TURKEY. No. 1 (1895).

(PART I.)

CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO THE

ASIATIC PROVINCES OF TURKEY.

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
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Correspondence relating to the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey.

Part I.

EVENTS AT SASSOON AND COMMISSION OF INQUIRY AT MOUSH.

No. 1.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received July* 30.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 24, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, suggesting that Mr. Hallward, after taking up his post at Van, should be authorized to visit Bitlis and Moush, and to recommend Mr. Graves' suggestion to your Lordship's favourable consideration.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, July* 12, 1894.

THE accounts which have reached me lately from trustworthy private sources of the present condition of affairs at Bitlis are so deplorable, and the oppression and exactions of the Vali Tahsin Pasha are said to have assumed such proportions, that I venture to think it desirable that your Excellency should be more fully and accurately informed on the subject.

I would therefore suggest that Mr. Hallward, after taking up his post at Van, should be authorized to visit Bitlis and Moush, returning to Van round the north and east shores of the lake. This journey would occupy about twenty-five to thirty days, including halts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 2.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, July* 31, 1894.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 24th instant, recommending the suggestion made by Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum that, in view of the deplorable state of affairs in the Van district, Mr. Hallward, after taking up his post as Vice-Consul at Van, should be authorized to visit Bitlis and Moush, and I have to request your Excellency to inform Mr. Graves that I sanction the proposed journey.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

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No. 3.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received August* 31.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, August* 31, 1894.

I HAVE been informed at the Porte, in answer to an inquiry, that Armenians at Talori, in the Vilayet of Bitlis, have risen, and that in order to quell the revolt a small number of troops are being sent to the scene.

This inquiry was made after having received a telegram from Mr. Graves at Erzeroum, in which he reported a movement of troops.

The Grand Vizier also says that movements are going on at Tokat, near Sivas, as well as at Talori, and that the Armenian Revolutionary Committees are clearly proved to be organizers of them.

No. 4.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received September* 3.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, September* 3, 1894.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 31st ultimo, Sassoon revolt is confirmed by a telegram from Mr. Graves at Erzeroum, who adds that the movement of troops continues, and that three regiments of Kurdish irregular cavalry, with Hussein Pasha, a Kurdish Chief, are expected to join the troops at Mush.

Hussein was arrested and brought to Erzeroum last June, but has now been released.

A strong protest against employing irregular troops to suppress the disturbances was at once addressed to the Grand Vizier by me.

No. 5.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received September* 3.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, September* 3, 1894, 7 P.M.

WITH reference to my previous telegram of to-day respecting the revolt of Armenians at Sassoon, the following information has been given me by the Grand Vizier.

The Commander-in-chief of the 4th Army Corps, Mushir Zeki Pasha, has received instructions personally to proceed from Erzinghian to Talori to restore order, together with a sufficient number of regular troops for the purpose.

He has the strictest injunctions to see that no excesses are committed.

In place of the regulars, Mush will be garrisoned by three squadrons (not regiments) of Hamidieh cavalry; but these will not enter the districts where the disturbances have arisen.

No. 6.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, September* 4, 1894.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of the 3rd instant relative to the rising at Sassoon, and I approve the representations which you have made to the Grand Vizier.

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No. 7.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received September* 10.)

My Lord, *Therapia, September* 4, 1894.

I TRANSMIT, for your Lordship's information, a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum reporting that several battalions have left that place in the direction of Mush, and that measures are being taken to call out the Reserve and enrol recruits.

The reason assigned for these extensive military preparations is a revolt of Armenians at Talori, in the Sassoon district of the Bitlis Vilayet. I have questioned the Grand Vizier on the subject, and he stated that the Armenians had risen, and that considerable bloodshed had taken place.

I was unable, however, to learn any particulars of what had taken place.

On the 3rd instant, as I informed your Lordship by telegraph, Mr. Graves reported that three regiments of Kurdish irregular cavalry had been dispatched to the disturbed district, and that a Kurdish Chief, named Hussein Pasha, of very evil repute, had left Erzeroum with the supposed intention of taking command of them.

I considered this news to be of so serious a character that I at once sent a private letter, of which a copy is inclosed, to the Grand Vizier, pointing out the danger of employing irregular troops for the suppression of disturbances. Yesterday I called upon his Highness at the Porte, when he assured me that the Hamidié troops about to be employed consisted of only three squadrons, and that they would be sent no further than Mush, where they would act as garrison in place of the regular troops, which were leaving that town for Talori.

He gave me to understand that the disturbances were confined to the latter place, and that there was no doubt that the revolted Armenians would promptly disperse as soon as the military force, which had been sent to restore order, made its appearance.

He added that the Mushir, Zeki Pasha, who commands the 4th Army Corps, has been ordered to go in person to Talori, and has been specially instructed to allow no excesses. The Grand Vizier took pains at the same time to impress upon me that the Hamidié regiments were not so undisciplined as I supposed, that they were under the command of Turkish officers of the regular army, and were being trained on the same system as the Cossack regiments in Russia.

In referring to the encounters which so frequently take place between the Kurds and Armenians the Grand Vizier asserted that the latter were often the aggressors; that in the mountainous districts there was little difference between the two races, and that in the settled parts of the country the Armenians had much the best of it, and that, owing to their superior wealth and intelligence, the Kurds were entirely in their hands.

I informed his Highness that the accounts I received from British Consular officers gave a widely different account, both of the Hamidié regiments and of the relations between the Armenians and Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 7.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, August* 25, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to report that orders have been received here to call out the First Reserve ("Ikhtiyat") of the Eighth Division (4th Army Corps), the head-quarters of which are at Erzeroum. At the same time, it is said that measures are being taken to enrol the recruits of this year's levy before the usual time, and considerable activity is being shown in military circles. Two battalions of the 25th Regiment of infantry have left Erzeroum, it is supposed, for Mush, as well as a detachment of mountain artillery, and it is said that a battalion of rifles and two other infantry battalions are on their way from Erzingian to Erzeroum.

Reports reach me from various quarters of very serious disorders in the Sassoon district of the Bitlis Vilayet, and it would seem as if the Sassoon region were in a

condition of open rebellion. It is, however, difficult to believe that these disorders alone account for the extensive and costly military preparations which are in progress.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 7.

Sir P. Currie to the Grand Vizier.

(Translation.)
My dear Grand Vizier, *Therapia, September* 2, 1894.

I HAVE just received some very serious news from Erzeroum. If true, a state of things would arise which could not fail to have most lamentable results to the interests of the Empire.

I am told that three Kurdish regiments of irregular cavalry are being sent against the Armenians at Sassoon.

It is also stated that Hussein Pasha, of the Haidaranli tribe, whose misdeeds are well known, and who was brought to Erzeroum three months ago under a military escort, had left that city, and is to put himself at the head of the regiments in question.

I need hardly remind your Highness that it was the acts of irregular troops in Bulgaria which produced so painful an impression in Europe, and were the cause of so many misfortunes to Turkey. I earnestly beg you, my dear Grand Vizier, to do your utmost to prevent the repetition of similar occurrences.

If it is absolutely necessary to order troops to Sassoon, could not regular and disciplined troops be sent, and cannot they be placed under the command of an officer of known discretion, in whom His Imperial Majesty the Sultan has full confidence?

Above all things the Kurdish regiments should be prevented from approaching the disturbed districts.

Being unable to see your Highness to-day, I send you these few lines, so as not to lose time in calling your attention to a matter which seems to me to be one of exceptional gravity.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 8.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, September* 13, 1894.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 4th instant relative to the steps taken by the Turkish Government to repress the revolt in the Sassoon district of the Vilayet of Bitlis.

I approve the terms of the private note which you addressed to the Grand Vizier on the 2nd instant, urging the Porte not to employ irregular troops for this purpose.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 9.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received September 20.)

(Telegraphic.) *Therapia, September* 20, 1894, 2·10 P.M.

HER Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum telegraphs that orders have been given for the Kurdish irregulars to return to their homes from Mush, whence an outbreak of cholera among the troops is reported, and that the reserves have been disbanded.

There are no reports of any hostilities, and the belief is that the importance of the disturbance has been greatly exaggerated by the authorities at Bitlis, to which place Zeki Pasha has gone.

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No. 10.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.—(*Received at the Foreign Office, September* 24.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, September* 1, 1894.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the rumoured revolt in the Sassoon district of Bitlis is fully confirmed, and that the military preparations for its repression are being actively pushed on.

I learn that the notorious Kurdish Chief, Hussein Pasha, of Patnotz, who has been under surveillance here for the past three months, has been allowed to leave Erzeroum this week, and it is generally believed that he is to join the troops at Moush with a large force of Hamidiyé cavalry of the Haidaranli tribe, though the civil and military authorities maintain silence on that point.

I have no hesitation in saying that these barbarous auxiliaries are entirely inefficient, except for purposes of rapine and atrocity, and if it be true that they are to be employed for the repression of internal disorders, the most disastrous consequences may be confidently anticipated.

I have communicated the substance of the above to your Excellency by telegram to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 11.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received September* 30.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, September* 30, 1894, 10 P.M.

CONSUL GRAVES telegraphs that Zeki Pasha has passed through Erzeroum on his return to Erzinjan. Mr. Graves informs me that the disturbances were much exaggerated, and that the troops will be withdrawn from Mush.

Zeki Pasha, it appears, does not anticipate any further trouble in Bitlis.

No. 12.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received October* 4.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, October* 4, 1894, 7·50 P.M.

VICE-CONSUL HALLWARD telegraphs from Mush following account of recent disturbances :—

"The Bekiranli Kurds who come from Diarbekir to pass the summer on the Antogh Dagh where there are several large Armenian villages, made a raid on the Armenians, and carried off cattle and other plunder. The Armenians, in the hope of recovering their property, made an attack on the Kurds, and in the encounter two or three persons on either side lost their lives. The affair was greatly exaggerated by the Governor of Bitlis, who applied for a large number of troops in order to suppress the disturbance. About the middle of August seven battalions of troops and one Hamidieh Regiment arrived here. The Hamidieh Regiment, however, never got as far as the Antogh Mountains, and left after ten days.

"Colonel Ismaïl Bey, commanding the regular troops, attacked the Armenians and plundered their villages. Several Armenians were killed, and the troops, it is said, were guilty of horrible atrocities. I intend in two or three days to start for Bitlis, passing by the scene of the disturbances, in order to verify the reported atrocities.

"The Mushir came here from Erzinjan a month ago and spent a few days on the Antogh Dagh, and then returned, as he considered the affair to be at an end."

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No. 13.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received October 5.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, October 5, 1894, 3·20 P.M.*

VICE-CONSUL HALLWARD telegraphs further from Moush that he hears that in Talori villages and churches were plundered and destroyed, and many men, women, and children killed by soldiers. There were four deaths from cholera at Moush on the 3rd, and the place is inclosed by a sanitary cordon with ten days' quarantine. Although the Vice-Consul was ready to perform quarantine, the Governor refuses escort to Armenian villages without order from Constantinople.

Shall I inform Porte of these reports, urging that they should, for their own justification, facilitate the Vice-Consul's visit, and press for escort?

No. 14.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.—(Received at the Foreign Office, October 8.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, September 12, 1894.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting that he had been informed that certain soldiers and zaptiehs had been killed by Armenians somewhere to the south of Moush, and that a considerable military force had been dispatched in pursuit of the perpetrators of the crime.

This report, no doubt, relates to some incident of the outbreak in Sassoon, reported in my despatch of the 1st instant and various preceding despatches and telegrams.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure in No. 14.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, August 31, 1894.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I have been informed from official sources that two zaptiehs and ten soldiers were killed eight or nine days ago by Armenians at a village called Maidin [?], south of Moush, and that some "Hamidié" troopers and six battalions of infantry have gone in pursuit of the perpetrators of the crime, who have taken refuge in the Sassoon Mountains.

Unofficial information, however, leads me to suppose that Kurds, and not Armenians, were the authors of the crime; it is said that the soldiers and zaptiehs tried to secure some cattle and sheep belonging to Kurds, in lieu of taxes, when they were attacked by the owners, with the result stated above.

It seems very improbable that any Armenians of the Moush district would be either bold enough or strong enough to make such slaughter of Government troops, as, by all accounts, they are for the most part miserably poor, and without either the will or the means to commit the deed attributed to them by the local authorities.

It is impossible for me to say at present what the truth of the case may be, but I will not fail to communicate to you any further reliable details of the occurrence that I may be able to furnish.

I have, &c.

(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

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No. 15.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, October* 8, 1894.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of the 5th instant regarding reports of outrages committed by Turkish troops in the Bitlis Vilayet.

You should inform the Turkish Government of these reports, and advise them, for their own justification, to facilitate Mr. Hallward's proposed visit to the scene of the alleged atrocities.

No. 16.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received October* 9.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, October* 9, 1894, 9·50 P.M.

AS instructed in your Lordship's telegram of yesterday, I mentioned the reports I had received from Vice-Consul Hallward to the Grand Vizier. His Highness maintains that Mr. Hallward's sources of information, including the Mutessarif of Moush, who is actuated by a personal feeling of hostility to the Vali of Bitlis, are unreliable, and refuses to admit the truth of the reports. The Grand Vizier says that Mr. Hallward's presence at this moment in the disturbed districts would raise expectations of English intervention, and encourage renewal of the insurrection which has now been suppressed, and he urged, therefore, that the Vice-Consul's journey should be postponed for some weeks. Facilities for it would be given as soon as the sanitary cordon was removed, say, in two months' time.

I told his Highness that I must refer the matter to your Lordship before giving him an answer.

No. 17.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received October* 10.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, October* 10, 1894, 11 A.M.

VICE-CONSUL HALLWARD telegraphed yesterday from Moush asking me to obtain orders to the Valis of Bitlis and Van to allow his party to pass without undergoing quarantine, subjecting them instead to a medical inspection before they entered the towns. Ten days' quarantine would, he said, bring his journey into winter. He reports ten deaths on the 7th and seven on the 8th, but says that there is no cholera in the villages although they communicate with the town.

No. 18.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received October* 10.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, October* 10, 1894, 11·30 A.M.

IN continuation of my preceding telegram, I have to inform your Lordship that there would not, in my opinion, be any chance of obtaining for Mr. Hallward exemption from quarantine. I propose, therefore, if your Lordship does not disapprove, to instruct him to return to Van at once.

No. 19.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, October* 12, 1894.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of the 9th instant.

I have to request you to inform the Grand Vizier that I regret that objection is made to Vice-Consul Hallward's proposed visit to the disturbed districts of the Vilayet of Bitlis, but that I will not, at the present moment, press the matter further.

You should communicate the statement made to you by the Grand Vizier to Vice-Consul Hallward, and instruct him to put off his visit.

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No. 20.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received October* 13.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, October* 13, 1894, 7·30 P.M.

IN accordance with your Lordship's telegram of yesterday, I to-day informed the Grand Vizier that Vice-Consul Hallward would be instructed to postpone his visit to the Talori district. I warned his Highness that in consequence of the abandonment of this journey Her Majesty's Government would not be in a position to correct even the most exaggerated versions of what had happened that might reach England. The Grand Vizier said that he had communicated to Rustem Pasha the report of the Mushir commanding the troops, and while admitting that the women and children had fled from the district during the actual fighting, he denied that any massacre had taken place. The flocks and herds, it was true, remained in the hands of the authorities, but any of the owners who returned to claim them were to receive back their property. The authorities would sell those not claimed and distribute the proceeds as relief.

No. 21.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received October* 20.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, October* 20, 1894, 10·30 A.M.

VICE-CONSUL HALLWARD'S journey. My telegram of 13th instant.

Mr. Hallward is at present undergoing quarantine near Mush. When this is done he will go on to Bitlis, arriving there about the 25th. He will return to Van from Bitlis.

No. 22.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received October* 22.)

My Lord, *Therapia, October* 15, 1894.

THE reports which I have received from Mr. Vice-Consul Hallward from Mush, and the substance of which I have telegraphed to your Lordship, show that the recent disturbances in the Vilayet of Bitlis have been suppressed by the Turkish Government with great severity. There appears to be no doubt that large numbers of the inhabitants have been killed, and that many others have fled, leaving their flocks and herds behind them, and that the district is almost entirely depopulated.

I had instructed Mr. Hallward, whose journey had been sanctioned by your Lordship so long ago as the 31st July, to proceed to Mush, when I first heard of the dispatch of troops to the disturbed districts, but an accident prevented his leaving at once, and it was not until the end of September that he reached Mush.

On the 4th October he telegraphed that, in consequence of an outbreak of cholera at Mush, a sanitary cordon had been drawn round the place, and that ten days' quarantine was imposed on all persons leaving for Sassoon. He was prepared to undergo quarantine, but the Turkish authorities refused to grant him an escort without instructions from Constantinople.

I thereupon requested the Grand Vizier to instruct the authorities at Mush to give Mr. Hallward the usual facilities, but at the earnest request of his Highness, who urged that Mr. Hallward's presence in the disturbed districts at the present moment would encourage a renewal of the insurrection, his journey was, with your Lordship's sanction, postponed for a time. Mr. Hallward himself represented that unless he could be exempted from quarantine, it would be too late in the season for him to undertake the journey.

In a telegram I received from him yesterday he says that he cannot vouch for the accuracy of the information given him at Mush, and, as he cannot visit the scene of action, I am unable at present to furnish your Lordship with a reliable account of what has taken place.

It may be useful, however, to recapitulate the circumstances, most of which have already been reported to your Lordship, that led to the lamentable events referred to.

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The district of Sassoon where Talori is situated, is the wildest and most mountainous part of Guendj, which is described as the worst governed Mutessariflic in the Empire. The Armenians who inhabit it, unlike those of the lowland districts, are a fierce and warlike race, hardly distinguishable from their Kurd neighbours, who exercise a sort of feudal authority over them, but do not, as a rule, oppress them further than by levying taxes on them, and requiring their help as vassals in their feuds and quarrels with the local authorities. There are 3,000 Armenians in the district, and 15,000 Kurds.* The latter have never been thoroughly subdued, and furnish neither recruits nor taxes to the Ottoman Government.

Colonel Chermside, who has drawn up for me a description of the Bitlis Vilayet, gives the following account of the Sassoon district:—

"Sassoon is a poor mountainous district, intersected by deep and precipitous gorges; it is said to take its name from Sannazar, one of the two sons of Sennacherib. It is traversed by no caravan routes, but by tracks used by the nomads in their migrations. There is good pasture and a considerable amount of forest. Intimate relations are maintained between the Armenians of Sassoon and the Kurds, their former feudal lords."

The troubles appear to have commenced in the summer of 1893, when some Kurdish tribes not belonging to the district attacked and plundered the village of Talori. The Mutessarif of Guendj arrived with an armed force; several Armenians were arrested but no Kurds, and the soldiers carried off whatever property had not been plundered by the marauders. The Mutessarif informed the Bitlis authorities that the Armenians were in revolt, and the latter withdrew in fear to the mountain fastnesses, where they passed the winter.

On learning these incidents from Mr. Boyajian, Acting Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, in May last, I brought them to the notice of the Grand Vizier, who gave me another version of the affair, and declared that the Armenians had attacked Moslems, and after killing them, had desecrated their corpses. He added that peace had been completely restored, and that no arrests had been made on either side. This version was no doubt supplied by the Bitlis authorities, but, according to the information obtained by Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, Mr. Boyajian's account was the true one, and the bad reputation of Tahsin Pasha, the Vali of Bitlis, makes his assertions unreliable.

According to Mr. Graves, there was reason to believe that the Bitlis Government had secretly encouraged the Kurds to pick a quarrel and attack the Armenians in force, but that the Talori men had made an obstinate defence and had killed large numbers of the aggressors. The action of the authorities was apparently prompted by a desire to destroy the independence of the district.

The Armenians of Talori having returned to their villages in the spring, gendarmes were sent there to collect arrears of taxes. The people protested that, in consequence of the treatment they had received at the hands of the Kurds, they were unable to contribute, not having enough to support life; and, while declaring their loyalty to the Government, they stated that it was impossible for them to pay taxes if they were not protected by the authorities against the Kurds.

The Kaïmakam of the district thereupon came into the village himself, and insulted and maltreated the inhabitants. The Talori villagers, exasperated by his conduct, set upon him and beat him. The Kaïmakam reported to the Mutessarif of Guendj that the villagers had rebelled, and asked for forces to coerce them. Three hundred gendarmes were sent, and the Armenians of Talori and of the neighbouring villages withdrew, some 1,500 strong, to the mountains. The gendarmes being unable to follow them, reinforcements were asked for, and the Vali of Bitlis called upon the Military Commandant at Erzinjan to send a strong military force to repress the movement, which he described as an insurrection of the Armenians. Extensive military preparations were forthwith made, reserves were called out, recruits enrolled, and six or seven battalions were dispatched from Erzeroum at the end of August. On the 1st September Mr. Graves reported that three Hamidieh regiments of Kurdish cavalry had been sent to the disturbed district, and that Hussein Pasha, a Kurd of very evil repute, had left Erzeroum with the supposed intention of taking command of them. On receipt of this information, I pointed out to the Grand Vizier the

* These numbers are taken from Mr. Graves' Report, but apply only to a portion of the district. The following numbers are supplied by Colonel Chermside from official sources:—

Caza of Sassoon	(Armenians)	8,389
Caza of Modki	(ditto)	5,710
Caza of Khulp	(ditto)	699

danger of sending those Hamidieh regiments for the suppression of disturbances, and reminded him of the disastrous effects produced by the employment of irregular troops in Bulgaria. His Highness gave me the assurance that the Hamidieh troops, which, he said, consisted of only three squadrons, would proceed no further than Mush, where they would act as a garrison in place of the regular troops, which were leaving that town for Talori. He added that the disturbances were confined to the last-named place, and that there was no doubt that the revolted Armenians would promptly disperse as soon as the military force made its appearance. Zeki Pasha, the Mushir of the 4th Army Corps, had been ordered to take the command in person and to allow no excesses.

The Grand Vizier went on to say that, in the mountainous districts where the outbreak had taken place, there was little difference between the Kurds and Armenians, both races being equally fierce and turbulent. He attributed the outbreak to the manœuvres of the Revolutionary Committee, which, having already created troubles at Marsovan, Yuzgat, and other places in the more civilized parts of Asia Minor, had now turned its attention to the wild and mountainous districts of the Vilayet of Bitlis.

It was absolutely necessary, he said, to put down these disturbances with a strong hand, but he apprehended no difficulty in doing so, and believed that tranquillity would soon be restored.

It appears from the reports now received, that the Hamidieh troops took no part in the operations; but after remaining ten days at Mush, were ordered to their homes.

Mr. Graves reported on the 29th September that Zeki Pasha had returned, and that the troops would be withdrawn from Mush. The Mushir did not anticipate further trouble, and considered the accounts given by the Vali of Bitlis of the disturbances as much exaggerated. The Grand Vizier has promised to communicate to me the substance of the official Reports received from Zeki Pasha: and he has undertaken that as soon as the sanitary cordon round Mush is withdrawn, and the state of the weather permits it, facilities will be given Vice-Consul Hallward to visit the scene of the recent troubles.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 23.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received October* 25.)

My Lord, *Therapia, October* 20, 1894.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 15th instant, I have the honour to inclose herewith to your Lordship copy of a document communicated to me by Saïd Pasha, which purports to be the Turkish version of the origin of the Talori incident. This Memorandum does not give the information promised me by the Grand Vizier as to what took place during the operations against the Armenians.

His Highness professes ignorance as to the number of persons killed.

I have instructed Mr. Block to point out to his Highness that he promised to send me the Mushir Zeki Pasha's Report.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 23.

Memorandum.

ON n'a certainement pas perdu de vue le souvenir du fameux révolutionnaire Damadian, qui, originaire de Hatchim, Vilayet d'Adana, avait suivi pendant huit années environ les cours de l'École de Médecine Civile, avait trempé dans l'échauffourée de Coum-Capou, et avait réussi, au moment où il était recherché, à s'enfuir à Athènes, et gagner de là la ville de Gênes.

A la faveur d'un déguisement il était rentré plus tard, sous le nom de Mourah, par la voie d'Alexandrette et de Diarbékir, à Talouri, où il a été enfin arrêté au

moment où il se disposait à commettre de nouveaux méfaits. Ce révolutionnaire a eu un continuateur de son œuvre en la personne d'un certain Hamparsoum. Non content d'exciter les Arméniens à la révolte par la parole seulement, il les a poussé à attaquer la ville de Moush, et à s'emparer des armes et munitions se trouvant au dépôt militaire, en massacrant tous les Musulmans qu'ils auraient rencontrés sur leur chemin. Passant pour un Européen, et se faisant fort de faire venir d'Angleterre des troupes en ballon au secours de ses coreligionnaires dans le cas où ils se dirigeraient contre l'autorité, leur assurant, d'autre part, que leur rébellion serait partout soutenue, il est parvenu à soulever la population Arménienne d'une dizaine de villages situés dans ces parages. Il a formé ainsi des bandes armées de fusils Berdan non rayés et à pierre, de poignards, de hautzers [*sic*], de haches, et d'autres engins de guerre, et avec leur concours il a attaqué, vers la fin du mois de Juillet passé, d'abord la tribu de Vélikian, dont il a tué quelques-uns et dévalisé d'autres. Il s'est dirigé ensuite contre les tribus de Bekran et de Badikian, et s'emparant du neveu d'Omer Agha, un des Chefs de la première de ces deux tribus, le nommé Hadjin, il l'a brûlé en emplissant son ventre de poudre de guerre. Il n'a pas épargné non plus les femmes Musulmanes du village de Keliguzan, auxquelles il a infligé les derniers outrages avant de les mettre à mort d'une façon qui fait vraiment frémir. Les moyens employés à l'égard des hommes ne le cédaient nullement en cruauté. Aux uns on attachaient une corde au cou pour les traîner dans les rues, à d'autres encore on coupait les oreilles.

Jouissant du spectacle de leurs atrocités, ces bandes se livraient à toute sorte de propos insultants contre la religion de l'État, et poussaient des vivas en faveur de leur soi-disant Roi.

Le village de Keliguzan, et quelques autres encore se trouvant sur leur passage, ont été incendiés.

En cette triste situation le Gouvernement n'a pas failli à son devoir. Grâce aux sages mesures adoptées, ces bandes révolutionnaires ont été dispersées. Hamparsoum et le curé de l'église de Kizil, Mighirdiken, convaincu de complicité avec Hamparsoum et Damadian, ont été arrêtés, avec tous leurs acolytes, et livrés aux Tribunaux.

Quant aux femmes et enfants qui avaient été enlevés pendant le mouvement et enfermés dans des cavernes, ils ont été délivrés et réinstallés dans leurs villages.

Bref, la tranquillité a été rétablie.

Il ne reste plus que de procéder à la punition des coupables après leurs jugements.

(Translation).

THE well-known revolutionist Damadian, who has certainly not been forgotten, was native of Hatchim, in the Vilayet of Adana, had attended lectures at the Civil School of Medicine for eight years, had been mixed up in the Kum-Kapu affray, and, when the police were looking for him, succeeded in escaping to Athens, whence he went to Genoa.

By means of a disguise, under the name of Mourah, he afterwards succeeded in getting, viâ Alexandretta and Diarbekir, to Talori, where he was at last arrested as he was preparing to commit new crimes. The work of this revolutionist was continued by one Hamparsum. Not satisfied with inciting the Armenians to revolt by words only, he urged them to attack the town of Mush, take possession of the arms and ammunition at the military depôt, and massacre all the Mussulmans they might meet on their way. Passing for a European, and boasting that he could bring troops from England in balloons to the assistance of his co-religionists if they marched against the authorities, and assuring them that their rebellion would be supported everywhere, he succeeded in inducing the Armenian inhabitants of about ten villages in that part of the country to rise. He thus formed bands armed with smooth-bore Berdans and flint-locks, daggers, hautzers [*sic*], axes, and other weapons, and with them he attacked, about the end of last July, the Velikian tribe, of which he killed some members and robbed others. He then marched against the Bekran and Badikian tribes, and, having seized Hadjin, nephew of Omer Agha, one of the Chiefs of the first of these two tribes, he filled his stomach with gunpowder and burnt him. He did not spare the Mussulman women of the village of Keliguzan, whom he outraged and then put to death in a manner which makes one shudder. His treatment of the men was equally cruel. He tied ropes round the necks of some and dragged them through the streets; others had their ears cut off.

Revelling in their atrocities, these bands showered every kind of insult on the religion of the State, and cheered their self-dubbed King.

The village of Keliguzan and some others through which they passed were burnt.

In this lamentable state of things the Government did not fail to do its duty. Thanks to the wise measures adopted, these revolutionary bands were broken up. Hamparsum and Mighirdiken, priest of the church of Kizil, who was shown to have been the accomplice of Hamparsum and Damadian, were arrested, with their assistants, and handed over to the judicial authorities.

The women and children who had been carried off during the movement and shut up in caves were set free and sent back to their villages.

In short, peace was restored.

Nothing remains but to punish the guilty persons after they have been tried.

No. 24.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received October* 29.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, October* 29, 1894, 12·45 P.M.

DETAILS of events in Bitlis Vilayet have reached me to-day in a despatch from Vice-Consul Hallward. There seems to be no doubt that great numbers of Armenians, who had surrendered without offering any resistance, were massacred by the soldiers collected by the Vali of Bitlis on the pretext of suppressing troubles between them and the Kurds. These soldiers also destroyed twenty-five Armenian villages, while the flocks and herds were carried off by the Kurds.

I propose, if your Lordship approves, to send a Memorandum direct to the Sultan, and to urge His Imperial Majesty to send a trustworthy agent to investigate on the spot, as the Grand Vizier gave very unsatisfactory replies to the last representations I made.

No. 25.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, October* 30, 1894.

I APPROVE the course which your Excellency proposes to take, as reported in your telegram of yesterday, in view of the details you have received from Mr. Vice-Consul Hallward of proceedings of the Turkish authorities in the Bitlis Vilayet.

No. 26.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 2.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 2, 1894, 10·30 A.M.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I sent yesterday, through the Sultan's Chief Secretary, a Memorandum to his Imperial Majesty on the massacre of Armenians in the Bitlis Vilayet, giving the substance of Vice-Consul Hallward's reports, and urging that an independent inquiry should be at once instituted, and that the officials responsible for the massacre should be severely punished if the reports prove true.

No. 27.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 3.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 3, 1894, 10·30 P.M.

IN reply to my Memorandum respecting the massacre of Armenians in the Vilayet of Bitlis, I have received a long message from the Sultan, in the course of which His Majesty says "he has read with horror and sorrow the account which your Excellency has given him. His Majesty had had no knowledge of these facts, and when he read the report yesterday morning he immediately instructed the Minister of

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the Interior to make inquiries, and cause a telegram to be sent to the Commandant of the 4th Corps d'Armée, Zeki Pasha, instructing him to report at once, and action will be taken accordingly if the result of His Majesty's inquiries proves the accuracy of your Excellency's information; and the Vali of Bitlis would be held responsible if he had really collected the Kurds in the manner your Excellency states."

The rest of the message contained a defence of the general treatment of the Armenians in the Turkish Empire, and referred to their seditious conduct, and the encouragement it receives in England.

No. 28.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 5.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 30, 1894.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 15th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the massacre of Armenians at Talori.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 28.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Moush, October* 9, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to report that, in accordance with your Excellency's instructions, I left Van on the 26th ultimo, and arrived here on the 30th ultimo. I am staying at the Armenian Catholic Bishop's house. The Bishop himself is away, but I have been hospitably received and entertained by his representative.

At Tadvan, a village on the west shore of the lake, I was met by an officer with zaptiehs, who came with a cordial message from the Vali to escort me to Bitlis. I thanked him, and informed him that Moush was my immediate destination, but that I hoped to visit Bitlis afterwards. After some attempt to dissuade me from going to Moush, he escorted me part of the way, and then returned to Bitlis.

On the way here, and after my arrival, I heard enough to convince me that events had occurred in this region far more serious than anything I had supposed from the vague rumours current in Van, but I soon found that it would be impossible to learn the truth in detail in this town, as all the Christian inhabitants were afraid to approach me, and there are no resident foreigners. I attempted to see the representative of the Armenian Orthodox Bishop (the latter has been in prison at Bitlis for the last two years), but he sent an urgent message begging me not to come near him. I have heard indirectly that many Armenians would be only too glad to see me, and give me all the information they can, but they are afraid of the Government, and I am bound to say their fears are justified by experience. Last year Mr. Lynch, an English traveller, changed some money at an Armenian's shop here, and after his departure the Armenian was thrown into prison here, and subsequently sent to Bitlis, where he was released after some months on payment of a gratuity to the Vali.

I therefore determined to proceed to the district in question, and endeavour to learn the truth on the spot, and I informed the Mutessarif Jelal-ed-din Bey that after visiting the Chanli Monastir, a large and famous Armenian monastery about 20 miles north-west of this, I wished, on my return, to proceed to Bitlis by way of the three villages Semal, Shinik, and Ghelïi Guzan and the Talori district. The three villages are in the Moush Sandjak, and he promised to give me an escort to them, but the Talori district being in the Ghinj Sandjak, and, therefore, not in his jurisdiction, he said there might be a sanitary cordon, as there was cholera in Moush, and cordons had been placed at different points of the boundaries of the Moush Sandjak, at which ten days' quarantine was imposed on all travellers to other districts. However, I said I would take my chance of that, as I was pretty sure that there was no cordon in that part. There were thirty-two deaths from cholera in the twenty-four hours preceding my arrival, but it has since diminished. The cholera was brought from Erzinjian by the soldiers,

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and by them communicated to the population of the town, to which it is now entirely confined.

I went to Chanli Monastir on the 2nd instant, but could learn little, as I found that a police officer had taken up his quarters there, and that six of the monks had been lately arrested, and were in prison in Moush. Two remained, but were afraid to tell me anything.

On my return the next day I received a message from the Governor that he wished to see me. When I went he was visibly embarrassed, and I waited some time to see what he had to say. At last I remarked that I wanted to start next day for Bitlis, as I had already told him. He then said he had received an official communication from the Military Commmandant to the effect that as there was still a battalion of soldiers at Semal, it was desirable to preserve them from infection, and, therefore, a sanitary cordon must be placed between the town and that village. I then offered to go to Talori by another road, but he said that I could not go there without passing the cordon at Semal, and that he must telegraph to the Mutessarif of Ghinj to inquire whether there was not a cordon there also. In fact, he gave me clearly to understand that he did not mean to let me go by that road at all, and I have no doubt that he had instructions from the Vali to that effect.

The next day he sent a police officer with a written communication, stating that the whole sandjak was entirely surrounded with sanitary cordons, and that an extra cordon had been placed on the Semal and Talori side, and asking which way I intended to go; the officer said the Mutessarif was anxious to have an answer in writing at once. I therefore wrote thanking him for his information, and saying that I had not yet decided which way to go, and must take time to consider the question. Considering that the cholera originated with the soldiers, and that, moreover, the battalion at Semal is in communication with the authorities at Moush, the plea of wishing to preserve them from infection is lamentably weak.

I had previously explained to the Mutessarif and also to Edhem Pasha, the Military Commandant, the object of my visit, and asked them both whether they could give me any account of the causes which led to the sending of troops to the Talori district. They both stated rather vaguely that the original cause of trouble was a disturbance between the Armenians and Kurds. I did not expect to get much information from either of them, but thought they might possibly offer some explanation of the severe measures adopted against the Armenians, but I failed to elicit anything of the sort from either of them, in fact they did not attempt to attach any special blame to the Armenians. What I chiefly gathered from their tone and conduct was that they were both extremely anxious to hush up the whole affair.

My information is, therefore, necessarily of a meagre character, and I have had some difficulty in collecting any definite facts. The following is the best account I can give of the matter, but I cannot vouch for the accuracy of all the details.

Three or four hours' journey to the south of this in a mountainous country are the three villages I have mentioned above, and four or five hours further to the south is a group of some twenty-five villages, which goes by the name of Talori, and borders on the Sassoun district. These three villages (Semal, Shinik, and Ghelïi Guzan) and Talori are purely Armenian, while Sassoun is chiefly Kurdish. The Armenians and their Kurdish neighbours live generally on fairly good terms, the former giving the latter certain subsidies on condition of help and protection in case of need. Things appeared to have gone fairly well with them till three or four years ago, when the tribal Kurds, Khianli, Badikanli, Bekiranli, and others who infest that district in summer, took to robbing and occasionally murdering the Armenian villagers, since when matters have been gradually getting worse.

The villages of Semal, Shinik, and Ghelïi Guzan appear to have enjoyed greater tranquillity, and to have been little troubled either by Kurdish or Government exactions, living in patriarchal style—forty, fifty, or even more in a house—and being particularly rich in sheep and cattle.

Last year the Vali of Bitlis summoned some of the Chief men from these villages on some pretext to Bitlis, but they did not appear, his Excellency Hassan Tahsin Pasha being notorious for his skill in exploiting the "Armenian question." There is, I believe, scarcely a single well-to-do Armenian in Bitlis or Moush who has not been either imprisoned or threatened with imprisonment on charges of sedition with a view to the extortion of money. The individuals in question, fearing similar treatment, preferred to remain at home. This appears to have exasperated his Excellency, and, taking advantage of certain disturbances that occurred last year between the Kurds and Armenians, he in the middle of June last sent a battalion of soldiers to that

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district, nominally to protect the Armenians. At the same time, a certain Kurdish Sheikh, Mehemet by name, was brought to Mush from the Diarbekir region, and commissioned to collect large numbers of tribal Kurds, who accordingly assembled in July last in enormous numbers in the Talori district.

Meantime the battalion of soldiers had lived on peaceable terms with the villagers for some six weeks, when, about the beginning of August, some Bekiranli Kurds from Diarbekir stole some cattle from one of the villages, and on the Armenians attempting to recover them a slight affray ensued, in which two or three were killed and wounded on either side. Thereupon the Kurds came to Moush to complain to the Government, saying that all the Armenians were up in arms, and that there were foreigners among them instigating them to revolt. The Commander of the troops is said to have reported to the same effect.

The Vali then demanded large reinforcements of troops, which were accordingly sent from Erzinjian, Kharput, Diarbekir, Erzeroum, and Van. When they appeared on the scene the Armenians surrendered to them on promise of protection against the Kurds. The troops then proceeded to massacre those who had surrendered and everybody else they could lay hands on—men, women, and children. They plundered all the property they could carry off, and then burnt the houses. The work of massacre and pillage is said to have continued for several days, and some twenty-five villages were almost entirely destroyed. The Kurds drove off enormous quantities of sheep and cattle, but did not assist in the massacre to any great extent. They are said to have carried off a number of girls, and many others were raped by the soldiers. Churches were sacked and burnt, and priests' robes and church ornaments were publicly sold in the market of Moush. I have heard that shocking atrocities were committed, such as burying men alive, blowing them up with gunpowder, &c. A woman from Talori told me that thirty men had been buried alive by soldiers, and I have heard the same thing repeated in different quarters, but I am not in a position to sift the truth of such stories.

Nor is it possible for me to estimate the loss of life, but from all I have heard I suppose there must have been 1,000 or more killed. I saw one old man who had been wandering for about three weeks in the mountains with a small boy, and had at length taken refuge in a monastery. He was from the village of Ghelü Guzan, and was a rich man, there being forty persons in his house. He did not know for certain what had become of any of them except the boy, but he supposed most of them must have been killed. In another case I heard of six escaped out of a household of fifty. There are a few women and children in a destitute state in the town, and a few in some of the villages in the plain, and some have taken refuge with the Kurds of Sassoun, others are wandering about the mountains, as the Armenians about here are afraid to receive them in their houses. I am, therefore, reluctant to give any figures as I have so little to go on except hearsay. The old man I mentioned said he supposed about 4,000 must have been killed in twelve villages that he knew; if this be correct the total might be as much as 8,000, but without visiting the villages and estimating the number of survivors, it is obviously impossible to make even a conjecture at the number of lives lost. About twenty of the villagers are in prison here and I hear are suffering greatly from hunger. One of the principal Sassoun Kurds, Khishman Aga, is also in prison for befriending the Armenians.

The Commander-in-chief of the 4th Corps d'Armée arrived from Erzinjian at the beginning of September, and after remaining ten days in the mountains returned. The Vali came to Moush the day before his arrival, but on hearing of his approach at once departed and did not see him.

The principal responsibility for the whole affair is attributed to the Vali of Bitlis, and rightly, as far as I can judge. A certain Staff Colonel, Ismaïl Bey, was in command of the troops I believe, and a Major named Salih, of the Moush battalion, is said to have taken a prominent part in the massacre. The present Mutessarif of Moush only arrived here in the middle of August, and cannot, therefore, be considered to share the Vali's responsibility; how far his predecessor was to blame in the matter I cannot say.

Had it not been for the attitude of the authorities in refusing to allow me to visit the district and preventing me as far as possible from having any communication with the population here or elsewhere by putting police to watch this house and to follow me wherever I go, I might have supposed there was some exaggeration in the accounts I have heard. But their object, evidently, is to stave off any close inquiry into the matter till winter, when all the mountainous districts will be under snow, and communication with the outside world extremely difficult; by the spring they, no doubt,

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calculate the whole affair will have blown over. It is said that the authorities are preparing a document to be signed by the principal inhabitants declaring that nothing has occurred to disturb the tranquillity of the province, or something to that effect; this will, doubtless, be forwarded to Constantinople, and will, I presume, appear in due course in the newspapers.

There is urgent need of immediate help being given to the unfortunate survivors of this terrible affair, as they must needs suffer cruelly if left houseless and penniless to face the rigorous winter of this region. As for the Christians in general, their outlook will be gloomy indeed, unless some effective measures are adopted for the future protection of their lives and property. The Kurds and tithe-farmers plunder them with impunity; they have no redress, and the whole Administration is unjust, corrupt, and inefficient to the last degree.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 29.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 7, 1894.

THE Turkish Ambassador to-day renewed his often-repeated complaints of the encouragement which his Excellency considers is given in this country to the malcontent Armenians.

Rustem Pasha did not, he said, mean to impute to Her Majesty's Government any desire to give support to rebellious subjects of the Sultan, but he must point out that the fact of this Office corresponding with the Armenian Committees led to the belief amongst the Armenians in Turkey that the agitators received official countenance.

I remarked that I was somewhat surprised at these reiterated complaints, as his Excellency was well aware that Her Majesty's Government had carefully avoided taking any action which could have the appearance of want of friendliness to the Sultan, or would give colour to the supposition that they gave encouragement to disloyal subjects of His Imperial Majesty.

Your Excellency, I said, had brought to the knowledge of the Porte reports which had reached you from trustworthy sources of cruelties inflicted on peaceable Armenians, and it was obviously in the interest of the Sultan that His Imperial Majesty should not be left in ignorance of these reports.

I went on to say that I had just received a despatch from the British Vice-Consul at Van, giving the result of his inquiries respecting the alleged massacre of Armenians in the Bitlis district by the Turkish soldiery.

Your Excellency had communicated it to the Sultan, who had expressed to you his horror at the account, and had ordered an immediate inquiry. I hoped that it might turn out that the account was exaggerated, but if only a tithe of it were true there was enough, when it became known in this country, to cause a burst of indignation.

The danger to the Turkish Government did not, I observed, arise from agitators, but from corrupt and vicious administration. The Sultan was, I entirely believed, sincerely desirous that the Armenians, in common with His Imperial Majesty's other subjects, should be justly treated, but, unfortunately, the provincial authorities, in not a few cases, acted in a contrary spirit, and the result was to stimulate the disaffection which it was the object of the agitators against the Sultan's Government to foment.

As to the Committees in this country, I assured his Excellency that he was quite mistaken if he supposed that any official encouragement had been given to them. On the contrary, great care had been taken not to do anything which would produce such an impression.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

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No. 30.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 8.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 8, 1894, 6·30 P.M.

THE Sultan sent to-day a further message through Mr. Block, in which, while complaining of the encouragement given to the Armenians by Mr. Hallward's proceedings, His Majesty stated that he had received from Zeki Pasha and the Vali of Bitlis telegrams from which he promised to give extracts in a few days, when he would have received additional explanations.

The message stated that those telegrams contradicted the truth of Vice-Consul Hallward's reports.

No. 31.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 9.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 9, 1894, 3 P.M.

I CALLED on Saïd Pasha this morning, in consequence of my having received last night an unsigned paper from the Porte headed "Notice," which stated that at Moush and Bitlis the Armenians had been instigated by Vice-Consul Hallward to hold meetings and to sign an Address against the Imperial Government; and further, that it had been proved, after an inquiry held by the Imperial authorities, that Mr Vice-Consul Hallward had gone so far as to urge the Armenians to rise against the Imperial Government.

I told Saïd Pasha that an immediate investigation would be required into such grave charges against an official of Her Majesty's Government, who would deserve immediate dismissal if they were true, and that I proposed at once to send the Military Attaché of this Embassy to hold an inquiry at Bitlis into the Vice-Consul's conduct, that the Vali must then prove or retract his accusations. Mr. Hallward could be ordered from Van to Bitlis to be present at the inquiry. I spoke with considerable warmth, and declined to remain and discuss the matter.

Artin Pasha was present at the interview, and he and Saïd Pasha protested that the document was an unofficial one, but I replied that such grave charges against an English official could not be treated as unofficial. In reply to an inquiry which I sent on receiving the Sultan's message of the 8th instant, Mr. Hallward telegraphed yesterday that neither he nor his Dragoman received an address from the Armenians, and that he refused to receive them.

I have little doubt that in consequence of my action the charges will be withdrawn, but I would beg your Lordship to support my language, and the proposed mission of Colonel Chermside should Rustem Pasha speak on the subject.

No. 32.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 9.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 9, 1894, 6·30 P.M.

THIS afternoon Mr. Block was summoned to the Palace and was charged with a message from His Imperial Majesty to me, stating that according to a telegram received from the Vali of Bitlis, the evidence of loyal Armenians who had made declarations before the Public Prosecutor had confirmed the accusations already made by the Vali against Mr. Hallward of collecting the Armenians by night, and inducing them to sign an Address against the Government. The Vice-Consul, the Vali added, was still engaging in intrigues, and wandering about the country.

The Sultan protested against the action of the Vice-Consul, and said that the responsibility would rest with the Embassy if it continued. I propose, with your Lordship's approval, simply to reply that the charge of stirring up rebellion is so grave that it must be at once investigated, and that Colonel Chermside will proceed to Bitlis for the purpose.

The Colonel is quite ready to start, and will leave in a few days if the threat of his visiting the neighbourhood of the scene of the recent massacres is not sufficient to

cause the withdrawal of the charges against the Vice-Consul. The Vali is simply trumping up false statements, supported by false witnesses, as a defence against the exposure of his misdeeds.

I have entire confidence in the discretion and truthfulness of Mr. Hallward, who has assured me that there is no foundation for the Vali's statements; moreover, I telegraphed to him at Moush on the 9th October, recommending him to be especially cautious.

He returned to Van on the 5th November.

No. 33.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 10, 1894.

I HAVE received your telegram of the 9th instant,* relative to the charges of inciting the Armenians of Moush to rebellion against the Imperial authorities which have been brought by the Porte against Mr. Vice-Consul Hallward. I entirely approve your Excellency's action in the matter, and think that you should insist upon your proposal to send Colonel Chermside to investigate these accusations.

No. 34.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic) *Foreign Office, November* 10, 1894.

I QUITE approve the course suggested by your Excellency in your telegram of yesterday,† with regard to the charges made by the Porte against Vice-Consul Hallward. It is, in my opinion, very desirable that Colonel Chermside should proceed to Bitlis without delay.

It is important to obtain more information respecting the reported massacre of Armenians, and the withdrawal of charges so circumstantially made can scarcely be accepted without investigation.

No. 35.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received November 12.)

My Lord, *Therapia, November* 4, 1894.

MR. VICE-CONSUL HALLWARD'S despatch of the 9th ultimo, of which a copy was inclosed in my despatch of the 30th ultimo, leaves little room to doubt the substantial accuracy of the reports contained in his telegrams from Moush as to the massacre of Armenians and the destruction of their villages in the Talori district.

I had kept the Grand Vizier informed of these reports, and had urged him to take steps for ascertaining the real state of affairs. At first he took my representations in good part, though without admitting the correctness of my information, but latterly he showed reluctance to discuss the matter, and objected to receive the unofficial Memoranda which I offered to leave with him, giving the substance of the intelligence that had reached me. There was reason to doubt whether this intelligence had ever been laid before the Sultan, and I therefore thought it advisable, when fuller details were supplied by Mr. Hallward's despatch, to communicate them directly to His Imperial Majesty.

Having obtained your Lordship's sanction, by telegraph, to this course, I drew up the Memorandum, of which a copy is inclosed, and instructed Mr. Block to hand a Turkish translation of it to the Sultan's Chief Secretary for communication to His Majesty. This was done on the 1st instant.

Yesterday morning Mr. Block was summoned to the Palace, and the Sultan's reply, of which a translation is inclosed, was read to him by a Secretary who had taken it down from His Imperial Majesty's dictation.

* No. 31.

† No. 32.

Your Lordship will observe that although Vice-Consul Hallward's reports are ascribed to Armenian misrepresentations, it is practically admitted that summary punishment was administered, and that the Imperial Government has stamped out the "robbers" in the Talori district.

There remains in doubt the question whether the Armenians had really risen in insurrection, and whether they offered an armed resistance to the troops. Mr. Hallward's version of the facts is confirmed by reports which have been received at the French Embassy from their Consular Agent at Diarbekir, and by private letters from the scene of the disturbances. The reference to Zeki Pasha, the Commandant of the 4th Army Corps, is not likely, I fear, to produce a reliable statement of the Vali's proceedings, but as he arrived at Talori after the massacres had taken place, and is said to have expressed the opinion that the disturbances which led to the troops being called out had been greatly exaggerated, it is possible that he may not altogether support the Vali's action. The steps, too, which, according to Mr. Graves, he is taking to restrain the Kurds, offer some ground for hoping that he does not consider the state of affairs as satisfactory.

My representations, if they do nothing more, will at any rate show that the proceedings of the provincial authorities are being watched, and that the truth of the reports they forward to Constantinople is liable to be questioned.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 35.

Memorandum.

THE British Ambassador has on several occasions unofficially brought to the notice of the Sublime Porte the substance of telegraphic messages sent from Moush by the British Vice-Consul at Van which contained accounts of the recent occurrences in the Bitlis Vilayet. The Vice-Consul intended to proceed from Moush to Bitlis, passing through the disturbed districts with a view of verifying the reports which had reached him, but he was prevented from doing so by the authorities on the ground that the roads were closed by sanitary cordons. He was, therefore, unable absolutely to test upon the spot the exactness of the details supplied to him, but the information he has now forwarded by despatch is derived either from eye-witnesses or from trustworthy sources, and is of so serious a nature that the Ambassador feels that he would be neglecting his duty towards the Sovereign to whom he is accredited if he failed to bring to the notice of the Sultan himself the facts which have come to his knowledge, and respectfully to urge His Imperial Majesty to send a trustworthy Agent, who will not be under the influence of the local authorities, to make a thorough investigation into the circumstances.

The following is a summary of the facts, as reported by the Vice-Consul:—

In the month of June last the Vali of Bitlis sent a battalion of soldiers to the Talori district nominally to prevent a recurrence of the disturbances which took place last year between the Kurds and Armenians. At the same time he caused a Kurdish Sheikh named Mehemet to come from the Diarbekir region to Moush, and commissioned him to collect a body of tribal Kurds, who accordingly assembled in great numbers in July last in the Talori district.

The soldiers lived peaceably with the villagers until the beginning of August, when some Bekiranli Kurds from Diarbekir stole some cattle from an Armenian village.

The villagers attempted to recover their property, and an affray took place in which two or three lives were lost. The Kurds then complained to the authorities, saying that all the Armenians were up in arms, and that there were foreigners among them instigating them to revolt. The Vali thereupon sent for large reinforcements of troops from different garrisons. When they appeared on the scene the Armenians surrendered to them on the promise that they would be protected against the Kurds, but in spite of this promise the troops massacred those who had surrendered and many others, including women and children. They plundered and burnt the villages, of which twenty-five were almost entirely destroyed. The Kurds drove off the sheep and cattle, and carried off many women. The churches were sacked and burnt, and priests' robes and sacred ornaments were publicly sold in the streets of Moush.

Shocking atrocities are said to have been committed, and the number of killed is said to have reached several thousands.

Some of the destitute women and children escaped to Moush, some to the villages in the plain, and some are wandering about the mountains. Immediate help is urgently needed for the survivors of the massacre, who are reduced to the greatest poverty. Zeki Pasha, the Commander-in-chief of the 4th Corps d'Armée, did not arrive in the district from Erzinjan until after the massacre had taken place.

The Ambassador does not doubt that these facts will be disputed by the authorities, who are said to be already preparing documents denying that disturbances have taken place, but he trusts that His Imperial Majesty will not be satisfied with these denials proceeding from interested sources, but will cause a searching investigation to be made into the conduct of Hussein Tahsin Pasha, the Vali of Bitlis, who is mainly responsible for the lamentable events that have occurred, of Staff-Colonel Ismaïl Bey, who commanded the troops, and of Major Salih, of the Moush battalion, who is said to have taken a prominent part in the massacre of the villagers.

The Ambassador believes that such an investigation would show that the statements made that the Armenians had risen in insurrection at the instigation of a revolutionary agent were untrue. Such disturbances as had occurred were caused by the attacks of the Kurds on the Armenians, and the resistance offered by the latter.

The Vali was to be blamed in the first instance for not taking proper measures to prevent those attacks, and his subsequent proceedings appear to have been inspired by a deliberate intention to break up the Armenian villages in the Talori district.

Inclosure 2 in No. 35.

Reply of His Majesty the Sultan to preceding Memorandum.

HIS Majesty states that he is well aware of your Excellency's friendly disposition towards himself and the Empire, and he does not for a moment imagine that in bringing these matters to his notice your Excellency wishes to raise the Armenian question.

His Majesty has no knowledge whatever of the incidents related by Mr. Hallward, who has probably got his information from untrustworthy sources. Indeed, His Majesty received on the 2nd instant a telegram from the Vali of Bitlis to the effect that Mr. Hallward has arrived there, and that through his Dragoman he has secretly collected some Armenians, suspected of sedition, by night, and has asked them to prepare a "Mazbata," or Report against the Government, which they accordingly have given him, and that furthermore he has informed them that he has been commissioned by the British Government to inquire into their grievances.

His Majesty continues by stating that just as in other countries there are Nihilists, Socialists, and Anarchists, endeavouring to obtain from the Government concessions and privileges which it is impossible to grant them, and just in the same manner as steps have to be taken against them, so it is with the Armenians, who for their own purposes invent these stories against the Government, and finding that they receive encouragement from British officials, are emboldened to proceed to open acts of rebellion, which the Government is perfectly justified in suppressing by every means in its power.

His Majesty has received to-day another telegram from the Mutessarif of Dersim, stating that in the district of Pallo, at a village called Habab, the Armenians, who on a former occasion had addressed Her Majesty's Embassy, assembled secretly last Monday and prepared a paper (probably a programme of revolution), and opened a subscription with the object of collecting money for soldiers in the cause, who were to be paid 10 piastres a-head. The Patriarchate is reported to be sending instructions to the Armenians at Diarbekir, and they meet in church once a-week to consider the measures they are to take in accordance therewith. It is reported, also, that their are seven foreigners travelling about the provinces, some of them English, with a view of intriguing amongst the Armenians.

His Majesty says that your Excellency will remember that the Bulgarians concocted the same stories against the Government, and proceeded just as the Armenians do, and that the British Government extended a certain protection to the Bulgarians, who have now been formed into a separate province. This cannot possibly, however, happen in the case of the Armenians. The Armenian population is spread over a large extent of country, and in no place are they in a majority. Their expectations, therefore, can never be realized, and all the exaggerated stories of oppression and persecution, got up with the object of exciting European sympathy to enable them to obtain an impossible end, should not be relied upon. Unfortunately, a great deal of false information is given to British newspapers, which accept the facts related as true, and convey a

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false impression to their readers. His Majesty counts upon your Excellency's assistance to counteract this impression, and trusts that you will endeavour to prevent the publication of false intelligence in the British press.

Naturally the Ottoman Government was bound to take strong measures to put down sedition, and when people were found with arms in their hands resisting the authorities, it was only natural that the Government should mete out to them summary punishment. Only a short time ago, in Italy, the Italians put down disorder with a strong hand. England herself had, in India, had resort to the strongest measures to stamp out rebellion, and even in Egypt England had put down disorder with a high hand.

His Imperial Majesty treated the Armenians with justice and moderation, and, as long as they behaved properly, all toleration would be shown to them, but he had given orders that when they took to revolt or to brigandage the authorities were to deal with them as they dealt with the authorities—otherwise the Imperial authorities were instructed to treat them with fairness and justice.

His Majesty had read the account which your Excellency had given him with horror and sorrow. His Majesty had had no knowledge of these facts, and yesterday morning, when he read the Report, he immediately instructed the Minister of the Interior to make inquiries, and cause a telegram to be sent to Zeki Pasha, Commandant of the 4th Corps d'Armée, instructing him to report at once, and, if the result of His Majesty's inquiries proves the accuracy of your Excellency's information, action will be taken accordingly, and if the Vali of Bitlis had really collected the Kurds in the manner your Excellency states he would be held responsible.

Returning to the question of the footing of equality on which His Majesty placed his Armenian subjects, the Sultan drew attention to the fact that after the recent earthquakes relief and money was given to Armenians and Armenian institutions in the same manner as to others. Armenians rose to the highest posts in the Administration, and, in fact, had more than their share of His Imperial Majesty's favour in this respect, taking into consideration their numbers and their status in the country.

His Majesty had lately had statistics drawn up, and he found in his Civil List Department that as many as sixty to seventy Armenians were employed, and the head of the Civil List was Michail Pasha Portocal, an Armenian. Thus, he repeated, they had more than their share of His Imperial Majesty's favour, and there was no *parti pris* with regard to them in His Majesty's mind. It was a wrong impression that prevailed in England with regard to the Armenians, and it was not true that they were oppressed. From time immemorial they have had perfect liberty and freedom with regard to their churches, their schools, and their language; all reports to the contrary were from Armenian sources, and unfortunately they obtained credence in England, and the Sultan concluded by saying he trusted the Ambassador would make England understand the truth of the case, and that they are wrong in believing that the Armenians are persecuted, and he counted on the Ambassador's support to remove the false impression that existed with regard to them.

His Majesty touched on one more point. He notices that Mr. Hallward states that the authorities are preparing documents to screen them. His Majesty could not believe this; in fact, he had already received documents on the part of the people thanking the Imperial Government for having stamped out these robbers in that part of the country.

No. 36.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 15.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 15, 1894, 6 P.M.

MR. VICE-CONSUL HALLWARD telegraphs from Van that many Armenians of Bitlis have sent a telegram to the Grand Vizier and other Heads of Departments in Constantinople, accusing the Governor-General of that vilayet of extortion, and asking for an inquiry.

Mr. Hallward adds that the number of those who escaped from Sassoon is larger than was supposed, as the fugitives had been much scattered.

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No. 37.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 16.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 15, 1894, *midnight.*

ON the 11th instant I sent the Porte a written communication, as reported in my despatch to your Lordship of the 15th instant,* informing the Ottoman Government that Colonel Chermside would proceed at once to Bitlis to inquire into the charges which have been made against Mr. Hallward, and requesting that the usual facilities might be given for his journey, the date of his departure being fixed for the 14th. On the 13th instant, and again this morning, Saïd Pasha called on me, and urged in the name of the Sultan the abandonment of Colonel Chermside's Mission. I informed his Excellency that I had positive instructions from Her Majesty's Government to send him, and that the matter was no longer in my hands.

It was proposed, among the various suggestions we discussed, that the Vali of Bitlis should be recalled, and that the inquiry should be held by the Consul at Erzeroum in place of Colonel Chermside, in order to allow time for further discussion, and I agreed that the departure of Colonel Chermside should be postponed until Saturday, but I stated that on that day he must start without fail.

Both the above proposals were rejected by the Sultan.

The following message has now been officially communicated to me by Saïd Pasha through Mr. Block:—

"His Imperial Majesty will send before to-morrow week a Commission to inquire into the events which have taken place in the Sassoon district, as well as into all the reports mentioned in the Memorandum presented to His Imperial Majesty by Her Majesty's Embassy on the 1st November.

"The Sultan considers that it is in his own interest to inquire into the facts as reported, and assures Her Majesty's Ambassador that the inquiry will be carried out in a just and impartial manner, and that punishment will fall on the guilty. The Commission will be composed of two or three Imperial Aides-de-camp and of a civil functionary, all trustworthy men, who will be sworn to give a true report. His Majesty does not believe in the charges which have been brought against Vice-Consul Hallward of inciting the Armenians to rebellion; he considers them null and void, and withdraws them."

Saïd Pasha stated to Mr. Block that he was prepared, in accordance with this message, either to write a further note withdrawing the accusations against Mr. Hallward, or to cancel the previous one. I would urge that your Lordship should authorize me to accept the Sultan's proposals on condition that they are strictly adhered to, and to stop the departure of Colonel Chermside, whose mission His Imperial Majesty has shown a fixed resolve not to allow, on the ground that it would probably lead to a rising of the Armenians, and to consequent bloodshed.

I think that in view of His Majesty's determination, Colonel Chermside's Mission would do more harm than good to the Armenians.

No. 38.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 16, 1894.

I CONSENT to stop Colonel Chermside's departure for Bitlis under the circumstances reported in your Excellency's telegram of yesterday, and on the special ground that his mission might occasion bloodshed, and tend to prejudice the position of the Armenians.

I authorize your Excellency to accept the proposals made by the Sultan, and to express to His Imperial Majesty the satisfaction with which Her Majesty's Government have heard that he has determined upon a thorough and impartial investigation of the recent occurrences in the Sassoun district.

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* See No. 42.

No. 39.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 17.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 17, 1894, 7·30 P.M.

BITLIS outrages.

In accordance with your Lordship's telegram dated yesterday, I have informed the Turkish Government that Her Majesty's Government have accepted the Sultan's proposals.

I am now using every endeavour to secure that the Commission of Inquiry, mentioned in my telegram to your Lordship of the 16th November, should be immediately dispatched.

No. 40.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 18.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 18, 1894, 2·30 P.M.

THE Sultan sent me this morning a very unsatisfactory message, to the effect that he intended to fulfil his promise with regard to the Mission of Inquiry to Bitlis, but that time and preparation would be required.

I am sending to the Palace a strong message in reply to this communication, and I am writing to Saïd Pasha in still stronger terms to point out the danger of delay.

I should be much obliged if your Lordship would speak in the same sense to Rustem Pasha.

No. 41.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 18.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 18, 1894, 6·30 P.M.

I REPORTED to your Lordship in my telegram of to-day that I had sent communications to the Porte and to the Palace, urging that the Commission of Inquiry into the Bitlis outrages should start without delay.

Saïd Pasha, on receiving my letter, promised to do his utmost. His Imperial Majesty has replied to my message through Mr. Block that he was already in communication with two persons, and would shortly select a third, but that considerable preparation was necessary owing to the cold weather.

The Sultan repeated his disbelief in the truth of the charges, and said that he was sending the Commission, which is now to start at latest on Monday, the 26th, only with the view of maintaining good relations with England.

No. 42.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 19.)

My Lord, *Pera, November* 15, 1894.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 9th instant,* I have the honour to forward herewith to your Lordship copy of a Notice which I have received from the Sublime Porte, accusing Mr. Hallward, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, of inciting the Armenians against the Turkish Government, and requesting that he might be instructed to return to Van.

A copy of my reply is also inclosed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

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* No. 31.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 42.

Notice.

LE Gouverneur-Général du Vilayet de Bitlis télégraphie que M. le Consul d'Angleterre à Van, qui se trouvait à Mouch, s'est rendu dernièrement à Bitlis et qu'à son instigation les Arméniens se trouvant dans ces deux villes ont tenu des conciliabules et signé une Adresse contre le Gouvernement Impérial qu'ils lui ont remise.

L'enquête effectuée par les autorités Impériales a établi, en outre, que le dit Agent, tout en exhortant, par l'entremise de son Drogman, les Arméniens à tenir de pareilles réunions, a été jusqu'à les pousser à se soulever contre le Gouvernement Impérial.

L'attitude de cet Agent se passe de tout commentaire. Aussi n'y a-t-il aucun doute que l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté la Reine, lorsqu'elle en aura pris connaissance, ne veuille bien lui infliger la réprimande qu'il a encourue et l'inviter, comme elle a bien voulu déjà le laisser espérer, à rentrer immédiatement à Van.

Le 8 *Novembre*, 1894.

(Translation.)

THE Governor-General of the Vilayet of Bitlis telegraphs that the British Consul at Van, who was at Mush, went recently to Bitlis, and that at his instigation the Armenians in these two towns held meetings and signed an address against the Imperial Government, which they delivered to him.

The inquiry instituted by the Imperial authorities has proved, besides, that the said Agent, while exhorting the Armenians through his Dragoman to hold such meetings, went so far as to urge them to rise against the Imperial Government.

The attitude of this Agent requires no comment. On being made acquainted with it, Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy will, no doubt, see fit to inflict on him the reprimand which he deserves, and request him to return at once to Van. The Embassy has already afforded us ground for hoping that such an order will be given.

November 8, 1894.

Inclosure 2 in No. 42.

Memorandum.

THE British Ambassador has received with extreme surprise and regret from the Sublime Porte a "Notice" dated the 8th November which, among other charges against Mr. Vice-Consul Hallward, states that "the inquiry instituted by the Imperial authorities has proved that the said Agent, while exhorting the Armenians through his Dragoman to hold meetings, has gone so far as to urge them to rise against the Imperial Government."

The charge of instigating the subjects of His Imperial Majesty to rebellion is of so grave a character and so injurious, not only to the Vice-Consul, but to Her Majesty's Embassy, that the Ambassador feels bound to take immediate measures to have it investigated.

With this view he has decided that Colonel Chermside, the Military Attaché to the Embassy, whose long experience of Asia Minor and knowledge of the Turkish language specially qualify him for the task, should proceed at once to Bitlis, where he will be met by the Vice-Consul.

After hearing from the authorities the evidence on which they have based their accusation, Colonel Chermside will proceed to make a careful inquiry into Mr. Hallward's proceedings for the information and guidance of Her Majesty's Government.

It is needless to say that if the charge of urging the Armenians to rise can be substantiated the Vice-Consul will be severely dealt with.

As soon as the date of Colonel Chermside's departure is definitely fixed the Ambassador will apply to the Sublime Porte for the usual facilities for his journey.

British Embassy, November 11, 1894.

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No. 43.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 19.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 15, 1894.

WITH reference to my previous despatch of to-day's date, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that Saïd Pasha called on me this morning and handed to me, by order of the Sultan, the accompanying Memorandum on the subject of the disturbances in the Bitlis Vilayet.

He added that His Majesty requested me to communicate this statement to Her Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 43.

Memorandum.

DES révoltés Arméniens portant des armes de provenance étrangère et se permettant de commettre des méfaits se sont réunis à des rebelles Kurdes et ont brûlé et dévasté des villages Musulmans sis dans ces parages. Pour donner une idée de la férocité de ces bandes Arméniennes, elles ont entre autres brûlé vif un Musulman après lui avoir introduit dans le ventre des matières fulminantes.

Des troupes régulières ont été envoyées sur les lieux avec ordre de mettre les habitants paisibles à l'abri de toutes ces déprédations; et à l'encontre des calomnies que l'on a débitées par rapport à cette expédition militaire, les troupes ont non seulement protégé et respecté la partie soumise de la population ainsi que les femmes et les enfants mais encore elles ont, en remplissant loyalement leurs devoirs, rétabli l'ordre et la tranquillité publique à la satisfaction des habitants paisibles. On a prétendu aussi que les Kurdes se seraient emparés des meubles, effets, et bestiaux des Arméniens fugitifs.

Tel n'est pas le cas. Ce sont les brigands eux-mêmes qui les ont emportés avec eux dans les montagnes avant de se mettre en révolte, et confiés à la garde de leurs acolytes Kurdes. Il n'est pas vrai non plus qu'il y ait eu enlèvement par les Kurdes de plusieurs femmes Arméniennes; ces femmes composant la famille des bandits susnommés se sont rendues elles-mêmes de leur propre gré auprès des insurgés Kurdes.

En ce qui regarde les villages Arméniens qui auraient été détruits, il s'agit précisément des villages des révoltés Arméniens que ceux-ci ont vidé avant de se livrer au brigandage. Quant au contenu d'un certain rapport prétendant que les Arméniens seraient opprimés et maltraités par la tribu Kurde "Bekranli." Ce fait est entièrement controuvé; et ce qui plus est, le malheureux brûlé avec torture par les Arméniens faisait parti de la tribu en question.

(Translation.)

SOME insurgent Armenians, with arms from abroad, are committing outrages, and have joined some rebel Kurds and burnt and devastated Mussulman villages situated in these parts. To give some idea of the ferocity of these Armenian bands, it is sufficient to state that, among other acts, they have burnt alive a Mussulman after inserting explosives in his stomach.

Some regular troops have been sent to the locality with orders to protect the peaceable inhabitants from all these depredations; and, contrary to the calumnies which have been uttered with respect to this military expedition, the troops have not only protected and respected the submissive part of the population and the women and children, but have also, in the loyal discharge of their duty, restored order and public tranquillity to the satisfaction of the peaceable inhabitants.

It has also been alleged that the Kurds laid hands on the furniture, effects, and cattle of the fugitive Armenians. Such is not the case. The brigands themselves carried them off with them to the mountains before rising in revolt, and placed them in the charge of their Kurdish friends.

Neither is it true that several Armenian women were abducted by the Kurds; these

women, of the families of the bandits above mentioned, betook themselves of their own accord to the insurgent Kurds.

As regards the Armenian villages which are said to have been destroyed, the villages in question were in fact those of the Armenian insurgents, which had been cleared out by them before they took to brigandage.

As to the statements in a certain report to the effect that the Armenians are oppressed and ill-treated by the Kurdish tribe "Bekranli," they are a pure invention; and, moreover, the unfortunate man, who was burnt and tortured by the Armenians, was one of the tribe in question.

No. 44.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 19, 1894.

I ENTIRELY approve your action as reported in your Excellency's telegrams of the 18th instant.

In the interests of the Porte, I think it essential that the investigation of recent occurrences in the Vilayet of Bitlis should be impartial and searching; and I should wish you to make it clear that we must insist on dispatching Colonel Chermside to the spot to report, unless the Commission is satisfactorily constituted and starts at once, using all reasonable speed to enter upon its task.

No. 45.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 21.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 21, 1894, 6·40 P.M.

THE following is a list, furnished by Saïd Pasha, of the members who have been chosen to form the Commission of Inquiry into the Bitlis outrages. They are unknown to us, but two of them are Imperial Aides-de-camp, who are said to have studied at Berlin:—

Mehemed Ali Pasha, General of Brigade, Aide-de-camp of the Sultan.

His Excellency Abdallah Pasha, General of Division, and Aide-de-camp of the Sultan.

Medjid Effendi, Director of Correspondence in the Ministry of the Interior; and Eumer Bey, Director of the Constantinople Savings Bank.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs says Commission will start before next Sunday.

No. 46.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 21, 1894.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 15th instant, forwarding a copy of a "Notice" which had been sent to you by the Sublime Porte, accusing Mr. Vice-Consul Hallward, on the authority of the Governor-General of Bitlis, of inciting the Armenians against the Turkish Government.

The reply returned by your Excellency to this communication in a Memorandum, of which you also inclose a copy, has the entire approval of Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

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No. 47.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 22, 1894.

IN conversation to-day I spoke about the Bitlis Commission to the Turkish Ambassador, urging upon the Porte the necessity of immediately investigating the recent occurrences in the Sassoon district.

Rustem Pasha assured me that he would at once report my observations by telegraph to the Porte.

No. 48.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received November 22.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 22, 1894, 10·20 P.M.

SAÏD PASHA declares that the date fixed for the departure of the Commission of Inquiry into the Bitlis outrages will be adhered to.

The members of the Commission, whose names I communicated to your Lordship in my telegram of yesterday, appear to be a fairly good selection.

No. 49.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received November 23.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 23, 1894, 2·45 P.M.

THE Ottoman Government have published Decrees conferring decorations on the Mufti of Moosh, who is said to have incited the troops against the Christians, and on Zeki Pasha, the Commandant of the 4th Army Corps.

The Mutessarif of Moosh, who protested against the massacres, has been dismissed.

The appointment of the Commission has been officially notified in the press. The notice states that the Commission is sent to inquire into the criminal conduct of Armenian brigands, and denies absolutely the truth of massacres.

Hafiz Tewfik is Second Military Commissioner, and not Mehemed Ali.

No 50.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 23, 1894.

THE announcement with respect to the Bitlis Commission, reported in your telegram of to-day, is so grave in its nature that Her Majesty's Government must give it their serious consideration without any delay.

I must, however, at once express my surprise and pain at hearing that the inquiry is represented as one into the criminal conduct of Armenian brigands, and not into the truth of the reported massacre of Armenians; that even before the inquiry has been made the report laid before the Sultan and the Turkish Government by your Excellency has been declared publicly to be false; that decorations have been given to two Turkish officers concerned in the recent events; and that the Mutessarif who protested against the massacre has been deprived of his appointment.

Your Excellency shall receive instructions after I have consulted with my colleagues, as the matter cannot possibly be left in this position.

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No. 51.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 26.)

My Lord, *Pera, November* 17, 1894.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 15th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship copy of a Memorandum by Mr. Block, giving an account of his interviews with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Surreya Pasha, the Sultan's Private Secretary, respecting Colonel Chermside's proposed visit to Bitlis, to inquire into the accusations brought against Mr. Hallward, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 51.

Memorandum by Mr. Block.

ON Thursday evening, the 15th instant, Saïd Pasha sent for me and informed me that the Sultan, to whom he had at great length repeated his conversations with your Excellency, had declined to remove the Vali, and was averse to Colonel Chermside's departure or Mr. Graves' visit to Bitlis. His Majesty was convinced that the presence of Colonel Chermside or of Mr. Graves would encourage and embolden the Armenians to acts of rebellion; that this might lead to an outburst of fanaticism, and that very serious consequences and bloodshed might ensue.

Finally, the Sultan said that as the Ambassador had desired in his Memorandum of the 1st November, he was prepared to send a Commission to inquire into what had taken place at Talori, and to investigate the circumstances related in your Excellency's *Mémoire*. The Commission would be composed of two or three Aides-de-camp of His Majesty's, and of a civil official, all men worthy of the greatest confidence.

They would be obliged to take an oath before His Majesty that they would render a truthful account of their inquiries, and His Majesty himself would inform and warn them that in case of abuse of their powers they would incur the most serious punishment. This Commission would start before the 23rd instant.

His Majesty would take every precaution to have the inquiry made in the most impartial and just manner, and if it was proved that any Government officials or others had been guilty of maladministration or irregularities, they would be seriously dealt with.

Saïd Pasha then pointed out to His Majesty that the Commission would not be able to investigate the charges against Mr. Hallward, which were the reason for Colonel Chermside's mission, and that your Excellency could not admit of their inquiring into charges against a British official, whereupon the Sultan stated that he did not give credence to the charges against Mr. Hallward; he considered them null and void, and withdrew them.

I said to Saïd Pasha that this was not sufficient, as the accusation had been made by the Porte in writing.

His Excellency replied he would either withdraw the document or annul it by another, just as your Excellency desired.

Saïd Pasha desired me to beg your Excellency on his behalf to ask Her Majesty's Government to withdraw the instructions with regard to Colonel Chermside.

Yesterday I was summoned to the Palace, and Surreya Pasha read to me a paper from His Majesty giving the Turkish version of the Talori incidents, and replying to your Excellency's *Mémoire*. I took down the words, and herewith inclose the translation.

The Sultan's message then continued to the effect that, notwithstanding this information, as your Excellency had desired it, and in order to obtain a still more accurate account of what had really happened, he had decided to send a Commission, which would start in two or three days.

The rest of the message was the same as Saïd Pasha's communication concerning the Commission of the day before, which I have related above, with the single exception that the civil official was not mentioned.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

Pera, November 17, 1894.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 51.

Memorandum communicated to Mr. Block.

(Translation.)

SOME Armenian brigands had the audacity to rise in revolt among the mountains of Talori, filled the stomach of a Mussulman with powder, and then set fire to him, massacred a number of Mussulmans, burnt Mussulman villages, and violated Mussulman girls.

Imperial troops were dispatched to protect the peaceful population, and strict orders were given to disperse the rebels, but in no way to molest the loyal part of the population, or women or children, and, according to reports from that district, the above orders were strictly carried out.

In a communication received from the British Ambassador, it is stated that, according to the report of the Consul at Van, a number of Armenian villages were depopulated and destroyed, 3,000 individuals killed, the churches plundered, and the sacred ornaments and sacerdotal vestments publicly sold in the streets of Moush, and a number of women carried off by the Kurds.

The Ambassador's communication then pointed out the advisability of an official being sent to inquire into the matter.

From an inquiry made as to the statements contained in this communication it would appear that they are completely devoid of foundation; that this false information was given to the Consul by a set of seditious and ill-disposed persons, and that nobody, except the rebels, was in any way molested. All this was communicated in detail to the Embassy.

From this it is evident that there is no reason whatsoever for the dismissal of the Vali or any other official, or for summoning them to Constantinople.

No. 52.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 26.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 26, 1894, 1·45 P.M.

I AM sending home to-day by post a despatch from our Consul at Erzeroum, covering a despatch from Mr. Hallward, dated Van, the 6th November.

Mr. Hallward reports in detail the same horrors as those described in the "Times" of the 17th November in the letter published by the Armenian Committee.

Mr. Graves, in his covering despatch, confirms the truth of the facts given by Mr. Hallward.

No. 53.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 26.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 26, 1894, 9·50 P.M.

THE French steamer which is to carry the Bitlis Commission to Trebizond leaves at daybreak to-morrow.

The members of the Commission are already on board.

No 54.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 26, 1894.

THE Turkish Ambassador called upon me at my request this afternoon, when I told his Excellency of the very painful impression made upon Her Majesty's Government by the manner in which the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry into recent events in the Sassoon district had been officially notified at Constantinople.

I informed him that there would be another Cabinet Council on the 28th instant to decide upon the course to be taken by Her Majesty's Government, and I said

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I could not impress upon him too earnestly the gravity and extent of the consequences to which this entire nullification of the promised investigation might give rise. It was even possible that it might develop into an European question.

His Excellency expressed his ignorance of the notification, and said that he would immediately inform the Porte of my observations by telegraph.

No. 55.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 27.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 21, 1894.

IN continuation of my despatch of the 17th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith to your Lordship copy of a Memorandum by Mr. Block giving an account of further interviews he has had with Surreya Pasha, the Sultan's First Secretary, respecting the dispatch of a Turkish Commission to investigate the recent incidents that have occurred in the Bitlis Vilayet.

I also inclose copy of my letter to Saïd Pasha referred to in the last paragraph of Mr. Block's Memorandum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 55.

Memorandum by Mr. Block respecting the Talori Incident and Commission of Inquiry.

November 19.—On the 17th I requested Surreya Pasha, the Sultan's First Secretary, to inform His Majesty that your Excellency had received a telegram from Lord Kimberley authorizing you to delay Colonel Chermside's departure, that you had immediately informed Saïd Pasha of the fact by letter on the evening of the 16th, that your Excellency desires to point out that "it was owing to the extremely strong and energetic representations of Saïd Pasha that Colonel Chermside's mission was abandoned for the present; Saïd Pasha had pointed out that the mission of a military man would inevitably rouse the aspirations of the Armenians, embolden them to illegal acts, and would probably lead to bloodshed; that your Excellency, although of opinion that Colonel Chermside ought to have started on the 19th, finally gave way to Saïd Pasha's violent representations, and advised the suspension of the instructions to Colonel Chermside; that in view of the cry of indignation which would infallibly appear in the European press, it was of the utmost importance that the Commission should start at once, as promised by His Imperial Majesty. In fact, that it was on this condition only that Her Majesty's Government, always anxious to guard the interests of Turkey and the Sultan, had consented to agree to Colonel Chermside's not going, and if the Commission did not start in three or four days at the latest it would be too late, and the only possible means of counteracting the bad effect of the statements in the press would be lost. That the sending of the Commission is therefore of the utmost importance; had it started a fortnight ago it would have been better; there was still just time, but if the opportunity was now lost, Her Majesty's Government would find it almost impossible to restrain public opinion in England." I also expressed your Excellency's satisfaction that the Sultan had decided to send a Commission.

