

4,106 prisoners were taken in Cronje's camp, and about 400 had been captured in the preceding ten days; but of these 4,500 a certain number were non-combatants. Previous to the relief of Kimberley the Dutch prisoners in our hands numbered 430 (see official statement by the Hon. George Wyndham in the House of Commons). Of the Boer losses in killed and wounded during the first four months of the war my assailants have truly said that no authentic return exists. These are but estimates, and I never pretended to give more than my own estimate. My own estimate, as you know, was about 5,000. The following paragraph, extracted from the *Cape Times*, shows you that this estimate was considerably above what the *Cape Times* regarded on the 16th March as a confession of the true losses from the Boer hospitals:—

THE BOER LOSSES.—STARTLING FIGURES.—THE TRUTH AT LAST.—Pretoria, 16th March.—(Reuter's Special Service.)—Dr. Molengraaf, the Chief Intelligence Officer, announces that the Federal losses prior to the relief of Kimberley and Ladysmith were: Killed, 677; wounded, 2,129; accidentally killed, 24; accidentally wounded, 171; died of sickness, 99; sick who have recovered or are still under treatment, 1,251; total, 4,251. The British officers were removed to-day in cabs from the Model Schools to new quarters under Daspoort Ridge, on the outskirts of the town.

The *Cape Times* is the leading anti-Boer paper in South Africa, yet you will see that it regarded an estimate of about 3,000 killed, wounded, and dead from diseases as "the truth at last" about the 16th February, by which time the Boer losses were heavier than when I telegraphed on the 30th January, when I reckoned their loss at 5,000, including prisoners of war, then from 400 to 500. Then, a careful examination of the despatches of our generals shows how greatly newspapers overestimated the Boer losses. The battle of Elandslaagte was much the most severe defeat received by the Boers in the open field before Cronje's surrender. There the Boer losses in killed and wounded were 300 (see General White's official despatch). At Belmont they left 83 dead on the field (see Lord Methuen's despatch); from which we may infer 250 or 300 wounded. In their attack on Ladysmith, on 6th January, their losses were certainly heavier than this—I should say 500 at least; and at Spionkop they must have been over 400. At Stormberg and Colenso there is no reason to believe that they lost 200 men. At Magersfontein 300 or 400 probably represented their losses, though a company of '80 Scandinavians were almost all killed, wounded, or captured. At Modder River the Boers left 29 dead behind them, and Lord Methuen thought they had carried away others, and thrown some bodies into the river. That, however, was surmised only, and has never been confirmed. At Willow Grange, in Natal, in November, the Boers are said to have lost 30 killed, chiefly with the bayonet, though General Hildyard's despatch does not indicate any such loss; but their loss in wounded was not proportionately heavy. When Cronje surrendered about 200 of his people were found to be wounded, and it was estimated that about 50 had been killed and hastily buried. In their different encounters with General French, about Colenso and Arundel, the Boers must have lost about 300. It is upon these facts, and upon the opinions given me by qualified persons here, that I based my estimate. I should say, now, that the Boer losses in killed, wounded, and prisoners are by this time something over 11,000, and that 1,000 to 2,000 of their men are probably in hospital from sickness.

Next comes the highly debatable point of the strength of the Boer forces. On this allow me to quote the opinion of Mr. Cecil Rhodes, published in the *Daily Mail* of the 17th March last:—

Mr. Rhodes surprised me very much by saying that there have only been 30,000 Boers against us in the field. I replied that the idea at military headquarters is that there are 65,000 of them against us.

"I know," he said, "that is the English method of accounting for their reverses and avoiding blame at Home for their mistakes, but, nevertheless, there are but 30,000 Boers in this war. Look over the census reports in your 'Whitaker,' and you will see that it cannot be otherwise. Men cannot be made in a minute. It takes twenty years to make a man, and we know how many they had at the beginning of the war. The Transvaal only polled a little over 17,000 votes at the last presidential election, and even the boys voted. That State has put in 15,000 men, and the Free State not quite so many. As for the foreigners in their army, do you know the facts? You have heard the foreigners accounted for by thousands, yet the Irish 'brigade' is but 100 strong; there are only 150 Scandinavians, and, for the rest, they amount to between 1,000 and 2,000. They appear more numerous because they keep shifting their men around. The people who were besieging us used to go away and fight Methuen at Magersfontein, and at the other places before that. No, we are exaggerating their numbers, simply because by doing so we account for bad generalship without confessing it."

You will see that Mr. Rhodes's estimate is much lower than mine, yet his worst enemies—and he has many—would not accuse him of being a "pro-Boer," however ungracious his reference to the British officers may be. Nor is the chairman of Robinson's Bank put in that category, though he has lived from his boyhood in the Transvaal, has fought side by side with the Boers in their native wars, and knows them as very few well-known Englishmen know them. This gentleman, Mr. J. B. Robinson, began, if I remember correctly, by putting the strength of the Boers at 30,000, but subsequently somewhat modified his opinion on account of the number of Cape Dutch and foreign Uitlanders who had joined them. These, I gather, would, in Mr. Robinson's opinion, have swelled their numbers in the field up to about 40,000.

One of my critics, Mr. Watson, of Invercargill, asserted that the War Office put the Boer Army at 60,000 before the ultimatum, and he would add to that all the foreign and Cape Dutch auxiliaries. The Cape Dutch he numbered at from 20,000 to 30,000. I annex an extract from the verbatim report of the speech of the Under-Secretary for War to show what he really did say on the subject. It will be seen from this that the War Office put the maximum strength of the Boers at 59,000, including an ample allowance for both foreigners and Cape Dutch rebels. But that was not an estimate of what they had put in the field, but of the maximum upon which they had to draw. When I telegraphed 40,000 as their strength at the end of December I purposely added the words "confronting us." I always allowed for their keeping some thousands to guard their railways and communications, to hold down Johannesburg, to watch the natives, and to hold Pretoria and guard the prisoners there.

It may be asked why, if the Boer numbers are so small, do the British Government send a force so relatively enormous into Africa. The answer is to be found in Annex 2, in which the