

THE OCCUPATION OF PRETORIA ON 5th JUNE, 1900

The Republican ultimatum to Great Britain, delivered on October 9, 1899, had resulted in the war breaking out on October 11, and martial law was proclaimed in the two Republics. The initial Republican victories in Natal had been succeeded by retreats not only there but on all other fronts. Ladysmith and Mafeking were relieved, Bloemfontein, the capital of the sister Republic, was occupied on March 13, 1900, and now Frederick Sleigh, Baron Roberts of Kandahar and Waterford, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Forces in South Africa, was marching from the Free State to Pretoria with his forces at an average rate of nearly 17 miles per marching day — a performance almost equal to the best recorded in military history up to then — with the commanders on the other fronts trying to keep pace with him.

Although Lord Roberts's advance was delayed by actions here and there, the Vaal River was crossed somewhere near Viljoensdrift without any serious opposition, and the British Army found itself within striking distance of the Rand gold mines — one of the main causes of the war.

By this time, General Louis Botha, unknown soldier at the outbreak of war, had succeeded General Piet Joubert and was, at this stage, acting Commandant-General of the Transvaal forces.

Mainly due to his strong stand — and, let it not be forgotten, that of President Kruger — the British found the gold mines undamaged when they entered Johannesburg on May 31. The Republican Government, in spite of strong demands and even personal attempts by some members to blow up the mines, had not been able to agree to any „scorched earth” policy.

Meanwhile, the Volksraad on May 7, met for the last time in Pretoria. It was a sad occasion for the members — with many empty seats in the Volksraad Chamber draped in crêpe, previously occupied by prominent members who by then had made the supreme sacrifice. Another empty seat was that of General Botha who was away at the front.

But on the Rand Lord Roberts was well pleased when, on May 31, he accepted the surrender of Johannesburg from Dr. F. E. T. Krause, who had been peremptorily charged by General Botha to maintain order in Johannesburg until it had to be surrendered. Lord Roberts settled down in pleasant headquarters at Orange Grove where he spent June 1 and 2. He knew by then that the ageing President Kruger had left Pretoria on the night of May 29, the seat of Government having been transferred to Machadodorp, in the Eastern Transvaal. But what he did not know was that the Republican Government had decided that Pretoria, mainly to avoid a bombardment, should not be defended — a decision agreed to by the Commandant-General.

Lord Roberts's generals urged him not to advance beyond Johannesburg at that stage. They pointed out that his lines of communications — modern mechanical transport as we know it today did not exist then — were dangerously long. But Her Majesty's Commander-in-Chief, strong-headed as

he sometimes was, decided to go on. He thought it worth risking a good deal to capture Pretoria before the Boer forces, somewhat demoralised by the defeats they had suffered in recent months, had time to rally for its defence or to make arrangements for removing the 4,000 British prisoners of war. So he stayed over for two days on the Rand, and on June 3, set out on the march which was to end in the capture of Pretoria and bring to a close the first phase of the epic struggle of the two Republics.

In Pretoria there was great excitement. It was common cause by then that President Kruger and most members of his Government had left the capital on May 29. Many Pretorians, on the afternoon of his departure, had witnessed the touching ceremony at the Presidency when James Smith, the American messenger boy from Philadelphia, handed to President Kruger an address of sympathy signed by 30,000 American schoolchildren.

The only ones still to attend a meeting at the Presidency that afternoon prior to the President's departure were the State Secretary, Mr. F. W. Reitz; General Schalk Burger; the young state attorney, Mr. Jan Smuts; and Mr. Piet Grobler.

On that day, one of the last trains from Pretoria to the Rand left early that morning and arrived in Johannesburg late that afternoon.