Surreya Pasha sent in my communication at once to the Sultan, but it was only on the following morning, Sunday, that his Excellency sent for me, and informed me that the Sultan had not yet chosen the members of the Commission; that this would naturally take some time, as the selection would have to be made with great care; they would have to study all the documents connected with the case, and to receive their instructions from His Majesty, and then they would have to make preparations for departure and for their arduous journey in a snow-bound country. At the same time the Commission would be sent, His Majesty recognizing the necessity for it, but it would require some time. Lastly, the Sultan desired your Excellency to counteract the bad effect of the publications in the British and European press.

After communicating to your Excellency the terms of the message, I again went back to the Palace, and, by your Excellency's instructions, I sent a message to the Sultan through Surreya Pasha to the effect that "your Excellency was pleased at

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learning that the Sultan recognized the necessity of sending the Commission, and the importance of choosing the best men for the task, but that your Excellency desired to point out that it was even of greater importance that the constitution and the date of departure of the Commission should be at once definitely fixed. It was in consequence of His Majesty's promise that the Commission would start in three or four days that your Excellency was able to persuade Her Majesty's Government to delay Colonel Chermside's mission."

I said "that your Excellency would certainly do your best, and Her Majesty's Government also, to counteract the effects of the publication of these incidents in the press, but that you desired to point out in the strongest possible manner that both you and Her Majesty's Government would be helpless to assist the Sultan if the Commission did not start before Friday. Any delay was most serious, and your Excellency solemnly warned His Majesty that time presses, and that if you could not, within one or two days, inform Her Majesty's Government of the constitution of the Mission and of its departure before Friday, your earnest desire to assist His Majesty might be of no avail, and the praiseworthy measures which His Majesty had decided to take would certainly and entirely have lost their value."

Arif Bey, the Chamberlain, brought me back the Sultan's reply that he had already thought of two persons, and was considering the choice of a third, as members of the Commission; that he had had all the documents sent for, and that the Commission would leave before Monday the 26th, and that orders would be sent to facilitate their journey to Bitlis. At the same time, His Majesty did not admit England's rights to insist on the sending of a Commission; that was an internal matter which concerned the Imperial Government alone, and if he was now sending one it was only out of regard for the friendly representations of England, with whom he desired to maintain the good relations which existed. His decision in respect of the Commission was to be considered in the light of a friendly and courteous act.

November 20.—Your Excellency had the same afternoon sent a letter to Saïd Pasha, which his Excellency communicated to the Sultan, and this morning Saïd Pasha desired me to report to you the Sultan's answer to the effect that, *without fail*, the Commission would start before Sunday, that two members were chosen—Saïd Pasha did not know their names—and that the *two* others would be decided upon at once. I later on thanked Saïd Pasha on your behalf for the message, and his Excellency communicated your thanks to the Palace, and informed me that directly he knew the names of the Commissioners he would let me know.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

Inclosure 2 in No. 55.

Sir P. Currie to Saïd Pasha.

Mon cher Ministre, *Péra, le* 18 *Novembre*, 1894.

J'AI été vivement peiné en recevant ce matin un message que Sa Majesté Impériale m'a fait l'honneur de me transmettre par l'entremise de Surreya Pacha. J'ai eu le regret d'apprendre que Sa Majesté Impériale a l'intention de retarder l'exécution immédiate de la promesse que votre Excellence m'a autorisé de la part de Sa Majesté à transmettre à mon Gouvernement; c'est-a-dire, qu'une Commission d'Enquête serait envoyée dans le délai d'une semaine à compter du 15 courant au Vilayet de Bitlis. C'est, comme votre Excellence le sait, sur la foi de ces assurances que j'ai amené mon Gouvernement à suspendre la mission du Colonel Chermside, qui était devenue nécessaire à cause des graves accusations portées par le Gouvernement Impérial contre le Vice-Consul Anglais à Van. Ces assurances ont été publiées dans l'espoir d'arrêter le plus possible l'émotion suscitée par les rapports sur les événements de Sassoon, qui sont en train d'arriver de plusieurs sources.

Je prie votre Excellence de rappeler à Sa Majesté Impériale que lorsque je communiquai, il y a dix-huit jours à Sa Majesté Impériale les rapports de notre Vice-Consul et que je suggérai l'envoi d'une Commission, j'espérai être utile à Sa Majesté, et lui montrer d'avance un moyen par lequel elle pourrait échapper à la responsabilité que l'Europe ne manquerait pas de lui attribuer pour les actes des autorités locales, s'ils n'étaient pas soumis à une enquête indépendante.

L'urgence d'une telle enquête est aujourd'hui beaucoup plus grande. Les informations, qui n'étaient alors qu'en route, sont maintenant arrivées et commencent à être circulées par la presse Européenne. A moins que le Gouvernement Anglais et

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les autres Gouvernements qui veulent du bien à l'Empire Ottoman ne puissent dire qu'une Commission d'Enquête est déjà partie, ou est sur le point de partir, il deviendra impossible d'arrêter le torrent d'accusations, fausses ou vraies, qui sera tourné contre le Sultan et son Gouvernement et qui pourra avoir des effets aussi regrettables que ceux qui ont suivi les incidents en Bulgarie.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) PHILIP CURRIE.

(Translation.)

My dear Minister, *Pera, November* 18, 1894.

I WAS much distressed at receiving this morning a message which His Imperial Majesty did me the honour to send through Surreya Pasha. I learnt with regret that His Imperial Majesty intends to put off the immediate performance of the promise which your Excellency, on behalf of His Majesty, authorized me to communicate to my Government, namely, that a Commission of Inquiry would be sent to the Vilayet of Bitlis within a week from the 15th instant. As your Excellency knows, it was on the strength of those assurances that Her Majesty's Government, at my instance, suspended Colonel Chermside's mission, which had become necessary in consequence of the grave charges brought by the Imperial Government against the British Vice-Consul at Van. Those assurances were published, with a view to allay as much as possible the excitement caused by the reports on the Sasun events, which are being received from various quarters.

I beg that your Excellency will remind His Imperial Majesty that, when I communicated to His Imperial Majesty eighteen days ago the reports of our Vice-Consul, and suggested that a Commission should be sent, I hoped to be useful to His Majesty, and to show him beforehand a way of escaping from the responsibility for the acts of the local authorities, which Europe would not fail to throw upon him, unless those acts were made the subject of an independent inquiry.

The need for such an inquiry has now become much more urgent. The information, which was then still on its way, has now arrived, and the European press is beginning to make it public. Unless the British Government and the other Governments which wish well to the Ottoman Empire are able to say that a Commission of Inquiry has already started, or is on the point of starting, it will become impossible to stop the torrent of accusations, false or true, which will be directed against the Sultan and his Government, and which may have results as regrettable as those which followed the events in Bulgaria.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 56.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received November* 27.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, November* 27, 1894.

IT has occurred to me that we might propose to the Powers which have Consuls at Erzeroum to make a joint application to the Porte to give facilities to our Consuls to communicate with the Commission, and to report the progress of the inquiry to their respective Governments.

Should your Lordship approve of this suggestion, perhaps the best plan would be that I should privately sound my French and Russian colleagues, as France and Russia are the only Powers besides ourselves that have Consuls at Erzeroum.

No. 57.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 28, 1894.

INSTRUCTIONS will shortly be sent to your Excellency to present to the Porte a formal protest against the official notification which has appeared with reference to the appointment of the Bitlis Commission, declaring that Her Majesty's Government cannot regard as satisfactory an inquiry instituted under such circumstances, and reserving to themselves complete liberty of action.

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Your suggestion that an inquiry should be held by the British, French, and Russian Consuls at Erzeroum is favourably viewed by the Cabinet, but it would not, in their opinion, be sufficient for the Consuls merely to communicate with the Commission, and report the progress of its work. It would be necessary that they should undertake an entirely separate investigation, quite independent of the Turkish Commissioners.

You should sound the French and Russian Representatives on the subject of such an inquiry, and ascertain whether their respective Consuls would be empowered to join in it.

No. 58.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 28, 1894.

THE Turkish Ambassador sent me this morning a copy of the telegram from the Porte, which he read to me yesterday, stating that the Commission of Inquiry had left Constantinople, and was instructed to make an impartial investigation into the facts connected with the occurrences in the Sassoon district.

His Excellency also communicated to me a translation from the Turkish of the notification published in the newspapers. He stated that it was not a proclamation, but a simple "Communiqué," inserted with others relating to different subjects, with the main object of counteracting the exaggerated statements regarding the events referred to which had appeared in certain foreign journals. His Excellency gathered from the despatch which he had received from the Porte that I attributed much greater importance to the notification than really attached to it.

I transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of both communications.

I am, &c.

(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No 58.

Saïd Pasha to Rustem Pasha.

Constantinople, le 27 *Novembre*, 1894.

LA Commission d'Enquête vient de quitter Constantinople pour se rendre sur les lieux par voie de Trébizonde. Elle est chargée d'examiner impartialement les faits et rapports relatifs à l'incident de Sassoun, et de nous en rendre compte au plus tôt.

(Signé) SAÏD.

(Translation.)

Constantinople, November 27, 1894.

THE Commission of Inquiry has just left Constantinople to proceed to its destination by way of Trebizond. It is instructed to make an impartial investigation into the facts in connection with the occurrences in the Sasun district and the reports on the subject, and to report to us as soon as possible.

(Signed) SAÏD.

Inclosure 2 in No. 58.

Notification.

(Traduction du Turc.)

CERTAINS journaux d'Europe ont cru devoir dernièrement répandre de fausses nouvelles annonçant que les troupes Ottomanes auraient détruit quelques villages Arméniens sis dans le district de Sassoun et y auraient en même temps commis des meurtres.

Quelques-unes de ces mêmes feuilles ont grossi outre mesure les faits, en ajoutant que s'ils n'ont pas été connus en Europe, c'est par suite de la défense faite aux voyageurs de quitter ces parages. Les sujets de Sa Majesté Impériale qui habitent les districts dont il s'agit vaquent comme par le passé tout à leur aise et tranquillement à leurs affaires, et ils sont libres de se rendre où bon leur semble en toute sécurité.

Mais à la suite des actes de brigandage que plusieurs bandits Arméniens, égarés par les instigations d'agitateurs, ont osé commettre en violation de l'ordre public à Talori et ses alentours, tels que assassinats, pillages, et vols de grand chemin, les autorités ont dû naturellement prendre les mesures propres à réprimer le mouvement. En conséquence un nombre suffisant de troupes du 4e Corps d'Armée Impérial fut expédié sur les lieux, et l'extension de la rébellion fut ainsi arrêtée. Aussitôt le calme rétabli, les troupes retournèrent à leurs cantonnements. De même aucune intervention n'eût lieu à cette occasion de la part des Kurdes. Tous ces actes répréhensibles commis par des insurgés Arméniens ayant été rapportés par le Maréchal Commandant-en-chef du 4e Corps d'Armée, et le Gouverneur-Général de la Province de Bitlis, il a été décidé d'envoyer sur les lieux par le premier bateau à vapeur devant partir cette semaine une Commission chargée de faire une enquête sur les méfaits des brigands en question, et composée de leurs Excellences le Général de Division, Abdoullah Pacha, Aide-de-camp de Sa Majesté le Sultan; le Directeur de la Caisse d'Épargne, Eumer Bey; le Premier Secrétaire du Bureau du Secrétariat du Ministère Impérial de l'Intérieur, Medjid Effendi; et de Hafiz Tewfik Pacha, Général de Brigade d'État-Major à la suite de Sa Majesté.

Le Gouvernement Impérial ne pouvant jamais tolérer des publications pareilles touchant les sujets de Sa Majesté Impériale qui jouissent tous à titre égal de la justice et de la clémence souveraine, la présente communication est faite pour rétablir les faits sous leur véritable jour et démentir les publications dont il s'agit.

(Translation.)

(Translation from the Turkish.)

CERTAIN European newspapers have seen fit lately to spread false news to the effect that the Ottoman troops had destroyed some Armenian villages situated in the Sasun district, and had at the same time committed murders there.

Some of these same newspapers have exaggerated the facts beyond measure, adding that, if they are not known in Europe, it is because travellers are forbidden to leave those parts. The subjects of His Imperial Majesty who inhabit the districts in question are following their occupations in peace and quiet as in the past, and are free to go where they like in all safety.

But in consequence of the acts of brigandage which some Armenian bandits, led astray by the instigations of agitators, have dared to commit, in violation of public order, in Talori and its neighbourhood, such as assassinations, plundering, and highway robbery, the authorities have naturally had to take the necessary steps to suppress the movement. A sufficient number of troops of the 4th Imperial Army Corps were therefore dispatched to the localities in question, and thus the rebellion was prevented from spreading. As soon as tranquillity was restored the troops returned to their quarters. There was no interference on the part of the Kurds on this occasion. On all these reprehensible acts of Armenian insurgents being reported by the Marshal Commander-in-chief of the 4th Army Corps, and by the Governor-General of the Province of Bitlis, it was decided to send to the spot, by the first steamer starting this week, a Commission, with instructions to institute an inquiry into the misdeeds of the brigands in question, which was to be composed of their Excellencies the General of Division, Abdoullah Pasha, Aide-de-camp of His Majesty the Sultan; the Director of the Savings Bank, Eumer Bey; the First Secretary of the Secretarial Bureau in the Imperial Ministry of the Interior, Medjid Effendi; and Hafiz Tewfik Pasha, General of Brigade of the Head-quarters Staff attached to His Majesty.

As it is impossible for the Imperial Government to tolerate the publication of such reports concerning the subjects of His Imperial Majesty, who are all equally in the enjoyment of justice and of the Sovereign's clemency, the present communication is made with the view of stating the real facts, and of contradicting the reports in question.

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No. 59.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir *Foreign Office, November* 29, 1894.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 21st instant, forwarding copies of a Memorandum by Mr. Block of his interviews with Surreya Pasha, and of the note addressed by your Excellency to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, with respect to the dispatch of the Commission of Inquiry into the recent events in the Sassoon district.

Her Majesty's Government approve the terms of your Excellency's note to Saïd Pasha on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 60.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received November 30.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 26, 1894.

WITH reference to my telegram of to-day's date,* I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, forwarding one from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting further details of the massacre at Sassoun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 60.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, November* 15, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a despatch which has reached me from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, under flying seal, to your Excellency, upon which I beg to offer the following observations.

Reports of the horrible barbarities committed by the Turkish troops and their Kurdish auxiliaries in Sassoun have reached me from time to time from various private sources, but I was loath to believe them, and refrained from reporting them officially while Mr. Hallward was engaged in inquiries upon the spot. Now that his inquiries are finished, it is my duty to inform your Excellency that the above reports from quite independent sources agree in almost all respects with the main lines of Mr. Hallward's narrative. I know also that my foreign colleagues here are in possession of information tending to confirm the truth of his reports, and differing chiefly with regard to the estimated number of the victims of the massacre, which their informants place at a somewhat lower figure than Mr. Hallward would seem inclined to do. And these persistent and circumstantial stories of massacre and atrocity have now reached the general public, and become matters of notoriety throughout the country, so that I venture to say that no intelligent person in these provinces, not being a Turkish official, would think of doubting that they were indeed committed by Turkish troops in Sassoun.

With regard to Osman Pasha, who is described by Mr. Hallward as a Ferik, in command of the troops in Sassoun before Zeki Pasha's appearance, I may observe that the only general officer of that name in the 4th Army Corps is the Brigadier-General (Liva) of Redifs at Erzingian, and I have not yet been able to ascertain whether he was engaged in the recent military operations.

I believe that the ex-Mutessarif of Moush, who only remained a very few weeks at that post, was mistaken in telling Mr. Hallward that the village of Semal had a population of some 1,700 souls. The population of Semal was from 350 to 400 only, and the Mutessarif probably meant the neighbouring large village of Ghelié Guzan,

* No. 52.

which really had a population of about 1,700 souls, who are said to have been almost entirely exterminated.

While the present reign of terror lasts, and Tahsin Pasha is still maintained in his post of Vali of Bitlis, it is hopeless to expect that natives of the country should come forward and give evidence as to what has occurred. Anyone attempting an exhaustive investigation into the charges of atrocity and massacre must have a free hand, and full powers to take evidence, or he would find himself isolated and paralyzed by the action of the local authorities, as Mr. Hallward was. But the destruction of life and property has been too great for its traces to be easily concealed, and a ruined and depopulated district remains to prove the substantial truth of Mr. Hallward's allegations, whenever the Turkish Government are prepared to facilitate a full and impartial inquiry.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 60.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Van, November* 6, 1894.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 9th ultimo, I have the honour to report that I remained in Moush till the 16th ultimo, and, after passing through quarantine, arrived in Bitlis on the 25th ultimo.

The information I obtained in Moush and Bitlis subsequently to the date of my despatch fully confirmed the substantial accuracy of the main facts related therein respecting the Sassoun massacre, of which I now beg to submit a more detailed account.

The attention of the Government appears to have been drawn towards that district by the proceedings of one Damadian, an Armenian Catholic from Constantinople, who in 1892 went about the villages of the Sassoun district and the Moush Plain in such a manner as to induce the authorities to believe that he was conducting a political agitation. Efforts were made to effect his arrest for some time without success, but in May 1893 he was captured by the police, taken to Bitlis, and thence sent to Constantinople, where he was granted a pardon. What this man's real character or object was in acting as he did I cannot state positively, nor by what means he obtained pardon; but I do not believe that the agitation amounted to much, or had much effect on the villagers. One thing seems clear, that shortly after his capture the fate of the Sassoun Armenians was sealed. Tribal Kurds began to assemble in large numbers in the neighbourhood of Talori in such a way as to alarm the villagers, who began to make preparations in anticipation of an attack, which, in fact, shortly took place. The Armenians, being in a stronger position than the Kurds, repulsed them with considerable loss, their own loss being small. At the same time, they broke down a bridge over a deep gorge across which other Kurds were coming to join in the attack. The Kurds then retired, finding themselves worsted, and Hassan Tahsin Pasha, Vali of Bitlis, appeared on the scene with a detachment of troops. After some parley with the villagers, which had no effect, the Vali departed, leaving the soldiers on the spot. The Armenians were in a strong position, and the troops did not attack them, but waited in the hope of reducing them by famine. This attempt, however, failed, and at the beginning of winter they returned to Bitlis.

Then followed the events related in my former despatch: the Vali's summons to the principal villagers, and their refusal to appear, the dispatch of a detachment of troops to the district in the early summer, the assembling of the tribal Kurds, and the affray between the latter and the Armenians on account of stolen cattle, and the arrival of reinforcements of troops in August.

The troops sent from Bitlis took eighty tins of petroleum with them, and also four mountain guns.

At first the troops did not show themselves in the villages, but the Kurds were urged to attack the latter. The Armenians, thinking they had only to deal with Kurds, made a vigorous resistance and repulsed them. The latter refused to return to the attack unless helped by the soldiers, some of whom then assumed Kurdish costume, and joined in an attack which was more successful.

The troops now began to show themselves in some of the villages, saying that they had come to protect them; they lodged the night in them, and during the night

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rose and slaughtered all the inhabitants, men, women, and children. The Ferik (General), whose name, I think, is Osman Pasha (not Ismaïl Bey, as stated in my previous despatch), and who came from Erzingian, read an Imperial Firman, authorizing the punishment of the villages, and exhorted the soldiers not to fail in their duty. It is said that at first they hung back, not relishing their task, but their officers urged them on with threats, and the work of destruction and butchery was carried through without mercy or distinction of age or sex.

A large number of the leading men, headed by a priest, went out to meet the Commanding Officer with their tax receipts in their hands, by way of proving their loyalty to the Government, and begging for mercy. They were surrounded and killed to a man.

At Ghelié Guzan a number of young men were bound hand and foot, laid out in a row, had brushwood piled on them, and were burnt alive.

At another village a priest and several leading men were captured and promised release if they would tell where others had fled to; they did so, but were killed. The priest had a chain put round his neck and pulled in opposite directions, so that he was nearly throttled; finally, bayonets were placed upright in the ground, and he was tossed in the air so that he fell on them.

The men of another village fled with their women and children to a grotto, where they remained for several days, till the weaker ones died of hunger; the remainder were at last discovered by the soldiers and put to the bayonet, which was the weapon principally employed throughout.

Some sixty young women and girls were driven into a church, where the soldiers were ordered to do as they liked with them and afterwards kill them, which order was carried out.

A larger number of the most attractive women were set aside and invited to accept Islam and marry Turks; they refused, and were accordingly killed.

The petroleum brought from Bitlis was utilized for burning the houses, together with the inhabitants inside them. A soldier related in Bitlis how he had seen on one occasion a little boy run out from the flames, and pushed back into them with a bayonet by another soldier. It was also used to burn the corpses.

Many other disgusting barbarities are said to have been committed, such as ripping open pregnant women, tearing children to pieces by main force, &c.; but the above will serve as examples of the way in which this campaign of extermination was carried out.

I must modify the statement I made in my former despatch, that the Kurds did not take any large share in the massacre. At the instigation of the soldiers they certainly did take part in it, though the worst excesses seem to have been committed by the former.

A large number of the villagers fled to a peak near Talori, and determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible. The Kurds were sent to attack them several days in succession, but did not produce much effect; finally, when their ammunition and food gave out, the soldiers reached the summit with little loss, and killed nearly every one of them.

The final scene was enacted in the Valley of Talvorceg, where a large number of men, women, and children had collected; they were surrounded by Kurds and soldiers, and first thinned out by rifle-shots, and then the rest dispatched with sword and bayonet.

The operations lasted some twenty-three days, from about the 18th August to the 10th September, having been begun by the Bitlis and Moush garrisons, who were gradually reinforced by other troops of the 4th Army Corps. By that time the Commander-in-chief arrived from Erzingian and put a stop to further slaughter; otherwise the destruction of four more villages is said to have been contemplated, among others that of Vartennis, in the plain of Moush, which has been in ill-odour with the Government ever since the trial of Moussa Bey, when several of the villagers went to Constantinople to give evidence against him.

A Kurdish Chief who arrived late on the scene of action found there was nothing left to plunder, and so went off and got what plunder he could from a village in another district.

The details given above were principally collected from soldiers who took part in the massacre, and I have heard the main facts substantiated from various different quarters, among others by a Turkish zaptieh, who was there and saw the whole affair.

Whether the number of 8,000 killed, mentioned in my former despatch, is at all near the mark, I cannot say; in Bitlis I heard a far higher estimate given, but there

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can be no doubt that a large majority of the population of some twenty-five villages perished, and some of the villages were unusually large for this country. Thus, the Mutessarif of Moush told me that the village of Semal had a population of some 1,700 souls. From what I heard in Bitlis, the number who escaped must have been comparatively small. A soldier was heard to say in quarantine on his way back from Moush that he had killed five persons, and that he had killed the least of any; another boasted that he had killed 100. The number of prisoners taken was small, I do not think more than from twenty to thirty, whose lives were spared on the arrival of the Commander-in-chief. Among them were a few agitators of the type of Damadian, but none of them were foreigners, as was reported at first.

There was no insurrection, as was reported in Constantinople; the villagers simply took up arms to defend themselves against the Kurds. The statement made to me by an official here of their having killed soldiers and zaptiehs, I found after careful inquiry to be false. Before arriving in Moush, I naturally supposed that something of the sort must have occurred to call for such a display of military force, but neither the Mutessarif nor the Military Commandant with whom I spoke on the subject hinted at anything of the sort, nor did I learn elsewhere that the Armenians had been guilty of any act of rebellion against the Government.

The Mutessarif of Moush shortly after my departure was moved to Kerkouk in the Vilayet of Moosul, and the Mutessarif of Kerkouk is to take his place. I do not know what the precise significance of this change may be, but presume it is due to the Vali, who appears to have thought that the Mutessarif had been prejudicing me against him, though in fact he did nothing of the kind. I did not see the Vali, as he left for Sairt two days before my arrival. Great apprehension is felt in Bitlis at the prospect of his remaining longer in office, as the responsibility for the Sassoun massacre is mainly attributed to him, and it is feared that the lives of the Christians in the town will not be safe if such a thing passes unnoticed. He has practically admitted his responsibility, as he tried to get a document signed by the townspeople thanking him for the measures he took in Sassoun, but they refused to sign it. He succeeded, however, in forcing many Heads of villages to sign such a document, and it was published in the newspapers. He has now been in Bitlis for upwards of three years, and has been continually trading on the "Armenian question," extorting money by threats from Armenians in every part of the province; he failed to do so in Sassoun, but has succeeded in amply revenging himself.

In conclusion, I beg to say that I had considerable difficulty in obtaining reliable information, as I was closely watched the whole time by police agents, so that most of the natives were afraid to be seen speaking to me. I was prevented from visiting the Sassoun district on the ground that I might carry the cholera infection to the troops, as stated by the local authorities, and, according to the authorities in Constantinople, because my presence there might have caused an insurrection. I had no intention of visiting the troops, and therefore they ran no risk of infection from me, and after what had occurred the danger of an insurrection was, to say the least, exceedingly remote. However, the principal facts are, I think, clear, and the details I have given above were obtained from a reliable source.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 61.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 30, 1894.

I HAVE received the horrible details of the events in the Vilayet of Bitlis given in the reports from Her Majesty's Consular officers at Erzeroum and Van, which were forwarded in your despatch of the 26th instant.

Your Excellency should bring these reports to the knowledge of the French and Russian Representatives at Constantinople, and inquire whether information of a similar nature has reached them.

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No. 62.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 30, 1894.

THE Turkish Ambassador called to-day, and read to me a telegram from the Porte, stating that a fresh official Notice would be issued, which would remove any doubts as to the impartial and searching nature of the inquiry to be instituted by the Bitlis Commission, and that the Sultan trusted that this "Communiqué" would remove the bad impression made upon Her Majesty's Government by the previous notification.

His Excellency expressed his hope that this assurance would prove satisfactory, and that Her Majesty's Government would abandon their intention of addressing a formal protest to the Turkish Government.

I said that my own opinion was that such a subsequent rectification would not be sufficient to relieve Her Majesty's Government from the obligation of protesting against the previous announcement of what had taken place in the Bitlis Vilayet, and of the object for which the Commission was sent there. That notification was a public document, and could not be passed over in silence.

I also thought Her Majesty's Government would still consider it necessary to require a separate and independent inquiry. I had just received a despatch from Her Majesty's Consular officers at Erzeroum and Van, giving additional and most horrible details of atrocities committed by the Turkish soldiery, and I could not exaggerate the effect which would be produced in this country by the publication of these reports.

I could say nothing further until I was in possession of the exact terms of the proposed new Notice, and had been able to consult my colleagues.

Rustem Pasha said he would send me the terms without delay. His Excellency expressed his great concern at the aspect which the question had assumed, and his earnest hope that Her Majesty's Government would display forbearance in their treatment of it.

I told him that I deeply regretted the situation which had been created by the Sultan's action, and that I desired, as earnestly as did his Excellency, to avert, if possible, the consequences which might follow.

I have communicated the material portions of this despatch to your Excellency by telegraph.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 63.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 30, 1894.

HER Majesty's Government have received, with great regret and surprise, the official notification which has been inserted in the Turkish newspapers at Constantinople, and a condensed translation of which has also appeared in the English press of that capital, stating the grounds on which His Majesty the Sultan has decided to send a Commission of Inquiry into the district of Sassoon, and describing the nature of the investigations with which that Commission will be charged.

The reports which your Excellency laid before His Majesty the Sultan in regard to recent events in the Vilayet of Bitlis, derived by one of Her Majesty's Consular officers from sources believed by him to be trustworthy, tended to show that massacres and other atrocities had been committed in the district of Sassoon by large numbers of Kurds, and even by Turkish soldiers under the direction of the Turkish authorities.

In reply to the representations thus made by you, his Excellency Saïd Pasha informed you that His Imperial Majesty would at once send a Commission to make inquiry into the occurrences in the district of Sassoon and to investigate the circumstances mentioned in the Memorandum sent to him by your Excellency on the 1st November.

Saïd Pasha stated that His Majesty considered it was for his own interest to inquire into the facts reported, and assured you that the inquiry would be carried out in a just and impartial manner, and that the guilty would be punished.

In reliance on this assurance, and in consideration of the fact that certain countercharges which had been made against the British Consular officer in question were

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withdrawn and admitted to be baseless, your Excellency was instructed not to press that Colonel Chermside should be sent to the spot to conduct an inquiry into the facts.

But the official notification, putting aside altogether the complaints of the conduct of the Turkish troops as well as against the Kurds, states that it was in consequence of acts of brigandage, such as assassinations, pillaging, and highway robberies committed by Armenian bandits, that the Turkish authorities were compelled to take measures of repression, and that the Commission was about to be sent for the purpose of investigating the misdeeds of these bandits.

Such an announcement, which is wholly at variance with the Sultan's assurances, renders it impossible for Her Majesty's Government to accept the Commission as being of a nature to secure an impartial and satisfactory investigation of the facts of the case.

Rustem Pasha, it is true, on the 28th instant (five days after the issue of the notification), communicated to Her Majesty's Government a telegram from Saïd Pasha stating that the Commission is instructed to examine impartially the facts and reports relative to the incident at Sassoon. But this subsequent communication cannot remove the effect of the published notification.

In these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government feel it their duty to protest formally against an inquiry so entirely unsatisfactory as insufficient to fulfil the engagements entered into by the Sublime Porte under the LXIst Article of the Treaty of Berlin, and in presence of the grave situation thus created they must reserve to themselves entire liberty of action in regard to the whole matter.

Your Excellency will read this despatch to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, and give him a copy of it.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 64.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 2.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 2, 1894, 3·30 P.M.

CONSUL LONGWORTH telegraphs that the members of the Commission arrived at Trebizond on the 30th ultimo and left to-day, and that they are limited by their instructions to ascertaining the truth about the Bitlis disturbances.

No. 65.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 3.)

My Lord, *Pera, November* 25, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith to your Lordship copy of a Circular addressed to the Turkish Ambassadors at foreign Courts relative to the appointment of a Commission to proceed to the districts of Sassoon and Talori, which had been communicated to me and to the other Ambassadors, by the Foreign Minister.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 65.

Circular addressed to Turkish Ambassadors at Foreign Courts.

MES communications précédentes vous ont fait savoir qu'à la suite des actes criminels commis par une foule d'insurgés Arméniens dans les districts de Sassoon et de Talourie, des troupes régulières ont été envoyées sur les lieux pour châtier les coupables, et l'ordre et la tranquillité publique y sont rétablis. Mais ce qui est pénible à constater, c'est que des organes de la presse Européenne se laissant induire en erreur par des suggestions malveillantes, publient des nouvelles imaginaires et contraires à la vérité.

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En présence de cette inconcevable attitude le Gouvernement Impérial vient de décider d'envoyer sur les lieux une Commission d'Enquête composée de leurs Excellences le Général de Division, Abdoullah Pacha, Aide-de-camp de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, notre auguste Souverain, le Directeur de la Caisse d'Épargne, Eumer Bey, le Premier Secrétaire du Bureau de la Correspondance du Ministère de l'Intérieur, Medjid Effendi, et de Hafviz Tevfik Pacha, Général de Brigade d'État-Major, à la suite de Sa Majesté.

Constantinople, le 23 *Novembre*, 1894.

(Translation.)

MY preceding communications have informed you that, in consequence of the criminal acts committed by a body of Armenian insurgents in the districts of Sasun and Talori, regular troops were sent to the spot to punish the guilty, and order and tranquillity have been restored. But unfortunately certain organs of the European press, allowing themselves to be misled by unfriendly inspirations, are publishing intelligence which is imaginary and opposed to the truth.

In view of this inconceivable attitude, the Imperial Government has decided to send to the spot a Commission of Inquiry, composed of their Excellencies the General of Division, Abdoullah Pasha, Aide-de-camp to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, our august Sovereign; the Director of the Savings Bank, Eumer Bey; the First Secretary of the Correspondence Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior, Medjid Effendi; and Hafviz Tewfik Pasha, General of Brigade of the Head-quarters Staff attached to His Majesty.

Constantinople, November 23, 1894.

No. 66.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 3.)

(Extract.) *Pera, November* 26, 1894.

I CALLED yesterday morning upon Saïd Pasha at his private residence, and spoke to him at great length of the bad impression produced in London by the terms in which the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry into the events in the Bitlis Vilayet had been announced in the official Gazette. I impressed upon his Excellency as forcibly as I could that the only safe course for the Turkish Government was to authorize the Commission to make a fair and impartial inquiry; that failing this, they would be held responsible for the cruelties perpetrated on the Armenians by the local authorities, and that the feeling aroused in Europe was such that if those cruelties were not punished, active interference from without must be looked for. I pointed out that the statement now made, that the Commission was intended to inquire into the criminal conduct of Armenian brigands, was a total departure from the engagement, which his Excellency had taken with Her Majesty's Government on behalf of the Sultan, that a Commission would be sent to make inquiries into the occurrences in the Sassoon district, as well as into all the reports mentioned in the Memorandum sent by me to His Imperial Majesty on the 1st instant; that it would consist of trustworthy men, who would be sworn to give a true Report; that the inquiry would be carried out in a just and impartial manner, and that the guilty would be punished.

I intimated that if steps were not taken to satisfy Her Majesty's Government that the Sultan's promise would be fulfilled, they might find it necessary to claim a right under the LXIst Article of the Treaty of Berlin to send Colonel Chermside to inquire into the treatment of the Armenians, and that they might also be forced to publish the Consular Reports from the Asiatic provinces, which had been so long withheld.

Throughout our conversation I spoke in a tone of friendly warning and advice, and left it to Saïd Pasha's discretion to make such use of my remarks as he might think best, when laying the matter before the Sultan. His Excellency made rather light of the announcement in the official paper, which he said was intended as an answer to the attacks made on the Turkish Government in the foreign press. He held out no expectation of the announcement being made here in a different form, but expressed a hope that he might obtain authority from His Majesty to send to the Turkish Ambassador in London, for communication and publication, an explicit declaration that the inquiry would be an impartial one, and that the guilty, wherever they might be found, would be punished.

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No. 67.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 3.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, November 26, 1894.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 15th instant, I have the honour to report that, at the request of Saïd Pasha, I have returned to him the "Notice" from the Sublime Porte, dated the 8th November, accusing Mr. Hallward of inciting the Armenians to sedition, and that his Excellency has returned to me the reply which I had sent to him on the 11th November.

Copies of both these documents, which are now to be regarded as cancelled, were forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch above referred to.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 68.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December 4, 1894.*

I HAVE not received from your Excellency copies of the Decrees mentioned in your telegram of the 23rd ultimo, which refer to the bestowal of decorations on Zeki Pasha and the Mufti of Moosh, and the dismissal of the Mutessarif; nor am I in possession of any information as to the reasons given for these decisions.

As this information constitutes an important feature in the case, I shall be glad to receive it as soon as possible.

No. 69.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 5.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December 5, 1894, 12·45 P.M.*

I THIS morning called on my French and Russian colleagues and sounded them confidentially as to whether their respective Governments would empower their Consuls at Erzeroum to join with our Consul in making a separate and independent investigation into the events in the Bitlis Vilayet.

The French Ambassador and the Russian Chargé d'Affaires both promised to telegraph at once to their Governments.

No. 70.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 5.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December 5, 1894, 11·55 P.M.*

I HAVE just had another visit from Saïd Pasha, who informs me of the Sultan's willingness to accept the nomination of a British Consular officer on the Commission.

His Excellency suggested Mr. Graves and Mr. Shipley, who are both at Erzeroum at the present moment, as persons who might be selected.

No. 71.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December 6, 1894.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of the 5th instant, reporting Saïd Pasha's proposal for the appointment of a British Consular officer on the Bitlis Commission.

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You should communicate this new proposal to the Russian and French Representatives at Constantinople, and inform them that Her Majesty's Government are inclined to agree to the Commission being accompanied by Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, on the clear understanding that he is at liberty himself to examine the witnesses who appear, and to send home a separate and independent report, which will be communicated to the Turkish Government and the other Powers Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin by Her Majesty's Government.

You should suggest to your French and Russian colleagues that their respective Governments should also urge that the Commission should be accompanied by their Consular officers at Erzeroum in the same manner.

No. 72.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 6, 1894.

BEFORE replying definitively to the proposal that a British Consular officer should join the Bitlis Commission, Her Majesty's Government think it right to consult other Powers with whom we have been in communication on the subject; but, in the meantime, you may tell the Porte that Her Majesty's Government are inclined to agree that the Commission should be accompanied by Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum on the conditions which I have communicated to you in my previous telegram of to-day, but must defer an answer for the reason I have mentioned.

No. 73.

*The Earl of Kimberley to the Marquis of Dufferin.**

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 6, 1894.

THE manner in which the Turkish Government have publicly notified the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry into the reports of horrible massacres in the Bitlis Vilayet has made it incumbent upon Her Majesty's Government to address a protest to the Sublime Porte. The inquiry was, by anticipation, deprived of the necessary character of impartiality and completeness owing to the announcement that the Commission was to inquire into the acts of the Armenian brigands.

A proposal has now been made by the Sultan for the appointment on the Commission of a British Consular officer.

Great Britain, France, and Russia alone being represented at Erzeroum by Consular officers, Sir P. Currie has been requested to communicate this proposal to the French and Russian Representatives at Constantinople, and to inform them that Her Majesty's Government are inclined to consent that the British Consul should join the Commission, provided that he is allowed to examine witnesses, and to make a separate report to Her Majesty's Government, who will communicate it to the Powers and the Porte. Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople will ask his French and Russian colleagues to suggest to their Governments that they also should urge the Sultan to allow their Consular Representatives at Erzeroum to accompany the Commission in the same manner as the British Consul.

The first step, as your Excellency will perceive, is to procure reliable information as regards the events that have occurred in the Sassoon district. You should communicate the substance of this telegram to the Government to which you are accredited, stating that the co-operation of as many of the Great Powers as possible in this process will be welcomed by Her Majesty's Government, but that at the present stage, from considerations of practical convenience and under the pressure of time, they have only considered it necessary to request those Powers who are represented by Consuls at Erzeroum to send those officers to join the Commission of Inquiry. You should add that Her Majesty's Government reserve to themselves the power of appealing, for their judgment, to the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin, when they are in possession of the authoritative information now being sought.

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* Also to Sir E. Malet, Sir Clare Ford, Sir F. Lascelles, and Sir E. Monson.

No. 74.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 7.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 7, 1894, 10 A.M.

CONSUL GRAVES telegraphs that he learns that the Commission which left Trebizond on the 2nd December, and were expected at Erzeroum to-day, have instead gone to Erzinjan.

Mr. Graves does not know whether Erzeroum will be visited by the Commission at all.

No. 75.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 7.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 7, 1894, 10·20 P.M.

YOUR Lordship's telegram of yesterday.*

I communicated the substance of your telegram to Saïd Pasha to-day, and advised him that the other foreign Consuls at Erzeroum should be invited to take part in the inquiry.

I had already on the 29th ultimo suggested this course.

His Excellency has just been here to inform me that the Sublime Porte are willing to accept the conditions which Her Majesty's Government attach to the participation of their Consul in the inquiry, and that they have decided to propose to France and Russia that their Consuls at Erzeroum should be authorized on the same footing as our Consul to take part in the inquiry.

No. 76.

Sir E. Monson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 7.)

(Telegraphic.) *Vienna, December* 7, 1894.

COUNT KÁLNOKY entirely agrees with Her Majesty's Government on the advisability of obtaining the co-operation of as many of the Great European Powers as may be possible on the question of the Armenian massacres, as suggested in your Lordship's telegram of yesterday's date, but, as your Lordship is already aware, there is at Erzeroum no Austro-Hungarian Consul.

No. 77.

The Marquis of Dufferin to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 8.)

(Telegraphic.) *Paris, December* 8, 1894.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 6th instant, I have the honour to report that M. Cambon has been instructed to enter into communication with his British and Russian colleagues, and further he has been authorized, should the Sultan accept, and he himself deem it desirable, to enter into the arrangement which has been suggested for a joint examination of the late occurrences at Bitlis by ourselves and other Powers.

No. 78.

Sir E. Malet to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 8.)

(Telegraphic.) *Berlin, December* 8, 1894.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 6th instant, I have the honour to report that, in compliance with your Lordship's instructions, I made a

* No. 72.

communication yesterday to the German Government respecting the composition of the Commission appointed to inquire into the reported massacres in Armenia.

Baron von Marschall replied, that although the German Government were only indirectly interested in the question, the Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople had already received instructions to advise the Sultan to appoint, in his own interests, a Commission as to whose integrity there could be no doubt in the opinion of the Great Powers.

No. 79.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Foreign Office, December 8, 1894.

(Telegraphic.)

YOUR Excellency should bring to the knowledge of the Turkish Government the main facts contained in the reports transmitted in your despatch of the 26th ultimo respecting the occurrences in the Sassoon district.

No. 80.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Foreign Office, December 8, 1894.

(Telegraphic.)

I REQUEST your Excellency to express to the Sublime Porte the satisfaction with which Her Majesty's Government have learnt from your telegram of the 7th instant, that the Turkish Government agree to the participation of foreign Consular officers in the inquiry to be undertaken by the Bitlis Commission.

No. 81.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Foreign Office, December 8, 1894.

(Telegraphic.)

UNLESS you have any other proposal to make, I think that Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum will be the proper person to accompany the Bitlis Commission.

Mr. Graves should be told to hold himself in readiness to start without delay, and your Excellency will no doubt arrange with the Turkish Government as to where he shall join the Commission of Inquiry. You should concert with your colleagues as soon as you are told whether their Consular officers will join in the proposed inquiry as to the joint instructions which should be given them.

No. 82.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 10.)

Pera, December 4, 1894.

My Lord,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your Lordship's telegram of this day's date, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a translation of the official notices which have appeared in the Turkish press respecting the decorations bestowed on Zeki Pasha and the Mufti of Moush, and the transfer of the Mutessarif of Moush.

I also inclose an extract from the "Levant Herald," giving an account of the honours paid at Trebizond to the officer who is conveying the Imtiaz to Zeki Pasha, as well as some flags sent by the Sultan to the Hamidieh regiments.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 82.

Official Notice in "Saadet" and other Papers of September 24, 1894.

THE decoration of the Imtiaz has been conferred on Zeki Pasha, Mushir of the 4th Corps d'Armée, for his faithful and laudable services and excellent and able efforts.

Official Notice in "Saadet" and other Papers of November 21, 1894.

The third class of the Medjidieh has been conferred on Mehemed Amin Effendi, Mufti of Moush, because he was an official deserving of the Imperial favour.

From "Saadet" of October 18, 1894.

The Mutessarif of Kerkuk, Arifi Pasha, has been appointed to the Sandjak of Moush, and Jelal Pasha, Mutessarif of Moush, to the Sandjak of Kerkuk. The Valis of Bitlis and Mosul have received information that the said functionaries have taken the usual oaths of allegiance.

Inclosure 2 in No. 82.

Extract from the "Stamboul" of November 22, 1894.

DÉCORATIONS. — En reconnaissance des efforts déployés par son Excellence le Maréchal Zéki Pacha, Commandant-en-chef du 4e Corps d'Armée (Erzindjan), pour le développement de l'agriculture dans la Province d'Erzeroum, Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan lui a conféré la Médaille d'Or du Mérite Agricole. Cette décoration sera envoyée au Maréchal aujourd'hui même par les soins du Ministère de l'Agriculture.

(Translation.)

DECORATIONS.—In recognition of the efforts of his Excellency Marshal Zeki Pasha, Commander-in-chief of the 4th Army Corps (Erzinjan), for the development of agriculture in the Province of Erzerum, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan has conferred on him the Gold Medal of Agricultural Merit. This medal will be sent to the Marshal to-day by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Inclosure 3 in No. 82.

Extract from the "Levant Herald" of November , 1894.

GREAT honours were paid at Trebizond to General Vehbi Pasha, Aide-de-camp to the Sultan, who left here lately for Erzindjan, conveying the insignia of the Order of the Imtiaz conferred by the Sovereign upon Marshal Zeki Pasha, Commander of the 4th Army Corps, and a number of flags sent by His Imperial Majesty to the Hamidieh cavalry regiments.

On his arrival at Trebizond Vehbi Pasha was received by the Governor-General of the province, the Military Commander, and the civil and military functionaries, all in full uniform. They accompanied the Sultan's Envoy from the landing to the premises of the Military Administration at Ghiuzel Hissar. The procession was preceded by several Imams of the town singing hymns, and at their head walked an officer bearing one of the standards sent by the Sovereign.

No. 83.

Sir E. Monson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 10.)

(Extract.) *Vienna, December* 8, 1894.

I COMMUNICATED to Count Kálnoky yesterday afternoon the substance of your Lordship's telegram of the 6th instant, setting forth the views of Her Majesty's Government and the action taken by them at Constantinople respecting the Armenian massacres.

His Excellency said that he is entirely in agreement with Her Majesty's Government as to the expediency of enlisting the co-operation of as many of the Great Powers as possible in the line which your Lordship announces.

Austria-Hungary, however, having no Consul at Erzeroum, nor, indeed, any Consular official in those regions except an Honorary Consul at Trebizond, cannot associate herself in the Consular action which Her Majesty's Government hope will be supplied by France and Russia.

No. 84.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 10.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 9, 1894, 10·30 A.M.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of yesterday,* I consider that Mr. Graves should accompany the Bitlis Commission. He intended to have left Erzeroum on the 29th November, on leave of absence, but, owing to a telegram from me, he is still there, awaiting further instructions.

No. 85.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 11, 1894.

HER Majesty's Government agree to the proposal of the Porte, that the Bitlis Commission should be accompanied by Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum on the conditions which I communicated to you in my telegram of the 6th,† which, as Saïd Pasha notified to you on the 7th, were accepted by the Turkish Government.

You should officially notify this acceptance to the Porte to-morrow, and express a hope that they will raise no difficulty in case any other of the Signatories of the Berlin Treaty should wish to send Consular officers to accompany the Commission.

No. 86.

The Earl of Kimberley to the Marquis of Dufferin.‡

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 11, 1894.

I REQUEST your Excellency to communicate to the Government to which you are accredited the substance of my telegram to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, repeated to you, in which his Excellency is instructed to agree to the Porte's proposal, that Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum shall accompany the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry on the conditions specified in a previous telegram to you of the 6th instant.

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* No. 81. † No. 71.

‡ Also to Sir E. Malet, Sir E. Monson, Sir F. Lascelles, and Sir Clare Ford.

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No. 87.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 12.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 12, 1894, 2·30 P.M.

ACTING on the instructions contained in your Lordship's telegram of yesterday, I am writing officially to Saïd Pasha to inform him that Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum will, on the conditions laid down by your Lordship, accompany the Commission. I informed M. Cambon and M. de Nélidoff of this step.

No. 88.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 12.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 12, 1894, 4 P.M.

I HAVE received a telegram from Mr. Graves saying that he expects the Commission to arrive at Erzeroum to-morrow.

I have telegraphed to him to report to me the movements of the Commission by telegraph, at the same time informing him of the communication I made to the Porte to-day.

No. 89.

Sir E. Monson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 12.)

(Telegraphic.) *Vienna, December* 12, 1894.

I HAVE written a note to Count Kálnoky on the subject of the Armenian atrocities in the sense of your Lordship's telegram of yesterday's date.

The reports received by your Lordship are entirely confirmed by the news received from the Austrian Consul at Trebizond, who fears evidence will not be given against the offending parties, owing to the existing reign of terror.

No. 90.

Sir E. Monson to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 12.)

(Telegraphic.) *Vienna, December* 12, 1894.

REFERRING to my preceding telegram on the subject of the Armenian atrocities, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the steps taken by Her Majesty's Government meet with the fullest approval of Count Kálnoky.

No 91.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 12.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, December* 12, 1894.

ACTING on the instructions received from your Lordship, I have spoken to Count Kapnist. He promised to communicate with M. de Giers, who is still very unwell, although slightly better. He said that instructions had been sent to the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople to consult with Sir P. Currie as to the position of Consuls with the Commission, and that he could at once tell me that his Government wished their Consul at Erzeroum to participate in the inquiry. But they were most averse to raising any political question, although ready to join in securing a full investigation of the case and the punishment of the guilty.

In participating in this inquiry, they were actuated by no "arrière-pensée politique," and they wished this to be clearly understood.

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No. 92.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 13.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 13, 1894, 12·15 P.M.

M. DE NÉLIDOW informs me that his Government adheres to the request of the Turkish Government to add the Russian Consul at Erzeroum to the Commission of Inquiry, and leaves it to the Ambassadors to arrange together as to the extent of the powers and competence of the Consuls.

M. de Nélidow will come to me this evening to discuss these points.

The Porte have replied to my note referred to in my telegram to your Lordship of the 12th December. They contend that their proposal of the 5th instant to the effect that we should send our Consul, is now modified by the subsequent one, that the three Powers should each send their Consuls. The Porte add that they must now wait until they have received our reply to the last proposal.

My answer has been, that the first proposal is in no way affected by the second; that it is quite independent of it; and that, having taken time to consider it, we now accept it.

No. 93.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 13, 1894.

AT an interview I had to-day with Rustem Pasha I explained to his Excellency the present situation of the Armenian question, and informed him that we had decided to accept the proposal of the Turkish Government that a Consul should be sent to accompany the Commission upon the conditions which we had already laid down. I assured him that, looking to the strong feeling which had been excited in the country on the subject, it would be impossible to satisfy public opinion without the presence of an independent person at the inquiries of the Commission. If the inquiry were held simply by the Turkish Commissioners, and the result were not satisfactory, there would be no alternative but to have a fresh and independent inquiry, and it was obvious that this would be a measure far more injurious to the authority of the Sultan, and likely to cause more widespread agitation, than the measure which we proposed to adopt of sending a Consul with the Commission, who would be able to watch the proceedings and make to us an independent Report.

His Excellency appeared to agree with me in this view, but he complained bitterly of the agitation in this country, and reiterated to me the strong opinion which he had formed that the movement was really a revolutionary one, and that the reports of the atrocities were, if not entirely untrue, grossly exaggerated. He could not understand how persons with any sense of justice could so loudly condemn the Turkish Government before it was known what was the result of the inquiry which was about to take place.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 94.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 13.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 13, 1894, 11·45 P.M.

A NOTIFICATION has been made to the Porte by the Russian and French Representatives here, that they accept the proposals respecting their Consuls at Erzeroum. They discussed the details this afternoon at this Embassy.

For three reasons they think it advisable that Delegates, who should be nationals, should be sent to the Commission; but that the Consuls should not accompany it themselves.

Firstly. They are of opinion that the Delegates, being dependent on an authority not so remote as the Embassies at Constantinople, could bring more influence to bear

on the Commission by simply threatening to refer to their superiors at Erzeroum, than the Consuls themselves could; and that the presence of the Consuls themselves would not offer such satisfactory guarantees as this arrangement.

In the second place, they consider that the Consuls from their status would end by being forced into directing the inquiry, and that it would be impossible for them to confine themselves to superintending. Before an European inquiry the witnesses would be subjected to intimidation, and their evidence would thereby become unreliable, and they would also have endless difficulties thrown in their way. The Ambassadors are of opinion that an European inquiry, impeded by Turks, would not be attended with the same success as a Turkish inquiry under the control of Europeans.

The last reason is, that, owing to the winter, those of the Consuls who are not young might be unable to travel.

The Delegates would indicate the places and methods of carrying on the investigation, and on all points about which they were not satisfied, would cause the Commission to examine the witnesses.

They would appear at all the proceedings of the Commission, with the object of controlling and supervising them.

With regard to the *procès-verbaux* of the Commission, which would be communicated to them, they would have the right of having such alterations made as they thought necessary.

They themselves would also draw up a *procès-verbal* of each act of the Commission and of each sitting.

A *procès-verbal* would be drawn up by them and referred to the Consuls, should any difficulty arise between them and the Commission.

No. 95.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 13.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 13, 1894, 11·30 P.M.

WITH reference to my previous telegram of to-day, should the Porte agree to the proposal I should suggest sending Vice-Consul Shipley as our Delegate; he is now at Erzeroum. The French would send a Dragoman of French nationality, while Russia would be represented by a Secretary of the Consul-General. The Russian Ambassador here is of opinion that there would be great difficulties in regard to the direct examination of witnesses, and that if the Delegates were to formulate questions to be put by the Commission, the result would be more satisfactory.

Should your Lordship consider this a point of importance, we might reserve to ourselves the right, in case of necessity, of direct examination.

No. 96.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 13, 1894.

YOUR Excellency was correct in explaining to the Porte, as reported in your telegram of to-day,* that the acceptance by Her Majesty's Government of the Turkish proposal as to the presence of a British Consular officer on the Bitlis Commission was independent of any other proposal.

Her Majesty's Government have, however, always desired and gladly accept the co-operation of the French and Russian Consuls.

No. 97.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir F. Lascelles.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 13, 1894.

I HAVE received with much satisfaction the assurance of the Russian Government, conveyed in your telegram of yesterday, as to their willingness to participate in the proposed inquiry into recent occurrences in the Vilayet of Bitlis.

The instruction sent to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople on the subject has been repeated to your Excellency.

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* No. 92.

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No. 98.

The Earl of Kimberley to the Marquis of Dufferin.

My Lord, *Foreign Office, December* 13, 1894.

THE French Ambassador called to-day, and informed me that the French Government were ready to act in concert with Her Majesty's Government and that of Russia in regard to the Bitlis Inquiry, and that instructions had been sent to the French Ambassador at Constantinople to consult with his British and Russian colleagues as to the proposed participation in the inquiry of the Consuls of the three Powers at Erzeroum, and the arrangements which should be made for that purpose.

I thanked Baron de Courcel for this communication, which I said I had received with much satisfaction.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 99.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 14, 1894.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of yesterday,* stating that the French and Russian Ambassadors have acccepted the proposal of the Porte in regard to the participation of Consular officers in the inquiry into the reported massacres at Sassoon, but that their Excellencies have proposed to you that the Consuls at Erzeroum should not themselves accompany the Commission, but should be represented for the purpose by Delegates.

As Her Majesty's Government are anxious that the French and Russian Governments should act in concert with them in this matter they will not object to the arrangement proposed by the two Ambassadors, although they would have preferred that Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum should himself take part in the inquiry, as originally arranged with the Turkish Government.

Your Excellency is accordingly authorized to accept the proposal, and to depute Mr. H. S. Shipley as the Delegate of Her Majesty's Government.

The right of the Delegates to address questions directly to the witnesses in case of necessity should be expressly reserved.

It is essential to obtain every guarantee that the inquiry will be thorough and complete.

No. 100.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 14, 1894.

THE Turkish Ambassador called upon me this afternoon at the Foreign Office, and said he was instructed to inform me of the acceptance by the Turkish Government of the proposal that the Consuls of France, Great Britain, and Russia at Erzeroum should accompany the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.

I expressed my satisfaction at this communication, but I told Rustem Pasha that I had just received your Excellency's report of the result of your communications with your French and Russian colleagues, who had suggested as a preferable arrangement that the Consuls should not themselves accompany the Commission, but that Delegates should be sent who should act under the control and superintendence of the Consuls.

I said that, personally, I should have preferred that the Consuls should have accompanied the Commission, as had been originally proposed. I did not, however, think it necessary to press the point, as time was of importance, and Her Majesty's Government desired to act in concert with the other Powers.

Rustem Pasha expressed his regret that Mr. Consul Graves should not be present at the inquiry, as, from what his Excellency had heard of him, he believed him well qualified to undertake this duty.

* No. 94.

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I told his Excellency that Mr. Vice-Consul Shipley, who had considerable experience in Turkey, would be nominated as Delegate, and that Mr. Graves would exercise a general superintendence, in conjunction with the French and Russian Consuls.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 101.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir Clare Ford.

Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 14, 1894.

I HAVE received in the course of the week several inquiries from the Italian Chargé d'Affaires with respect to the arrangements in progress for securing the presence of foreign Consular officers with the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.

I informed the Chevalier Silvestrelli to-day that, after consultation together, the British, Russian, and French Ambassadors at Constantinople had recommended that the Consuls at Erzeroum should not themselves accompany the Commission to Sassoon, but should send Delegates, who should be nationals of the three countries.

The Ambassadors were of opinion that this would be the most convenient and effective course.

The Delegates would be present at all the proceedings of the Commission in order to watch and control them.

They would have the witnesses interrogated by the Commission on any points which seemed to them to require elucidation, and they would also indicate the places which the Commission should, in their opinion, visit, and the steps to be taken for carrying on the investigation.

The *procès-verbaux* of the Commission would be communicated to them, and they would have the right of demanding any corrections which might appear to them necessary. They would also themselves draw up a *procès-verbal* of each sitting and of all proceedings of the Commission, and in case of any difficulty arising between them and the Commission they would draw up a report, and refer it to the Consuls at Erzeroum.

Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople had been informed that Her Majesty's Government were prepared to accept this plan of procedure, but that the right should be reserved to the Delegates of asking questions directly of the witnesses if necessary.

The Italtan Chargé d'Affaires stated that it was not the intention of his Government to press for the presence on the Commission of Inquiry of the Italian Consul at Trebizond, unless his attendance should be considered advantageous by Her Majesty's Government.

I expressed my thanks to M. Silvestrelli for the courtesy of the Italian Government, and said that it was, of course, for them to decide what course they would pursue; if, however, they desired to send a Delegate with the Commission, his presence would be welcome to Her Majesty's Government, or else they might, if they preferred it, send their Consul at Trebizond to Erzeroum to join with the other Consuls in the general superintendence of the proceedings of the Delegates.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 102.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 15)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 15, 1894, 2·35 P.M.

THE Commission is to leave Erzeroum to-day for the Vilayet of Bitlis, according to a telegram I have received from Mr. Graves.

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No. 103.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 15.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 15, 1894, 10·20 P.M.

THE Russian and French Ambassadors and myself have this afternoon sent to the Porte an identic verbal communication as follows:—

"Our Governments have, in answer to the Turkish proposals, authorized our Consuls at Erzeroum to send special Delegates to the Commission.

"These Delegates will have instructions to take cognizance of the Reports and Minutes of the Commission, and to make reports to their respective chiefs.

"They will accompany the Commission and will give it assistance in all its proceedings by offering all such indications as may be necessary to its investigations.

"They will in case of need, themselves put questions to the witnesses, after having first suggested to the President such questions as they think he should put to the witnesses.

No. 104.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 15, 1894.

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 13th instant,* I conclude that it has been made perfectly clear that each Agent shall report independently to his Government, and that neither Consuls nor delegates shall join in the Report of the Turkish Commission. I shall be glad to know whether it is proposed that this duty shall be undertaken by the Consul or the Delegate.

No. 105.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 15, 18

WITH reference to my telegram of the 14th instant, agreeing to the new proposal that Delegates for the Consuls at Erzeroum should accompany the Commission, you should stipulate for our right to dispatch our Consul to the spot, if it were proved by the reports of our Delegate that the inquiry is not proceeding to our satisfaction. The same right would naturally be enjoyed by the other Powers.

No. 106.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 16.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 16, 1894, 7·30 P.M.

THE departure of the Commission from Erzeroum has, according to a telegram from Mr. Graves, been postponed for one or two days.

No. 107.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 16.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, December* 16, 1894.

COUNT KAPNIST informs me that the Russian Ambassador's instructions were to the effect that he should confer with Sir P. Currie with a view to coming to an understanding. He said that his Government wished the inquiry to be conducted in a satisfactory manner and to be complete, but it would be better, they thought, that the Ambassadors at Constantinople should settle the details of the arrangement so far as the position and attributions of the Consuls or their Delegates were concerned.

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* No. 94.

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No. 108.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 16, 1894.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of yesterday,* informing me that an identic verbal communication has been addressed to the Porte by you and your Russian and French colleagues relative to the deputation by the Consuls at Erzeroum of Delegates to accompany the Commission of Inquiry into the reported massacres in Sassoon.

I observe that the Consul's Delegates are to report to their respective chiefs. I should be glad to be informed whether it is understood that the Consuls are also to furnish reports to their respective Governments on the result of the inquiry.

We attach the greatest importance to obtaining full independent reports on all that has occurred.

No. 109.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 17.)

(Extract.) *Pera, December* 13, 1894th

THE observations addressed by your Lordship to Rustem Pasha on the 26 ultimo, of which I was informed in your telegram of that date, produced a serious effect both at the Palace and at the Porte.

The Sultan at once sent his Private Secretary, Kiazim Bey, to see me, and he was shortly followed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. They expressed much alarm at the possible consequences which your Lordship had foreshadowed, and begged me to suggest the steps that could be taken in order to avoid them. I said that I had no authority to make any suggestion, but that I believed Her Majesty's Government would be satisfied with nothing else than an absolute guarantee that there would be an impartial inquiry into the events at Sassoon. So far as I could see, the only means of securing this was to invite foreigners to take some part in the inquiry. I suggested that the task might be undertaken by the Consuls at Erzeroum.

On the 6th December your Lordship instructed me to inform the Porte that Her Majesty's Government were disposed to agree that our Consul at Erzeroum should accompany the Commission on condition that he should have the right of addressing inquiries to the witnesses, and of making an independent and separate Report to Her Majesty's Government, which would be communicated by them to the Porte and to the other Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin.

In communicating this reply to Saïd Pasha, I repeated a suggestion which I had already made to him on the 29th ultimo, that the Porte should invite the other foreign Consuls at Erzeroum to take part in the inquiry. A few hours afterwards he came to announce that the Porte had decided to invite France and Russia to authorize their Consuls at Erzeroum to accompany the Commission on the same footing as our Consul. This was on the evening of the 7th, and on the 8th your Lordship instructed me to express to the Porte the satisfaction with which Her Majesty's Government had received the communication.

The two Powers not having on the 11th instant sent any definite answer, your Lordship instructed me no longer to postpone the formal acceptance of the proposal that our Consul should accompany the Bitlis Commission.

I accordingly addressed yesterday to Saïd Pasha the note, of which a copy is inclosed, and which expressed the hope that if any other of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin should wish to send Consular officers, the Porte would make no difficulty.

I have this morning received a reply, in which the Turkish Government maintain that the separate proposal to us was modified by the larger one to the Powers, and that they must await our reply to the second communication. To this I have sent an answer, maintaining our right to deal with the first proposal as an independent one. Copies of these two documents are also inclosed.

A note which I have just received from my Russian colleague informs me that his Government have decided to accept the request of the Turkish Government to add their

* No. 103.

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Consul at Erzeroum to the Commission of Inquiry, and have authorized him to come to an understanding with the French Ambassador and myself as to the extent of the powers to be intrusted to our Consuls.

Inclosure 1 in No. 109.

Sir P. Currie to Saïd Pasha.

M. le Ministre, *Constantinople, December* 12, 1894.

I REFERRED to my Government the statement which you made to me on the 5th instant that His Imperial Majesty the Sultan consented to the nomination of a British Consular officer to the Sassoon Commission. On the 7th instant I had the honour to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government were disposed to agree that a British Consul should accompany the Commission, provided that it was clearly understood that he would have the right of addressing inquiries to the witnesses, and making a separate and independent Report to Her Majesty's Government, which would be communicated by them to the Sublime Porte and the other Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin.

Your Excellency accepted these terms on the same evening, and I have now the honour, by order of my Government, to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government formally accept the proposal of the Ottoman Government on the conditions stated above, and have selected for the purpose Mr. Graves, Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum.

Her Majesty's Government trust that if any other of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin should wish to send Consuls to accompany the Commission, the Sublime Porte will make no difficulty as to their doing so.

I avail, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 109.

Saïd Pasha to Sir P. Currie.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Le* 12 *Décembre*, 1894.

J'AI reçu la note que votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser aujourd'hui pour m'informer que le Gouvernement accepte la proposition de la Sublime Porte de faire accompagner la Commission d'Enquête de Sassoun d'un Consul Britannique et que son choix s'est porté sur Mr. Graves, Consul de Sa Majesté à Erzeroum.

Votre Excellence voudra bien se rappeler qu'à la suite de la proposition faite au début par moi d'adjoindre un Consul Britannique à la Commission d'Enquête, j'avais eu l'honneur de l'entretenir plus tard de l'idée d'y adjoindre également Messieurs les Consuls de France et de Russie à Erzeroum. Votre Excellence y avait acquiescée à la condition que les Ambassades de France et de Russie y donneraient leur assentiment et m'avait promis d'écrire immédiatement à L o ndre De notre côté, nous en avons entretenu les Ambassades de France et de Russie à Constantinople qui en ont déjà référé à leurs Gouvernements respectifs, ce dont votre Excellence avait été prévenue par moi.

Dès lors votre Excellence conviendra certainement que notre seconde proposition à laquelle elle avait adhérée ayant modifié la première qui fait aujourd'hui l'objet de sa note précitée, nous devons attendre la réponse du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique à notre dernière proposition énoncée ci-dessus.

J'espère, M. l'Ambassadeur, que vous voudrez bien nous faire part du résultat de vos démarches à cet égard, et je saisis, &c.

(Signé) SAÏD.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *December* 12, 1894.

I HAVE received the note which your Excellency has been good enough to address to me to-day informing me that the Government accept the proposal of the Sublime Porte that the Sasun Commission of Inquiry should be accompanied by a British Consul, and that their choice has fallen on Mr. Graves, Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum.

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Your Excellency will recollect that, subsequently to the proposal made by me in the first instance to attach a British Consul to the Commission of Inquiry, I had the honour to suggest to you later that the French and Russian Consuls at Erzeroum should also be attached to it. Your Excellency agreed, conditionally on the Embassies of France and Russia giving their assent, and you promised to write at once to London. On our side we communicated with the Embassies of France and Russia at Constantinople, by whom the matter has already been referred to their respective Governments, as I informed your Excellency.

In these circumstances your Excellency will certainly agree that, as our second proposal, to which you assented, modified the first one, which is the subject of your note of to-day, we must await the reply of Her Britannic Majesty's Government to our last proposal stated above.

I hope, M. l'Ambassadeur, that you will be good enough to communicate to us the result of the steps you have taken in the matter, and I beg, &c.

(Signed) SAÏD.

Inclosure 3 in No. 109.

Sir P. Currie to Saïd Pasha.

M. le Ministre, *Constantinople, December* 13, 1894.

I HAVE had the honour to receive your Excellency's note of yesterday respecting the appointment of Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum to accompany the Bitlis Commission, and feel it my duty to lose no time in rectifying a misunderstanding which appears to have arisen.

My communication of the 7th to your Excellency, whilst stating that Her Majesty's Government reserved their final answer to your proposal until they had consulted the Powers, in no way fettered their liberty of action as to the eventual acceptance of it. The two propositions referred to in your Excellency's note under acknowledgment were entirely distinct, and nothing has been said or done to detract from the force of the proposal which your Excellency made me on the 5th.

That proposal, after full consideration, my Government have resolved to accept and have instructed me so to inform your Excellency.

I avail, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 110.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 17.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 17, 1894, 11·50 A.M.

THE Commission started yesterday from Erzeroum.

No. 111.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 17.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 17, 1894, 7·45 P.M.

A DRAFT of the instructions which the Sultan proposes to send to the Commission was this morning unofficially submitted to the Russian and French Ambassadors and myself for our opinion.

The Sultan sent a Secretary for the purpose.

We have decided to send them back with a statement that we are not able to deviate from the lines laid down in our communication to Saïd Pasha, mentioned in telegram of the 15th instant from this Embassy.*

The instructions were not satisfactory as far as the part to be taken by the Delegates is concerned.

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* No. 103.

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No. 112.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 18, 1894.

HER Majesty's Government have somewhat reluctantly agreed to the proposal to send Delegates instead of the Consuls to attend the Commission, but they deem it very important to reserve the right of the Consuls to proceed to the inquiry in person. It would naturally be a matter for discussion and agreement between the three Powers whether this right should be exercised or not as the occasion arose. But Her Majesty's Government think it necessary to retain this lever for exercising pressure on the Porte in the case of any difficulties arising between the Turkish Commissioners and the Delegates of the three Governments. The Turkish Government can hardly object at the present stage to our stipulating for this right, as it is in accordance with a proposal which emanated from themselves. We may, however, find it difficult to assert it at a later period if it is allowed now to lapse.

I will communicate in this sense with Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Paris and St. Petersburgh.

No. 113.

*The Earl of Kimberley to Sir F. Lascelles.**

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 18, 1894.

IT is necessary, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, to reserve their right to send Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum to attend the Turkish Commission in the event of the reports from the Delegates showing that the inquiry is not proceeding in a satisfactory manner.

Please address M. de Giers in the sense of my telegram to Sir P. Currie, which I have repeated to you, and press his Excellency to issue instructions in accordance with our wishes.

No. 114.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 19.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 19, 1894, 12·15 P.M.

MR. BLOCK and the Dragomans of the French and Russian Embassies will to-day ask at the Porte for an answer to the joint communication which I telegraphed to your Lordship in my telegram of the 15th instant.†

At the same time they will request that telegraphic orders may be sent to the Commission that they are not, before the arrival of the Delegates, to proceed any further, or to hold any inquiries. They will notify that we shall consider as null and void any inquiries so held.

No. 115.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 21.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 21, 1894, 10·20 P.M.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 19th instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that His Imperial Majesty has given way at last with regard to the position of the foreign Delegates on the Commission.

It is provided in the instructions to the Commission, which were communicated to the three Dragomans this afternoon by Saïd Pasha, that the *procès-verbaux* of the Commission will be shown to the Delegates, and that they will be asked for their observations. The Delegates will be present at the proceedings of the Commission, and will have a right to ask, through the President, questions of the witnesses, and, in case of need, to put questions themselves.

* Also to the Marquess of Dufferin.

† No. 103.

The French Delegate, who is an Embassy Dragoman, starts from here to-morrow, and I shall forward by the same steamer instructions in charge of the messenger for Tehran, who goes viâ Trebizond, whence they will be forwarded by Consul Longworth to Erzeroum by special messenger.

Abdullah Pasha is to be recalled, and two functionaries of the Ministry of Justice appointed to preside over the Commission. They will start at once to join the other Turkish members.

No. 116.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 22.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 22, 1894, 2·40 P.M.

WITH reference to telegram of yesterday from this Embassy:

This morning the French and Russian Ambassadors met here.

Our Dragomans have been sent to ask Saïd Pasha for facilities to enable our Delegates to travel and communicate by telegraph.

Later on we intend to ask that the Vali be suspended.

We have also communicated to Saïd Pasha our joint instructions to the Delegates.

No. 117.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 22.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, December* 22, 1894, 5·40 P.M.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 21st instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that, owing to a delay in the departure of the steamer, the new members of the Bitlis Commission will leave on Monday, when our messenger and the French Delegate will also start.

The names of the new members are Jelalladin Bey, who is President of the Correctional Section of the Court of Appeal, and Shefik Bey, President of the Section of Requests of the Court of Cassation.

The latter will be the President of the Commission.

No. 118.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 22, 1894.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of yesterday relative to the position of the foreign Delegates on the Bitlis Commission, and I approve the arrangements reported therein.

The important point is that the Delegates should join the Commission without delay. Other questions connected with the inquiry can form the subject of separate discussion.

No. 119.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 24.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 18, 1894.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 6th instant I did not fail to communicate the substance of it to Count Kapnist, who said that the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople had telegraphed the reports of the horrible massacres in the Vilayet of Bitlis, and the unsatisfactory manner in which the Porte had announced the appointment of a Commission to inquire into them.

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The communication I had made was an invitation on the part of Her Majesty's Government to the Russian Government to send their Consul at Erzeroum to accompany the Turkish Commission, and his Excellency was unable to give me a reply until he should have received instructions from M. de Giers. He would see M. de Giers as soon as possible, but his Excellency had been in such bad health for the last two days that it was doubtful whether he would be able to see him that day.

Count Kapnist said that he understood that the Turkish Government asserted that the Armenians had risen in revolt, and there could be no doubt that there was a movement, which was by no means confined to the Armenians living in Turkey, for the purpose of establishing an independent Armenia, a question which could not be indifferent to the Russian Government, considering the large number of Armenians living on Russian territory.

I have not failed to keep Count Kapnist informed of the substance of the subsequent telegrams which your Lordship has done me the honour to address to me on this subject, and on the 12th instant I had the honour to report by telegraph that the Russian Government wished that their Consul at Erzeroum should participate in the inquiry, and that M. de Nélidoff had been instructed to consult with Sir P. Currie as to the position which the Consuls should hold on the Commission. Count Kapnist laid stress upon the fact that the Russian Government wished it to be understood that they had no "arrière-pensée politique" on the subject, and were averse to raising any political question.

In a later interview which I had with Count Kapnist for the purpose of conveying to him the expression of your Lordship's satisfaction at the readiness of the Russian Government to join in the inquiry, his Excellency explained to me, as I had the honour to report in my telegram of the 16th instant, that the Russian Government desired that the inquiry should be conducted in a satisfactory manner, but that they considered that the Ambassadors at Constantinople were in the best position to arrange details as to the position which the Consuls or their Delegates should have on the Commission, and that instructions had been sent to M. de Nélidoff to come to an understanding with Sir P. Currie on the subject.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 120.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 24.)

(Extract.) *St. Petersburgh, December* 19, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a copy of a note which, at Count Kapnist's request, I have addressed to M. de Giers, informing his Excellency that Her Majesty's Government thought it necessary to reserve the right of sending Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum to attend the Bitlis Commission in person if it should appear from the reports of their Delegates that the Commission is not progressing in a satisfactory manner, and expressing the hope that the Russian Government may see their way to sending instructions in the same sense to their Ambassador at Constantinople.

Inclosure in No. 120.

Sir F. Lascelles to M. de Giers.

M. le Ministre, *St. Petersburgh, December* 7 (19), 1894.

YOUR Excellency is aware that Her Majesty's Government have accepted the proposal that the Consuls at Erzeroum of Russia, France, and England should send Delegates to the Commission which has been appointed to inquire into the alleged atrocities in the Vilayet of Bitlis, instead of accompanying the Commission themselves; but in accepting this proposal, Her Majesty's Government consider it a matter of great importance that the right of sending the Consuls in person should be reserved. It would be a question for discussion and agreement between the three Powers whether this right should or should not be exercised if the occasion should arise, but it appears

to Her Majesty's Government to be necessary, in the case of difficulties arising between the Commission and the Delegates, to have this lever for exercising pressure. This right is in accordance with the proposal made by the Turkish Government, who could therefore raise no objection to it at the present stage, but there may be some difficulty in asserting it later on if it should be allowed to lapse now.

It appears from the reports of Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, that the Russian and French Ambassadors hesitate to insist on this point, and I have been instructed by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government consider it necessary to reserve the right of sending Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum to attend the Commission in person, should it appear from the reports of the Delegates that the Commission is not progressing in a satisfactory manner.

I have also been instructed to express the hope that the Russian Government may see their way to sending instructions in the same sense to their Ambassador at Constantinople.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 121.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 24.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, December 24, 1894.*

I AM informed by Count Kapnist that there is no objection on the part of his Government to the eventual participation of the British Consul in the Armenian inquiry.

They desire, however, that a similar right should be reserved to their Consular Representative.

No. 122.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir F. Lascelles.

Sir, *Foreign Office, December 27, 1894.*

I HAVE received your despatch of the 19th instant, forwarding a copy of the note which, in accordance with your instructions, your Excellency addressed to the Russian Government announcing the intention of Her Majesty's Government to reserve the right of sending their Consul to attend the Bitlis Commission in person if necessary, and expressing the hope that the Russian Government would send instructions to Constantinople in the same sense.

I approve the terms of your Excellency's communication to M. de Giers.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 123.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December 28, 1894.*

YOUR Excellency, after conferring with the French and Russian Representatives at Constantinople, should inform the Turkish Government that Her Majesty's Government will claim the right of dispatching their Consul to the Commission as originally proposed by the Porte in the event of the Delegates' reports showing that the inquiry is not progressing in a satisfactory manner.

You should add that Her Majesty's Government understand that if they have to take this step, the same right will be claimed by the Governments of France and Russia.

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No. 124.

*The Earl of Kimberley to the Marquis of Dufferin.**

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, December* 28, 1894.

I HAVE repeated to your Excellency a telegram I have sent to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople to-day, instructing him to inform the Porte of the intention of Her Majesty's Government to claim the right, if necessary, of sending their Consul at Erzeroum to the Bitlis Commission.

I request your Excellency to communicate the substance of this instruction to the Government to which you are accredited.

No. 125.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received December 31.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 22, 1894.

ON the evening of the 13th the Russian and French Ambassadors, who had just notified to the Porte their acceptance of the proposals that their Consuls at Erzeroum should take part in the inquiry, met at this Embassy. They urged that it would be better that the Consuls should not accompany the Commission themselves, but send Delegates.

My colleagues were of opinion that the status of the Consuls would render it impossible for them to limit themselves to superintending the Commission, and that they would be forced to take a more active part than was desired. The Delegates would feel this difficulty less, and without assuming the absolute direction of the Commission, would be able to influence its proceedings, and in case of difficulty would be able to appeal to their superiors at Erzeroum.

They considered that there was far more chance of ascertaining the truth by means of an Ottoman inquiry assisted by Europeans than by a European inquiry thwarted by the Ottoman authorities.

Your Lordship informed me by telegram the next day that for the sake of securing united action you were prepared to agree to this proposal; but you directed me to reserve the right of the Delegates to question the witnesses directly in case of necessity.

On the 15th the three Embassies made to the Sublime Porte the communication of which I have the honour to transmit a copy herewith respecting the dispatch of Delegates and their relations to the Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 125.

Communication made by Dragomans of British, French, and Russian Embassies to Saïd Pasha on December 15, 1894.

EN réponse à la proposition qui nous a été faite par la Porte nos Gouvernements ont autorisé nos Consuls à Erzeroum à se faire représenter auprès de la Commission d'Enquête par des Délégués spéciaux.

Ces Délégués recevront l'ordre d'accompagner la Commission et de l'assister dans toutes ses opérations en lui donnant toutes les indications utiles pour la guider dans ses investigations. Ils pourront suggérer au Président les questions qu'il leur paraîtrait nécessaire de faire poser aux témoins et les formuleraient eux-mêmes au besoin; ils prendront connaissance des procès-verbaux et des Rapports de la Commission et rendront compte à leurs chefs respectifs.

(Translation.)

IN reply to the proposal made to us by the Porte, our Governments have authorized our Consuls at Erzeroum to be represented at the Commission of Inquiry by special Delegates.

* Also to Sir F. Lascelles.

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These Delegates will be instructed to accompany the Commission and assist it in all its proceedings, furnishing it with all information which may be of use to guide it in its investigations. They may suggest to the President questions which they think should be put to the witnesses, and will formulate the questions themselves if necessary; they will read the *procès-verbaux* and the Reports of the Commission, and will furnish Reports to their respective superiors.

No. 126.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 31.)

My Lord, *Pera, December* 26, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation of the instructions addressed by the Sublime Porte to the Turkish Commission of Inquiry into the recent events in the Sassoon district.

These instructions were communicated verbally on the 21st instant to Mr. Block by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and I have sent copies of them, both in Turkish and in translation, to Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, for his information.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 126.

Instructions to be given to the Commission charged with the investigation into the Sassoon affair.

THE duty of the said Commission being to carry out an inquiry and investigation into the Sassoon incident, the Imperial Government, in order once more to show its sincere and impartial (fair) intention to that end, has obtained the consent (of the three Powers) to sending Delegates of the French, Russian, and English Consuls at Erzeroum to the said Commission.

The Commission will carry out the necessary inquiries with the greatest impartiality and fairness, and with regard to all Ottoman subjects without exception.

The Commission will make reports containing the result of the inquiries, and will show them as soon as they are made successively to the foreign Delegates, and will ask them if they have any observations to make or not.

The Delegates will be present at the inquiries of the Commission, they will have questions put by the President, and, if the President refuses so to do, they are to be able to formulate the questions themselves, and in case of need ("au besoin"), to put them themselves.

The inquiry is to be confined to the events of Sassoon.

The Delegates will not have the position of members, but will act in conformity with these instructions *as assisting the Commission* (as in conjunction with the Commission).

No. 127.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 31.)

My Lord, *Pera, December* 26, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship copy of the instructions to our Delegates on the Sassoon Commission, which have been agreed on by the Russian and French Ambassadors in concert with myself, subject to the approval of our respective Governments. A summary of these instructions has been already telegraphed to your Lordship.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

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Inclosure in No. 127.

