معنية في أغلبها بالخدمة في الجيش الهندي والخدمة السياسية الهندية في الهند والخليج الفارسي في الفترة ١٩٣٢-١٩٤٧"
"حكاية جد: مذكرات

المؤسسة المالكة	المكتبة البريطانية: أوراق خاصة وسجلات من مكتب الهند
المرجع	Mss Eur F226/23
التاريخ/ التواريخ	يوليو ١٩٨٤ (ميلادي)
لغة الكتابة	الإنجليزية في اللاتينية
الحجم والشكل	ملف واحد (٥٧ ورقة)
حق النشر	غير معروف

حول هذا السجلّ

مذكرات بقلم الرائد هيو دانستان هولويل رانس عن حياته المهنية في الجيش الهندي والخدمة السياسية الهندية البريطانية، ١٩٣٢-١٩٤٧. تتناول المذكرات ما يلي بالتفصيل:

- طفولته وتعليمه
- خدمته في الجيش الهندي، ١٩٣٢-١٩٣٦، ١٩٤٠-١٩٤٣
- خدمته في الخدمة السياسية الهندية البريطانية، ١٩٣٦-١٩٤٠، في فادودارا، شيملا، أغرة، راجكوت، بوشهر، شيراز والبحرين

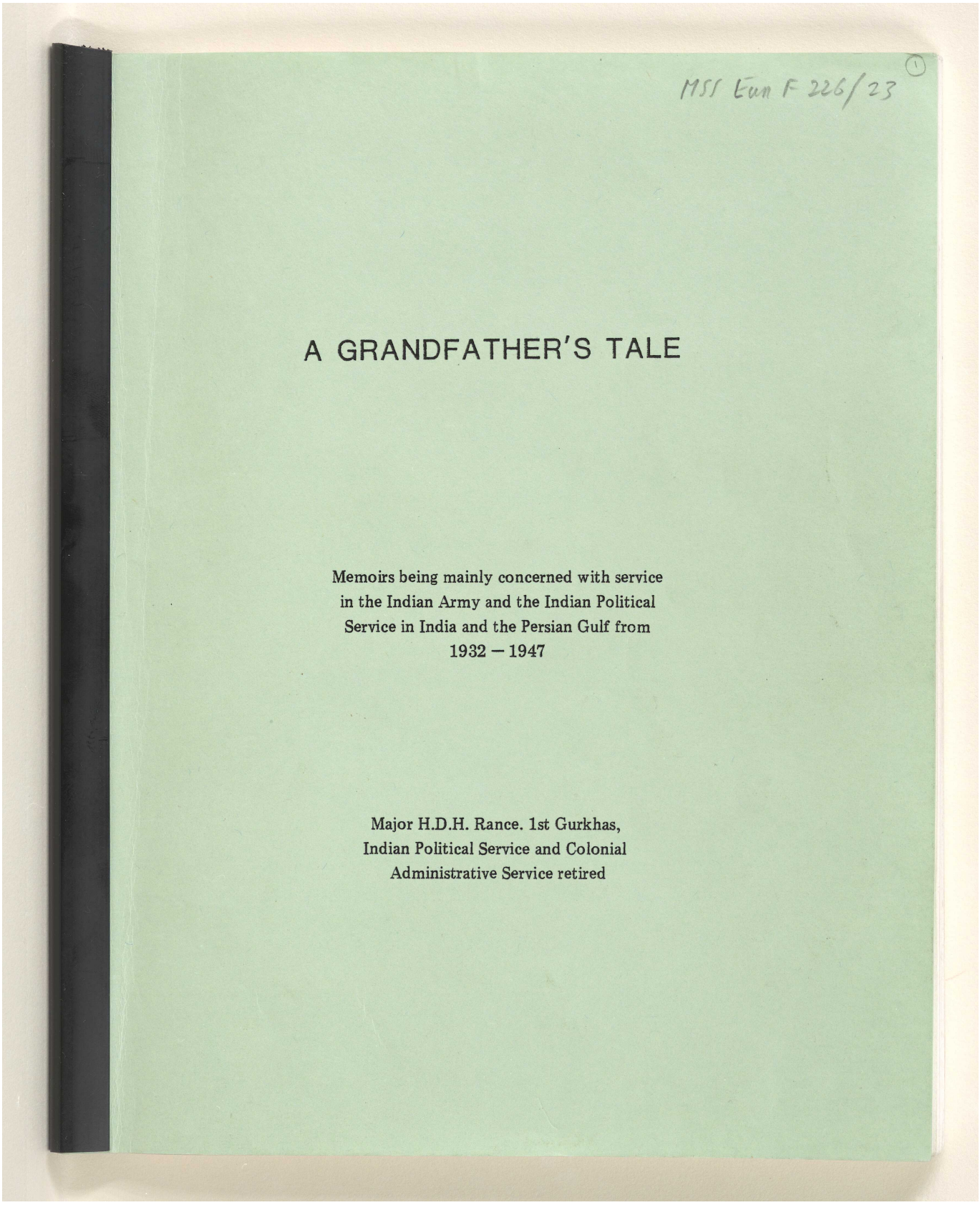
• خدمته في الخدمة السياسية الهندية البريطانية، ١٩٤٣-١٩٤٧، في كويته، مكران، البحرين، الساحل المتصالح [الإمارات العربية المتحدة] وشيراز