And that evening of May 29, an old man, bent down by cares and worries, which had been particularly heavy during the last of his four periods of office as head of the State, in the gathering dusk said farewell to his beloved wife after 54 years of married life, never to see her again. He entered a dilapidated landau coach, drove away from his residence in Church Street West, and said a last farewell to Pretoria which he had known since the time when the first hartbees houses had stood in Elandspoort. At the hill beyond Arcadia, President Kruger, for he was this old man, was met by his bodyguard which escorted him to Eerste Fabriek (Hatherley) where he joined a waiting train. This took him to the temporary seat of government in the Eastern Transvaal.

Generally, things were going from bad to worse in Pretoria. Virtually denuded of police and others who could maintain order, there were many robberies. People were pestered by doubtful characters, and life was uncertain. Rumour was rife, and people were nervous. The British were said to be at Kaalfontein already. Streams of burgers were daily pouring through Pretoria, on their way to the east, and many different tales were told. Nobody knew what was happening because newspapers, of which „De Volksstem” alone remained almost to the last issuing free “specials” printed on slips of pink, yellow, green or any other coloured paper, had suspended publication. Dame Rumour had a glorious time.

General Botha, however, was full of fight, though he had had to retreat on Pretoria via Germiston, on one occasion escaping capture by the skin of his teeth.

But Pretoria remained “jittery”. Out in their camp at Waterval, 14 miles north of Pretoria on the main railway line to Pietersburg, lay over 3,000 British prisoners of war, guarded by about only 300 inadequately

armed men, chosen for this task because they were unfit for active service — young boys, old men and convalescents. The prisoners also knew what was happening and were more than restive. Though their camp was at night brilliantly illuminated by electricity from a plant made in Pretoria during the war specially for this purpose, their guards were despairing of keeping them in check. So a number of British officers were hurriedly transported from their prison quarters to Waterval, with a request to calm them. This they did successfully.

The State Attorney, Mr. Smuts, who had been told by the Government to stay behind and maintain order, had left to reconnoitre in the direction of Johannesburg to ascertain the positions of the advancing British forces.

With nobody to turn to — the civic administration had disintegrated after the departure of the Government — the people on May 30 elected a committee of civilians which they thought should deal with the situation. But this committee proved quite incapable of doing so.

Night fell on Wednesday, May 30, but, like the previous one, it was an uneasy night for Pretoria, for that night large-scale looting started at the Government stores.

The next day, Thursday, May 31, while Lord Roberts was occupying the Rand, General Botha appeared on the scene in Pretoria. From the steps of the Raadsaal he delivered an impassioned address to the crowd, exhorting the men to do their duty, to gather their rifles and make for the direction of Irene, an important point in the line stretching westwards from there which he had laid down to guard the capital.

The looting of the previous night had by now become very serious. Everyone, and not only burgers wanting fodder for their horses, was helping himself "to prevent the stores from falling into British hands". Every kind of transport, including wheelbarrows and prams, was used by the looters. General Botha soon restored order, aided somewhat by the deliberate spreading of a rumour: "The khakies are here!" which acted like a bombshell in dispelling the looters.

By this time, General Botha's main army was east of Pretoria. All that was left was a relatively small number of men on the south and west of the capital — more delaying tactics than anything else.

Historians record that Thursday, May 31, was a "black day" in the history of Pretoria. Prior to General Botha's strong measures becoming effective, the unruly elements, which suddenly seemed to have concentrated on Pretoria from everywhere, took things completely into their own hands, and some, who had joined the "special police" for this purpose, saw their chance, took part in smashing shop windows and looting took place on an unprecedented scale. Towards the afternoon, however, General Botha had forced his strong will on the capital, and comparative quiet and order reigned, only horses still being taken unlawfully. The burgers passing through Pretoria needed mounts desperately and simply "commandeered", but leaving well alone at the least sign of resistance from an owner.

Complete order was difficult to maintain because the Republican Commander-in-Chief had greater worries than the maintenance of law and order in the town.