Instructions to Delegates on the Sassoon Commission.

L'ENQUÊTE ordonnée par la Porte doit porter exclusivement sur les faits dont le caza de Sassoon a été le théâtre dans le courant de l'été dernier et qui ont ému l'opinion publique.

C'est à l'autorité Ottomane qu'il appartient de procéder à l'enquête. Les Puissances représentées à Erzeroum, ayant été invitées par la Porte à seconder l'action de la Commission, ont autorisé leurs Consuls à se faire représenter auprès d'elle par des Délégués qui doivent se borner à une mission de contrôle et de surveillance.

Leur rôle est de s'assurer que l'enquête est conduite avec impartialité et bonne foi et que toutes les mesures sont prises pour assurer sa sincérité.

Les Délégués rédigeront, en conséquence, un procès-verbal collectif et journalier des opérations auxquelles ils assisteront. Ils y mentionneront tous les incidents de l'enquête et les difficultés que pourrait rencontrer l'exercice de leur mission. Ces procès-verbaux seront régulièrement adressés à MM. les Consuls avec des Rapports complémentaires, s'il y a lieu. Les Consuls les feront parvenir à leur tour à leurs Ambassades avec leurs rapports personnels.

L'enquête une fois terminée, les Délégués rendront compte à MM. les Consuls de ses résultats et de leurs appréciations dans des rapports séparés.

En outre, ils consigneront, dans un Rapport d'ensemble, les points sur lesquels ils seront tombés d'accord et les appréciations qui leur seront communes.

MM. les Consuls apprécieront à leur tour les faits de l'enquête dans des Rapports adressés à leurs Ambassades.

Les Délégués assisteront à toutes les séances de la Commission; ils l'accompagneront dans ses déplacements; ils devront avoir connaissance de toutes ses investigations et recevoir chaque jour communication de ses procès-verbaux.

Si ces procès-verbaux leur semblent contenir des inexactitudes, ils en demanderont la rectification. Au cas où elle leur serait refusée ils demanderaient l'insertion de leurs observations, et si cette insertion même était écartée, ils prendraient acte du refus et référeraient à leurs Consuls.

Les Délégués fourniront à la Commission tous les renseignements de nature à l'éclairer, ils la dirigeront au besoin dans ses recherches en lui indiquant les lieux où elles pourraient s'exercer avec fruit et les personnes dont le témoignage offrirait quelque utilité.

Au cours des interrogatoires des témoins, ils pourront leur faire poser par le Président toute question de nature à éclairer l'enquête. Si la question leur semblait mal posée par le Président, ils pourraient la formuler ou la poser eux-mêmes, mais ils ne recourraient à ce moyen que dans le cas où son emploi leur paraîtrait indispensable pour dégager la vérité.

(Translation.)

THE inquiry ordered by the Porte is to deal exclusively with the events of which the Caza of Sasun was the scene during the course of last year, and which have excited public opinion.

It devolves upon the Ottoman authorities to conduct the inquiry. The Powers represented at Erzeroum having been requested by the Porte to assist the Commission, have authorized their Consuls to send Delegates as their representatives on the Commission, whose mission will be limited to control and supervision.

Their duty will be to see that the inquiry is conducted with impartiality and in good faith, and that all precautions are taken to insure its sincerity.

The Delegates will, accordingly, draw up each day a joint *procès-verbal* of the proceedings at which they are present. They will record therein all that passes at the inquiry, and any difficulties which they may meet with in the performance of their duties. These *procès-verbaux* will be sent regularly to the Consuls with explanatory reports if necessary. The Consuls will in their turn transmit them to their Embassies with their own observations.

On the termination of the inquiry the Delegates will report its results to the Consuls, with their comments, in separate reports.

They will also record in a joint report the points on which they are agreed, and the observations they have to make in common.

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The Consuls will address Reports to their Embassies, containing their observations on what has passed at the inquiry.

The Delegates will attend all the meetings of the Commission; they will accompany it wherever it goes; they must have full knowledge of all its investigations, and be put in possession each day of its *procès-verbaux*.

If in their opinion these *procès-verbaux* contain inaccuracies, they will request that they may be rectified. In case of refusal they will demand the insertion in them of their observations, and if this also be refused, they will take note of the refusal and refer to their Consuls.

The Delegates will furnish the Commission with any information they may possess likely to assist the inquiry, and they will, if necessary, guide it in its investigations by pointing out places which might be visited with advantage, or persons whose evidence might be useful.

During the examination of witnesses they may request the President to put any questions likely to advance the inquiry. If they consider any question wrongly put by the President, they may formulate it or put it themselves, but they should only have recourse to this procedure when it seems to them indispensable in order to ascertain the truth.

No. 128.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 31.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 27, 1894.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 26th instant,* I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a despatch in which I have conveyed to Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum the identic instructions respecting the Sassoon Commission which I have agreed upon with my Russian and French colleagues, and directing him to send Mr. Shipley as his Delegate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 128.

Sir P. Currie to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Pera, December* 21, 1894.

THE Sublime Porte has decided to send a Commission to inquire into recent events in the Caza of Sassoon. This investigation will be concerned exclusively with the incidents which took place in that district last summer, and which have aroused public opinion in Europe.

The inquiry is undertaken by the Ottoman Government, but the Porte having requested the assistance of the Powers having Consuls at Erzeroum, the latter have authorized their Consuls to send Delegates, whose mission is limited to superintending and supervising the proceedings of the Commission. Their duty will be to see that the inquiry is absolutely fair and impartial, and that all precautions are taken to insure its *bona fides*. They will accordingly draw up every day a collective Report of the proceedings, at which they will be present. They will record therein all that takes place, and any difficulties which they may encounter in the exercise of their mission.

These Reports will be regularly sent to the Consuls, with the comments of the Delegates.

The Consuls will forward them to their respective Embassies with any observations they may have to offer.

On the termination of the inquiry the Delegates will report its results and their comments to the Consuls, and will also record in a joint Report the points on which they are agreed and the conclusions which they share.

In forwarding their final Reports to their Embassies, the Consuls will add any observations they may desire to make on the inquiry.

The Delegates will be present at all the sittings of the Commission. They will accompany it everywhere. They will be kept informed of all its investigations, and will receive every day Minutes of its proceedings. Should they consider these

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Minutes inaccurate, they will ask that they should be corrected. In case of refusal they will claim that their observations should be inserted in the Minutes. Should this also be refused, they will take act of the refusal, and refer to their Consuls. They will lay before the Commission all information likely to throw light on the inquiry, and they will, when necessary, direct its researches by pointing out such places or persons as can profitably be examined.

During the examination of witnesses they may ask the President to put any question likely to facilitate the inquiry, and should they consider that any question is wrongly put, they will have the right to formulate it or to put it themselves, but they will have recourse to this latter mode of procedure only when it seems to them indispensable for ascertaining the truth.

You will appoint Mr. Shipley as your Delegate, and concert with your colleagues as to the time and manner of his departure.

The Turkish Government have been requested to give instructions to the Commission to await the arrival of the Delegates, and have been informed that any proceedings or inquiries that may take place in their absence will be considered as null and void.

I inclose herewith a copy of the French text of the instructions given to the French and Russian Delegates.

I am, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 129.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 31.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, December* 27, 1894.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 24th instant, I have the honour to inclose a copy of the private note which Count Kapnist addressed to me on that day to inform me that the Russian Government have no objection to the eventual participation of an English Consul in the inquiry in Armenia, with the reservation of the same right to a Russian Consul.

Count Kapnist adds that the above information has been communicated to Constantinople and Paris.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

Inclosure in No. 129.

Count Kapnist to Sir F. Lascelles.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Le* 12 (24) *Décembre*, 1894.

JE m'empresse de vous informer que nous n'objectons pas à la participation éventuelle d'un Consul Anglais à l'enquête en Arménie, en réservant le même droit à un Consul Russe. Ce qui précède a déjà été communiqué à Constantinople et Paris.

Mille sincères hommages,
(Signé) D. KAPNIST.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *December* 24, 1894.

I HASTEN to inform you that we have no objection to the eventual participation of a British Consul in the inquiry in Armenia, while reserving the same right to a Russian Consul. The above has already been communicated to Constantinople and Paris.

Very sincerely, &c.
(Signed) D. KAPNIST.

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No. 130.

The Marquis of Dufferin to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received December* 31.)

My Lord, *Paris, December* 29, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to report that, in conformity with the instructions contained in your Lordship's telegram of yesterday, I have communicated to the French Government the substance of the instructions addressed to Sir P. Currie respecting the reservation of the right to send Consuls to attend the Commission appointed to inquire into the alleged massacre of Armenians in the Vilayet of Bitlis in the event of the progress of the inquiry proving unsatisfactory.

I have, &c.

(Signed) DUFFERIN AND AVA.

No. 131.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 4.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 4, 1895, 12·5 P.M.

I HAVE the honour to state, with reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 28th ultimo, that I yesterday formally reserved at the Porte our right to send a Consul in place of Delegate in case the inquiry does not proceed satisfactorily.

I had previously informed the Russian and French Ambassadors of my intention.

No. 132.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 8.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 1, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum regarding the movements of the Turkish Commission of Inquiry.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 132.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 18, 1894.

I HAVE the honour to report that the members of the Turkish Commission of Inquiry, who arrived here on the evening of the 13th instant, left for Mush on the morning of the 16th instant.

The morning after their arrival I sent my Dragoman to take the usual compliments to the Commissioners. He brought back a polite message from Abdullah Pasha, the First Commissioner, that they regretted that they would not have the opportunity of making my acquaintance at present, as they were to leave the next day, but they hoped to see me on their return.

It is believed that their hasty departure from Erzeroum was in consequence of telegraphic instructions from Constantinople which they received here, and that they had originally intended to remain at least a week at Erzeroum. However, they were unable to leave the next day, owing to the difficulty of procuring the 500 Turkish liras required for their travelling expenses; the money was ultimately borrowed by the local authorities in time for them to start on the morning of the 16th instant.

A rumour is current here that Tahsin Pasha, the Vali of Bitlis, has been dismissed from his post. I venture to express the opinion that, if he is not dismissed, his suspension at least, pending the inquiry which has been ordered, would be almost indispensable to a satisfactory and impartial investigation. I have already expressed my views on this subject in the last paragraph of my despatch to your Excellency of the 15th ultimo.

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I had the honour to communicate the substance of the above to your Excellency by telegraph.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 133.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 8.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 1, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting the proceedings of Tahsin Pasha at Bitlis, and false accusations against Mr. Hallward.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 133.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 21, 1894.

THE following information regarding Tahsin Pasha's recent proceedings at Bitlis, and the false accusation which he endeavoured to trump up against Mr. Hallward, has just reached me from a trustworthy source.

It appears that after Mr. Hallward's visit to Bitlis, a document was prepared by Tahsin Pasha's directions, accusing Mr. Hallward of having excited the Armenians of the town against the Government; and the Mektoubdji, a creature of Tahsin's, was charged to procure a sufficient number of Armenian signatures to this document in support of this accusation.

Amongst others, a man was called to the Mektoubdji's office at the Government House, and requested to sign this paper, without his being acquainted with its contents. This he refused to do, upon which the Mektoubdji called in an Armenian paid informer, who was in waiting, and told him to forge the man's signature to the document. This was promptly done in his presence, and the document was then handed to the Juge d'Instruction. The man lost no time in informing all his friends of what had happened, and, on their advice, remained for a few days in hiding, but was discovered by the police and thrown into prison for having divulged the means employed in obtaining Armenian signatures.

In all, ten persons accused of having had communications with Mr. Hallward of a nature compromising to the Government have been put into gaol, the principal men among them being Hadgi Serop Shohigian, Jijis Kirkoyan, and Bakalian Effendi, one of the richest Notables of Bitlis.

At about the same time, upon the evidence of a notorious informer, two Armenian Notables, both of them members of the Court of Appeal, were imprisoned on suspicion of having been in treasonable communication with the Talori Armenians. A house in which these alleged conspirators were supposed to meet was also surrounded and searched, but nothing was discovered except some papers hidden in the top of one of the chimneys, on which were rude drawings of guns and cannon, and certain words and figures, such as "400 guns" and "10,000 cartridges," which may well have been placed there by the informer.

One of the leading Armenian ecclesiastics then sent a telegram to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, complaining of both these incidents, and he also is said to have been thrown into prison by the Vali. No reply was given directly to the priest's telegram, but the Vali received a message from Constantinople, in consequence of which he requested the Cadi, who is also President of the Court of Appeal, to inquire into the case of the two members of his Court accused of complicity with the Talori people. This the Cadi, who is said to be an upright man, refused to do, not venturing to defy the Vali by proclaiming their innocence, but preferring to have nothing to do with the matter, and the prisoners remain in gaol pending the arrival of the Sasun Commissioners.

Numerous telegraphic Petitions have been addressed to the Sultan, Grand Vizier, and other Ministers at Constantinople by the Bitlis Armenians, almost all the

signatories to which, including the principal men of their community, have been ill-used and imprisoned by the Governor-General. In one of these Petitions they declare that they can prove that Tahsin Pasha has extorted from them no less a sum than 35,000 liras.

It seems evident that Tahsin Pasha has attempted to found a charge of incitement to revolt against Mr. Hallward, and perhaps other British Consular officers, upon intimidation, false witness, and forgery, and your Excellency can now judge whether I have exaggerated in stating that his suspension, pending inquiry into his conduct, is almost indispensable to a satisfactory issue of the investigation about to be opened.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 134.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 10.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 10, 1895, 9·45 P.M.

IN consequence of some doubt as to the interpretation of the general instructions, we have sent a joint telegram to our Consuls at Erzeroum to the following effect:—

"The functions of the Delegates will not begin until the Commission has been duly constituted, and has entered upon its duties.

"They may then, as laid down in their general instructions, point out to the Commission the persons whom it should call as witnesses, and the places it should visit.

"In giving such indications the Delegates should, as far as possible, act in concert, but every Delegate also has the right to act singly in this respect.

"Outside the Commission the Delegates must not take any joint action in the way of summoning or interrogating witnesses. Their business is not to hold a separate inquiry, but only to superintend the general inquiry of the Commission, and the depositions of witnesses can only be taken before the Commission. The Delegates, however, are at liberty to note and report to their respective Ambassadors anything they may learn from outside sources."

The Commissioners and Delegates leave Erzeroum to-morrow. The Delegates are to ask the Commission, as soon as it meets, for the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis during its sittings.

No. 135.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, January* 11, 1895.

I APPROVE the joint instructions to the Delegates on the Bitlis Commission which have been sent by your Excellency and the French and Russian Ambassadors to the respective Consuls at Erzeroum, and also the proposed application for the suspension during the inquiry of the Vali of Bitlis, as reported in your telegram of the 10th instant.

No. 136.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 13.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 13, 1895, 11·10 A.M.

THE foreign Delegates and the Turkish members of the Commission started to-day for Mush from Erzeroum. It will take them more than a week to reach their destination.

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No. 137.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 4, 1895.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 28th ultimo, I spoke to my French and Russian colleagues in regard to the wish of Her Majesty's Government to make a formal reservation of their right to send Consul Graves to the Commission if it should be found that the inquiry was not proceeding satisfactorily.

They were both of opinion that such a reservation was unnecessary, as they considered that the three Powers retained the right under the original proposals of the Porte of sending their Consuls if they saw fit. According to their view it would be sufficient, if the necessity arose, that we should order our Consuls to take the places of the Delegates, and inform the Porte that we had done so.

They, however, offered no objection to my making the proposed reservation.

I accordingly desired Mr. Block to speak to Saïd Pasha in the sense of your Lordship's telegram, and he yesterday formally informed his Excellency that in case of any difficulties with regard to the Commission, Her Majesty's Government reserved the right to send their Consul to replace the Delegate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 138.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

My Lord, *Pera, January* 4, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a translation of an official "Communiqué" which has appeared in the Turkish newspapers, announcing the peaceful state of the Vilayet of Bitlis.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 138.

Extract from the "Tarik" of January 3, 1895.

(Official "Communiqué.")

(Translation.)

A TELEGRAM dated the 19th (31st) December, 1894, from his Excellency Hassan Tahsin Pasha, the Vali of Bitlis, states that, under the auspices of His Imperial Majesty, perfect peace and order reign throughout the vilayet.

No. 139.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 8, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting documents which he has communicated to Mr. Shipley relating to recent events in Sasun.

I have communicated copies of these documents to my French and Russian colleagues.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 139.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 27, 1894.

IN order that Mr. Shipley, while serving as Delegate with the Sasun Commission of Inquiry, may be fully provided with all the information in my possession bearing upon the recent disturbances, I have supplied him, in addition to copies or précis of all my despatches and those of Messrs. Hallward and Boyajian upon this subject, with a Memorandum, copies of which I have the honour to inclose, containing a brief summary of the whole affair from its origin as far as I am acquainted with it. To this is annexed a list of twenty-seven names of villages, out of thirty-two which are now said to have been destroyed, with a rough estimate of their population, which I trust Mr. Shipley will have an opportunity of verifying and correcting.

I have communicated this list to my Russian colleague at his own request.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 139.

Memorandum by Consul Graves.

ALTHOUGH for two or three years past the Government have been aware of the presence of a certain number of political agitators in the Sasun district, their more serious attention was drawn to the fact at about the beginning of June, 1893, when the Armenian agitator, Damadian, was captured near Mush, and taken to Bitlis, where he remained several months, being subsequently removed to Constantinople. He is supposed to have made important revelations as to sedition in Sasun and elsewhere, and to have been released or allowed to escape in consequence.

In July 1893 hostilities occurred between the Kurds, instigated by the Sheikh of Zillan or Zileh, and the Armenian villages of Talori Nahié. The Kurds engaged seem to have been chiefly nomads from Sairt (Bohtan) and Diarbekir, namely, the Rashkotanli, Bekiranli, and (?) Badikanli tribes, who are accustomed to summer in the Sasun and Mush mountains, but had been for some time past prevented from doing so owing to their unruly and lawless conduct. A Turkish battalion used to be stationed in summer at Kab-il-Jevs in Sasun to keep them in order.

The Talori Armenians withdrew to a stronghold which they had prepared, and successfully defended themselves against the attacks of the Kurds, who ultimately withdrew, and retired southwards to their winter quarters.

The Governor of Gendj, Mustapha Pasha, who arrived later on the scene with zaptiehs and soldiers, arrested some of the leading Armenians, and sent them to Bitlis, and reported that the Talori people were in revolt against the Government. The bulk of the Armenians remained in their stronghold until the winter, when the troops withdrew, and they came down.

Mustapha Pasha was shortly afterwards dismissed, it is believed in consequence of correspondence between Surri Pasha, Vali of Diarbekir, and the Porte, Surri Pasha's views as to his misconduct being freely expressed. He was succeeded by Ibrahim Kiamil Pasha, of Mardin, whose misconduct while Governor of Bayazid twelve years ago was notorious.

It might have been supposed that after this experience the Bitlis authorities would this year have forbidden the entry of the nomad Kurds into Sasun, lest their attacks on Talori should be renewed. However, they were allowed to enter, and shortly began minor acts of hostility towards the Armenians. It is suggested that the Bitlis authorities intended to make use of them for the purpose of breaking the strength of the Sasun Armenians, whose offences were:—

1. That they paid no taxes to Government, but to the neighbouring Kurd Aghas, whose serfs they were.

2. That they were known to harbour a certain number of political agitators, such as Damadian, and had probably been denounced by the latter as ripe for a revolt against the Government.

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3. That their Notables had avoided being squeezed by the Vali of Bitlis by steadily refusing his pressing invitations to appear before him at that city. And it is asserted that, apparently for the purpose of gaining credit for the repression of a dangerous revolt, and at the same time covering the traces of his own misgovernment, Tahsin Pasha resolved first to push on the Kurds to destroy the Sasun villages, and then, if they failed, to invoke the aid of the Imperial troops in completing their destruction.

Early this summer the Kaïmakam of Koulp was sent to claim arrears of taxes from the Talori Nahié. On the inhabitants declaring that they were ready to pay Government taxes if the Government would protect them from Kurdish exactions, but that otherwise it was impossible for them to do so, he proceeded to abuse and maltreat them. They then lost their temper, fell upon him, and, after administering a severe beating, drove him and his zaptiehs from the district. He then reported that they were in armed rebellion against the Government, and that a large military force would be required to reduce them. About 300 troops and zaptiehs were sent to the spot, but the Armenians retired into their stronghold, and the officer in command refrained from attacking. Probably about the same time, *i.e.*, towards the end of June 1894, an invitation of the Vali Tahsin Pasha to some of the Notables of Ghelieguzan to come to Bitlis was disregarded by them, and a small force of soldiers who went to Shenik and Semal, in the same nahié, and arrested five of the inhabitants, were pursued by armed villagers, and four of their prisoners rescued.

The nomad Kurds from the south, who, under these critical circumstances, should never have been allowed to enter the district, this year showed themselves especially hostile to the Armenians who had successfully repulsed them in 1893. Apparently, about the beginning of August a raid was made upon one of the smaller villages in the Shatakh district by Kurds, variously described as Bekiranli tribesmen, or Kurds of Khiyan, in the Gendj district, and about 200 sheep were driven off. The Armenians pursued them, and an affray followed in which some Kurds were killed. The Kurds then came to Mush and complained to the Mutessarif, and at once extensive, and, indeed, most disproportionate measures were taken to avenge them by the Vali of Bitlis. On the pretext that the Sasun Armenians were now in open rebellion, which appears to have been believed by the Central Government, the reserves of the 7th Division were called out, troops were concentrated at Mush and Bitlis from Erzingian, Erzeroum, Van, Kharput, and other garrisons, while the well-known Kurdish Sheikh Mehmet was encouraged by the Vali to collect a large horde of Kurdish irregulars to co-operate with the troops.

Active operations were begun about the 19th August, and appear to have been chiefly confined to the two groups of almost entirely Armenian villages of the Talori Nahié and that of Shatakh, the names of which are given approximately in the annexed Tables. Serious resistance seems only to have been encountered in the former, and at the outset the Kurds were pushed forward to the attacks, and repulsed, as they had been last year. Regular troops were then employed, and the Armenians, seeing the futility of further resistance, surrendered, and were slaughtered in cold blood.

In the Shatakh district, on the other hand, practically no resistance appears to have been made, the troops entering the villages quietly on the pretence of protecting them from the Kurds, and then indiscriminately massacring the inhabitants under revolting circumstances of violation and torture.

About thirty-two villages are said to have been destroyed, and 3,000 to 4,000 persons killed during a period of twenty-three days, ending 10th September, when the Mushir Zekki Pasha appeared on the scene, and put a stop to further slaughter by taking over command from the Colonels Tewfik Bey and Ismaïl Bey, who were in charge of the military operations, and upon whom, together with the Vali of Bitlis and his subordinates, the responsibility of what has occurred must devolve, unless it is made clear that they acted under superior orders.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

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Inclosure 3 in No. 139.

VILLAGES of Talori, Koulph Caza, Gendj Sandjak.

Name of Village.	Armenian Houses.	Armenian Inhabitants.	Observations.
Talori	250	3,000	Caza of *Koulph* (Gendj Sandjak), Nahié of Talori or *Talvorig*, about nine hours from Mush S.W. or S.S.W.
Hartk			
Yeghgart ..			
Pourkh ..			There are practically no Kurds resident in this nahié. Estimated number of houses from private sources, and number of inhabitants by multiplying number of houses by 12, that being average of *Gavvar* villages from previous observations. *Talori Village.*—Some of the survivors are said to have returned, and to be now inhabiting the village.
Servank ..			
Keghékrank ..			
Hityouk (? Upper)			
„ (? Lower)			
Hosnerk	24	288	Near Talori, but not in nahié.
Enguzik	25	300	Ditto.
Eshhensor	40	480	Near Talori, but not in nahié. Two priests, Hatchadour and Perkis, were killed. Some of the survivors said to have returned to village.
Akhronk	30	360	(?) Caza of Gendj, district of Khirjan, about four hours from Talori.

Inclosure 4 in No. 139.

VILLAGES in Shatakh District: two or three in Mush Caza, the rest in Sasun Caza.

Name of Village.	Armenian Houses (oldest).	Armenian Inhabitants (oldest).	Observations.
			District of Shatakh, about five hours south of Mush. All these villages are said to have been entirely ruined, except two, but rebuilt by soldiers after events of August-September 1894. Two or three of the first on the list belong to Mush Caza, the rest to Sasun Caza.
Shenik..	30	454	A few Kurd houses.
Semal	25	360	
Ghelieguzan	108	1,618	Ditto.
Aghpi	50	385	
Khotzotz Vank	7	94	A few Kurd houses. Village said to be only partly destroyed.
Kop	15	171	
Erotzank	12	183	
*Aghbin (? Upper) ..	30	360	
„ (? Lower) ..			
Hitenk..	49	424	
Dabig	10	107	A few Kurd houses.
Shoushnamerk	10	91	
Kéghashen	14	97	Said to be only partly destroyed.
*Gheliégenim	10	120	(?) Ghelin is also given as an alternative name.
*Geurmav	18	216	

* Number of houses from a private estimate. Number of inhabitants obtained by multiplying number of houses by 12.

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No. 140.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 14.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 10, 1895.

THE following is a list of the Turkish Commissioners now on their way to inquire into the Armenian disturbances:—

1. Shefik Bey.
2. Jellal-ed-din Bey.
3. Eumer Bey.
4. Tewfik Pasha (rank of Ferik).

Mejid Effendi, Secretary.

The first three Commissioners rank above Hassan Tahsin Pasha, the Vali of Bitlis, who is a "Roumeïli Beylerbey," which corresponds to the rank of Ferik.

Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond informs me that Kadri Bey, the Vali of that place, states that for years he has been intimately acquainted with Jellal-ed-din Bey and Shefik Bey, and testifies to their being men of great integrity and some capacity.

Abdullah Pasha, who was formerly a member of the Ottoman Commission, is now returning to Constantinople. He has left Trebizond, and will stop at Samsoun on his way to inquire into a dispute between the Civil and Military Governors of that place.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 141.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 15.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 15, 1895, 8 P.M.

IN accordance with the instructions of the Sultan, Abdullah Pasha, ex-President of the Sasun Commission, who has just arrived here from Mush, paid me a visit to-day, accompanied by Munir Bey, one of His Majesty's Secretaries.

He said that, in his opinion, the Commission would be able to arrive at the truth without any difficulty, though, on account of the snow, it would not be able to visit the Talori Valley before the middle or end of May.

He told me that two officers who were in command of the troops, and two village Moukhtars or Mayors, had given him account of the Sasun occurrences.

According to their narrative, Tewfik Bey, at the head of six battalions, was sent, after the engagement which took place last July between the Bekiranli Kurds and the Armenians, to subdue the latter, who, to the number of about 750, had taken up an intrenched position in the mountains, after having previously intrusted their families and flocks to the custody of the Sasun Kurds.

A hundred and fifty Armenians were killed during the fight, which lasted four days, and the rest were dispersed.

The murdering of women and children and the destruction of the villages was absolutely denied.

I cross-questioned Abdullah Pasha on this point, and he professed his disbelief.

The women and children were, he said, in safety; but difficulties had been made by the Sasun Kurds as to the restoration of the flocks.

Abdullah Pasha told me that he had had no communication with independent witnesses. He said that it was not until the fighting was over that Zekki Pasha had arrived at Sasun.

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No. 142.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 21.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 16, 1895.

THE Sasun Commission, together with the British, Russian, and French Delegates, left Erzeroum for Mush on the 13th January.

I have the honour to inclose a Memorandum, of which I have received a copy from Mr. Graves, which he gave to Mr. Shipley for his guidance.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 142.

Memorandum of Points to be elicited by Commission of Inquiry into Sasun Occurrences.

IT would be my endeavour—

1. To show whether any massacre of prisoners, unarmed men, women, and children took place, and by whom it was committed, *i.e.*, by regular troops, or by Kurdish irregulars.

2. If such massacre took place, whether it was with the knowledge and consent of the Military Commanders on the spot, and of the local authorities, and who the said Commanders and authorities were.

3. If that was the case, whether such Commanders and local authorities were authorized so to act by superior orders from the Mushir Commanding-in-chief, or from the Central Government.

4. If such superior orders were given, whether the reports of local authorities or military officers, which led to their being given, were founded upon facts, *i.e.*, whether it was demonstrated that the Sasun Armenians were in armed rebellion against His Majesty the Sultan, or were merely acting in self-defence against the Kurds.

5. Whether, after the events of Talori of last year, the Vali of Bitlis exercised due discretion and took all reasonable precautions to prevent a conflict between the Kurds and Armenians, and unnecessary bloodshed.

6. Whether his Excellency permitted, and, if so, whether he was justified in permitting, the gathering of large hordes of armed Kurds, and their employment in the repression of an alleged rebellion.

7. Whether the Armenians of Sasun, in arms either against the Imperial Government or to defend themselves against Kurdish attacks, could not have been reduced to submission by a reasonable display of force, and firm and just treatment, including in the first alternative the severest punishment of the ringleaders, without its being necessary to proceed to such extremities as appear to have been resorted to.

No. 143.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 22.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 22, 1895, 11·5 A.M.

DELEGATES reached Mush safely yesterday.

No. 144.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received January* 26.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 26, 1895, 7·30 P.M.

THE suspension of the Vali of Bitlis was demanded by the Delegates at the first meeting of the Commission on the 24th of this month. The demand was refused and referred to Constantinople.

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We are going to send our Dragomans to the Porte to-morrow to insist on the suspension, and we have instructed the Delegates to cease to attend the Commission until it has been granted. We shall also inform the Porte that the inquiry will be considered null and void if it goes on while the Delegates are absent, and that we shall have to decide upon what steps it may be necessary to take to institute an independent inquiry in place of it.

No. 145.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, January* 27, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of yesterday, and I entirely approve your action as to the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis.

No. 146.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 28.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 28, 1895, 4 P.M.

EUMER BEY, one of the original members of the Sasun Commission, has been provisionally appointed Vali of Bitlis, in the place of Hassan Tahsin Pasha, who has been dismissed and ordered to return to Constantinople.

No. 147.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 29, 1895, 10·30 A.M.

MR. SHIPLEY, the British Delegate on the Bitlis Commission, telegraphed to me yesterday from Mush that he had received on the 24th instant a communication from American missionaries at Bitlis, according to which the situation in that town had become intolerable; the whole of the Christian population was completely terrorized by the Vali, and the people were being forced to sign a statement incriminating Mr. Hallward and the missionaries for having stirred up the whole matter from when it began two years ago; the trial of the imprisoned Armenian Notables was being rapidly pushed forward.

Mr. Shipley added that he had no means of controlling these statements, but it would appear that the Vali is desperate, and from the evident fear and reluctance of the Christian population of Mush to approach the Delegates on the Commission, he is inclined to think that there is little, if any, exaggeration in the account given by the missionaries; the latter conclude their communication by expressing fears as to their own personal safety.

No. 148.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 29.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, January* 29, 1895, 10·30 A.M.

IT has been notified to the Delegates that the Vali of Bitlis has been dismissed.

No. 149.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.— (*Received February* 6.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 30, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have received from Mr. Shipley a telegraphic summary of the proceedings at the second sitting of the Commission, which was held on the 27th instant.

The President, after reading out a résumé of certain documents from Bitlis which contained an official account from the Turkish point of view of the events which are to form the subject of the inquiry, proposed that they should commence proceedings by summoning and examining all the persons mentioned in the documents he had just read.

The foreign Delegates disapproved of this proposal, which they considered as unlikely to lead to any practical result. Mr. Shipley, therefore, with the full concurrence of his colleagues, suggested that the first duty of the Commission was to inquire into the truth of the accusations which had been brought against the Imperial troops of having burnt some twenty-seven villages, and of having massacred a great part of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, and that the question of responsibility might be left to be settled later.

The Turkish Commissioners all supported the President's proposal, and the suggestion of the Delegates was defeated. Mr. Shipley, however, informs me that it was recorded on the Minutes of the proceedings, and that if necessary he can bring it before the Commission again.

My colleagues and I have not thought it necessary to take any action at present in the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 150.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 9.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 9, 1895, 2·20 P.M.

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphed yesterday from Mush that the Commission had now held twelve sittings, devoting the greater part of their time to examining Government witnesses and official douments with a view to proving—

1. That a state of open rebellion existed among the Armenians.
2. That in every case the Armenians had been the aggressors, and not the Kurds.
3. That the Armenians committed acts of revolting barbarity against the Mahommedans.

Up till that time the Commission had heard only one witness on the Armenian side. This witness, a man of the name of Erco, was summoned at the suggestion of the Delegates. His body still bore the marks of recent wounds, and he stated that he had witnessed the massacring of women and children by the troops, and that members of his own family had so perished.

The Commissioners evidently felt the damaging effect of the last witness' evidence, as a few days afterwards a cousin of Erco, named Serkiss, was summoned. This man had been transferred, with other inhabitans of Shenik, to a village three hours distant from Mush.

He contradicted the evidence given by Erco, that the troops had massacred certain of his (Serkiss') children; they had died, he said, from the effects of their flight.

The Delegates requested that these two witnesses should be confronted, and Erco, while maintaining the truth of his evidence, added that the authorities had bribed Serkiss, and that the room in which the Commission was sitting would be thronged with petitioners were it not for the fact that the road was barred to them.

Serkiss, on the other hand, contradicted himself, and gave most unsatisfactory evidence.

The Commission, instead of following the matter up, proceeded to call fresh witnesses, with a view to casting discredit on such of the principal survivors as had been mentioned by Erco as being likely by their evidence to throw fuller light on the events under consideration.

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The Delegates therefore suggested that, in view of the divergence in the evidence of the two witnesses, Erco and Serkiss, on points of the highest importance, and of Serkiss' statement that they might find at a village only three hours from Mush a large number of the inhabitants of Shenik, the Commission should proceed thither without delay and examine these people. They would thus render it impossible for accusations of any undue influence to be levelled against them.

The following day the Commissioners, adducing among other reasons the necessity of adhering to the order of proceeding, as already laid down, refused to adopt the suggestion of the Delegates.

No. 151.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 11.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 5, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the demand by the European Delegates on the Sasun Commission for the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis, and of the reply of the Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 151.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, January* 25, 1895.

I HAD the honour to transmit to your Excellency by telegraph this day a telegram addressed to me by Mr. Shipley, dated the 24th January, reporting that on that day, at the first sitting of the Bitlis Commission at Mush, the Delegates presented a demand to the President of the Commission for the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis during the proceedings of the Commission, in accordance with the identic instructions received by them from their respective Ambassadors.

The President of the Commission, after having deliberated with his colleagues in a separate room, returned and informed the Delegates that the Commissioners, in view of their instructions, and of the powers conferred upon them by the Sultan's Commission, did not see any necessity for the suspension of Tahsin Pasha, in order to secure a free and impartial inquiry, but that they would transmit the request of the Delegates to the Porte for the information of the latter.

My colleagues having received similar telegrams in the course of the night, a meeting of Consuls was held this morning at the Russian Consulate-General, at which we agreed to telegraph to our Ambassadors in similar terms, stating that we considered it absolutely necessary that the Porte should accede at once to the demand of our Delegates for Tahsin Pasha's suspension, which had been made in obedience to identic instructions from the three Ambassadors. I did not think it necessary to repeat the reasons for this belief, as your Excellency is already fully acquainted with them.

We also agreed to inquire whether the Turkish Commissioners were entitled to hold secret deliberations apart from the Delegates during the proceedings of the Commission, that course appearing to us to be irregular, and whether it would not be well that the Ambassadors should send direct orders by telegraph to the Delegates to take no further part in the proceedings of the Commission pending the suspension of the Governor-General.

In another telegram of the same date, Mr. Shipley informed me that the Delegates had agreed, whilst profiting by any outside information which they may obtain, to make no use of it before the Commission unless previously agreed as to the desirability of so doing.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

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No. 152.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 11.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 4, 1895.

MUNIR BEY called upon me yesterday, by order of the Sultan, and read a report received by His Majesty from the Governor of Bitlis as to the movements of the foreign Delegates at Mush.

It appeared that they had visited the principal Armenian institutions, and an Armenian village, and had also called upon several Armenians, one of whom was spoken of as a suspected individual, and that they had declined to be accompanied by a zaptieh whose services were placed at their disposal.

On my inquiring the object of this communication, Munir Bey said that His Majesty thought it was to be regretted that the Delegates should, by their proceedings, give cause for suspicion that they had a leaning towards the Armenians, and would be prejudiced by the accounts they would receive from them.

His Majesty hoped that I would recommend the British Delegate to abstain from paying such visits in future.

I said that I would talk the matter over with my Russian and French colleagues, who would, no doubt, receive a similar communication from His Majesty, but that my own opinion was that the Delegates should be left entire liberty to visit such places and persons as they thought fit; that they were not authorized to hold any formal inquiry outside of the Commission, but that it was their business to obtain any information that was accessible to them, and, if they thought fit, to call the attention of the Commission to it, and report it to their Governments; that for this purpose it was indispensable that they should communicate freely with the inhabitants.

Later in the day the Russian and French Ambassadors called upon me, and I found that they had spoken to Munir Bey in nearly the same terms that I had used.

We agreed that it was not necessary to take any further notice of the communication.

Saïd Pasha also sent me a message on the subject through my Dragoman, to which I gave a reply similar to that which I had already returned to Munir Bey.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 153.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 11.)

My Lord, *Pera, February* 6, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a telegram from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the preliminary examination of the history of the Sasun events, and of my reply to him.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 153.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Erzeroum, February* 1, 1895.

My colleagues and I agree in regretting that proposal of Delegates was rejected by Turkish Commissioners, as we consider that the main object of whole inquiry is to prove whether massacres have occurred. The question of responsibility must evidently be considered later. French Delegate telegraphed 31st January that notwithstanding this decision the Turkish Commission that day heard evidence upon the whole of the Sasun occurrences of a witness proposed by Delegates.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 153.

Sir P. Currie to Consul Graves.

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 4, 1895.

YOUR telegram of 1st February.

I agree with you as to the final objects of the inquiry, but I see no objection to the preliminary examination of the history of the Sasun events, which I understand to have been decided upon by the Turkish Commissioners. The Russian and French Ambassadors are sending a similar telegram to their Consuls.

No. 154.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, February* 11, 1895.

THE report from Mr. Shipley of the proceedings of the Sasun Commission, contained in your Excellency's telegram of the 9th instant, is very unsatisfactory.

If the Commissions overrule the suggestions of the Delegates in matters which are important for eliciting the truth in regard to the occurrences in Sasun, it will be necessary for Her Majesty's Government to consider what measures they shall take to prevent their becoming accessories to what will be no more than a mere deception.

Your Excellency should consult the French and Russian Ambassadors as to the desirability of some warning being given to the Turkish Government.

No. 155.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 12, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 4th instant reporting the communications from the Sultan, conveyed to your Excellency by Munir Bey and subsequently by Saïd Pasha, with regard to the proceedings of the foreign Delegates at Mush.

I approve the language held by your Excellency in reply, as recorded in your despatch.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 156.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 13.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 13, 1895, 9·30 A.M.

I CONFERRED with the Russian and French Ambassadors after receiving Mr. Shipley's telegram, which I repeated to the Foreign Office in my telegram of the 9th instant.

On Sunday our respective Dragomans jointly urged the Porte to issue instructions to the Commission to visit the village in the neighbourhood of Mush indicated by the Delegates. The Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me to-day that telegraphic instructions have been sent in the sense desired.

The above is with reference to your Lordship's telegram of the 11th instant.

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No. 157.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 13.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 13, 1895.

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs that at to-day's sitting the Delegates renewed their proposal to visit Haskeui, the village which Serkiss referred to in his evidence. The Commissioners at once assented, and proposed to start the next morning. In view, however, of the fact that some ten or twelve inhabitants of Shenik were waiting to be examined, among them being two important witnesses referred to by Erco, the President put it to the Delegates whether they would still wish to proceed to Haskeui at once, or whether it would not be more convenient first to examine the witnesses who were ready. The Delegates held it of greater importance to at once obtain the evidence of the inhabitants of Shenik, and therefore determined to reserve for the present the question of visiting Haskeui. The Commission has accordingly deferred its departure for that place.

Mr. Shipley says that the fact of four or five days having elapsed since they first suggested to proceed to Haskeui had considerably modified the original proposal, and that they were therefore more disposed to adopt the course they did.

No. 158.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 14.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 14, 1895, 8 P.M.

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs from Mush 14th February, that at the sitting of the Commission on the 13th February Sako of Shenik was examined. This witness gave his evidence in a very clear manner, and stated that the villages of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelieguzan were attacked and burned by the soldiers and the Kurds; all the men, women, and children, taking with them such of their goods and cattle as they could get together, fled to the Antok Mountain, where they remained for five days, when, on perceiving that the soldiers were advancing to the attack, they again took to flight, and dispersed in different directions.

This witness had heard from survivors that after he himself had fled a priest with 200 persons whom he had gathered together, men, women, and children, went with the intention of surrendering, but the soldiers at Ghelieguzan, with whom was a superior officer, bayonetted all the men—the women, however, were not touched; the corpses were thrown into a trench, the position of which can be pointed out by several persons, including Tavo of Semal.

Sako himself saw a soldier bayonetting a child, and he had heard that several women in their efforts to prevent the cries of their children from attracting the attention of the Kurds and the soldiers had accidentally stifled their babies by putting their hands over their mouths.

Although there are considerable discrepancies to be explained between the accounts of Erco and those of the above witness, yet both agree in their statements as to the very serious nature of the excesses suffered at the hands of the soldiers.

On Thursday, Tavo of Semal, mentioned above, will be examined before the Commission.

No. 159.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 16.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 16, 1895.

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs that the whole of the two last days has been taken up with the examination of Tavo of Semal. His evidence confirmed in all essential details the account given by Sako, except that on the mountain the people of his village were at some distance from the people of Shenik He also corroborated the statements of Sako as to the massacre of Ohannes and other defenceless Armenians by the soldiers at Ghelieguzan. He had been one of those who accompanied the priest when he set out to give himself up, and only escaped owing to his having turned back.

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He had heard from women who were present at the priest's death that it was surrounded by circumstances of revolting barbarity. The names of some of these women he gave to the Commission. He had himself visited the trench into which the soldiers threw the corpses.

His house at Semal had been burnt with the others. Of his own house eight members had been killed, four during the flight from the mountain, and four who accompanied the priest Ohannes. He could not, however, state how many persons had perished in the whole course of the attack and flight.

The narrative of Tavo, like that of Sako, contains some discrepancies, and it will be necessary to obtain corroboration of certain of his statements.

The evidence was, on the whole, well and fearlessly given.

The Commission will be able on one important point to immediately put his veracity to the test, as he said that he knew where to find the sole survivor of the Ghelieguzan affair. This man, he said, had been left for dead, but had recovered, and was now living at a village close to Mush; he was called Ovak, and his age was about 15.

At the suggestion of the Delegates, Tavo's offer to produce this youth was accepted by the Commission, and a gendarme will be sent to-day with Tavo to fetch him.

No. 160.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 21.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 21, 1895, 10 A.M.

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs that on Monday Tavo produced the witness Ovak referred to in my telegram to your Lordship of the 16th instant. Ovak is about 16 years of age. He stated that at Ghelieguzan he saw the soldiers tear out the priest Ohannes' eyes, mock him, and then stab him to death with their bayonets, and then throw his body into a ditch, afterwards falling on those who had accompanied him. He himself ran away, but received several wounds from bayonets; however, he crawled under two dead bodies, and so managed to escape, and got away to a place where his mother found him, and nursed him. His mother, he said, had since set out for Diarbekir, accompanied by her two younger sons. His body showed the marks of numerous wounds, and was yesterday, by order of the Commission, examined by three medical men, namely, two military and the municipal doctors. These three doctors reported that the wounds were at most two months old, that they are the result of burns caused by heated iron points, and could never have been caused by bayonets. We do not, however, consider that the report of such doctors disposes entirely of the question of Ovak's veracity, and we feel that in such a case it would be far more satisfactory if the services of an independent medical witness had been obtained.

We have pointed out to the Commission that it is now absolutely necessary to obtain the evidence of the women whom Tavo referred to as witnesses of the occurrences at Ghelieguzan.

No. 161.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 21.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 21, 1895, 6 P.M.

MR. GRAVES, referring to Mr. Shipley's telegram repeated to your Lordship in my preceding telegram, informs me that there is at Erzeroum another survivor of the same massacre who escaped wounded. Mr. Graves and his Russian colleague have seen him, and find that his story agrees with that of Ovak as to the death of the priest. He and a survivor of the Talori massacre, whom they have also seen, are to go to give evidence before the Commission at Mush. Mr. Graves fears that the Turkish Commissioners will take every possible advantage of the fact that it is impossible to procure independent medical evidence.

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No. 162.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.—(Received at the Foreign Office, February 22.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 1, 1895.

ON the 28th ultimo I had the honour to transmit to your Excellency a telegram from Mr. Shipley, reporting that the President of the Commission of Inquiry had read out a summary of documents furnished by the Bitlis authorities, containing an official account from the Turkish point of view of the occurrences in Sasun, and that he had proposed to begin the inquiry by summoning and examining all the persons referred to in these documents. Mr. Shipley, with the concurrence of his colleagues, then suggested that the charges against the Imperial troops of burning villages and massacring a great part of their inhabitants should be taken first, leaving the question of responsibility to be examined later, but this suggestion was not accepted by the Commissioners.

I lost no time in communicating the sense of Mr. Shipley's telegram to my Russian and French colleagues, but as their Delegates had not reported to them on this subject, they were obliged to telegraph to Mush, asking for direct information before discussing it. The Russian and French Delegates have now replied, giving a general confirmation of Mr. Shipley's account of the President's proposal, the counter-suggestion put forward by them, and its rejection by the Commissioners. They do not, however, mention, as Mr. Shipley does, that the version of the Sasun occurrences adopted by the Commission as the basis for its inquiries is an official account emanating from Bitlis, which we can hardly help regarding as coming from a tainted source, but they merely state that the President proposed to take the occurrences "in chronological order," without saying what the authority for such chronological order may be.

My colleagues and I feel that if the President's method of procedure is definitely adopted, the inquiry may be diverted into side issues, and much valuable time may be lost before getting to the real facts, in examining a number of witnesses referred to in the Bitlis documents, who have no doubt been duly primed in the interests of Tahsin Pasha and his associates. At the same time, it would be difficult to contest the right of the Turkish Commissioners to conduct the inquiry in the chronological order of events as they propose to do. We have therefore agreed to telegraph to-day to our respective Ambassadors, merely expressing regret that the suggestion of our Delegates was not followed by the Commissioners, as, in our opinion, the main object of the whole inquiry is to establish whether the alleged massacres took place or no; the question of responsibility necessarily remaining for later consideration.

As an indication that the Commissioners do not adhere absolutely to the principle which they have thus laid down, the French Delegate yesterday (31st January) informed his Consul here that on that day they heard the evidence of a witness indicated to them by the Delegates with respect to the whole of the occurrences in Sasun.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 163.

Consul Graves to Sir P Currie.—(Received at the Foreign Office, February 22.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 1, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have not been able to obtain any confirmation of the alleged cases of sedition and political brigandage referred to in the extracts from the "Tarik," inclosed in your Excellency's despatches. Even if true, they appear trivial enough when compared with the daily outrages of the Kurds upon their Christian neighbours, of which no official notice is taken.

At the present moment, a remarkable absence of political agitation is noticeable among the Armenians, partly attributable to the terror inspired by the Sasun massacres, and partly to their evident desire not to compromise the good results they hope for from the inqury now proceeding, by conduct of a nature to justify Government severities. This being so, I am inclined to believe that communications of this sort from the Mushir Zekki Pasha, the ex-Vali of Bitlis, and the Vali of Van are being given

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prominence to in the Turkish press, in the hope of distracting attention from the Sasun affair, and perhaps of furnishing some kind of *ex post facto* justification for the past conduct of the above-named officials.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 164.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received February* 25.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, February* 25, 1895, 11·30 A.M.

MR. GRAVES has forwarded on to me the following telegram from Mr. Shipley, dated yesterday:—

"I learn that the situation at Bitlis is still very critical. Eumer Bey spares no effort to persuade the eleven Armenian Notables, who are soon to be tried, to telegraph an address of thanks to the Sultan.

"This address is said to deny the truth of the reported outrages at Sasun, and to protest against the foreign inquiry, and again accuses Mr. Hallward of being at the bottom of the whole agitation.

"Before we can hope to see any permanent improvement, it is considered that it will be necessary to remove the Muavin, the Secretary-General, and one or two others of the creatures of Tahsin Pasha. These continued intrigues against Mr. Hallward seem to be getting serious. I have asked my informant, if possible, to procure some proof of his statements, as, failing this, I do not see that we can do anything.

"The Americans beg that their Legation may be informed of their situation, which they still consider precarious, so that their Consul may be instructed to proceed to Bitlis. I have answered that as they had no sure and speedy means of communicating with the United States' Minister, I would make their request known to you, and that you would, should you think fit, transmit it further to Constantinople."

No. 165.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 2.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 2, 1895, 4·30 P.M.

ACCORDING to a telegram received yesterday from Mr. Shipley, the Commission has been taking the evidence of the Armenians and Kurds mentioned by him in his telegram of the 12th February, which I repeated to your Lordship in my telegram of the 13th ultimo.*

One witness described the condition of the village of Gheliguzan as follows:—

"The houses burned, the fields devastated, the school-house desecrated, and the church pillaged and deserted."

The Kurdish witnesses gave evidence of attacks on them by Armenians, while the Armenians corroborated the evidence given by their countrymen, agreeing that villages were burned, and that the old people and children who were left behind were either massacred or perished in the flames.

No. 166.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 6.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 6, 1895, 10·20 A.M.

MR. GRAVES telegraphs that the Delegates find that, notwithstanding the declarations of impartiality of the Turkish Commissioners, the inquiry is not being conducted in good faith. They consider that the presence of a Dragoman of their own, speaking Armenian and Kurdish, would be of great service in establishing the facts and eliciting the truth, besides giving confidence to the witnesses.

* No. 157.

The Delegates also request authority to engage a copyist, as the work is at present very much in arrear, and they find it impossible to keep pace with it. Mr. Graves says that he and his colleagues are strongly in favour of granting this double request.

The Porte should give formal assurances that they will not, either now or later, in any way annoy him on account of his accepting this temporary employment, and should now officially recognize him.

No. 167.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 6.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 6, 1895.

IN reply to Mr. Graves' telegram, repeated to your Lordship in my previous telegram of to-day, I telegraphed as follows:—

"You had better send to the Delegates a Dragoman from one of the Consulates, who might, if necessary, be accompanied by a Kurdish translator.

"You and your colleagues should settle on whom to send."

No. 168.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 7.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 7, 1895, 10·15 A.M.

THE Delegates telegraph that an Armenian delegation had come to Mush to give evidence before the Commission, confirmatory of that already given by Armenian witnesses. The Delegates are five in number. The Turkish Commissioners, however, seem inclined to believe the accusations which the Kurdish witnesses are bringing against them, of being the leaders of the Armenian revolt.

No. 169.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 8.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 8, 1895, 6·50 P.M.

THE Acting Vali of Bitlis reports that there is no danger of any Mussulman outbreak in his vilayet. The Grand Vizier declares that he has given him stringent instructions to maintain order.

No. 170.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 11.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 2, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, forwarding copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van in regard to the treatment of Sasun prisoners at Bitlis.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 170.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 14, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, containing information

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which he has obtained from Bitlis as to the treatment of the Sasun prisoners there, the examination of the prisoner Mourad, and some of the proceedings of the ex-Vali, Tahsin Pasha, before his dismissal. I have forwarded to Mr. Shipley a copy of this despatch for his information.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 170.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Van, January* 31, 1895.

THE following information has been furnished me from a trustworthy source from Bitlis. The letter containing it was dated the 23rd December, but was delayed more than a month in the post:—

"A Sasun prisoner was so beaten on his way here that he died soon after. Two others have since died. They had been repeatedly beaten, half starved, and, in this cold weather and in these damp dungeons, had on only a coarse, ragged cotton shirt and drawers. Inquisitorial methods are being used to get these prisoners to testify that the leading Armenians here, now in prison, have been in league with them. Now that the Commission is afoot, they want them to testify that the Government had nothing to do with destroying villages, but merely stepped in to restore order between them and the Kurds.

"Murad Effendi and his companions were up for trial on Thursday. He said he was a native of Hadjin, in the Adana Vilayet, had studied medicine in Constantinople, Athens, and Geneva. Had come to Sasun to teach people chiefly two things—not to sell their daughters in marriage, and to resist the unjust exactions of the Kurds. He had given guns to the five young men, mere striplings, who were there with him, that they might the better defend themselves against the Kurds, since they were never able to get redress through the Government. The five young men, his companions, substantiated what he said. They were repeatedly asked if he had not promised English assistance against the Government. Four denied it; the fifth said he had not heard him say so, but had heard others say that he had said so.

"There seems no doubt that there was a plan in some way to get papers away from Mr. Hallward, but his going the direct way into Van territory instead of round by Melazguird defeated the plan. The four zaptiehs who took him on to Akhlat, on their return to Dzigak, where he had spent the night, accused some men of having talked with him, and did not let them off till they had received something. Several days after Mr. Hallward was there a zaptieh cruelly beat a man about some tax matter, pulled his moustache, and spat in his mouth, and as a result of this treatment the man became so crazy that he has had to be bound with ropes.

"The Government is not content with what it has already done. It has ordered the Kurds in the Khouit district (adjacent to the devastated region) to treat the Armenians there in the same way. But last week, from news of the composition and purpose of the Commission, they were led to issue countermands and dispatch them at once with zaptiehs and troops to keep the peace till the Commission shall get away. A reliable man has seen a copy of the countermand, and there is no doubt about the facts.

"There is a desperate effort being made to convict the Armenian Notables, now some twenty in number in prison, of complicity with Sasun. In some way they got the deposition of an Armenian young man to a statement that these men had something to do with the Consul, and that they were disturbers of the peace. The young man has succeeded in sending a telegram to Constantinople, saying that the men are innocent, and that the signature was got by unfair means. The Government is in search of that young man, but cannot find him."

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

No. 171.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 11.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 6, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum forwarding copies of the joint Reports drawn up by the Consular Delegates of the first eight sittings of the Sassoon Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 171.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 12, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of despatches which I have received from Mr. Shipley containing information as to the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sassoon occurrences since its arrival at Moush, and inclosing joint Reports drawn up by the Consular Delegates of the first eight sittings of the Commission.

The subjects of Mr. Shipley's despatches of the 25th and 28th ultimo,* namely, the understanding arrived at between the Delegates as to the use to be made by them of outside information before the Commission; the dismissal of the Vali of Bitlis; and the order of conducting the inquiry adopted by the Turkish Commissioners, have already been briefly dealt with in my despatches to your Excellency of the 25th January and of the 1st February.

In his despatch of the 4th February Mr. Shipley incloses reports of the proceedings of the Commission from the 27th January to the 2nd February inclusive, some of which are of the highest interest.

As I anticipated, the evidence called by the Turkish Commissioners so far, being based upon the official version of the affair put forward by the Bitlis authorities, has proved to be entirely of an *ex parte* character. But it is significant that the gendarmerie officers and men who gave an account of the earlier conflicts between the Kurds and Armenians, and the desertion of their villages by the latter when they took refuge upon the Antok Mountain, did not attempt to give any reasonable explanation of the origin of the disturbances, into which they had apparently made no inquiry, and that they only spoke from hearsay of the alleged atrocities by Armenians upon Kurds. It must also be remarked that only one Kurd is said to have been killed and two wounded in these collisions, while nothing is said of any loss on the Armenian side, although I have reason to believe that the latter suffered at least as heavily as the Kurds; and the Tabour Agassi in command of the gendarmerie, who is said to have interrogated the Kurdish woman who complained of ill-treatment at the hands of the Armenians, was not called before the Commission.

On the other hand, the important evidence of the witness Erko (Report No. 7), substantially confirming the truth of Mr. Hallward's reports, and of the information forwarded by me to your Excellency, was only brought before the Commission by the action of the Delegates, though it was open to the Commissioners to have called this man, and many other Sassoon survivors now in or near Moush. It is to be hoped that, as the Delegates have just been instructed to press the Commissioners to visit without delay the village in which a number of the Shenik villagers are to be found, a large mass of direct evidence from the Armenian point of view will shortly be laid before the Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

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* Inclosures 3, 4, and 6 in No. 171.

Inclosure 2 in No. 171.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, January* 22, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report to you that I arrived yesterday at Moush, together with M. Vilbert and M. Prjvalsky, the French and Russian Delegates attached to the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry, having performed the journey from Erzeroum in company with Shefik Bey, the President, and Djelal Bey, one of the members of the Commission above referred to.

I feel it is only due to the two latter-named gentlemen to say that the journey in question, which at this season is a somewhat difficult one, was greatly facilitated by the unvarying courtesy and kindness showed by them, and by the assistance rendered by the escort furnished by the Imperial Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 3 in No. 171.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, January* 25, 1895.

IT will be in your recollection that I and my Russian colleague, M. Prjvalsky, were respectively authorized by yourself and the Russian Consul-General previously to our departure from Erzeroum to use our discretion as to the question of obtaining information from sources other than those provided by the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry itself.

In view of the urgent necessity of coming to a clear understanding upon the point before the commencement of the actual work of the Commission, I took an opportunity shortly after our arrival at Moush of proposing the following arrangement to my colleagues, viz., that while each Delegate should be at liberty to profit by any information he might obtain apart from and outside of the proceedings of the Commission itself, no use should be made of it before the Commissioners unless the advisability of so doing should have been previously agreed upon by the Delegates. The arrangement in question, which was at once accepted by my colleagues, appears to me to afford a fairly satisfactory solution of a question which, if allowed to remain unsettled, might have given rise to serious misunderstanding. I venture, therefore, to hope that my action in the matter will meet with your approval.

I had the honour to communicate the substance of the above to you by telegraph yesterday.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 4 in No. 171.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, January* 25, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith an identic copy of the Repor of the proceedings at the first sitting held yesterday of the Bitlis Commission o Inquiry duly drawn up and signed by myself and my two colleagues attached to the Commission in question.

The proceedings, as you will observe, were of a purely formal character, with the exception of those in connection with the request made by the Consular Delegates to the Commission for the suspension, pending the inquiry, of the Vali of Bitlis, and with reference to this incident I would beg to observe that the form in which the request referred to was made was based upon the text of the instructions given to the French Delegate, and which were "de réclamer du Gouvernement Impérial la suspension du Vali de Bitlis."

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The reply of the President, viz., that the Commissioners, while not agreeing that there was any necessity for the step in question, in view of the sufficiency of the powers already held by them, would, nevertheless, transmit the request of the Delegates to the Sublime Porte "à titre de renseignement," I have already had the honour to communicate to you by telegraph. There was little or no discussion on the matter, as our instructions appeared to restrict our action to a simple enunciation of the demand. I need hardly, however, say that even with our short residence at Moush my colleagues and myself are fully convinced that some such step is imperatively necessary in order to insure a full and complete investigation of the facts at issue.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 5 in No. 171.

Procès-verbal No. 1 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of January 24, 1895.

[See Part II.]

Inclosure 6 in No. 171.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, January 28, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith the Report duly drawn up by myself and colleagues at the proceedings at the second sitting of the Commission of Inquiry of the 26th January, which were of some importance as establishing the line of inquiry which the Commissioners proposed to adopt. The President, as you will observe, after reading out a summary of the documents which he had received from the authorities at Bitlis, and which went to show that the immediate cause of the troubles at Sassoon of last year was the assembly in large numbers, at the instigation of political agitators, strangers to the district, of armed Armenians in the villages of Gheliéguzan, Chenik, Semal, and in the district of Talori itself, and of the attacks of the latter upon the Kurds camped in the summer pasturages, proposed to begin the inquiry by summoning all persons to whom reference had been made in the documents in question a proposition which met with the assent of his colleagues.

There was, I may remark, no allusion whatever in the above documents to any excesses, either on the part of the Imperial troops or the Kurds, and as both myself and my colleagues felt it to be extremely uncertain as to how long it might be before the proceedings so conducted would yield any definite result, I addressed the President with their concurrence, stating that accusations had been brought against the Imperial troops of having burnt some twenty-seven Armenian villages and of having massacred a great part of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, and that while fully recognizing the right of the Commissioners to direct what course should be pursued in investigating the events of Sassoon of last year, we considered that these were accusations, the truth or falsehood of which it would be preferable to establish first, leaving the question of responsibility to be settled afterwards.

The Turkish Commissioners, after a somewhat protracted discussion, unanimously decided to adopt the proposition of the President.

I had the honour to communicate to you the substance of the above by telegraph; and I now beg to add that while in taking the above course I acted in entire accord with my colleagues, we considered that, in view of our instructions and of the assurances of the President, that each incident would receive the fullest and most impartial investigation, it would be unadvisable to persist in our objection to the course decided upon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

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Inclosure 7 in No. 171.

Procès-verbal No. 2 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of January 26, 1895.

[See Part II.]

Inclosure 8 in No. 171.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, January 30, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to report to you, with reference to my telegram of to-day's date, that Omer Bey, the newly-appointed Vali of Bitlis, left for the latter city to-day to take up his post. I communicated to my colleagues the information received from you respecting Tahsin Pasha, and as the dismissal of the latter had already been announced to us officially by Chéfik Bey, the President of the Commission of Inquiry, we attended, at his invitation, yesterday's sitting of the Commission as usual. I transmit herewith our joint Report of the third sitting of the Commission held on the 28th January, at which the Consular Delegates made a joint statement to the President of the Commission to the effect that, pending the suspension of the Vali of Bitlis, they had been instructed to abstain from attendance at the meetings.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 9 in No. 171.

Procès-verbal No. 3 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.—Sitting of January 28, 1895.

[See Part II.]

Inclosure 10 in No. 171.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, February 4, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith the joint Reports drawn up by the Consular Delegates, Nos. 4 to 8 inclusive, of the proceedings at the sittings of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry of the 29th, 30th, and 31st January, and 1st and 2nd February respectively.

Of the above Reports, No. 4 contains the depositions of Tshender Agha, Yuzbashi; Saadullah, Sergeant; and Medjid Agha, Corporal of zaptiehs at Moush, relative to alleged attacks in the latter part of July last (o. s.) by the Armenians of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan on certain Velikanli Kurds camped on their summer pasturages on the Kourtik Mountain, and which, with a force of zaptiehs under the command of Major Fevzi Effendi, they were sent by the Moush authorities to investigate.

Their evidence, in so much as it was drawn almost exclusively from Kurdish sources, cannot be regarded as conclusively establishing that the whole responsibility for the attack above referred to rested upon the Armenians, and it will be noticed from the answers to the questions addressed to the witnesses by the Consular Delegates that the only motive which they were able to adduce for the above aggression on the part of the Armenians seemed to have been a quarrel about a cloak belonging to an Armenian shepherd, which a Kurd had found and refused to give up. It will further be noticed that Fevzi Effendi was not called, an omission which the President, on the suggestion of the Delegates, promised to rectify.

Report No. 5 contains the deposition of Faris Agha, Lieutenant of zaptiehs of Moush, relative to the ill-treatment alleged to have been met with by a certain

Mehemed, a Kurd of Tapik, Sassoon Caza, at the hands of the villagers of Ghelié-Guzan some time before the 12th (24th) July last.

The deposition of this latter witness may be regarded as important, in so far as it establishes the fact that up to the date last mentioned the villages of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan were still occupied by their inhabitants.

The sitting of the 31st January (Report No. 6) was chiefly taken up by the reading of official reports, &c., respecting the attacks of the Armenians upon the Kurds above referred to. A letter addressed to the Commission by Bishop Garabed, of the Monastery of Tchanli (Surp Garabed), near Moush, was also read, asking pardon for the Armenians who had been led astray by political agitators, and asking to be allowed to attend the Commission to give evidence.

The proceedings at the sitting of the Commission of the 1st February and following day were, it will be seen, of a most important nature, as they included the statements of an Armenian named Erko, an inhabitant of the village of Shenik, who deposed that he was an eye-witness of the final assault by the Turkish troops and Kurds on the Armenian position on the Antok Dagh, and of the massacre by the former of the inhabitants of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan, he himself being wounded in the Passin Mountain, whither he had fled from Antok. His testimony is, moreover, additionally noteworthy, from the fact that with that of his brother Gourdjo it is the first that has come before the Commission, giving an account of events from an Armenian point of view which, I need scarcely say, differs very widely from that given by the Kurds. He was submitted to a very severe examination on the part of the Commissioners, but, as a whole, he adhered firmly to his original statements.

With regard to the general conduct of the inquiry by the Turkish Commissioners, I feel bound to say that the tendency of the latter seems to be to base the proceedings too much on official documents, the object apparently being to prove in the first instance that the Armenians were in armed rebellion, and that the authorities had no option but to act as they did, viz., to suppress it by the dispatch of troops. I trust in saying this I am not misrepresenting the intention of the Commissioners, but it is certainly significant that so far the only two Armenians examined before the Commission were summoned at the request of M. Prjvalsky, the Russian Delegate, after consultation with myself and M. Vilbert. From a Turkish point of view no doubt the claim to conduct the inquiry in "chronological order" is a perfectly legitimate one, but I cannot but think, and my colleagues agree with me, that it would be to the better advantage of the Turkish Government to inquire at once into the truth of allegations so serious as those made by the witness Erko.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosures 11 to 15 in No. 171.

Procès-verbaux Nos. 4 to 8 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.

[See Part II.]

No. 172.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 12.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March 12, 1895, 10·45 A.M.*

WITH reference to my telegram to your Lordship of the 6th instant,* the Porte will not consent to a Dragoman proceeding to Mush. We, however, maintain that it is our right to send a Dragoman, and are insisting that the Turkish Government should afford him the necessary facilities for travelling.

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* No. 166.

No. 173.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 12, 1895.

I HAVE received your telegram of to-day, and I entirely approve the attitude assumed by your Excellency in concert with your French and Russian colleagues with regard to the dispatch of a Dragoman to Mush.

All requisite assistance should be furnished to the Delegates to insure the proper performance of their duties, and Her Majesty's Government must insist on every facility being given by the Porte with that object. Otherwise, the investigation becomes illusory, and an universal feeling of indignation in this country will be the result.

If the Turkish Government persist in withholding their consent, Her Majesty's Government may find it necessary to send Her Majesty's Consul from Erzeroum, accompanied by a full staff of assistants, to the spot.

No. 174.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 14.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 14, 1895, 10·10 P.M.

IN accordance with your Lordship's telegram of the 12th instant, I yesterday informed the Grand Vizier that you had instructed me to send Mr. Graves and his staff to Mush, if the Turkish Government maintained its refusal as to the Armenian Dragoman. The refusal is still persisted in.

I have telegraphed to Mr. Graves to apply to the Vali for an escort for himself to proceed to Mush.

No. 175.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 16.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 16, 1895, 11 A.M.

MY telegram of the 14th instant.

Mr. Graves telegraphed yesterday that he had made an official application in writing to the Vali to grant him and his Dragoman facilities and an escort for their journey to Mush. He informed him that they were starting at once, giving the reasons that I had indicated to him in a telegram. The Governor-General has referred this request of Mr. Graves to the Porte. Mr. Graves proposes to send his Dragoman to-day to inform the Vali verbally that, escort or no escort, he will start on Monday.

No. 176.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 16, 1895.

I HAVE received your telegram of the 14th instant relative to the refusal of the Sultan to sanction the dispatch of a Dragoman to Mush to assist the Delegates on the Bitlis Commission.

I approve your Excellency's action in the matter, and have urged the Governments of France and Russia to instruct their Ambassadors at Constantinople in a similar sense.

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No. 177.

*The Earl of Kimberley to the Marquess of Dufferin.**

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, March* 16, 1895.

YOUR Excellency will have learnt from the telegrams repeated to you from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, that the three European Delegates on the Sasun Commission are in great need of a Dragoman with a knowledge of Armenian and Kurdish, whose presence would inspire the witnesses with confidence, and help to establish the truth of the facts now under investigation.

The Porte has been requested by the three Ambassadors at Constantinople to give facilities for a Dragoman selected by the Consular Representatives at Erzeroum to go for the purpose to Mush.

Permission having been refused by the Sultan, Sir P. Currie has been instructed to insist that, if the necessary leave is not given, Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, accompanied by a full staff, shall proceed in person to Mush. Mr. Graves has accordingly requested the Governor-General of Erzeroum to furnish an escort and facilities to enable him and his Dragoman to start on the 18th instant.

If the Sultan persists in his refusal, the Ambassadors are of opinion that there will be no alternative but to withdraw from the Commission, or to dispatch the Consuls and their staff to the spot. Your Excellency should urge the French Government to send telegraphic instructions to their Ambassador similar to those which have been sent to Sir P. Currie.

No. 178.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 17.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 17, 1895, 3·10 P.M.

YOUR Lordship's telegram of the 12th instant.

As an alternative to the dispatch of a Dragoman from Erzeroum, the Porte this morning proposed that the Delegates should select Dragomans at Mush in conjunction with the Turkish Commissioners. We have informed the Porte that we cannot accept this proposal, and have sent a joint telegram to our Consuls to dispatch the Dragoman. If the Turkish authorities refuse to grant him the necessary facilities and an escort, the Consuls are themselves to make the necessary arrangements for his journey and safety.

We shall inform the Porte that in case of any accident to the Dragoman, we shall hold them responsible.

I have telegraphed to Mr. Graves that, under these circumstances, he need not start for Mush.

No. 179.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 18.)

My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, March* 13, 1895.

IN the course of conversation with Prince Lobanoff yesterday, I told his Excellency that I saw from the telegrams, which your Lordship had done me the honour to communicate to me, that the Bitlis Commission was not proceeding as satisfactorily as could be wished.

His Excellency replied that he had never entertained much hope of a satisfactory result, and he doubted whether the perpetrators of the Sasun massacres would be brought to justice. In his opinion, however, the most important question to be considered was what was to be done when the Commission should have concluded its labours. His Excellency had been glad to learn from M. de Nédiloff that he had already been in consultation with Sir Philip Currie on the subject, and he sincerely hoped that some practical suggestion would be made.

* Also to Sir F. Lascelles.

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I said that I appreciated the difficulty of the question, as I quite understood that Russia could not desire that the question of the independence of Armenia should be raised; and, on the other hand, the introduction of reforms into Armenia could scarcely be carried out without something more than diplomatic action, unless, indeed, the Porte agreed to introduce reforms, and authorized the Consuls of the Powers to watch over their execution.

His Excellency said that it was evident that something must be done, but it was not easy to suggest any course which would not be open to objection. He also observed that the Armenian Committees in England and elsewhere, which were of a purely political character, were showing great activity.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 180.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 18.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 18, 1895, 2·35 P.M.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding telegram, the Porte have now consented to the dispatch of the Dragoman to Mush, and have instructed the Vali of Erzeroum to grant the necessary facilities for his journey.

No. 181.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 18.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 18, 1895, 8 P.M.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that Mr. Shipley, acting in accord with his colleagues, has reported to me that on the 18th instant the Commission informed the Delegates that, as the examination of Mourad and his companions was indispensable for the complete investigation into the various remaining questions relative to events of last year, which, according to the Commission, were now matters of detail only, they would leave for Bitlis on the following Thursday. The Delegates stated in reply that, although they admitted the eventual necessity of examining the persons in question, they considered that the better course would be to postpone their departure for Bitlis until they had made a more thorough investigation into the Ghelieguzan and other occurrences.

The Commission, however, adhered to its decision, The witnesses referred to in Mr. Shipley's previous telegrams, whose testimony was of importance, had not yet been produced, the Commission alleging that, notwithstanding the active search they had set on foot, the witnesses were not to be found. Mr. Shipley and his colleagues think that until these witnesses are produced, grave objections exist to the Commission's absenting itself for four or five weeks from Mush, which would practically result in a suspension of all inquiries in that district, while the Delegates when at Bitlis would remain in total ignorance of what was being done by the Mush authorities with regard to those witnesses.

Mr. Shipley concludes by stating that, although the examination of Mourad is also of great importance, its adjournment is not a matter of equal consequence.

We have replied to the Delegates that they are to inform the Commission that, according to instructions received from their Ambassadors, they cannot leave Mush before the Commission has taken all the evidence and carried out all the investigations which the Delegates consider necessary. They are to add that, if the Commission, disregarding this communication, persists in its intention of proceeding immediately to Bitlis, all its proceedings in the absence of the Delegates will be considered as null.

To-morrow the Dragomans of the three Embassies will inform the Porte of the above communications, and will request them to send instructions to the Commission in accordance with our telegram to the Delegates.

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No. 182.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 18.)

(Telegraphic.) *St. Petersburgh, March* 18, 1895.

PRINCE LOBANOFF will give me a reply as to the Sultan's refusal to allow the Dragoman selected by the Consuls to proceed to Mush, but he must first consult M. Nélidoff, from whom he has heard nothing on this matter. His Excellency does not understand the necessity of the immediate departure of Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum for Mush: inasmuch as the three Ambassadors are acting together, this departure might give rise to the idea that their respective Governments were not acting in complete harmony.

No. 183.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 19.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March* 19, 1895, 7·20 P.M.

I HAVE the honour to state, with reference to my telegram of yesterday,* that the Sublime Porte has not supported the proposal of the Commissioners to leave for Bitlis.

The instructions sent to them are to the effect that they must remain at Mush, and that all the witnesses whom the Delegates suggest must be examined.

No. 184.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received March* 26.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 21, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, inclosing copy of a despatch from Mr. Shipley which transmits Protocols Nos. 9 to 17 inclusive of the sittings of the Sassoon Commission of Inquiry from the 4th to the 13th ultimo.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 184.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 13, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Mr. Shipley, British Delegate with the Commission of Inquiry at Moush, inclosing Protocols Nos. 9 to 17 inclusive of the sittings of the Commission, from the 4th to the 13th ultimo.

Mr. Shipley, in his covering despatch, gives an exhaustive analysis of the evidence taken by the Commission, with observations on the way in which the Turkish Commissioners are endeavouring to conduct the inquiry, and the impression produced upon himself and his colleagues, with which I venture to express my entire agreement, without offering any further comment of my own for the present.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

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* No. 181

Inclosure 2 in No. 184.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, March 4, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith the joint Reports of the Consular Delegates, Nos. 9 to 17 inclusive, of the proceedings at the sittings of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry of the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, and 13th February respectively.

The two witnesses heard at the sitting of the Commission of the 4th February (Report No. 9) were Major Fevzi Effendi, the officer referred to in my despatch of the 4th February last, as having been in command of the zaptiehs sent to investigate the circumstances attending the attack by the Armenians, of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan upon the Velikanli Kurds near the first-mentioned village; and Hadji Mustapha Effendi, Captain in command of the detachment of troops, stationed at Merghémouzan, near the village of Shenik.

The evidence of Fevzi Effendi was in the main nothing but a confirmation of the account already given of the above-mentioned affair by his subordinates. It is, however, perhaps worthy of note that, according to his statement, the Armenians of Shenik, while attributing the cause of the quarrel to thefts committed by the Kurds, consented to restore the cattle of the latter out of consideration for the Government.

The deposition of Mustapha Effendi, who appears to have been sent to Merghémouzan with his detachment about the beginning of July last (o. s.), consists principally of the enumeration of the murders which, according to him, were committed by Armenians, of three Kurds, viz.:—

1. A Khianli Kurd.
2. The son of Amo, a Hoshkanli.
3. Hadji Agha, a Bekiranli Kurd; accompanied by the mutilation of their corpses.

The other statements of importance of Mustapha Effendi are, that the villagers of Shenik and Semal had evacuated their villages the day after his arrival at Merghémouzan, that it was they themselves who set fire to their villages with a view to revolt, and that their proceedings in this respect were part of a preconcerted plan to attack and destroy his own detachment. The Armenians even, the witness states, came to within a short distance of the encampment, but retired on finding the soldiers on their guard.

The evidence of Mustapha Effendi is, however, unsatisfactory in this respect, as it is almost impossible, from the vague nature of the dates given by him, to fix the time of the very important event of the evacuation of the villages of Semal, Shenik, and Ghelié-Guzan, and it is, I think, particularly noteworthy that he professes to be entirely ignorant of an attack by the Kurds on the village of Shenik, such as that recounted by Erko in his deposition of the 1st February (Report No. 7).

The sitting of the 5th February (Report No. 10) was occupied by the reading of judicial documents and by the evidence of an Armenian named Serkis, of Shenik, a cousin of Erko, who had been produced by the Commission, with a view of showing that his wife and two daughters named Mairo and Aivan and Shushan respectively, had not been killed at Ghelié-Hangevi, as stated by Erko, but had died from illness in their own home or elsewhere. The evidence given by Serkis was, in fact, a contradiction of that given by Erko; but as I shall have to refer to it in a subsequent Report, I would only at present call your attention to the following points:—

1. That he, Serkis, first stated that his wife died at Tapik, and subsequently, that it was at Shenik, on her return there.

2. That, until his attention was called by the President to the statement of Erko, he made no mention of his daughters Aivan and Shushan.

3. His unwillingness to give an account of his own movements during the events that occurred after the soldiers had attacked Shenik, as evidenced by the fact that, when questioned where he was at Mariam Perhiz (the fast of the Virgin Mary) a date, it will be remembered, fixed by Erko as having occurred during the events on the Antok Mountain, he professed himself ignorant as to what such a feast was.

At the subsequent confrontation of Erko with Serkis, both maintained their previous declarations, Erko, however, making the very grave accusation that Serkis had been tampered with by the authorities, and that free access to the Commission was not allowed to the Armenians.

At the sitting of the 6th February (Report No. 11), the evidence of the Gregorian priest, Parsegh, of Moush, who appears to be an informer, was taken, and consisted

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mainly, as will be seen, of an account of the origin of the troubles in the Sassoon district, which was ascribed by him mainly to the agitation set on foot by Nersès, Bishop of Moush, Damadian, and lastly, Mourad. As the statement of the priest Parsegh, with reference to a conversation, which he alleges he had held with the Armenian Tavo, of Semal, has been subsequently shown to be false, the wholesale accusations, which, it will be observed, he makes, against prominent Armenians of Moush and district, of being engaged at the present moment in seditious practices against the Government, cease to have much value. I would, however, note that his testimony was felt at the time both by myself and colleagues to be open to the greatest suspicion, owing to the fact that he appeared to single out Erko in particular for denunciation, and that in giving an account of the conflicts during past years between Armenians and Kurds, the former were, according to him, in every case the aggressors, and that, while he remembered very well the circumstances that four Kurds were killed in one of these encounters, he appeared, until questioned by the Delegates, to have no knowledge of any losses that may have been sustained by the Armenians.

At the sitting of the 7th February (Report No. 12) the Delegates, for reasons which I have already had the honour to report to you by telegraph, proposed to the Commission a visit to Hasskeui in person, not only with a view of clearing up discrepancies in the account of Erko and that of Serkis, but also of taking evidence on various other important points. The Reports which I now send will, I trust, justify the statements which I made in my telegram above referred to, viz., that the Commission appeared to be devoting itself to the task of showing by Government witnesses that the troubles of last year were due solely to the misconduct of the Armenians, the Kurds being in no way to blame. We felt, in fact, that as Erko and his brother Gourdjo had hitherto been absolutely the only witnesses who could be said to represent the Armenian side of the question, and as we saw no prospect whatever of obtaining further independent Armenian testimony, it was the intention of the Commission to present the case fully, from the Government point of view first, leaving it to the Armenians afterwards to make what representations they could on their own behalf. It was, therefore, equally as much with the hope of obtaining some independent Armenian testimony as of clearing up the points at issue between Erko and Serkis, that we proposed to the Commission to proceed to Hasskeui in person to investigate matters on the spot.