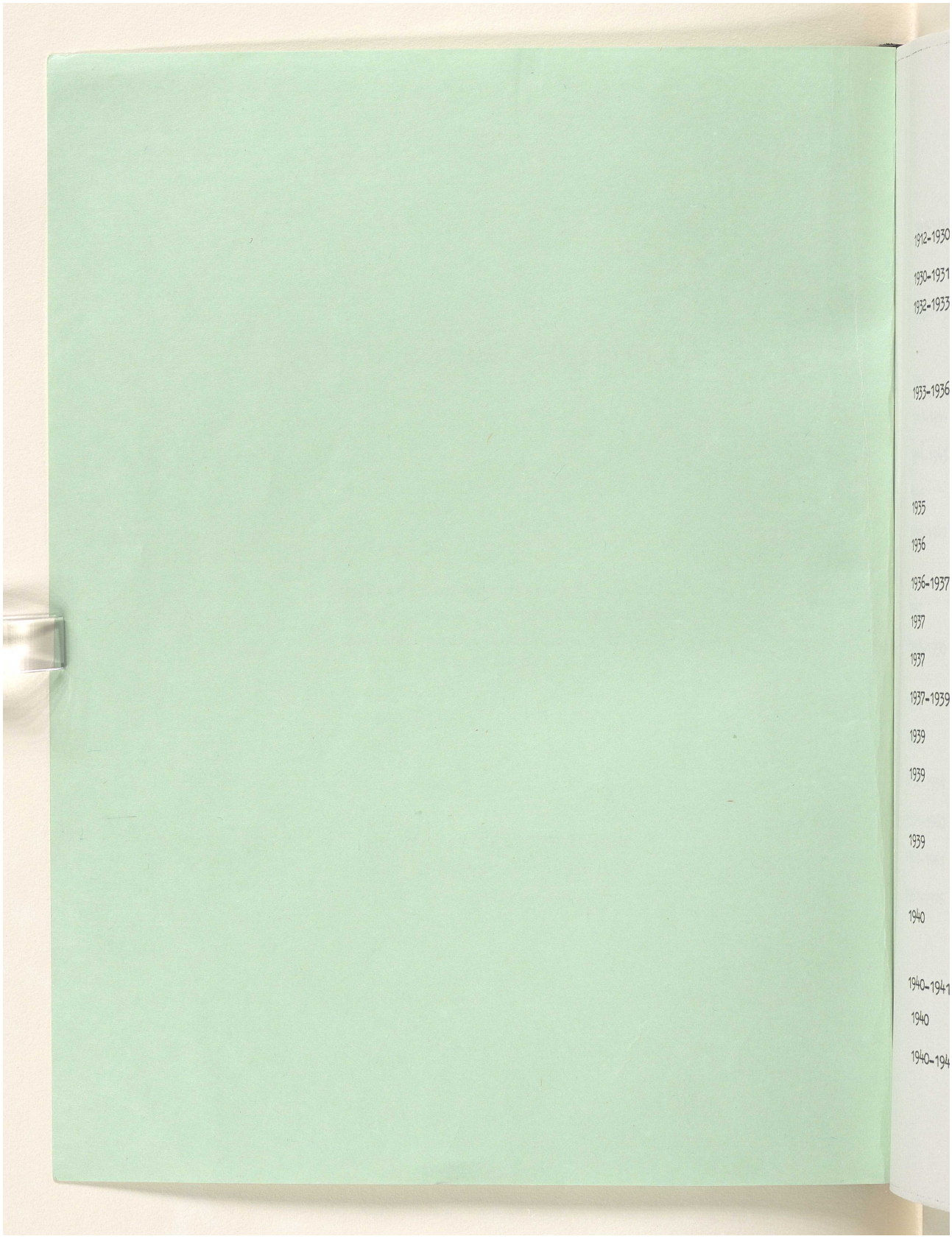
• عمله في الخدمة الاستعمارية في رودسيا الشمالية [زامبيا] ومكتب المستعمرات البريطانية في لندن، ١٩٤٨-١٩٥١

• عمله في القطاع الخاص، ١٩٥٢-١٩٧٦.

تحتوي الأوراق ٥٦-٥٨ على نسخ من خرائط توضح أجزاء من الهند وباكستان وأفغانستان وإيران والخليج.

"حكاية جد: مذكرات معنية في أغلبها بالخدمة في الجيش الهندي والخدمة السياسية الهندية في الهند والخليج الفارسي في الفترة ١٩٣٢-١٩٤٧" [أمامي] (١١٨/١)