So on June 2, acting under the powers vested in him which gave him absolute control over any area falling within the "front", he issued a proclamation appointing a "triumvirate to maintain law and order", authorising this "chief commission", as the proclamation called it, to commandeer any person for any purpose, summarily to deal with any offences, and cancelling all previous regulations, notices and appointments. This "commission" thus replaced the existing committee of civilians, some of whom were definitely considered "unreliable" in the circumstances.

The three members of the "commission" were the Landdrost of Pretoria; Commandant P. F. Zeederberg and Jonkheer C. G. S. Sandberg, former secretary to the Secretary of State (Dr. W. J. Leyds) in the Transvaal and military secretary to General Botha during the first months of the war. About this Sandberg, who was in reality the only active member of General Botha's "triumvirate" we shall have more to say anon.

By the next day General Botha had made the final dispositions of his forces to delay the advance on the capital as long as possible. But to oppose the well equipped British army of nearly 30,000 men, which was bringing up heavy artillery, he had only 2,000 to 3,000 burgers guarding the capital in the directions from which the British were advancing.

While Pretoria was anxiously waiting, the main British advance from the Rand began on Sunday, June 3. The British were marching on Pretoria from the south-east, south, south-west and west. A half-hearted attempt to block General Botha's main line of retreat along the railway line to the east had been made on June 1, when Major Hunter-Weston was sent with 200 men of General Gordon's brigade to cut the line. But he was immediately attacked and had to retreat with losses.

Good progress was made that Sunday, although Lord Roberts's troops clashed with General S. du Toit and his Western Transvaalers at Kalkheuvelds, 20 miles south-west of Pretoria. Meanwhile, General French had reached Commando Nek and Silkaats Nek, and began marching from the west.

The Boers were holding a line, under the command of General Lemmer, stretching along the Hennops River from Irene to about opposite Quaggapoort. The first line made contact with a second, commanded by Generals Botha, de la Rey, A. Cronje and others who were holding the koppies south of Pretoria, from Skanskop, immediately east of the Voortrekker Monument, to beyond the Krugersdorp road. This line was reinforced by General Botha's artillery.

When General Gordon reached Irene station, he encountered strong opposition and had to retire without achieving anything while reinforcements were brought up. At noon, the Boers were still holding their positions and, supported by artillery, were offering stiff resistance.

Colonel G. C. Henry had meanwhile succeeded in occupying Swartkop, thereby exposing the Republican positions on the Quaggapoort ridge, but

a further advance was immediately checked by heavy fire all along the line. Two divisions were ordered to deploy for attack, and by 12.30 p.m. seven batteries, besides heavy guns, were in action, forcing the burgers to yield ground.

Crossing Hennops River (Six Mile Spruit) at 1 p.m., Lord Roberts took up his position on Swartkop, from the top of which he could view and direct the movement of his whole force.

To the south fighting was also going on, the British advance being held up by General Lemmer's men. But at midday the burgers were forced to fall back from the southern banks, and then the Republican guns, from their concealed positions in the koppies, began barking. Lord Roberts ordered immediate reinforcements, and from the advantageous position which the British had meanwhile occupied on Swartkop, naval and other guns began shelling the Republican lines, and the silent forts. By 3 p.m. some 50 guns were barking simultaneously, and lyddite burst over the positions held by the burgers. Some shells travelled farther and burst over the railway station where some of the last trains to leave the capital were pulling out eastwards. Other shells were thrown even farther and burst over Sunnyside.

General Ian Hamilton, who had been ordered to come up from the rear, reached three miles west of Swartkop at about 2 p.m. and immediately made the presence of his large mounted force felt. He found himself opposite General de la Rey who was holding so strong a position on the ridge west of Quaggapoort that a direct advance against him seemed out of the question. At this point there appeared to be an opening for cavalry, which General Broadwood with the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, and Colonel H. de Lisle exploited.