The evidence of Taleb Effendi was then taken relative to the various missions on which he had been sent by Government to the villages of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan, to obtain information as to the seditious agitation which, it was alleged, was being carried on in those villages, and Talori, by Damadian, and others. Taleb Effendi's deposition, which had evidently been prepared beforehand, was nothing but a statement of the case against the Armenians, from a Government point of view, and was clearly regarded as such by the Commissioners, as scarcely any question was put to him by the latter. I may mention that I put personally some questions to Taleb Effendi with reference to the troubles between the Talori people and the Kurds in the year 1893, but could succeed in obtaining no further information than that contained in the reply given in the Report, viz., that these troubles were caused by certain outrages committed by the Armenians of that district upon the Kurds. The further evidence of Taleb Effendi as to the events of 1894 was, it will be observed, chiefly hearsay, and need not, therefore, be dwelt upon. His statement, however, that the Kurdish villages of Sassoon, of which he gives the names of five, were friendly to the Armenians, is, I consider, valuable, as affording material for further investigation.

At the sitting of the Commission of the 8th February (Report No. 13), the latter communicated to us a reply in writing, of which we give a translation in full, negativing our proposal to visit Hasskeui, for reasons which I have already had the honour to communicate to you in summary in my telegram of the 10th February. The reply in question, repeating as it does the decision of the Commission to proceed in "chronological order," taking the evidence as to the origin of what the Turkish authorities regard as an armed rebellion of the Armenians first, bears out, I venture to think, the contention that the Commission was not desirous of touching upon the question of atrocities at present, more especially as it will be noticed that an early visit to Bitlis was then in contemplation, leaving entirely out of question the serious charges alleged by Erko against the Turkish troops, evidence as to which could obviously be more easily obtained in the Moush plain than at Bitlis. With reference to the expression made use of by the Commissioners in their reply, viz., "going to this village and that village," I may point out that our proposition was confined to a visit to Hasskeui only.

The witnesses heard at this sitting were Nadir Agha, a provision dealer of Moush, and the priests Garabed, Isaiah, and Egishé, of the Monastery of Tchanli. The evidence

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of the former does not contain much of interest, except that he states that already at the end of May last (o. s.), the Armenians of the villages of Kavar (Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan), in reply to his inquiry, informed him that they were being excited to revolt by the Armenians of Talori, who had become brigands. He also made the statement, which appeared to us extraordinary, that the witness Erko had said in his presence, and in that of others, some time after the events on the Antok Mountain, that if the soldiers of the detachment at Mergémouzan had not been massacred by the inhabitants of the villages above referred to, it was due to his (Erko's) intercession.

The depositions of the priests Garabed, Isaiah, and Egishé, did not contribute much to the information already in the possession of the Commission. Their statements seemed rather to have reference to their personal grievances against Nersès, Bishop of Moush, against whom it appears they had at various times addressed Petitions to the Armenian Patriarchate, and their statement that the Archimandrite Isaiah saw at the residence of the Bishop at Moush the garments of a murdered Mussulman youth of Van, seems to me to be wholly incredible. Nevertheless, their account of the doings of the revolutionary agents in the Moush district agrees to a great extent with that already given by the priest Parsegh and Taleb Effendi.

Of more immediate interest as regards the events in Sassoon is the statement made by them in reply to a question by the Delegates, to the effect that the number of Kurds in the habit of visiting the Talori and Kavar region amounts to 10,000 tents, but that this year, *i.e.*, 1894, 5,000 or 6,000 only came. I have no means of ascertaining at present whether these numbers are exaggerated or not, but in view of the statements of previous witnesess, that the number of Kurds never exceeded 300 or 400, I think that the above estimate, given by a witness favourable to the Government, deserves attention.

At the sitting of the Commission of the 9th February (Report No. 14), the President read out certain judicial documents, containing an account of the trial at Bitlis of Mourad and his companions, captured at Talori. Their depositions, except that of Mourad, offered little interest, and it was not thought necessary by the Delegates to include them in the Report, especially as it had previously been formally stated by the President that the above persons would be examined before the Commission.

The deposition of Salih Agha, who appears to have acted temporarily as Inspector of Tithes, was then taken, and was mainly to the effect that, on the 12th July of last year (o. s.), the Armenians of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan had already retired to the mountains, and had closed the roads leading to Koulp and Khiyan. He states, also, that he was eye-witness of a combat between the Armenians and Kurds on the road to Moush, which lasted about two hours, but in which the only losses were two men killed on the Kurdish and one on the Armenian side.

With regard to this witness, as, in fact, to all those having any employment under Government, I may remark that their evidence invariably stops at a certain point, viz., the arrival of the soldiers at Ghelié-Guzan. Of the subsequent movements of the latter they profess to know nothing, though singularly well informed as to the events which preceded.

The testimony of Bedros Effendi consisted of a long statement as to the origin of the troubles in the Kavar district, which the witness asserted he had received from a mendicant, named Ohan, of Ghelié-Guzan, whom he had met at Perhak, a village near Moush, and who ascribed his misfortunes to the fact that he had opposed the evil designs of Damadian. According to his statement, a general rising of the Armenians of Moush, Van, Boulanik, and Varto was planned by Mourad in 1894, who counselled the villagers of Ghelié-Guzan, Shenik, and Semal to send their wives and children to the mountains as a preparatory step.

The only direct evidence which Bedros Effendi was able to give was that he had translated certain Proclamations for the Government, addressed, the witness alleged, by Nersès, the Bishop of Moush, to the Armenian population.

The sitting of the 11th February (Report No. 15) was occupied by the Commission in taking the depositions of Mustapha Agha, Nasrullah Agha, Halil Effendi, and Bederkhan Agha, the two former of whom deposed that, having purchased last year the tithes of Ghelié-Guzan, Semal, and Shenik, they were unable to collect them owing to the fact of those villages having been abandoned by their inhabitants.

The depositions of Halil Effendi and Bederkhan Agha, sent in the middle of August last (o. s.) to report on the above matters, were, as will be seen, to the effect that the district was almost in a state of open war. The testimony of Halil Effendi is important as showing that at the date above mentioned the troops were already at Ghelié-Guzan.

At the sitting of the 12th February (Report No. 16) the Commissioners, on the

renewal by the Consular Delegates of the proposition to visit Hasskeui, declared themselves ready to start at once.

The visit in question, however, for reasons which I had the honour to communicate to you by telegraph, was deferred, the Delegates understanding that certain important witnesses from Semal and Shenik, referred to by Erko, had presented themselves to the Commission for examination.

The deposition of Hatcho, son of Manouk, of Shenik, who fled to the Antok Mountain four days after the other inhabitants of the villages, was then taken. As will be seen, it does not differ very essentially from the account already given by Erko as to the causes which led to the retreat of the villagers to the mountain, except that the witness who, it is necessary to bear in mind, had been summoned by the Government, attributed the conflicts between the Armenians and Kurds to the consequences of the agitation which had been carried on by Mourad. In one very important respect, however, he differs from Erko, viz, in that he states that they were not attacked while on the Antok Mountain, nor were they pursued while flying, and that, as far as he himself knew, there was nobody killed. The witness, it will be noted, ascribed the flight in different directions of the Armenians on the mountain solely to want of food.

At the sitting of the Commission of the following day (Report No. 17), the deposition of Sako, of Shenik, the first of the witnesses referred to in the previous Protocol, was taken.

The allegations brought by Sako against the troops are, it will at once be seen, of the most serious nature, for, like Erko, he accuses them of bayonetting defenceless persons on the Antok Mountain. Sako's account, it will be observed, is very circumstantial, and in estimating the amount of credence to be attached to his story, it must be borne in mind that, among others, he recounts the death of members of his own family, and that, moreover, as in the case of the two children, Ghiro and Manoushak, abandoned on the mountain, he gives names of persons who could be called to verify his statements. It will also be observed that, with reference to the account given of the death of the priest Ohannes, with others at Ghelié-Guzan, he states that his own nephew was among those put to death. With regard, however, to his statement that there was at no time any resistance on the part of the Armenians, it is, I think, not true, and in this respect Erko's account would seem to be more to be relied upon. It should be remembered, however, that Armenians are not likely to be ready to admit before Representatives of the Government that they fired upon the Imperial troops.

With regard to the probable issue of the Inquiry, it would perhaps at the present stage be premature to speak. Nevertheless, with the information in our possession, as furnished by the remainder of the witnesses referred to in Report No. 16 of the 13th February, a summary of which I had the honour to communicate to you by telegraph, the conviction is being gradually forced upon myself and colleagues that, even putting aside for the moment the question of the slaughter by the troops of defenceless persons, an amount of misery and suffering has been inflicted upon the Armenians of the villages of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan, wholly out of proportion to any offences of which they may have been guilty.

The number of Armenians on the Antok Mountain was estimated by Mustapha Effendi, the Officer in Command of the detachment of troops at Merghémouzan (Report No. 9) as 3,000 in all, and it is not contested by the Turkish authorities themselves that all these people, or those that survived of them, are now homeless, and the greater part of them absolutely without means of subsistence.

The above, moreover, it is to be noted, is entirely independent of the villages of Talori proper, on which the Commission has, as yet, hardly touched.

With regard to the question of sedition among the Armenians, the case is somewhat different. A political agitation of some kind or other seems undoubtedly to have been carried on by Damadian, and, after him, by Mourad, though even here the only act of overt rebellion against constituted authority, brought to the notice of the Commission, seems to have been the attack made by the inhabitants of Akkesser and Talori upon Ismail Effendi, Kaïmakam of Koulp, referred to by Mustapha Effendi (Report No. 9), unless an attack, which is alleged by Salih Agha (Report No. 14) to have been meditated upon the Kaïmakam of Sassoon, be counted as such.

It is more difficult to arrive at a conclusion with regard to the outrages alleged to have been committed by Armenians upon Kurds. That certain of the latter have been killed by Armenians is, I believe, true; but neither myself nor my colleagues feel satisfied, from the evidence which has come before us, that it was the Amenians who gave the provocation; and it is in this respect that the absence of independent and impartial testimony, of which as yet we have had none, makes itself most keenly felt. The fact is, however,

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significant, in connection with these alleged outrages, viz., that nearly the whole of them appear to have been committed upon the nomad Kurds, one or two cases only being instanced of an attack upon the Kurds resident in the villages. I should, perhaps, add the number of these outrages is not large, and that the fact that the corpses were mutilated by Armenians has not yet been shown entirely to our satisfaction.

In concluding my Report I beg to call your attention to the suggestions which we have thought it necessary to make to the Commission with a view to, as far as possible, insuring an impartial hearing for Armenians who may be called upon to give evidence.

The first one is that, as the majority of Armenian witnesses are Gregorians, it would be only just that one of the Dragomans should be a person in whom they would have confidence; and to that end we proposed (Report 11) that some one should be chosen from their own community. This was agreed to by the President, and a second person added. The latter, however, not proving satisfactory, was replaced by Mardiros Agha, a member of the Armenian Administrative Council, who acted for some time, but was subsequently declared by the President to be unsuitable, for reasons known to the Government. As various other persons who, on the invitation of the Commission, were proposed by ourselves, were also declared to be unacceptable, the services of Avedis Agha, an elected Armenian member of the Moush Municipality, have been enlisted by the Commission. I should point out, however, that the want of a Dragoman of our own, understanding Armenian and Kurdish, has been felt by us to be a very serious drawback.

The second suggestion to which I refer, and which has also been adopted by the Commission (Report No. 13) is that Armenians having Petitions to present with reference to the affair at Sassoon, shall at once be admitted before the Commissioners, their Petitions read out in the presence of the Consular Delegates, and registered in the journal of the proceedings of the Commission for subsequent investigation.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosures 3 to 11 in No. 184.

Procès-verbaux Nos. 9 to 17 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.

[See Part II.]

No. 185.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 26.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March 26, 1895, 7·30 P.M.*

I HAVE been informed by the Porte that the Acting Governor-General of Diarbekir has been instructed to send Sheikh of Zeilan before the Commission at Mush, unless he had already started for Mecca, and that he has been ordered at the same time, in consequence of our joint representations, to adopt such measures as are necessary for the maintenance of order.

No. 186.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received March 31.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, March 31, 1895.*

ACCORDING to a telegram received from the French Delegate, there will be sufficient work at Mush for the Commission for a month, and until that time the roads to the Sasun villages will not be open.

No. 187.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received April* 8.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 3, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the dispatch of a Dragoman to the Delegates at Mush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 187.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 20, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report further as follows on the subject of the dispatch of M. Dikran Srabian, Second Dragoman of the French Consulate, to assist the Delegates with the Commission of Inquiry at Mush.

On the 10th instant I had the honour to receive your Excellency's telegram, informing me that the Porte had been requested to instruct the Vali to grant travelling facilities to the Dragoman, and, in a further telegram of the 11th instant, I was instructed to ask the Vali formally in writing for the necessary facilities and escort, and to report his official answer.

My colleagues and I accordingly addressed notes to the Vali in this sense on the 12th instant, and were informed by him that he had referred our request by telegram to the Sublime Porte, as I had the honour to report to your Excellency in my telegram of the same day.

No answer having been vouchsafed to this request, on the 16th instant your Excellency instructed me by telegram to inform the Vali that, as facilities had not been given for the Dragoman, I was instructed to make preparations to proceed to Mush at once with my Dragoman, and to ask for an escort. I therefore addressed a note to the Vali the same day in the sense indicated, which was at once referred to the Porte, and the following day I twice sent my Dragoman to ask for an answer, and to inform the Vali that I was desirous of starting as soon as possible, the answer being that he could not give the required facilities without orders from Constantinople, but on his asking the Vali on my instructions to let me have this in writing, his Excellency politely declined to do so.

On the evening of the 17th instant, on receipt of identic telegrams from our respective Embassies, my colleagues and I drew up identic notes to the Vali, which were conveyed at midnight to the Government House by our Dragomans, repeating our request for escort and facilities for the Dragoman who had been ordered to Mush, and informing his Excellency that if they were not given we intended, under orders from our Ambassadors, to send him off on the morning of the 19th instant, accompanied by three of our cavasses and our special courier. My Dragoman also informed the Vali, verbally, that as the Dragoman was certainly going, there was no longer any necessity for my proposed journey to Mush.

The following morning, the 18th instant, the Dragoman of the vilayet called on all of us, on behalf of the Governor-General, to inform us that, by the Grand Vizier's orders, he was authorized to furnish whatever escort was required, and desired to know our wishes on the subject. We sent our Dragomans to express our thanks, and to inform his Excellency that M. Dikran Srabian would start the next morning early, and request that he might be furnished with a "bouyourouldou"* and two mounted gendarmes. They only saw the Secretary-General, who gave the required assurances as to the gendarmes, but said that the "bouyourouldou" was not necessary. However, on their return, my French colleague sent back his Dragoman to insist upon its being granted, which was done without further demur. I telegraphed this result to your Excellency without delay, and M. Srabian duly started for Mush on the following morning.

I am bound to add that, in all this affair, the Vali has palpably acted under direct orders from Constantinople, and that neither my colleagues nor myself have had reason to complain of any want of courtesy on his part.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

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* Formal permit.

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No. 188.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received April* 17.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, April* 17, 1895, *noon.*

I HAVE received the following telegram from Mr. Shipley:—

"The account of the massacre of the prisoners at the camp, and of the soldiers outraging the women, has in nearly every detail been confirmed by the testimony of the three women mentioned by Tavo, whose testimony we have at length secured. These women, although not eye-witnesses of the massacre, subsequently saw the pit full of corpses.

"According to the deposition of a shepherd from Semal, he saw the bodies only some six or seven days after the soldiers had left the camp. Although the Commissioners have so far made no official communication to us in regard to these and other statements of the Armenians, they appear disposed to think that no credence can be attached to them. We have been chiefly occupied during the past fortnight in taking the evidence of Kurds, and this has been for the most part merely a repetition of the stock charges against the Armenians of revolt and the committing of atrocities.

"It is impossible to say when the labours of the Commission are likely to terminate, as there are more Kurds to be examined, as well as the witnesses proposed by us.

"Nothing has apparently been done with regard to the long list of losses which various Armenian witnesses have stated to have taken place in their own families, beyond the production of several persons whom an Armenian woman recently alleged, in a manifestly exaggerated statement, to have been killed before her eyes."

No. 189.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, April* 17, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of to-day, repeating one from Mr. Shipley relative to the proceedings of the Commission at Mush.

I should wish to have your opinion whether it would not be advisable that something should be done to prevent the Commission from spending an indefinite amount of time in taking immaterial evidence.

It would seem quite possible that the traces of the massacres might be altogether removed by the time the Commission gets to the spot.

I consider that the Delegates might be encouraged to make any proposal which they think desirable in order to avoid these results, and that your Excellency and your French and Russian colleagues should give such proposal your support.

No. 190.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received April* 19.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, April* 19, 1895, 10·45 A.M.

I HAVE telegraphed to Mr. Shipley on the subject of your telegram of the 17th instant.

No. 191.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received April* 23.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, April* 23, 1895, 3 P.M.

I HAVE received the following telegram from Mr. Shipley:—

"Length of inquiry is largely due to the fact that the Commission has endeavoured from the first, on a damaging piece of evidence being brought against the Government by an Armenian, immediately to destroy or counterbalance it by means of witnesses on its own side.

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"From the list of their witnesses furnished last Saturday, the Commissioners show signs of being about to close their case.

"Not more than three or four weeks at the most ought to be occupied by the examination of these witnesses, together with those now in Mush who have been proposed by ourselves.

"For the next two or three weeks, therefore, I hardly think anything can be done in the way of united suggestion."

No. 192.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received April* 25.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, April* 25, 1895, 8 P.M.

THE Russian and French Delegates at Mush have telegraphed that the improvement in the attitude of the Commission reported in my telegram to your Lordship of the 23rd instant has been restricted to matters of mere form; practically, the proceedings of the Commission are conducted in as unsatisfactory a manner as ever.

No. 193.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received April* 26.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 21, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 21st March, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, transmitting Protocols 18 to 30 of the Commission of Inquiry now sitting at Moush.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 193.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Extract) *Erzeroum, April* 9, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of despatches which I received on Saturday, the 6th instant, from Mr. Shipley, the British Delegate with the Commission of Inquiry at Moush. In the first of these despatches Mr. Shipley incloses copies of the joint Reports, Nos. 18 to 22 inclusive, drawn up by the Delegates, of the sittings of the 14th to the 19th February. The latter Reports, numbered 23 to 30 inclusive, which have been sent in single copy only, were sent to the French Consul at Erzeroum, and are being transmitted by him to his Ambassador at Constantinople, after copies have been taken by my colleagues and myself for our archives.

Mr. Shipley again gives a careful analysis in his despatches of all the evidence heard, but without drawing any conclusions as to the conduct and probable results of the inquiry.

Inclosure 2 in No. 193.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, March* 15, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith the joint Reports, drawn up by the Consular Delegates, Nos. 18 to 22 inclusive, of the proceedings at the sittings of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry of the 14th, 15th, 16th, 18th, and 19th February inclusive.

Of the above Reports, No. 20, of the 15th February, contains the very important deposition of the Armenian Tavo, one of the leading inhabitants of the village of Semal, a brief summary of which I had the honour to communicate to you by telegraph.

As will be seen, the account given by Tavo of the flight of the villagers to the Antok Mountain, the burning of the villages by the soldiers, and the attack made by the latter

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on the inhabitants of Semal, Shenik, and Ghelié-Guzan do not differ in any very essential detail from that already given by Sako (Report No. 17 of the 13th February).

Tavo, however, adds that no less than twenty persons, all old people and young children, three of whom were members of his own family, perished in the flames; and with regard to this part of Tavo's story, I would note that as he gives the names of some eight persons as having sustained losses similar to his own, he puts it in the power of the Commission to test his veracity, either by producing the persons in question or showing that they are non-existent.

Tavo, it will be observed, affirms equally with Sako that he is ignorant of the reason of the attack upon these villages by the soldiers, with whom up to the very day of which he maintains they were on a friendly footing. You will, however, not fail to notice that Tavo states that he had heard that in the spring of last year the Kurds were saying among themselves that the order had come to exterminate the Armenians, and that an attempt had been made to induce him to pay a sum of money in order to avert the threatened attack.

The above story of Tavo may or may not be true, but the fact that a similar statement has been made by other witnesses since examined shows that a belief that some such order had been issued was certainly prevalent among the villagers.

The leading features of Tavo's statement as to the massacre of priest Ohannes and others by the soldiers at Ghelié-Guzan I have already had the honour to communicate to you in my telegram above alluded to. The details given by Tavo as to the trenches into which, as he alleges, the dead bodies were thrown are very circumstantial, and it will be observed that among those whom he asserts to have met their death with priest Ohannes were two of his own brothers and their two children. I may note that of the witnesses mentioned by Tavo as having been present on that occasion, only Ovak has as yet been produced, with whose evidence I propose to deal later on.

Tavo, it will be observed, maintains that, notwithstanding the assertions of Major Fevzi Effendi (Report No. 9 of 4th February), the inhabitants of Semal were still in their village on the 27th or 28th July (o. s.) last, giving, it will be noticed, the name of Medjid, on-Bashi of Zaptieh, in support of his contention. The date in question is a matter of some importance, as by the Government witnesses brought before the Commission the evacuation in question has been put at a much earlier date, and has, in fact, been advanced as a proof that the villagers were in active rebellion.

According to Tavo, the inhabitants of Semal paid comparatively only a small amount of tribute ("hafir") annually to the neighbouring Kurdish Aghas of Sassoon, and were in this respect generally more independent than the neighbouring Armenian villages of Sassoon. It may perhaps be noted that, notwithstanding the payment of this tribute, their relations with the Sassoon Aghas appear to have been fairly cordial. With the nomad Bekiranli Kurds, on the other hand, by whom tribute was also exacted, Tavo states that the inhabitants of his village were in continual dispute. The soldiers sent to protect the villagers against these Kurds do not, according to Tavo, appear to have been of much utility, and the villagers ceased their complaints, finding that greater inconveniences were the only result.

The statement made by Tavo, in reply to a question of the Consular Delegates, viz., that his house at Semal had cost for timber alone some 1,200 piastres, is not without interest, for if Tavo's estimate is a true one, it seems scarcely probable that the villagers would themselves so readily set fire to their villages in the manner suggested by Government witnesses.

Tavo, on this latter point, spoke out, it will be observed, very plainly, his observation being, in fact, almost equivalent to saying that the villagers might, with equal reason, have been accused of bayonetting their own women. With regard to Nadir Agha (Report No. 13 of the 8th February) and priest Parsegh (Report No. 11 of the 6th February), Tavo denied that he had ever held conversation with either of them.

In one respect, Tavo's deposition is somewhat unsatisfactory, viz., in the account he gives of the retreat of the villagers and of his own movements on the day of the attack by the soldiers. It is, in fact, almost impossible to understand how, if, as he states, no resistance was at any time offered to the soldiers, the villagers succeeded in making their way to the Antok Mountain, taking with them at the same time their women, children, and flocks, and in this respect I would again observe that the account given by Erko is more likely to be the true one.

The witnesses heard at the sitting of the Commission of the 16th February last, were the woman Maké, of the village of Spagank, in the Talori district, and the Kurds Ressoul and Abdullah, of the villages of Djerdjas and Melek, in the Khiyan district respectively.

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Maké's statement, the substance of which I had the honour to communicate to you by telegraph, was a very plain and straightforward one. She asserted that she was an eye-witness of the bayoneting of her husband and several of her children by the soldiers, and, it is to be noted, made no attempt to speak of the losses which other inhabitants may have sustained, of which she said she knew nothing. I may also point out that though Alvarindj is at no great distance from Moush, none of the members of her own family, whose names she gives as residing there, have yet been summoned before the Commission.

The two Kurds, Ressoul and Abdullah, spoke, the former to the murder of his cousin, and the latter to that of his father, by the Armenians of Talori and Kavar. With regard to these murders, I would observe that even granting the fact that they were committed by the Armenians of those villages (as to which the evidence, especially in the case of the Kurd Temish, is not altogether satisfactory), the fact that precisely Tavo should have been among those singled out for accusation appears to be open to the greatest suspicion. Ressoul, it will be noticed, accused him with the others he had named on the sole apparent ground that all Khiyan knew them for brigands, and that they were the chiefs of their villages, the latter being also the reason given by the Kurd Abdullah. It is, moreover, difficult to believe that if the authorities had really suspected Tavo of being guilty of participation in the above crimes, they were so powerless as not to be able to arrest him so far back as the June of last year.

The sitting of the 18th February (Report No. 21) was taken up principally with the confrontation of Tavo with the priest Parsegh, and of Tavo and Sako with Nadir Agha. At the same sitting, the witness Ovak, referred to by Tavo as having been present at the death of the priest Ohannes, was also examined.

The result of the confrontation of the priest Parsegh with Tavo showed very clearly that the statement of the former relative to an alleged conversation with Tavo (Report No. 11 of the 6th February) was false. Under these circumstances the account volunteered by the priest in question at the same sitting, of the death of priest Ohannes, has the appearance of being an ingenious invention, rather than a statement of fact.

With regard to Nadir Agha, it would appear from the statement of Sako that Tavo, notwithstanding his denial, had, in fact, visited the shop of the former at Moush since the events of last year. Sako, however, denied that any such conversation had taken place as that recounted by Nadir Agha (Report No. 13 of the 8th February).

The greater part of the evidence of Ovak, the last of the witnesses examined at this sitting, and who gave an account of his experiences at the camp of the soldiers at Ghelié-Guzan, has already been communicated by telegraph. With regard to the medical Report on the case of Ovak, communicated to us by the President at the following sitting (Report No. 22) and referred to by me in the same telegram, I am, of course, not able to offer an opinion. Nevertheless, I think that on several points, and especially on the important question of the date of the scars on various parts of Ovak's body, some other independent medical testimony may fairly be asked for, and this in fact is also the view taken by my colleagues. I should also state that on this occasion we renewed our observation to the President as to the immediate necessity of summoning the women referred to by Tavo.

At the sitting of the 19th February (Report No. 22) after the medical Report above referred to, and of which we give a translation in full, had been communicated to us by the President, the evidence of an Armenian named Vahan, of Moush, was taken. The deposition of the latter, who appears to be the person referred to by Taleb Effendi (Report No. 12 of the 7th February) as having given the information respecting the doings of Damadian, was principally an account of the unsuccessful efforts which, in conjunction with Taleb, he made to effect the capture of Damadian in the Kavar villages as far back as 1892. The evidence upon which this witness connects various persons of those villages, including Erko and the brother of Tavo, with Damadian, it will be observed, was not of a very convincing nature, while the important conversation, which he alleges he had with the priest Ohannes, of Semal, is, for obvious reasons, likely to remain uncontrolled.

The only other point worthy of note in the evidence of Vahan is the charge brought by the latter against the Armenians of exercising undue influence on witnesses, singling out in particular a certain Mardiros Agha, of the Armenian Administrative Council of Moush. The only proof, however, which the Delegates were able to obtain from him of the truth of his assertions with regard to the latter, was that such intimidation was evident from what was taking place around him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

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Inclosure 3 in No. 193.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, March* 30, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that the joint Reports of the Consular Delegates Nos. 23, 24, and 25 of the proceedings of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry at the sittings of the 20th, 21st, and 22nd February respectively, have been forwarded to M. Bergeron, Consul in charge of the French Vice-Consulate at Erzeroum, and I beg to explain that, owing to the great pressure of work, we have been unable to send more than one copy of each Report.

The deposition of the Kurd Reshid (Report No. 23), who stated that he was a prisoner among the Armenians on the Antok Mountain, would undoubtedly have been of interest as giving an account, from a non-Armenian point of view, of what took place on the mountain in question. It is, however, impossible to attach any credence to it, as, after the statements of Serko, Kiragos, and others confronted with Reshid at the sitting of the Commission of the following day (Report No. 24), it is more than doubtful whether the latter was ever on the Antok Mountain at all, and in any case his own numerous self-contradictions at the confrontation in question would render his evidence open to the greatest suspicion.

Reshid, it would appear, has brothers at Ghelié-Guzan (a fact, however, which he himself, it will be seen, denies), and it is possible that he may have obtained from them, or from other Kurds, material for part of his story, the remaining details being evidently a pure invention.

I should, perhaps, state that two or three witnesses have since given evidence tending to show that Reshid was in reality a resident at Ghelié-Guzan. But apart from the fact that none of these witnesses were confronted with the latter, their statements as to his family and as to his whereabouts during the events in question were so entirely at variance with Reshid's own account as to increase rather than otherwise the doubts as to his veracity.

To the depositions of Serko and Kiragos, both of the village of Ghelié-Guzan (Report No. 25) I have already had occasion to refer by telegraph, and a perusal of them will, I think, show that they bear out in all essential details the accounts already given by Sako and Tavo (Reports Nos. 17 and 18 of the 13th and 14th February), of the flight of the villagers to the Antok, and of the subsequent attack upon the latter by the soldiers.

A noteworthy feature in the examination of Serko and Kiragos was the freedom with which both of them stated their case to the Commissioners, the last-named in particular, in reply to a question by the President, stating very plainly that the soldiers had come upon them, had massacred them; and it was on that account that he had cause to make his complaint to the Commission.

The most serious of the accusations brought by Serko against the troops is undoubtedly that which refers to the massacre in the Ghelié-San ravine, distant some three or three and a-half hours from Ghelié-Guzan, of a mixed number of fugitives from the villages of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan, who, according to Serko, had gathered together in the ravine in question. Serko's statement no doubt requires further investigation, but it cannot, I feel, be regarded as an unsupported one in view of the fact that he not only gives the names of those who he asserts he knows to have been killed, but also the names of two of the survivors, from whom he states he obtained the account as well. I may observe that although some time has now elapsed since Serko's statement was first made, we have not yet had an opportunity of examining the two witnesses referred to.

The remaining statements of Serko do not call for any particular comment. It will be noticed, however, that he speaks of the priest Ohannes, whom he states he saw going with others in the direction of the camp. His statement, also, that the inhabitants of his village paid on two occasions in 1894 the sheep tax to a representative of the Government may, in view of the accusation brought against them of having meditated revolt for some time previous to their actual flight to the Antok Mountain, be regarded as worthy of attention.

The chief points in the deposition of Kiragos, the witness above alluded to, are the accounts which he gives of the events in the Avié-Han ravine, and of the burial by himself of the bodies of his two uncles, who, he states, were killed in the Ghelié-San ravine alluded to by the preceding witness, Serko. Kiragos, it will be observed, furnishes in this connection, the name of the wife of one of his uncles, whose evidence when called may

prove to be of value in clearing up some of the doubtful points in the account both of Kiragos and Serko.

Kiragos further states that he had found the bodies of two aged females at Ghelié-Guzan, who, according to the witness, had been killed by the bayonet, and who were named Shamé and Hazé respectively, the latter being the mother of a certain Medjdo, actually resident at one of the villages in the Moush plain.

The description which Kiragos gave at the end of his deposition of the condition in which he found his village on his return has already been alluded to by me in my telegram of the 1st instant, and it has since, I may mention, been corroborated by another witness.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 4 in No. 193.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, March* 31, 1895.

REFERRING to my despatch of yesterday's date I have the honour to report to you that the following further joint Reports of the Consular Delegates, Nos. 26 to 30 inclusive, of the proceedings at the sittings of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry, of the 23rd, 25th, 26th, and 27th February respectively, have been forwarded by us to M. Bergeron, Consul in charge of the French Vice-Consulate at Erzeroum.

Artin of Shenik, the witness examined at the sitting of the 23rd February (Report No. 26), gives, it will be seen, much the same account of the flight of the villagers to the Antok Mountain as that already given by Tavo and others, with the important exception, however, that he states that his village sustained an attack on the part of the soldiers and Kurds combined.

The account given by Serko of the occurrences in the Ghelié-San ravine (Report No. 25 of the 22nd February), is, it will be seen, confirmed by Artin, and I cannot but think that great importance attaches to the fact that the latter, who gave his evidence with great sobriety of detail, furnishes, equally with Serko, the names of persons killed in the ravine in question, the only difference being that in his case the names so given are those of inhabitants of Shenik, who would be known to Artin as being himself of the latter village.

With regard to the attack by the soldiers on the villagers on the Antok Mountain, the imminence of the danger in which the latter believed themselves to be, may be judged from the fact that the witness, according to his own statement, abandoned his grandchild in order to save himself. Neither the child in question, nor his daughter Shushan, abandoned by its mother on the mountain, have, the witness added, since been seen by him.

I refer to this more particularly, as from subsequent testimony the fact of children having been thus abandoned would seem to have been of no uncommon occurrence.

Artin, it will be observed, states that on his return he found that his village had been entirely burned, and it is perhaps interesting to note with regard to the report that houses had been reconstructed at these villages, that according to Artin the inhabitants did in fact begin to build small huts, abandoning their intention, however, on the failure of the Government to redeem its promise of furnishing them with rations.

Among other statements of Artin may be noticed the estimate he gives of the numbers of tribal Kurds annually coming to their summer pasturages near the villages of Kavar, and which, in the case of those camping near Shenik, Artin puts at some fifty to sixty tents. The witness did not, however, say whether a greater number assembled this year than usual, but it will be observed that he states that the soldiers at Merguemouzan were sent there for the purpose of protecting the villagers against these nomad tribes.

The Kurd Dervish of the village of Hoshkan (not belonging to the nomad Kurds of that name), examined at the sitting of the 25th February (Report No. 27), seems to have been summoned principally to speak to two attacks—the first of which he alleges was made upon himself by a band of Armenians in 1893, shortly after the capture of Damadian; and the second upon his son in 1894 by certain Armenians of Ghelié-Guzan. As far as could be ascertained from the witness, the only steps taken by the authorities with regard to the first of these attacks was that some names were extorted from a priest by Major Fevzi Effendi, and, with regard to the second, which resulted, according to the witness, in the death eventually of his son, his reply to a question of the Consular Delegates amounted prac-

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tically to the statement that, as his first complaint had remained without result, he did not think it worth while to make a second.

The other witness heard at this sitting was the Armenian named Medjdo, of Ghélié-Guzan, whose evidence, it will be seen, confirmed generally that given by Serko and Kiragos (Report No. 26), and as Medjdo had been summoned by the Commissioners apparently to control the statements made by the latter, his testimony possesses more than usual interest. He states, however, that, although his mother was in fact abandoned in the village of Ghélié-Guzan, he was ignorant of what had since become of her, and had had no conversation with Kiragos, such as that recounted by the latter. For this reason and also because of Medjdo's statements with reference to the visits which he alleges were paid by Kiragos to Talori, the Consular Delegates suggested to the Commission that a confrontation of the two would be desirable. It was, we felt, only just to Kiragos to give him the opportunity of denying or explaining the statement of Medjdo with reference to his connection with Talori, as a visit to the latter place is almost tantamount, from a Turkish point of view, to an accusation of being engaged in actual rebellion.

At the sittings of the Commission of the 26th and 27th February (Reports Nos. 28 and 29), five Kurds were examined, viz., Amo-ben-Meho and Salih-ben-Zoro, of the villages of Latchki and Ghélié-Mansour, respectively; Emin-ben-Khasso, of the Badikanli Kurds; Mirzo-ben-Ali, of the village of Reshki, in the Guendj Sandjak, and Sali-ben-Ali, of Kerih, in the district of Koulp.

All the above individuals spoke to various outrages which they alleged were either committed upon themselves or other Kurds by Armenians, and with reference to the accusations brought by the three first-named, you will not fail to observe that the names of Erko, Sako, Tavo and Serko, all of whom have given evidence before the Commission, appear among those whom they profess to have recognized among the aggressors, though there seems to be considerable doubt whether in the petitions originally presented by these Kurds, the above-mentioned names would in all cases be found.

With regard to the outrage referred to by Amo as having been committed by the Armenians at Merghéboti in 1894, it is at least singular that no report on the matter appears to have been drawn up by Captain Mustapha Effendi, in command of the troops at Merghémouzan, though several other acts of atrocity were, it will be remembered, enumerated by that officer in his deposition of the 4th February (Report No. 9).

With reference to the attack alleged by the Kurd Salih-ben-Zaro to have been made on the house of his uncle in 1893, I would only remark that unless the district was already then in a state of open rebellion, which has not yet been alleged, the authorities were singularly remiss in not taking steps to arrest Sako, who is a leading inhabitant of Shenik, and who, whether concerned in the attack or not, seems to have remained quietly in his village until the events of last year.

As regards the deposition of Emin-ben-Khasso, who stated that he was attacked at his summer pasturage by a large band of Armenians, which statement was confirmed by the Kurds Mirzo-ben-Ali and Salih-ben-Ali. I would point out that at the date which all three give, namely, the month of August, and two of them as the 15th (27th), it is very doubtful whether an attack could have taken place under such conditions, as at that time the soldiers were already in the vicinity. But even granting the fact that certain Kurds may have been killed by Armenians, which, however, is denied by the latter, and of which the evidence is chiefly that of the Kurds themselves, there has been no independent testimony whatever to show from which side the provocation originally came. In the combat which took place between the Armenians of Shenik and the Velikanli Kurds at the beginning of July last, and which seems to have been one of the first of the serious events of that year, it is stated by Erko (Report No. 7 of the 1st February) that the cause of the combat in question was the retaking by the shepherds of his village from the Velikanli Kurds of the sheep which the latter had stolen in the first instance. This is, of course, a very different version of the matter from that given by the Kurds. Unfortunately, since Erko no Armenian has apparently been willing to allude to any combats which may have taken place between them and the latter.

At the sitting of the 28th February (Report No. 30), the witnesses heard were the Kurds Omer-ben-Pourto and Ahmet-ben-Hamo, of the village of Ghélié-Mansour, some three hours distant from Ghélié-Guzan. Part of the deposition of the former is, it will be seen, taken up with the story which he gives respecting two Armenians named Tato and Serko, who, according to the witness, furnished him with information respecting the intentions and plans of the Armenians at Talori, and again when on the Antok Mountain. I do not, however, propose to go into this part of his statement, as the evidence of witnesses since examined has given rise to very grave doubts whether Omer-ben-Pourto ever had any such conversation with the two Armenians referred to. His other evidence

is, it will be seen, for the most part merely a repetition of the accusations of the acts of outrage and atrocity brought by other witnesses against the Armenians. I may observe that the story that the Armenians set fire to their own houses reappears again in the evidence of this witness, the information this time having been supplied by a Badikanli Kurd whose name does not transpire.

The witness, it will be observed, stated that nobody of his own village had suffered anything at the hands of the Armenians, who, according to him, only attacked tribal Kurds.

This reply is, I would submit, not without a certain interest, in view of the wholesale accusations of brigandage brought by this witness and others against the Armeniaus.

With regard to the witness Ahmet-ben-Hamo, whose evidence was a repetition almost word for word of that given by Omer-ben-Pourto, the observations which I made in the case of the latter apply equally to the present witness.

It will, however, be observed that he adds that it was Serko and Tato, the Armenians referred to by the preceding witness, who had informed him that the Armenians of Gavar had, by the order of Mourad, burned their houses as a preparatory measure to their intended revolt against the Government. You will also not fail to notice that whereas, according to Ahmet-ben-Hamo, it would appear that Serko and Tato were in this district as recently as about one month back, according to Omer-ben-Pourto, they had already left last autumn for Diarbekir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosures 5 to 17 in No. 193.

Procès-verbaux Nos. 18 *to* 30 *of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.*

[See Part II.]

No. 194.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received April* 27.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, April* 27, 1895, 3 P.M.

THE following joint telegram has been received by the three Embassies from the Consuls at Erzeroum :—

"We think it our duty to point out to your Excellencies the necessity of asking the Porte to order the Bitlis Commission to proceed to Ghelieguzan without delay in order to make the necessary investigations there.

"We have taken this action in view of persistent rumours here, from semi-official and other sources, of the removal of bodies buried at Ghelieguzan, a large number of which are said to have been taken away by the authorities before the winter.

"We have also in view the French Delegate's telegram of the 26th March sent with the approval of his colleagues and communicated to the French Ambassador on the 27th March, according to which our Delegates think that a visit to Ghelieguzan would be desirable as soon as possible."

The following identic telegram was sent by my colleagues and myself direct to the Delegates at Mush :—

"In concert with your colleagues, who are receiving similar instructions, you should propose to the Commission an immediate excursion to Ghelieguzan in order to ascertain the condition of the village at the end of the winter. If need be, you should insist on the necessity of your proposal being acceded to.

"Sent to Erzeroum."

We have informed the Porte of the dispatch of these instructions.

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No. 195.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 1.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May 1, 1895, 12·3 P.M.*

I HAVE to-day telegraphed to Mr. Graves and Mr. Shipley that the Sultan has given orders for the Commission to finish up the examination on which they are at present engaged as quickly as possible, in order that they may reach Ghelieguzan before the end of the week. In the event of the departure being delayed beyond that date, the Delegates are to inform the Commissioners that they will start off independently.

No. 196.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May 1, 1895.*

I HAVE received your telegram of the 27th ultimo with regard to the necessity for the immediate presence of the Commission of Inquiry at Ghelieguzan, in view of the reported efforts of the local authorities there to remove all traces of the alleged massacres.

I approve the identic instructions on the subject sent by your Excellency and your French and Russian colleagues to the European Delegates at Mush.

I am, &c.

(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 197.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 2.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May 2, 1895, 9·15 A.M.*

MR. GRAVES telegraphed to me yesterday as follows:—

"Following identical telegram with my French and Russian colleagues here.

"We submit the following telegram to your Excellencies which we have received from our Delegates, asking for instructions as to the attitude to be taken by them under the circumstances:—

"'Hebo, of Shenik, was summoned by us to-day, the 29th April, and deposed that the Chief of Gendarmerie yesterday threatened him with death if he accused the soldiers instead of the Kurds of killing the Armenians; that by means of Nadir Aga and the Mufti acting as interpreters, he received a similar recommendation from the Mutessarif in the presence of a Pasha and of the Secretary of the Commission.

"'Further promises were made by the Mutessarif that he would give him 1,000 piastres, 10 oxen, and 500 sheep, reconstruct his house and his village, making him Headman of the latter, and restore the £T. 360 taken from his brother, on condition that he would acknowledge that he had seen Mourad, whose revolutionary counsels had been followed by the Armenians, that he would attribute the burning of the villages to the Kurds, declare that Mourad and his band had fought with the troops at Ghelieguzan, and, finally, that he would refuse to reply when questioned about the massacre of the women in the church, or about the priest of Semal.

"'We have received the promise of the President of the Commission that an inquiry shall be held.

"'We are justified in considering that there is good foundation for these grave accusations, both from information in our possession, and from the way in which the inquiry is being conducted.'"

No. 198.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 2.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May 2, 1895, 9·30 A.M.*

WITH reference to my telegram to your Lordship of to-day, I have telegraphed the following reply to Mr. Graves:—

"Tell Mr. Shipley he is to insist on the inquiry being held immediately, with the assistance of the Delegates, and in their presence."

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No. 199.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May 2, 1895.*

I HAVE received your telegrams of to-day, reporting an alleged attempt on the part of the local authorities at Mush to intimidate the Armenian witness, Hebo, and the instructions sent by your Excellency to the British Delegate in consequence.

I approve your having directed Mr. Shipley to insist upon an immediate inquiry being held into this matter by the Commission, with the necessary safeguards.

I am, &c.

(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 200.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 3.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May 3, 1895, 11·15 A.M.*

YESTERDAY Mr. Shipley sent me the following telegram:—

"The accusations of Hebo have been declared by the Commission to be without foundation on the strength of written answers from the Military Pasha and the Mutessarif, together with a verbal denial of the Clerk of the Commission and of the Mufti, without having examined either the Chief of the Gendarmerie or the Nadir Agha, and without confrontation.

"We only signed the *procès-verbal* as being present, declaring ourselves unable to agree with this opinion."

No. 201.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 4.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May 4, 1895, 11·45 A.M.*

HAVING heard from the Delegates that the Commission had declined to start for Ghelieguzan before Wednesday, we telegraphed the following instructions yesterday:—

"The Sultan has informed us that the delay until Wednesday was ordered so that the Commission could be accompanied to Ghelieguzan by the Colonel, who is expected at Mush.

"We attach great importance to serious inquiry into the intimidation of Hebo being held in your presence before your departure, but the Delegates should use their own discretion as to whether they should wait for the Colonel or not.

"Repeated to Erzeroum."

No. 202.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 5.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May 5, 1895.*

WE have received the following identic telegram from the Delegates:—

"Believing it to be of the utmost importance to visit Ghelieguzan before the arrival of Colonel Tewfik Pasha, whose presence there might seriously interfere with the *bona fides* of the investigation, and availing ourselves of the latitude allowed us by your Excellencies, we are starting to-day alone.

"Even when directly interrogated on the point, the Commission have always concealed from us the fact that this officer was to accompany them.

"The President has assured us that Hebo will remain at our disposal."

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No. 203.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May* 7, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of the 4th instant, informing me of the instructions sent to the foreign Delegates at Mush in regard to the proposed visit of the Sasun Commission to Ghelieguzan, and the inquiry into the alleged intimidation of the witness Hebo, of Shenik.

I approve the terms of the message in question.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 204.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received May* 13.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May* 13, 1895, 12·5 P.M.

I HAVE received from Mr. Shipley a telegram giving an account of the visit of the Commission to Ghelieguzan.

The Delegates started on the 5th May at 3 in the afternoon. The Commissioners caught them up the same evening, and they continued their journey in company. The villages of Shenik and Semal, which lay on their route, had been destroyed by fire, and the fields laid waste. They arrived at Ghelieguzan on the 8th.

The witness Tavo pointed out to them three trenches lying between the house of Bedo and the former encampment of the soldiers. Two of these trenches were opened in their presence. In the first, they found only fragments of clothing. Round the second, a space of some 30 yards by 10 was strewn with pieces of human bones and bits of clothing; amongst other things, they saw two skulls, and in the trench they found, among fragments of bone and clothing, a putrefied corpse clothed and three skulls, one of which had still some hair adhering to it, and contained a portion of the brain.

The peasants, however, refused to continue the digging on account of the nauseating smells, and said also that they were not likely to find any more bodies there.

As to the third trench, Tavo declared that it contained no remains. The Delegates, therefore, did not have it opened.

They, however, made the villagers dig up a fourth place near the village, and this brought to light a decapitated trunk, an arm with its hand, three skulls, and some small bones.

They had the ground round dug up, but without result. The smells here were again overpowering.

The villagers stated that on their return they had themselves removed many bodies from the three trenches, and buried them near the church.

The Delegates found the village itself, which had contained something like 120 houses, entirely burnt out, and the thirty families still left living in a destitute condition in huts.

The Commissioners threw the onus of continuing the work of excavation on the Delegates after the first remains had been brought to light, declaring that they were convinced on the report of their medical officer that the bodies had been there for some two or three months at longest. The Delegates left on the 9th May, and for the first three hours Mr. Shipley reports that their line of march was dotted with hamlets of from five to twenty houses completely ruined, not even the walls being left standing.

No. 205.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received May* 17.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May* 17, 1895, 5·30 P.M.

MY despatch of the 16th,* inclosing Mr. Graves' despatch of the 3rd instant.

In consequence of Mr. Graves' representations as to the importance of excluding the nomad Kurds from the villages in the Sasun district during the ensuing summer,

asked the Russian and French Ambassadors to make a joint representation with me on the subject to the Porte. My colleagues having agreed to do so, we ordered our Dragomans to go to the Porte this afternoon and make a joint communication, urging that the most stringent orders should be given, without delay, that no Kurds should be allowed to enter the district in question.

No. 206.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received May* 20.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, May* 16, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, forwarding a despatch from Mr Shipley, and the *procès-verbaux* Nos. 31 to 39 of the Commission.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 206.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, May* 3, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Mr. Shipley, British Delegate with the Commission of Inquiry at Moush. Joint Reports by the Consular Delegates, numbered 31 to 39 inclusive, of the proceedings at the sittings of the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th March respectively, have been sent in single copy to the French Consul at Erzeroum, by whom they are being transmitted to the French Ambassador at Constantinople, after copies have been taken by my colleagues and myself for our archives.

Mr. Shipley furnishes an analysis of the contents of these Reports, to which he adds some observations upon the subsequent progress of the inquiry up to the time of writing, the 27th April. From these your Excellency will perceive that he states his opinion that, from the evidence now before the Commission, it is becoming evident that the magnitude of the Sassoon affair was not in the least exaggerated in the earlier reports received at Constantinople and elsewhere; that evidence is slowly accumulating as to the allegations of massacre by the soldiers at Ghelié-Guzan, no semblance of evidence being brought forward on the other side to show that they are merely Armenian inventions devised for the purpose of discrediting the Turkish Government; and that the Turkish Commissioners appear to be endeavouring to substantiate the theory of Armenian rebellion and atrocities, as set forth in the official statement which appeared in the "Levant Herald" and other Constantinople newspapers on the 23rd November, 1894, but that this theory was not borne out by the facts which have come before them.

With regard to the witnesses proposed by the Delegates to the Commission, he has now, at my request, sent me more detailed information, from which it appears that, of over forty persons mentioned by name on the Delegates' list, besides a number of others as to whose identity sufficient indications were given, only seven had already been produced and heard by the 26th April, while three more were at Moush awaiting examination. Among the witnesses asked for was the officer who commanded the troops at Ghelié-Guzan. I am now able to report that Colonel Tewfik Bey, of the 25th Infantry Regiment, who is put forward by the Government as the officer asked for, left Erzeroum for Moush on Monday last, under orders from Constantinople.

In the conclusion and postscript of Mr. Shipley's despatch he deals with the destitute condition of the Sassoon villages, the allocation of a sum of £ T. 2,500 for their relief, and the intention of the Government to settle them in their old villages. My own information tallies with that of Mr. Shipley as to their abject poverty, and it is clearly a hardship to leave them any longer as a burden on the Armenian villagers of other districts.

The sum of £ T. 2,500, although it may go a little way towards averting absolute starvation, is ridiculously inadequate for carrying out the re-establishment

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of the Sassoonlis in their ruined houses and devastated farmsteads, especially if it is to be administered by Government officials under the present régime. The latter are only too likely to follow the example of their late chief—Tahsin Pasha—who is well known to have embezzled £ T. 1,500 out of a sum of £ T. 7,000 sent from Constantinople for the relief of the famine-stricken people of Bitlis a year ago. But I venture to point out that a first condition of success in any attempt to restore these unfortunate people to their former homes must be the issue of stringent and speedy orders from Constantinople to prevent the entry of the nomad Kurds from Sairt and Diarbekir into the Sassoon district, for the present year at least, and until really effective measures have been taken for securing their future good behaviour.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 206.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, April* 27, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report to you that Protocols Nos. 31 to 39 inclusive, drawn up by the Consular Delegates, of the proceedings at the sittings of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry of the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th March respectively have been forwarded in single copies to M. Bergeron, Consul in charge of the French Vice-Consulate at Erzeroum.

The depositions of Simo and Ego, of Semal (Protocols Nos. 31 and 32), complete the series of seven witnesses, beginning with Sako, of Shenik, referred to in my despatch of the 4th March last, and the value of their evidence as a basis for further inquiry into the events of Sassoon will be best estimated by a comparison with that furnished by the greater part of the witnesses of the series beginning with the Kurd Meho-ben-Mizo (Protocol No. 33), and ending with Gope Veled Avedik, of Semal (Protocol No. 39), the whole of whom, with the exception of the woman Saro, of Ghelié-Guzan (Protocol No. 36), were produced before the Commission through the medium of the Moush local authorities.

Certain of these witnesses, viz., Egho Veled Keshish, Resho V. Giorgi, Gaspar V. Temo (Protocol No. 34), Pallo V. Avedis, Tavo V. Atto, Omer-ben-Ahmet, Mullah Osman, and Boghos V. Khazar (Protocol No. 35), were apparently called by the Commission to furnish further proof of the brigandage and revolutionary doings of the Armenians of Talori and Kavvar generally, in the spring and summer of last year; and with regard to their evidence I would only point out that it is a singular circumstance that, while all of them brought general charges against the Armenians of those districts of being engaged in brigandage, they none of them appeared to be able to cite a single case in which the inhabitants of their own village had been the sufferers. Their evidence, in fact, was for the most part hearsay, and you will not fail to observe that they all preserve a discreet silence as to the events which may have taken place after the dispersion of the Armenians on the Antok by the soldiers.

Of the Armenians of the district of Kavvar itself heard at the sittings of the Commission between the dates above referred to., viz., Khazar V. Boghos (Protocol No. 33), Manouk V. Hebo (Protocol No. 34), Bedros V. Hatcho, Saro (Protocol No. 36), Mardiros V. Nigo, Manouk V. Nigo, Stepan V. Manouk (Protocol No. 37), Avé V. Kalo, Gebo V. Aghob, Priest Stepan (Protocol No. 38), Asdur V. Merké, Gopé V. Avedik (Protocol No. 39), all, with the exception of Saro, were summoned, as I have already stated, by the Commission itself in pursuance of the plan adopted, by which certain of the Kavvar Armenians resident in the villages of the Moush Plain should be produced by the Moukhtars of those villages, previous application having been made to the latter through the medium of the Moush authorities. With regard to certain of these witnesses, such as Stepo V. Erko, Ohan V. Boghos, Mardiros V. Nigo, and Manouk, it is difficult to say why they were summoned at all, as for the most part their depositions consisted of little else beyond the statement that, on hearing that the soldiers were coming, they took to the mountain, after which they appeared to have neither seen nor heard anything further. The only depositions, perhaps, that call for any notice are those of Khazar V. Boghos, of Shenik (Protocol No. 33), and Stepan V. Manouk (Protocol

No. 38), the first named giving interesting though in some respects contradictory details respecting the flight of the villagers to the Antok, while Stepan, it will be observed, gives a description of the remains of human bodies which he found in the ravine near Ghelié-Guzan. With reference to the evidence given by the woman Saro, who, I am bound to say, appeared to me sane enough, you will observe that we have stated officially (Protocol No. 38) that the medical report on her case could not be considered as entirely conclusive by us in the absence of independent medical testimony. With reference to the evidence of the priest Stepan, who appears to have acted as informer, I would draw attention to the fact that his statements as regards the burning of the houses were so contradictory as to deprive them of all value, viewed as a means of elucidating the truth.

With regard to the general result of the inquiry, it is difficult, even at the present advanced stage, to express an opinion, except under great reserve, as, although the Commission has already been sitting three months, the examination of the Talori prisoners who have been sent here from Bitlis has only just begun, and it is not until their evidence has been taken that it will be possible to form a clear idea of the events in Sassoon as a whole. From the depositions, nevertheless, of the three or four of them (there are, I understand, thirteen in all) which have already been given, as well as from the evidence of Armenians heard before the Commission during the past few weeks, it is becoming evident that the magnitude of the affair has not in the least been exaggerated in the reports which had been previously received at Constantinople and elsewhere. The exact number of villages destroyed (a Talori witness has put them down as fifty-five) will of course have to be verified by the Commission, but this much seems almost certain, that, in addition to Shenik, Semal, Ghelié-Guzan, Alian, Hetink, Aghpi, and Spagank, the whole district of Talori has been wiped out. Of the loss of life involved in this destruction of these villages I can as yet form no estimate. All that can be said is that scarcely a single Armenian witness has as yet appeared before the Commission without deposing to the loss of one or more members of his own family.

With reference to the alleged massacre by the soldiers at the camp of Ghelié-guzan, the evidence is steadily accumulating; three of the women alleged by Tavo and others to have been present having at length, as I had the honour to inform you by telegraph, been found and examined by the Commission.

The following is a brief outline of the story given by these three women :—

It appears that the inhabitants of Semal, after their flight from the Antok Mountain itself, whither they had been followed by the soldiers, gathered together near a wood on a mountain situated not far from Ghelié-Guzan, the exact locality of which the witnesses were, however, not able to determine. There the priest, Ohannes, appears to have advised them to give themselves up to the soldiers. The people accordingly set out with him, and on their arrival at the camp of Ghelié-Guzan shortly after midday, all three witnesses state that they, with the other women, were separated from the men, who were taken to another part of the camp. The same night, all three women deposed, a number of soldiers came in among them, and as one of the witnesses expressed herself, "No honour was then left to us." The second night of their arrival at the camp was the night, according to the witnesses, of the massacre of the men. They did not themselves see it, but two of them asserted that the sounds reached them, and all of them state that on the next day, or the day following, when they were free to go, they passed by the pit into which the dead bodies had been thrown, and which they stated were mingled with blood. One of the witnesses, Mairam, wife of Korké, brother of Tavo, further stated that, in a smaller pit, she recognized the body of Priest Ohannes, with the eyes torn out, adding that the priest was formerly a member of their own house, but had for some little time past separated from them. They then finally found their way back to the village of Semal.

To the above story of these women, which I have in no way exaggerated, giving it exactly as it was told by them to the Commission, I may add the account given a day or two later by the shepherd referred to in my above-mentioned telegram of the 16th April. This shepherd, whose name was Ovsep, brother of Tavo, of Semal, stated that he accompanied his father, Hatcho, with the other inhabitants of Semal, on their way to the camp at Ghelié-Guzan, remaining, however, a little behind, being in charge of some sheep. When nearly at the camp the witness stated that, frightened by the sound of firing, he turned back and fled, abandoning his sheep. Six or seven days later, on hearing that the soldiers had left, the witness visited the place where the camp had been at Ghelié-Guzan. There the

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witness stated that he saw, besides the pit full of dead bodies, the dimensions of which he gave as about 20 feet in length, by about 5 feet in depth, a number of bodies, mixed up pell-mell in a small ravine close by, among which, he asserted. were those of some women and children. Certain of the bodies had been stripped, and the witness gave the same account as the three women above referred to as regards their being mingled with blood. He added that among the bodies he recognized only that of his father, which he buried, and that of the Priest Ohannes, which was in a separate and smaller trench, the larger one not allowing of a close approach owing to the smell of the putrefying corpses. When questioned as to the number of people, men, women, and children, accompanying Priest Ohannes, the witness stated that he could not say with any exactitude, but that they were probably more than 300, and that among them there might possibly have been a few of the inhabitants of Ghelié-Guzan and Shenik.

I need only say, with regard to the statements of the four witnesses above mentioned, that I have endeavoured to reproduce them with the utmost exactitude as they were made before the Commissioners. They are, it will be seen, most serious, and I feel, therefore, considerable hesitation in expressing as yet an opinion of any kind upon them. Nevertheless, if they are merely exaggerations of the Armenians invented for the purpose of discrediting the Turkish Government, I can only regard it as a very serious matter indeed that no semblance of evidence to show that this is the case has yet been produced by the Turkish Commissioners, though the accusations, as will be remembered, were made as far back as the 14th February last.

The line taken by the Commissioners throughout the inquiry, and which they have brought a great number of Kurds and others to support, appears to have been to show that the inhabitants of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan, and of the Talori district, incited by Mourad, who arrived among them in the spring of last year, began to form into bands on the Antok Mountain, from which they descended at intervals during the summer, committing acts of brigandage and atrocity on the Kurds, who were proceeding to their summer pasturages, which, in turn, led to resistance on the part of the latter, and armed conflicts. It was, the Commissioners appear desirous through their witnesses of showing, to put a stop to these conflicts that the troops were sent to Ghelié-Guzan and Talori. On the Armenians attacking the soldiers, conflicts took place both at Ghelié-Guzan and at Gheliésan, which resulted in the final dispersion of the Armenians, and the loss of a few lives on the part of the latter.

As will be seen from the above, the Commissioners have adhered fairly closely to the official publication on the subject in the "Levant Herald" of the 23rd November last. Unfortunately for this version of the matter, it is not entirely borne out by the facts which have so far been brought before us. As regards the acts of brigandage and atrocity laid to the charge of the Armenians, I have on several occasions pointed out that the evidence concerning them is by no means always satisfactory, and I do not propose to refer to them here. Certainly no convincing proof has hitherto been adduced that brigandage as a system was being carried on by the inhabitants of that district, and even granting the fact that the rare cases of murder, accompanied by circumstances of mutilation as horrible as has been alleged, had been committed by Armenians, that of itself would not suffice to connect a whole district with complicity in them. That armed conflicts occurred between the Badikanli and Bekiranli Kurds and the inhabitants of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelié-Guzan is certain. It was, according to the views apparently taken by the Commission, at this juncture that the troops appeared on the scene to restore order. But if this view be the correct one, there is still the fact of the villages of a whole district having been destroyed to be accounted for, and as the Bekiranli and Badikanli Kurds summoned by the Commission to speak to the conflicts between themselves and the Armenians above referred to have unanimously asserted that not being able, owing to inferiority of numbers, to hold out against the latter, they forthwith returned home to their winter quarters, the attempt has been made, as you will have observed from certain of the Protocols already sent in, on evidence which I can only call ludicrous, to show that it was the Armenians themselves who set fire to their villages as a means of the better preparing themselves for the revolution to follow.

On the other hand, Mourad and other agitators seem undoubtedly to have profited by the discontent existing among the Armenians of that district, owing to general misgovernment and their unsatisfactory state of dependence on the Kurds, to carry on an active political propaganda, which the Turkish Government would

be justified in regarding as dangerous; and the constant denial of the Armenians who have been called before the Commission, either that they knew of such a person as Mourad, or that they had had any conflicts at all with the Kurds or soldiers, has done not a little to weaken their case. For, as I feel convinced, from the evidence which has been brought before the Commission, that resistance was offered to the troops by the Armenians at Ghelié-Guzan and elsewhere, the only effect of the above denial on their part has been to force them into making contradictions as to their movements while flying from their villages, or while on the Antok Mountain itself, which, of course, tends to throw doubt on those of their statements which may be perfectly true. I must also point out that it seems to be tolerably certain that the Armenians of Talori committed an act of aggression on the Kaïmakam of Koulp at the village of Eshentzor (Akkhesser) in the summer of last year, for which a reasonable penalty might have been exacted by the Turkish Government; but apart entirely from the question of excesses, I can only say that the measures which the latter thought fit to adopt have been justified by no evidence which has as yet been brought before the Commission.

As regards the progress of the inquiry, it is at length possible to state with some certainty that we are entering upon the final stage, as the Commission appears to consider that the case against the Armenians has been sufficiently established. In addition to the witnesses proposed by ourselves, there are the thirteen prisoners from Bitlis, of whom, however, four have already been examined. It is to be hoped that the above, together with the few Kurds and officers of the detachments employed during the operations, whom the Commissioners propose to call, may be got through in at any rate the next six weeks, when, I understand, a visit to the Sassoon district will be proposed by the Commission.

In concluding my Report, I beg to refer to a subject which has, I believe, also been alluded to by my colleagues in their Reports to their respective Consuls. It is, namely, the great distress, amounting in a great number of cases to abject destitution, which exists among the fugitives from Sassoon, and of which we have had during the course of the inquiry only too many opportunities of convincing ourselves by personal observation. My Russian colleague informs me that the sum of £T. 1,500 has been forwarded to relieve the more necessitous cases in the vicinity of Moush itself; but I would point out that this sum, though it will do much to diminish present distress, can only be regarded as a temporary palliative—the more serious question being what is to become of these people during the next winter. The time for spring sowing, even if they had the necessary implements and seed, is rapidly passing away; and the inhabitants of the villages of the Moush, Boulanik, and other districts, who have maintained these fugitives during the whole of the past winter, are not unreasonably expecting to be relieved of their burden, now that summer is approaching. It is difficult to suggest a remedy, but they would, I believe, be willing to settle in their old villages if the means of tilling their fields were furnished them. It is, at all events, urgently necessary that something should be done during the summer, if it is desired that these people should not remain homeless during the ensuing winter.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

P.S.—Since writing the above, I, together with my colleagues, have been informed privately by the President of the Commission, Shefik Bey, that the sum of £T. 2,500, and not £T. 1,500, has been allocated to the needs of the Sassoonlis, and an attempt is to be made to settle them in their old villages. A Commission, of which two members are to be Armenians, will, the President further stated, be formed to give effect to the above decision; and an effort will be made to recover some of the cattle lost by the Armenians of Sassoon during the recent events. The project is, of course, to be commended in every way; and if the above sum is well applied, it will do something towards effecting the object in view, though I think it will not suffice; and there is very little prospect, I fear, of the cattle or sheep ever being restored to their rightful owners.

H. S. S.

Inclosures 3 to 11 in No. 206.

Procès-verbaux Nos. 31 to 39 of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.

[See Part II.]

No. 207.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, May 21, 1895.*

I HAVE received your telegram of the 17th instant, informing me of the joint communication made to the Porte by the Dragomans of the British, French, and Russian Embassies at Constantinople, urging the importance of orders being issued to insure the exclusion of nomad Kurds from the Sasun villages during this year.

I have also received your despatch of the 16th instant, inclosing copy of Mr. Consul Graves' despatch, in which attention was called to this important point.

The steps taken by your Excellency in the matter have the approval of Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 208.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 25.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May 25, 1895, 7 P.M.*

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs to me that the Commission is making difficulties about examining witnesses. They have declined to hear the Vicar Bishop of Genj, as they say that he has calumniated the Turkish troops, that he is a suspect, and has been expelled from his diocese by the Government, and that they cannot therefore regard his testimony as impartial.

The Bishop absolutely denies all these accusations, stating that he still exercises his religious office. He has been at Mush for two months, and the Delegates have only now, for the first time, heard of these objections to him, though his name has been frequently mentioned by them.

Mr. Shipley, therefore, concludes that the Commissioners are not desirous of taking his deposition solely because it is likely to prove distasteful to them.

With regard to the muleteers who accompanied the troops, and whom we have named, the Commission state that they have been informed by the Mush military authorities that no such persons ever accompanied the troops, that they cannot, therefore, inquire into the case, or comply with our request to summon them.

Further, with regard to Anna, the Commission state that they will not refuse to hear her on the proposal of the Delegates, but that they can attach no weight to the testimony of a woman who is the wife of Kirko, and they will refuse to examine her on the question of the surrender of the Armenians to the soldiers in camp.

The Delegates consider Anna an important witness, and her evidence could easily have been taken before this question of the surrender had been, as the Commission at last consider it, decided.

Of the four mule-drivers, whose names the Delegates submitted to the Commission, one accompanied them to Mush from Erzeroum, and another, Marchvo (?) by name, has stated in their presence that he was in camp at the time of the surrender.

No. 209.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 27.)

My Lord, *Pera, May 21, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that my French and Russian colleagues and I have received telegrams from the Consuls at Erzeroum relative to the

necessity of obtaining from the Porte a promise of immunity for the witnesses who have given evidence before the Mush Commission after the departure of the European Delegates.

After consultation with my French and Russian colleagues, we agreed to instruct our Dragomans to inform the Porte that we should consider the witnesses in question to be under our protection, and that careful lists of their names would be prepared by the Delegates, with such particulars as would secure their identification at any future time.

Directions in this sense have been telegraphed to the Delegates.

I inclose a copy of my instructions to Mr. Block, and I trust that your Lordship will approve my action in the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

P.S.—I have also the honour to inclose copy of a Memorandum by Mr. Block, reporting the representations he has made.

P. C.

Inclosure 1 in No. 209.

Memorandum for Mr. Block.

MR. BLOCK will inform the Porte jointly with his French and Russian colleagues that the three Ambassadors consider the witnesses who have given evidence before the Mush Commission as under their protection.

Careful lists of them will be made by the Delegates with such particulars as will enable them to be identified at any future time.

May 21, 1895.

Inclosure 2 in No. 209.

Memorandum by Mr. Block.

IN the absence of the Foreign Minister at the Palace, and of the Under-Secretary who is unwell, I communicated to the Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs on the 21st May that the three Ambassadors consider the witnesses who have given evidence before the Mush Commission as under their protection. M. Rouet, First Dragoman of the French Embassy, made the same communication, and we informed the Secretary-General that this was a joint representation by the three Embassies, and that M. Maximow would no doubt make the same on his arrival at the Porte.

Nouri Bey, Secretary-General, took a note of our communications for the immediate information of Saïd Pasha.

No. 210.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received May* 27.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, May* 22, 1895.

WITH reference to the concluding portion of Mr. Graves' despatch forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch of the 16th May, I have received telegraphic communications from the British Delegate at Mush respecting the state of destitution and despair to which the sufferers from the Sasun events of last year are being reduced.

Mr. Shipley reports that he has learnt that sufferers from recent events are beginning to talk of doing something desperate in order to procure for themselves a livelihood. They say that they are driven out from every place, and that it is better to be killed at once than to perish slowly of want.

Mr. Shipley also reports that none of the money sent by the Sultan for the relief of the Sassoonlis has yet been distributed, and he gathers that the Government has been endeavouring to use the money in order to persuade the people to sign a statement saying that the depositions made by their Headmen before the Commission were false.

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The people, however, have refused to sign such a statement, and are preparing a Petition to the Commission setting forth the facts of the case.

Mr. Shipley, moreover, is informed that the authorities are anxious to induce the villagers to repudiate the former Councils of Elders as being suspected persons.

Mr. Shipley concludes from these considerations that it would be for the interest of the Armenians themselves that the inquiry should be closed as soon as possible, as the question of affording real relief to the sufferers could then be taken up without raising any suspicions of undue influence on either side.

I have instructed Mr. Block to mention the substance of the above to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 211.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, May* 27, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of the 25th instant relative to the action of the Sasun Commissioners in refusing to take the evidence of certain important witnesses suggested to them by the foreign Delegates.

I presume that you are consulting with your French and Russian colleagues as to this refusal. It is contrary to the understanding on which the Delegates were appointed, and cannot, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, be admitted.

The Report of the Commission will be deprived of all value if the Commissioners persist in such proceedings.

No. 212.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 27.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May* 27, 1895, 8·30 P.M.

WITH reference to my telegram to your Lordship of the 25th instant, we have instructed the Delegates to insist on the examination of the witnesses in question, and should the Commission still refuse to hear them, they are to examine them themselves separately, informing the Commissioners that they have received instructions to do so from their respective Ambassadors.

We shall inform the Porte of the dispatch of these instructions.

No. 213.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, May* 28, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of yesterday relative to the examination of witnesses by the Sasun Commission.

Your action is entirely approved by Her Majesty's Government.

No. 214.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received May 30.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May* 30, 1895.

FOLLOWING is the text of a telegram received at the French Embassy from the three Delegates:—

"*Mouch, le* 29 *Mai*, 1895.

"La police Turque, depuis que nous sommes à Mouch, nous a causé une quantité de petits ennuis; les gens qui nous parlaient ou que nous employions comme guides étaient arrêtés, on interrogeait, on menaçait même les gens du pays qui nous servaient de domestiques,

"Chaque fois, grâce au Président de la Commission, nous avons obtenu satisfaction, mais hier un fait plus grave s'est passé. Un gendarme disant vouloir emmener à la police un de nos domestiques, a pénétré chez nous; après lui avoir répondu que la police devait en référer à la Commission, nous étions sur le point de nous rendre chez le Président pour porter plainte, lorsque deux gendarmes vinrent garder une des portes d'entrée de notre maison.

"Pendant ce temps-là un agent de la police, escorté de deux autres zaptiés, pénétraient chez nous par l'autre porte, et montait jusqu'au premier étage. Mes collègues lui ayant renouvelé l'observation faite précédemment aux gendarmes, il répondit en grossièretés, et comme il voulait user de violence les cavas durent le mettre à la porte. Nous nous sommes aussitôt plaints au Président de la Commission de cette violation de notre domicile. Celui-ci a fini par nous promettre de réclamer du Vali de Bitlis le déplacement du Commissaire de Police responsable."*

This afternoon we sent our three Dragomans to the Porte to demand as satisfaction for the outrage the execution of the following measures:—

1. An apology to the Delegates from the Mutessarif of Mush on the part of the Vali of Bitlis.
2. The dismissal of the Head of the Gendarmerie.
3. The dismissal of the Commissary of Police, and the immediate arrest and punishment of the police agent.

No. 215.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received May* 31.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May* 31, 1895, 11·45 A.M.

IN view of the importance of having some one at Mush after the departure of the Commission to watch events and prevent reprisals on Christians, I propose, with your Lordship's sanction, that Mr. Hampson should be sent there from Erzeroum, and should receive a Commission as Vice-Consul for the Vilayet of Bitlis. Should your Lordship approve, I would ask the Porte, pending his formal appointment, to grant him a provisional recognition.

No. 216.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received May* 31.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, May* 31, 1895, 10·20 A.M.

WITH reference to my telegram to your Lordship of the 17th instant, I have the honour to state that after having communicated with the Vali of Bitlis, the Grand Vizier has informed me that if the nomad Kurds are forbidden access to their pasturing grounds through the Sasun district they will starve. His Highness, however, states that with a view to maintaining order and preventing the Kurds and Armenians from attacking each other, he has given orders that gendarmes and soldiers shall be posted along the road.

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* (TRANSLATION.)—"Since we have been at Mush the Turkish police have caused us many little annoyances; people who spoke to us or whom we employed as guides were arrested; they questioned and even threatened natives in our employ as servants.

"Thanks to the President of the Commission we always obtained satisfaction, but yesterday a more serious incident occurred. On the pretext of removing to the police station one of our servants a gendarme made his way into our house; after telling him that the police should refer the matter to the Commission, we were just starting to the President's house to make our complaint, when two gendarmes came and placed themselves on guard at one of the entrance doors of our house.

"Meanwhile a police agent, accompanied by two other zaptiehs, entered the house by another door and went up to the first floor. On my colleagues repeating to him the observation previously made to the gendarmes, he replied in insulting language, and as he was about to use force, the cavasses had to eject him. We at once complained to the President of the Commission of this violation of our domicile, and he ended by promising us that he would demand from the Vali of Bitlis the dismissal of the Police Commissary who was responsible."

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No. 217.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, May* 31, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of to-day,* and I approve the appointment of Mr. Hampson as Her Majesty's Vice-Consul for the Vilayet of Bitlis, to reside at Mush.

No. 218.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 1.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, June* 1, 1895, 7·10 P.M.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 30th ultimo in regard to the violation by the police of the Delegates' domicile at Mush, I have the honour to state that the Porte has granted the satisfaction demanded.

No. 219.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 3.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, May* 28, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 22nd instant in regard to the destitute condition of the sufferers from the Sasun events of last year, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I received a telegram from Mr. Shipley on the 23rd instant to the effect that a crowd of some 100 women and children, together with about twenty men, had assembled near the premises of the Commission, and refused to stir until relief had been given them.

The effect of this assembly had been to force upon the immediate attention of the Commission of Inquiry and of the local Relief Committee the necessity of doing something to relieve the people. The three Delegates suggested that whenever it should be desired to resettle them in their villages the men should be induced to go first and construct huts, and that the families should subsequently follow, the means of living being supplied by the relief fund.

Mr. Shipley added that more refugees were expected, and that the situation would then become more aggravated.

On the receipt of this telegram the Dragomans of the three Embassies drew the attention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the subject, and his Excellency promised to take the necessary measures at once.

Since this representation was made I have received a further telegram from Mr. Shipley, stating that, owing to the conciliatory measures adopted by the President of the Commission, the crowd had dispersed quietly, that the local authorities had acted with circumspection, and that bread had been distributed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 220.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 3.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, June* 3, 1895, 11·55 A.M.

THE French Embassy have received the following identic telegram from the Delegates at Mush:—

"L'interrogatoire de Murad étant terminé et la Commission d'Enquête refusant définitivement de convoquer les témoins que nous avons indiqués en dernier lieu, nous avons clôturé l'enquête, conformément aux ordres de vos Excellences. La Commission nous a répondu qu'il y avait encore des points à éclaircir et que d'ailleurs elle n'avait pas

* No. 215.

d'instructions à cet effet. Nous allons procéder à l'interrogatoire des témoins dont il est parlé ci-dessus.*

(Signé) "PRJEVALSKY.
"SHIPLEY.
"VILBERT."

No. 221.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June* 3, 1895.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 21st ultimo relative to the question of securing the safety, after the departure of the European Delegates from Mush, of the Armenian witnesses who have given evidence before the Commission of Inquiry.

Her Majesty's Government entirely approve the joint action taken to attain this object by your Excellency and the Ambassadors of France and Russia at Constantinople.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 222.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June* 3, 1895.

I HAVE received your telegram of the 30th ultimo, reporting the forcible entry by Turkish police officers of the premises occupied at Mush by the foreign Delegates attached to the Commission of Inquiry, and the course pursued in the matter by your Excellency in conjunction with your French and Russian colleagues.

Her Majesty's Government approve the measures which have been taken with a view to obtaining satisfaction from the Turkish Government for these unjustifiable proceedings.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 223.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 4.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, June* 4, 1895, 11·30 P.M.

I HAVE, in concert with my colleagues, sent the following telegram to Mr. Shipley; it refers to my telegram to your Lordship of yesterday:—

"It appears from your joint telegram of the 2nd instant, that the Commission has been declared closed by you and your colleagues.

"The President is the proper person to close the Commission, and should he persist in continuing its labours after you have advised him to the contrary, you should still be present at the sittings, and keep the Embassies informed of what passes."

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* (TRANSLATION.)—"As Murad's examination is concluded and the Commission of Inquiry refuses definitively to summon the witnesses last suggested by us, we have closed the inquiry, in accordance with your Excellencies' orders.

"The Commission has replied to us that some points still remain for investigation, and that, moreover, it has no instructions to this effect. We are about to examine the witnesses referred to above.

(Signed) "PRJEVALSKY.
"SHIPLEY.
"VILBERT."

No. 224.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, June* 4, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of to-day, repeating one which you have addressed to Mr. Shipley on the question of the continued attendance of the Delegates at the sittings of the Sasun Commission.

I concur in the terms of your instruction to Mr. Shipley.

No. 225.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 5.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, June* 5, 1895, 10 P.M.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 3rd instant, Mr. Shipley now telegraphs that the Commission is not actually closed. What the Delegates stated to the Commission was, that the examination of Mourad having terminated, and the Commission having refused to hear the witnesses referred to in their joint telegram of the 25th May (repeated to your Lordship in my telegram of the 25th May), they, in accordance with the instructions received from their Embassies, declared the inquiry closed as regarded themselves. They had, however, not refused to attend the sittings of the Commission, and, as the French Delegate has informed his Ambassador to-day, the Delegates are ready to attend again to-morrow to discuss a Report on which the Commission desires to have their opinion.

The Delegates based their action on the formal instructions telegraphed to the French Delegate from his Embassy on the 29th May that he should close the inquiry on the contingency above mentioned.

No. 226.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received June 10.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 5, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 21st ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the protection of witnesses who have given evidence before the Sasun Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 226.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, May* 19, 1895.

THE accounts which have reached my colleagues and myself of the attitude of the Mush authorities towards the survivors of the Sasun massacres, and especially towards such of them as have endeavoured in any way to bring their sufferings and grievances to the knowledge of the European Delegates with the Commission of Inquiry, make it clear that, as long as the present régime is maintained, these unfortunate people will be exposed to severe persecution unless measures are speedily taken for their protection. It has also appeared to us that, as those among them who have given evidence unfavourable to the Turkish Government only ventured to do so because they relied upon the countenance and protection of our Delegates, we had incurred some moral obligation to do what was possible to preserve them from ill-treatment after the withdrawal of the Commission which now appears imminent.

We, therefore, agreed to-day to send identical telegrams to our respective Ambassadors, stating that we thought it our duty to lose no time in begging your Excellency to obtain from the Porte, on behalf of such persons, at least a promise of immunity from any consequences of their evidence after the departure of our Delegates.

If this promise is obtained, we should probably be quickly informed of any failure to observe it, to which we could at once direct the attention of your Excellencies.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 227.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received June* 12.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, June* 12, 1895.

MR. GRAVES and his colleagues sent the following identic telegram to their respective Ambassadors yesterday :—

"On the 1st June we received a joint telegram from the Delegates announcing that the inquiry was closed. As we had received no further news from Mush since that date we decided to inquire of the Delegates, by telegram, what there still remained for them to do, thinking that we might then, if necessary, request our Ambassadors to authorize the Delegates to leave Mush if all they have left to do is to write up the arrears of their Protocols and finish their final Report.

"The French Delegate telegraphs, under date of 11th June, in the name of his British and Russian colleagues, that they have completed the examination of their witnesses excepting two absent muleteers. They continued, however, under orders from their Ambassadors, to attend the Commission, as the closing of the inquiry lay entirely in its hands. It had now ceased to hear evidence, and had communicated to the Delegates the previous day the first five portions of its final Report as it was to be.

"They (the Delegates) were hard at work drawing up their own Report and completing their Protocols."

No. 228.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received June* 16.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, June* 16, 1895.

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphed to me to-day that the Turkish Relief Committee, whether through their own fault or that of the Armenians, had done practically nothing, and that there seemed no probability of their doing anything in the short time still left for sowing, which the Armenians told him was at least two or three weeks. He expected, however, that they would aid in providing food until the crops were ready. The Armenians had collected seed and some thirty head of oxen, which they proposed, providing the local authorities did nothing to prevent them, to convey to Sasun, as it would suffice for the Kavvar district. As regards the Talori district, however, they stated that there was no possibility of sowing, and that the people collected there would inevitably have to come down again into the plains, but that for the Kavvar villages there was still time for sowing.