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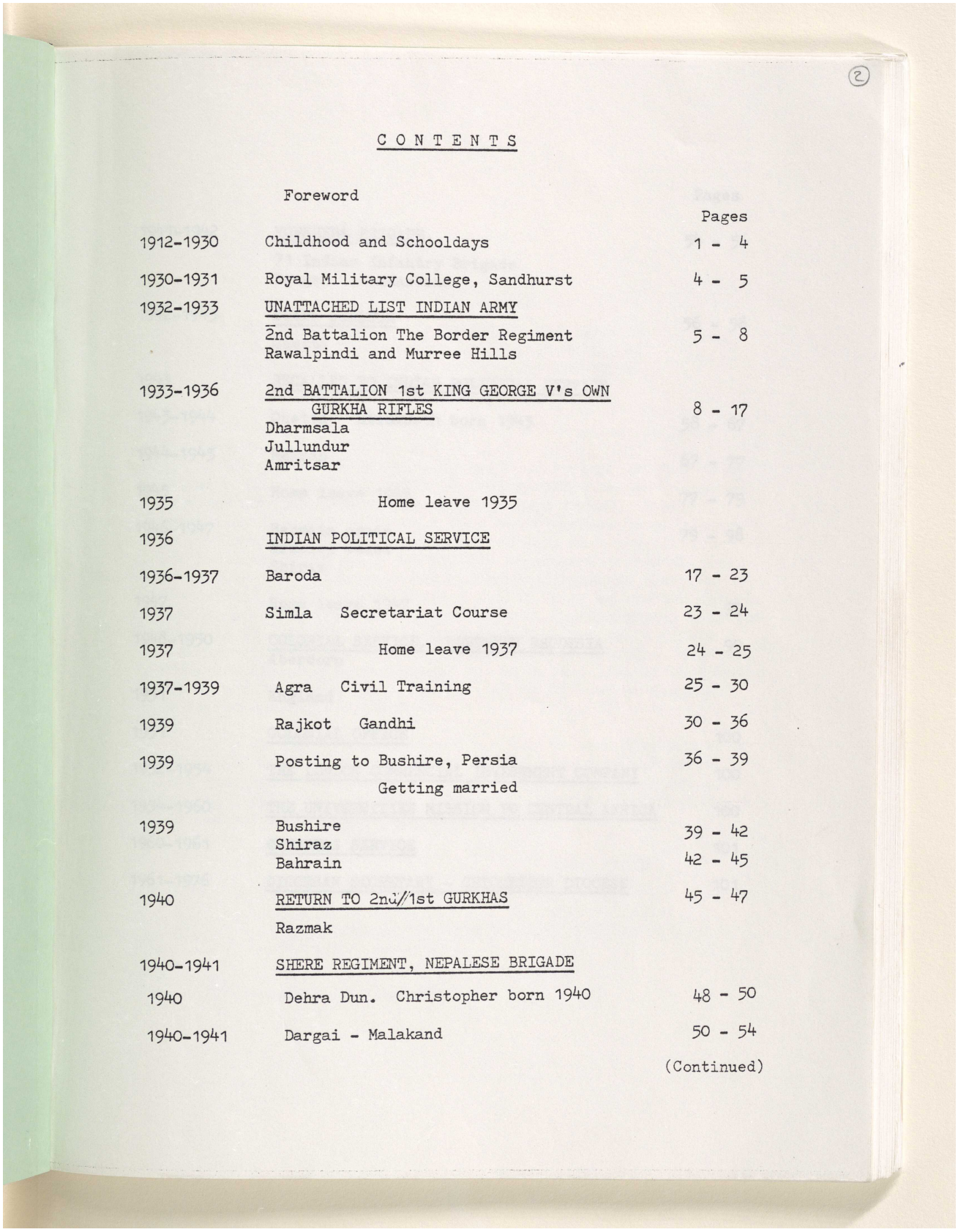

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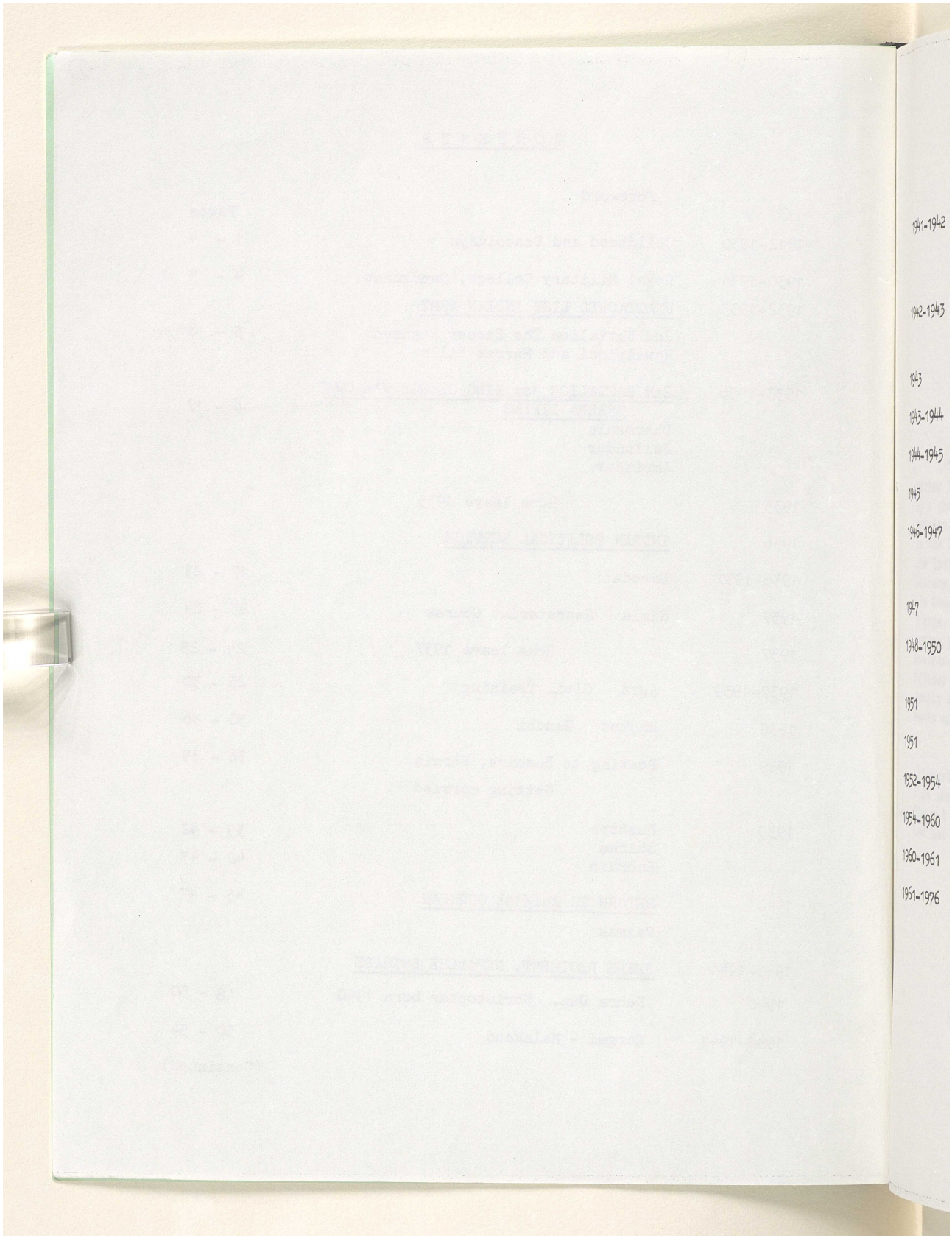