Colonel de Lisle, whose French-sounding Christian and surnames are explained by the fact that he was a Channel Islander from Guernsey, making a shorter detour to the west than General Broadwood, soon outdistanced the latter's cavalry and succeeded, without any check, in gaining a ridge held by the burgers, getting well behind the right flank of the position, capturing a Maxim gun on the way, and chasing the burgers, who were being vigorously attacked in front by the infantry of the main body, to make a rapid retreat into Pretoria.

By 4.45 p.m. Colonel de Lisle had captured a hill west of Pretoria, subsequently (probably as a result of this event) named Proclamation Hill, and the battle for Pretoria was over, though it was only at dusk that General Botha broke off the fight.

And the Republican forts built around Pretoria at a cost of £150,000 for its defence, looked on silently. Not a shot so to speak, was fired from them, not a gun worthwhile mentioning was located there. General Botha could not spare his guns — he needed them in the field. Also, fearing another Paardeberg, it had been decided not to man these forts and risk encirclement. Apart from that, impartial military observers held the forts to be useless for defensive purposes.

By nightfall on June 4, the coveted positions — the hills around the capital, representing the key to Pretoria — were all occupied by the British.

But what was happening inside Pretoria during these critical days? The Government had left. The most senior official in the capital at this time was the State Attorney, Mr. Smuts, still without a military rank. He was determined not to surrender Pretoria without striking a blow. A day or two earlier he had commandeered every burger he could raise and had set out in the direction of Kaalfontein, past Irene (where in later years he bought a farm and where he lived for many years). But the rumour that the British troops had reached Irene proved to be false and he returned without having achieved his purpose.

While General Botha was making his preparations to hold up the British advance, there was feverish activity in Pretoria, much of it directed by the State Attorney.

The ammunition still in the magazine was hastily transported to the station and sent away to the Eastern Transvaal, instructions to this effect having been telegraphically given by General Botha. (The original of this telegram, is still in existence).

More important perhaps, the Government's money and bullion was lying in the vaults of the National Bank in Pretoria. The gold had been brought over from Johannesburg only a short while earlier. The total value was between £2,500,000 and £3,000,000. There was also an additional amount of £25,000 standing to the credit of the Commandant-General.

Smuts realised that this could not be left behind, and tested his position by politely asking the bank to make the money available to him. This request was refused, perhaps deliberately. He was not going to surrender so easily, however, and soon afterwards he returned with a posse of policemen. What actually happened, whether the request was repeated at the point of several revolvers or merely a threat — only General Smuts could have told. His biographers differ and official documents are silent — but the fact remains that his "request" or "demand" — call it what you will — was met.

Even while British shells were bursting over the station, Smuts had the money and the bullion placed on a train which speeded away to the east. In later years, he is known to have remarked with pride that this money kept the war going for another two years against an outlay of £200,000,000 from the British Treasury.

There was nothing that angered a section of the Pretoria population more than this daring exploit by the State Attorney. The story was told and retold — perhaps even with embellishments. Some said that Smuts had hidden in Pretoria for this purpose. They were unaware of his short fruitless "raid" to Kaalfontein, but it was to be the forerunner of the famous raid to the Cape later on. Others said it was lucky for him that the public had not known he was about, and this implied a threat. There was talk of organising a commando to pursue him to Middelburg, where he was thought to have gone, to bring back the gold. Anyway, that came to nothing and in any case, they were wrong because Smuts was next heard of in the

mountains — to the west of Pretoria — the Magaliesberg (but that is another story).

Undoubtedly this gold which the State Attorney removed from Pretoria was the cause of rumours, which still persist today — half a century later — concerning the Kruger millions. There is conclusive official evidence that this hoard of bullion belonging to the Republican Government was the only “Kruger Millions” that ever existed.

By the time the State Attorney, Mr. Jan Smuts, had left the town, nothing could be done to hold Pretoria. Colonel de Lisle was established on the hills west of Pretoria, which he had taken earlier that afternoon (June 4), the first officer whose men had broken through the defensive semi-ring around the capital. Unknown to Lord Roberts (surrounded by his men of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles and the West Australian Rifles) Colonel de Lisle decided to call on Pretoria to surrender.