Mr. Shipley considers it to be of the greatest importance that nothing should be done to prevent the Armenians obtaining relief on their own account, and urges the appointment of some independent person to assist in the distribution. He says that Mr. Cole, who is at present at Mush, would be willing to administer the relief fund collected by him and his friends provided the Turkish authorities afford him facilities. His fund, however, was small, and was nearly exhausted. The Turkish authorities appear to be very jealous of any interference, but would possibly not extend their jealousy to Mr. Cole.

Mr. Shipley had represented unofficially to Shefik Bey the necessity of immediate action as regarded the sowing of crops, and had been supported by his colleagues in his representation.

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No. 229.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received June* 19.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, June* 19, 1895, 11·15 A.M.

MR. SHIPLEY has sent me the following telegram to-day:—

"I am informed by Mr. Cole that the Mutessarif of Mush has refused him authority to go to Semal until a reply has been obtained from Bitlis. Armenians have already commenced forwarding the oxen and seed collected by them to the Kavvar district. The Mutessarif informs them that until instructions are received from Bitlis he cannot give facilities or countenance these operations, but, in the meanwhile, he does not absolutely prohibit them. It is feared that the cattle may be stolen if the authorities withhold their protection.

"All the Armenians assert that, should relief be distributed from the Turkish fund, they will thankfully and gladly accept it.

"An excellent effect has been produced on Armenians here by the news, which I learn that the Patriarch has telegraphed here, that the Vicar-Bishop of Guendj has been appointed President of the Armenian Relief Committee and Vicar-Bishop of Mush."

No. 230.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, June* 19, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of to-day relative to the steps which are being taken for the relief of the distressed Armenians of the Sasun district, and the attitude of the Mutessarif of Mush in the absence of definite instructions from Bitlis.

I request you to urge the Turkish Government to cause early instructions to be sent to the Mutessarif, authorizing him to assist the operations of the local Relief Committee.

No. 231.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received June* 25.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, June* 24, 1895, 7·30 P.M.

EFFORTS have been made by the Porte to induce us to send instructions to our Delegates on the Commission at Mush that they should sign or otherwise adhere to the Commissioners' Report.

We have refused to accede to the Porte's request. Meanwhile, the Delegates have asked for instructions, as the Commission have been pressing them to make observations on the first portion of their Report. We have told them that, until they receive the Report in a complete and definitive form, they are to defer making any observations on it. They are then to communicate any observations they may have to offer to the Commissioners, and at the same time to transmit them to the Ambassadors, together with the Report.

Any attempt to make the Delegates responsible for any part of the Report by incorporating in it the Delegates' observations will thus be prevented.

No. 232.

The Earl of Kimberley to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, June* 27, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram of the 24th instant relative to the desire of the Porte that the foreign Delegates at Mush should adhere to the Report of the Bitlis Commission.

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I approve the instructions which you and your French and Russian colleagues sent to the foreign Delegates with a view to prevent them from becoming responsible for any part of the Report.

I am, &c.
(Signed) KIMBERLEY.

No. 233.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received July* 1.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 24, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the closing of the Sasun Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 233.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, June* 12, 1895.

ON the 10th instant, having received no further news of the proceedings of the Delegates at Mush since their joint telegram of the 1st June announcing the closing of the Commission of Inquiry, my colleagues and I agreed to send them a telegram, which was dispatched by the French Consul at Erzeroum in the name of all of us, inquiring what further remained for them to do, in order that we might, if requisite, request the Ambassadors to give the necessary authorization for their return, in case the only cause for their continued stay at Mush was the drawing up of their final Report, and of the large number of daily joint Reports now in arrears. We added that, so far as the latter are concerned, we should be able to give them assistance in the material work of copying, &c.

Yesterday, the 11th instant, we received a reply from the French Delegate, in the name of himself and colleagues, stating that they had completed the examination of their witnesses, with the exception of two muleteers, who were absent, and that they were hard at work drawing up their Report, and completing their *procès-verbaux;* that, under orders from the Ambassadors, they continued to attend the sittings of the Commission, upon which alone the termination of the inquiry depended, and which, having ceased to hear further evidence, had communicated to them yesterday the first of the five portions of which its final Report will consist.

I had the honour to transmit the substance of the above to your Excellency by telegram to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 234.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(*Received July* 1.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 24, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in regard to the attempt made by the Armenians of Mush and Bitlis to render assistance to the Sasun sufferers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

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Inclosure in No. 234.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, June* 14, 1895.

ON the 9th instant I received a telegram from Mr. Shipley with regard to an attempt which is being made by the Armenians of Mush and Bitlis, in view of the failure of Government relief operations, to render assistance to the returned Sasun refugees, especially in the practical form of seed and ploughing cattle, while there is still time to sow for some of the autumn crops. The Armenians of Mush had applied to Mr. Shipley for help to obtain the necessary authorization for sending this relief, and Mr. Shipley informed me that he had told them he would do what he could, but that it was difficult for him to interfere except indirectly.

As it was not clear to me whether this authorization had been applied for and refused, I requested him, by telegraph, to inform me on this point.

On the 10th June I received another telegram, stating that an application had been made to the Mush authorities, and that an answer was expected that day. And subsequently, on the 13th instant, Mr. Shipley reported that the President of the Commission of Inquiry had informed him that no obstacle would be placed in the way of the Armenians who desired to send relief on their own account, but had complained at the same time of the "unreasonable attitude" of the Sasun people themselves, which had, according to him, been the cause of the delay in affording official relief.

Mr. Shipley has expressed his opinion that the Government Relief Fund was being improperly used as a means to put pressure on the starving survivors of the massacres; and again, that there was danger of the fund being ineffectually frittered away; and the assurances of the President of the Commission are, I fear, hardly to be trusted in the light of what we know of the actions of the Mush local authorities.

I therefore thought it advisable to telegraph to Mr. Shipley yesterday, recommending him to endeavour to obtain the support of his colleagues in furthering the chances of effective relief, and, whether he succeeded in this or no, to inform your Excellency, by telegraph, upon the question, pointing out the present failure of the relief operations, as well as the difficulties of the situation and the requirements for insuring success, and drawing special attention to the urgency of providing for the sowing for autumn crops before it is too late.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 235.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 9.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 9, 1895, 12·30 P.M.

MR. SHIPLEY has sent me the following telegram from Moush :—

"The distribution of 240 liras among the three leading Kavvar villages has now been effected by the Turkish Relief Committee. It is, I hear, proposed to allot 800*l.* of the remaining sum to Talori, which the Mutessarif of Guendj is to distribute. The rest will be left for Kavvar.

"It would seem, therefore, that, as far as regards the fate of the people, the outlook is improving; but I am told, nevertheless, that the 240 liras above mentioned was the only portion of the Turkish fund which ever existed in cash. The remainder consists of drafts, which have yet to be collected, on Guendj and Moush.

"The arrival here to-morrow of Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Cole is expected.

"I learn that the Mutessarif of Moush proposes to leave to-morrow for Sassoon, with a view of personally superintending the building operations there."

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No. 236.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 12.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 12, 1895, 10·10 A.M.

I HAVE received the following telegram from Mr. Shipley, dated yesterday :—

"The missionaries and I had an interview to-day with the Mutessarif, who assured us that every facility would be afforded to the missionaries in their work of distribution, and placed at their disposal the requisite gendarmes as an escort to Sassoon.

"I had previously communicated to the missionaries your Excellency's message, and they considered that as the two Mussulman members of the Turkish Relief Commission appear to enjoy a fair amount of confidence among the Christians, it would be best to endeavour to work as far as possible with that Commission. They therefore asked me to inform the Mutessarif that their purpose was only to supplement the work of the Turkish Commission and supply any deficiencies, not in any way to supersede them, it being, of course, understood that they retained control of the funds.

"A member of the Turkish Commission has put himself in communication with the missionaries, by order of the Mutessarif, and will accompany them on their journey to Sassoon to-morrow.

"The Mutessarif has deferred his departure."

No. 237.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 14.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 14, 1895, 12·30 P.M.

WE have authorized the three Delegates to leave Moush, as they have telegraphed that the Commission has not met since the 18th June, and they have finished their joint Report and *procès-verbaux*.

No. 238.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 21.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 21, 1895, 11 A.M.

MR. SHIPLEY telegraphs to Mr. Graves at Erzeroum that the Government having, as far as he knows, made no attempt to stop them, the tribe of Alai Kuchan are arriving and camping in their pastures of last year. He has not heard of any unusual assembly taking place like that of last year, nor that they are camping in the immediate vicinity of ruined villages.

He adds that on several occasions he has spoken to Shefik Bey, pointing out that if the security of these Armenians is not guaranteed serious responsibility will fall on local authorities. He adds that at Talori and Shatakh there are a few troops.

I propose to ask the Grand Vizier what precautions are being taken to keep the Kurds in order, and to call his attention to the above.

No. 239.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 22.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 22, 1895, 7·45 P.M.

HAMPSON has arrived at Moush. The Delegates and members of the Sassoon Commission left Moush this morning.

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No. 240.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, July* 22, 1895.

I HAVE received your telegram of the 21st instant, and I approve your Excellency's proposal to call the attention of the Grand Vizier to the danger attending any assembly of tribal Kurds in the Sassoun district, and to inquire what precautions the Porte intends to take for the preservation of order in that region. Very serious results would attend any fresh outbreak of troubles in the Sassoun Province.

No. 241.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 24.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 24, 1895, *noon.*

MR. HAMPSON telegraphs that the Bekiranli nomad Kurds having arrived at their pastures, which are two hours distant from Moush, and near those of the inhabitants of the Protestant villages of Hadavorig, soldiers have been sent nominally to prevent a collision, but really to remove Armenians, who have now no place to feed flocks. So far all is quiet in Sassoon and Talori, although at least the usual number of nomads are there. He hears that in those districts there are no troops, but in order to maintain order the Government have sent an influential Kurd, who is much mistrusted by the Armenians. It is said that the Sheikh of Zilan is also there.

No. 242.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 26, 1·15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 26, 1895, 11·10 A.M.

FOLLOWING received yesterday from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum:—

"Delegates and Commissioners arrived here safely to-day."

No. 243.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 27.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 27, 1895, 11·20 A.M.

VICE-CONSUL HAMPSON telegraphed yesterday as follows:—

"Authorities in the Sassoon villages of Guendj Caza, where Armenian relief funds have been distributed, are collecting taxes.

"The funds of the Turkish Relief Commission are chiefly derived from drafts on the taxes of Guendj and Moush."

The attention of the Grand Vizier is being called to this report.

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No. 244.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 27.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 27, 1895, 11 A.M.

MR. HAMPSON telegraphed yesterday as follows:—

"Armenian prisoners, thirteen in number, condemned for political offences, were to-day released.

"All connected with events of last year, including Erko and Mourad, have been kept in prison, and have now been put in chains."

No. 245.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 27.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 27, 1895.

IN reply to my inquiries, Mr. Hampson informed me that none of the persons who gave evidence on the Armenian side before the Commission had been put in prison except Erko, who, before giving evidence, was imprisoned on a trumped-up charge of murder.

The others are being carefully watched over by Mr. Hampson.

No. 246.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 29.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 29, 1895, 11 A.M.

WITH reference to my telegram of 27th instant,* a recommendation for the exemption from this year's taxation of the Sassoon and Talori villages is being made to the Sultan by the Porte.

No. 247.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 29.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, July* 29, 1895, 11·45 A.M.

WITH reference to my telegram of 27th instant,† on my representing to the Grand Vizier that the good effect of the amnesty would be seriously impaired by the retention in prison of persons concerned in the Sassoon events, his Highness replied that as soon as the Report of the Moush Commission had been received their case would be considered, but until then he could take no steps for their release.

No. 248.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 2.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, August* 2, 1895, 2·30 P.M.

HER Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum telegraphed yesterday as follows:—

"The Russian Delegate and Mr. Shipley will, in the course of a week or ten days, have completed their work here, with our assistance. They are at present engaged with

* No. 243. † No. 244.

copies of the General Report and Annexes, and in making a collation of the *procès-verbaux* copied here, of which sixty still remain unsigned.

"Mr. Shipley should, I conclude, finish the above work before leaving.

"The fair draft of the General Report signed by the three Delegates, but without the Annexes, has been dispatched with the French Delegate, who left this morning.

No. 249.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 5.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 1, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum on the subject of the distribution of relief at Sassoon, and inclosing an extract from a private letter from Moush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 249.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, July* 18, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that Mr. Hallward has reported the departure of Dr. Reynolds from Van for Bitlis and Moush on the 4th instant, and I learn from Mr. Shipley's telegrams that he reached the latter place with the Rev. Mr. Cole on the 9th instant, leaving again for the Sassoon district on the 12th instant.

I am informed that there is much sickness among the returned refugees, including small-pox, and that the still-unhealed wounds of many of them are in a very bad state from the heat, so that there will be full employment for Dr. Reynolds' medical skill in the hospital, which he and Mr. Cole are organizing at Semal.

In this connection, I have the honour to transmit copies of an extract from a private letter from Moush, dated the 24th June, which gives a painful account of the privations endured by the Talori people, whose condition is far worse than that of the other Sassoonlis, both because they are more exposed to the attack of the Kurds, and because nothing whatever was done to enable them to plough and sow for this year's summer crops.

This letter is of special interest, in so far as it gives a definite estimate of the number of destitute persons to be provided for, and of the daily cost of supplying them with a ration of bread.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 249.

Extract from a Private Letter, dated Moush, June 24, 1895.

TALVORIG is composed of a number of villages, of which thirteen are now absolutely in ruins. No inhabitants remain. No buildings; not so much as a bit of timber. The former inhabitants are wanderers; last winter they took refuge in Psanats district, which comprises more than thirty villages, containing from 20 to 150 houses each, while some of them were scattered about Diarbekir. At the beginning of spring, oppression began at the hands of the nomad Kurds and others, and the villagers then decided that it was best to return to their former homes. There are about 860 of these houseless wanderers, now living in the woods and mountains, in caves and hollow trees, half-naked, and some, indeed, entirely without covering for their

nakedness. Bread they have not tasted for months, and curdled milk they only dream of—living as they do upon greens and the leaves of trees. There are two varieties of greens which are preferred, but these are disappearing, as they wither at this season. Living on such food they have become sickly; their skin has turned yellow, their strength is gone, their bodies are swollen, and fever is rife among them.

I will send you a list of the deaths among them.

There is great enmity between the Kurds and these unfortunate people of Talvorig. The former lie in wait for them and shoot them on sight, nor do they allow them to leave the country, so that, shut in on every side in their mountains, they will gradually die out. For the sake of humanity let their condition be made known. The authorities do not allow them to wander out and beg, like the remnant of the other Sassoon villagers.

In the villages destroyed were eight stone churches with arched roofs. The woodwork of these was collected, piled on the altars, and burned. There were also twelve churches burned which were built wholly or partly of wood, and even the wooden foundations of these were pulled up and burned.

Bedros Tchouroyan, of Upper Talvorig, had two pieces of carpet and a brass vessel, and Hamzé Gamian, of Hosnoud, had two guns. These were sold, and flour purchased for last winter. But the others were and remain destitute, having nothing of value but a few guns.

I do not know what to suggest. There are more than 5,000 of these Sassoon people destitute and hungry. Less than one-fifth are now housed in huts. To give each of them a piece of dry bread daily, £T. 40 a-day are wanted. We are trying to help them and give them the means of sowing some of their fields.

The collection of taxes here (at Moush) is being carried out with great severity, and between that and having to support the Sassoon refugees we know not where to turn. Bread is growing dear, and the general misery is on the increase; 600 okes of bread are being distributed daily.

One of the oxen we sent (to enable the refugees to plough) was stolen from Shenik by the Latchkanli Kurds. The nomad Kurds are steadily coming up, and are pitching their tents near the ruined villages: this has been arranged by the authorities. There is danger of serious trouble, for matters only are made worse when the Armenians complain of the Kurds, for the latter say, "You are *our* Armenians; how dare you complain of us?"

No. 250.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 5.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, August* 5, 1895, 10·15 A.M.

I RECEIVED the following telegram from Vice-Consul Hampson last night:—

"I have started building operations in the villages of Ghelié-Guzan, Semal, and Shenik, whence I have just returned. Previous to my arrival no work had been commenced, owing to the action of the Turkish Commissioners.

"The hospital work and the distribution of rations was being undertaken by the missionaries, and I trust that now matters will progress favourably. On Tuesday I propose to start for Talori, remaining absent for about a week.

"Would your Excellency kindly inform us whether we may hope for further funds, for although there still remains a sum of nearly 600*l.* in the hands of the missionaries, much more will be required for the necessary cattle and building operations, and also for the support of the villages during a winter of at least four months, as very little grain could be sown?

"A detailed Report on the present position will shortly be forwarded by the missionaries."

No. 251.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 18.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, August* 18, 1895, 3·40 P.M.

MR. HAMPSON informed me to-day by telegraph that, despite his remonstrances with the Mutessarif, unexampled severity was being shown in tax-collecting in the

plain of Moush. Great cruelty is being shown to the Christians, on the special ground that they complained to the Commission. The Mudirs of Avrana and Avsakdur and Hadji Feim, Reshid and Iskender, captains of police, are the worst offenders.

No. 252.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 19.)

My Lord, *Therapia, August* 15, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of the joint Report drawn up by the Consular Delegates attached to the Commission appointed to inquire into the events at Sasun, together with Annexes.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 252.

Report of the Consular Delegates attached to the Commission appointed to inquire into the Events at Sasun.

A la suite des événements dont la région de Sassoun, dépendant des Sandjaks de Mouch et de Guendj, Vilayet de Bitlis, avait été le théâtre pendant l'été de l'année 1894, le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman décida l'envoi sur les lieux d'une Commission chargée d'y procéder aux enquêtes nécessaires, et obtint des Puissances représentées à Erzeroum l'autorisation pour leurs Consuls de se faire représenter par des Délégués auprès de la dite Commission.

Elle était composée de son Excellence Chefik Bey, Président, Djelal Bey, Madjid Bey, du Général Tewfik Pacha, et Omer Bey, membres, ce dernier ayant cessé ses fonctions le 29 Janvier, par suite de sa nomination au poste de Vali *ad interim* de Bitlis.

Les Délégués du Consul de France, du Consul de la Grande-Bretagne, et du Consul-Général de Russie, à Erzeroum étaient MM. Vilbert, Shipley, et Prjévalsky.

Ils ont l'honneur d'exposer ci-dessous les résultats de l'enquête; mais ils croient indispensable de tracer auparavant une rapide esquisse du pays où les événements se sont déroulés, de déterminer ensuite les rapports unissant les populations indigènes Arménienne et Kurde, pour passer en dernier lieu à l'examen des événements eux-mêmes et à l'appréciation des questions qui en découlent: existence d'une révolte, réalité de massacres, et fixation de responsabilités.

Aperçu du Pays.

Dans la partie sud et sur la lisière de la plaine arrosée par le Kara Sou, un des affluents du Mourad Sou (Euphrate Oriental), et au pied d'une chaîne de montagnes bordant cette plaine du côté sud-ouest se trouve bâtie la ville de Mouch, chef-lieu du sandjak du même nom, dépendant du Vilayet de Bitlis.

Les diverses parties de cette chaîne portant le nom général de montagnes de Mouch, parties situées auprès de la ville même, sont appelées Kourtik-Dagh, Hatcherach Sevsar (Pierres Noires) et leurs versants sud et sud-ouest, opposés à la plaine, se réunissent par l'intermédiaire d'une série de hauteurs, de moindre élévation, au grand massif de l'Antok-Dagh et de Tsovasar, formant ainsi une série de vallées et de ravins qu'arrosent les sources du Batman Sou: c'est là que sont situés les villages Arméniens de Kavar, Shatak et Talori.

Dans une de ces vallées qui contourne ensuite l'Antok-Dagh du côté nord-ouest, et à sa partie supérieure se trouvent Chenik, Semal et Alian, distants l'un de l'autre d'une demi-heure, et de trois à trois heures et demie de Mouch; également, dans la partie supérieure d'une seconde vallée, passant au sud-ouest de l'Antok-Dagh, et entre cette dernière montagne et celle de Tsovasar, on rencontre les six villages de Shatak: Kop, Guermav, Iritsank, Tapik, Kiagashin, Chouchamerg, puis Agpi, Hetink sur les flancs du Tsovasar-Dagh; enfin, en face d'Agpi, et dans un ravin transversal,

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Guéliéguzan, compris dans les villages de Kavar, et séparé de Chenik et Semal par des hauteurs nommées Keupru-Cherif-Han et Tchaï, qui rattachent l'Antok-Dagh aux montagnes de Mouch; c'est par ces hauteurs que passent les sentiers reliant Chenik et Semal à Guéliéguzan.

Plus loin que ce dernier village et qu'Agpi, dans la direction du sud-ouest, les ravins que forment les contreforts très escarpés et boisés de l'Antok-Dagh renferment les villages d'Ergart, Tsorir, Spagank, les quartiers qui composent Talori, nommés: Dawalik, Pourh, Hosnoud, Hartk, Hakmank, Kholovit, Halorink, Talori même dit Ekoudoun, dit Verin Kiegh, puis Ichhantzor dit Aktchesser, Sevit, Ingouznak, et les quartiers qui dépendent de ces divers villages. Le plus éloigné est celui de Talori, dont les quartiers situés à une ou deux heures l'un de l'autre sont à cinq ou six heures de Guéliéguzan, et auquel il est relié par deux chemins: l'un direct par la montagne, et passant par le ravin de Guéliésan et Afkart, l'autre par le ravin d'Agpi, Hetink, et Spagank.

Les villages de Kavar Chenik, Semal, et Guéliéguzan, dont Alian n'est qu'un quartier, dépendent du Caza de Mouch, les villages de Shatak, Agpi, Hetink, Spagank, Tsorir, Ergart, de celui de Sassoun et tous les autres du caza de Koulp.

On trouvera un supplément (ch. No. 1), et tel qu'il résulte des renseignements fournis par l'enquête, le détail approximatif du nombre de maisons et d'habitants que cette région renferme.

Relations de la Population Arménienne et Kurde.

L'ensemble du pays, dont il vient d'être donné un rapide aperçu, présente des terrains fertiles, de riches pâturages propices à l'élèvement d'un nombreux bétail, et du côté de Talori même se rencontrent des minerais de fer, exploités par les villageois qui fabriquaient et fournissaient aux régions environnantes les ustensiles de travail nécessaires.

La population Arménienne qui habite cette partie du Vilayet de Bitlis est entourée par une grande quantité de villages Kurdes du côté de Sassoun, Khian et Koulp; en été venant de la direction de Diarbekir, et Silivan aux montagnes ci-dessus énumérées: Tsovasar, Antok et Kourtik Dagh, pour y paître leurs troupeaux, arrivent les tribus semi-sédentaires Kurdes dont les deux principales sont les Bekranli, et les Badikanli composées de nombreuses subdivisions (Kabilé) qui portent des noms différents.

Grâce au groupement des villages Arméniens, à la configuration même du sol et, d'autre part, aux rivalités existant entre les Kurdes eux-mêmes, les habitants de Kavar et de Talori avaient pu, jusqu'ici, se maintenir sur le pied de bonnes relations avec leurs voisins et visiteurs Kurdes; ils vivaient, selon l'expression d'un témoin, comme des frères "de terre et d'eau" et les difficultés qui s'élevaient entre eux, occasionnées par des vols de bétail tour à tour emporté et repris, finissaient toujours par être tranchées au gré des parties intéressées.

Il est juste d'ajouter que si les relations de Kurdes à Arméniens présentaient un caractère satisfaisant c'est que de long date ceux-ci, pour trouver aide et protection, en cas de besoin auprès des Aghas Kurdes, leur payaient, proportionnellement à leurs ressources, une redevance annuelle connue sous le nom de "hafir" et consistant à leur remettre une certaine partie de tout ce qu'ils récoltent, des têtes de bétail, de l'argent en nature, en y ajoutant des effets d'habillement, des instruments aratoires, &c. Quand un paysan Arménien marie sa fille, son Agha perçoit sous le nom de "hala" la moitié de la somme versée, selon les habitudes du pays, par le fiancé aux parents de la future.

Chaque village ou chaque maison dépend d'un ou plusieurs Aghas, qui regardent les diverses perceptions comme un droit de propriété, au point qu'ils se le transmettent par voie d'héritage ou par vente à l'amiable.

Si l'Arménien refuse de payer pour un motif quelconque, l'Agha l'y contraint par la force en lui volant son bétail ou en lui causant quelque dommage; les Aghas des villages de Kavar et de Talori étaient principalement les Aghas Kurdes de Sassoun (Kharzan).

Telle est du moins la façon dont les Arméniens avec une unanimité presque absolue ont présenté le "hafir;" mais il convient d'ajouter que des témoignages eux-mêmes il résulte que les exigences de ce tribut, si elles s'appliquaient aux gens de Talori et de Khian étaient beaucoup plus faibles à Guéliéguzan, Semal, et Chenik, dont un habitant dit que le "hafir" n'y était pas payé.

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Les Kurdes et leurs Aghas entendus par la Commission d'Enquête déclarent ne même pas connaître le mot de "hafir" et sa signification, affirment qu'un pareil tribut a cessé d'exister depuis une cinquantaine d'années et expliquent la perception opérée par certains Aghas sur les Arméniens comme une redevance dûe par l'exploiteur du sol au propriétaire du fond.

Néanmoins, le fait que le "hafir" existait jusque dans ces dernières années est prouvé par la déclaration du nommé Taleb Effendi, un des agents de l'autorité à Mouch, qui, chargé de fréquentes missions dans ces pays, doit être au courant, et qui parle dans sa déposition d'un Kurde s'étant rendu, il y a deux ans, à Talori, dit-il textuellement, "pour y percevoir le 'hafir.'"

Les explications données à cet égard par une communication officielle, émanant du Conseil Administratif de Mouch et qui n'a été lue qu'en partie, d'ailleurs, dans la séance de la Commission en date du 7 Juin, 1895, ne sauraient être considérées comme probantes et présentant un caractère d'indépendance absolue.

Dans les trois ou quatre dernières années, les relations entre les villages Arméniens en question et les Kurdes commencèrent à prendre un caractère d'hostilité qu'il est permis d'attribuer à deux causes: d'une part, chez les Kurdes la propagande religieuse de leurs Cheiks, reconciliant entr'elles les tribus jusqu'alors en mésintelligence et leur interdisant toute querelle motivée par la protection qu'elles exerçaient, à l'encontre les unes des autres, sur les Arméniens; d'autre part, l'agitation causée parmi ceux-ci par des hommes tels que Damadian, leur représentant leur sujétion aux Kurdes comme une sorte d'esclavage contre lequel ils ne trouvaient aucune protection auprès du Gouvernement, et les poussant à secouer le joug: l'année 1893 donne une preuve de cet état d'hostilités ouvertes dans l'attaque combinée des tribus Kurdes sur Talori.

Exposé des Événements de Sassoun en 1894.

C'est sur ces entrefaites qu'au printemps de 1894 un Arménien, nommé Hamparsoum Boyadjian, originaire du Vilayet d'Adana, et ayant fait ses études de médecine à Constantinople et à Genève, arriva dans la région de Talori, prenant, pour n'être pas reconnu, le nom de Mourad. Accompagné d'une bande armée parmi laquelle se trouvait un ancien compagnon de Damadian, avec lequel il s'est d'ailleurs rencontré, il parcourait les villages de la région et ceux de Kavar pour y exercer la médecine à ce qu'il prétend, et engager les Arméniens à se délivrer des mauvaises coutumes de "hafir, hala" qui les assujettissaient aux Kurdes. Mais ni lui ni aucun de ses cinq compagnons à qu'il avait donné des fusils de guerre et des munitions, n'ont pu expliquer de façon plausible leur séjour dans les montagnes, et la déposition de l'un d'eux fait comprendre que s'il était sorti de la voie droite, c'est à la suite de l'oppression dont soit sa famille, soit lui-même avait eu à se plaindre de la part des Kurdes.

Presque tous les témoins Arméniens nient connaître même le nom de Mourad. Les Kurdes ou les témoins ayant des attaches officielles ne parlent de lui que par ouï-dire. Dans ces circonstances l'enquête ne présente pas les données nécessaires pour se rendre un compte parfaitement exact de ses faits et gestes. Tout ce qu'il est permis de conclure c'est qu'il visitait les régions de Kavar et de Talori où il avait sa résidence principale, ainsi que les villages environnants, se promenant avec ses compagnons, mais rarement dans les montagnes, et donnant, comme il le reconnaît lui-même, des conseils touchant directement les rapports d'Arméniens à Kurdes. D'après le nommé Tono, de Talori, en effet, il engageait les premiers à rendre dent pour dent aux seconds, et à ne pas payer leurs impôts au Gouvernement pour attirer son attention.

En outre, le contenu du cahier trouvé sur Mourad lui-même, composé de pièces de vers patriotiques en Arménien, d'une biographie de Damadian, exposant les agissements de ce dernier, encore que ces écrits ne soient pas de Mourad, les notes au crayon entr'autres, qu'il reconnaît être de sa main et qui sont le début d'une lettre relatant le commencement des événements de 1894, prouvent indubitablement qu'aussi bien que Damadian, Mourad est venu dans ces pays avec un but politique caché et en essayant de provoquer des rencontres entre les Arméniens et les Kurdes. D'ailleurs ces excitations ne paraissent guère avoir eu pour résultat, acquis par l'enquête, que l'incident d'Aktchesser, au mois de Juin 1894, et d'où le Caïmacam de Koulp, qui y était allé pour percevoir les impôts et arrêter quelques individus, fut obligé de se sauver, et de plus, quelques méfaits qui auraient été commis par les Arméniens sur les Kurdes.

Un grand nombre d'accusations de différent genre: vols, meurtres barbares, viol, &c., ont été soulevées contre les premiers. Le détail, ainsi que le degré de

confiance qu'elles méritent, s'en trouvera consigné dans le supplément (ch. No. 2); les Soussignés doivent reconnaître comme ayant été réellement commis, pendant l'été de 1894, le vol des deux bœufs du nommé Ahmé Ahmo de Nedrân, le meurtre de deux Kurdes: l'un de Inekân, et l'autre de Karikân; l'attaque sur les tentes du nommé Hassan Chaouki, et le 28 Juillet (v. s.), 1894, sur celles des Kurdes Velikanli, habitant Moush, cette dernière provoquée par des querelles antérieures au sujet de bétail volé et repris.

Ces attentats paraissent avoir eu pour auteur la bande des compagnons de Mourad, qui devaient être en réalité plus nombreux que les cinq hommes arrêtés avec lui et parmi lesquels se trouvaient selon toute vraisemblance quelques Arméniens de Kavar et de Talori.

Ces faits dans leur ensemble, le dernier surtout, où trois Musulmans furent tués ou blessés, ne pouvaient manquer, grossis et exagérés, d'exciter chez les Kurdes une agitation que rend visible la déposition de Hichman Agha, disant qu'un Kurde Velikanli courut chez les Bekranli pour leur exposer la situation critique qui leur était faite par les Arméniens, et la déclaration de Cherho, Agha des Bekranli, expliquant que si les Badikanli prirent part aux combats qui suivirent, ce n'était pas pour aider aux Bekranli, leurs ennemis de la veille, mais pour venger tous les méfaits dont eux-mêmes avaient eu à souffrir de la part des Arméniens.

Quoiqu'il en soit, les Kurdes se rassemblèrent à Kavar et à Talori et, surtout dans ce dernier endroit, leur nombre paraît avoir été considérable; à quelle influence déterminante doit-on l'attribuer? Les données de l'enquête ne permettent de rien affirmer, des déclarations isolées, d'après lesquelles ce rassemblement aurait eté causé par les excitations des agents de l'autorité, dont le Cheik Mehemet de Zeilan aurait été l'intermédiaire, ne pouvant être regardées comme suffisantes dans un cas aussi important, et la présence à Guéliéguzan de celui-ci, le premier des Cheiks Kurdes, quoique affirmée par quelques témoignages, ne paraissant pas prouvée.

A la suite de l'agitation qui s'était produite parmi les Kurdes, les Karikanli veulent attaquer les Arméniens, mais ils en sont empêchés par l'intervention des troupes régulières, détachées au nombre de deux compagnies d'infanterie à Merguémouzan, situé à trente minutes de Chenik. Il est à noter que cette alerte devait forcément obliger les Arméniens à prendre leurs précautions contre la possibilité d'attaques ultérieures.

Peu de temps après les Bekranli, au nombre de soixante à quatre-vingts environ, se rendent avec leurs Aghas, Omer et Cherho, au dit campement de Merguémouzan, et à leur retour tombent sur Chenik et Semal, dont les habitants se retirent sur les hauteurs de Keupru-Cherif-Han et de Tchaï, ainsi que les gens d'Alian qui se réunissent à eux et les combats commencent entre Kurdes et Arméniens. C'était le 1er Août, (v. s.) 1894.

Après deux jours de luttes, pendant lesquels les Bekranli reçoivent des secours des Badikanli les Arméniens se dirigent vers Guéliéguzan et l'Antok-Dagh, où ils avaient auparavant envoyé leurs familles. Le fait qu'ils réussirent à emmener femmes, enfants, troupeaux et une partie de leurs effets, prouve que le départ avait commencé un peu avant les luttes elles-mêmes, comme en témoignent plusieurs dépositions.

Quant aux gens de Guéliéguzan, qui envoyèrent, eux aussi, leurs familles à la montagne, ils étaient restés dans leur village pour le protéger contre les attaques des Kurdes, qui avaient brûlé Chenik et Semal.

Les affirmations des Kurdes eux-mêmes ou des témoins n'étant pas libres de toute attache présentent la rencontre des Arméniens avec les Bekranli et les Badikanli, comme une attaque des Arméniens descendus de l'Antok-Dagh, où ils s'étaient réunis depuis le commencement de Juillet; cette attaque aurait eu lieu sur la première partie des Kurdes Bekranli, venant à leurs pâturages d'été d'après une version ou, d'après une seconde, sur les Kurdes Bekranli allant porter plainte aux troupes de Merguémouzan.

Or, à en croire les Bekranli eux-mêmes, ils prirent l'année dernière pour se rendre aux pâturages la route de Sassoun, qui passe par le Tsovasar-Dagh. Dans ces conditions, il est impossible qu'ils aient pu être attaqués à Tchaï, situé dans une direction absolument opposée, et séparé de la dite route par la grande et profonde vallée d'Agpi.

En admettant la seconde hypothèse fournie également par les Bekranli, à savoir qu'ils auraient été attaqués au moment où ils allaient porter plainte à Merguémouzan; leurs pâturages étant sur la montagne de Mouch, du côté de Shatak, il est également impossible qu'ils aient pu être attaqués à Tchaï, où, d'après la plupart de leurs dépositions, le combat eut lieu, attendu que cet endroit situé entre Chenik, Semal et

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Guéliéguzan se trouve en dehors de la route que dans ce cas ils eussent été obligés de suivre.

Pas une seule déposition Arménienne, excepté celle de Girbo, fils de Manouk de Chenik, qui n'offre d'ailleurs aucune vraisemblance, n'autorise à croire que les Arméniens aient, dès le commencement de Juillet, évacué leurs villages et se soient rassemblés à l'Antok-Dagh dans un but de révolte.

Nadir Agha, il est vrai, dit avoir vu déjà au mois d'Avril quelques maisons de Semal abandonnées par leurs habitants ; le Caïmacam de Sassoun affirme que le 2 Juillet les villageois commençaient à gagner l'Antok-Dagh et son secrétaire, Ali Effendi, dit n'avoir vu alors aucun habitant de ce village. Cependant, ce même Caïmacam se rendant à la même époque à Chenik, pouvait, en moins de cinq minutes, faire amener devant lui les nommés Kirko, Erko, les Chefs du village, représentés parmi les hommes les plus séditieux et comme faisant toujours partie des bandes coutumières d'agression sur les Kurdes.

Salih Agha, le 7 ou le 9 Juillet, dit avoir trouvé Chenik et Semal désert, et d'après Nasroullah Agha, à ce même mois, Guéliéguzan était vide de ses habitants : cependant, Faris Agha, Lieutenant de Zaptiés, passant par Kavar le 12 Juillet, dit avoir vu Chenik et Semal encore habités.

Le 30 Juillet, soit un jour avant la rencontre avec les Bekranli, Medjid on-Bachi, caporal de zaptiés, se rend de Merguémouzan dans ces deux villages pour le ravitaillement des troupes : ce qui prouve que ce jour-là, lui qui se trouvait au campement situé à 30 minutes de distance de Chenik et qui était en contact journalier avec les villageois n'avait aucune connaissance de leur départ.

De plus, Tavo, de Semal, affirme qu'à cette même date, qui coïncide avec celle de l'arrivée du Chef de Bataillon de Zaptiés, Fevzi Effendi, les gens de Semal étaient au village et a proposé d'interroger à ce sujet le dit Medjid on-Bachi, affecté au service de la Commission. Mais malgré la demande des Soussignés, elle n'a pas procédé à leur confrontation et à l'interrogatoire immédiat du second.

Enfin, le fait que Fevzi Effendi pouvait faire comparaître sans retard devant lui un des chefs de Chenik, que deux ou trois zaptiés obtenaient sans la moindre difficulté la restitution par les Arméniens du bétail enlevé lors des représailles qu'ils exercèrent sur les Velikanli, que les Arméniens déclarèrent le rendre par déférence pour l'autorité et se bornèrent à porter plainte contre les Velikanli, prouve surabondamment que ce dit jour du 30 Juillet, les Arméniens de Chenik pas plus que ceux de Semal d'ailleurs, n'étaient ni en révolte contre le Gouvernement ni éloignés sur l'Antok-Dagh. Il est possible aussi qu'à l'arrivée du Chef de Bataillon les hommes de Chenik parmi lesquels courait le bruit qu'ils étaient Firmanli ("rebelles") et craignant d'être arrêtés à la suite de cette même rixe avec les Velikanli se soient sauvés, mais non loin du village d'où ils ne seraient certainement pas partis au moment même où commençaient les récoltes.

En ce qui concerne Guéliéguzan, à l'exception de la déclaration ci-dessus rappelée, le plus grand nombre des autres déclarations, et la lettre (supplément ch. No. 3) trouvée sur Mourad démontre que jusqu'au 12 ou 14 Août, le village était encore occupé par les Arméniens.

De ces premiers combats entre les Kurdes et les Arméniens, les motifs et les détails, tels qu'ils sont donnés par trois Kurdes de Guéliéguzan, un de Spagank, l'Arménien Girbo précité présentent de telles contradictions et les déclarations même de ces individus offrent un tel caractère d'invraisemblance que les Soussignés ne sauraient les prendre en considération. Un récit du même genre ayant été répété par le Cheik Mehemet, de Zeilan, forcément renseigné sur les événements de l'année dernière, l'importante situation religieuse de celui-ci devrait être garante de la véracité de cette version. Mais, en la rééditant, le Cheik, à de nombreuses reprises, a déclaré ne parler que d'après ouï-dire, ne pas être caution des bruits courants ; ces réserves réitérées ne peuvent que jeter les plus graves soupçons sur le récit dont le Cheik se contente d'être l'écho.

Au moment où ces combats eurent lieu, quelle fut la conduite des compagnies de troupes régulières chargées de maintenir l'ordre dans cette partie du pays et campées à Merguémouzan, à une demi-heure de distance de Chenik ? Elle a reçu deux explications : d'une voix presque unanime, les villageois accusent les soldats d'avoir, réunis aux Kurdes, participé à l'attaque dont Chenik et Semal auraient été l'objet. Mais le Commandant de ces troupes, le Capitaine Hadji Moustapha Effendi, nie connaître l'existence des combats, affirmés par les dépositions des Kurdes et Arméniens qui y prirent part, et dit seulement qu'un matin il apprit que pendant la nuit une partie des

Bekranli avait été assaillie par les Arméniens, le neveu d'Omer Agha tué et, ajoute-t-il, " son cadavre mutilé apporté au camp."

Les Bekranli et Badikanli, eux aussi, nient que les troupes se soient mêlées aux combats et disent que, cernés par les Arméniens, ils se trouvèrent dans l'impossibilité de donner aucun avis aux soldats de Merguémouzan.

Cependant les Soussignés ne sauraient accepter cette explication, attendu que les Badikanli, dont les pâturages se trouvent du même côté de Chenik que le campement, purent recevoir la nouvelle du combat et au nombre d'une centaine, à les en croire, venir se joindre aux Bekranli.

En outre, le chef du détachement qui ajoutait foi, comme le prouvent sa déposition et celle de Fevzi Effendi, aux bruits répandus auparavant, suivant lesquels les Arméniens étaient dans l'intention d'exterminer les soldats qu'il commandait à Merguémouzan et qui sur ces entrefaites avaient été portées à un bataillon, ce qu'il a toujours caché, devait être forcément amené à prendre des mesures de précaution et de surveillance qui auraient dû lui permettre d'être informé de ce qui se passait aux alentours et en particulier de la lutte assez importante, par suite du nombre des combattants, engagée à proximité de son propre campement.

Pour ces différents motifs, les Soussignés, prenant en considération que l'accusation, portée contre les troupes de Merguémouzan d'avoir participé à l'attaque des Kurdes émane des Arméniens seuls, ne peuvent la considérer comme absolument prouvée, mais en admettant qu'en réalité elles se soient abstenues, le fait avoué et reconnu par lui d'être resté dans l'inaction, lors d'événements graves et proches, qu'il ne pouvait pas ne pas connaître, condamne la conduite du chef des troupes, aussi gravement que si elles eussent pris une part directe à l'action.

Les événements ci-dessus racontés, l'incident d'Aktchesser, quelques attaques sur les Kurdes et en dernier lieu sur les Velikanli, joints au bruit que les Arméniens voulaient même se porter sur les troupes de Merguémouzan, qu'une de leurs bandes était dans l'intention de tuer le Caïmacam de Sassoun à Shatak, enfin la lutte avec les Kurdes Bekranli et le départ subséquent des Arméniens sur l'Antok-Dagh, tout cela, réuni à la présence parmi eux de Mourad et de ses compagnons, laquelle n'était pas un secret pour les autorités, fut considéré par elles comme une révolte ouverte contre le Gouvernement qui décida l'envoi de troupes, dans le but de disperser les rebelles et de s'emparer de leur chef Mourad et de ses acolytes.

Quelques bataillons furent concentrés à Mouch et un détachement, sous le commandement du Colonel Tewfik Bey, qui reçut les instructions directes du Muchir du IVe Corps d'Armée, Zeki Pacha, et qui se trouva ensuite sous les ordres d'Edhem Pacha, Commandant Militaire de Mouch, fut organisé. Il se composait de deux bataillons et quart d'infanterie, une peloton de dragons, avec deux canons de montagne, plus une trentaine de zaptiés.

Parti de Mouch le 13 Août (v. s.), 1894, ce détachement alla se réunir près de Chenik aux deux compagnies campées à Merguémouzan, qui, quelques jours auparavant avaient été renforcées et atteignaient un bataillon.

Ce que firent et ce que devinrent les Arméniens depuis leur fuite sur l'Antok-Dagh jusqu'au jour où le détachement quitta Mouch n'a pas été parfaitement éclairci.

La lettre trouvée dans les papiers de Mourad et qui lui était adressée de l'Antok-Dagh par le prêtre Ohannès, de Semal, Kirko, fils de Mossé, de Chenik, et Ohan, fils de Nigo, permet de conclure que pendant une période de douze jours, à dater du commencement des événements, soit le 1er ou le 2 Août, les Arméniens ne cessèrent de lutter avec les Kurdes dont ils restèrent vainqueurs, mais que le onzième jour, épuisés par les combats précédents, ils durent, vers le soir, céder aux attaquants Husséindsik, quartier de Guéliéguzan, puis Guéliéguzan même, que le village fut ensuite brûlé. Leur situation était alors désespérée.

En même temps, de la déposition de Tewfik Bey et de quelques autres, il résulte que le 14 Août (v. s.) le détachement, quittant Chenik de bon matin et arrivé le même jour à Guéliéguzan, eut en route une rencontre qui se borna à un échange de coups de fusil, et qu'en atteignant Husséindsik, les Arméniens qui occupaient le village en furent délogés après un court combat. Est-ce le même combat que celui dont fait mention la lettre précitée? Ce document, qui mérite foi complète, étant donné les circonstances où il a été écrit, parle d'un combat qui durait jusqu'au soir, que ce même soir Guéliéguzan était brûlé et que les Arméniens étaient près d'être anéantis.

Le Colonel, au contraire, ne mentionne qu'un échange de coups de fusil, affirme qu'à son arrivée le village était déjà brûlé et toutes les autres dépositions viennent à l'appui de cette dernière assertion.

D'autre part, les muletiers Chrétiens qui étaient avec les troupes, niant à l'encontre,

des autres dépositions avoir entendu des coups de fusil, en route vers Guéliéguzan, beaucoup d'autres témoignages confirmant que le combat qui eut pour suite l'incendie de ce village dura jusqu'au soir, on est autorisé à croire que les deux combats n'étaient pas le même, que Guéliéguzan fut évacué et incendié avant l'arrivée du détachement et à douter que celui-ci ait eu réellement une rencontre avec les villageois. Cette même lettre prouve, en outre, que le lendemain de la lutte racontée par elle, les Arméniens, dont la position était des plus critiques, commencèrent à se diviser. L'ensemble de leurs dépositions démontre que les causes de leur fuite de l'Antok-Dagh furent dues à la seule arrivée des troupes, sans qu'il ressorte clairement qu'il y ait eu attaque de la part de ces dernières et que c'est le jour où ils se sauvèrent que fut écrite la lettre en question. Elle parle de douze jours de combats. Avec qui les soutinrent-ils? Les Kurdes unanimement nient s'être trouvés là et affirment qu'après les rencontres, dans le voisinage de Semal, à Tchaï-Dagh, ils avaient regagné leurs villages, obéissant à la peur. Les Arméniens avec une unanimité aussi parfaite affirment les avoir eus pour adversaires; deux même, habitant Guéliémansour, Tato et Manouk, restés en dehors des événements, disent s'être enfuis de crainte des Kurdes armés, qui passaient près d'eux; et les Kurdes témoins de l'attaque sur Émin-ben-Kasso, de Rechki, qui en fixent la date au 15 Août environ, certifient de la sorte qu'à cette date les Kurdes n'avaient pas encore quitté leurs pâturages, ce qui résulte également de la déclaration de Mirzo-ben-Ali, Kurde Badikanli.

Quant au Colonél et à Moustapha Effendi, ils nient la présence des Kurdes sur le lieu des événements, mais sans pouvoir expliquer où ils se trouvaient à l'époque.

Hichman Agha fait la même déclaration et va même pour dissimuler la venue au camp de Mollah Omer jusqu'à inventer une histoire de capture, par les troupes, de onze hommes de Talori.

Ces dénégations intéressées de la part des Kurdes; ce manque d'explication de la part des officiers; ce récit mensonger de Hichman Agha; et les affirmations unanimes des Arméniens se réunissent pour prouver qu'en réalité ils eurent bien les Kurdes pour adversaires.

Une fois le détachement arrivé à Guéliéguzan, le 14 Août à en croire le Colonel, les événements qui se déroulèrent sur l'Antok-Dagh sont empreints de la plus grande incertitude.

Tous les Arméniens disent qu'ils étaient en fuite, poursuivis par les Kurdes, les soldats ou les zaptiehs, repoussés par les habitants des villages d'alentour qui craignaient de s'exposer au même sort, et que cette situation ne prit fin qu'à l'arrivée du Muchir et à la nouvelle qu'ils étaient pardonnés et n'avaient plus rien à craindre.

De toutes les autres dépositions il résulte que les Kurdes n'auraient pas été là, que l'action du détachement se borna à un séjour inactif de trois jours à Guéliéguzan, dont la cause aurait été le besoin de se ravitailler, puis à une marche sur Talori avec arrêt d'un jour à Afkart et une légère rencontre d'une heure environ avec les brigands Arméniens dans le ravin de Guéliésan.

Il en résulte également qu'il y avait deux jours que le détachement était à Talori quand à force de recherches et sur les indications de gens amenés par Mollah Omer, la caverne où se cachaient Mourad et ses compagnons ayant été découverte, ceux-ci furent obligés de se rendre.

Ces mêmes dépositions déclarent qu'à Talori il ne s'est passé aucun autre incident, affirmant d'une façon générale que les habitants, après avoir brûlé leurs maisons, s'étaient enfuis à l'Antok-Dagh pour se disperser ensuite et que les soldats venus à Talori n'y trouvèrent plus personne dans les quartiers incendiés et déserts.

A en croire, au contraire, les rares dépositions Arméniennes, entendues sur ce point, c'est devant une attaque des Kurdes rassemblés en grand nombre, sous les ordres de Khalil Bechiri et Papori Guendjo que les habitants de Talori s'enfuirent de leurs quartiers dont les maisons furent brûlées et où ils revinrent ensuite en partie après le départ des Kurdes.

Ils se sauvèrent de nouveau en apprenant l'arrivée des troupes qui coïncida avec un retour offensif des premiers Kurdes auxquels s'étaient joints, cette fois, les Bekranli, Khianli, Kotanli et Bozikli.

Trois des quartiers de Talori restés intacts: Hosnoud, Holovit, et Dawalik auraient alors été incendiés par les soldats et les Kurdes réunis.

L'enquête au sujet des événements de Talori doit être considérée comme ayant été faite par la Commission d'une façon très insuffisante: elle a consisté presque exclusivement dans la déposition des prisonniers amenés de Bitlis, et dont les déclarations ne peuvent pas être regardées comme indépendantes les unes des autres.

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Néanmoins, des témoignages même du prêtre Stépan de Dawalik, de Gopé de Mezré, que l'on ne saurait soupçonner de partialité pour les Arméniens, ainsi que de ceux des gens de Kavar, il ressort que les habitants de Talori n'étaient pas, comme ou le prétend, réunis en masse sur l'Antok-Dagh, qu'ils ne brûlèrent pas eux-mêmes leurs propres maisons; et le dit prêtre Stépan va jusqu'à dire qu'il ne croit pas jusqu'à présent que Talori ait été incendié!

Il ressort, en outre, des déclarations du dit Gopé de Mezré et du nommé Serkis de Hartkh que les habitants de leurs deux villages, quoique ne s'étant pas joints à Mourad, s'enfuirent eux-mêmes avec leurs familles, et le second attribue cette fuite au rassemblement des Kurdes.

On est donc autorisé à conclure que les événements qui se déroulèrent à Talori n'avaient pas le caractère de simplicité que lui prête la première des deux versions et que la réalité se rapproche davantage de la thèse Arménienne, représentant le pays comme complètement incendié et ruiné.

En ce qui concerne la question des agissements des troupes depuis leur départ de Mouch même jusqu'à la prise de Mourad à Talori, qu'il est permis de regarder comme marquant la fin de l'affaire de Sassoun, les Soussignés doivent faire remarquer que comme il appert clairement des dépositions du Colonel Tewfik Bey et de son subordonné Hadji Moustapha Effendi, aucun pas ne fut fait par le premier, commandant supérieur responsable, pour tâcher d'entrer en contact avec les populations Arméniennes de Kavar et de Talori et tenter d'obtenir, sans verser le sang, la pacification du pays et la remise de Mourad, ses deux seuls objectifs, s'il faut l'en croire lui-même.

Comme les Soussignés ont tenté de le démontrer plus haut, la présence des Kurdes sur le lieu des événements, au moment où les troupes s'y trouvaient elles-mêmes doit être considérée comme prouvée. En niant le premier de ces faits, le Colonel avoue ainsi n'avoir pris aucune mesure pour éloigner les Kurdes, et se priver de leurs concours. En outre, si son principal but, à ce qu'il prétend, était de s'emparer des bandes de brigands, et de leur chef, le mode de procéder qu'il dit avoir adopté est des moins explicables. Il reconnaît à la fois que le chef des brigands devait se trouver parmi les bandes qui attaquent les troupes à deux reprises différentes, à Guéliéguzan, et à Guéliésan, qu'aucun obstacle ne pouvait leur barrer passage, et il ne prend aucune mesure soit pour entourer ces bandes soit pour leur couper la route; au contraire, il reste pendant trois jours inactif à Guéliéguzan, défendant même, dit-il, aux soldats de traverser le ravin pour aller du côté de l'Antok-Dagh; il ne poursuit pas davantage ses agresseurs à Guéliésan, et s'arrête également deux jours à Afkart, leur donnant ainsi tous les moyens d'échapper à sa poursuite.

En réalité, les Kurdes bloquant les Arméniens, comme cela est représenté dans beaucoup de leurs dépositions, leur avaient ôté toute facilité de retraite. Même dans ce cas, le devoir du Colonel était d'envoyer de petits détachements avec la mission de tâcher de s'emparer de Mourad, et tout au moins de faire des prisonniers, grâce aux renseignements desquels il aurait pu être éclairé sur l'endroit où se cachaient les Arméniens, et prendre les mesures propres à amener leur reddition.

Le Colonel lui-même avoue qu'à son arrivée à Talori, le jour même et le lendemain, il envoya dans un but de recherches des détachements dans les différents quartiers; il est évident qu'il aurait dû agir de la sorte auparavant.

Mais, contrairement à sa déclaration et tel que cela résulte de celles de Mariam et Simo d'Agpi, de Stépan et de Serkis de Guéliéguzan, témoignages qui peuvent être considérés comme indépendants les uns des autres, pendant que le gros du détachement se rendait à Talori par Guéliésan et Afkart des soldats y allaient par la route d'Agpi et Hetink, et il y eut de leur part poursuite des Arméniens dans le ravin de Guéliéresh, sur les pentes de Tsovasar-Dagh, pendant qu'il y avait poursuite sur l'Antok-Dagh même, et à Guéliésan, comme le prouvent de nombreuses dépositions Arméniennes.

Malgré la déclaration de Tewfik Bey, de Moustapha Effendi, du Lieutenant des zaptiés, Husséin Agha et de trois muletiers Musulmans produits devant la Commission par l'intermédiaire du même Moustapha Effendi, la durée du séjour du détachement à Guéliéguzan pendant trois jours seulement, les 14, 15, et 16 Août, ne saurait être considérée comme établie.

La nommée Maimo de Chenik et les muletiers Chrétiens, au contraire, disent formellement que les troupes campèrent à Guéliéguzan pendant six jours et le calcul du nombre des jours vient à l'appui de cette affirmation. L'enquête a fourni trois dates certaines:—

Le 14 Août, arrivée du détachement à Guéliéguzan;

Le 23, prise de Mourad date indiquée par lui-même;

Les Soussignés s'étant adressés en vain à la Commission pour en obtenir cette

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date puisée dans les documents officiels dressés à l'époque même des événements, n'en ont reçu que celle du 22 Août, comme "résultant" de la déposition du Colonel.

Mourad étant un homme intelligent instruit et cette date étant trop importante pour qu'il ne puisse pas la remarquer, trop récente pour qu'il puisse l'oublier, les Soussignés, en l'absence d'autres renseignements, doivent la regarder comme vraie. Enfin, le 1er Septembre, interrogatoire des prisonniers de Talori à Semal, en présence du Muchir Zekki Pacha, indication donnée par la Commission d'après des sources officielles.

L'un des compagnons de Mourad dit qu'ils restèrent au campement à Talori pendant cinq jours, et il résulte de la déposition du nommé Attam, que c'est le cinquième jour de leur séjour à Semal qu'ils furent interrogés.

Enfin, le Colonel dit que c'est le troisième jour après l'arrivée des troupes à Talori que Mourad fut capturé.

Toutes ces indications, rapprochées les unes des autres, permettent de dresser le Tableau suivant:—

14 Août ..	Arrivée du détachement à Guéliéguzan ..	Cinq jours de séjour à Guéliéguzan.
15 „ ..	.. ..	
16 „ ..	.. ..	
17 „ ..	.. ..	
18 „ ..	.. ..	
19 „ ..	Départ du détachement de Guéliéguzan.	
20 „ ..	Halte à Afkart.	
21 „ ..	Arrivée à Talori.	
22 „ ..	.. ..	
23 „ ..	Capturé de Mourad	Pendant ces cinq jours Mourad et ses compagnons restent à Talori.
24 „ ..	.. ..	
25 „ ..	.. ..	
26 „ ..	.. ..	
27 „ ..	.. ..	
28 „ ..	Arrivée de Mourad et de ses compagnons à Semal, le détachement restant à Talori.	Quatre jours à Semal avant l'interrogatoire des prisonniers.
29 „ ..	.. ..	
30 „ ..	.. ..	
31 „ ..	.. ..	
1er Septembre ..	Interrogatoire des prisonniers à Semal.	

Ce Tableau, s'il est exact, démontre que le détachement n'a pas pu rester moins de cinq jours à Talori et en admettant que l'arrêt à Afkart d'une journée ne soit pas sérieusement démontré, Medjid Effendi disant que les troupes n'y passèrent qu'une nuit, le séjour total des troupes à Guéliéguzan ne sera pas inférieur à six jours.

Il est nécessaire d'ajouter que ce comput est en contradiction avec les dépositions des muletiers Musulmans, disant que les troupes sont restées à Talori sept jours.

D'autre part, ce dernier laps de temps ne concorde pas avec les déclarations du Colonel Tewfik Bey et de Moustapha Effendi, d'après lesquelles le séjour des troupes à Talori semble n'avoir pas duré moins de neuf jours, ce qui ressort également du même Tableau.

Les Soussignés s'empressent d'ajouter que s'ils ont cru devoir insister sur le détail de cette question de date, c'est qu'elle présente une importance capitale pour la question de reddition des Arméniens au camp de Guéliéguzan, et qu'elle donne en même temps une preuve du caractère confus et embarrassé des dépositions, émanant des agents de l'autorité, dont les déclarations ne présentent pas plus de garanties que celles des autres témoins.

En résumé, les événements, tels qu'ils se dégagent avec difficulté des données très approximatives de l'enquête, se présentent de la façon suivante:

Dans ces dernières années, les relations entre les Arméniens de Kavar et de Talori et les Kurdes, s'étaient sensiblement altérées; un agitateur politique, Hamparsoum Boyadjian, dit Mourad, en profite pour former une bande qui se livre à quelques méfaits sur les Kurdes; ceux-ci excités se rassemblent, tombent sur les Arméniens et les combats commencent.

Le Gouvernement, considérant la conduite des Arméniens comme une révolte ouverte, envoie des troupes, qui les dispersent, et s'emparent de Mourad.

La question de la résistance que les Arméniens auraient opposée aux troupes à Guéliéguzan et à Guéliésan n'a pas été suffisamment éclaircie. Dans le premier de ces deux endroits, comme on l'a expliqué plus haut, il est plus probable que les Arméniens avaient évacué le village avant l'arrivée du détachement; dans le second,

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il n'est pas possible de dire, s'il y a eu résistance en masse, ou quelques cas de résistance isolée.

Le fait que les Kurdes se trouvaient avec les troupes, et que celles-ci n'ont rien fait pour les éloigner peut être considéré comme prouvé.

Il reste à examiner si les Arméniens étaient en réalité en révolte contre le Gouvernement, si la répression a été proportionnée à la gravité du mouvement, et, dans le cas où elle aurait dépassé les bornes de l'humanité, à qui incombent les responsabilités.

Les preuves citées à l'appui de l'existence d'une révolte sont les suivantes :—

La propagande de gens, tels que Damadian et Mourad ;

La formation de bandes armées depuis le commencement du mois de Mai 1894 ;

L'état d'hostilité ouverte contre les agents du Gouvernement se traduisant par l'incident d'Aktchesser, l'attentat sur le Caïmacam de Sassoun à Kiagashin, l'expulsion des zaptiés par les habitants d'Agpi et de Hetink, le refus datant de quinze ou vingt ans, opposé par les gens de Talori, d'admettre des employés sur leur territoire, et de payer leurs impôts.

La préparation de la poudre, et sa distribution, ainsi que celle du plomb ;

Le rassemblement des Arméniens sur l'Antok-Dagh, d'où ils descendaient pour molester et attaquer les Kurdes ;

L'incendie mis par eux-mêmes à leurs propres villages ;

La résolution d'exterminer les soldats campés à Merguémouzan, et, enfin, leurs attaques sur les troupes Impériales à Guéliéguzan et à Guéliésan.

On ne peut nier l'existence d'une propagande ni la présence de Mourad avec ses compagnons, parmi les gens de Kavar et de Talori, et la participation des premiers aux combats soutenus par les Arméniens.

Quant à l'hostilité contre les agents du Gouvernement, l'incident seul d'Aktchesser peut être regardé comme prouvé, mais non pas dans les conditions où il a été présenté.

Le refus opposé par sept ou huit quartiers de Talori, de soixante-dix ou quatre-vingts maisons, d'après les sources officielles, de payer leurs impôts au Gouvernement ne fait, en admettant qu'il soit établi, que démontrer l'insouciance des autorités locales ou leur faiblesse dans ces régions où la population est Kurde en majorité, et ne prouve pas l'esprit révolutionnaire des habitants qui versaient un tribut aux Kurdes.

En ce qui concerne la question des munitions, l'obligation dans ces pays pour les bergers d'être armés, la crainte de voir se renouveler une attaque semblable à celle opérée par les Kurdes en masse en 1893, et où les Arméniens ne devaient compter que sur eux-mêmes, expliquent la présence des armes que les Arméniens portaient toujours sur eux, et la possibilité d'un approvisionnement plus considérable de poudre. Leur rassemblement sur l'Antok-Dagh avait eu pour motif les attaques des Kurdes, comme cela a été mentionné plus haut. Les méfaits commis contre eux doivent être attribués à la bande de Mourad, et le principal, l'incident avec les Velikanli du 28 Juillet, fut provoqué par les Kurdes eux-mêmes.

Tous ces faits ne démontrent nullement que les Arméniens aient été en révolte ouverte à la fin de Juillet 1894. On a voulu voir dans une des pièces trouvées sur Mourad un programme politique à l'appui de cette accusation, mais il ressort clairement de son contenu que ces notes présentent le canevas d'un récit des événements eux-mêmes ; et si la révolte avait commencé à se faire jour trois mois auparavant, si la situation avait été telle qu'elle ressort du télégramme du Mutessarif de Guendj du 3 (15) Mai, 1894, et des dépositions officielles des agents du Gouvernement, quelle explication donner de la conduite des autorités qui, ni en Mai, ni en Juin, ni en Juillet ne prenaient aucune mesure en face d'un état de choses aussi grave et aussi accentuée ?

L'accusation, ridicule en soi, portée contre les Arméniens d'avoir brûlé leurs propres maisons, leurs bergeries, &c., ne s'appuyant que sur des ouï-dire, les dépositions des témoins qui se disent témoins oculaires sont tellement contradictoires et invraisemblables que les Soussignés sont obligés de la repousser comme ne méritant aucune considération, et en la supposant un seul instant fondée, est-il possible d'admettre, ce que personne n'a osé prétendre d'ailleurs, que cette population de rite Arménien Grégorien particulièrement attachée à sa religion, comme tous les Chrétiens du rite Orthodoxe, soit allée jusqu'à profaner et saccager ses églises et à les mettre dans l'état que les Soussignés ont constaté eux-mêmes ?

Ils doivent donc considérer les accusations des Arméniens comme fondées et voir dans les Kurdes et les soldats les auteurs de l'incendie des villages entiers. Enfin, si pour apprécier la nature des premiers combats des Arméniens avec les Kurdes on fait

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entrer en ligne de compte l'inaction, si ce n'est la participation des troupes de Merguémouzan à ces combats, l'absence de toute démarche de l'autorité soit pour les empêcher, soit pour venir au secours des paysans attaqués, le bruit qu'il y avait un ordre de les exterminer dont se seraient servis les Kurdes pour extorquer des sommes d'argent aux villageois de Kavar, la vue de leurs maisons détruites, on comprend qu'il ne soit plus resté aux Arméniens qu'une ressource : celle de défendre leur vie et celle de leurs familles.

A l'arrivée du détachement de troupes à Guéliéguzan, ils commencèrent à s'enfuir. Les conditions de la rencontre qui s'y serait produite ainsi que celle de Guéliésan sont restées très mystérieuses, d'autant plus que le nombre de soldats tués ou blessés, qui aurait pu venir à l'appui de l'existence des combats allégués est indiqué par le seul Tewfik Bey dont les déclarations ne sauraient être regardées, en l'espèce comme probantes, les autres dépositions relatives aux victimes faites parmi les troupes régulières ayant gardé le caractère le plus indéterminé.

Toutes les raisons qui viennent d'être énumérées autorisent donc les Soussignés à répéter que les données fournies par l'enquête ne prouvent pas que les Arméniens de Kavar et de Talori soient entrés en révolte contre le Gouvernement.

En venant aux mesures qui furent prises pour réprimer ce que l'on considérait comme tel il est nécessaire de rappeler en premier lieu que rien ne fut fait pour aboutir par voie de conciliation, et qu'aucune trace n'existe de précautions adoptées ensuite pour sauvegarder la vie des femmes et des enfants qui, de l'aveu de tous, étaient avec les Arméniens sur l'Antok-Dagh. Des nombreux témoignages de ces derniers il résulterait que pendant les événements un nombre considérable d'hommes, de femmes, et d'enfants périrent, les uns tués par les soldats, Kurdes et zaptiés réunis, d'autres morts de peur, de privations, les autres ayant disparu dans la panique causée par les poursuites dont ils furent l'objet, quelques-uns aussi laissé dans les maisons, où ils auraient été brûlés, et d'autres enfin massacrés avec le prêtre Ohannès, de Semal, au camp de Guéliéguzan. Si l'on admet la version suivant laquelle le combat, n'ayant duré que deux jours près de Semal entre Arméniens et Kurdes, aurait été suivi de la disparition immédiate de ceux-ci, l'action des troupes s'étant ensuite bornée à repousser à coups de fusil les deux attaques de Guéliéguzan et de Guéliésan, toutes les accusations des Arméniens doivent être regardées comme mensongères, et leurs pertes ne portant que sur les hommes ayant pris part à ces trois rencontres, comme très minimes.

Les Soussignés cependant, pour les causes expliquées ci-dessus, ne peuvent se rallier à cette manière de voir, et sont obligés de croire qu'en réalité les Arméniens —hommes, femmes, et enfants—ont été pendant les événements l'objet de poursuites répétées de la part des soldats, Kurdes et zaptiés, qui blessaient ou tuaient, sans distinction d'âge ou de sexe, tous ceux qui leur tombaient sous la main, et point à noter, à l'exception des onze villageois de Talori il n'y a pas eu un seul prisonnier.

Le fait de ces meurtres ressort de très nombreux témoignages Arméniens concordant les uns avec les autres et donnant le nom des victimes. Quant à leur nombre, en l'absence de tout état civil régulier et de mesures sérieuses prises pour reconstituer les populations de Kavar et de Talori, il est impossible de le fixer d'une manière même approximative, d'autant plus que les Arméniens eux-mêmes en fuite et dispersés indiquent comme morts des gens qui n'ont que disparu, comme ayant été tués, d'autres qui succombèrent aux suites et aux conséquences des événements. Il n'en est pas moins vrai qu'une certaine quantité de personnes a péri et les Soussignés ne peuvent sur ce point que renvoyer au supplément (ch. 4), où seront indiqués les noms de ceux qui sont donnés comme tels.

Y a-t-il eu, à cette époque, des actes de cruauté révoltante commis, tels que la mutilation barbare d'une femme enceinte ? Les témoignages à ce sujet étant isolés comme celui de la femme Anna de Chenik ou s'appuyant sur des ouï-dire, comme celui du Vicaire de Guendj, et étant donné l'exagération apportée par un grand nombre d'Arméniens dans leurs déclarations, les Soussignés ne croient pas possible de se prononcer à cet égard.

Quant aux vieillards et aux enfants qui auraient été brûlés dans l'incendie des maisons, les déclarations, à ce sujet, de Tavo de Semal, de Sako et de Khaté de Chenik n'ont pas été confirmées ; mais il est hors de doute que quelques vieillards, des infirmes et des enfants sont restés dans les villages Arméniens au moment où ils furent abandonnés par leurs habitants, comme le prouve en particulier pour Guéliéguzan la lettre du prêtre Ohannès de Semal ci-dessus mentionnée.

L'une des plus graves accusations portées contre les troupes régulières est celle du

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massacre par elles et de l'enfouissement au camp de Guéliéguzan d'une partie des habitants de Semal qui seraient venus pour s'y rendre, conduite par leur prêtre, et du viol des femmes qui y aurait été commis.

Les Soussignés n'ont rencontré, au cours de l'enquête, de la part de la Commission, que la plus visible répugnance à élucider cette question, une des plus importantes de toutes. Seules, quatre femmes de Semal ont été entendues, l'une même ne voulant plus répondre le second jour de son interrogatoire. La Commission a refusé d'écouter à ce sujet soit la femme Anna de Chenik, soit les muletiers Arméniens qui se sont trouvés au camp, et avant même d'être allée à Guéliéguzan et d'y avoir examiné les fosses, qu'on disait renfermer les restes des victimes, elle se prononçait sur leur origine en déclarant que si ces fosses étaient trouvées avec des ossements, il était très probable que ceux-ci avaient été réunis et apportés par les Arméniens eux-mêmes.

Dans ces conditions, l'enquête ne dispose que de peu de témoignages oculaires, ceux-ci émanant pour la plupart de gens s'étant présentés d'eux-mêmes ou de leurs parents et qu'il sera toujours facile d'accuser d'un accord ou d'une préparation antérieure ; mais, dans ce cas, le premier devoir de la Commission eût été de ne rien négliger pour faire la lumière et de s'entourer du plus grand nombre de témoignages possibles : les Soussignés doivent déclarer qu'elle n'a pas agi ainsi. Comme cela a été dit plus haut, la lettre signée par le prêtre Ohannès prouve qu'après l'abandon de Guéliéguzan par les Arméniens, qu'il est permis de fixer au 12 ou 13 Août et par conséquent avant l'arrivée du détachement, la situation des Arméniens sur l'Antok-Dagh était désespérée et que leur dispersion avait déjà commencé. Des dépositions des nommés Tavo, Simo, Egho, Ossep, des deux femmes nommées Mariam et de la nommée Dilo, tous de Semal, il résulte que leur dit prêtre, avec une partie de ses villageois, gagna Guéliéguzan pour s'y rendre aux troupes, quelques jours après être restés en fuite. Tavo, dont la présence parmi les gens allant au camp est d'ailleurs très douteuse et Mariam, femme de Cherho, disent le lendemain.

Les autres témoins, au contraire, disent approximativement cinq ou six jours.

Ce dernier chiffre concorde, du reste, avec les dates fournies par les muletiers Arméniens, qui fixent la reddition des fuyards à la fin de leur séjour à Guéliéguzan, lequel, d'après eux, dura six jours.

Maintenant il apparaît clairement que si les troupes n'étaient restées à Guéliéguzan que trois jours, toutes les accusations portées contre elles, à l'occasion des excès dont elles s'y seraient rendues coupables, s'écrouleraient d'elles-mêmes. Seulement l'enquête n'établit pas qu'elles n'y aient séjourné que ce laps de temps, mais bien au contraire, cinq ou six jours, comme les Soussignés pensent l'avoir démontré plus haut.

D'autre part la mort du prêtre Ohannès n'a reçu aucune autre explication satisfaisante.

Le prêtre Parsegh le dit tué par les Kurdes, au moment où il feignait d'aller faire sa soumission aux troupes à Merguémouzan ; mais cette affirmation n'émanait pas de Tavo, ce que celui-ci a déclaré lui-même, tous les efforts du prêtre Parsegh pour prouver ses relations avec le dit Tavo ayant échoué, et l'assertion de Rechid de Guéliéguzan et de Girbo, fils de Manouk, de Chenik, le disant tué dans le combat de Guéliéguzan, trouve son démenti dans la lettre même signée par le prêtre Ohannès et postérieure au combat. De plus, le Colonel Tewfik Bey lui-même n'a pu nier l'existence de bruits relatifs à ce qui s'était passé à Guéliéguzan.

Or, les gens de Mouch et des villages d'alentour déclarent n'en avoir aucune connaissance. Quelques-uns des gens de Semal sont allés jusqu'à dire ne pas connaître le nom du prêtre de leur propre village et ignorer son sort.

Ces explications contradictoires et mensongères d'une part, ces dénégations de l'autre, viennent à l'appui de l'accusation, au lieu de servir à la détruire. Enfin, elle trouve sa pleine confirmation dans la découverte de fosses à Guéliéguzan existant effectivement derrière la maison de Bedo, l'une en particulier entourée d'ossements humains L'état actuel des fosses s'explique par les détails très vraisemblables que contiennent les dépositions Arméniennes à ce sujet et relatifs aux exhumations postérieures qui y ont été pratiquées et aux dégâts commis par les bêtes sauvages. D'ailleurs, l'enquête elle-même ne renferme pas un mot d'une autre explication sur l'origine de ces fosses.

Toutes ces considérations réunies permettent, malgré les recherches volontairement insuffisantes de la Commission, d'affirmer, au dépit des dénégations formelles de Tewfik Bey et de Hadji Moustapha Effendi, que l'accusation du massacre à Guéliéguzan par les troupes du prêtre Ohannès de Semal et d'Arméniens est fondée. Le nombre des victimes peut être fixé à une quarantaine, les détails du massacre lui-même restant

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empreints d'obscurité. Le fait de la séparation, lors de la venue au camp, des hommes d'avec les enfants et les femmes, le viol de ces dernières se présentent dans les mêmes conditions que le massacre auquel ils sont intimement liés. Ajouter foi à la première de ces accusations c'est ajouter foi à la seconde. Il est du reste nécessaire de faire observer que des contradictions existent au sujet des sentinelles—soldats ou zaptiés—qui entouraient les femmes et se seraient ensuite portées sur elles à des actes déshonorants.

Si l'on considère le résultat de tous les événements, les trois villages de Kavar, Chenik, Semal, Guéliéguzan, le district entier de Talori: Agpi, Hetink, Spagank, avec leurs dépendances, ont été dévastés et la presque totalité des habitants, sans maisons, sans ressources, obligés de s'éloigner, les uns du côté de Diarbekir, les autres, avec le concours partiel des autorités, répartis dans les villages Arméniens de la plaine qui pendant l'hiver les ont nourris.

La ruine absolue d'une région ne peut jamais être considérée comme une répression proportionnée au châtiment même d'une révolte: à plus forte raison, dans le cas actuel, le seul crime pour les Arméniens d'avoir abrité, voire caché Mourad et sa bande, quelques actes de brigandage isolés sur la personne des Kurdes ou d'insoumission à l'égard des autorités, une légère résistance possible contre les troupes Impériales, et dans des conditions restées non éclaircies, ne sauraient-elles aucunement justifier l'état de misère auquel gens et pays se trouvent réduits. L'absence de mesures destinées à prévenir une pseudo-révolte qui se serait dessinée depuis le mois de Mai, à empêcher ensuite la lutte des Arméniens et des Kurdes, et les pertes de tout genre qui en furent la conséquence, fait peser sur les autorités locales civiles et militaires une égale responsabilité. La conduite des troupes de Merguémouzan est et demeure inexplicable, étant donné ce qui s'est passé sous leurs yeux, et ne peut pas plus être excusée que les agissements du détachement venu ensuite, aucune mesure n'ayant été adoptée, soit pour protéger les femmes et enfants, soit pour faire revenir les Arméniens à leurs villages, ce soin n'ayant été pris qu'après la venue du Muchir Zekki Pacha.

L'enquête n'ayant pas porté sur les agissements des autorités elles-mêmes, leur relations entre elles, et sur les instructions données ou reçues à ce sujet, il ne paraît pas possible aux Soussignés d'aborder la question de responsabilités personnelles.

Les données du présent Rapport ayant été fournies exclusivement par l'enquête, les Soussignés ne sauraient, en terminant, se dispenser d'exposer rapidement les conditions dans lesquelles elle a eu lieu.

Conditions de l'Enquête.

La Commission, composée comme il est dit ci-dessus, a tenu 107 séances du 24 Janvier au 21 Juillet, 1895, et entendu 190 témoins, qu'il est possible de répartir de la façon suivante:—

Vingt-trois agents de l'autorité civile ou ayant des attaches avec elle, deux officiers de l'armée régulière, six membres du clergé Arménien, soixante-et-un Kurdes, deux Arméniens de Mouch, soixante-dix-huit Arméniens de Kavar, dix-huit Arméniens de Khian.

Mais de ce grand nombre de témoignages la majeure partie ne présente qu'une très faible valeur:

Les agents de l'autorité civile ou militaire, les membres du clergé Arménien, les deux Arméniens de Mouch, donnent de longs détails sur la propagande révolutionnaire qui aurait été faite dans le pays par l'agitateur Mourad et ses prédécesseurs et sur les méfaits commis par les Arméniens, mais évitent de parler de l'affaire de Sassoun, et quelques-uns d'entre eux font même des déclarations mensongères à ce sujet.

D'un autre côté, les Arméniens de Kavar et de Talori nient pour la plupart connaître Mourad, même de nom, passent sous silence soit par peur ou pour tout autre motif, les agissements du premier et de ses compagnons, et tout ce qu'ils craignent pouvoir ensuite leur être reproché—luttes avec les Kurdes et les troupes régulières.

Les Arméniens de Khian, ainsi qu'un certain nombre de témoins venus de ce côté, répètent d'une façon générale un récit identique dans des termes identiques; l'un même, Recho, fils de Boghos de Keguervan, se donnant comme Kiahia, sans l'être, Pollo, fils d'Avédis, comme Kiahia de Nedran, qui ne renferme que deux maisons Arméniennes; Boghos, fils de Khazar, de Guéliémansour, comme membre du Conseil des Anciens, et personne ne l'y connaît, toutes circonstances faisant douter de l'identité des personnes qui comparaissent.

La plupart de ces témoins ayant été choisis par l'intermédiaire des autorités de

Koulp et de Guendj, que la Commission d'Enquête avait invitées à lui envoyer des personnes ayant connaissance des événements, ce mode de comparaître ne pouvait en aucune façon être garant de la sincérité de leurs déclarations.

Des 78 Arméniens de Kavar, 35 sont de Chenik, 15 sont de Semal, 11 sont de Guéliéguzan, 1 est de Spagank, 2 sont de Agpi, et 3 sont de Talori, plus 11 prisonniers faits dans ce dernier endroit, et dont les témoignages ne sauraient en conséquence être regardés comme indépendants l'un de l'autre.

La comparaison de ces chiffres démontre que les événements de Talori, dont la Commission, en dépit des suggestions des Soussignés, a toujours refusé de rechercher l'origine possible et les motifs dans les faits de 1893, ont été, pour ainsi parler, laissés de côté par elle, que son attention s'est portée particulièrement sur le village de Chenik alors que les allégations relatives aux faits qui se seraient passés à Guéliéguzan même, entre Guéliéguzan et Talori et à Talori auraient dû attirer et retenir ses principaux efforts.

De ces soixante-dix-huit Arméniens à l'exception de ceux d'entr'eux venus de leur plein gré et de ceux appelés pour vérifier leur existence, le choix a appartenu aux autorités locales ; et pendant leur séjour ils se trouvaient sous la surveillance et à la disposition de la police. C'est un zaptié qui rencontre au bazar Girbo et Khatcho, fils de Manouk de Chenik et qui les mène devant la Commission. A plusieurs reprises les Soussignés ont attiré l'attention de la Commission, auprès de laquelle l'accès a toujours été difficile, sur l'intérêt qui se présentait, pour la recherche de la vérité, à se mettre en contact direct avec la population et à ne laisser de la sorte aucun intermédiaire, aucune influence s'interposer entre elle-même et les témoins que la Commission avait à entendre. Mais les Soussignés doivent constater que leurs efforts dans ce sens sont toujours restés infructueux et ils étaient cependant justifiés : le Moukhtar d'Alvarindj reçoit de la Commission l'ordre d'amener directement devant elle un réfugié de Spagank, qui se trouvait dans son village : il en est empêché par la police, ainsi que cela ressort des procès-verbaux, cette ingérence va jusqu'à s'exercer dans le local même de la Commission où des témoins sont, soit menacés, soit intimidés par les agents de l'autorité employés à son service.