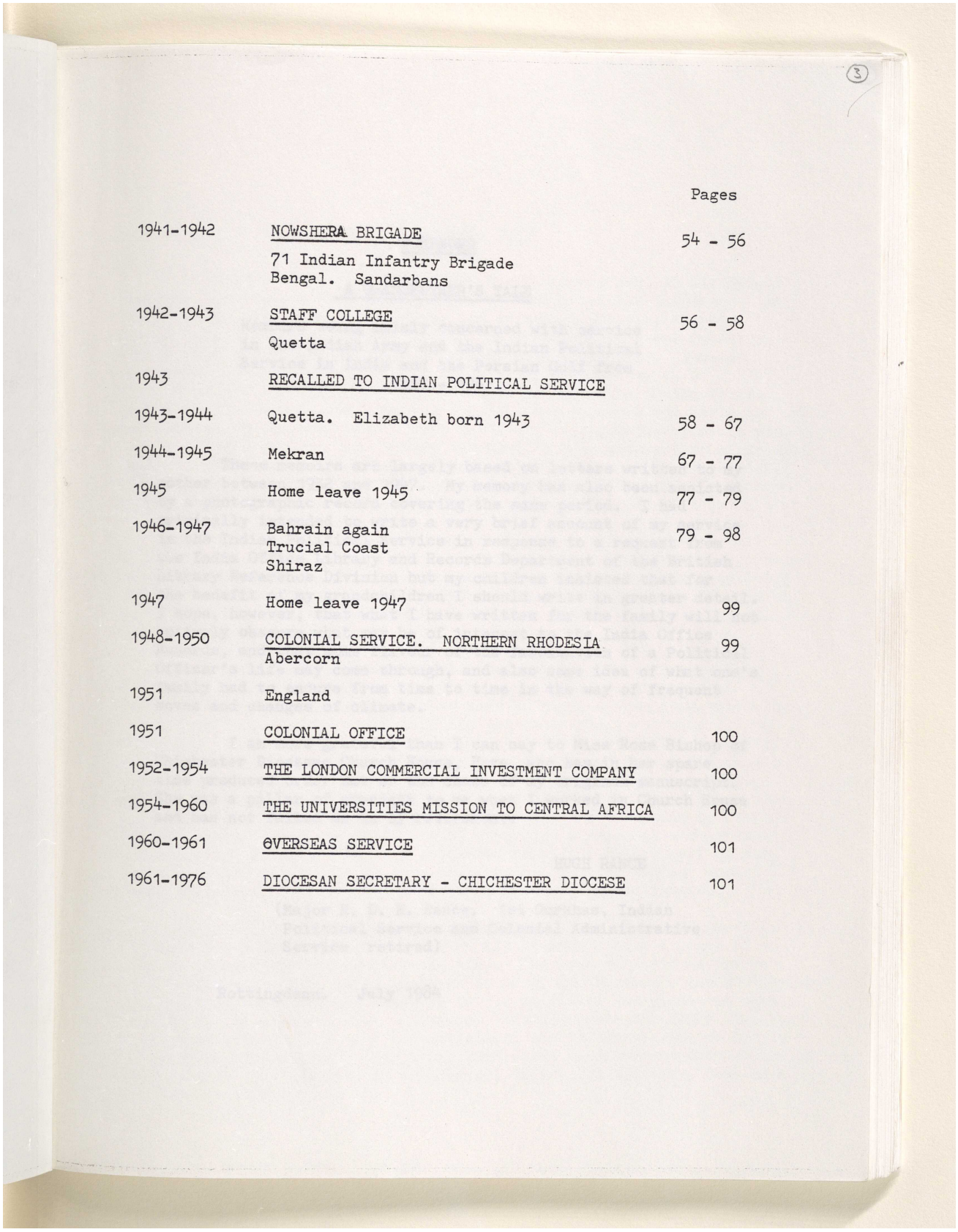

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