He sent for Lieutenant W. W. R. Watson, a Sydney officer and a prominent actor in the subsequent proceedings.

Beaming with delight, the Colonel said to Watson:

“Now, lad, you have done so well, are you fit to take the white flag into the city and demand its surrender in the name of Lord Roberts and the British army?”

“Rather!” replied Watson, delighted.

So they tied a white handkerchief on to a whip, and Watson started for the landdrost’s office (where the main entrance to the Pretoria Post Office is now). The white flag was flying in the air and he was unarmed.

He had not gone far when he was stopped by a Republican artilleryman whom he requested to take him into town. (Mr. C. W. Clark, former M.P., told me, after the first publication of this article, that Lieut. Watson had asked him the way to General Botha’s house, and that he had accompanied him there). He did so, but Watson could find neither the landdrost nor the burgomaster. The Commandant-General was still fighting in the hills, and he was conducted to General Botha’s private residence near Burgers Park. By this time Watson had been fighting and carrying the ultimatum for a long time, and while messages were being sent everywhere to summon whoever was available to meet at once at General Botha’s home, Mrs. Botha, Watson subsequently related, “kindly gave me coffee and sandwiches which, as I had not had a square meal for 36 hours, were most acceptable”.

Fortunately we are able to complete the story of Lieut. Watson’s mission by making use of the memoirs of Jonkheer Sandberg, published in 1941. And this is Sandberg’s story:

After three days spent almost without food and sleep, Sandberg who, as related earlier, was a member of the “triumvirate” which General Botha had appointed to maintain order in Pretoria, had just returned from an inspection to his office when he was hastily summoned to General Botha’s home where an Australian officer had arrived to demand the surrender of Pretoria.

Sandberg jumped on his horse and rode to General Botha's home as fast as the animal could gallop. When he arrived there, he met the officer and as nobody knew when General Botha would turn up, he entertained the Australian officer generously, giving him whisky and soda. Eventually Watson became impatient but was persuaded to wait a little longer.

When General Botha arrived well after dark, he was quickly informed by Sandberg of the developments. A Council of War was decided on, and as many officers as possible were called together. The discussions took place in a room adjoining that in which Watson was waiting, and it was decided to request Lord Roberts in writing to grant an armistice for the removal of women and children from Pretoria. Sandberg drafted the letter on behalf of General Botha.

As a reply was essential, volunteers were called for to go to Lord Roberts. The officers who had just returned from the fighting line all seemed tired, and Sandberg volunteered. General Sarel F. Oosthuizen, who was killed in action a few months later near Krugersdorp, agreed to accompany him.

It was a long and hard journey until they found Lord Roberts' headquarters, probably somewhere in the vicinity of the present-day Valhalla. (Voortrekkerhoogte did not exist in those days.)

Lord Roberts, records Sandberg, was in bed in his little wagonette standing alone in the open veld. Sandberg was welcomed by the officer in charge of Lord Roberts' staff. Later this officer became General Lord Henry Rawlinson, Commander-in-Chief of the Army in India until his death in 1925, and a well-known figure in the first World War.

Rawlinson took Botha's letter to Roberts but returned with the request that Sandberg should come with him to read it in English to the Field-Marshal because General Botha's letter, naturally, was in High Dutch.

Sandberg says he followed Rawlinson to the wagonette and found inside a "little man with a white night-cap on his head lying snugly under the blankets which were pulled up to his neck. I was face to face with Roberts of Kandahar, the grizzled veteran of many campaigns in far-flung corners of the Empire since he had joined the Army 49 years earlier".

Roberts made the interview as brief as possible, intimating that he would speak to Botha on the following morning only if the town was surrendered unconditionally. And in that case, Botha's reply was to reach him before dawn because his troops had orders to move at 5 a.m. These were his last words on the subject, he told Sandberg.