Dès le début de l'enquête la Commission avait établi deux catégories : l'une de suspects accusés, l'autre de témoins ou informateurs entre les personnes qu'elle entendait, distinction contre laquelle les Soussignés n'ont pas manqué de protester et qui s'est fait sentir jusque dans le mode même d'interrogatoire des personnes ayant comparu.

Dans ces conditions, il est compréhensible que l'enquête, malgré sa durée et le nombre des témoins entendus, n'ait fourni relativement qu'une faible quantité de résultats certains, et sa continuation, d'ailleurs, étant donné la façon dont elle n'a cessé d'être menée n'aurait pas permis d'espérer une découverte plus large de la vérité.

(Signé) M. VILBERT.
H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. PRJEVALSKY.

Mouch, le 20 *Juillet,* 1895.

Annex to Report of the Consular Delegates on the Sasun Commission.

CHAPITRE I.—*Nombre de Maisons et des Habitants des Villages Arméniens de Kavar et de Talori.*

En l'absence d'état civil régulier, de recensement officiel méritant foi complète et vu les données insuffisantes de l'enquête à cet égard, il paraît très difficile de déterminer le nombre exact de maisons et d'habitants des villages ayant eu à souffrir des événements.

Le Tableau suivant fournit les seuls chiffres qu'il ait été permis de recueillir :—

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	Maisons.	Étables.	Granges.
Chenik	38	48	53
Semal	48	84	26
	Chiffres communiqués par la Commission, d'après les sources officielles, l'enquête ne fournissant rien à ce sujet, sauf la déposition du nommé Hebo (Procès-verbal No. 79) qui donne pour Chenik plus de 200 maisons, chiffre évidemment très exagéré.		
Guéliéguénim	6–7 maisons (Tato, Procès-verbal No. 62).		
Guéliéguzan même	80–85 maisons Arméniennes et 4 maisons Kurdes.		
Dans les quartiers qui en dépendent:			
Hasseindsik mezréssi	35 maisons.		
Kchochok	10		
Guéliésan	10		
Alatchak	20		
Kharipchan	20		
Mikhitar	12		
Guevasar	8		
Alian	30		
Belovar	15		
	Maisons et bergeries. Chiffres fournis à la Commission par le Secrétaire du village, nommé Dikran, lors des recherches à Guéliéguzan; d'après chiffres officiels fournis par la Commission, ce village contient 87 maisons, 110 étables, et 9 granges.		
Talori—			
Talori même	(Dit Ekou-doun, dit Verinkiegh.)		
Dawalik	D'après la communication officielle du Mutessarif de Guendj, Talori et ses quartiers comprendraient 67 maisons et 278 habitants. D'autres dépositions permettent de fixer le nombre des maisons de Talori de huit à dix environ par quartier.		
Pourh			
Hartk			
Hosnoud			
Hakmank			
Halorink			
Kholovit			

	Maisons.	Étables et Bergeries.	Granges.
Spagank	12	6	..
Tsorir	Aucune donnée.		
Ergurt	9	5	.
Hetink	16	7	2
Agpi	27	16	..
	Chiffres donnés par la Commission. D'après Simo (Procès-verbal No. 81) Agpi comprendrait 30 à 35 maisons et environ 40 étables, granges, &c. Des maisons 8 ou 10 seraient restées intactes.		
Et le quartier qui en dépend:			
Daghvernik	3 ou 4 maisons (Mariam, Procès-verbal No. 46).		
Aktchesser	20 maisons (Molla Omer, Procès-verbal No. 96),		

D'après le nommé Tono de Talori (Procès-verbal No. 72) dont sur ce point la déposition est unique, les villages de Khedank, Gueliéresh, Tchin, Kirdamank, Khenzan, Kirtanokh, Norgank, Kizilguardir, Ardegonk, Ingouznagh, Sevit, Hetink, et quelques autres auraient été brûlés.

De ce Tableau, qui comprend à la fois les chiffres officiels et ceux résultant des dépositions de l'enquête permet d'évaluer à un minimum de 450 à 500 maisons le nombre des maisons des villages ci-dessus énumérés.

Si l'on prend pour moyenne, comme les données de l'enquête y autorisent, le chiffre de dix personnes par maison, on arrive à un total de 4,500 à 5,000 âmes pour la population des villages précités.

Toute cette population, à la suite des événements, a eu ses maisons brûlées, s'est trouvée sans ressource et dispersée de différents côtés.

CHAPITRE II.—*Actes de voies de fait de Meurtre, de Brigandage, et d'Illégalité, que les Arméniens ont été accusés d'avoir commis pendant l'été de* 1894.

D'après un grand nombre de témoins entendus par la Commission, les Arméniens de Kavar et de Talori, obéissant aux conseils et aux instigations de Mourad, auraient, dès le début du printemps de 1894, formé des bandes armées qui se seraient livrées à une série de crimes de tout genre contre les Kurdes et auraient même commis certains délits d'insoumission à l'égard du Gouvernement, ainsi que d'autres actes ayant été considérés par celui-ci comme des préparatifs à la révolte.

L'examen des actes ci-dessus mentionnés constitue le contenu de ce chapitre.

(A.)—*Actes de Vol, Brigandage, et Meurtre contre les Kurdes.*

(*a.*) Vol des effets des Kurdes Badikanli, Meho, et Temo, emportés de la maison de Girbo de Chenik.

Il résulte des dépositions des nommés Youssouf-ben-Ali, Mehemet-ben-Haïdar, et Peto-ben-Tako de Kouhislam (Procès-verbaux Nos. 54 et 55) que le 5 Mai, 1894, ils rencontrèrent près de Guéliéguénim une bande d'Arméniens armés ayant à leur tête Kirko, Moukhtar de Chenik.

Ils virent, en même temps, des bêtes de somme, chargés d'effets et le même jour ils apprirent à Guéliémansour que les dits effets qui appartenaient aux Kurdes Badikanli, Meho et Temo, avaient été enlevés de la maison de Girbo de Chenik.

Il convient de faire observer que de tous les Badikanli et les habitants de Guéliémansour entendus devant la Commission pas un seul n'a mentionné ce vol et que le susdit Peto, fils de Tako, un des témoins ci-dessus mentionnés, a donné à ce sujet des dépositions contradictoires. Girbo, fils de Manouk (Procès-verbal No. 65) qui, ainsi qu'on peut en conclure de la déposition du Caïmacam de Koulp (Procès-verbal No. 66) est le Girbo dans la maison duquel le vol a été commis, n'y a fait aucune allusion quoiqu'il ait montré beaucoup d'empressement à attribuer d'autres méfaits aux Arméniens.

Dans ces conditions le fait même du vol d'effets de Temo et Meho ne peut pas être regardé comme prouvé.

Quant à la rencontre près de Guéliéguénim d'une bande composée de quarante Arméniens en armes ayant Kirko à leur tête, l'enquête ne donne pas d'indices directes qui appuyent ou qui infirment les déclarations à ce sujet de trois habitants de Kouhislam : elles pourraient trouver une confirmation indirecte dans l'attaque à laquelle cette même bande se serait portée à cette même place cinq jours plus tard, soit le 10 Mai, sur une caravane se rendant à Mouch ; mais comme il sera démontré ci-dessous cette attaque elle-même paraît douteuse.

L'apparition d'une bande armée ayant le Moukhtar de Chenik à la tête, après l'annonce que disent en avoir faite à Guéliémansour par Youssouf, Mehemed, et Peto devait infailliblement attirer l'attention des habitants de ce village, cependant treize d'entre eux entendus devant la Commission n'en ayant fait aucune mention, l'existence même de cette bande ne doit pas être considérée comme démontrée.

(*b.*) Attaque sur une caravane de porteurs se rendant à Mouch.

D'après les déclarations de cinq Kurdes, interrogés par la Commission (Procès-verbal No. 58), une attaque aurait lieu le 10 Mai à Guéliéguénim sur une caravane de porteurs se rendant à Mouch, quarante charges de blé enlevées, quatre Musulmans blessés, dont l'un serait mort quelques jours après. Plainte à ce sujet fut portée à Mouch le 11 Mai (Procès-verbal No. 59).

Quoique des dispositions aient été prises sur le papier pour la poursuite des gens accusés, l'absence de suites effectives données à cette affaire, malgré la gravité des déclarations des plaignants, tendrait à démontrer que les renseignements pris par les autorités locales ne vinrent pas à l'appui des accusations formulées dans la plainte et que l'attaque en question n'eut pas lieu dans les conditions exposées, pas plus qu'elle n'eut les conséquences alléguées par les requérants.

Une plainte datée aussi le 11 Mai, 1894, et lu dans la séance du 5 Février, 1895, confirme cette supposition. Elle parle également d'une attaque par les Arméniens de Chenik au nombre de quinze, parmi lesquels Kirko, sur les habitants des mêmes villages de Djaks et Tiakhs, auxquels appartiennent les cinq témoins ci-dessus mentionnés ; quinze charges de blé auraient été enlevées. Deux des signataires de cette seconde requête portent le même nom que ceux de deux des cinq témoins en question, l'un des individus présents ayant éprouvé à donner son vrai nom un embarras qu fut partagé par ces compagnons.

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La Commission n'a pas fait d'enquête au sujet de cette attaque, se bornant à entendre les plaignants, et sans nier la réalité du fait lui-même que démontre la plainte portée en son temps, il y a lieu de considérer comme restées obscures les conditions dans lesquelles cette attaque aurait eu lieu.

(*c.*) L'enlèvement des moutons de Dervich Agha, de Khochekan, et la blessure faite alors à son fils Ibrahim qui en serait mort ensuite.

L'enquête à ce sujet ne possède que la déclaration de Dervich Agha lui-même (Procès-verbal No. 27). Cette attaque si elle s'est produite, ne pouvait pas rester ignorée d'autant plus qu'elle aurait pu être regardée comme un acte de vengeance des Arméniens contre Dervich Agha, qui avait pris une part directe à l'arrestation de Damadian, cependant Omer-ben-Pourto est le seul (Procès-verbal No. 30) qui en aurait entendu parler. Taleb Effendi (Procès-verbal No. 12) qui donnait sa déposition en se rapportant à des notes écrites ne cite pas cette affaire parmi la longue série de crimes qu'il impute aux Arméniens.

L'absence de plainte en son temps de la part de Dervich Agha, qui, il le déclare lui-même, connaissait les agresseurs et possédait des témoins de l'incident, ne permet pas d'accorder foi à son récit, car malgré l'explication qu'il donne de son silence il pouvait toujours espérer que les autorités, vu ses services, donneraient toutes les suites voulues à sa plainte.

L'enquête à ce sujet n'a pas été poursuivie par la Commission.

(*d.*) Le viol et le meurtre barbare environ le 10 Juin, 1894, de Hedo, femme de Moussa Abdoullah, de Molla Meleki.

Ce crime forme le sujet des dépositions du mari de la victime (Procès-verbal No. 65), et d'Ahmet-ben-Récho (Procès-verbal No. 67). Le Caïmacam de Koulp (Procès-verbal No. 66) confirme le fait de la remise d'une requête y ayant trait, et Ali de Guéliéguzan (Procès-verbal No. 68), parent de la victime, a entendu parler de ce meurtre quelques jours avant les événements sur l'Antok-Dagh. Taleb Effendi (Procès-verbal No. 12) dans sa déposition cite également le meurtre barbare de Hedo, femme de Moussa, mais il ajoute que le mari lui-même fut tué, et il place ce double assassinat parmi les événements de l'année 1893, le regardant comme une cause des combats qui se produisirent cette même année entre Kurdes et Arméniens.

Ni Réched (Procès-verbal No. 24), ni Mehmet-ben-Mirzo (Procès-verbal No. 33), ni Meho (Procès-verbal No. 69), les parents de la femme tuée, en énumérant les actes de violence dont les Arméniens se seraient rendus coupables à l'égard des Kurdes, ne font aucune mention de cet incident qui, s'il avait eu vraiment lieu, ne pouvait échapper à leur attention. De plus, il est difficile d'admettre que le vol de deux bœufs chez le nommé Ahmo-ben-Ahmé de Nederan ait pu provoquer uue plus grande impression sur les Kurdes qu'un meurtre qui aurait éte commis dans de circonstances aussi barbares. Cependant le vol de ces bœufs a trouvé une mention dans presque chaque déposition faite par un Kurde ou Arménien de Khian ou Koulp devant la Commission, tandis que pour le meurtre en question les seules dépositions sont celles ci-dessus mentionnées.

L'absence d'enquête à ce sujet et en son temps, reconnue par le Caïmacam de Koulp lui-même, est avec le récit invraisemblable en soi que fait le mari de la victime, une raison sérieuse qui donne à douter que cette accusation contre les Arméniens soit fondée.

En conséquence, les Soussignés ne sauraient regarder cet incident comme un des faits acquis devant la Commission.

(*e.*) La déclaration unique et très indéterminée de Nadir Agha (Procès-verbal No. 13) au sujet de l'enlèvement par les Arméniens d'une femme Kurde qui après avoir subi de mauvais traitements aurait été relâchée au bout de deux jours, ne présente pas les données voulues pour arriver à une conclusion quelconque.

(*f.*) Meurtre barbare près de Guéliéguénim d'un Kurde dont le cadavre aurait été apporté au camp de Merguémouzan entre le 14 et 17 Juillet (Procès-verbal No. 5).

Cette allégation n'a pas été confirmée ni par les dépositions du Capitaine Moustapha Effendi (Procès-verbal No. 9), ni par celle de Medjid on-Bachi (Procès-verbal No. 5), dont la conversation avec un soldat et niée ensuite par Medjid lui-même aurait fourni l'occasion du rapport qui a trait à cet incident.

(*g.*) Le meurtre par des Arméniens du fils d'Amo, Kurde de Khochekan, et dont le cadavre écorché, d'après le Capitaine Moustapha Effendi, aurait été amené au camp, n'a pas été mentionné dans une seule déposition devant la Commission qui cependant a entendu un très grand nombre de Kurdes Badikanli et autres. Seul Serkiz, fils de Hamza (Procès-verbal No. 42), du village de Hartk, près Talori, dit d'une façon

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indéterminée que les Arméniens non seulement tuaient les Kurdes mais encore écorchaient les victimes.

Dans ces circonstances, l'accusation dont il s'agit ne peut pas être considérée comme prouvée.

(*h.*) Le meurtre au commencement du mois de Juin du Kurde Temich-ben-Mehemet et mutilation du cadavre.

Le nommé Ressoul-ben-Merdjo (Procès-verbal No. 20) est venu de lui-même devant la Commission porter plainte à ce sujet, mais se bornant à de simples dénonciations n'a fourni aucune preuve à l'appui des accusations qu'il a jetées sur les Arméniens.

Aucun des trois Kurdes de Guéliéguzan (Procès-verbaux Nos. 24, 68, et 69) ne fait allusion à ce meurtre quoique d'après Ressoul lui-même ce serait les Kurdes de Guéliéguzan qui les premiers lui en auraient fait part.

Les dépositions des trois Kurdes de Djadjas, voisin du village où demeurait la victime, accusent le fait seul du meurtre mais ne désignent pas les auteurs (Procès-verbal No. 69).

De plus, à en croire Ressoul, il résiderait de façon permanente à Djadjas et par conséquent aurait vu lui-même le cadavre mutilé. Mais il résulte des dépositions de Dervich Agha (Procès-verbal No. 27) que le dit Ressoul habite Mouch depuis longtemps et qu'il a participé avec son frère Mamo à la prise de Damadian.

Dans ces circonstances, en admettant le fait même d'un meurtre dont l'existence d'ailleurs n'a pas été suffisamment démontrée, aucune preuve n'est avancée que ce meurtre ait été commis par les Arméniens.

(*i.*) Le meurtre de Selim (Procès-verbal No. 20) qui d'après les dépositions de son fils Abdullah aurait eu lieu au mois de Juillet 1894, a été commis en réalité en 1893 pendant les événements de Talori, ce qui résulte de la déposition du dit Abdullah lui-même rapprochée de celle de Taleb Effendi (Procès-verbal No. 12).

La Commission n'a pas poursuivi l'enquête sur cet incident.

(*j.*) L'attaque sur le Kurde Mehmet de Tapik.

(*k.*) L'enlèvement de bestiaux chez Ako-ben-Abro.

(*l.*) L'attaque sur Moussa-ben-Sado.

(*m.*) Le meurtre d'un Kurde dont environ 150 moutons furent enlevés (Procès-verbaux Nos. 5, 69, 72, 24).

Chacune de ces quatre accusations ne repose que sur des dépositions uniques et indéterminées qui ne permettent de formuler une conclusion.

(*n.*) L'enlèvement par une bande d'Arméniens armés de deux bœufs appartenant à Ahmo-ben-Ahmé, du village de Nederen, forme le sujet de dépositions nombreuses, indépendantes les unes des autres, parmi lesquelles les principales sont celles d'Osman-ben-Tolo, Arakel, fils de Tavo, Ali-ben-Abdo (Procès-verbal No. 59), Gulavi-ben-Abdo (Procès-verbal No. 60), Tato et Serko (Procès-verbaux Nos. 62 et 63).

Il en ressort de façon incontestable que ce vol a eu lieu et qu'il était le fait d'une bande armée d'Arméniens qui se retirèrent ensuite vers l'Antok-Dagh. Mais il est à noter que les dites dépositions relatives à la poursuite par les Kurdes des Arméniens ravisseurs démentient que les Arméniens de Chenik, Semal, et Guéliéguzan n'étaient ni au moment de l'enlèvement même, ni immédiatement après réunis sur l'Antok-Dagh.

(*o.*) Le meurtre barbare de Husséin-ben-Kalo, du village d'Inekan.

D'après le récit du Capitaine Moustapha Effendi (Procès-verbal No. 9) ce fut le cadavre mutilé d'un homme de Khian habitant dans le voisinage de Merguémouzan qui fut apporté au camp; la victime qui était allée sur l'Antok-Dagh chercher deux bœufs qu'elle avait perdus y fut assassinée.

Arakel, fils de Tavo (Procès-verbal No. 59), Tato (Procès-verbal No. 62), disent avoir entendu parler par les Kurdes partis à la recherche des bœufs d'Ahmo Ahmé du meurtre d'un Kurde d'Inekan, Osman-ben-Talo, Ali-ben-Abdo, Gulavi-ben-Abdo, Maksoud-ben-Hassan, Salih-ben-Omer, Mamo-ben-Temo (Procès-verbal Nos. 59, 60, et 65), confirment le fait du meurtre et du transport du cadavre mutilé à Merguémouzan.

En examinant toutes ces dépositions on voit que tous ces témoins parlent du même fait. Sako (Procès-verbal No. 17) a entendu dire par les zaptiés, au temps des événements mêmes, qu'un cadavre mutilé avait été amené au camp. Dans ces circonstances, le fait doit être considéré comme prouvé; attendu qu'il résulte des dépositions précitées que c'était au moment de la poursuite par les Kurdes de la bande d'Arméniens qui avaient enlevé les bœufs d'Ahmo Ahmé, il est possible que cet homme ait été tué par elle.

Quant au récit de Gulavi-ben-Abdo (Procès-verbal No. 60) qui, se disant témoin oculaire, a donné les plus minutieux détails des actes de cruauté révoltante qu'il aurait

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vu commettre par les Arméniens, il ne convient pas d'y ajouter foi, car ce même Gulavi-ben-Abdo ayant d'après sa propre déclaration accompagné le cadavre jusqu'au camp de Merguémouzan, il est impossible qu'il n'ait pas donné ces détails avec les noms des assassins soit à ses compagnons, soit au Capitaine Moustapha Effendi. Étant donné les contradictions très sérieuses existant entre la déposition de ce dernier et celles des autres témoins relativement aux conditions dans lesquelles la mort du dit Kurde aurait eu lieu, les circonstances environnant cet incident restent très vagues et n'ont pas été suffisamment éclaircies par l'enquête.

(*p.*) Le meurtre du Kurde Karikanli Silo-ben-Kasso.

On doit considérer le fait du meurtre de cet homme, confirmé même par Attam (Procès verbal No. 77) comme prouvé.

En ce qui regarde les auteurs de l'attentat et les détails on ne saurait prendre au sérieux les dépositions de Hazzo, de Spagank (Procès-verbal No. 70), et Gulavi-ben-Abdo (Procès-verbal No. 60), et en l'absence de témoignages directs considérer cette dernière question comme élucidée par l'enquête.

Toutefois la disparition de Silo-ben-Kasso sur des terrains situés près de villages Arméniens, les déclarations des villageois qui nient en avoir aucune connaissance, alors que les dires du susdit Attam prouvent que ce fait ne pouvait être ignoré d'eux, la présence enfin parmi les Arméniens de la bande de Mourad, donnent lieu de fortement soupçonner les Arméniens du meurtre dont il s'agit.

(*q.*) Attaque sur les tentes de Hassan Chaouki (Procès-verbal No. 90) accompagnée d'un vol de bétail, deux hommes ayant été blessés, cette attaque mentionnée aussi fréquemment dans les dépositions entendues que celle ayant eu pour résultat l'enlèvement des deux bœufs d'Ahmo Ahmé et les meurtres de deux Kurdes d'Inekan et de Karikan est confirmé par la déposition de Hassan Chaouki lui-même et par celle de Tato, de Guéliémansour (Procès-verbal No. 62), qui de plus affirme que cet iucident même aurait été la cause des rencontres ultérieures entre les Kurdes et les Arméniens. Étant donné les dépositions unanimes au sujet de cette attaque, elle doit être admise comme s'étant réellement produite, et les auteurs comme étant des Arméniens.

(*r.*) Attaque sur les tentes d'Émin-ben-Kasso.

D'après Émin-ben-Kasso lui-même (Procès-verbal No. 28), Mirzo-ben-Ali et Salih-ben-Ali (Procès-verbal No. 29), cette attaque aurait eu lieu environ le 15 Août aux pâturages nommés Chen près de Chenik et Semal et aurait été suivie par l'enlèvement d'environ 300 moutons, par la mort de quatre Kurdes, et la blessure de trois autres.

Des dépositions de Suleïman-ben-Mollah Ahmet et Ahmo-ben-Mehemet (Procès-verbal No. 72) il résulterait au contraire que cette attaque aurait eu lieu au mois de Juillet.

Si l'on prend en considération la situation dans laquelle se trouvaient les Arméniens le 15 Août sur l'Antok-Dagh et de plus l'endroit où l'attaque alléguée aurait eu lieu, c'est-à-dire près de Chenik, du côté opposé à l'Antok-Dagh, on doit la regarder comme impossible et étant donné que les Kurdes nient avoir soutenu aucun combat avec les Arméniens sauf les deux seuls jours à Tchaï, il est très probable que la perte d'hommes attribuée par Émin-ben-Kasso à l'incident en question n'ait été qu'un résultat des combats qui eurent lieu pendant la première moitié d'Août.

Si au contraire l'attaque avait lieu au mois de Juillet, comme prétendent les témoins Suleïman et Ahmo précité il est alors inexplicable qu'un accident entraînant des conséquences aussi graves n'ait été l'objet d'aucune mention dans les autres témoignages Kurdes et qu'Omer-ben-Pourto (Procès-verbal No. 30) si bien renseigné n'en ait pas même entendu parler.

(*s.*) L'attaque sur les tentes d'Amo Meho de Latchekan aux pâturages du Kourtik-Dagh à deux heures de distance des villages de Chenik et Semal.

Les plus minutieux détails au sujet de cette attaque on été donnés par Amo Meho lui-même (Procès-verbal No. 28), mais quoique très graves n'ont trouvé de confirmation que dans quatre témoignages Badikanli (Procès-verbaux Nos. 71 et 72).

L'affaire en question à ce qu'affirmait le plaignant, se serait passée à Kourtik-Dagh, mais dans ce cas elle n'aurait pu rester ignorée du Capitaine Moustafa Effendi; cependant ni celui-ci ni les autres Kurdes qui énumèrent les méfaits Arméniens n'en font mention, et le Capitaine aussi bien que ces derniers sont absolument muets au sujet des cadavres mutilés des trois Kurdes qui, à en croire Ahmo, auraient été apportés à Merguémouzan.

Cet incident ne doit pas être pris plus en considération que le précédent.

(*t.*) L'enlèvement du bétail de Farho-Oghlou, Kurde d'Inekan.

Il résulterait des dépositions y relatives (Procès-verbaux No. 30, 49, 59, 66,

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67, et 91) que ce vol aurait été commis par une bande d'Arméniens des villages de Kavar et de Talori. A cette accusation les Arméniens répondent simplement par des dénégations et les récits Kurdes se contredisent eux-mêmes sur quelques points

Étant donné les exagérations et les inventions remarquées dans le récit de semblables attaques, il ne paraît pas possible, sans nier que celle-ci ait eu lieu, de se prononcer à son endroit, surtout si l'on prend en considération que les deux principaux témoins de l'incident, Sophi Mehemet et Suleïman de Guedorni (Procès-verbal No. 70) donnent ensuite un récit tout à fait invraisemblable au sujet de la question suivante, savoir—

(*u.*) La perception des Arméniens pendant deux années sur des Musulmans d'argent et de produits agricoles à titre de redevances pour l'Église Arménienne.

Étant donné la situation respective des Kurdes et des Arméniens dans le pays, les premiers étant les maîtres on doit considérer cette accusation qui porte non sur un cas isolé de brigandage, mais s'étend à une période de deux années, comme une pure invention, ayant toute l'apparence d'avoir été imaginée pour servir de contrepoids aux déclarations des Arméniens relatives au hafir que les Kurdes perçoivent d'eux.

(*v.*) La conversion au Christianisme opérée de force par Mourad sur trois Kurdes de Guéliéguzan et sur la famille de Hazzo de Spagank.

Cette accusation malgré les récits circonstanciés mais pleins de contradictions et d'invraisemblances, dont elle est l'objet de la part d'Ali, Mého de Guéliéguzan, et Hazzo de Spagank (Procès-verbaux Nos. 68, 69, et 70), confirmée d'après ouï-dire par Taleb Effendi, ne présente rien qu'une calomnie.

Ces faits sont inadmissibles, si l'on songe aux conditions du pays, le district où ces conversions auraient été oporées étant à proximité immédiate de Mouch, et entouré par des villages Kurdes où les soi-disant victimes auraient pu aisément se réfugier.

(*w.*) Le meurtre de Hadji Agha, Kurde Bekranli, dont le cadavre mutilé aurait été apporté au camp de Merguémouzan.

D'après le Capitaine Moustapha Effendi (Procès-verbaux Nos. 9 et 80), Hadji Agha aurait été tué pendant l'attaque des Arméniens sur les Bekranli, venant à leurs pâturages d'été, mais toutes les autres dépositions à ce sujet, y compris celles des Bekranli eux-mêmes, ne confirment ni le fait de mutilation du cadavre ni celui du combat dans les conditions relatées par le Capitaine Moustapha Effendi. Seul Cherho, Agha des Bekranli (Procès-verbal No. 87), déclare que les cadavres de trois Kurdes tués pendant le premier jour de la lutte avaient été mutilés par les Arméniens, mais il nie que les Bekranli aient eu des relations avec les troupes à Merguémouzan, tandis que de son côté le Capitaine qui les commandait nie avoir eu connaissance d'un combat ayant duré deux jours entre les Arméniens et Kurdes. Vu ces contradictions évidentes et les exagérations démontrées plus haut au sujet de mutilation de cadavres par les Arméniens, on ne peut considérer cette accusation comme digne de foi.

(*x.*) Obstruction, pour les Musulmans, du fait des Arméniens, de routes directes de Khian à Mouch pendant deux ans.

Les dépositions à ce sujet de Salih Agha, Ressoul, Dervich Agha, Salih-ben-Zoro, Medjid Effendi, et Temo (Procès-verbaux Nos. 14, 20, 27, 28, 49, et 51) sont de simples allégations insuffisamment appuyées sur des faits probants.

(*y.*) L'attaque sur les Kurdes Velikanli le 28 Juillet (v. s.), 1894 (Procès-verbaux Nos. 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 30, 36, 41, 51, 59, 73, 74, 75, et 98).

Les nombreuses dépositions à ce sujet tant Arméniennes que Kurdes établissent le fait d'une telle attaque de la part des gens de Chenik, et accompagnée de la mort de trois Kurdes et ne diffèrent que sur les motifs. Les Arméniens les trouvent dans un vol de bétail commis d'abord par les Kurdes tandis que les autres dépositions attribuent l'attaque aux excitations de Mourad et à l'état de révolte où se trouvaient alors les Arméniens. Mais le fait qu'ils restituèrent par égard pour le Gouvernement le bétail enlevé à cette occasion, en se bornant à se plaindre des Velikanli aux agents des autorités venus à Chenik, ainsi que leur attitude à l'égard de ces mêmes agents, montrent bien que cette attaque n'avait pas le caractère révolutionnaire qu'on lui à prêté et n'était que le résultat d'une dispute entre les deux parties intéressées.

Quant à l'accusation de viol de femmes à cette occasion portée contre les Arméniens, elle émane du seul Simonen Oghlou (Procès-verbal No. 98), qui en aurait fait part à Fevzi Effendi, mais n'a pas été confirmée par celui-ci, envoyé spécialement pour examiner l'incident et ne saurait être acceptée sur l'affirmation unique du dit Simonen Oghlou.

(*z.*) Les paroles injurieuses proférées par les bandes Arméniennes contre la religion Musulmane.

Ce fait a été signalé dans beaucoup de dépositions, les témoins ajoutant qu'en

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même temps des Arméniens criaient le nom de Mourad, comme celui de leur chef, et Mourad lui-même n'a pas nié que la chose fût possible, vu les habitudes du pays.

Quoique les témoignages relatifs à cette accusation émanent d'un seul côté, on peut admettre que des injures aient été proférées par les Arméniens au cours de leurs rixes avec les Kurdes.

(B.)—*Actes d'Insoumission des Arméniens à l'égard du Gouvernement et autres agissements considérés par celui-ci comme préparatoires à la Révolte.*

(*a.*) Attaque sur le Caïmacam de Koulp, au village d'Aktchesser, environ le 20 Juin (v. s.), 1894.

Le récit fait à ce sujet par le Caïmacam lui-même et confirmé par la déposition des gens de sa suite (Procès-verbaux Nos. 66, 67) ne paraît que peu vraisemblable, attendu qu'une réunion de plusieurs centaines d'Arméniens armés de Kavar et de Talori joints à ceux d'Aktchesser même, attaquant un Agent du Gouvernement du rang de Caïmacam n'aurait pas pu ne pas être considéré comme un acte de révolte ouverte; cependant, malgré la gravité du cas, on ne voit pas qu'une mesure quelconque ait été prise à la suite de ce grave incident, ce qui permet de penser qu'il était de proportions beaucoup plus modestes que celles qui lui ont été attribuées par le Caïmacam.

D'autre part, comme il ressort du commencement d'une lettre prise sur Mourad, qu'il y eut une opposition réelle de la part des villageois à l'arrestation de leurs Chefs, le fait en question ne peut être regardé autrement que comme un acte d'insoumission envers les Agents du Gouvernement.

Aucun des habitants d'Aktchesser n'ayant été appelé devant la Commission, l'enquête ne présente qu'un des côtés de la question.

(*b.*) Attaque affirmée par le Caïmacam de Sassoun comme ayant été méditée contre sa personne à Kiagashin (Procès-verbal No. 52).

L'enquête ne présente aucune déposition indépendante de celle du Caïmacam lui-même et aucun habitant du village de Kiagashin n'ayant été produit devant la Commission malgré la demande des Délégués, ceux-ci ne peuvent regarder ce fait comme établi, d'autant plus que le Caïmacam ne basait ses propres affirmations que sur les simples informations d'un de ses Agents.

(*c.*) Expulsion de Chenik de Fevzi Effendi, Commandant de Gendarmerie, envoyé à l'occasion de la rixe entre les habitants de ce village et les Kurdes Velikanli, et allégué par Anton Effendi, Vicaire de l'Évêque Catholique de Mouch (Procès-verbal No. 43).

Cette accusation n'a pas été confirmée par Fevzi Effendi même. Les déclarations du prêtre Parsegh disant que des Agents du Gouvernement tels qu'Ali Effendi, Taleb Effendi et autres envoyés pour donner des conseils aux villageois de Kavar et de Talori auraient été chassés par ces derniers, n'ont pas trouvé davantage de confirmation dans les dépositions faites devant la Commission, Taleb Effendi lui-même ayant nié s'être rendu dans ces districts pendant l'été 1894.

(*d.*) Refus par les habitants de Talori d'admettre chez eux pendant quinze ans les agents de l'autorité.

La déposition à ce sujet de Medjid Effendi et du Caïmacam de Koulp (Procès-verbaux Nos. 49 et 66) ce dernier allant jusqu'à affirmer qu'à cause de cette conduite il n'a pu envoyer des agents pour constater l'état des villages détruits de Talori, est en absolue contradiction avec la déposition de Mahmoud Onbachi (Procès-verbal No. 75) qui affirma que pendant son service comme gendarme il passait par Talori sans être aucunement inquiété par les Arméniens.

Mais en admettant que le fait avancé fut vrai, il faudrait en voir la cause dans la situation générale du pays et ne pas rejeter la faute sur les Arméniens vu leur situation au milieu des Kurdes et leur faiblesse numérique.

(*e.*) Attaque méditée par les Arméniens sur les troupes de Merguémouzan.

La plupart des dépositions à cet égard ne reposant que sur des ouï-dire et le Capitaine Moustafa Effendi se basant uniquement sur les informations reçues d'un certain Kurde de Sassoun par l'intermédiaire d'un zaptié, le fait de préméditation d'une attaque sur les soldats ne présente que le caractère d'une simple rumeur.

Les déclarations relatives à ce sujet des témoins Rechid, Ali, et Hazzo (Procès-verbaux Nos. 23, 69, et 70), vu leur caractère invraisemblable et contradictoire, ne peuvent pas être considérées comme fournissant un appui quelconque à l'accusation,

d'autant plus que leur présence parmi les Arméniens sur l'Antok-Dagh est des plus douteuses.

(*f.*) Refus des habitants d'Agpi et Hetink de payer leurs impôts en 1894.

Cette accusation a été portée par le seul Caïmacam de Sassoun (Procès-verbal No. 52), et l'enquête n'a pas été faite à ce sujet. Simo, d'Agpi (Procès-verbal No. 81), a nié le fait.

(*g.*) Introduction de poudre et de plomb à Talori (Procès-verbaux Nos. 49, 53, 69, et 75).

L'enquête en fournit deux cas : l'un constaté par les agents secrets de Medjid Effendi, l'autre vu par les gens de Khian, qui auraient rencontré une bande avec les porteurs des munitions en question. En dépit des affirmations des témoins précités, les conditions dans lesquelles ils ont comparu devant la Commission et les détails de leur récit ne permettent pas de le considérer comme vraisemblable.

(*h.*) Enfouissement des effets, ustensiles de ménage, &c., au printemps de 1894, de la part des gens de Kavar, et présenté dans de nombreux témoignages comme préparatoire à la révolte.

Les Arméniens ont expliqué cette habitude, d'ailleurs ancienne, par la crainte du vol des Kurdes venant dans leurs environs à leurs pâturages d'été.

CHAPITRE III.—*Pièce trouvée sur Mourad au moment de son Arrestation.*

(Traduction.)

Notre estimé compagnon Mourad,

Nous avons reçu ta lettre en question et l'avons accueillie avec beaucoup d'affection et si tu demandes pour nous, il ne nous reste plus rien, parce que voilà douze jours qu'il y a combat sur nous, et grâce à la faveur du Seigneur, c'est nous qui sommes les vainqueurs; mais hier matin le combat a commencé de toutes parts, il y a eu attaque sur nous, il s'est emparé de Husseintzik, et le soir il est entré dans le village et a mis tout en cendres. Aujourd'hui, au matin, il a marché sur nous de tous les points de l'Antok et peu s'en est fallu qu'il ne nous détruisit complètement. Voilà pourquoi, en prenant avec lui la plus grande partie des habitants de Guéliéguzan, Der-Bedros (le prêtre) s'est, à notre insu, dirigé vers Sassoun, c'est pour cela que nous n'avons trouvé autre moyen que l'envoi de deux ou trois femmes auprès d'eux; un peu est retourné. Nous ignorons encore le nombre des gens tués, seulement beaucoup de femmes et de petits enfants ont été brûlés dans les maisons, beaucoup de personnes sont perdues.

(Signé) KERKO MOSSEYAN.
OHAN NIGOYAN.
D. OHANNÈS, *Prêtre.*

Au dos de la lettre :—

A présent nous ignorons ce qui arrivera; il peut se faire que jusqu'au soir ça tourne autrement et qu'il nous passe au fil de l'épée.

CHAPITRE IV.—*Victimes des Événements de Sassoun.*

Les témoignages des Arméniens à ce sujet ne permettent pas d'établir la quantité même approximative des pertes subies par eux et des conditions exactes dans lesquelles elles se sont produites. Étant donné la dispersion qui a été la conséquence des événements, les tendances de quelques Arméniens, logiques d'après leur point de vue, à attribuer aux événements mêmes la mort de gens qui n'ont fait que succomber postérieurement aux suites, et de plus, les détails évidemment imaginaires fournit par quelques-uns, il est presque impossible d'espérer pouvoir dresser un Tableau véridique.

Seul, le plus grand nombre des témoins de Chenik permet une évaluation plus rapprochée de la réalité. Quant aux autres villages et en particulier ceux de Talori, l'enquête ne donne que des indications isolées. Néanmoins l'aspect général de tous les témoignages rend évident le fait que pendant les événements il y a eu meurtre d'hommes, de femmes, et enfants, et les essais de la Commission pour en restreindre le chiffre, donné en particulier par les habitants de Chenik, n'a abouti qu'à résultat de faire découvrir un nombre plus élevé des victimes.

Ci-dessous la liste comprenant les noms des gens de tout âge et de tout sexe dont le meurtre a été déclaré devant la Commission et les circonstances dans lesquelles il aurait eu lieu.

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I.—Du Village de Chenik.

No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.
1	Artin, frère d'Erko	Tué par les soldats pendant la fuite vers Passour, d'après Erko ; Serkis le dit tué, mais ignore par qui	Erko .. 7 Serkis .. 10
2 3	Vartan, 3 ans Aram, 1 an } fils du dit Artin	Tué d'après Erko dans le ravin de Guélié-Henguevi par les soldats. La mort de deux fils d'Artin est confirmée par les dépositions de la nommée Maïmo, mais elle leur donne les noms de Vartan et Simo. Serkis confirme la mort d'Aram pendant la fuite, mais nie l'existence de Vartan	Erko .. 7 Serkis .. 10 Maïmo .. 55 „ .. 66
4 5 6 7	Maïram Chouchan, 6 ans Aïvan, 3 ans (?) 1 an } femme et trois filles de Serkis, fils de Vartan, et neveu du susdit Erko	Serkis nie que ces membres de sa famille aient été tués et affirme que sa femme Maïram et ses deux filles, Chouchan et Aïvan, sont mortes après leur retour à Chenik ; il nie l'existence d'un enfant d'un an qu'on dit être mort Maïmo, Mardiros, frère de Serkis, et Rebé, femme du dit Mardiros, confirment le meurtre de Maïram et de ses deux filles Chouchan et Hamé	Erko .. 7 Serkis .. 10 Maïmo .. 55 Mardiros .. 78 Rebé .. 78
8	Bedros, 7 ans, fils de Mardiros, frère du susdit Serkis	Erko nomme ce Bedros comme fils de Serkis, mais comme on voit des dépositions de Maïmo, ainsi que celles de Mardiros et de sa femme Rebé, Bedros est le fils de ces deux derniers	Erko .. 7 Serkis .. 10 Mardiros .. 78 Rebé .. 78
9	Migréditch, 2 ans, frère du précédent	D'après les dépositions des parents de ces deux enfants, Bedros et Migréditch, ont été abandonnés pendant la fuite de l'Antok-Dagh au moment de l'arrivée des soldats mêlés aux Kurdes, et on ne les a plus revus	.. ..
10	Chouchan, 40 jours, fille de Sako ..	D'après Sako elle aurait été abandonnée dans le village au moment de la fuite, mais les dépositions d'Erko, fils de Kalo, Toné, fils de Miko, et de Mariam, femme de Sako, lui-même montrent que Sako n'a jamais eu d'enfant	Sako .. 17 Erko .. 56 Toné .. 56 Mariam .. 91
11 12	Kourki (Guiro) Manouchké } enfants de Mardo, fils de Kalo et neveu du dit Sako	D'après Sako, Manouchké était la fille d'Erko, frère de Mardo, et les deux enfants auraient été abondonnés à l'Antok pendant la fuite. D'après Mardo, père de ces enfants, Manouchké a été abandonnée dans le village et Kourki tué par les soldats à Guéliéguzan. Le meurtre de ce dernier est confirmé par Toné, fils de Miko, mais ce même Toné nie l'existence de Manouchké ; et Erko, fils de Kalo, affirme que Manouchké était mort deux ans auparavant ; il nie en outre l'existence de Kourki.	Sako .. 17 Toné .. 56 Erko .. 56 Mardo .. 54
13 14 15 16 17	Artin, fils de Bedo .. .. Girbo, fils du dit Artin Gulé, femme du dit Girbo Chouchan, fille de ces deux derniers Mardo, fils de Saak, oncle du dit Artin	Rendé, femme d'Artin, affirme le meurtre de ces cinq personnes en attribuant la mort des hommes aux soldats, mais ignore par qui ont été tuées les autres ; elle n'en a vu que les cadavres. Maïmo confirme le meurtre de ces cinq personnes. D'après Artin, Artin fils de Bedo, et Girbo son fils auraient été tués à Guéliésan.	Rendé .. 63 Maïmo .. 65 „ .. 63 „ .. 66 Artin .. 26 Hazé .. 81
18	Manouk, fils du dit Girbo ..	Les dépositions d'Artin au sujet de le mort de Manouk ne sont pas confirmées par la déposition de Rendé, grand'mère du dit Manouk et à sa place elle donne comme morte Chouchan (No. 16 de la présente liste).	Artin .. 26 Rendé .. 63
19 20 21 22	Migro, 2 ans, fils de Bedros, fils d'Artin Nouré, 3 ans, fille de Merké, frère du dit Bedros Apré, frère de Nouré Hanémik, fille du dit Bedros	Bedros dit que ces deux enfants ont été abandonnés sur l'Antok-Dagh, mais Boghos, son frère, affirme que Nouré est morte après le retour au village. Artin dit l'abandon de Garabet et Chouchan, son petit-fils et sa petite fille ; mais Garabet donné comme fils de Bedros est vivant, et Merké n'avait pas de fille nommée Chouchan, ce qu'on voit des dépositions de Bedros et de Boghos. Il est donc évident qu'Artin s'est trompé de noms et que ses deux petits enfants restés au milieu des soldats à l'Antok-Dagh sont Apré et Hanémik	Bedros .. 53 Boghos .. 66 Artin .. 26
23 24	Toné, fils de Migro .. .. Avedis, fils du dit Toné, 5 ou 6 ans	Tués ensemble d'après Hebo par les soldats accompagnés par les Kurdes pendant la fuite	Maïmo .. 55 „ .. 66 Sako .. 17 Hebo .. 79
25	Ossep, fils de Kechich	Tué pendant la fuite	Maïmo .. 55 „ .. 66 Sako .. 17
26	Djoré, fils de Kasso	Tué pendant la fuite de Chenik	Sako .. 17 Erko .. 56 Maïmo .. 55 „ .. 66 Girbo .. 65

No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.	
27	Djoré, fille de Hebo, femme de Gourdjo, fils de Mossé	Tué à Keupri-Cherif-Han pendant le combat	Hebo ..	79
			Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			Erko ..	56
			Sako ..	17
28	Chaké, fille de Sako, fils de Temé, et femme de Mardo, fils de Mossé	Tué pendant la fuite à l'Antok-Dagh. D'après Hebo s'est jetée avec d'autres femmes dans un précipice	Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			Erko ..	56
			Hebo ..	79
29	Kirko, fils de Mossé, Moukhtar de Chenik	Tué par les Kurdes pendant la fuite de l'Antok-Dagh ..	Hatcho ..	16
			Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			Hebo ..	79
30	Artin, fils de Kasso	Les deux tués d'après Artin à Guéliésan	Maïmo ..	55
31	Migro, fils d'Agop		,, ..	63
			,, ..	66
			Artin ..	26
			Sako ..	17
32	Girbo, fils de Tono	Tué à Guéliésan	Artin ..	26
33	La mère de Khazar, fils de Boghos..	Tué par les balles d'hommes du Gouvernement pendant la fuite de l'Antok-Dagh	Khazar ..	33
34	La fille de Manouk, fils de Nigo, de 8 ans	Disparue pendant la fuite de l'Antok-Dagh	Manouk ..	37
35	Khazar, fils de Serke, mari de Maïmo	Tué par les soldats d'après Maïmo	Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			Girbo ..	65
36	Garabet, de 11 ans, fils de Maïmo ..	Massacré d'après la première déposition de Maïmo, qu'elle a rétracté ensuite en disant qu'il avait succombé à la peur pendant les événements, puis enfin qu'il est mort après le retour au village	Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			,, ..	91
37	Ohannès, fils de Loucig	Tué d'après Khazé, sa belle-sœur, par les soldats et jeté dans les fosses. Ses enfants ont été tués par les soldats	Maïmo ..	55
38	Artin } enfants du dit Ohannès		,, ..	66
39	Moucho }		Khazé ..	58
40	Artin, fils d'Aram	Tués pendant les événements	Maïmo ..	55
41	Migro, fils d'Ové	Id.	,, ..	63
42	Mardiros, fils d'Agop	Id.	,, ..	66
43	Serkis, fils d'Ohannès	Tués par les soldats sur l'Antok-Dagh	Maïmo ..	55
44	Hampo, son fils de 6 ans.. ..	Id.	Garabet ..	76
45	Ohan, 4 ans } enfants de Garabet, fils d'Ohannès	Tués sur l'Antok-Dagh par les soldats	Garabet ..	76
46	Varte, 5 ans }			
47	Garabet, fils d'Ohannès	Tué pendant les événements. Un homme du nom de Garabet, fils d'Ohannès, s'est présenté dans la séance du 26 Avril (Procès-verbal No. 76), mais de sa déposition, ainsi que de celle de Kiatib Mikhaïl, il résulte qu'il a un homonyme dont le sort est ignoré	Maïmo ..	55
			Garabet ..	76
			Mikhaïl ..	76
48	Manouk, fils d'Artin	Tué pendant les événements. Erko, fils de Kalo, cite un enfant de ce nom comme tué. Manouk, fils d'Artin et de Rendé, et mari de Bulbul, est vivant. D'après les documents un Manouk, fils d'Artin, est mort depuis longtemps. Maïmo rétracte sa déposition au sujet de la mort de Manouk, fils d'Artin (Procès-verbal No. 91)	Maimo ..	55
			,, ..	91
			Erko ..	56
			Rendé ..	63
			Khaté ..	57
49	Khazar, fils de Recho	Tué près de Guéliéguzan	Sako ..	17
			Erko ..	56
			Toné ..	56
			Migro ..	56
			Mairam ..	57
50	Haïro, enfant, fils de Mariam et de Kiragos, fils de Recho	Arraché par les zaptiés pendant la fuite des mains de sa mère et jeté par terre	Maïram ..	
51	Megreditch, fils d'Ohannès, un enfant	Tué pendant les événements	Erko ..	56
52	Bedros, fils de Martiros et de Haté .	Tué pendant les événements	Haté ..	57
53	Aïvan } enfants d'Artin, fils de Serké	Abandonnés au moment de la fuite au village dans la maison qui a été brûlée ensuite	Haté ..	57
54	Abgar }			
55	Eghassab } enfants de Manouk, fils d'Artin	Id.		
56	Archak }			
57	Varté, fille de Khazzé et de Tono, fils de Loucig	Abandonnée au village	Hazzé ..	58
58	Serkis, fils d'Artin et d'Aïvan ..	Disparu pendant les événements	Maïmo ..	55
			Aïvan ..	58

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No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.
59 60	Varté } filles de Migro, fils de Hunavé } Miko	Une disparue pendant les événements, l'autre morte de peur après le retour	Maïmo .. 63 Toné .. 63
61	Serkis, fils d'Avé	Tué pendant les événements	Maïmo .. 66 Attam .. 66
62	Melko, fils de Mardiros	Id.	Maïmo .. 66
63	Varté, femme de Girbo, fils de Kalo	Perdue pendant la fuite de l'Antok-Dagh à l'arrivée des soldats et des Kurdes	Bedros .. 78
64 65 66	Nazar } enfants de Mariam, fille de Girbo } Gopé et d'Artin, fils de Avedis } Giro	D'après la mère Mariam tués pendant les événements. Artin, fils de Giro, nie avoir eu des enfants nommés Girbo et Avedis et affirme que Nazar n'est mort qu'en automne. La mère interrogée une seconde fois confirme sa première déposition en ajoutant que c'est par peur que son mari a nié avoir eu ces deux enfants	Mariam .. 58 „ .. 91 Artin .. 81
67 68	Mardiros .. .. .. Mardo	Tués pendant les événements	Erko .. 7 Sako .. 17 Haté .. 57
69	Kiragos, 1 an, fils de Hebo ..	Abandonnée par sa mère pendant la fuite	Hebo .. 79
70 71	Hampo, 2 ans } enfants d'Aro, fils Guelivar, nouveau-né } de Serkis	Abandonnés par leur père pendant la fuite	„ .. 79
72	Megreditch, fils de Merké, fils d'Aro	Id.	„ .. 79
73	Sako, fils de Temo	Vieillard resté au village et tué	„ .. 79
74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102	Hatcho, fils de Serkis .. .. Simó, fils d'Artin Migro, fils d'Ové Ohannès, fils de Mossé Ohan, fils d'Osman Nazar, úls d'Artin Vartan, fils de Mardo Khazar, fils de Gurdjo Kirko, fils de Nigo Mardiros, fils de Nigo Guiro, fils de Mardo Stepo, fils de Djeré Khazar, fils de Kechich Kirko, fils de Pollo Artin, fils de Mardiros Miko, fils de Mordiron Guiro, fils de Boghos Aïvan, fille de Bollé, femme de Recho Hatché, femme de Marké Mariam, fille de Merké, femme de Girbo Merké, fils de Guiro Hatché, femme d'Ohan Hatché, fille de Stepo, femme de Mardo Saro, femme d'Ohannès Ogdé, fille de Kiragos, femme de Gourdjo Hamé, fille de Mardo Chemé, fille d'Ohan Rebé, femme d'Artin Ogdé, fille de Serké, femme d'Erko	De 74 à 102 sont donnés par la nommée Maïmo comme tué, mais dans ses interrogatoires subséquents elle déclare qu'elle n'est pas sûre du meurtre de ces gens. Parmi eux se trouve Nazar, fils d'Artin, donné comme un enfant par Mariam (Procès-verbal No. 58) et Guiro (No. 11 de cette liste). Un Mardiros, fils de Nigo, a été entendu dans la séance du 8 Mars (Procès-verbal No. 37) et Maïmo (Procès-verbal No. 91) s'est rétractée à son sujet. Erko dans sa déposition (Procès-verbal No. 7) ne dit rien de la mort de sa propre femme Ogdé. D'après le Moukhtar de Kizil-Agatch une Rebé, femme d'Artin, se trouverait dans ce village. Un enfant du nom de Khazar, fils de Gourdjo, a été amené devant la Commission (Procès-verbal No. 79)	
103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110	Erko, fils de Kalo .. .. Migro, fils de Miko Bedo, fils de Kalo Bulbul, fille de Mardo et femme de Manouk Rendé, fille de Kourki et femme d'Artin, fils de Bedo Khazé, fille de Recho, femme de Migro Attam, fils d'Ové Boghos, fils d'Artin	Du No. 103 jusqu'à No. 110, inclusivement, étaient cités par Maïmo comme tués, tous ont été produits devant la Commission, excepté la nommée Bulbul, qu'a été grièvement blessée pendant les événements, comme il résulte de la déposition de sa belle-mère Rendé. Le nommé Attam, fils d'Ové, est également blessé	
111	Mariam, fille de Merké, femme de Girbo	Citée par Maïmo peut-être par erreur pour Gulé, fille de Merké, et femme de Girbo (No. 15)	.. ..
112	Artin, fils de Guiro	Cité comme mort par sa femme mais produit ensuite devant la Commission et reconnu comme vivant	Mariam .. 58 „ .. 91 Artin .. 81
113	Boghos, fils de Mardo, fils de Saak..	Tué pendant les événements d'après sa mère	Hazzé .. 81
114	Chouchan, fille du dit Mardo ..	Tête coupée	Hazzé .. 81

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II.—Du Village de Semal.

No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.	
1	Ohannès, neveu de Sako, de Chenik	Tué au camp de Guéliéguzan avec le prêtre Ohannès ..	Sako ..	17
2	Boghé			
3	Khatcho } fils de Mardo.. ..	Id.	Tavo ..	19
4	Manouk		Mariam ..	62
5	Attam } fils du dit Hatcho ..	Id.	Ossep ..	64
6	Serko..	Id.	Egho ..	32
7	Mardo	Id.	Simo ..	31
8	Garabet	Id.	Egho ..	32
9	Manouk, fils de Vartan	Tué au camp de Guéliéguzan avec le prêtre Ohannès ..	Chahbaz ..	43
10	Cherho, fils d'Ohannès	Id.		
11	Stepan			
12	Ohannès } fils du dit Cherho ..	Id.	Mariam ..	61
13	Giro			
14	Boghos, fils de Vartan	Id.		
15	Vartan, fils de Vartan	Id.		
16	Gabriel, frère d'Ossep	Id.	Ossep ..	64
17	Toné, fils de Hebo	Id.	Mariam ..	62
18	Boghos, fils d'Artin	Id.		
19	Toro, de 15 ans	Id.	Dilo ..	61
20	Kirkor, fils de Boghos, enfant ..	Id.		
21	Le prêtre Ohannès	Id.		
22	Ovak, jeune garçon	Blessé au camp de Guéliéguzan d'après sa propre déclaration	Ovak ..	21
23	Hanéghine, de 5 à 6 ans, fille de Khatcho, frère de Tavo et père d'Ossep	Abandonnés au village. D'après Ossep, Hanéguine, sa sœur, aurait été trouvée par lui mort sur la poitrine de son père à Guéliéguzan	Tavo ..	19
			Ossep ..	64
24	Noubar, leur parente très vieille			
25	Bedros, de 8 à 9 ans			
26	Mano, enfant, fils du cousin de Tavo	Tué à coups de baïonnette sur l'Antok-Dagh	Tavo ..	19
27	Ardesh, de 4 à 6 ans, fils de Boghé, frère de Tavo	Tué pendant la fuite par les soldats	Ossep ..	64
			Tavo ..	19
28	Setrak, autre fils du dit Boghé ..	Tué pendant les événements	Ossep ..	64
29	Setrak, de 2 ans, petit-fils de Mariam, qui n'est pas parent de Tavo	Jeté par sa mère à Guéliéguzan et mort de peur ..	Mariam ..	61
30	Archak, garçon de 4 ans	D'après Tavo tués près de Hazzo par les soldats. Mariam, leur mère, n'a pas été interrogée directement à leur égard, mais dans ses réponses aux questions générales sur les massacres pendant la fuite de l'Antok-Dagh, elle n'en a pas parlé	Mariam ..	62
31	Mermere, fille de 6 ans, enfants du frère de Tavo, Korké, et de Mariam		Tavo ..	19
32	Ossep, un des parents de Tavo, son enfant a été pris par un Lieutenant de zaptiés	Tué pendant les événements d'après Tavo. Ossep entendu devant la Commission n'est pas marié, ce n'est donc pas de lui que Tavo a voulu parler	Tavo ..	19
			Ossep ..	64
33	Cherho } fils de Stepan	Tués sur la Montagne de Tchaï pendant la fuite du village	Simo ..	31
34	Ohan		Egho ..	32
35	Toné, fils de Hetcho	Id.	Chahbaz ..	43
36	Toré, femme d'Aré, une très vieille..	Restée dans le village au moment de la fuite	Simo ..	31
37	Une autre très vieille femme dont Simo ignore le nom	Id. .. .. C'est peut-être Noubar citée par Tavo (No. 24)	„ ..	31
38	Merké, fils de Sefer ..			
39	Serkis, fils d'Aroutin ..			
40	Hebo, oncle de Simo ..	Tués pendant les événements	„ ..	31
41	Khazar			
42	Le fils du prêtre Ohannès, âgé de 5 à 6 ans	Abandonné à Guéliéguzan	„ ..	31
43	Khaté, femme du grand-oncle Egho	Abandonnée au village. Possiblement la même que Toré, femme d'Aré (No. 36)	Egho ..	32
44	Aré, oncle d'Egho	Tué pendant les événements	„ ..	32

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No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.
45	Boghos, frère d'Erko ..	Tous tués à Guélié-Henguevi par les soldats pendant la fuite	.. 32
46	Bedros, fils d'Erko ..		
47	Oskian, fils du dit Bedros		
48	Toné, parent d'Erko ..		
49	Le fils de ce Toné, âgé de 2 ans		
50	Merké, oncle d'Egho ..		
51	Sako, parent d'Egho ..		
52	Gulé, femme du dit Sako ..		
53	La fille de ces derniers nommée Maké		
54	Melko, frères d'Egho	Ont disparu pendant les événements	„ .. 32
55	Khazar, frères d'Egho		
56	Manouk, frère de Stepan	Disparus pendant les événements. D'après des morceaux d'habits Stepan pense avoir trouvé leurs cadavres dans un ravin près de Guéliéguzan	Stepan .. 37
57	Khazar, fils du dit Manouk		
58	Artin, fils du dit Manouk		
59	Arakel, âgés de 4 à 5 ans, fils d'Asatour	Morts de peur pendant la fuite	Asatour .. 39
60	Parsegh, âgés de 4 à 5 ans, fils d'Asatour		
61	Tono, père de Serkis	Disparu pendant les événements	Serkis .. 49
62	Mardo, mari de Zeri, fille de Mardiros d'Agpi	Son cadavre mutilé a été trouvé entre Kiagashin et Chouchamerg	Mariam .. 46
63	Chero	Tués pendant le combat. Des gens de ce nom ayant été précédemment mentionnés, on ne saurait dire si ce sont les mêmes ou des homonymes	Stepo .. 50
64	Vartan		
65	Hatcho		

Tavo (Procès-verbal No. 19) sans pouvoir citer les noms dit qu'environ une vingtaine d'enfants et vieillards auraient été abandonnés dans le village et y auraient péri :—

2	dans la maison du nommé	Toné.	
2	„	„	Chabgoudan.
1	„	„	Hebo.
1	„	„	Ohan.
3	„	„	Artin.
1	„	„	Manouk.
1	„	„	Chahbego Khazar.
1	„	„	Kazar.

III.—Du Village de Guéliéguzan.

No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.
1	Un vieillard, oncle de Serko ..	Tué pendant la fuite du village	Serko .. 25
2	Le fils de Serko	Disparu pendant la fuite	„ .. 25
3	Recho, fils d'Erko	Tués par les soldats dans le ravin de Guéliésan	„ .. 25
4	Migro, fils de Ferho		Stepan .. 50
5	Toné, fils de Ferho		Rehan .. 57
6	Serkis, fils d'Avo	Tué par les soldats dans le ravin de Guéliésan	Serko .. 25 Rehan .. 57
7	Henan, fils de Giro	Tués par les soldats dans le ravin de Guéliésan ..	Serko .. 25
8	Son frère, âgé de 7 ans		
9	Mardo, fils d'Erko et cousin de Serko		
10	Un enfant de 7 ans, frère d'Asatour		
11	Hario, fils de Vartan		
12	Ono, fils de Miko		
13	Hafsé, femme de Serko, fils d'Avo ..	Serko a vu leurs cadavres	Serko .. 25
14	Une autre Hafsé, fille de Nouré et femme d'Avo		Rehan .. 57
15	Une autre femme de nom inconnu		
16	Serkis, oncles de Kirangos	Tués à Guéliésan	Kiragos .. 25
17	Khazar, oncles de Kirangos		
18	Chemé, fille de Serko, femme de Guirbo, mère de Khazar et de Gopé	Abandonnée et tuée à Guéliéguzan	Kiragos .. 25 Stepan .. 50
19	Chemé, femme d'Ohan, mère d'un autre Khazar qui a été tué, très âgée	Abandonnés à Guéliéguzan	Stepan .. 50
20	Vartan, également très âgé ..		

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No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.
21	Nazé, mère de Medjdo	Tuée pendant la fuite du village	Kiragos .. 25 Medjdo .. 27
22 23	Serkis, sourd-muet } deux cousins de Manouk, fils de Hebo Khazar }	Tués à Pambouk-Tarlassi par les soldats et les Kurdes mêlés	Manouk .. 34
24 25 26 27	Toro, fils de Saro .. .. Sa femme Maïro .. .. Serkis } leurs enfants .. Abraham }	Tués près d'Agpi pendant la poursuite des soldats ..	Saro .. 36 Stepo .. 47
28	La fille de Bedros, fils de Hatcho ..	Tuée dans la forêt par une balle quand les soldats et les Kurdes étaient mêlés	Bedros .. 36
29 30 31 32 33	Khazar, fils de Vartan .. .. Khazar, fils de Ogné .. .. Guiro, fils de Keva .. .. Mardo, fils de Balo .. .. Mardo, fils de Erko	Tués par les soldats dans le ravin de Guéliéresh ..	Stepan .. 50
34	Serkis, fils de Stepan	Tué près de Hetink	„ .. 50
35 36	Artin, âgé de 6 ans } enfants de Chouchan, âgé de 8 ans } Rehan	Tués d'après Rehan par les soldats, ou zaptiés, ou hommes du Gouvernement	Rehan .. 57
37	Nazé, femme de Polo, fils de Mardo	Tuée pendant les événements	„ .. 57
38	Le prêtre Bedros	Tué au combat de Guéliéguzan d'après Girbo, mais cette explication de la mort du prêtre Bedros est fausse comme le prouve la lettre du prêtre Ohannès trouvée parmi les papiers de Mourad.	Girbo .. 65
39 40	Le fils de Hatcho .. .. Le nommé Asatour	Blessés.	Serko .. 25

IV.—Du Village d'Agpi (deux témoins entendus).

No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.
1 2	Misro, mère de Boghdi, vieille femme Témé, mère de Bedros, vieille femme	Abandonnées et tuées dans le village	Mariam .. 46
3	Avo, fils de Toro, âgé de 7 à 8 ans..	Tué pendant les événements	„ .. 46
4	Avo, fils de Mardo	Agé de 4 à 5 ans, et tué d'après Mariam pendant les événements. Simo dit qu'il y a un Avo dans la plaine de Mouche	Mariam .. 46 Simo .. 81
5 6 7 8	Vartan } fils de Kerké et neveux Mossé } de Simo Hebo, fils de Mossé et frère de Simo Kevo, fils de Hitcho et neveu de Simo	Tué à Guéliéresh par les soldats et les Kurdes..	Mariam .. 46 Simo .. 81
9	Toné, fils de Manouk	Tué pendant les événements	Simo .. 81 Mariam .. 46
10 11	Hamo } fils de Khasso .. .. Miro }	Tués d'après Mariam pendant les événements, mais d'après Simo seraient actuellement au village	Simo .. 81 Mariam .. 46
12	Boghos, fils de Manaro	Tué pendant les événements	Mariam .. 46 Simo .. 81
13	Kirko, fils de Kiragos	Tué d'après Mariam, mais d'après Simo se trouverait au village	„ .. 81
14 15 16	Mardiros, fils de Saak .. .. Hatcho, fils de Maïré .. .. Bedré, fils de Khosso	Tués d'après Mariam pendant les événements. Simo ne connaît pas de tels noms	„ .. 81
17	Melkom, fils de Mardiros.. ..	Tué pendant les événements	„ .. 81
18	Khoumar, vieille femme	Tuée dans le village et mutilée	„ .. 81
19 20	Khatcho, fils de Manouk.. .. Gopé, aveugle	Vieillards, tués dans le village	„ .. 81
21 22	Kirko, fils de Simo .. .. Artin, fils de Korké et neveu de Simo	Blessés..	„ .. 81

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V.—Du Village de Spagank (un témoin).

No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.	
1	Erko, mari de Maké	Tués par les soldats à coups de baïonnette au village et pendant la fuite	Maké ..	20
2	Artin, âgé de 12 ans			
3	Kirkor, âgé de 9 ans } fils de Maké			
4	Khatchadour, âgé de 4 ans			
5	Khazar	Disparus pendant les événements. Maké ne les a pas revus	Maké ..	20
6	Saro			
7	Aranos } enfants de Maké ..			
8	Agop			
9	Khazo, enfant en bas âge de Maké ..	Mort plus tard à Alvarendj..	Maké ..	20
10	Cherho	Tué par les Kurdes Bozikli que commandait Achour ..	Gaspard ..	74

VI.—De Talori (quatre témoins et onze prisonniers).

No.	Noms des Victimes.	Circonstances de leur Mort d'après les Témoignages.	Noms des Témoins et Numéros des Procès-verbaux.	
1	Khatcho, fils de Migro	Tués par les soldats et Kurdes mêlés. Khaté tuée à coups de pierre	Migro ..	41
2	Gaspard			
3	Aré } frères de Migro ..			
4	Khaté, femme de Serkis et belle-sœur de Migro			
5	Kevo, fils des dits Khaté et Serkis ..			
6	Agop, fils de Bedjo et enfant de 4 ans	Tué par les Kurdes de Mollah Omer	Boghos ..	75
			Tono ..	73
7	Gaspard, fils de Bedros de Hakmank	Tué pendant la fuite par les Kurdes de Papori Guendjo ..	Boghos ..	75
8	Kevo, de Pourh	Tué par les mêmes Kurdes	Tono ..	73
9	Varte, femme de Teré	Tuée par les Kurdes Belekli	Khatcho ..	82
10	Kemo, père de Boghos	Tué dans les montagnes pendant les événements ..	Boghos ..	75
11	Abdo, frère de Boghos			
12	Artin	Tués près de Spagank	Attam ..	77
13	Boghos, frère de Migro	Blessés	Migro ..	41
14	Stepan, fils de Merké et neveu de Migro			

(Translation.)

IN consequence of the events of which the district of Sasun, included in the Sandjaks of Mush and Ghendj, in the Vilayet of Bitlis, had been the scene during the summer of the year 1894, the Imperial Ottoman Government decided to send to the spot a Commission charged to hold the necessary inquiry there, and obtained from the Powers represented at Erzeroum authority for their Consuls to be represented by Delegates attached to the Commission.

The Commission was composed of his Excellency Shefik Bey, President; Djelal Bey, Madjid Bey, General Tewfik Pasha, and Omer Bey, members, the last named ceasing to act on the 29th of January, on being nominated to the post of Vali of Bitlis *ad interim*.

The Delegates of the French Consul, the British Consul, and the Russian Consul-General at Erzeroum were respectively MM. Vilbert, Shipley, and Prjevalsky. They have the honour to set forth below the results of the inquiry, but they think it indispensable to begin by taking a rapid survey of the country in which the events took place, and then to investigate the relations between the native Armenian and Kurdish populations, finally passing to the examination of the events themselves, and the consideration of the questions arising from them, namely, whether there was really a revolt, whether massacres did actually occur, and who should be held responsible.

In the southern part, and on the edge of the plain watered by the Kara Su, one of the affluents of the Murad Su (Eastern Euphrates), and at the foot of a chain of mountains bordering this plain on the south-west, is situated the town of Mush, the chief town of the sandjak of the same name, in the Vilayet of Bitlis.

The various portions of this chain (which is known as the Mountains of Mush) lying near the town itself, are called Kurtik-Dagh, Hatsherash Sevsar ("Black Rocks"); their southern and south-western slopes facing the plain are joined by a series of heights of lesser altitude to the great range of the Antok-Dagh and Tsovasar, thus forming a series of valleys and ravines watered by the springs of the Batman-Su; it is there that the Armenian villages of Kavar, Shatak, and Talori are situated.

In one of these valleys, eventually running round the north-west side of the Antok-Dagh, and in its upper extremity, are Shenik, Semal, and Alian, at half-an-hour's distance from one another, and three to three-and-a-half hours from Mush. Similarly situated at the upper end of a second valley, which runs to the south-west of the Antok-Dagh, and between this mountain and Mount Tsovasar, are the six villages of Shatak: Kop, Ghermav, Iritsank, Tapik, Kiagashin, and Shushamerg, then Agpi and Hetink on the side of the Tsovasar-Dagh; and then, facing Agpi, and in a transversal ravine, is Ghelieguzan, one of the villages of Kavar, separated from Shenik and Semal by heights named Keupru-Sherif-Han and Chaï, which connect the Antok-Dagh with the Mountains of Mush; the paths leading from Shenik and Semal to Ghelieguzan pass over these heights.

Beyond Ghelieguzan and Agpi, to the south-west, the ravines forming the very steep and wooded spurs of the Antok-Dagh contain the villages of Ergart, Tsorir, Spagank, the wards composing Talori, named Dawalik, Purh, Hosnud, Hartk, Hakmank, Kholovit, Halorink, Talori itself, known as Ekudun, or Verin Kiegh, then Ishhantzor, known as Akchesser, Sevit, Inguznak, and the wards belonging to these various villages. The most distant is that of Talori, the wards of which, situated at one or two hours' distance from each other, are five or six hours from Ghelieguzan, with which two paths connect it: one by the mountain direct, passing by the ravine of Gheliesan and Afkart, the other by the ravine of Agpi, Hetink, and Spagank.

The villages of Kavar, Shenik, Semal, and Ghelieguzan, of which Alian is only a ward, belong to the Caza of Mush, the villages of Shatak, Agpi, Hetink, Spagank, Tsorir, and Ergart to that of Sasun, and all the rest to the Caza of Kulp.

The approximate numbers of houses and inhabitants in this district, as shown by the evidence furnished by the inquiry, will be found in the Annexes (Chap. I).

Relations of the Armenians with the Kurds.

The country, of which a short sketch has just been given, contains fertile tracts and rich pastures well adapted for rearing large numbers of cattle, and on the Talori side there are even iron mines, worked by the villagers, who used to manufacture the necessary agricultural implements and supply them to the surrounding districts.

The Armenian population inhabiting this portion of the Vilayet of Bitlis is surrounded by a large number of Kurdish villages on the side of Sasun, Khian, and Kulp. In the summer the half-settled Kurdish tribes, of which the two chief are the Bekranli and the Badikanli, with many subdivisions (Kabilé) bearing different names, come from the direction of Diarbekir and Silivan to the mountains of Tsovasar, Antok, and Kurtik-Dagh, mentioned above, to pasture their herds.

Thanks to the grouping of the Armenian villages, and the configuration of the ground, and also to the rivalry existing among the Kurds themselves, the inhabitants of Kavar and Talori had, up to this time, been able to maintain good relations with their neighbours and visitors the Kurds; they lived, to use the expression of a witness, like brothers "of earth and water," and the difficulties which arose among them, due to thefts of cattle alternately carried off and retaken, always ended by being settled to the satisfaction of the parties interested.

It should be added that if the relations of the Kurds with the Armenians were of a satisfactory character, it was because the latter, in order to secure assistance and protection from the Kurdish Aghas in case of need, had for a long period paid them an annual due, in proportion to their resources, known by the name of "hafir," and consisting of a certain portion of all their crops, cattle, silver, ore, with the addition of articles of clothing, agricultural implements, &c. When the daughter of an Armenian peasant marries, his

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Agha levies, under the name of "hala," half the sum paid by the bridegroom, by the custom of the country, to the bride's parents.

Every village and house is dependent on one or more Aghas, who look upon the different levies made as a proprietary right, going so far as to hand it on as an inheritance, or to sell it by private contract.

If an Armenian refuses for any reason to pay, the Agha compels him to do so by force, stealing his cattle, or doing him some injury. The Aghas of the villages of Kavar and Talori were chiefly the Kurdish Aghas of Sasun (Kharzan).

This, at any rate, is the description which the Armenians almost unanimously gave of the hafir, but it is only right to add that the evidence given goes to show that, though the requirements of this tribute may have pressed upon the people of Talori and Khian, they were much less severe at Ghelieguzan, Semal, and Shenik, an inhabitant of which latter place stated that the "hafir" was not paid there.

The Kurds and their Aghas heard before the Commission declare that they do not even know the word "hafir" or its meaning, state that no such tribute has existed for fifty years, and explain the levies made by certain Aghas on the Armenians as a debt due from the tiller of the soil to its proprietor.

Nevertheless, the fact that the "hafir" existed to within the last few years is proved by the declaration of Taleb Effendi, one of the agents of the authorities at Mush, who, having been sent on frequent missions into these districts, ought to be well informed, and who, in his deposition, speaks of a Kurd having gone two years ago to Talori for the purpose, he says in so many words, "of levying hafir."

The explanations given on the subject in an official communication emanating from the Administrative Council of Mush, read, but only in part, at the sitting of the Commission on the 7th June, 1895, cannot be considered as proof, or as being of an absolutely independent character.

For three or four years past the relations between the Armenian villages in question and the Kurds had begun to assume a hostile character, which may be attributed to two causes: on the side of the Kurds, the religious propaganda of their Sheiks which reconciled the tribes hitherto on bad terms, and prohibited all quarrels arising from the protection which any one tribe might extend over the Armenians to the disadvantage of another; and on the side of the Armenians the agitation fomented by such men as Damadian, who represented to them their subjection to the Kurds as a sort of slavery against which the Government afforded them no protection, and stirred them up to cast off the yoke. The year 1893 affords a proof of this state of open hostility in the combined attack of the Kurdish tribes on Talori.

Account of the Events at Sasun in 1894.

Such was the state of things when, in the spring of 1894, an Armenian named Hamparsum Boyadjian, a native of the Vilayet of Adana, who had studied medicine at Constantinople and Geneva, arrived in the district of Talori, taking the name of Murad to avoid recognition. Accompanied by an armed band, amongst whom was an ancient comrade of Damadian—also an acquaintance of his—he traversed the villages of the district, as well as those of Kavar, for the purpose of practising medicine, as he states, and persuading the Armenians to free themselves from the evil custom of "hafir, hala," which kept them in subjection to the Kurds. But neither he nor any of his five companions, whom he had provided with military guns and ammunition, have been able to give a satisfactory explanation of their sojourn in the mountains; and one of them practically admits in his evidence that if he had left the paths of honesty it was owing to the oppression which either himself or his family had had to endure at the hands of the Kurds.

Almost all the Armenian witnesses deny any knowledge even of the name of Murad. The Kurds, or witnesses with official connections, only speak of him from hearsay. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to get a very clear idea of his proceedings from the slender evidence given at the inquiry. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that he visited the regions of Kavar and Talori, which he made his principal residence, as well as the surrounding villages, moving about with his companions, but not often in the mountains, and giving counsels directly affecting, as he himself admits, the relations of the Armenians with the Kurds. According to the man Tono, of Talori, he, in fact, encouraged the former to give as good as they got to their adversaries, and to attract the attention of the Government to themselves by refusing to pay their taxes.

Moreover, the contents of the note-book found upon Murad, consisting of patriotic

verse in Armenian, and a biography of Damadian, giving an account of his acts, though they may not have been written by Murad, prove beyond doubt—by the pencil notes, amongst other things, admitted by him to be in his handwriting, and forming the introduction of a letter on the beginning of the events of 1894—that Murad, no less than Damadian, came into the country with a concealed political end in view, and with the intention of provoking encounters between Armenians and Kurds. No result, however, as far as the inquiry could elicit, appears to have ensued from these incitements except the incident of Akchesser, in the month of June 1894, when the Kaïmakam of Kulp, who had gone to that place to collect the taxes and arrest certain individuals, was obliged to fly, and several outrages said to have been committed by Armenians on Kurds.

The former have been accused of a large number of crimes of different kinds: thefts, barbarous murders, rape, &c. Details on these points, as well as observations on the degree of credence they deserve, will be found in the Annexes (Chap. II).

The Undersigned must recognize as having really taken place in the summer of 1894 the theft of two oxen of the man Ahme Ahmo, of Nedran, and the murder of two Kurds, one belonging to Inekân, the other to Karikân; the attack on the tents of the man Hassan Shauki, and on the 28th July (o. s.), 1894, on those of the Velikanli Kurds inhabiting Mush, the latter attack being provoked by former quarrels about cattle that had been stolen and recaptured.

These crimes seem to have been committed by the band accompanying Murad, which must in reality have numbered more than the five men arrested with him, and among whom in all probability some Armenians from Kavar and Talori were to be found.

These facts taken together, and particularly the last-mentioned attack, in which three Mussulmans were killed or wounded, could not fail, when made much of and exaggerated, to arouse among the Kurds an amount of agitation which is seen from the deposition of Hichman Agha, who states that a Velikanli Kurd went to the Bekranli to inform them of the critical situation in which they were placed by the Armenians, and from the declaration of Sherho, Agha of the Bekranli, explaining that the Badikanli took part in the ensuing conflicts, not to assist the Bekranli, who had just before been their enemies, but to avenge all the misdeeds which they had themselves had to submit to at the hands of the Armenians.

Whatever the facts may be, the Kurds assembled at Kavar and Talori, and their number appears to have been considerable, especially at the latter place. The question is: To what cause is this movement to be ascribed? The results of the inquiry admit of no positive statement on the subject; for some isolated declarations to the effect that this meeting was caused by the instigations of Government agents, through the intermediary of Sheik Mehemet of Zeilan, cannot in a case of such importance be regarded as being of sufficient value, nor does the presence of the latter, who is the chief of the Kurdish Sheiks, at Ghelieguzan, although affirmed by several witnesses, appear to be proved.

In consequence of the agitation which had arisen among the Kurds, the Karikanli wished to attack the Armenians, but were prevented by the intervention of the regular troops, two infantry companies of which were sent to Merghemuzan, thirty minutes distant from Shenik. It should be noted that the effect of this alarm was to make it absolutely necessary for the Armenians to take precautions against the possibility of subsequent attack.

Shortly afterwards the Bekranli, to the number of about sixty or eighty, betook themselves with their Aghas, Omer and Sherho, to the above-mentioned encampment at Merghemuzan, and on their return fell upon Shenik and Semal, the inhabitants of which retired to the heights of Keupru-Sherif-Han and Chaï, with the people of Alian who joined them, and the conflicts between Kurds and Armenians began. This was the 1st August (o. s.), 1894.

After two days of conflict, during which the Bekranli received support from the Badikanli, the Armenians retired towards Ghelieguzan and the Antok-Dagh, whither they had previously sent their families. The fact that they succeeded in taking with them their wives, children, flocks, and part of their belongings proves that their departure had begun rather before the conflict itself, and this is borne out by several depositions.

The people of Ghelieguzan, who had also sent their families to the mountain, remained in their village to defend it against the attacks of the Kurds who had burnt Shenik and Semal.

The statements of the Kurds themselves, and of such witnesses as were not without bias of some kind, represent the encounter of the Armenians with the Bekranli and Badikanli as an attack made by Armenians descending from the Antok-Dagh, where they had collected since the beginning of July; according to one version this attack was

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made upon the first division of Bekranli Kurds going to their summer pasturage, and, according to another, on the Bekranli Kurds on their way to complain to the troops at Merghemuzan.

Now, if the Bekranli themselves are to be believed, they followed the Sasun road which passes by the Tsovasar-Dagh when going to their pasturage last year. Under these circumstances it is impossible that they can have been attacked at Chaï, which lies in an exactly opposite direction, and is separated from the above-mentioned road by the deep and extensive valley of Agpi.

If we admit the second hypothesis, which is equally supplied by the Bekranli, viz., that they were attacked at the moment when they were going to make a complaint at Merghemuzan, then, seeing that their pastures were on the Mountain of Mush, on the Shatak side, it is equally impossible that they can have been attacked at Chaï, where, according to most of their depositions, the fight occurred; for this place, which lies between Shenik, Semal, and Ghelieguzan, is off the road which they would in this case have been obliged to follow.

With the exception of the testimony of Girbo, son of Manuk of Shenik, which moreover seems very untrustworthy, not a single deposition by Armenians authorizes the belief that the Armenians evacuated their villages at the beginning of July, and assembled on the Antok-Dagh with the intention of revolting.