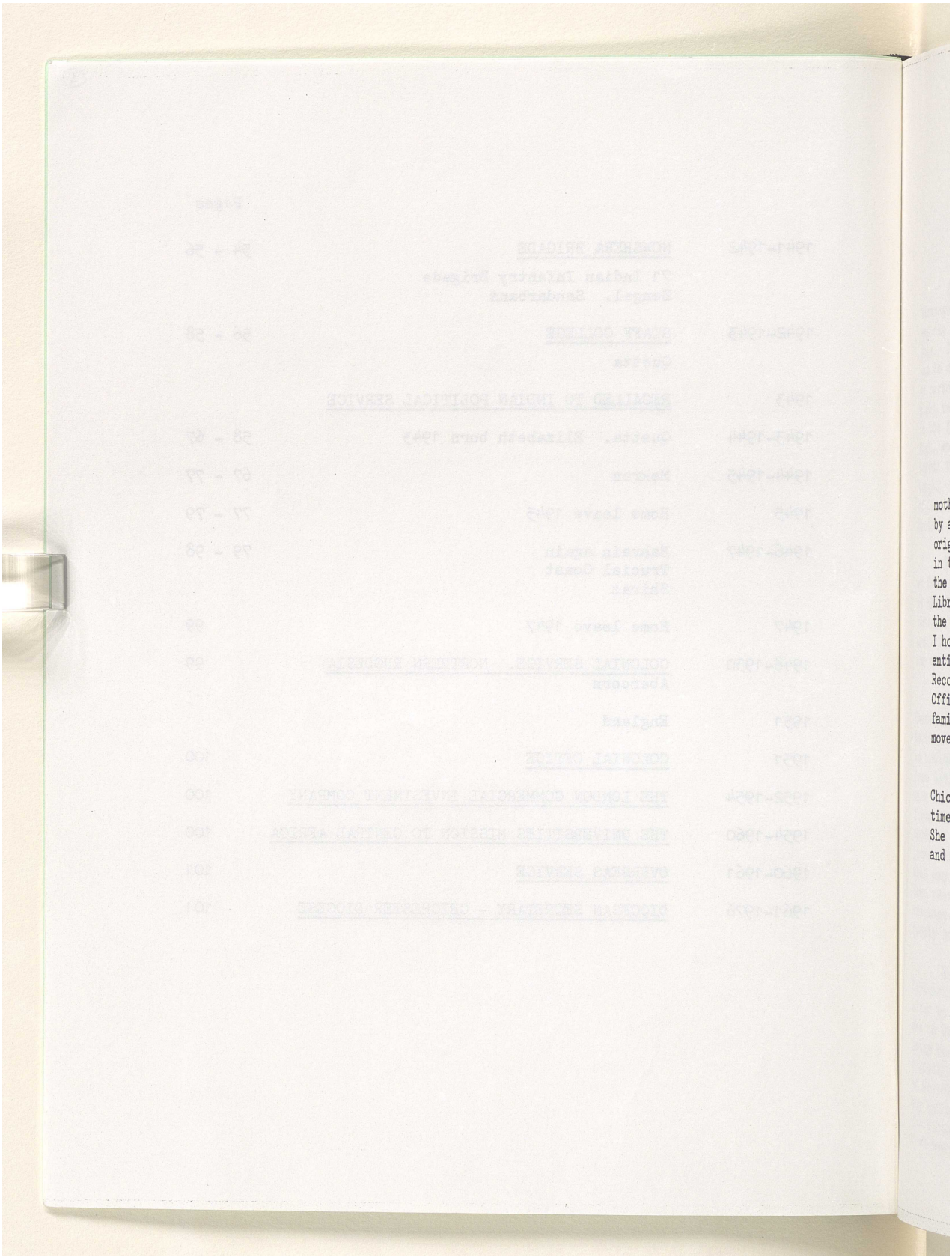
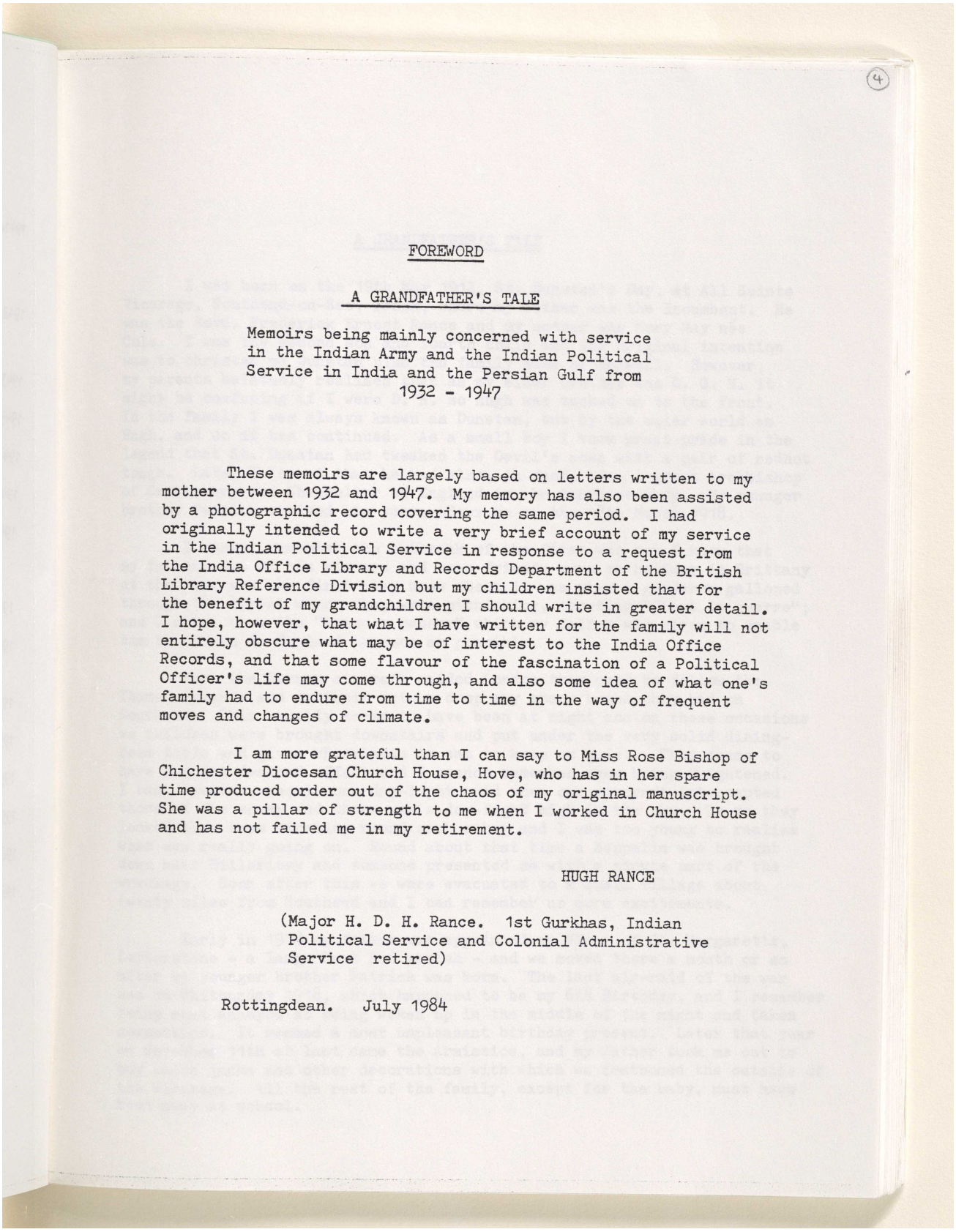




