

Copy

Downing Street, .

9th February, 1916.

38  
and

Dear Sir William Robertson,

Mr. Bonar Law wishes me to send you  
*of an telegram and*  
the enclosed copy of Lord Buxton's reply as to the  
appointment of General Hoskins to the staff of  
General J. C. Smuts.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd) F.G.A. Butler.

8 16

**PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE**

**END**

**TOTAL EXPOSURES →**