Nadir Agha, it is true, said he had seen some houses in Semal abandoned by their inhabitants as early as the month of April. The Kaïmakam of Sasun declares that the villagers began to make for the Antok-Dagh on the 2nd July, and his Secretary, Ali Effendi, says that at that date he did not see a single inhabitant of that village. Nevertheless, on this same Kaïmakam going at that same time to Shenik, he was able, in less than five minutes, to have brought before him Kirko and Erko, the heads of the village, represented as being most seditious persons, and as always joining the bands who habitually attacked the Kurds.

Salih Agha said he found Shenik and Semal deserted on the 7th or 9th July, and, according to Nasrullah Agha, that same month Ghelieguzan was uninhabited.

Nevertheless, Faris Agha, Lieutenant of Zaptiehs, passing through Kavar on the 12th July, said that he saw Shenik and Semal still inhabited.

On the 30th July, or one day before the encounter with the Bekranli, Medjid on-bashi, a corporal of zaptiehs, went from Merghemuzan to these two villages for provisions for his troops. This proves that on that day he knew nothing of the departure of the villagers, although he was with the encampment at thirty minutes' distance from Shenik, and was in daily contact with them.

Moreover, Tavo, of Semal, declared that at that same date, which coincides with the arrival of Fevzi Effendi, Commander of a Battalion of Zaptiehs, the people of Semal were in their village, and he proposed to question on this point the said Medjid on-bashi employed in the service of the Commission. But notwithstanding the request of the Undersigned, the Commission did not confront them with each other, or at once interrogate Medjid.

Finally, the following facts, viz., that Fevzi Effendi was able to have one of the Headmen of Shenik brought before him without delay, that two or three zaptiehs without the slightest difficulty obtained the restitution by the Armenians of the cattle carried off at the time they were exercising reprisals on the Velikanli, and that the Armenians declared they gave up the cattle out of deference to the authorities and confined themselves to lodging a complaint against the Velikanli, amply prove that on this said day, the 30th July, neither the Armenians of Shenik nor those of Semal were in revolt against the Government or away on the Antok-Dagh. It is also possible that, on the arrival of the Commander of the Battalion, the men of Shenik, among whom the report circulated that they were considered Firmanli (rebels), and who feared arrest in consequence of this same fight with the Velikanli, took to flight, but remained not far from the village, which they would certainly not have left at the commencement of harvest time.

As regards Ghelieguzan, with the exception of the declaration mentioned above, most of the declarations and the letter (Annexes, Chap. III) found on Murad show that up to the 12th or 14th August the village was still occupied by the Armenians.

The motives and details of these first encounters between the Kurds and the Armenians as given by three Kurds of Ghelieguzan, one of Spagank, and the above-mentioned Armenian, Girbo, offer such contradictions, and the declarations of these individuals are so full of improbabilities, that the Undersigned cannot take them into consideration. An account of a similar nature was given by the Sheik Mehemet of Zeilan, who was of necessity acquainted with the events of the past year, and his important religious position should guarantee the truth of this version. But in revising it the Sheik

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repeatedly declared that he only spoke from hearsay, and would not answer for the current reports. These reiterated reservations must cast grave doubts on the account of which the Sheik is content to be the echo.

At the time these encounters took place, what was the attitude of the companies of regular troops charged to keep order in that part of the country, and encamped at Merghemuzan, distant half-an-hour from Shenik? Two explanations have been given: the villagers almost unanimously accuse the soldiers of having joined the Kurds and taken part in the attack directed against Shenik and Semal. But the Commandant of these troops, Captain Hadji Mustapha Effendi, denies all knowledge of the encounters mentioned in the depositions of the Kurds and Armenians who took part in them, and merely says that one morning he learnt that during the night a body of Bekranli had been attacked by the Armenians, the nephew of Omer Agha killed, and, he adds, "his mutilated corpse brought into the camp."

The Bekranli and Badikanli also deny that the troops took part in the encounters, and say that, being surrounded by the Armenians, they found it impossible to communicate with the soldiers at Merghemuzan.

But the Undersigned cannot accept this explanation, seeing that the Badikanli, whose pastures lie on the same side of Shenik as the encampment, managed to hear of the fight, and that 100 of them, according to their own account, were able to come and join the Bekranli.

Moreover, the head of the detachment, who gave credence, as proved by his deposition and that of Fevzi Effendi, to the reports previously circulated, which attributed to the Armenians the intention of exterminating the soldiers under his command at Merghemuzan, and whose strength had in the meanwhile been increased to a battalion, a fact he always kept secret, must of necessity have taken measures of precaution and supervision, which would have kept him informed of events in the vicinity, and especially of the fight which was taking place in proximity to his own camp, and which was sufficiently important from the number of combatants.

For these different reasons, taking into consideration the fact that the accusation brought against the troops at Merghemuzan of having taken part in the attack of the Kurds emanates from the Armenians alone, the Undersigned cannot regard it as absolutely proved; but admitting that the troops really held aloof, the fact, avowed and admitted by the Commander of the troops, of having remained passive during serious events which took place close to him, and of which he could not have been in ignorance, is as weighty a condemnation of his conduct as if the troops had directly participated in the engagement.

The events narrated above, the Akchesser incident, some attacks on the Kurds, and, lastly, on the Velikanli, joined to the report that the Armenians intended even to attack the troops at Merghemuzan, that one of their bands designed to kill the Kaïmakam of Sasun at Shatak, finally, the fight with the Bekranli Kurds and the subsequent departure of the Armenians for the Antok-Dagh,—all this, joined to the presence among them of Murad and his companions, which was no secret to the authorities, was considered by them as an open revolt against the Government, who resolved to send troops with the object of dispersing the rebels and seizing their leader Murad and his associates.

Some battalions were concentrated at Mush, and a detachment was organized, under the command of Colonel Tewfik Bey, who received instructions direct from the Mushir of the 4th Army Corps, Zekki Pasha, and was afterwards under the orders of Edhem Pasha, Military Commandant of Mush. This force consisted of two and a quarter battalions of infantry, a detachment of dragoons, with two mountain guns, and about thirty zaptiehs.

Starting from Mush on the 13th August (o. s.), 1894, this force proceeded to join, near Shenik, the two companies in camp at Merghemuzan, who, a few days previously, had been reinforced to the strength of a battalion.

It has not been clearly ascertained what the Armenians did, or what became of them, from the time of their flight to the Antok-Dagh to the departure of the detachment from Mush.

The letter found among Murad's papers, and addressed to him from the Antok-Dagh by the priest Ohannes of Semal, by Kirko of Shenik, the son of Mosse, and by Ohan, the son of Nigo, makes it appear that during a period of twelve days from the commencement of the events, that is, from the 1st or 2nd August, the Armenians never ceased fighting the Kurds, whom they overcame; but that on the eleventh day, exhausted by the previous conflicts, they were forced towards evening to give up to their assailants Husseindsik, a ward of Ghelieguzan, then Ghelieguzan itself, and that the village was then burned down. Their position then became desperate.

At the same time it appears from the deposition of Tewfik Bey, and of others, that on the 14th August (o. s.) the detachment of troops, starting early in the morning from

Shenik, and arriving the same day at Ghelieguzan, had on their march an encounter which was merely an exchange of shots, and that on their reaching Husseindsik the Armenians who occupied the village were dislodged from it after a short fight. Is this the same fight as the one mentioned in the above letter? This document, which is worthy of full credence on account of the circumstances in which it was written, mentions a fight which lasted till the evening, and says that on the same evening Ghelieguzan was burnt, and that the Armenians were nearly annihilated.

The Colonel, on the contrary, only speaks of an exchange of shots, and says that on his arrival the village was already burnt, and all the other depositions support the latter assertion.

On the other hand, considering that the Christian muleteers, who were with the troops, in opposition to the other depositions, deny having heard any shots on their march towards Ghelieguzan, and that many other witnesses agree that the fight which was followed by the burning of the village lasted till the evening, it is fair to believe that the two fights were not the same, that Ghelieguzan was evacuated and burned down before the arrival of the detachment, and to doubt that the latter really did have an encounter with the villagers. This same letter, moreover, proves that on the day following the fight mentioned in it the Armenians, whose position had become most critical, began to disperse. All their depositions agree that their flight from the Antok-Dagh was due solely to the arrival of the troops, without showing clearly that an attack was made by the latter, and that the letter in question was written on the day when they took to flight. It mentions twelve days of fighting. With whom did they keep up the fight? The Kurds unanimously deny having been there, and maintain that after their encounters at Chaï-Dagh, in the neighbourhood of Semal, they returned to their villages in a panic. The Armenians, with equal unanimity, assert that they had them as adversaries; two of them even, Tato and Manuk, inhabitants of Gheliemansur, who took no part in the events, say that they took to flight through fear of the armed Kurds who were passing near to them; and the Kurdish witnesses of the attack on Emin-ben-Kasso, of Reshki, who fix the date of that attack at about the 15th August, by so doing certify that at that date the Kurds had not yet quitted their pastures, and this also appears from the declaration of Mirzo-ben-Ali, a Badikanli Kurd.

As for the Colonel and Mustapha Effendi, they deny the presence of the Kurds on the scene of the events, but cannot explain where they then were.

Hishman Agha makes a similar declaration, and, in order to conceal the arrival in the camp of Mollah Omer, goes so far as to invent a story of the capture by the troops of eleven men from Talori.

These interested denials on the part of the Kurds, this want of explanations on the part of the officers, this misleading account given by Hishman Agha, and the unanimous declarations of the Armenians, all unite to prove that they did in fact have the Kurds as adversaries.

After the arrival of the detachment at Ghelieguzan, on the 14th August, according to the Colonel, there is the greatest uncertainty as to the events which occurred on the Antok-Dagh.

All the Armenians say they were in flight, pursued by the Kurds, the soldiers, or the zaptiehs, repulsed by the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, who feared to expose themselves to a similar fate, and that this state of things continued till the arrival of the Mushir, and the receipt of the news that they were pardoned and had nothing further to fear.

It appears from all the other depositions that the Kurds were not there, and that the action of the troops was confined to spending three days at Ghelieguzan without doing anything, the reason of which is said to have been the necessity of provisioning them, to a march on Talori, with a day's stoppage at Afkart, and to a slight encounter, lasting about an hour, with the Armenian brigands in the ravine of Gheliesan.

It also appears from these depositions that the troops had been two days at Talori when, by dint of searching, and from information supplied by people brought up by the Mollah Omer, the cavern where Murad and his companions were concealed was discovered, and they were forced to surrender.

The same depositions say that no other incident occurred at Talori, whilst maintaining generally that, after setting fire to their houses, the inhabitants escaped to the Antok-Dagh, and afterwards dispersed, and that the soldiers on arriving at Talori found nobody in the burnt down and deserted wards.

If, on the contrary, we are to believe the few Armenian depositions heard on this point, it was in the face of an attack by the Kurds, who had collected in great numbers under the command of Khalil Beshiri and Papori Ghendjo, that the inhabitants of Talori

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fled from their wards, the houses of which were burnt, and that some returned thither after the departure of the Kurds.

They fled again on hearing of the arrival of the troops, which coincided with the return, with a view to a renewal of hostilities, of the former Kurds, now reinforced by the Bekranli, Khianli, Kotanli, and Bozikli tribes.

Three of the wards of Talori which remained untouched, Hosnud, Holovit, and Dawalik, are said to have been then burnt down by the soldiers and the Kurds combined.

The Commission must be considered as having conducted the inquiry into the events in Talori in a very insufficient manner; the inquiry consisted almost exclusively of the hearing of the evidence of the prisoners brought from Bitlis, whose depositions cannot be looked upon as being independent of each other.

It appears, nevertheless, from the evidence even of the priest Stepan of Dawalik, and of Gope of Mezre, who cannot be suspected of partiality for the Armenians, as well as from the evidence of the people of Kavar, that the inhabitants of Talori were not, as it is alleged, collected *en masse* on the Antok-Dagh, and that they did not themselves set fire to their own houses; and the above-mentioned priest Stepan goes as far as to say that he does not believe even now that Talori was burned down.

It appears, moreover, from the evidence of the above-mentioned Gope of Mezre, and of Serkis of Hartikh, that the inhabitants of their two villages fled themselves with their families, though they had not joined Murad, and Serkis attributes this flight to the gathering of the Kurds.

It is therefore permissible to conclude that the events which took place at Talori did not bear the simple character which is attributed to them by the first of the two versions, and that the Armenian version, which describes the country as being completely ruined by fire, more nearly approaches the truth.

As regards the question of the proceedings of the troops from the time of their departure from Mush up to the capture of Murad at Talori, which may be considered as bringing the Sasun affair to an end, the Undersigned have to observe that, as appears clearly from the depositions of Colonel Tewfik Bey and of his subordinate Hadji Mustapha Effendi, no attempt was made by the former, who was the responsible officer in command, to enter into communication with the Armenians of Kavar and Talori, or to bring about, without bloodshed, the pacification of the country and the surrender of Murad—Tewfik's only two objects, according to his own account.

As the Undersigned have endeavoured to show already, the presence of the Kurds on the scene of the events, at the time when the troops were there, must be considered as established. By denying the former of these facts the Colonel admits that he took no steps to remove the Kurds, and to deprive himself of their assistance. Moreover, if his main object was, as he asserts, to capture the bands of brigands and their chief, the mode of procedure which he says he adopted is quite inexplicable. He admits that the chief of the brigands must have been with the bands which attacked the troops on two occasions, at Ghelieguzan and at Gheliesan, and that there could not have been any obstacle to impede their passage, and yet he takes no steps either to surround these bands or to intercept them; on the contrary, he remains without doing anything for three days at Ghelieguzan, even forbidding the soldiers, as he says, to cross the ravine to go towards the Antok-Dagh; neither does he pursue his assailants at Ghelieguzan; and he stops for two days at Afkart, thus affording them every means of escaping from him.

As a matter of fact, the Kurds, by surrounding the Armenians, as they have stated in many of their depositions, deprived them of all possible means of retreat. Even in this case, it was the duty of the Colonel to send small detachments with orders to endeavour to capture Murad, and at least to make some prisoners who could have given him information which might have enlightened him as to the hiding-place of the Armenians, and enabled him to take the necessary measures to bring about their surrender.

The Colonel himself admits that on the very day of his arrival at Talori, and on the day following, he despatched detachments to the various wards with a view to instituting a search; it is evident that he should have acted thus before.

But, in contradiction to his statements, the depositions of Mariam and Simo of Agpi, and of Stepan and Serkis of Ghelieguzan, depositions which may be considered as independent of one another, are to the effect that, whilst the body of the troops was proceeding to Talori by way of Gheliesan and Afkart, soldiers were going thither by way of Agpi and Hetink, who pursued the Armenians in the ravine of Ghelieresh on the slopes of the Tsovasar-Dagh, whilst they were also being pursued on the Antok-Dagh itself and at Gheliesan, as is established by numerous Armenian depositions.

In spite of the statements of Tewfik Bey, Mustapha Effendi, Hussein Agha, Lieutenant

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of Zaptiehs, and the three Mussulman muleteers who were brought before the Commission through the intermediary of the same Mustapha Effendi, it cannot be taken as proved that the stay of the detachment at Ghelieguzan lasted only three days, from the 14th to the 16th August inclusive.

On the contrary, Maimo of Shenik and the Christian muleteers state distinctly that the troops encamped at Ghelieguzan for six days, and this statement is borne out if the number of days be counted up. The inquiry has established three certain dates: 14th August, arrival of the detachment at Ghelieguzan; 23rd August, capture of Murad, the date given by himself.

The Undersigned, having in vain appealed to the Commission to obtain this date, taken from the official documents drawn up at the very time the events took place, were only given the date of the 22nd August, as "resulting from" the deposition of the Colonel. Murad being an intelligent and well-educated man, and this date being too important for him not to observe, and too recent for him to forget it, the Undersigned, in the absence of other information, are bound to consider it as the true one.

Finally, on the 1st September, the examination of the Talori prisoners at Semal, in the presence of the Mushir Zekki Pasha, took place, as stated by the Commission from official sources of information.

One of the companions of Murad says that they remained in camp at Talori for five days, and it appears from the deposition of one Attam that it was on the fifth day of their stay at Semal that they were examined.

Finally, the Colonel states that Murad was captured on the third day after the arrival of the troops at Talori.

A comparison of these data makes it possible to draw up the following Table :—

August	14	Arrival of the detachment at Ghelieguzan	Five days' stay at Ghelieguzan.
„	15	..	
„	16	..	
„	17	..	
„	18	..	
„	19	Departure of the detachment from Ghelieguzan	
„	20	Halt at Afkart	
„	21	Arrival at Talori	
„	22	..	
„	23	Capture of Murad	During these five days Murad and his companions remain at Talori.
„	24	..	
„	25	..	
„	26	..	
„	27	..	
„	28	Arrival at Semal of Murad and his companions, the detachment remaining at Talori	Four days at Semal before the examination of the prisoners.
„	29	..	
„	30	..	
„	31	..	
September	1	Examination of the prisoners at Semal.	

This Table, if correct, shows that the detachment cannot have remained less than five days at Talori, and, allowing that the halt of a day at Afkart is not clearly proved, since Medjid Effendi says the troops passed only one night there, the total stay of the troops at Ghelieguzan cannot have been less than six days.

It must be added that this calculation is at variance with the depositions of the Mussulman muleteers, who state that the troops remained seven days at Talori.

On the other hand, this last period does not agree with the declarations of Colonel Tewfik Bey and Mustapha Effendi, according to which the stay of the troops at Talori appears to have extended over not less than nine days, and this is also shown by the above Table.

The Undersigned desire to add that they have thought it necessary to lay stress on this question of date, since it has an important bearing on the question of the surrender of the Armenians at the camp of Ghelieguzan, and at the same time affords a proof of the confused and halting nature of the depositions made by the officials, whose statements supply no surer guarantees than those of the other witnesses.

To sum up, the course of events, such as they appear extracted with difficulty from the very uncertain data collected at the inquiry, seems to have been as follows :—

During the last few years the relations between the Armenians at Kavar and Talori and the Kurds had undergone a considerable change; a political agitator, Hamparsum Boyadjian, called Murad, takes advantage of this to form a band which commits certain

misdeeds against the Kurds; the latter are excited and assemble, attack the Armenians, and the fighting commences.

The Government regard the conduct of the Armenians as an open revolt, and send troops, who disperse them and capture Murad.

The question of the resistance said to have been offered by the Armenians to the troops at Ghelieguzan and Gheliesan has not been sufficiently elucidated. At the former of these two places, as explained above, it is more probable that the Armenians had evacuated the village before the arrival of the detachment; at the latter, it is impossible to say whether there was united resistance, or whether there were some instances of isolated resistance.

The fact that the Kurds were with the troops, and that no steps were taken by the latter to make them withdraw, may be considered as proved.

There remain to be examined the questions whether the Armenians were really in revolt against the Government; whether the measures of repression were in proportion to the gravity of the movement; and, if those measures went beyond what humanity permitted, on whom the responsibility falls.

The facts brought forward in proof of the existence of a revolt are as follows:—

The propaganda of men such as Damadian and Murad;

The formation of armed bands since the beginning of May 1894;

The state of open hostility against the Government officials, shown by the Akchesser incident, the attempt on the Kaïmakam of Sasun at Kiagashin, the expulsion of zaptiehs by the inhabitants of Agpi and Hetink, the refusal, for the last fifteen or twenty years, of the people of Talori to allow officials to enter their territory or to pay taxes;

The manufacture of powder, and its distribution, as also that of lead;

The assembling of the Armenians on the Antok-Dagh, whence they came down to molest and attack the Kurds;

The burning by them of their own villages;

The resolve to exterminate the soldiers encamped at Merghemuzan, and, lastly, the attacks of the Armenians on the Imperial troops at Ghelieguzan and Gheliesan.

The existence of a propaganda, the presence of Murad and his companions among the people of Kavar and Talori, and the participation of the former in the fights in which the Armenians were engaged, cannot be denied.

As regards the hostility to Government agents, only the Akchesser incident can be considered as proved, but not under the conditions in which it has been represented.

The refusal of seven or eight wards of Talori, consisting of seventy or eighty houses, according to official sources, to pay taxes to the Government, only demonstrates, supposing it to be true, the carelessness of the local authorities, or their weakness in those regions where the majority of the population is Kurdish, and affords no proof of a revolutionary spirit among the inhabitants, who paid tribute to the Kurds.

As regards the question of ammunition, the necessity that the shepherds in those parts should be armed, and the fear of another attack similar to that made by the Kurds in a body in 1893, when the Armenians had only themselves to rely on, explain the presence of the arms which the Armenians always carried, and the possibility of the existence of a large store of powder. Their assembling on the Antok-Dagh was caused by the attacks of the Kurds, as mentioned above. The misdeeds committed against the Kurds must be attributed to Murad's band, and the principal, the incident of the 28th July with the Velikanli, was provoked by the Kurds themselves.

All these facts by no means prove that the Armenians were in open revolt at the end of July 1894. One of the papers found on Murad has been represented as a political programme corroborating this charge, but its contents show clearly that these notes are merely an outline of the events themselves; and, if the revolt had begun to declare itself three months previously, if the situation was as described in the telegram of the Mutessarif of Ghendj of the 3rd (15th) May, 1894, and in the official statements of the Government agents, how are we to explain the conduct of the authorities, who took no steps either in May, June, or July, in the presence of so critical a state of affairs?

The accusation, in itself absurd, brought against the Armenians of having burnt down their own houses, sheep-folds, &c., only rests on hearsay, and the depositions of the witnesses, calling themselves eye-witnesses, are so contradictory and improbable that the Undersigned are forced to reject the charge as unworthy of consideration. Even supposing for a moment that it were well-founded, is it possible to admit (what, moreover, no one has dared to assert) that this population, Gregorian Armenian by creed, and especially attached to its religion as are all Orthodox Christians, would go so far as to profane and sack its churches, and reduce them to the state in which the Undersigned have themselves seen them?

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They must, therefore, regard the accusations of the Armenians as established, and consider the Kurds and the soldiers as the authors of the burning of the entire villages.

Finally, if, in order to rightly appreciate the character of the first fights of the Armenians with the Kurds, one takes into consideration the inactivity of the troops at Merghemuzan, if not their participation in these combats, the absence of any steps on the part of the authorities either to prevent them, or to come to the assistance of the attacked peasants, the rumour that there was an order for their extermination, which is said to have been taken advantage of by the Kurds to extort money from the villagers of Kavar, and the sight of their ruined houses, one can understand that only one resource was left to the Armenians—to defend their lives and those of their families.

When the detachment of troops arrived at Ghelieguzan, they began to take to flight. The circumstances of the encounter which is said to have taken place there, as well as of that at Gheliesan, remain very mysterious; the more so because the number of soldiers killed or wounded, which might have been quoted in support of the reality of the alleged conflicts, is mentioned by Tewfik Bey alone, and his statements cannot in this case be regarded as of a convincing character, while the other depositions relative to the victims among the regular troops are of a very vague character.

For the above reasons, the Undersigned consider they are justified in repeating that the facts furnished by the inquiry do not prove that the Armenians of Kavar and Talori were in revolt against the Government.

Coming now to the measures which were taken to suppress what was considered to be a revolt, it is necessary, in the first place, to recall the fact that nothing was done to arrive at a peaceful settlement, and that there is no sign of any steps having been taken subsequently to protect the lives of the women and children, who, as all allow, were with the Armenians on the Antok-Dagh. It would appear from the numerous depositions of the latter that during the events a considerable number of men, women, and children perished, some being killed by the soldiers, Kurds, and zaptiehs united, some dying through fear or privation, others having disappeared in the panic caused by the pursuit instituted against them; some also were left in the houses, where they were burnt, and lastly some were massacred with the priest Ohannes of Semal, at the camp at Ghelieguzan. If we admit the version according to which the fight between Armenians and Kurds near Semal only lasted two days, and was followed by the immediate disappearance of the latter, the action of the troops afterwards being restricted to repelling by musketry fire the two attacks at Ghelieguzan and Gheliesan, we must regard all the charges made by the Armenians as false, and their losses as very small, being confined to the men who took part in these three encounters.

But, for the reasons explained above, the Undersigned cannot adopt this view, and are compelled to believe that in reality the Armenians—men, women, and children—were during the events the object of repeated pursuit on the part of the soldiers, Kurds, and zaptiehs, who wounded or killed, without distinction of age or sex, all who fell into their hands, and it is remarkable that, excepting eleven villagers of Talori, there was not one single prisoner.

The fact of these murders is established by the evidence of numerous Armenians, whose accounts agree, and who name the victims. As regards their number, in the absence of any regular registration, and of any serious attempt to reconstitute the populations of Kavar and Talori, it is impossible to fix it, even approximately, the more so because the Armenians, being themselves in flight and dispersed, indicate as dead people who have only disappeared, and as having been killed others who succumbed to the consequences of the events. It is none the less true that a certain number of people perished, and on this point the Undersigned can only refer to the Annexes (Chap. IV), where will be found the names of those returned as dead.

Were any acts of revolting cruelty perpetrated at that time, such as the barbarous mutilation of a pregnant woman? As the evidence on this subject is either isolated, like that of the woman Anna of Shenik, or rests on hearsay, like that of the Vicar of Ghendj, and in view of the exaggeration which is found in the statements of many Armenians, the Undersigned think no decided opinion can be pronounced on the point.

As to the old people and children said to have been burnt in the fired houses, the declarations of Tavo of Semal, and of Sako and Khate of Shenik, on this point, have not been confirmed; but it is beyond doubt that some old people, sick, and children remained in the Armenian villages when they were abandoned by their inhabitants, as is proved especially in the case of Ghelieguzan by the letter, mentioned above, of the priest Ohannes of Semal.

One of the gravest accusations brought against the regular troops is the massacre by them and the burial in the camp at Ghelieguzan of some of the inhabitants of Semal, said

to have come to surrender themselves, led by their priest, and the violation of the women which is said to have taken place there.

In the course of the inquiry the Undersigned noticed the most evident repugnance on the part of the Commission to elucidate this question, one of the most important of all. Only four women of Semal were heard, one of whom even refused to answer questions on the second day of her examination. The Commission refused to hear on this point either the woman Anna of Shenik, or the Armenian muleteers who were in the camp, and, before they even went to Ghelieguzan and examined the trenches there said to contain the remains of the victims, they decided on their origin, declaring that, if these trenches and bones were found, it was very probable that the latter had been collected and taken there by the Armenians themselves.

In these circumstances, the evidence of only very few eye-witnesses was taken, the majority being people who came of their own accord, or their relations, whom it would be easy to accuse of previous accord or preparation; but in this case it should have been the first duty of the Commission to neglect nothing to gain information, and to obtain all the evidence possible. The Undersigned are bound to state that the Commission did not act thus. As said above, the letter signed by the priest Ohannes proves that, after the abandonment of Ghelieguzan by the Armenians, of which the date may be fixed as the 12th or 13th August, and therefore previous to the arrival of the detachment, the position of the Armenians on the Antok-Dagh was desperate, and they had already begun to disperse. The depositions of Tavo, Simo, Egho, and Ossep, and of the two women, Mariam and Dilo, all of Semal, show that their priest, above named, with some of his villagers, went to Ghelieguzan for the purpose of surrendering to the troops, some days after they had taken to flight. Tavo, whose presence among the people bound for the camp is, however, very doubtful, and Mariam, wife of Sherho, say it was the next day.

On the other hand, the other witnesses put it approximately at five or six days.

This last figure agrees, moreover, with the dates given by the Armenian muleteers, who fix the surrender of the fugitives at the end of their stay at Ghelieguzan, which they say lasted six days.

Now it is clear that, if the troops only remained three days at Ghelieguzan, all the accusations brought against them of excesses said to have been committed by them must fall to the ground. But the inquiry does not prove that they remained there only for three days, but, on the contrary, shows that they stayed there five or six days, as the Undersigned think they have shown above.

Again, no other satisfactory explanation has been given of the death of the priest Ohannes.

The priest Parsegh says he was killed by the Kurds while pretending to be on his way to surrender to the troops at Merghemuzan; but this was not asserted by Tavo, as the latter stated himself, while all the endeavours of the priest Parsegh to prove his relations with the said Tavo failed; moreover, the statement of Reshid of Ghelieguzan, and Girbo, son of Manuk of Shenik, that he was killed in the combat at Ghelieguzan, finds its contradiction in the letter signed by the priest Ohannes subsequently to the combat. Besides, Colonel Tewfik Bey himself was unable to deny the existence of reports about what had occurred at Ghelieguzan.

Now, the people of Mush and the surrounding villages profess total ignorance of this affair. Some of the Semal people went so far as to say they did not know the name of their own village priest, and were ignorant of his fate.

These contradictory and misleading explanations on the one hand, and these denials on the other, serve to support the accusation instead of demolishing it. Lastly, it receives full confirmation from the discovery of the trenches at Ghelieguzan behind the house of Bedo, one in particular surrounded by human bones. The present state of the trenches is accounted for by the details, having every appearance of truth, given in the Armenian depositions on this subject, which speak of the disinterments which took place subsequently, and the havoc committed by wild beasts. Moreover, record of the inquiry itself contains not a word of any other explanation of the origin of these trenches.

Notwithstanding the purposely insufficient researches of the Commission, all these considerations, taken together, authorize the assertion, in spite of the formal denials of Tewfik Bey and Hadji Mustapha Effendi, that the accusation of the massacre by the troops at Ghelieguzan of the priest Ohannes of Semal, and of Armenians, is well founded. The number of the victims may be put at about forty, the details of the massacre itself remaining wrapped in obscurity. The facts of the separation, on their arrival in camp, of the men from the children and women, and the violation of these last, are vouched for to the same extent as the massacre, with which they are intimately associated. If we

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believe the first of these accusations, we must believe the second. But it should be noted that there are contradictions with regard to the sentinels—soldiers or zaptiehs—who guarded the women, and who are said to have subsequently dishonoured them.

To sum up the result of all the events, the three villages of Kavar, Shenik, Semal, and Ghelieguzan, and the entire district of Talori, Agpi, Hetink, Spagank, with their dependencies, were laid waste, and almost the whole of the inhabitants, left without homes or means, were forced to remove, some towards Diarbekir, while others, with the partial help of the authorities, were distributed among the Armenian villages on the plain, where they were maintained during the winter.

The absolute ruin of a district can never be regarded as a measure proportionate to the punishment even of a revolt; *à fortiori*, in the present case, the only crimes of the Armenians, namely, those of having sheltered or perhaps concealed Murad and his band, of having committed some isolated acts of brigandage against the Kurds, or disregarded the authorities, and possibly of having offered some slight resistance to the Imperial troops under circumstances which have not been cleared up, cannot possibly justify the state of misery to which the people and the country have been reduced. An equal responsibility rests on the local authorities, civil and military, for the absence of all measures to prevent a pseudo-revolt which is said to have shown itself as early as May, or to put a stop later to the strife between Armenians and Kurds, and the losses of all kinds which were the consequence. The proceedings of the troops at Merghemuzan are and remain inexplicable, considering what took place before their eyes, and they can no more be excused than the action of the detachment which came on to the scene later, no steps having been taken either to protect the women and children, or to make the Armenians return to their villages. This was not done till after the arrival of the Mushir Zekki Pasha.

As the inquiry did not touch on the action of the authorities, their mutual relations, or the instructions given and received on this subject, the Undersigned do not consider it possible to broach the question of personal responsibility.

As the data of the present Report were furnished exclusively by the inquiry, the Undersigned feel it their duty, in conclusion, to explain briefly the circumstances in which the inquiry was held.

Circumstances of the Inquiry.

The Commission, composed as above stated, held 107 sittings from the 24th January to the 21st July, 1895, and heard 190 witnesses, who may be divided as follows:—

Twenty-three persons employed by the civil authorities or connected with them; 2 officers of the regular army; 6 members of the Armenian clergy; 61 Kurds; 2 Armenians from Mush; 78 Armenians from Kavar; 18 Armenians from Khian.

But little value attaches to the greater part of this mass of evidence.

The Government employés, civil or military, the members of the Armenian clergy, and the two Armenians from Mush give copious details respecting the revolutionary propaganda said to have been carried on in the country by the agitator Murad and his predecessors, and respecting the misdeeds of the Armenians, but avoid speaking of the Sasun affair, and some of them even make false statements on this subject.

On the other hand, the Armenians from Kavar and Talori for the most part deny that they know Murad, even by name, and observe silence, through fear or some other reason, on the subject of his doings and those of his companions, and on all matters for which they are afraid they may be afterwards blamed, such as the fights with the Kurds and the regular troops.

The Armenians from Khian, as well as a certain number of other witnesses from that part, repeat generally an identic story in identic terms; one of them even, Resho, son of Boghos of Keghervan, styling himself a Kiahia, although he is not one; another, Pollo, son of Avedis, styling himself Kiahia of Nedran, where there are but two Armenian houses; Boghos, son of Khazar of Gheliemansur, calling himself member of the Council of Elders, though no one there knows him; all these are circumstances which create doubts as to the identity of the people who appeared.

Most of these witnesses having been selected through the intermediary of the authorities of Kulp and Ghendj, who were asked by the Commission of Inquiry to send them persons with knowledge of the events, the circumstances under which they appeared as witnesses could not be a guarantee of the good faith of their declarations.

Of the 78 Armenians from Kavar, 35 are from Shenik, 15 are from Semal, 11 are from Ghelieguzan, 1 is from Spagank, 2 are from Agpi, and 3 are from Talori, besides 11 men who were taken prisoners in the latter place, and whose depositions could not therefore be regarded as independent of each other.

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A comparison of these figures shows that the events of Talori, the possible origin and causes of which the Commission, in spite of the suggestions made by the Undersigned, always refused to seek in the occurrences of 1893, were, so to speak, set aside, and that the attention of the Commission was especially directed to the village of Shenik, while the statements relative to events said to have taken place at Ghelieguzan itself, between that place and Talori, and at Talori, should have principally attracted their attention and occupied them.

The selection of these seventy-eight Armenians was left to the local authorities, with the exception of two of them, who came of their own accord, and of those who were summoned for the purpose of verifying their existence; and during their stay they were under the supervision and at the disposal of the police. It was a zaptieh who met Girbo and Khacho, sons of Manuk of Shenik, in the bazaar and brought them before the Commission. On several occasions the Undersigned drew the attention of the Commission, access to which was always difficult, to the importance, in order to discover the truth, of putting themselves in direct touch with the people, and of thus not allowing any intermediary or any influence to come between themselves and the witnesses whose evidence the Commission had to take. But the Undersigned must place it on record that their efforts in this sense were always fruitless, though they were justified in making them. The Mukhtar of Alvarindj was ordered by the Commission to bring directly before them a refugee of Spagank, who was then in his village, but he was prevented by the police, as shown by the *procès-verbaux*. This interference even extended to the meeting-place of the Commission, where witnesses were threatened and intimidated by the Government agents attached to its service.

From the commencement of the inquiry the Commission divided the witnesses into two classes: one composed of accused suspects, the other of witnesses or informers, a distinction against which the Undersigned did not fail to protest, and which was noticeable even in the mode adopted for the examination of witnesses.

In these circumstances, it is comprehensible that the inquiry, notwithstanding its duration and the number of witnesses heard, should have produced relatively but few certain results; moreover, considering the manner in which it was conducted throughout, no hopes could be entertained that its continuance would have led to an ampler discovery of the truth.

(Signed) M. VILBERT.
H. S. SHIPLEY.
M. PRJEVALSKY.

Mush, July 20, 1895.

Annex to Report.

CHAPTER I.—*Number of Houses and Inhabitants in the Armenian Villages of Kavar and Talori.*

IN the absence of any regular system of registration or any official Census on which complete dependence can be placed, and considering the insufficient information on this point obtained by the inquiry, it becomes very difficult to determine the exact numbers of the houses and inhabitants of the villages affected by the events.

The following Table gives the only figures which it has been possible to collect:—

	Houses.	Stables.	Barns.
Shenik	38	48	53
Semal	48	84	26
	Figures communicated by the Commission from official sources, the inquiry supplying no information on the subject, except the deposition of Hebo (*Procès-verbal* No 79), who gives Shenik over 200 houses, a number evidently much exaggerated.		
Ghelieghenim	6–7 houses (Tato, *Procès-verbal* No. 62).		
Ghelieguzan itself	80–85 Armenian houses and 4 Kurdish houses.		
In the wards depending on it:			
Hasseindsik mezressi	35 houses.		
Kshoshok	10		
Gheliesan	10		
Alachak..	20		
Kharipshan	20		
Mikhitar	12		
Ghevasar	8		
Alian	30		
Belovar	15		
	Houses and sheep-folds.		
	Figures furnished to the Commission by the Secretary of the village, Dikran by name, at the time of the investigation at Ghelieguzan; according to official figures furnished by the Commission, this village contains 87 houses, 110 stables, and 9 barns.		
Talori —			
Talori itself	(Called Eku-dun, or Verinkiegh.)		
Dawalik..	According to the official communication of the Mutessarif of Ghendj, Talori and its wards comprise 67 houses and 278 inhabitants. From other depositions the number of houses at Talori may be put at about 8 or 10 per ward.		
Purh			
Hartk			
Hosnud			
Hakmank			
Halorink			
Kholovit			

	Houses.	Stables or Folds.	Barns.
Spagank	12	6	..
Tsorir	No return.		
Ergurt	9	5	..
Hetink	16	7	2
Agpi	27	16	..
	Figures furnished by the Commission. According to Simo (*Procès-verbal* No. 81) Agpi comprises from 30 to 35 houses, and about 40 stables, barns, &c. Of the houses 8 or 10 remain intact.		
And the dependent wards:			
Daghvernik	3 or 4 houses (Mariam, *Procès-verbal* No. 46).		
Aktchesser	20 houses (Molla Omer, *Procès-verbal* No 96.)		

According to Tono of Talori (*Procès-verbal* No. 72), whose deposition on this point is the only one, the villages of Khedank, Ghelieresh, Tchin, Kirdamank, Khenzan, Kirtanokh, Norgank, Kizilguardir, Ardegonk, Inguznagh, Sevit, Hetink, and some others, were burnt.

This Table, including as it does both the official figures and those resulting from the depositions at the inquiry, allows of the number of houses in the above-named villages being estimated at a minimum of from 450 to 500.

Taking an average, as authorized by the results of the inquiry, of 10 people per house, a total is reached of from 4,500 to 5,000 souls as the population of the above-mentioned villages.

As a result of the events, all this population had their houses burnt, and found themselves without resources and scattered in different directions.

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Chapter II.—*Acts of Murder, Brigandage, and Lawlessness attributed to the Armenians during the summer of* 1894.

According to a large number of witnesses heard by the Commission, the Armenians of Kavar and Talori, yielding to the advice and instigation of Murad, are said to have formed since the beginning of spring 1894 armed bands, which committed a series of crimes of all sorts against the Kurds, and even some acts of insubordination against the Government, as well as other acts which were regarded by the latter as preparatory to a revolt.

This chapter deals with the acts above mentioned.

(A.)—*Acts of Theft, Brigandage, and Murder directed against the Kurds.*

(*a.*) Theft of property belonging to the Badikanli Kurds, Meho and Temo, and carried away from the house of Girbo of Shenik.

It appears from the depositions of Yussouf-ben-Ali, Mehemet-ben-Haïdar, and Peto-ben-Tako of Kuhislam (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 54 and 55), that on the 5th May, 1894, they met near Ghelieghenim a band of armed Armenians led by Kirko, Mukhtar of Shenik.

They saw at the same time beasts of burden laden with property, and they learnt on the same day at Gheliemansur that the said property belonged to the Badikanli Kurds, Meho and Temo, and had been carried off from the house of Girbo of Shenik.

It is well to call attention to the fact that of all the Badikanli and inhabitants of Gheliemansur who were heard before the Commission, not one mentioned this robbery, and that the above-named Peto, son of Tako, one of the witnesses mentioned above, gave contradictory evidence on this subject. Girbo, son of Manuk (*Procès-verbal* No. 65), who, as may be concluded from the deposition of the Kaïmakam of Kulp (*Procès-verbal* No. 66), is the Girbo in whose house the robbery was committed, made no allusion to it, although he showed himself very ready to attribute other misdeeds to the Armenians.

Under these circumstances, the fact even of the robbery of property belonging to Temo and Meho cannot be considered as proved.

As to the meeting near Ghelieghenim with a band composed of forty armed Armenians led by Kirko, the inquiry affords no direct indication either confirming or rebutting the declarations of three inhabitants of Kuhislam on the subject; they may be said to receive indirect confirmation from the attack said to have been made by this same band at the same place five days later, on the 10th May, on a caravan going to Mush: but, as will be shown later, the attack itself seems doubtful.

The appearance of an armed band, with the Mukhtar of Shenik at its head, after the information said to have been given about it at Gheliemansur by Yussuf, Mehemed, and Peto, must infallibly have attracted the attention of the inhabitants of that village, yet, as thirteen of them who were heard before the Commission made no mention of it, the existence even of this band must not be considered as established.

(*b.*) Attack on a caravan of carriers going to Mush.

According to the statements of five Kurds who were examined by the Commission (*Procès-verbal* No. 58), an attack was made on the 10th May at Ghelieghenim on a caravan of carriers going to Mush, forty loads of corn were carried off, and four Mussulmans were wounded, of whom one died some days later. A complaint on the subject was made at Mush on the 11th May (*Procès-verbal* No. 59).

Although orders were given on paper for the pursuit of the accused, the absence of any real action in this case, in spite of the serious statements of the complainants, would seem to show that the information obtained by the local authorities was not such as to confirm the accusations laid in the complaint, that the attack in question did not take place under the conditions stated, and that its consequences were not such as were alleged by the complainants.

A complaint, also dated the 11th May, 1894, which was read at the sitting of the 5th February, 1895, confirms this supposition. It mentions likewise an attack made by the Armenians of Shenik, fifteen in number, and amongst them Kirko, on the inhabitants of the same villages of Djaks and Tiakhs, to which the five witnesses above mentioned belonged. Fifteen loads of corn were said to have been carried off. Two of the signatories of this second Petition bear the same names as those of two of the five witnesses in question, and one of the individuals present felt a hesitation in giving his real name which was shared by his companions.

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The Commission made no investigation into this attack, but confined themselves to hearing the complainants, and, without denying the reality of the incident itself, which is shown by the complaint made at the time, the circumstances of this attack must be considered as not having been cleared up.

(*c.*) The lifting of the sheep belonging to Dervish Agha, of Khoshekan, and the wound then inflicted on his son Ibrahim, which resulted later in his death.

On this subject the only statement elicited by the inquiry was that of Dervish Agha himself (*Procès-verbal* No. 27). If this attack took place, it could not remain unknown, more especially as it might have been regarded as an act of vengeance on the part of the Armenians against Dervish Agha, who had been directly concerned in the arrest of Damadian; yet Omer-ben-Purto alone (*Procès-verbal* No. 30) had heard it mentioned. Taleb Effendi (*Procès-verbal* No. 12), who referred to written notes while making his depositions, does not mention this matter in the long list of crimes with which he charges the Armenians.

The failure of Dervish Agha to lay a complaint at the time, though knowing, as he declares, the aggressors, and having witnesses of the incident, induces disbelief in his story, for, in spite of the explanation which he gives of his silence, he had always reason to hope that the authorities, considering his services, would take all necessary action on his complaint.

The inquiry into this affair was not pursued by the Commission.

(*d.*) The violation and barbarous murder, about the 10th June, 1894, of Hedo, wife of Mussa Abdullah, of Molla Meleki.

This crime forms the subject of the depositions of the husband of the victim (*Procès-verbal* No. 65), and of Ahmet-ben-Recho (*Proces-verbal* No. 67). The Kaïmakam of Kulp (*Procès-verbal* No. 66) confirms the fact of the delivery of a Petition on the subject, and Ali of Ghelieguzan (*Procès-verbal* No. 68), a relative of the victim, had heard this murder spoken of some days before the events on the Antok-Dagh. Taleb Effendi (*Procès-verbal* No. 12), in his deposition, likewise mentions the barbarous murder of Hedo, wife of Mussa, but he adds that the husband was himself killed, and he places this double assassination among the events of the year 1893, regarding it as a cause of the combats which took place that same year between Kurds and Armenians.

Neither Reshed (*Procès-verbal* No. 24) nor Mehmet-ben-Mirzo (*Procès-verbal* No. 33), nor Meho (*Procès-verbal* No 69), relatives of the woman who was killed, in enumerating the acts of violence said to have been committed by the Armenians against the Kurds, make any mention of this incident, which, had it really occurred, could not have escaped their notice. Besides, it is difficult to admit that the theft of two beasts from the man Ahmo-ben-Ahme of Nederan could have made a greater impression on the Kurds than a murder said to have been committed under such barbarous circumstances. Yet the theft of these beasts was mentioned in almost every deposition made before the Commission by a Kurd or an Armenian of Khian or Kulp, whilst the only depositions dealing with the murder in question are those above mentioned.

The absence of inquiry into this matter at the time, admitted by the Kaïmakam of Kulp himself, together with the account, improbable on the face of it, given by the husband of the victim, affords serious reason for doubting whether this accusation against the Armenians is well founded.

Consequently, the Undersigned cannot regard this incident as one of the facts established before the Commission.

(*e.*) The solitary and very vague statement of Nadir Agha (*Procès-verbal* No. 13) respecting the abduction by the Armenians of a Kurdish woman, who after being subjected to bad treatment was said to have been released at the end of two days, does not furnish the information requisite for arriving at any conclusion.

(*f.*) The barbarous murder near Ghelieghenim of a Kurd whose corpse was said to have been taken to the camp at Merghemuzan between the 14th and 17th July (*Procès-verbal* No. 5).

This allegation was not confirmed in the depositions of either Captain Mustafa Effendi (*Procès-verbal* No. 9) or of Medjid on-Bachi (*Procès-verbal* No. 5), whose conversation with a soldier, which was subsequently denied by Medjid himself, was said to have occasioned the report on the subject of this incident.

(*g.*) The murder by the Armenians of the son of Amo, a Kurd of Khoshekan, whose flayed corpse was, according to Captain Mustafa Effendi, brought into camp, was not mentioned in a single deposition before the Commission, though they heard a very great number of Badikanli and other Kurds. Serkiz, son of Hamza (*Procès-verbal* No. 42), of the village of Hartk, near Talori, alone stated hesitatingly that the Armenians not only killed the Kurds, but also flayed the victims.

In these circumstances the accusation in question cannot be considered as proved.

(*h.*) The murder early in June of the Kurd Temish-ben-Mehemet, and the mutilation of the corpse.

One Ressul-ben-Merdjo (*Procès-verbal* No. 20) appeared of his own accord before the Commission to make a complaint on this subject, but confined himself to simple denunciations, and brought no proof in support of his accusations against the Armenians.

None of the three Kurds of Ghelieguzan (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 24, 68, and 69) make any allusion to this murder, although, according to Ressul, the Kurds of Ghelieguzan were the first to inform him of it.

The depositions of the three Kurds of Djadjas, a village near that in which the victim lived, mention the fact of the murder only, but do not name its authors (*Procès-verbal* No. 69).

Further, Ressul states that he lives permanently at Djadjas, and consequently himself saw the mutilated corpse. But the depositions of Dervish Agha (*Procès-verbal* No. 27) show that the said Ressul has lived for a long time at Mush, and that he took part with his brother Mamo in the capture of Damadian.

In these circumstances, even admitting the fact of a murder, of which, however, there is not sufficient evidence, no proof is forthcoming that this murder was committed by the Armenians.

(*i.*) The murder of Selim (*Procès-verbal* No. 20), which, according to the depositions of his son Abdullah, took place in July 1894, was really committed in 1893 during the events of Talori, as is shown by comparing the deposition of the said Abdullah with that of Taleb Effendi (*Procès-verbal* No. 12).

The Commission did not inquire further into this incident.

(*j.*) The attack on the Kurd Mehmet of Tapik.

(*k.*) The lifting of cattle belonging to Ako-ben-Abro.

(*l.*) The attack on Mussa-ben-Sado.

(*m.*) The murder of a Kurd, 150 of whose sheep were lifted (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 5, 69, 72, and 24).

Each of these four accusations rests only on solitary and vague depositions, which do not allow of any conclusion being arrived at.

(*n.*) The lifting by a band of armed Armenians of two oxen belonging to Ahmo-ben-Ahme, of the village of Nederen, forms the subject of numerous depositions independent one of another, the chief among them being those of Osman-ben-Tolo, Arakel, son of Tavo, Ali-ben-Abdo (*Procès-verbal* No. 59), Gulavi-ben-Abdo (*Procès-verbal* No. 60), Tato and Serko (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 62 and 63).

It is quite clear from these depositions that this robbery took place, and that it was committed by an armed band of Armenians, who afterwards retired in the direction of the Antok-Dagh. But it is noteworthy that the said depositions respecting the pursuit of the Armenian plunderers by the Kurds deny that the Armenians of Shenik, Semal, and Ghelieguzan were, either at the time of this cattle-lifting, or immediately afterwards, assembled on the Antok-Dagh.

(*o.*) The barbarous murder of Hussein-ben-Kalo, of the village of Inekan.

According to the statement of Captain Mustafa Effendi (*Procès-verbal* No. 9), it was the mutilated corpse of a man of Khian, residing in the vicinity of Merghemuzan, that was brought into camp; the victim had gone to the Antok-Dagh in search of two oxen which he had lost, and was there assassinated.

Arakel, son of Tavo (*Procès-verbal* No. 59), and Tato (*Procès-verbal* No. 62) say that they heard the murder of a Kurd of Inekan spoken of by the Kurds who went in pursuit of the beasts of Ahmo Ahmé; Osman-ben-Talo, Ali-ben-Abdo, Gulavi-ben-Abdo, Maksud-ben-Hassan, Salih-ben-Omer, and Mamo-ben-Temo (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 59, 60, and 65) confirm the fact of the murder and of the mutilated corpse being brought to Merghemuzan.

An examination of all these depositions shows that all these witnesses are referring to the same incident. Sako (*Procès-verbal* No. 17) heard it said by the zaptiehs, at the time of the events, that a mutilated corpse had been brought into camp. In these circumstances the fact must be held as proved: seeing that the depositions above mentioned show that it occurred at the time the Kurds were pursuing the band of Armenians who had carried off the beasts of Ahmo Ahme, it is possible that the man was killed by that band.

As to the story of Gulavi-ben-Abdo (*Procès-verbal* No. 60), who, calling himself an eye-witness, gave most minute details of acts of revolting cruelty which he saw committed by the Armenians, no reliance should be placed on it, for as this same Gulavi-ben-Abdo,

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according to his own statement, accompanied the corpse to the camp at Merghemuzan, it is impossible that he should not have given these details, with the names of the assassins, either to his companions or to Captain Mustafa Effendi. Considering the very serious manner in which the deposition of the latter contradicts those of the other witnesses as to the circumstances attending the death of the said Kurd, the details of this incident remain very vague, and have not been sufficiently cleared up by the inquiry.

(*p.*) The murder of the Karikanli Kurd Silo-ben-Kasso.

The fact of the murder of this man, confirmed as it is by Attam (*Procès-verbal* No. 77) must be considered as proved.

As to the authors of the deed and its details, the depositions of Hazzo of Spagank (*Procès-verbal* No. 70), and of Gulavi-ben-Abdo (*Procès-verbal* No. 60) cannot be taken seriously, and in the absence of direct evidence this last point cannot be considered as cleared up by the inquiry.

Nevertheless, the disappearance of Silo-ben-Kasso on ground close to Armenian villages, the declarations of the villagers denying all knowledge of it, though the statement of the aforesaid Attam proves that the fact must have been known to them, and, lastly, the presence amongst the Armenians of Murad's band, afford strong grounds for suspecting the Armenians of the murder in question.

(*q.*) The attack on the tents of Hassan Shauki (*Procès-verbal* No. 90), accompanied by a theft of cattle and the wounding of two men. This attack, which is mentioned in the depositions as frequently as that which resulted in the carrying off of the two oxen of Ahmo Ahme and the murders of two Kurds of Inekan and of Karikan, is confirmed by the depositions of Hassan Shauki himself, and of Tato of Gheliemansur (*Procès-verbal* No. 62), the latter asserting further that this same incident was the cause of the subsequent encounters between the Kurds and the Armenians. Considering the unanimous depositions on the subject of this attack, it must be accepted as having really taken place, and its authors as having been Armenians.

(*r.*) The attack on the tents of Emin-ben-Kasso.

According to Emin-ben-Kasso himself (*Procès-verbal* No. 28), Mirzo-ben-Ali and Salih-ben-Ali (*Procès-verbal* No. 29), this attack took place about the 15th August at the pastures called Shen, near Shenik and Semal, and was followed by the lifting of some 300 sheep, the death of four Kurds, and the wounding of three others.

The depositions of Suleiman-ben-Mollah, Ahmet, and Ahmo-ben-Mehemet (*Procès-verbal* No. 72) show, on the contrary, that this attack occurred in July.

Taking into consideration the situation in which the Armenians found themselves on the 15th August on the Antok-Dagh, and, further, the spot where the alleged attack took place, that is to say, close to Shenik, on the side furthest from the Antok-Dagh, it must be regarded as impossible, and, considering that the Kurds deny the fact of any fight with the Armenians, excepting only the two days at Tchai, it is very probable that the loss of life attributed by Emin-ben-Kasso to the incident in question was but a result of the fights which occurred during the first half of August.

If, on the other hand, the attack took place in July, as stated by the above-named witnesses Suleiman and Ahmo, it is inexplicable that an accident involving such serious consequences should not have been mentioned in the other Kurdish evidence, and that Omer-ben-Purto (*Procès-verbal* No. 30), who was so well informed, should not even have heard it spoken of.

(*s.*) The attack on the tents of Amo Meho of Latshekan at the pastures of the Kurtik-Dagh, two hours' distance from the villages of Shenik and Semal.

Most minute details on the subject of this attack were given by Amo Meho himself (*Procès-verbal* No. 28), but though very serious they were only corroborated by the evidence of four Badikanlis (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 71 and 72).

According to the complainant the occurrence in question took place at Kurtik-Dagh, but in that case it could not have remained unknown to Captain Mustafa Effendi; yet neither he nor the other Kurds who enumerate the Armenian misdeeds make any mention of it, and the Captain as well as these latter are absolutely dumb on the subject of the mutilated corpses of the three Kurds, which, if Ahmo may be believed, were brought to Merghemuzan.

This incident does not merit consideration any more than the preceding one.

(*t.*) The lifting of the cattle of Farho-Oghlu, a Kurd of Inekan.

From the depositions respecting this (*Procès-verbaux*, Nos. 30, 49, 59, 66, 67, and 91) it would appear that this robbery was committed by a band of Armenians from the villages of Kavar and Talori. To this accusation the Armenians simply oppose denials, and the Kurdish accounts contradict themselves on some points.

Considering the exaggerations and inventions noticeable in the accounts of similar

attacks, without denying that this one took place, it does not appear possible to decide on its locality, especially if the fact be taken into consideration that the two principal witnesses of the incident, Sofi Mehemet and Suleiman of Ghedorni (*Procès-verbal* No. 70), go on to furnish an altogether improbable account of the following incident, viz.:

(*u.*) The collection by the Armenians from Mussulmans, for the space of two years, of money and agricultural produce under the name of dues for the Armenian Church.

Considering the respective status of Kurds and Armenians in the country, the former being the masters, this accusation, not bearing on an isolated case of brigandage, but extending over a period of two years, must be regarded as a pure invention, with every appearance of having been created as a counterpoise to the statements of the Armenians relative to the "hafir" which the Kurds collect from them.

(*v.*) The compulsory conversion to Christianity by Murad of three Kurds of Ghelieguzan and of the family of Hazzo of Spagank.

Notwithstanding the accounts, circumstantial, yet full of contradictions and improbabilities, given on the subject of this charge by Ali, Meho of Ghelieguzan, and Hazzo of Spagank (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 68, 69, and 70), and confirmed on hearsay by Taleb Effendi, it is simply a calumny.

These facts are incredible if the state of the country be considered, the district in which these conversions are said to have taken place being in close proximity to Mush, and surrounded by Kurdish villages where the supposed victims might easily have taken refuge.

(*w.*) The murder of Hadji Agha, a Bekranli Kurd, whose mutilated corpse is said to have been brought into the camp at Merghemuzan.

According to Captain Mustafa Effendi (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 9 and 80), Hadji Agha was killed during the attack by the Armenians on the Bekranli on their way to their summer pastures, but the other depositions on this subject, including those of the Bekranli themselves, do not confirm either the fact of the mutilation of the corpse or that of the fight in the circumstances related by Captain Mustafa Effendi. Shercho, Agha of the Bekranli (*Procès-verbal* No. 87), alone states that the corpses of three Kurds, killed in the first day's fighting, were mutilated by the Armenians, but he denies that the Bekranli had any relations with the troops at Merghemuzan, whilst, on his side, the Captain who commanded them denies any knowledge of a fight of two days' duration between the Armenians and Kurds. In view of these evident contradictions, and the exaggerations shown above respecting the mutilation of corpses by the Armenians, this charge cannot be regarded as worthy of belief.

(*x.*) The closing to the Mussulmans, by the Armenians, of direct routes from Khian to Mush during two years.

On this subject the depositions of Salih Agha, Ressul, Dervish Agha, Salih-ben-Zoro, Medjid Effendi, and Temo (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 14, 20, 27, 28, 49, and 51) are simple allegations insufficiently supported by facts.

(*y.*) The attack on the Velikanli Kurds on the 28th July (o. s.), 1894 (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 30, 36, 41, 51, 59, 73, 74, 75, and 98).

The numerous depositions on this subject, Armenian as well as Kurdish, establish the fact of such an attack by the people of Shenik, accompanied by the death of three Kurds, and only differ as to its motives. The Armenians attribute it to a robbery of cattle committed, in the first instance, by the Kurds, whilst the other depositions attribute the attack to the instigations of Murad, and the state of revolt in which the Armenians then were. But the fact that, out of respect to the Government, they restored the cattle carried off on this occasion, while confining themselves to lodging a complaint against the Velikanli with the Government agents who had come to Shenik, and their attitude towards these same agents, show pretty clearly that this attack did not bear the revolutionary character attributed to it, and was only the result of a dispute between the two parties concerned.

As to the accusation brought against the Armenians of the violation of women on this occasion, it emanates solely from Simonen Oghlu (*Procès-verbal* No. 98), who communicated it to Fevzi Effendi, but it was not confirmed by the latter, who was specially sent to investigate the incident, and cannot be accepted on the solitary assertion of the said Simonen Oghlu.

(*z.*) The injurious expressions used by the Armenian bands against the Mussulman religion.

This fact has been mentioned in many depositions, the witnesses adding that, at the same time, the Armenians shouted the name of Murad as that of their Chief, and Murad himself did not deny that the thing was possible, considering the customs of the country.

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Although the evidence respecting this accusation comes from one side only, it may be allowed that insults were uttered by the Armenians in the course of their conflicts with the Kurds.

(B.)—*Acts of Insubordination on the part of the Armenians towards the Government, and other Proceedings regarded by the latter as preparatory to Revolt.*

(*a.*) Attack on the Kaïmakam of Kulp, at the village of Akchesser, about the 20th June (o. s.), 1894.

The account of this matter given by the Kaïmakam himself, and confirmed by the deposition of his subordinates (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 66 and 67), seems hardly probable, seeing that an attack made by a body of some hundreds of armed Armenians of Kavar and Talori, united to those of Akchesser itself, on a Government agent of the rank of Kaïmakam, could not but be considered as an act of open revolt; yet, notwithstanding the gravity of the case, no steps appear to have been taken in consequence of this serious incident, and this warrants the conclusion that its proportions were much more modest than those attributed to it by the Kaïmakam.

On the other hand, as it appears from the beginning of a letter found on Murad that there was a real resistance on the part of the villagers to the apprehension of their leaders, the incident in question cannot be regarded otherwise than as an act of insubordination against the Government officials.

As none of the inhabitants of Akchesser were summoned before the Commission, the inquiry only shows one side of the question.

(*b.*) Attack stated by the Kaïmakam of Sasun to have been planned against him personally at Kiagashin (*Procès-verbal* No. 52).

The inquiry includes no deposition independent of that of the Kaïmakam himself, and as, in spite of the demand of the Delegates, no inhabitant of the village of Kiagashin was produced before the Commission, they cannot regard this fact as established, more especially as the Kaïmakam based his own assertions entirely on information received from one of his subordinates.

(*c.*) Expulsion from Shenik of Fevzi Effendi, Commandant of Gendarmerie, sent there on the occasion of the quarrel between the inhabitants of the village and the Velikanli Kurds, and spoken of by Anton Effendi, Vicar of the Catholic Bishop of Mush (*Procès-verbal* No. 43).

This charge did not receive confirmation from Fevzi Effendi himself. Nor were the statements of the priest Parsegh that Government agents, such as Ali Effendi, Taleb Effendi, and others, who were sent to give advice to the villagers of Kavar and Talori, were expelled by the latter, confirmed in the depositions taken before the Commission, and Taleb Effendi himself denied having gone to these districts during the summer of 1894.

(*d.*) Refusal of the inhabitants of Talori during a period of fifteen years to allow Government officials to visit them.

On this subject the depositions of Medjid Effendi and the Kaïmakam of Kulp (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 49 and 66), the latter going so far as to declare, that owing to this conduct he was unable to send agents to ascertain the state of the ruined villages of Talori, absolutely contradict that of Mahmoud on-bashi (*Procès-verbal* No. 75), who declared that during his service as gendarme he passed through Talori without being in any way molested by the Armenians.

But even admitting that the fact alleged was true, the cause must be sought for in the general state of the country, and the Armenians must not be blamed, having regard to their position in the midst of the Kurds, and their numerical weakness.

(*e.*) Attack on the troops at Merghemuzan, planned by the Armenians.

As most of the depositions on this subject are based only on hearsay, and as Captain Mustafa Effendi relies solely on information received from a certain Kurd of Sasun through a zaptieh, the reported planning of an attack on the soldiers must be considered as a mere rumour.

The statements of the witnesses Reshid, Ali, and Hazzo, on this subject (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 23, 69, and 70), considering their improbable and contradictory nature, cannot be regarded as giving any support to the accusation, more especially as their presence among the Armenians on the Antok-Dagh is extremely doubtful.

(*f.*) Refusal of the inhabitants of Agpi and Hetink to pay their taxes in 1894.

This accusation was made by the Kaïmakam of Sasun alone (*Procès-verbal* No. 52), and no inquiry was made into the matter. Simo of Agpi (*Procès-verbal* No. 81) denied the fact.

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(*g.*) Introduction into Talori of powder and lead (*Procès-verbaux* Nos. 49, 53, 69, and 75).

Two cases appear in the inquiry: one alleged by the secret agents of Medjid Effendi; the other seen by the people of Khian, who are said to have met a band with persons carrying the ammunition in question. Notwithstanding the assertions of the above-mentioned witnesses, the circumstances attending their appearance before the Commission, and the details of their story, do not admit of its being regarded as probable.

(*h.*) Hiding of property, household utensils, &c., in the spring of 1894, by the people of Kavar, represented in numerous depositions as preparatory to revolt.

The Armenians explained this practice, which is an old one, as the outcome of fear of robbery by Kurds who came into their neighbourhood to their summer pasturages.

Chapter III.—*Paper found on Murad at the time of his Arrest.*

Our esteemed comrade Murad,

We have received your letter in question, and have welcomed it with much affection; and if you ask about us, we have nothing left, because for the last twelve days we have been fighting, and by the Lord's mercy we are conquerors; but yesterday morning the fighting began in all directions; we were attacked, he [*sic*] captured Husseintzik, and in the evening entered the village and laid all in ashes. To-day, in the morning, he [*sic*] attacked us from all points on the Antok, and we only just escaped complete destruction.

This is why Der Bedros (the priest), taking with him the greater part of the inhabitants of Ghelieguzan, went, unknown to us, towards Sasun, and for this reason we found no other means than to send two or three women to them; a few have returned. We do not yet know the number of people killed, only many women and children were burnt in the houses, and many persons are lost.

(Signed) KERKO MOSSEYAN.
OHAN NIGOYAN.
D. OHANNES, *Priest.*

On the back of the letter:—

At present we know not what will happen; it may be that by the evening there will be a change, and that he [*sic*] will put us to the sword.

Chapter IV.—*Victims of the Events at Sasun.*

The Armenian evidence on this subject does not make it possible to form even an approximate estimate of the losses suffered by them, or of the exact circumstances in which those losses occurred. Taking into consideration the dispersion which took place as a consequence of the events, the tendency shown by some Armenians, logical from their point of view, to attribute to the events the death of people who only succumbed afterwards to their consequences, and, further, the evidently imaginary details given by some, it is almost hopeless to try to draw up a correct Table.

In the case of Shenik, however, the greater number of the witnesses allows of an estimate more nearly approaching the reality. As regards the other villages, and especially those of Talori, the inquiry furnishes only isolated facts. Nevertheless, the general aspect of all the evidence makes it clear that murders of men, women, and children did take place during the events, and the efforts of the Commission to make the numbers, especially those given by the inhabitants of Shenik, appear less only resulted in bringing to light a larger number of victims.

Below is given a list comprising the names of persons of all ages and either sex who were stated before the Commission to have been murdered, and the circumstances attending their death:—

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I.—Of the Village of Shenik.

No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
1	Artin, brother of Erko.. ..	Killed by soldiers in the flight towards Passur, according to Erko: Serkis says he was killed, but knows not by whom	Erko ..	7
			Serkis ..	10
2	Vartan, aged 3 } sons of the above-mentioned Artin	Killed, according to Erko, by soldiers in the ravine of Ghelie-Henghevi. The death of Artin's two sons is confirmed by the depositions of Maïmo, but she calls them Vartan and Simo. Serkis confirms the death of Aram in the flight, but denies the existence of Vartan.	Erko ..	7
3	Aram, „ 1 }		Serkis ..	10
			Maïmo ..	55
			„ ..	66
4	Maïram } wife and three daughters of Serkis, son of Vartan, and nephew of the above-mentioned Erko	Serkis denies that these members of his family were killed, and declares that his wife Maïram and his two daughters, Shushan and Aïvan, died after their return to Shenik; he denies the existence of a child of 1 year who is said to be dead	Erko ..	7
			Serkis ..	10
			Maïmo ..	55
5	Shushan, aged 6 }		Mardiros ..	78
6	Aïvan, „ 3 }		Rebe ..	78
7	(?) „ 1 }	Maïmo, Mardiros, brother of Serkis, and Rebe, wife of Mardiros, confirm the murder of Maïram and her two daughters, Shushan and Hame		
8	Bedros, aged 7, son of Mardiros, brother of the above Serkis	Erko calls this Bedros son of Serkis, but, as seen in the depositions of Maïmo and of Mardiros and his wife Rebe, Bedros is the son of the two latter	Erko ..	7
			Serkis ..	10
			Mardiros ..	78
			Rebe ..	78
9	Migredich, aged 2, brother of the above	According to the depositions of the relatives of these two children, Bedros and Migredich were abandoned in the flight from the Antok-Dagh on the arrival of mingled soldiers and Kurds, and have not been seen since	..	..
10	Shushan, 40 days old, daughter of Sako	According to Sako, she was abandoned in the village at the time of the flight, but the depositions of Erko, son of Kalo, Tone, son of Miko, and Mariam, wife of Sako himself, show that Sako had no child	Sako ..	17
			Erko ..	56
			Tone ..	56
			Mariam ..	91
11	Kurki (Ghiro) } children of Mardo, son of Kalo, and nephew of the above Sako	According to Sako, Manushke was the daughter of Erko, brother of Mardo, and the two children were left on the Antok during the flight. According to Mardo, father of these children, Manushke was abandoned in the village and Kourki killed by the soldiers at Ghelie-guzan. The murder of the latter is confirmed by Tone, son of Miko, but this same Tone denies the existence of Manushke; and Erko, son of Kalo, states that Manushke died two years before; he also denies the existence of Kurki	Sako ..	17
12	Manushke }		Tone ..	56
			Erko ..	56
			Mardo ..	54
13	Artin, son of Bedo	Rende, wife of Artin, affirms the murder of these five persons and attributes the men's death to the soldiers, but is unaware who killed the others; she only saw the corpses. Maïmo confirms the murder of these five persons. According to Artin, Artin son of Bedo, and Girbo his son, were killed at Gheliesan	Rende ..	63
14	Girbo, son of the above Artin		Maïmo ..	65
15	Gule, wife of the above Girbo		„ ..	63
16	Shushan, daughter of the two latter		„ ..	66
			Artin ..	26
17	Mardo, son of Saak, uncle of the above Artin		Haze ..	81
18	Manuk, son of the above Girbo ..	The depositions of Artin about the death of Manuk are not confirmed by that of Rende, grandmother of Manuk, and in his place she gives Shushan as dead (No. 16 in this list)	Artin ..	26
			Rende ..	63
19	Migro, aged 2, son of Bedros, son of Artin	Bedros says these two children were abandoned on the Antok-Dagh, but Boghos, his brother, states that Nure died after returning to the village. Artin mentions the abandonment of Garabet and Shushan, his grandson and granddaughter, but Garabet, given as son of Bedros, is alive, and Merke had no daughter named Shushan, as is shown by the depositions of Bedros and Boghos. So it is clear that Artin mistook the names, and that his two grandchildren left among the soldiers on the Antok-Dagh are Apre and Hanemik	Bedros ..	53
			Boghos ..	66
20	Nure, aged 3, daughter of Merke, brother of the above Bedros		Artin ..	26
21	Apre, brother of Nure			
22	Hanemik, daughter of the above Bedros			
23	Tone, son of Migro	Killed together, according to Hebo, by soldiers in company of Kurds, during the flight	Maïmo ..	55
			„ ..	66
24	Avedis, son of the above Tone, aged 5 or 6		Sako ..	17
			Hebo ..	79
25	Ossep, son of Keshish	Killed during the flight	Maïmo ..	55
			„ ..	66
			Sako ..	17
26	Djore, son of Kasso	Killed in the flight from Shenik	Sako ..	17
			Erko ..	56
			Maïmo ..	55
			„ ..	66
			Girbo ..	65

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No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
27	Djore, daughter of Hebo, wife of Gurdjo, son of Mosse	Killed at Keupri-Sherif-Han during the fight	Hebo ..	79
			Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			Erko ..	56
			Sako ..	17
28	Shake, daughter of Sako, son of Teme, and wife of Mardo, son of Mosse	Killed in the flight to the Antok-Dagh. According to Hebo she threw herself with other women down a precipice	Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			Erko ..	56
			Hebo ..	79
29	Kirko, son of Mosse, Mukhtar of Shenik	Killed by Kurds in the flight from the Antok-Dagh ..	Hatcho ..	16
			Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			Hebo ..	79
30	Artin, son of Kasso	Both killed at Gheliesan, according to Artin	Maïmo ..	55
31	Migro, son of Agop		,, ..	63
			,, ..	66
			Artin ..	26
			Sako ..	17
32	Girbo, son of Tono	Killed at Gheliesan	Artin ..	26
33	The mother of Khazar, son of Boghos	Shot by Government men in the flight from the Antok-Dagh	Khazar ..	33
34	The daughter of Manuk, son of Nigo, aged 8	Disappeared in the flight from the Antok-Dagh ..	Manuk ..	37
35	Khazar, son of Serke, husband of Maïmo	Killed by soldiers, according to Maïmo	Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			Girbo ..	65
36	Garabet, aged 11, son of Maïmo ..	Massacred, according to Maïmo's first deposition, which she retracted later, saying he died of fright during the events, and finally that he died after returning to the village	Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	66
			,, ..	91
37	Ohannes, son of Lucig ..	Killed, according to Khaze, his sister-in-law, by soldiers, and thrown into the trenches. His children were killed by soldiers	Maïmo ..	55
38	Artin } children of Ohannes		,, ..	66
39	Musho }		Khaze ..	58
40	Artin, son of Aram	Killed during the events	Maïmo ..	55
41	Migro, son of Ove	Ditto	,, ..	63
42	Mardiros, son of Agop.. ..	Ditto	,, ..	66
43	Serkis, son of Ohannes ..	Killed by soldiers on the Antok-Dagh	Maïmo ..	55
44	Hampo, his son, aged 6 ..	Ditto	Garabet ..	76
45	Ohan, aged 4 { children of Ga-	Killed by soldiers on the Antok-Dagh	Garabet ..	76
46	Varte, aged 5 { rabet, son of Ohannes			
47	Garabet, son of Ohannes ..	Killed during the events. A man named Garabet, son of Ohannes, appeared at the sitting of the 26th April (*Procès-verbal* No. 76), but his deposition, and that of Kiatib Mikhail, shows he has a namesake whose fate is unknown	Maïmo ..	55
			Garabet ..	76
			Mikhail ..	76
48	Manuk, son of Artin	Killed during the events. Erko, son of Kalo, gives a child of this name as killed. Manuk, son of Artin and Rende, and husband of Bulbul, is alive. The documents give a Manuk, son of Artin, as dead long ago. Maïmo retracts her deposition as to the death of Manuk, son of Artin (*Procès-verbal* No. 91)	Maïmo ..	55
			,, ..	91
			Erko ..	56
			Rende ..	63
			Khate ..	57
49	Khazar, son of Resho	Killed near Ghelieguzan	Sako ..	17
			Erko ..	56
			Tone ..	56
			Migro ..	56
			Maïram ..	57
50	Haïro, child, son of Mariam and Kiragos, son of Resho	Snatched by zaptiehs from his mother's hands in the flight, and dashed on the ground	Maïram ..	57
51	Megreditch, son of Ohannes, a child	Killed during the events	Erko ..	56
52	Bedros, son of Martiros and Hate	Ditto	Hate ..	57
53	Aïvan } children of Artin, son of	Abandoned in the village at the time of the flight in a house which was subsequently burnt	,, ..	57
54	Abgar } Serke			
55	Eghassab { children of Manuk,	Ditto		
56	Arshak { son of Artin			
57	Varte, daughter of Khazze and Tono, son of Lucig	Abandoned in the village	Hazze ..	58

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No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
58	Serkis, son of Artin and Aïvan ..	Disappeared during the events	Maïmo ..	55
			Aïvan ..	58
59	Varte } daughters of Migro, son	One disappeared during the events, the other died from fright after the return	Maïmo ..	63
60	Hunave } of Miko		Tone ..	63
61	Serkis, son of Ave	Killed during the events	Maïmo ..	66
			Attam ..	66
62	Melko, son of Mardiros ..	Ditto	Maïmo ..	66
63	Varte, wife of Girbo, son of Kalo	Lost in the flight from the Antok-Dagh on the arrival of the soldiers and Kurds	Bedros ..	78
64	Nazar } children of Mariam, the	According to Mariam the mother, killed during the events. Artin, son of Giro, denies having children called Girbo and Avedis, and says Nazar only died in the autumn. On being asked again the mother confirms her first deposition, adding that her husband denied having them through fear	Mariam ..	58
65	Girbo } daughter of Gope, and		,, ..	91
66	Avedis } Artin, son of Giro		Artin ..	81
67	Mardiros	Killed during the events	Erko ..	7
68	Mardo		Sako ..	17
			Hate ..	57
69	Kiragos, aged 1, son of Hebo ..	Abandoned by his mother in the flight	Hebo ..	79
70	Hampo, aged 2 } children of	Abandoned by their father in the flight	,, ..	79
71	Ghelivar, newly born } Aro, son of Serkis			
72	Megredich, son of Merke, son of Aro	Ditto	,, ..	79
73	Sako, son of Temo	An old man, left in the village and killed	,, ..	79
74	Hacho, son of Serkis	From 74 to 102 are given by Maïmo as killed, but in later examinations she states she is not sure of their murder. Among them is Nazar, son of Artin, given as a child by Mariam (*Procès-verbal* No. 58), and Ghiro (No. 11 in this list). A Mardiros, son of Nigo, was heard at the sitting of March 8 (*Procès-verbal* No. 37), and Maïmo (*Procès-verbal* No. 91) retracted what she had said about him. Erko in his deposition (*Procès-verbal* No. 7) says nothing of the death of his own wife Ogde. According to the Mukhtar of Kizil-Agach, one Rebe, wife of Artin, was to be found in the village. A child named Khazar, son of Gurdjo, was brought before the Commission (*Procès-verbal* No. 79)		
75	Simo, son of Artin			
76	Migro, son of Ove			
77	Ohannes, son of Mosse			
78	Ohan, son of Osman			
79	Nazar, son of Artin			
80	Vartan, son of Mardo			
81	Khazar, son of Gurdjo			
82	Kirko, son of Nigo			
83	Mardiros, son of Nigo			
84	Ghiro, son of Mardo			
85	Stepo, son of Djere			
86	Khazar, son of Keshish			
87	Kirko, son of Pollo			
88	Artin, son of Mardiros			
89	Miko, son of Mordiron			
90	Ghiro, son of Boghos			
91	Aïvan, daughter of Bolle, wife of Resho			
92	Hache, wife of Marke			
93	Mariam, daughter of Merke, wife of Girbo			
94	Merke, son of Ghiro			
95	Hache, wife of Ohan			
96	Hache, daughter of Stepo, wife of Mardo			
97	Saro, wife of Ohannes			
98	Ogde, daughter of Kiragos, wife of Gourdjo			
99	Hame, daughter of Mardo			
100	Sheme, daughter of Ohan			
101	Rebe, wife of Artin			
102	Ogde, daughter of Serke, wife of Erko			
103	Erko, son of Kalo	From No. 103 to 110, inclusive, were named by Maïmo as killed, though all appeared before the Commission, except Bulbul, badly wounded during the events, as shown by the deposition of her mother-in-law Rende. Attam, son of Ove, was also wounded		
104	Migro, son of Miko			
105	Bedo, son of Kalo			
106	Bulbul, daughter of Mardo, and wife of Manuk			
107	Rende, daughter of Kurki, and wife of Artin, son of Bedo			
108	Khaze, daughter of Resho, wife of Migro			
109	Attam, son of Ove			
110	Boghos, son of Artin			
111	Mariam, daughter of Merke, wife of Girbo	Named by Maïmo perhaps in mistake for Gule, daughter of Merke, and wife of Girbo (No. 15)		

No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
112	Artin, son of Ghiro	Named as dead by his wife, but produced later before the Commission, and recognized as living	Mariam ..	58
			,, ..	91
			Artin ..	81
113	Boghos, son of Mardo, son of Saak	According to his mother, killed during the events ..	Hazze ..	81
114	Shushan, daughter of Mardo ..	Beheaded	,, ..	81

II.—Of the Village of Semal.