Sandberg left the tent wagon in which Lord Roberts was lying and was taken to the camp fire by Rawlinson who reminded him that on board ship, where they had first met when Sandberg was returning from a visit to Holland, they had agreed that should they meet again, whoever could do so would treat the other to a whisky and soda. Rawlinson was in a position to do so, but General Oosthuizen was hesitant. Nevertheless, they accepted the invitation and, there in the middle of the night, sat representatives of two warring nations enjoying whisky and soda.

It was after three o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, June 5, that Sandberg returned to General Botha's home, to whom he reported what Lord Roberts had said. General Botha at once issued orders that all commandos still in and around Pretoria should immediately withdraw to Eerste Fabrieken, he and General Lucas Meyer following that morning, just about the time when the British troops were entering Pretoria.

Pretorians were astir early that morning. It had been an uneasy night for many of them. What lay in store? they wondered.

It was obvious, though, that formal steps had to be taken to surrender the town to Lord Roberts.

In the absence of any representatives of the Government or the military authorities, this task had been entrusted by the Government to the Burgomaster, Mr. P. J. Potgieter. Dr. Knobel, representing the Pretoria committee of the Red Cross called on the Burgomaster early to ask whether he could accompany him when he went to see the British commanding officer. These two, still unaware of the negotiations that had taken place during the night and its outcome, held a meeting at the old Union Club to arrange matters. It was decided that two of them should ride out on their bicycles immediately and inform Lord Roberts that the military authorities had left the town and that Mr. Potgieter, as head of the civil administration, had been asked to surrender Pretoria into Lord Roberts's charge.

While this was being done, they were informed that a British officer had arrived at the artillery camp to hoist the Union Jack over Pretoria. So they went out there, but found that the officer had no orders from anyone. He was requested to desist until Lord Roberts's wishes were known.

A good deal of confusion followed because nobody knew precisely where Lord Roberts was, some saying that he was out at Quaggapoort. A wild goose chase to locate Roberts followed and he was eventually found somewhere in the Fountains Valley where he accepted the formal surrender of Pretoria.

Civil servants and Z.A.S.M. Hollanders going to work that Tuesday morning found British guards at every office, hotel and bar, while printed notices appeared everywhere setting out the terms under which individuals could accept British rule.

With the British troops was a young man, a war correspondent representing the London "Morning Post", "returning" to Pretoria. He had been taken prisoner at Chieveley, near Estcourt, Natal, on November 15, 1899, arrived in Pretoria on November 18, and was taken to the Staats Model School at the corner of Skinner and van der Walt Streets, which was used as an officers prisoner-of-war camp. He escaped on the night of December, 12.

His name is Winston Spencer Churchill.

Early that morning he was up and about. Accompanied by his kinsman, the Duke of Marlborough, he cantered into town to see the last train laden with burgers and pulled by two locomotives steam past them. There were no military precautions. The two hoped that the British prisoners were still in

Pretoria, which they were. When they arrived at the prisoners' "cage", Marlborough, resplendent in the red tabs of the staff, called on the guards to surrender.

Churchill records:

'What followed resembled the end of an Adelphi melodrama Someone produced the Union Jack, the Transvaal emblem was torn down, and amidst wild cheers from our captive friends, the first British flag was hoisted over Pretoria. Time: 8.47, June 5.'

The drama of the surrender of a capital was nearing its climax. That morning, Tuesday, June 5, negotiations between British officers and such representatives of the citizens as were willing to co-operate with the British, including the Republican officials J. J. Smit, J. F. de Beer and De Souza, were conducted in the Raadsaal. It was arranged that the formal entry of Lord Roberts would take place on Church Square at 2 p.m. that day. Meanwhile, British guards had been placed at all important buildings, including those belonging to the Netherlands railway company, as well as the Presidency and General Botha's home where Mrs. Kruger and Mrs. Botha were staying.