FOREWORD

A GRANDFATHER'S TALE

Memoirs being mainly concerned with service in the Indian Army and the Indian Political Service in India and the Persian Gulf from 1932 - 1947

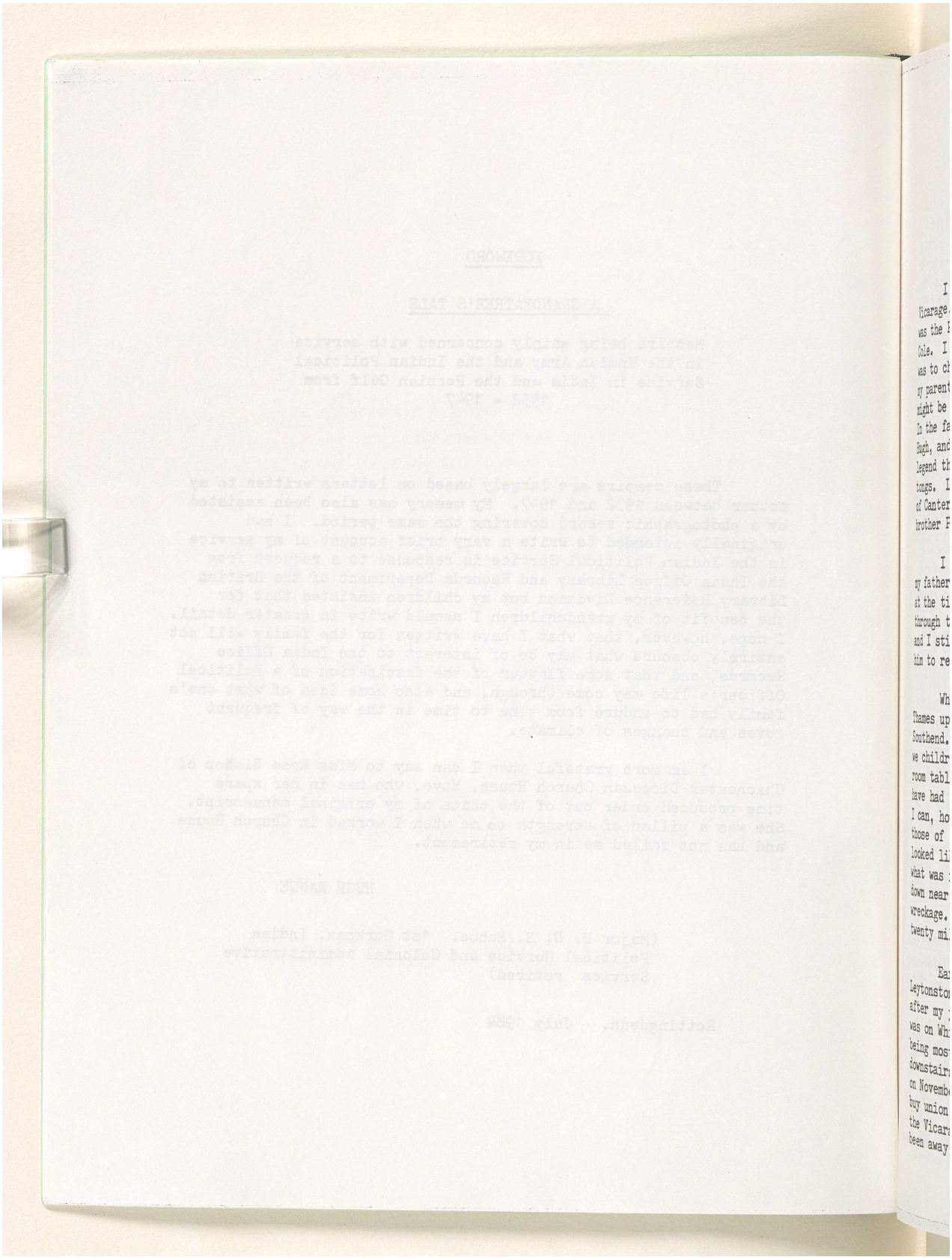
These memoirs are largely based on letters written to my mother between 1932 and 1947. My memory has also been assisted by a photographic record covering the same period. I had originally intended to write a very brief account of my service in the Indian Political Service in response to a request from the India Office Library and Records Department of the British Library Reference Division but my children insisted that for the benefit of my grandchildren I should write in greater detail. I hope, however, that what I have written for the family will not entirely obscure what may be of interest to the India Office Records, and that some flavour of the fascination of a Political Officer's life may come through, and also some idea of what one's family had to endure from time to time in the way of frequent moves and changes of climate.