No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
1	Ohannes, nephew of Sako, of Shenik	Killed with the priest Ohannes at the camp at Ghelieguzan	Sako ..	17
2	Boghe } sons of Mardo ..	Ditto	Tavo ..	19
3	Khacho }		Mariam ..	62
4	Manuk } sons of the above Hatcho	Ditto	Ossep ..	64
5	Attam }			
6	Serko	Ditto	Egho ..	32
7	Mardo	Ditto	Simo ..	31
8	Garabet	Ditto	Egho ..	32
9	Manuk, son of Vartan	Ditto	Shahbaz ..	43
10	Sherho, son of Ohannes ..	Ditto		
11	Stepan }			
12	Ohannes } sons of Sherho ..	Ditto	Mariam ..	61
13	Giro }			
14	Boghos, son of Vartan	Ditto		
15	Vartan, son of Vartan	Ditto		
16	Gabriel, brother of Ossep ..	Ditto	Ossep ..	64
17	Tone, son of Hebo	Ditto	Mariam ..	62
18	Boghos, son of Artin	Ditto		
19	Toro, aged 15	Ditto	Dilo ..	61
20	Kirkor, a child, son of Boghos ..	Ditto		
21	The priest Ohannes	Ditto		
22	Ovak, a lad	Wounded, according to his own statement, at the camp at Ghelieguzan	Ovak ..	21
23	Haneghine, aged 5–6, daughter of Khacho, brother of Tavo and father of Ossep	Abandoned in the village. According to Ossep, Haneghine, his sister, was found by him dead on her father's breast at Ghelieguzan	Tavo ..	19
			Ossep ..	64
24	Nubar, their relative, very old			
25	Bedros, aged 8–9			
26	Mano, a child, son of the cousin of Tavo	Killed by the bayonet on the Antok-Dagh	Tavo ..	19
27	Ardesh, aged 4–6, son of Boghe, brother of Tavo	Killed by soldiers in the flight	Ossep ..	64
			Tavo ..	19
28	Setrak, another son of Boghe ..	Killed during the events	Ossep ..	64
29	Setrak, aged 2, grandson of Mariam, who is not related to Tavo	Cast away by his mother at Ghelieguzan, and died of fright	Mariam ..	61
30	Arshak, a boy of 4	Killed, according to Tavo, by soldiers near Hazzo. Mariam, their mother, was not questioned directly about them, but in her replies to general questions on the massacres in the flight from the Antok-Dagh she did not mention them	Mariam ..	62
31	Mermere, a girl of 6, children of Tavo's brother, Korke, and Mariam		Tavo ..	19
32	Ossep, father of Tavo; his child was taken by a Lieutenant of zaptiehs	Killed during the events, according to Tavo. Ossep, heard before the Commission, was unmarried, so it was not of him that Tavo was speaking	Tavo ..	19
			Ossep ..	64
33	Sherho } sons of Stepan	Killed on the mountain of Tchaï in the flight from the village	Simo ..	31
34	Ohan }		Egho ..	32
35	Tone, son of Hecho	Ditto	Shahbaz ..	43

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No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
36	Tore, very old, wife of Are ..	Left in the village at the time of the flight	Simo ..	31
37	Another very old woman, name unknown to Simo	Left in the village at the time of the flight. She is perhaps Nubar mentioned by Tavo (No. 24)	„ ..	31
38	Merke, son of Sefer ..	Killed during the events	„ ..	31
39	Serkis, son of Arutin ..			
40	Hebo, uncle of Simo ..			
41	Khazar			
42	Son of priest Ohannes, aged 5-6	Abandoned at Ghelieguzan	„ ..	31
43	Khate, wife of the great-uncle of Egho	Left in the village. Possibly identical with Tore, wife of Are (No. 36)	Egho ..	32
44	Are, uncle of Egho	Killed during the events	„ ..	32
45	Boghos, brother of Erko	All killed by soldiers at Ghelie-Henghevi during the flight	„ ..	32
46	Bedros, son of Erko ..			
47	Oskian, son of Bedros ..			
48	Tone, related to Erko ..			
49	Son of Tone, aged 2 ..			
50	Merke, uncle of Egho ..			
51	Sako, related to Egho ..			
52	Gule, wife of Sako ..			
53	Make, daughter of the last two			
54	Melko } brothers of Egho	Disappeared during the events	„ ..	32
55	Khazar }			
56	Manuk, brother of Stepan ..	Disappeared during the events. From portions of clothes Stepan thinks he found their corpses in a ravine near Ghelieguzan	Stepan ..	37
57	Khazar } sons of the above Ma-			
58	Artin } nuk			
59	Arakel } sons of Asatur, aged	Died of fright during the flight	Asatur ..	39
60	Parsegh } 4 to 5			
61	Tono, father of Serkis	Disappeared during the events	Serkis ..	49
62	Mardo, husband of Zeri, daughter of Mardiros of Agpi	His mutilated corpse was found between Kiagashin and Shushamerg	Mariam ..	46
63	Shero	Killed in the fight. As persons of this name have already been mentioned, it is not possible to say if they are the same or namesakes	Stepo ..	50
64	Vartan			
65	Hacho			

Tavo (*Procès-verbal* No. 19), though unable to give names, said that about a score of children and old men were abandoned in the village and perished there:—

2 in the house of Tone.
2 „ „ Shabgudan.
1 „ „ Hebo.
1 „ „ Ohan.
3 „ „ Artin.
1 „ „ Manuk.
1 „ „ Shahbego Khazar.
1 „ „ Kazar.

III.—Of the Village of Ghelieguzan.

No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
1	An old man, uncle of Serko ..	Killed in the flight from the village	Serko ..	25
2	The son of Serko	Disappeared during the flight	„ ..	25
3	Resho, son of Erko	Killed by soldiers in the ravine of Gheliesan ..	Serko ..	25
4	Migro } sons of Ferho		Stepan ..	50
5	Tone }		Rehan ..	57
6	Serkis, son of Avo	Ditto	Serko ..	25
			Rehan ..	57
7	Henan, son of Giro	Ditto	Serko ..	25
8	His brother, aged 7			
9	Mardo, son of Erko and cousin of Serko			
10	A child of 7, brother of Asatur ..			
11	Hario, son of Vartan			
12	Ono, son of Miko			

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No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
13	Hafse, wife of Serko, son of Avo..	Serko saw their corpses	Serko ..	25
14	Another Hafse, the daughter of Noure and wife of Avo		Rehan ..	57
15	A woman, name unknown ..			
16	Serkis, uncles of Kirangos ..	Killed at Gheliesan	Kiragos ..	25
17	Khazar, uncles of Kirangos ..			
18	Sheme, daughter of Serko, wife of Girbo, mother of Khazar and Gope	Abandoned and killed at Ghelieguzan	Kiragos ..	25
			Stepan ..	50
19	Sheme, wife of Ohan, mother of another Khazar who was killed, very old	Abandoned at Ghelieguzan..	Stepan ..	50
20	Vartan, also very old			
21	Naze, mother of Medjdo ..	Killed in the flight from the village	Kiragos ..	25
			Medjdo ..	27
22	Serkis, deaf and dumb, both cousins of Khazar, Manuk, son of Hebo	Killed at Pambuk-Tarlassi by soldiers and Kurds mingled	Manuk ..	34
23				
24	Toro, son of Saro	Killed near Agpi in the pursuit by the soldiers	Saro ..	36
25	Maïro, his wife		Stepo ..	47
26	Serkis, their children			
27	Abraham, their children			
28	The daughter of Bedros, son of Hacho	Killed in the forest by a bullet when the soldiers and Kurds were mingled	Bedros ..	36
29	Khazar, son of Vartan	Killed by soldiers in the ravine of Ghelieresh	Stepan ..	50
30	Khazar, son of Ogne			
31	Ghiro, son of Keva			
32	Mardo, son of Balo			
33	Mardo, son of Erko			
34	Serkis, son of Stepan	Killed near Hetink	„ ..	50
35	Artin, aged 6, children of Rehan	Killed, according to Rehan, by soldiers, or zaptiehs, or Government men	Rehan ..	57
36	Shushan, aged 8, children of Rehan			
37	Naze, wife of Polo, son of Mardo..	Killed during the events	„ ..	57
38	The priest Bedros	Killed in the fight at Ghelieguzan, according to Girbo, but this explanation of the death of the priest Bedros is false, as is proved by the letter of the priest Ohannes found among Murad's papers	Girbo ..	65
39	The son of Hacho ..	Wounded	Serko ..	25
40	Asatur			

IV.—Of the Village of Agpi (two witnesses heard).

No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
1	Misro, mother of Boghdi, an old woman	Abandoned and killed in the village..	Mariam ..	46
2	Teme, mother of Bedross, ditto ..			
3	Avo, son of Toro, aged 7–8 ..	Killed during the events	„ ..	46
4	Avo, son of Mardo	Aged 4–5. Killed, according to Mariam, during the events. Simo says there is an Avo in the Plain of Mush	Mariam ..	46
			Simo ..	81
5	Vartan, sons of Kerke, nephews of Simo	Killed at Ghelieresh by soldiers and Kurds ..	Mariam ..	46
6	Mosse, sons of Kerke, nephews of Simo		Simo ..	81
7	Hebo, son of Mosse, and brother of Simo			
8	Kevo, son of Hicho, and nephew of Simo			
9	Tone, son of Manuk	Killed during the events	Simo ..	81
			Mariam ..	46
10	Hamo, sons of Khasso	Killed, according to Mariam, during the events; but, according to Simo, they are now in the village	Simo ..	81
11	Miro, sons of Khasso		Mariam ..	46
12	Boghos, son of Manaro ..	Killed during the events	Mariam ..	46
			Simo ..	81

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No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
13	Kirko, son of Kiragos ..	Killed, according to Mariam, but according to Simo now in the village	Simo ..	81
14	Mardiros, son of Saak	Killed during the events, according to Mariam. Simo has never heard of them	„ ..	81
15	Hacho, son of Maïre			
16	Bedre, son of Khosso			
17	Melkom, son of Mardiros ..	Killed during the events	„ ..	81
18	Khumar, an old woman ..	Killed in the village and mutilated	„ ..	81
19	Khacho, son of Manuk ..	Old men. Killed in the village	„ ..	81
20	Gope, blind			
21	Kirko, son of Simo	Wounded	„ ..	81
22	Artin, son of Korke, and nephew of Simo			

V.—Of the Village of Spagank (one witness).

No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
1	Erko, husband of Make ..	Killed by the bayonet by soldiers in the village and during the flight	Make ..	20
2	Artin, aged 12 } sons of Make			
3	Kirkor, aged 9 }			
4	Khachadur, aged 4 }			
5	Khazar } children of Make ..	Disappeared during the events. Make has not seen them since	„ ..	20
6	Saro }			
7	Aranos }			
8	Agop }			
9	Khazo, child of Make, an infant ..	Died later at Alvarendj	„ ..	20
10	Sherho	Killed by Bozikli Kurds led by Ashur	Gaspard ..	74

VI.—Of Talori (four witnesses and eleven prisoners).

No.	Names of Victims.	Circumstances of their Death according to Evidence.	Names of Witnesses and Nos. of the *Procès-verbaux*.	
1	Khacho, son of Migro ..	Killed by soldiers and Kurds mingled. Khate stoned to death	Migro ..	41
2	Gaspard } brothers of Migro ..			
3	Are }			
4	Khate, wife of Serkis, and sister-in-law of Migro			
5	Kevo, son of Khate and Serkis ..			
6	Agop, child, aged 4, son of Bedjo	Killed by the Kurds of Mollah Omer	Boghos ..	75
			Tono ..	73
7	Gaspard, son of Bedros, of Hakmank	Killed in flight by the Kurds of Papori Ghendjo	Boghos ..	75
8	Kevo, of Purh	Killed by same as above	Tono ..	73
9	Varte, wife of Tere	Killed by Belekli Kurds	Khacho ..	82
10	Kemo, father of Boghos ..	Killed on the mountains during the events	Boghos ..	75
11	Abdo, brother of Boghos ..			
12	Artin	Killed near Spagank	Attam	77
13	Boghos, brother of Migro ..	Wounded	Migro ..	41
14	Stepan, son of Merke, and nephew of Migro			

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No. 253.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, August* 19, 1895.

I HAVE received your telegram of yesterday, reporting that the taxes are being collected with unparalleled severity from the Christians in the Plain of Moush.

I presume that, in concert with the French and Russian Ambassadors, you will demand that the officials found guilty of this inhuman conduct should be dismissed or suspended.

Your Excellency may inform the Turkish Government that it will not be possible to withhold this information from Parliament, and that the worst impression will be created in the public mind in this country and in Europe, unless it can be announced that the Porte has adopted proper measures with a view to prevent such abuses.

No. 254.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 23.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, August* 23, 1895, 2·30 P.M.

ACCORDING to instructions contained in your Lordship's, telegram of the 19th August, Mr. Marinitch made a representation to Turkhan Pasha yesterday respecting the conduct of the Moush officials.

His Excellency denied the truth of the reports, but took down the substance of the communication for inquiry.

The French and Russian Dragomans supported Mr. Marinitch in general terms, and called special attention to the fact that the three Ambassadors had declared their intention of extending protection to the witnesses examined before the Moush Commission.

No. 255.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 25.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 21, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, transmitting despatches from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Moush reporting the incursions of Kurds on Armenian pastures, and their subsequent removal.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 255.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, July* 31, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Moush, reporting on the arrival of nomad Kurds in the Sassoon and Talori districts, and the forcible removal of the Armenians of Hadavorig from their pastures by the Moush authorities, on the pretext of avoiding disturbances between them and the Bekranli tribe of Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

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Inclosure 2 in No. 255.

Vice-Consul Hampson to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, July* 24, 1895.

WITH reference to Mr. Shipley's telegram to you of the 20th instant, and my telegram to Her Majesty's Embassy, repeated to you, of yesterday, respecting the presence of nomad Kurds in the Sassoon and Talori districts in spite of a promise given by the Porte to the Russian Ambassador to prevent their entry this year, as communicated to the Russian Consul-General at Erzeroum, I have the honour to report that, as far as I can ascertain at present, the facts are as follows :—

No attempt having been made on the part of the Government to prevent them, nomad Kurds of the Bekranli, Badikanli, Reshkotanli, and Latchkanli tribes, to at least the usual number, and, it is said, in larger numbers than usual, have pitched their tents on their habitual pasture-grounds in Sassoon and Talori. I hear also that women and children are conspicuously absent among them this year, but whether this is true or not I am unable to say.

There are no troops in the two districts named; and the only step taken by the authorities to maintain order is to send an influential Kurd of this town, Hajji Deib by name, nominally to keep the Kurds quiet. This man enjoys anything but a good reputation here. It is said that the Sheikh of Zeilan is also with the Bekranli Kurds in the mountains. However, so far, there appears to have been no trouble.

As an instance of the means adopted to prevent collisions between the Kurds and the Armenian villagers, I may quote the following :—

For some years past certain of the Bekranli Kurds have adopted as their pasturage ground close to the pasturages belonging, by right of "Tapu," to the inhabitants of Hadavorik, a Protestant Armenian village some two hours distant from Moush. The Kurds having arrived last week, about a company of soldiers were sent to forcibly remove the Armenians from their pasturages, where they already were. These people have now nowhere to feed their flocks, which are considerable.

If, in order to prevent collisions, the Armenians are to be forced to vacate their pasturages and leave them to the Kurds, the method will, no doubt, be effective, as the former will be forced to quit these districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

Inclosure 3 in No. 255.

Vice-Consul Hampson to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, July* 30, 1895.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 24th instant, I have the honour to state that the Kurds were quietly told to vacate the pastures of the inhabitants of Hadavorik, the latter having threatened to telegraph to the Grand Vizier on the subject.

I reported the above by telegraph to Her Majesty's Embassy, repeated to yourself to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

No. 256.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 27.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 20, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copies of despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting the amnesty of political prisoners.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 256.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Extract.) *Erzeroum, July* 25, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report that orders were received here by telegraph on the 24th instant for the release of all political prisoners, with the exception of any who might be connected with the events of last year in the districts of Sassoun and Talori. On the receipt of these orders twenty political prisoners were set at liberty, while sixteen others, who are charged with offences which may fairly be classed as political, are still detained in prison.

Inclosure 2 in No. 256.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Extract.) *Erzeroum, August* 8, 1895.

FROM Moush Mr. Hampson informs me, in a despatch of the 26th ultimo, copies of which I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency, that thirteen prisoners, whose names he furnishes, have been set at liberty, while fourteen others, including "Mourad," and eleven Talori men, Erko, one of the strongest Armenian witnesses before the Commission of Inquiry, and one other, are still in prison, and are being treated with greater severity than heretofore.

With regard to Erko's case, it is to be hoped that his speedy release may be procured from the Porte, as I learn from Mr. Shipley that there can be little doubt that the charge of murder brought against him was trumped up in order to punish him for having fearlessly presented himself before Abdullah Pasha, on the first arrival of the Turkish Commissioners at Moush, at a time when the other survivors of the Sassoun affair were successfully terrorized into silence by the local authorities. So that, if the interested Powers are able to afford any protection to Sassoun witnesses from the consequences of their evidence, this man, if anyone, should be made to profit by it. Mr. Hampson notes the significant fact that of twenty-two Talori prisoners —the only prisoners made during the Sassoun events of 1894—eleven have died during an imprisonment of less than a year, and that three out of eight alleged accomplices of Damadian have also died in prison.

Inclosure 3 in No. 256.

Vice-Consul Hampson to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, July* 26, 1895.

AS I had the honour to inform you by telegram to-day, thirteen Armenians in prison here on political charges have been set at liberty.

Their names are as follows:—

Deacon Moyses, of Ziaret; Deacon Harutune, of Erzeroum; Zachar, of Moush; Zachar, of Talori; Bedros, of Ardgonk; Hagop, of Enguznak; Ghandil, of Guvars; in prison since August 1894, on charge of concealing Damadian in Sourp Garabet Monastery.

Boghos, of Bitlis; Mardiros, of Ketakom; Azo, of Geliésan; Mirkho, of Koulp; Boghos; in prison since March 1891, for being friends of Damadian.

The first condemned for 101 years, others 5 years. Micaïl, Mardiros, and Nooro, arrested at same time, died in prison.

Krikor, of Moush, in prison since December 1894.

I understand that the above were released in consequence of telegraphic orders from Constantinople that all Armenian prisoners not accused of murder or other grave crimes should be set free.

There now remain in prison here fourteen Armenians: "Mourad" (Dr. Hamparsoun); eleven of Damadian's companions who were arrested in Talori last year (the other eleven have died in prison); Erko, who was one of the strongest witnesses on the Armenian side before the Commission of Inquiry, but was arrested, before giving evidence, on a trumped up charge of murder; and an Armenian who was arrested sometime ago on a pretence that he had robbed Kurds.

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I learn that "Mourad" and his companions are now being treated with considerably greater severity than heretofore.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

P.S.—I hear that certain Armenian political prisoners have also been released at Bitlis, but, so far, have been unable to obtain details.

C. S. H.

No. 257.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 30.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, August* 30, 1895, 3·45 P.M.

WITH reference to my telegram to your Lordship of the 23rd instant:

I have made a further representation to the Grand Vizier respecting the cruelty of Captain Reshid Effendi towards the Christians upon receipt of a fresh telegram from Vice-Consul Hampson on the subject.

In consequence of my renewed representations, his Highness has caused a telegram to be sent dismissing that officer from his post.

No. 258.

Procès-verbaux Nos. 40 *to* 108 *of the Bitlis Commission.*—(*Received at the Foreign Office, September* 2.)

[See Part II.]

No. 259.

Translations of Six Depositions of Armenians, taken separately by the Consular Delegates on the Sassoon Commission according to Instructions from the Embassies at Constantinople.—(*Received at the Foreign Office, September* 2, 1895.)

[See Part II.]

No. 260.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 2.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 27, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, forwarding the letter in which Mr. Shipley, the British Delegate to the Bitlis Commission, submits the Joint Report drawn up by his colleagues and himself on the proceedings of the Commission.*

I have much pleasure in calling your Lordship's attention to the satisfactory manner in which Mr. Shipley performed the arduous duties intrusted to him.

The work of the Delegates was performed under conditions which entailed no small amount of personal inconvenience, and I submit that the way in which it was carried out, and the perfect harmony which prevailed between them during the whole time of their association, reflect the greatest credit upon them.

I beg to recommend Mr. Shipley's services to your Lordship's approval.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

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* No. 252.

Inclosure 1 in No. 260.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, August* 12, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which has been addressed to me by Mr. Shipley, British Delegate with the Commission of Inquiry into the events of Sasun in 1894, on his submitting the General Report of the Delegates upon those events.

The Report itself, with its Annexes, has been intrusted to M. Prjevalsky, the Russian Delegate, by whom it is being carried to Constantinople.

After a careful study of this document, and of the daily Joint Reports of the Delegates upon which it is based, I can only express my entire agreement with their conclusion, as far as they go, and bear my testimony to the unselfish zeal and energy with which they have all laboured so long—under conditions of almost unparalleled difficulty and hardship—in order to arrive at this result.

At the same time, I venture to point out certain respects in which, as was only to be expected from the conditions under which the inquiry was made, the Report of the Delegates has fallen short of an entire elucidation of the Sasun affair, from its earliest beginning up to the date of writing, when, by administrative pressure of every kind, and under the disguise of superintending their relief, the Turkish authorities are still endeavouring to consummate the ruin of the Christians of Sasun and Talori.

1. Owing to the persistent refusal of the Turkish Commissioners to take evidence on the subject, no inquiry was made into the attack of the Kurds on Talori in 1893, which, in my belief, had for its direct result the agitation of "Mourad" and his fellows, their isolated acts of hostility towards the Kurds, and of insubordination towards Government officials, and the subsequent terrible reprisals of the latter in 1894. The Delegates were therefore only able to express a guarded opinion upon this concatenation of events.

2. No attempt whatever was made by the Commission to throw light upon the movements of troops or the superior orders under which the Commanding officers acted; consequently, the precise share of the regular troops in the massacre of Christians, without distinction of age or sex, rests upon the evidence of Armenians only. This fact has prevented our Delegates from doing more than formally express their conviction that such massacre took place, without attempting to fix the personal responsibilities for its execution.

3. Although it is clear from what has been recorded in the daily Joint Reports, as well as from outside information, that strong pressure was brought to bear by intimidation or promises of reward, to influence the evidence of Armenian witnesses, in their final Report the Delegates have refrained from insisting upon the fact that, not only is there a strong presumption that the evidence on the Government side had been prepared beforehand by the local authorities, but proofs were actually adduced that evidence was previously submitted to the Commissioners before being given formally in the presence of the European Delegates.

4. On the question of torture and acts of revolting atrocity, in the absence of independent corroborating evidence, and in consequence of the reluctance of the Commissioners to go into them, it was impossible for the Delegates to do more than declare that they remain in obscurity.

The lack of direct authority vested in the Delegates rendered them powerless to remedy these voluntary shortcomings of the Turkish Commissioners. In the consequent absence of legally conclusive proofs, their quasi-judicial position, and the necessity imposed upon each of them of not claiming to record as proved more than was certain to be admitted as such by his colleagues, has compelled them to render an open verdict upon these important points, or refrain from touching upon them at all.

Individually, however, there is no impropriety in their expressing their matured opinions on these subjects, and Mr. Shipley proposes to embody his own in a Memorandum to be submitted to your Excellency after his return to Constantinople.

In conclusion, I desire to express my acknowledgments of Mr. Shipley's services during his long and arduous mission. I am in a position to say that such success as the Delegates have been able to achieve is largely due to the prudence, tact, and unfailing straightforwardness shown by Mr. Shipley in his relations with his colleagues, of whose conduct towards himself he speaks in the warmest terms; and

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I have also to thank him for valuable assistance most cordially rendered to myself during his residence at Erzeroum before and after the inquiry at Moush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 260.

Mr. Shipley to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Erzeroum, August* 10, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to submit to you herewith, in accordance with instructions, the Joint Report on the events in Sasun of last year,* drawn up by Messrs. Prjevalsky, Vilbert, and myself, Delegates of the Russian, French and British Consulates at Erzeroum respectively to the Bitlis Commission appointed by the Turkish Government to inquire into the events in question.

Owing to the great pressure of work entailed by the necessity of completing the revision of the Protocols of the above-mentioned Commission, I am unavoidably compelled to postpone the consideration of certain points in the above Report to which I think particular attention should be drawn, leaving them to be embodied in a Memorandum which I propose to submit subsequently to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople.

I would only at present remark that the conclusions arrived at in our Report above referred to were arrived at in entire agreement with my colleagues, to whose unselfish and strenuous co-operation with myself I feel it my duty to bear the fullest witness.

It only remains for me to acknowledge my great obligations for the assistance which I have on all occasions met with from yourself. The information, in particular, placed by you at my disposal has proved to be of the utmost value to me, owing to your intimate knowledge of the districts coming under the scope of the inquiry.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

No. 261.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 2.)

My Lord, *Therapia, August* 29, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a telegram which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, stating that Mr. Hampson ascertained, on visiting the Talori villages, that the thirteen wards which compose that group, twelve, consisting of 425 houses, had been totally destroyed, while the thirteenth, which contained thirty houses, had only been plundered.

I would call your Lordship's attention to the fact that the Delegates on the Moush Commission of Inquiry have understated the number of houses destroyed in the Talori district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 261.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Erzeroum, August* 26, 1895.

MR. HAMPSON has ascertained that the Kurds still practise the levy of "Lafir."

With reference to the statistics given in the Annex of Delegates' Joint Report, the report on the Talori villages drawn up by Mr. Hampson shows that, of the thirteen wards which compose that group, and were visited by him, twelve, consisting of 425 houses, had been totally destroyed, while the thirteenth, which contained thirty houses, had been only plundered.

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* See No. 252.

No. 262.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 4.)

(Telegraphic.) *Constantinople, September* 4, 1895, 11·30 A.M.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 30th ultimo:

The Acting Vali has informed Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Mush that the Turkish Government has ordered the dismissal of the five officials named.

No. 263.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Foreign Office, September* 6, 1895.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch of the 27th ultimo, forwarding despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum and the British Delegate to the Sasun Commission, and the joint Report drawn up by Mr. Shipley and his colleagues on the proceedings of the Commission.

I have much pleasure in requesting you to express to Mr. Shipley my satisfaction at the manner in which he has performed his duties, and my entire approval of his proceedings.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 264.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 9.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 3, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Moush respecting abuses in tax collection in Moush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 264.

Vice-Consul Hampson to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, August* 5, 1895.

I REGRET to have to state that the reports of the brutal manner in which the taxes are being collected in the villages throughout this district grow worse and worse. The zaptiehs, who demand the whole taxes for the year up to March next, ill-treat the inhabitants—men, women and children, sell all their property at absurd prices, and destroy what is unsaleable.

At Awran, a village in the Moush Plain, they forcibly entered the houses at night, dragged the naked women from their beds and threw them into a stream. They tied ropes round the men's necks and led them to the water and forced them to drink. In short, the tax-collecting is everywhere conducted in a shameful manner. The worst offender appears to be a certain Reshid Effendi, Lieutenant of Police.

At Agpik, a Sasun village, which was robbed but not burnt last year, the same thing has been going on.

I have called the Mutessarif's attention to these facts, but fear that under the present system little improvement can be hoped for.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. S. HAMPSON.

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No. 265.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 9.)

My Lord, *Therapia, September 3, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, inclosing a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Moush on the subject of the relief operations in Sassoon. I would draw your Lordship's favourable attention to the great services which Dr. Reynolds is rendering without regard for his own personal interests.

I have expressed to Mr. Hampson my approval of the steps he has taken to forward the work of relief in Sassoon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 265.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, August 19, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Moush on the subject of the relief operations in Sassoon. Before Mr. Hampson's arrival the work of relief seems to have been brought almost to a standstill by the obstructive policy of the local authorities, but his energy has already overcome some of the difficulties, especially in the matter of providing shelter for the survivors of last year's massacre in the Kavar villages at least.

I would venture to suggest that the dismissal of the Mutessarifs of Moush and Guendj, and their replacement by officials not identified in any way as they have been with the policy of extermination of the Sassoonlis, are steps which should have been taken months ago if the Sublime Porte had been really anxious to dissociate itself from such a policy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 265.

Vice-Consul Hampson to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, August 5, 1895.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, in obedience to his Excellency Sir P. Currie's telegraphic instructions of the 29th ultimo, I left Moush on the 1st August for Sassoon, to superintend in person the distribution of relief. Previous to my departure the Mutessarif informed me that orders had been received from the Grand Vizier that the Turkish Relief Commission were to consult and work with me in the distribution.

I proceeded directly to Semal. On entering the pretty and fertile Sassoon valley the pitiable state of things became at once evident; not a house is standing throughout the valley, which includes Semal, Shenik, and Guelieguesan. Even the houses scattered on the hill-sides at considerable distances from the actual villages had been hunted out and burned. A few fields are in cultivation with the grain sown late when the first relief arrived; but though the crops look well, they are, of course, very few, and even those are in many cases so backward that it is doubtful if they will ripen. At the very best these crops will not suffice to support the villagers for more than two months. An ox or a cow is a very rare sight, and not a sheep or a hen is to be seen, though the mountains are crowded with flocks belonging to the nomad Kurds, many of them stolen from the villages last year.

On arriving at Semal I found the missionaries settled there distributing rations to the starving villagers who came to them from all sides; while Dr. Reynolds has established a small hospital in huts of branches put up among the ruins, and is treating

a considerable number of patients both for old wounds and for small-pox (which is rife) and other diseases. There was not a sign of any commencement of building, and on inquiring the reason I was told that the Turkish Commissioners had forbidden the villagers to touch their houses. I immediately set the people of Semal to work repairing some of the walls, and, when the Turkish Commissioners came to see me that evening, talked very seriously to them at the way in which they had neglected their duties, and insisted that they should at once take steps to bring the timber for roofing purposes, which the Mutessarif had assured me I should find ready, but of which there was no sign.

Next day (2nd August) I went over to Shenik, where I found exactly the same condition of things. Having set the people to work on their walls I rode about one hour further to a hill above Guelieguesan, as I had heard that nomad Kurds were occupying that village, having turned out the Christian inhabitants. I found this statement to be true, and saw myself the Kurds and their flocks swarming in the village and hurrying away when they saw us looking at them from above. On the way within half-hour from Shenik I had seen the tents of the nomads on the mountains, the hay belonging to the village cut and carried off by the Kurds, and the flocks of the latter feeding on the pastures of the Armenians.

On returning to Semal that evening I spoke very strongly to the Commissioners on the subject, pointing out what a disgraceful thing it was that the nomad Kurds should be allowed to behave thus close to the Commission and the zaptiehs in attendance on them. Next day, in my absence, Hajji Tahil (referred to in previous despatches as having been sent to keep the Kurds in order) and the Major in command of the company stationed between here and Sassoon came down from the mountains to see me. The Commissioners repeated to them my observations, and they at once started off to inquire into the matter, but I have not yet heard with what result.

On Saturday, the 3rd August, I went to Guelieguesan. It is hard to realize that this beautiful village, in a rich valley, high among the mountains, shaded by large walnut trees, was the scene last year of an awful massacre, but the burnt houses, the death-pits, the human bones still to be found, and the grave of the priest Ohannes are there as witnesses. Here also I at once set the people to work building.

Yesterday I returned to Moush, and start again to-morrow viâ Semal, Aliantsik, and Guelieguesan for Talori, the visit to which will occupy about a week.

From what I have seen so far, it is evident that next to nothing has been done in the way of permanent relief, or to enable the villagers to remain in their villages this winter. The missionaries have done what they were allowed to do in the way of keeping the people alive and aiding the sick; but this is not enough. The first thing to be done is undoubtedly to secure necessary shelter for the villagers before bad weather commences, *i.e.*, within the next two months. A certain number of professional masons are absolutely necessary to set things going in each village, and these the Mutessarif has now promised to allow to go up.

After shelter has been secured, it will be necessary to consider how the people are to be supported for at least four months of the winter, and also how to supply them with such cattle, sheep, &c., as are absolutely necessary for their existence. On these points I have requested the missionaries to draw up detailed reports for each village in Sassoon which I hope to be able to forward next week, and the following week to send a similar report for the Talori district, where I hear things are very bad, and the Kurds returning to their old practices.

In any case, it is quite evident that large sums of money will be needed if any effective relief is to be granted, and I would appeal strongly for prompt help. So far the funds collected from Armenian sources are unavailable owing to the hostility of the authorities.

It is right that I should mention what serious sacrifices Dr. Reynolds is making in order to assist in the relief work. His practice in Van is large and profitable, and this he is totally abandoning.

I telegraphed the substance of the preceding to Her Majesty's Embassy last night.

(Signed) C. S. HAMPSON.

No. 266.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 16.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 11, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, inclosing Mr. Hampson's Report on his tour through Sasun and Talori.

I have communicated copies of this despatch, with its inclosures, to the French and Russian Ambassadors.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 266.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir, *Erzeroum, August* 26, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Moush, reporting upon the tour which he has just completed through Sasun and Talori.

From the accompanying sketch-map your Excellency will see that Mr. Hampson has visited all the most important points signalized by massacre and atrocity in 1894. Besides passing several days between Semal, Shenik, and Gueliguzan, which received the visit of the Commission of Inquiry last May, Mr. Hampson has traversed the ravine of Gueliesan, and seen the traces of massacre in the shape of human remains which still strew the track. He proceeded thence to Ishkentsor or Aktchesser, where the alleged attack by the Armenians on the Kaïmakam of Koulp took place, and afterwards visited all the thirteen wards comprising Talori in succession. His information as to the number of houses destroyed in this group of villages may be taken as conclusive; and as it differs widely from the figures given in the Annex to their Joint Report by the Consular Delegates, who did not reach Talori, I thought it advisable to telegraph its substance to your Excellency to-day, adding that Mr. Hampson ascertained that the Kurds are still in the habit of levying "hafir" on the district, notwithstanding the attempt to demonstrate before the Commission of Inquiry that the practice was unknown, or at least obsolete.

Passing to the east of the Talori River, Mr. Hampson skirted the district of Kurdish Sasun, which he found as usual in a state of lawless turmoil, and proceeded through the Hetink and Aghpik groups of villages to Shatakh, and so back to Moush viâ Semal.

In concluding his long and interesting Report, Mr. Hampson indicates as measure essential to the future prosperity of Sasun and Talori, after their present necessities have been relieved, the prevention of Kurdish incursions and outrages, and the abolition of the "hafir;" to effect which it would be necessary to reduce Kurdish Sasun, which he describes as the source of all the past troubles, and to remove some of the most turbulent Chiefs. But I would point out that it is idle to expect any honest endeavour to carry out this or any remedial policy from the present Mutessarifs of Moush and Guendj, between whose sandjaks the district under report is divided; not that matters are likely to be mended under any successors who may be appointed to replace them, until a radical change is effected in the current from head-quarters, which now influences and directs every action of provincial Governors in this part of the Ottoman Empire.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 266.

Vice-Consul Hampson to Consul Graves.

Sir, *Moush, August* 18, 1895.

I RETURNED yesterday from a tour in the Sasun and Talori districts, as I had the honour to announce to yourself and Her Majesty's Embassy. As you will see from the

inclosed sketch-map, which, without any pretensions to geographical correctness, gives, I hope, a truer idea of the relative positions of the places named than any map I have seen, I visited all the principal parts of the district. The mountainous nature of the country, consisting of alternate high ridges and deep valleys, many of them thickly wooded with walnuts, oaks, willows, mulberries, figs, and vines, and abounding in streams, and the entire absence of any but the roughest footpaths, make travelling a matter of great difficulty.

Some idea of the variations of elevation traversed may be gathered from the following approximate figures of height above sea-level:—

	Feet.
Semal	6,000
Mountains south of Guelieguzan (at point crossed)	8,000
Valley of Talori stream..	3,500
Mount Sovasor (at point crossed)	8,200

It may be well in the first place to give some explanation of the terms "Sasun" and "Talori," as to which much confusion seems to exist.

The term "Sasun," though properly only applicable to the caza of that name, belonging to the Sandjak of Moush, and extending from the Komlik Mountains on the north to the borders of Sairt on the south, and from the Talori Su on the west to Maratong on the east, the residence of the Kaïmakam being at Hasso, is commonly used for the whole region south of Moush as far as Sairt, Khyan, and Koulp on the south, and extending to the neighbourhood of the town of Guendj on the west, and to Modeki and Mount Maratong on the east. Of this country the greater part is known as Armenian Sasun, but a small corner in the north-east, of which the principal place is a group of villages, or wards, the largest being Boshkan and Kevashdik (the residences respectively of the notorious Aghas Halil and Hishman, who are generally at war among themselves), in all about 150 houses, which are sometimes collectively spoken of as the village of Sasun, is known as Kurdish Sasun. It is inhabited by Kurds who refuse to recognize any Government, pay no taxes, and live in a state of complete lawlessness and rebellion, no one, Government official or other, being able to enter their district. Here, as pointed out later, is the nest of most of the troubles in these parts.

The name Talori only covers the various "mahalés," or wards, which form the village of Talori, viz.:—

Merquer (25 houses); Eko-dun and Talori (60 houses); Hakmank (15 houses); Halorink (50 houses); Mezré (35 houses); Zorir (15 houses); Devalink (40 houses); Tevalid (40 houses); Hosnoud (15 houses); Pourkh (50 houses); Hartho (35 houses); Ergank (30 houses); and Hartk (45 houses); and belongs to the Sandjak of Guendj, with Ishkentson and the neighbouring places.

Semal, Shenik, Guelieguenim, Aliantsik, Guelieguzan are administered directly from Moush.

I think that the term "Gavar," or "Kavar," has also been wrongly understood as applying to some special district. This is not so. "Kavar" is an Armenian word meaning a small district or group of villages, not in any way necessarily recognized officially as a separate division. There is no district specially known as Kavar. Shenik, Semal, and the neighbouring villages are talked of as a "kavar;" equally Shatakh and Psanats (Psank) are "kavars" of Sasun Caza; Talori is a "kavar" of Guendj.

I have endeavoured in the following report of my journey to state, after the name of each village, the number of houses of which it formerly consisted. It has been impossible in most cases to obtain any definite information as to the numbers massacred last year. It is hoped that many of the former inhabitants are still scattered in neighbouring districts. That large numbers perished seems certain, the whole of the region being absolutely surrounded by Kurds and soldiers, under the direction of the Mutessarif of Guendj, and of Major Sali Effendi, now in command of the detachment on the mountains near Moush. Nobody and nothing belonging to the Armenians was purposely spared. From twenty to fifty from each village appeared to be the idea of the number who lost their lives.

On the 6th August I again left Moush for Semal, where I stayed that night. Shortly after my arrival, Hajji Mejmeddin Effendi, a rich and intelligent Kurd of Bitlis, who has great influence among his compatriots, also arrived. He was accompanied by Taleb Effendi, of certain notoriety during the Commission of Inquiry. As his Excellency the Ambassador informed me in his telegram of that day's date, they had been sent from Bitlis to inquire into the condition of Sasun and Talori. I had some conversation with them on the subject, and met them again in the camp of the

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Guendj Mutessarif, near Ishkentsor. The building operations were going on steadily at Semal, but no timber had yet arrived.

On the 7th I left Semal with Mr. Cole, viâ Shenik and Aliantsik, a ward of Guelieguzan, for the latter place. We found the building advancing everywhere, but there was much typhoid fever in Shenik.

On the 8th we went on over the shoulder of Mount Antok by a very rough road to Ishkentsor, passing the top of the valley of Gueliésan, where large numbers of Armenians were butchered by the soldiers and Kurds last year. I found various human remains still lying about close to the track.

In Ishkentsor (40 houses) nearly every building had been destroyed, as also in Enguznak (20 houses), Ardgorik, and Sevid. The inhabitants complained bitterly of the attempts to collect taxes from them in their present miserable condition; but I found that these had ceased for the last ten days, and when I saw the Mutessarif of Guendj next day he told me that he had received orders not to collect taxes at present in those parts. The villagers complained also of the "hafir," a tribute which they have to pay to the neighbouring Kurdish Aghas. In this district the worst tyrants appear to be Suleiman (or Selo) Agha and his family. The former lives at Sindah, in the Khyan district, and is a notorious ruffian.

Leaving Ishkentsor on the 9th, we proceeded to Merquer (25 houses), the highest of the wards of Talori, stopping on the way to lunch with the Mutessarif of Guendj, an old man, quite unfit for his work, and whose record is anything but good. He is also, as above stated, under very bad influences. With him were Hajji Mejmeddin and Taleb Effendis, and they had some 70,000 piastres for distribution among the wards of Talori. The inhabitants had, however, so far refused to accept the money of those whom they considered as the butchers of their relatives and friends. At Hajji Mejmeddin's request I spoke to the people of Talori on the subject, and the money was subsequently distributed, after which the two envoys from Bitlis immediately returned home, this being apparently the end of their mission.

At Merquer, which was one of the centres of the military force employed last year in the work of destruction, the position of the mountain guns which were fired down the ravine, more for bravado than for any practical results to be obtained, being evident, the desolation was complete, and here, as in every ward of Talori which I subsequently visited, not a house is standing. I should state that the villages of this district have all the appearance of having been very well off, many of the houses having two and even three stories. As is the case in the Kurdish villages now, the welcome extended to us everywhere, bands of twenty to fifty nomad Armenians meeting us on our approach to every village, and escorting and helping us along the road, proved how much they appreciated the sympathy and help given to them by England.

From Merquer we proceeded through the ruined wards of Eko-dun and Talori (together 60 houses), Hakmank (15) and Devalink (40), to the edge of the Talori stream, in a deep gorge below Tevalid (40).

Here we remained over Sunday, the 11th, being continually surrounded by crowds from the neighbourhood, whom, as above stated, we eventually persuaded to accept the relief funds distributed by the Mutessarif. The priest of Devalink is a certain Stepan, who appeared as a false witness before the Commission of Inquiry on behalf of the Kurds, and is a paid Government spy. An instance of his having appropriated certain sums belonging to the villagers having been brought to my notice, and Stepan himself having shamelessly admitted it, I was able to frighten him into returning the same, and into promising to amend his ways.

On the 12th we went on through Pourkh (50 houses), round the rock of Ferferkar, celebrated among Armenians as the place of refuge of Damadian and "Mourad," passing above the Devil's Bridge to Hartk (45 houses), a beautiful village, but also entirely ruined, having been both burnt and fired into with cannon.

Having heard that the Kurds in the district west and south-west of Mount Maratong were committing all sorts of outrages, I now determined to turn back and visit that region, especially as I knew that the Kaïmakam of Sasun was there, and as I had good reason to believe that the nest and source of most of the Kurdish lawlessness was to be found in that neighbourhood. On the 13th, therefore, leaving Spagank (50 houses) on the north, and crossing the Talori Su close to the cave where Mourad was betrayed and captured, I proceeded viâ Erghank (or Erghart, 30 houses), the Kurdish village of Arghik, Kistan (nearly abandoned ten years ago, now 4 houses), and Tertank (8 houses), to the mountains above the monastery of Komats, and the villages of Cheftinik and Hauzorik, where I pitched my camp.

The villages passed this day had not been burned last year, but are suffering much

at the hands of Kurds; and the fact that we were approaching the strongholds of the latter became evident, one Agha riding up to us and insolently demanding cartridges, another, who lives in the rich Kurdish village of Jernalink, but who was staying, an unwelcome and expensive guest, in the Christian village of Tertank, ordering the villagers not to allow us to alight there.

We stayed over the 14th above Cheftinik, and I had several long and interesting conversations with the Kaïmakam, Ismaïl Bey, an able, energetic, and honest man, who has an excellent record wherever he has been. Mr. Cole had known him as Kaïmakam of Boulanik.

He informed me that it was quite true that the nest of all the Kurdish troubles was in this district. As mentioned in the beginning of this despatch, the Kurds of Kurdish Sasun consider themselves independent, and those of this region are nearly as bad.

They respect neither Government officials nor any one else, but do as they please, living on the Armenians, turning them out of their villages, ill-treating them in every way, and stealing and destroying their property. The nearest roads are unsafe.

Ismaïl Bey complained that, with all the good-will possible, he was quite unable to keep order. He has only fourteen zaptiehs in a caza which is large, the country most difficult, and including places like Kurdish Sasun. He has no troops at his command. All he could do was to report the lawlessness and his own powerlessness to the Mutessarif. Either the caza should be divided into smaller districts, with strong officials and an efficient force of zaptiehs, or he should be granted at least fifty good zaptiehs and a strong detachment of military stationed there all the year round.

The instances of Kurdish outrages brought to my notice are far too numerous to quote. In a word, they laugh at the pretence of control which exists. Only four days before my arrival the Kurds had murdered a man at Psank (Halilan), and turned all the Christians out of the village, of which they had taken possession. The Kaïmakam had only four zaptiehs in the neighbourhood, and could do nothing. Three days later a Kurd had fired at and wounded a woman in the village in which the Kaïmakam was staying because she tried to prevent him from entering and robbing her house. In February last, Halil, son of Bishar, the Kurd Agha of Boshkan and Pevek (the same Halil Agha before mentioned), seized an Armenian, Astour, son of Der Hachadour of Komk, and kept him in irons in his house for forty-five days, beating and torturing him with hot irons, &c., every day, until he paid 1,000 piastres, 25 sheep, 2 oxen, 2 cows, &c. The result of a complaint to the Kaïmakam was that Halil consented to restore 500 piastres and 25 lambs in the place of the 25 sheep. I saw Astour and his scars. These are only examples of the endless cases which I heard of. To show the insolence of the Kurds, I may add that, some villagers having gone to fetch hay for my horses, some Kurds who met them, hearing that the hay was for me, refused to let them bring it. When I reported this to the Kaïmakam he said, "What can I do? They often refuse to allow things to be brought to me." Till this region is reduced to some semblance of order it seems hopeless to think of any peace or security in Sasun and Talori.

On the 15th August we took the mountain road over Mount Sovasor, which leads from Hasso to Moush, from which we had a good view over the rebel Kurdish district, passing close above the principal villages. Turning down to the west we reached Hetink (40 houses) which had been entirely ruined last year. Some seven or eight houses have been since rebuilt, and more crops have been sown than in most of the devastated villages, but considerable relief will still be needed there, especially as the seed for the fields sown was obtained from the Kurds, who have a lien on a proportion of the crops, which, if permitted, they are sure to exact in a very liberal manner. The missionaries propose to endeavour to buy off this lien at a reasonable price. From this place most of the villagers managed to escape with their lives, only eighteen having been killed.

On the 16th August we went to Kelarash and Teghik, which, with Hidan and Aghpik, form the four wards of the village known by the last name, and which formerly contained 69 houses; of these, only 28 are now standing, 16 having escaped burning last year, and 12 having been since rebuilt. Thence we returned, through Tapik and Kegashend, which had only suffered from loss of cattle and property last year, to Semal.

The Kurds resident in Tapik, after I had passed, ill-treated the Christians who had dared to come and speak to me. Immediately on my return here I demanded from the Mutessarif the punishment of the offenders, which he has promised. If this promise is not fulfilled I shall report again to you, as I consider it important that an example should be made.

In Semal and in Shenik the building is progressing well, several houses only waiting for timber to be roofed in. This, however, has not yet arrived, though the Mutessarif has been there in person during the past week, and, outwardly at least, pushed on

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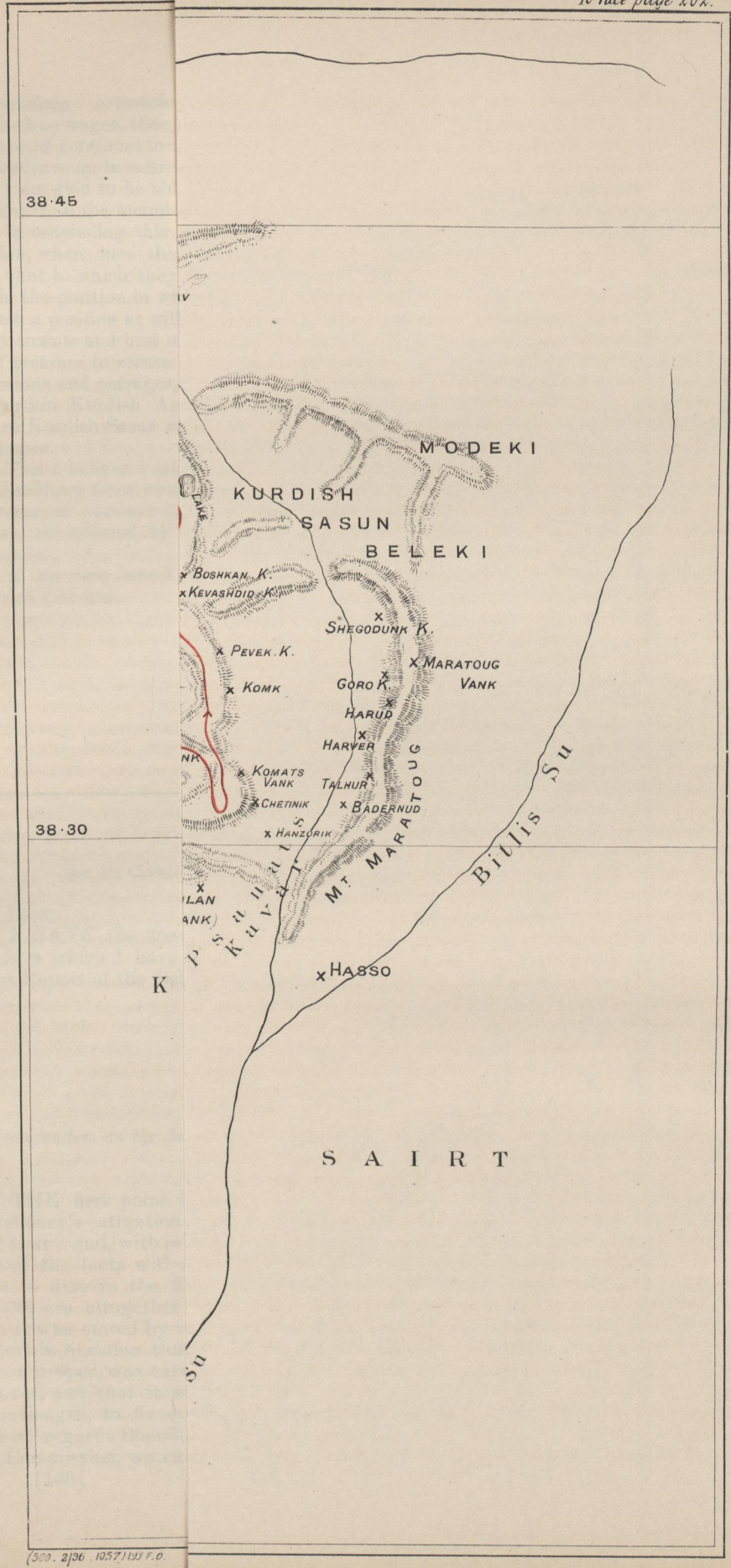

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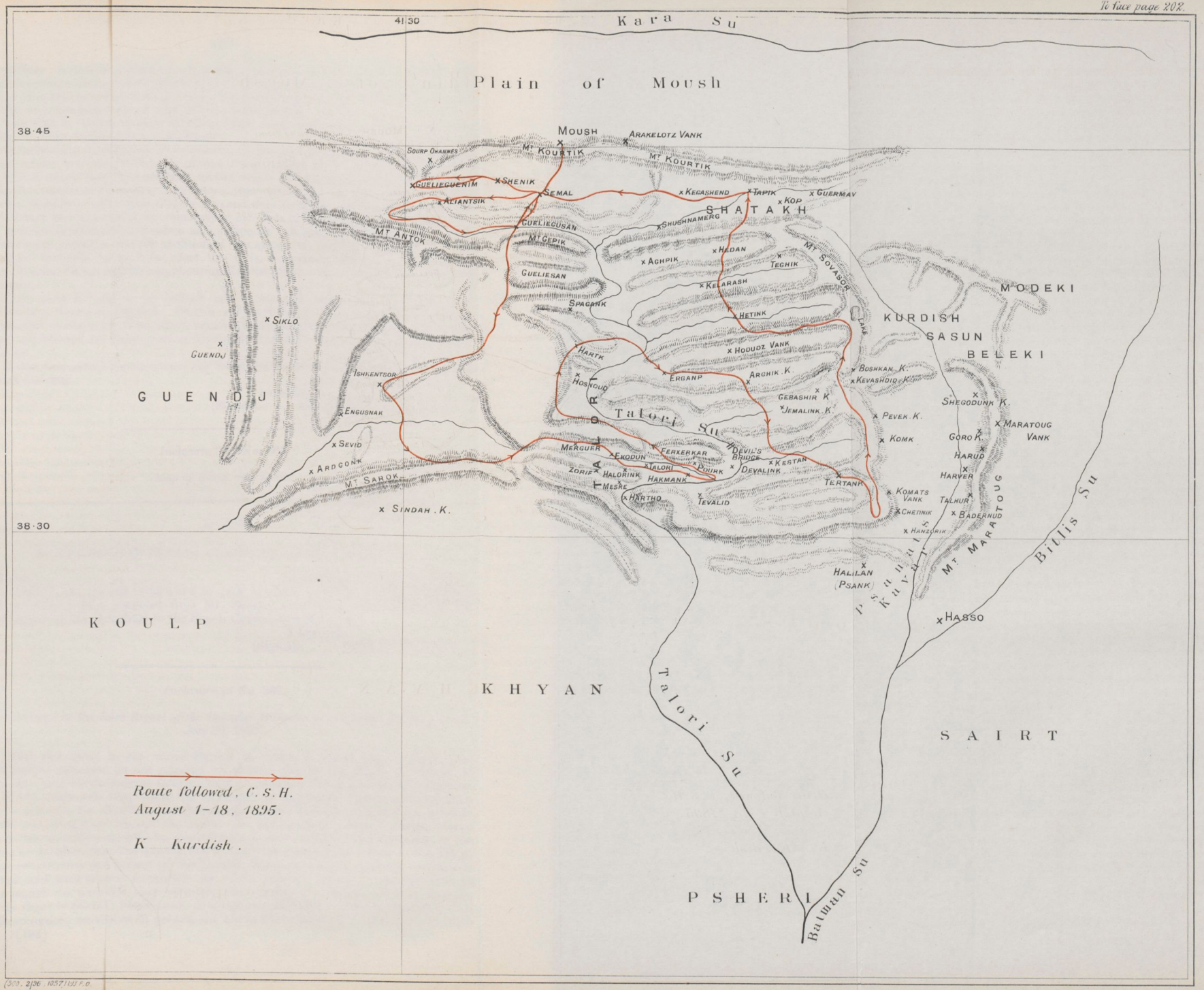

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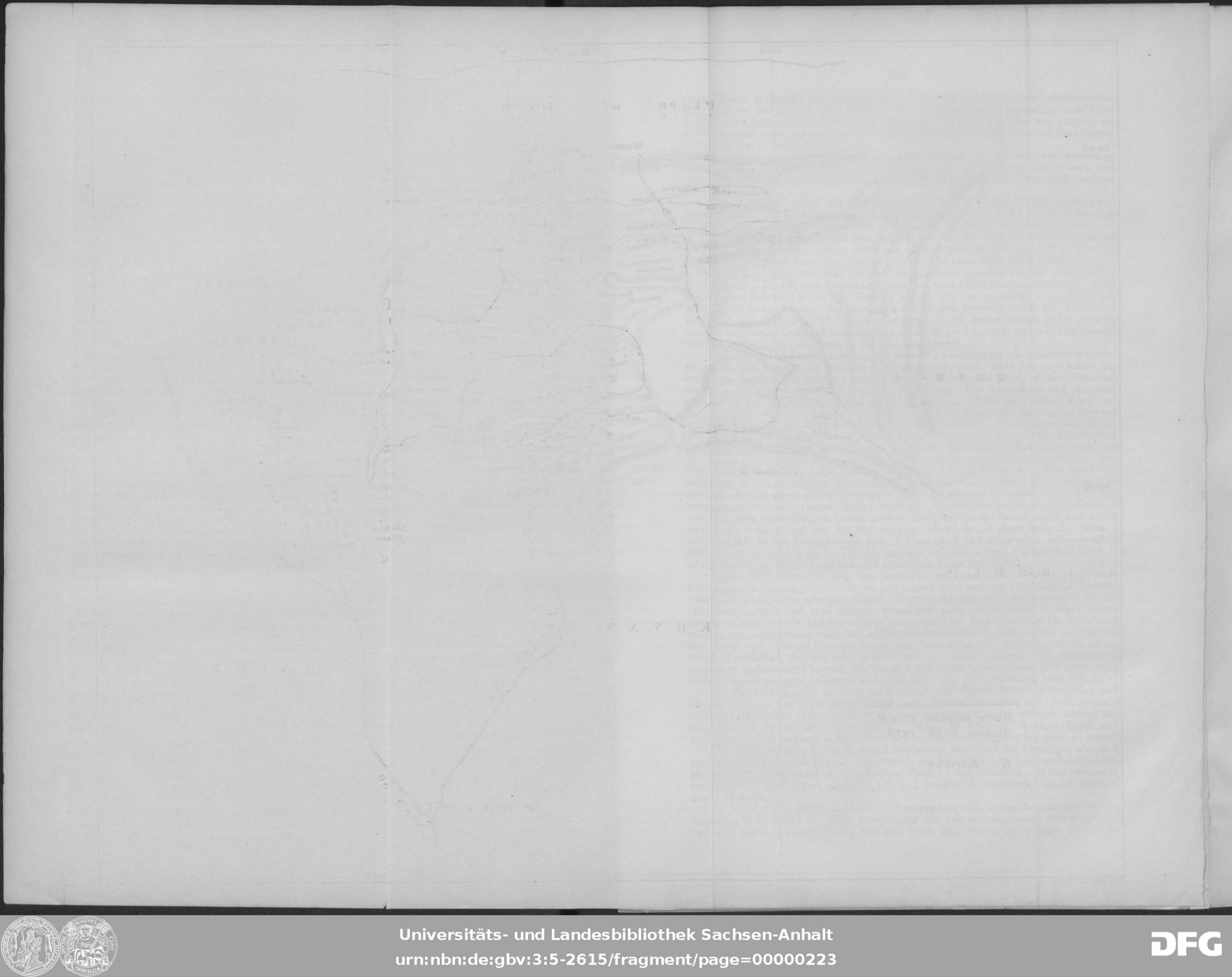

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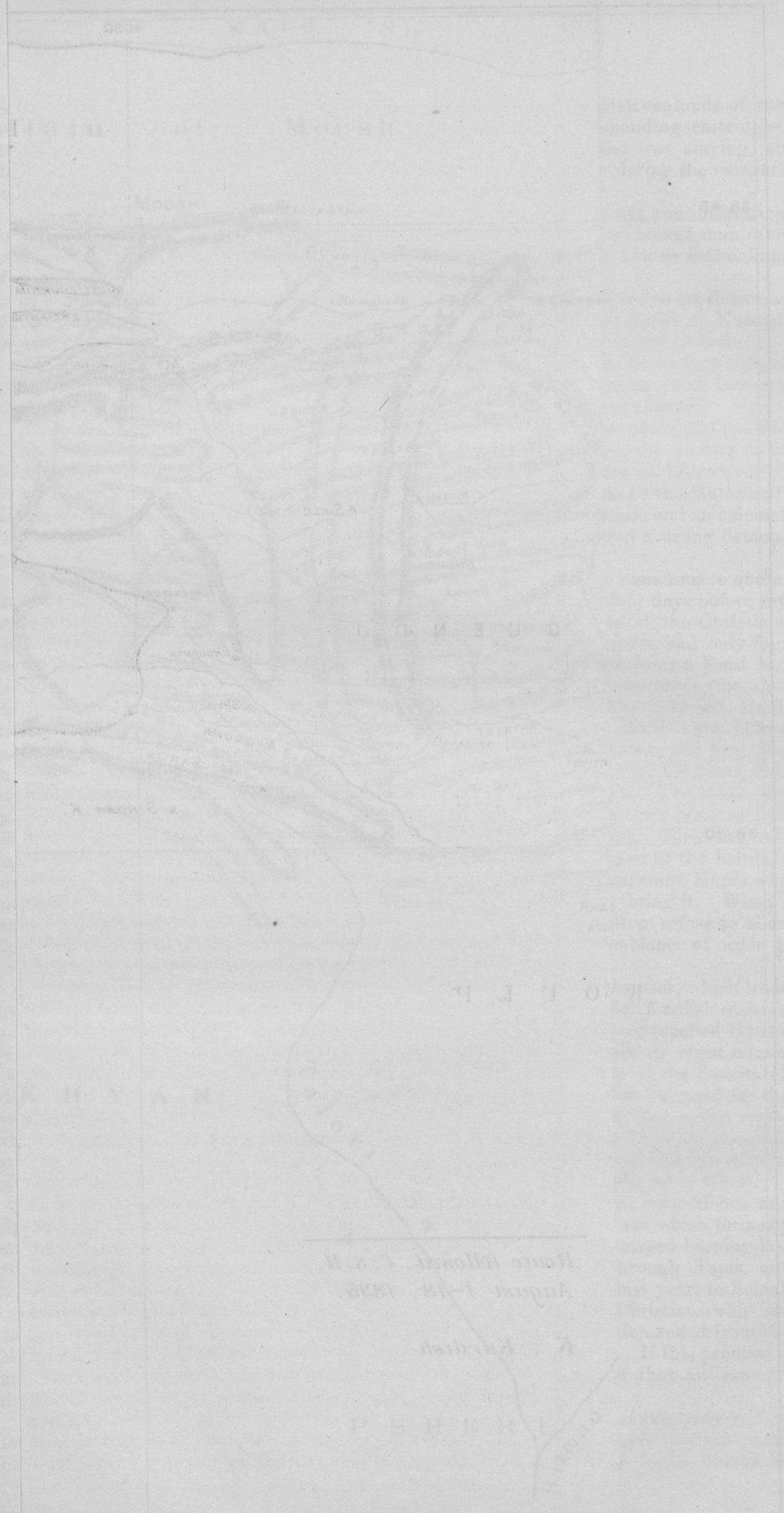

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the building. A certain number of masons from Moush are now at work, but have so far received no wages, though the Turkish Relief Commission undertook to pay them. The Mutessarif continues to show hostility to the missionaries, amounting to personal rudeness, and endeavours to misrepresent their actions to the people.

I am glad to be able to state that the nomad Kurds have been forced to move on, at least from the mountains close to Moush.

In concluding this Report of my journey, I have the honour to state that, in my opinion, when once the inhabitants of the district visited have been relieved from the dire want to which they were reduced by the events of last year, and re-established—not in the position in which they were before (that cannot be expected all at once)—but in such a position as will enable them to live and work to regain what they have lost, the requirements and best means for which object Mr. Cole is reporting on, there will be one chief measure to secure their comfort and prosperity: this is the prevention of Kurdish incursions and outrages, and the abolition of the system of "hafir," or tribute, extorted by certain Kurdish Aghas. To effect this it is, I consider, absolutely necessary to reduce Kurdish Sasun and the neighbouring Kurdish villages to something like order and obedience.

This I believe would be no difficult task if energetic measures were adopted. A small military force would suffice. Certain of the more powerful Chiefs would have to be removed permanently from these regions, notably Halil, Hishman, and Suleiman Aghas, all referred to above, and a strong hand would have to be kept over the remainder.

If this were done I see no reason why Sasun and Talori should not become flourishing and rich districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. HAMPSON.

Inclosure 3 in No. 266.

Map of Sasun and Talori.

No. 267.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 21.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 16, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a copy of a Memorandum which I have received from Mr. Shipley, submitting observations on the Joint Report of the Delegates to the Sasun Commission of Inquiry.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 267.

Memorandum on the Joint Report of the Consular Delegates to the Sasun Commission of July 20, 1895.

THE first point in the above Report to which I would beg to draw your Excellency's attention is the number of victims during the events in Sasun of last year; and, with reference to this, I may at once say that a very short consideration of the facts will show that the estimates of Armenian losses published from time to time in the English and Continental press, and which vary from 5,000 to 10,000, are altogether beyond the mark. In saying this I am, of course, aware that it was stated by myself and my colleagues, MM. Vilbert and Prjevalsky, in the Report in question that the inquiry, particularly as regards the events in the Talori region proper, was carried out by the Turkish Commissioners in a wholly inadequate manner, and that it was impossible for us, for reasons which we entered into at some length, to fix even approximately the number of victims. If this was the case as regards Shenik, Semal, and Ghéliéguzan, districts which, in company with the Commission, we visited in person, the above observation will, of course, be much

more applicable to the Talori region, which we had no opportunity of visiting, and from which only four witnesses independently of the ten prisoners were examined before the Commission.

Nevertheless, since the visit of Mr. Vice-Consul Hampson to Talori and Kavar, it has become possible at least to calculate with a reasonable amount of certainty the population of those districts from which an idea, even if remote, of Armenian losses may be obtained. Mr. Hampson, it must be remembered, was for some time in the districts referred to; he had every opportunity of coming into direct contact with the Talori population, and was consequently able to control personally the information supplied to him. I therefore regard his Report as forming a most valuable supplement to that drawn up by ourselves.

Briefly speaking, the number of Talori parishes or wards which he gives from personal observation as having been totally destroyed in the events of last year amounts to thirteen, in addition to the villages of Ishentzor, Enguznak, Sevid, Spagank Ergart, Hetink, and finally, the greater part of Agpi. These, in addition to Shenik, Semal, and Ghéliéguzan, with its dependencies, such as Alian, make up a total of some twenty-four villages so destroyed. Mr. Hampson, it will be seen, gives the number of houses in the thirteen wards of Talori as 455 (an estimate which appears to me to be somewhat high taking into consideration the numbers given by certain of the Armenians before the Commission), which, allowing 10 as the average number of persons to each house, would give a population for Talori itself of some 4,500. The population of the remaining eleven villages, judging from Shenik and Semal, which I inspected personally (Ghéliéguzan is larger and would contain probably from 800 to 1,000 inhabitants), I should put down at between 5,000 and 6,000, or a total of some 10,000 in all. As some 6,000 or 7,000 of these Armenians have been reported to have returned to their ruined villages, the exaggeration indulged in as to the number of victims becomes evident. Mr. Hampson, it will further be noticed, after careful inquiry among the population, puts the number of victims at from twenty to sixty per village, adding that from Hetink the greater number succeeded in escaping, only some eighteen having been killed. Taking, therefore, forty for each of the twenty-three villages destroyed as an average, the total number of victims, including of course those who perished from want or exposure, would amount to some 900 in all.

This estimate, which tallies fairly well with the list of losses given in Chapter IV of the Annex to our Report, is certainly nearer the truth than the estimates of 10,000 or even 5,000 alluded to. It is true that a perusal of the list given by us, and which is concerned more particularly with Ghéliéguzan, Semal, and Shenik, would lead one to infer that the losses of the Armenians would, if the same proportion were maintained for the other villages, be even greater than 900, but it must be borne in mind that many of the persons (especially in the case of Shenik) given as dead were afterwards shown to be alive, and that all the three above villages, sustaining, as they did, a prolonged combat first with the Kurds and then with the soldiers, suffered, there is every reason to suppose, greater losses proportionately than the others. I beg, however, to repeat once more that all estimates of the total of Armenian losses can scarcely even be approximate, but are little better than mere guesses, the method of inquiry which the Turkish Commissioners thought fit to adopt—trivial questions such as an alleged theft by a band of Armenians of two oxen belonging to a Kurd being minutely gone into—effectually preventing the full and true facts of the case from being arrived at.

Turning to the consideration of the stories of wholesale butchery of the Armenians by the Turkish soldiers (I refer more particularly to the accounts given of the slaughter of some 250 women in the church at Ghéliéguzan, and of a similar number in the convent of Surp Merapa, in the Talori district), I find, with the exception of the putting to death of the prisoners in the camp at Ghéliéguzan, referred to at some detail in our Report, no confirmation at all, either in the evidence of the Armenians produced before the Commission or from the special inquiries which I myself made, and caused to be made, into the stories in question.

As regards the first one, viz., the slaughter of the women in the church at Ghéliéguzan, with the exception of the prisoner Attam, who only gave it at second hand, such an incident was not even alluded to by any of the inhabitants of the latter village or by any of the women who accompanied the prisoners to the camp; and it is impossible to believe that had such a butchery really taken place it would not have been referred to by at least one or more of the Armenians with whom we came into contact. Similarly, with regard to the alleged slaughter of the women at

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the convent of Surp Merapa, in Talori, resting, I believe, principally on the evidence given at Erzeroum of the Armenian Giragos, of Hartk, according to which the blood of the murdered women ran under the doors of the church, not one of the Armenians whom I questioned could give any information respecting it. Several of them had visited the church referred to almost immediately after the events, but although all agreed that it had been sacked and destroyed, not one of them made any allusion to any traces of slaughter having taken place there. While, therefore, I am compelled to look on these and similar stories as enormously exaggerated, if not, as in certain instances I believe to be the case, absolutely invented for the wholly unnecessary purpose of adding to the very real horror of the Sasun affair, an impartial review of the evidence taken before the Commission leaves no doubt that in certain ravines of the Antok Mountain, such as Ghéliésan (where Mr. Hampson was still able to see human remains), Ghélié Hengevi, and Ghéliérah, in which parties of the fugitive villagers had endeavoured to hide themselves, they were set upon by the soldiers, zaptiehs, and Kurds and massacred with savage brutality, without distinction of age or sex. One of the worst cases of such cold-blooded cruelty was the murder of the prisoners in the camp at Ghéliéguzan already alluded to.

As regards this incident, it was stated by Armenians before the Commission, and, I believe, with truth, that a safe-conduct was promised to them if they would give themselves up, and it was therefore on the strength of that promise that certain of their number went down to the camp from the mountain. The story how some 300 men, women, and children gathered together under the leadership of the priest Ohannes, how they went down to the camp, how the women and children were separated from the men, and how the latter on the second night of their arrival were put to death, their cries and groans reaching the women, who themselves had been outraged by the soldiers and zaptiehs, will be found in detail in the Protocols of the proceedings of the Commission, and I do not propose to go into it here.

I feel it my duty, however, to observe that, though the fact of the inhuman slaughter is undoubted, all the evidence, both before the Commission and that taken by us privately, tended to prove conclusively that the number of men so put to death did not exceed forty, or, at most, fifty; the statements made by certain Turkish soldiers and others at Erzeroum, that the slaughter went on for several days, and that some 300 or 400 Armenians in this way met their death, being, I believe, an exaggeration. There is no record of any other Armenians beyond those above referred to having come to the camp to give themselves up, and the evidence of the only four Christian muleteers who were with the troops at Ghéliéguzan, and whose depositions will be found annexed to the Protocols, is, I believe, conclusive on this point. Three of these muleteers, in fact, were unanimous in stating that they saw no other men beyond the forty above alluded to come to the camp, and, further, that the troops after the massacre remained some two days only at Ghéliéguzan. The testimony of the women, moreover, who accompanied the victims bears out in this respect the statements of the muleteers. On the other hand, the story of the torture of the priest Ohannes, viz., by having his eyes put out and being otherwise barbarously treated, has, I believe, a foundation in fact. It is true that no one, if I except Ovak, produced before the Commission, professed to have been an eye-witness of the torture of the priest, but many Armenians, both before the Commission and in private examination, declared that, on visiting the camp shortly after the departure of the soldiers, they identified the body of the priest in question bearing marks of the outrage referred to. It is, moreover, significant that, though the Turkish Commissioners cast doubt on the statement of Ovak, they declined to accede to our suggestion to examine his brother, who affirmed that he had likewise succeeded in escaping from the massacre, and whom we ourselves saw with a wound in his back, indisputably the effect of a bayonet-thrust.

On the other hand, I have considerable doubts as to the truth of the story, which rests on the authority of the Turkish muleteer Ali Gulanen Oghlou, that Colonel Tewfik Bey and the Sheikh of Zilan had caused, while in the camp at Ghéliéguzan, an Armenian, named Shero, to be flayed alive, and into which, in accordance with your Excellency's instructions, I made special inquiries. Ali Gulanen Oghlou himself was not examined, the Turkish Commissioners declining to do so on a pretext mainly technical, but no allusion whatever was made to such an incident by any of the Armenians who came before the Commission, nor was it known to any of the numerous Armenians whom I questioned on the matter, or to

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the Christian muleteers with the troops, though these latter could hardly fail to have heard of it from Ali Gulanen Oghlou himself had it really taken place. The Shero referred to by the latter is, I may mention, now alive at Ghéliéguzan.

Although, therefore, as I have endeavoured to show above, the Turkish soldiers cannot be convicted of the sensationally exaggerated stories of massacre attributed to them in certain of the English newspapers, I do not think, seeing as I did, in company with my colleagues, the entire ruin of a whole district, not a house being left standing, the fields even having been wantonly devastated, as well as the abject misery and destitution to which these Armenians have been reduced, that the epithets applied to the conduct of the Turkish soldiers and Kurds by the same press are in any way too strong. We have in our Report given it as our conviction, arrived at from the evidence brought before us, that the Armenians were massacred without distinction of age or sex, and, indeed, for a period of some three weeks, viz., from the 12th August to the 4th September (o s.), it is not too much to say that the Armenians were absolutely hunted like wild beasts, being killed wherever they were met, and if the slaughter was not greater it was, I believe, solely owing to the vastness of the mountain ranges of that district which enabled the people to scatter, and so facilitated their escape. In fact, and speaking with a full sense of responsibility, I am compelled to say that the conviction has forced itself on me that it was not so much the capture of the agitator Mourad, or the suppression of a pseudo-revolt, which was desired by the Turkish authorities, as the extermination, pure and simple, of the Ghéliéguzan and Talori districts. In support of this statement I would point, in addition, to the useless and wanton ruin of the district already alluded to—first, to the conduct of Captain Hadji Mustapha, which, indeed, in our Report, we have not failed to sharply criticize; and, secondly, to that of Colonel Tewfik Bey, in command of the detachment sent to Ghéliéguzan and Talori. The first-named officer, sent in the early summer to the vicinity of Shenik to maintain order, certainly allowed, if he did not participate, in the destruction of that village and Semal by the Kurds, for his statement that he knew nothing of a combat going on at only half-an-hour's distance from him may be dismissed as a simple untruth. It is, perhaps, possible that Captain Hadji Mustapha himself, acting under orders, did not take a part in the first fighting, but we know, though the fact was not allowed to transpire before the Commission, that his two companies were reinforced by a battalion sent from Moush on the 3rd August (o.s.), or some ten days before the detachment under Colonel Tewfik Bey. What this battalion did we had no means of ascertaining, but bearing in mind the almost universal assertion of the Armenians that there were soldiers helping the Kurds, it is not unreasonable to suppose that these soldiers were soldiers belonging to the battalion in question.

As regards Colonel Tewfik Bey, apart from his conduct at the camp at Ghéliéguzan, I can only say that any one, after reading the evidence given by him, is forced to the conclusion that the only explanation of the entire absence of plan or method shown by him in conducting the operations, even from a military point of view, is that the capture of Mourad was entirely secondary, and that his real objective was to burn and destroy whatever might have been left by the Kurds. Colonel Tewfik Bey's so-called plan for capturing Mourad was most ably criticized by my Russian colleague, himself formerly a military man, who thoroughly exposed its futility, and I refer to the Protocol (No. 86) of the proceedings at which the Colonel was examined, for further details.

Passing to the question of acts of individual atrocity committed by the soldiers, zaptiehs, and Kurds, of which the Protocols contain enough and to spare, I do not propose to dwell on these, as a list of the Armenian victims has been given in Chapter IV of the Annex to our Report previously referred to. I will, however, give one case which was related to me by the mother of the victim. Briefly, it was this: she herself, with her husband, husband's brother, two little children, and an infant in the cradle, fled from Alian (their village) to the Antok Mountain at the first approach of the Kurds and soldiers. After passing a few days on the Antok they descended to a brook for water. While there her husband came running to her, calling out to her to fly, as the soldiers were coming. She caught up the two children, leaving the infant, and fled. Her husband and husband's brother were killed, and she herself, descending again some little time afterwards, found the child with its head beaten in. I purposely asked the woman why she had abandoned the infant, seeing that she had carried it in the first instance from her house, and received the passionate answer, "How could I take it? I had a child in each arm already." This is, unfortunately, but one out of many such cases. In another it was

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a woman who saw her own child's throat cut before her eyes. It may be said that those and similar stories rest on the evidence of Armenians alone; but, in answer to this, I would point to the fact that no proof whatever was adduced by the Turkish Commissioners (beyond a mere denial of the parties interested) to show that these stories were inventions of the Armenians, while the fact that no explanation was forthcoming of the existence of a district entirely ruined, and the inhabitants reduced to beggary, is undeniable. The explanation attempted, viz., that it was the Armenians themselves who set fire to their own houses in order the better to prepare for the revolution to follow, supported as it was by no evidence worthy of the name, was not considered by us as meriting serious consideration, and was, in fact, I consider, an impudent attempt, whether on the part of the Kurds or Turks, to impose on our credulity.

The case which it was sought to establish before the Commission against the Armenians — that the latter were in open revolt, and were committing outrages on the neighbouring Kurdish population, has been sufficiently dealt with in Chapter II of the Annex to our Report, and I do not therefore propose to discuss it in the present Memorandum. I would, however, remark that all the cases of outrage that the Commissioners could produce were some twenty-four in number, and of these the authenticated cases were finally reduced to some half-dozen, a very slight cause on which to found such terrible reprisals. But, I venture to repeat again, the real cause of the sending of troops in 1894, and consequent destruction of the Talori and Ghéliéguzan regions, was not the pseudo-revolt of the Armenians or the pretended outrages against the surrounding Kurdish population, but lay in the fact that the Turkish authorities were unable to brook the feeling of independence which had survived among the Armenians of that district, especially among those of Talori, and had for some time past determined to make an example of them.

In connection with the question of this pretended revolt of Armenians, and of outrages by them on the Kurds in 1894, the fact cannot be too strongly dwelt upon that, as regards the Armenians of Talori at any rate, the latter had already in 1893 been ruined by the wanton and unprovoked attack upon them in that year by a combined Kurdish force to the number of some 3,000 or 4,000. The full truth in connection with this attack, details concerning which were given by several Armenian witnesses before the Commission, was never elucidated by us, our persistent efforts in that direction being as steadily opposed by the Turkish Commissioners. Into the question whether this attack was, as the Armenians of that district universally assert, the result of the direct action of the Turkish authorities themselves, who deliberately instigated the Kurds, I do not propose to enter, the proofs being, I admit, of too scanty a nature to enable a definite statement to be made. All that can be said is that from the inquiries I made it would seem very certain that shortly before the attack in question took place the Mutessarif of Ghendj had put himself in communication with the notorious Sheikh of Zilan and certain other Kurdish Chiefs. But—and this is the fact which I think should be insisted upon—the Turkish authorities, whether they instigated the above attack or not, were responsible for it; it took place with their knowledge and consent, as is shown by the fact that the soldiers sent nominally to keep order sided with the Kurds, and so contributed to the ruin of the Talori Armenians to which I have referred above. These facts would, of course, not necessarily disprove the Turkish contention as to Armenian rebellion and acts of outrage in the year 1894, but it will, I think, be admitted that they merit serious attention in dealing with the events of that year, as also with the relations of the Turkish Government towards both Armenians and Kurds, upon which they throw considerable light.

I have no wish to be thought unduly partial to the Armenians, and I feel it therefore my duty to point to the fact that an agitation subversive of the authority of the Ottoman Government has been carried on, not for one or two, but for several years past among the Armenians of the Moush and Talori regions by the Armenian Committees abroad, whose latest agent was Mourad, and that it was the knowledge of their failure to successfully cope with this movement which ended by exasperating the Turkish authorities. But even this admission has to be qualified by the fact that in its first duty, viz., that of affording protection to all classes of its subjects alike, the Turkish Government has entirely failed. It was, for instance, during the proceedings of the Commission, made a reproach to the Armenians of Talori that for twenty years past they had paid no taxes to the Government. But the Armenians, on the other hand, replied that they

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could not pay taxes to two masters, *i.e.*, to the Government and the Kurds, and their statement that, if they had not paid to these Kurds, the latter would have burnt their houses and stolen their cattle, was certainly not disproved by any evidence produced before the Commission. As no attempt, as far as I could discover, was ever made by the Turkish Government to keep these Kurdish neighbours of the Armenians in order, the latter in self-defence were obliged to come to terms with them, and it is a significant fact that in the attack of 1893—the first one—of which I have spoken above, the Belekli Kurds, to whom these Talori Armenians more particularly paid tribute, refused to take any part.

As regards the Armenians of the Moush Plain, their condition has been even worse, for, as I had ample opportunities of observing, they are exposed both to the exactions of the Kurds and the rapacity of Government officials. It is impossible to expect, under conditions such as I have described, that the Armenians could rest contented, or that they would not furnish a likely field for political agitators.

In conclusion, I would beg to say with reference to the conduct of the inquiry by the Turkish Commissioners that I have grave doubts as to whether in the case of many of the witnesses on the Government side their story had not been concocted beforehand. We have commented in several of our Reports on the fact that many of these witnesses repeated the same story absolutely word for word, professing, at the same time, their entire ignorance of anything else than the story they had come to tell, and we had abundant evidence of the fact that in no case, where possible, was an Armenian allowed to come before the Commission without having been first examined by the Mutessarif or some other of the Moush local officials. In one case, viz., that of the Archimandrite Egishé, who came to the Commission with the intention of retracting certain evidence which he had previously given against the Armenians, we had direct proof that after an interview with the Commissioner he deemed it more prudent to leave Moush without giving effect to his purpose. I cannot but feel, moreover, that the action of the Commissioners in establishing at the very commencement of the proceedings two categories for persons giving evidence, one, namely, being called "witnesses," and the other "suspects," the latter including practically all Armenians, was not calculated to advance the interests of truth, for not only did it tend to deter Armenians from coming forward to state their case, but assumed as proved a revolt into the existence or non-existence of which they had come to inquire. If I have dwelt at some length on this last question, it is because I feel it is only due to myself and colleagues to explain more fully than was possible in our Report the reasons why our efforts to arrive at the truth did not meet with a larger share of success.

(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Therapia, October 12, 1895.

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