And when the hour came, Lord Roberts, with Lord Kitchener at his side, rode on to Church Square to hoist the Union Jack. How different this occasion to that on April 12, 1877, when Sir Theophilus Shepstone with his eight civil servants and 25 policemen annexed the Republic! The strength of the British army marching on Pretoria under Lord Roberts was 1,099 officers, 24,432 men, 6,971 horses, 12 heavy guns, 104 field guns and 176 machine guns. Opposing them was General Botha with 148 officers and 3,039 men.

Church Square was filled by 3,000 troops when the Commander-in-Chief, the white-haired, 68-year-old wearer of the Victoria Cross, Lord Roberts, stood to attention as the Union Jack was hoisted and "God save the Queen" was played, followed by loud cheering. A photograph shows that the time on the Raadsaal clock was 2.20. And then came the biggest march past Pretoria had ever seen.

To digress for a moment: After the first South African War, the Union Jack which flew over Pretoria was taken down, following Britain's recognition of the independence of the South African Republic, and formally buried during a "funeral" ceremony in Pretoria. The following "epitaph" was chosen for the occasion:

"In memory of the British Flag in the Transvaal, which departed this life on August 2, 1881, aged four years. In other lands none knew thee but to love thee." To this "epitaph" was added the word "Resurgam", and now this was about to come true nearly 19 years later.

This Union Jack was hoisted when the British entered Potehefstroom, the first capital of the South African Republic, on June 14 — eight days after the big parade on Church Square. It had been dug up by Colonel Gildea, who was commandant of Pretoria in 1881.

But to return to the events of sixty-three years ago:

While Pretoria was seeing the biggest parade in its history up to then, in London crowds were cheering wildly. A brief despatch from Lord Roberts announcing the capture of Pretoria was published at 12.30 p.m., and spread with "miraculous speed. Flags were hoisted and crowds cheered wildly". But disorders also broke out among the crowds and in front of Mansion House the police were forced to intervene.

In South Africa, Sandberg was among those who watched the preparations for the parade. From an office overlooking Church Square, he saw unit after unit drawn up, until he made his way to a club not far from the Square where he collected his Mauser revolver, several rounds of ammunition, Zeiss binoculars and a heavy overcoat. After reaching Sunnyside safely where he enjoyed a hasty lunch, he "collected" a horse to join General Botha at Eerste Fabrieken. But before arriving there he was twice challenged by British soldiers while on his way through the present-day Brooklyn. However, he "got away with it".

At Eerste Fabrieken the Commandant-General had started a Council-of-War which was held in Sammy Marks's distillery. He was depressed because his people would not fight and because so many others, including some of his personal and trusted friends, had surrendered.

Sammy Marks was also among those who watched the parade on Church Square. Sitting in his office overlooking the Square, he described what was happening over the telephone to the manager of his distillery, Hugh Crawford, who in turn told General Botha what was happening on Church Square.

There was momentary pessimism in the Boer Council-of-War, but a decision was postponed for two days while General Botha stayed at Eerste Fabrieken.

It is said that he was a keen bridge player and was very miserable when he found that he was without a pack of cards. One of his officers volunteered to fetch a pack from his home, which he did, much to Botha's joy.

The meeting of the Council-of-War was resumed on June 7 and was attended, among others, by General De la Rey who, meanwhile, had come around Pretoria, by-passing it on the north again to make contact with his Commander-in-Chief. The meeting was characterised by a strong and forthright speech made by a comparatively unknown assistant field-cornet, C. F. Beyers, later to become a general and still later to take a great part in public life.

It was decided to fight on, and the first result of this decision was the battle of Diamond Hill (Donkerhoek) which led a United States military attache to pen these words:

"Considering that they (the burgers) were not trained soldiers, or soldiers in any sense for that matter, I doubt whether any body of men in similar circumstances and with similar primitive means could have accomplished what the Boers did at Donkerhoek on June 10 and 11."

That was the beginning of the second phase of the war, during which Pretoria was occupied by the British and became their headquarters. Bu:

that is another story. What concerns us here is what was happening in the town immediately after the occupation.