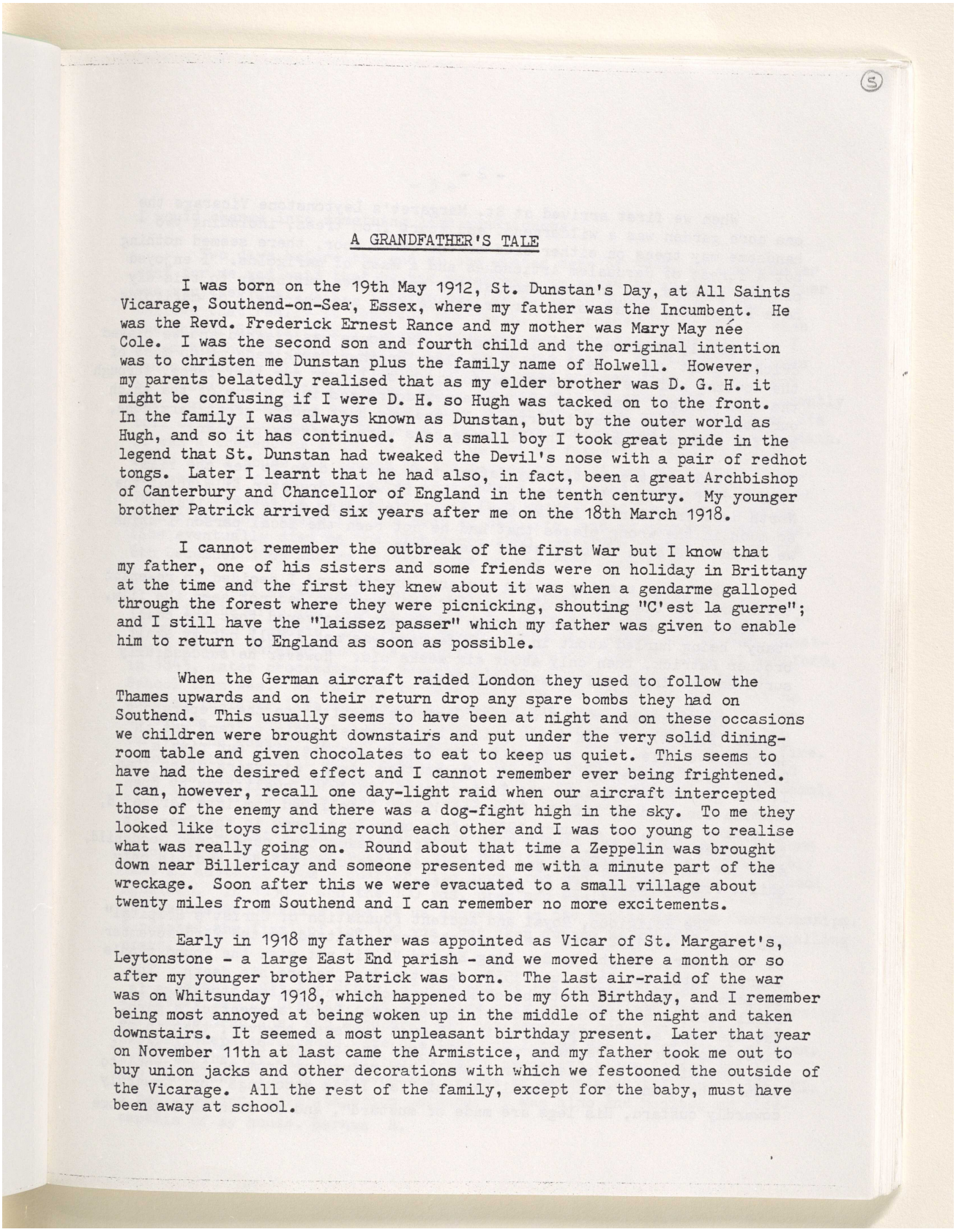
I am more grateful than I can say to Miss Rose Bishop of Chichester Diocesan Church House, Hove, who has in her spare time produced order out of the chaos of my original manuscript. She was a pillar of strength to me when I worked in Church House and has not failed me in my retirement.