Pretoria was without any newspapers and rumour must have played havoc, for one of the first things Major-General J. G. Maxwell, the Military Governor, did was to issue a proclamation, informing the public that any person circulating "false and malicious reports tending to dissatisfy and unsettle the public mind will be punished with the utmost rigour of the law".

On Wednesday, June 7, a proclamation was issued ordering all civilians to remain indoors between 7 p.m. and 6.30 a.m. unless they had a pass signed by the Military Commissioner of Police.

Communications were entirely disrupted. Prior to retreating, the burgers blew up the railway bridge at Irene, and rail communication with the Rand was tremendously delayed, as trains from the two towns had to meet at the bridge. Furthermore, General Botha had been successful in getting most trains away from Pretoria prior to the entry of the British troops, and, according to Z.A.S.M. records, only 17 locomotives and about 400 trucks were captured.

But the most important event after the capture of Pretoria was the liberation on June 6 of the prisoners-of-war from the camp at Waterval. This was done in the nick of time, for 900 had already been moved further east to the farm Nooitgedacht, near Franspoort, on the way to Premier Mine. The camp was threatened by General De la Rey who was coming around from the west. He nearly succeeded in preventing the liberation of the remaining 3,000 men, and there was a skirmish with his burgers when a train was sent to fetch the prisoners. General De la Rey was unable to intervene effectively and the prisoners made their way to Pretoria as best as they could, by train, waggon, horse or on foot, so much so that they crowded each other in Wonderboom Poort. They gathered on Church Square to be re-armed, and once again Church Square resounded to cheering.

And gradually Pretoria settled down. A hospital was opened in the Palace of Justice on June 11. A train service on regular time-table to the Rand was resumed on June 17, and foreign military attaches left because they thought the war was over.

A proclamation was issued safeguarding tenants against ejection by their landlords, and thus much hardship brought about by changed circumstances was prevented.

On June 19, the public was informed by proclamation that all questions regarding municipal affairs should be addressed to the Burgomaster, Mr. R. K. Loveday, at his offices in Church Street West, who had agreed to accept this position. For the second and last time in its history Pretoria had an appointed mayor. But this appointment shows that the reins of civil government were slowly being taken up again.

On June 26, Pretoria, for the first time since the occupation could read its own newspaper. This was the "Pretoria Friend", which was issued to provide news for the troops. As such the bulk of its reading matter consisted of proclamations and official notices. The advertisements, however, indi-

cate that trade was also returning to normal. It was sold for 3d. and the profits were to go to charity. How difficult it must have been to keep up to date is shown by the fact that on June 26 it published a report dated June 3, about the fighting at Zeerust, and the same day there was a report dated June 4, from Mafeking.

It ceased publication barely three weeks later when it was announced that the editors of the "Bloemfontein Post" had arranged for a daily delivery of their newspaper in Pretoria.

The pages of the "Pretoria Friend" show that in many ways life in Pretoria was not unbearable. On June 29, it published a detailed description of the Derby which was won by the Prince of Wales's Diamond Jubilee, and on July 10, it was announced that in future polo would be played regularly three times a week at the Racecourse.

The clouds of war were receding from Pretoria, and only once did Pretorians get a fright again — when General De la Rey threatened the capital and came to within striking distance of it.

Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener took up residence in Pretoria. For a time Lord Roberts resided in Joubert Street in a house adjoining "Harmony", while Lord Kitchener lived in the same block, but farther north, at the corner of Joubert and Rissik Streets. Afterwards they moved to Melrose House which, to all intents and purposes, became the "Imperial Headquarters, South Africa" reflected in the letterheads of the military headquarters. This it remained until May 31, 1902.

It was not until nearly two years later, however, (on May 31, 1902), when representatives of the British Government and those of the former Republics gathered at Melrose House to sign the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging, that peace came once again.

H. P. H. Behrens.