HUGH RANCE

(Major H. D. H. Rance. 1st Gurkhas, Indian Political Service and Colonial Administrative Service retired)

Rottingdean. July 1984





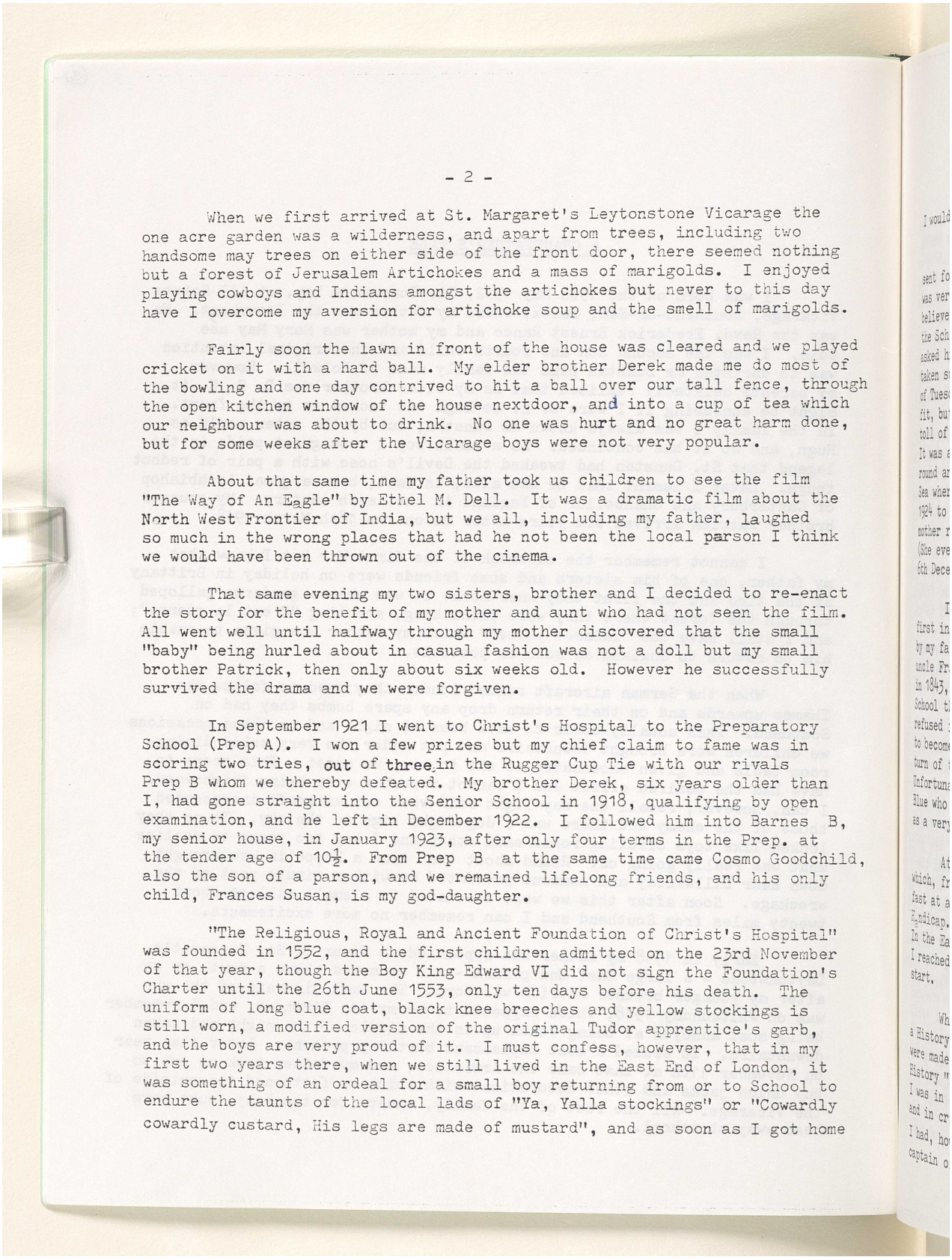
A GRANDFATHER'S TALE

I was born on the 19th May 1912, St. Dunstan's Day, at All Saints Vicarage, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, where my father was the Incumbent. He was the Revd. Frederick Ernest Rance and my mother was Mary May née Cole. I was the second son and fourth child and the original intention was to christen me Dunstan plus the family name of Holwell. However, my parents belatedly realised that as my elder brother was D. G. H. it might be confusing if I were D. H. so Hugh was tacked on to the front. In the family I was always known as Dunstan, but by the outer world as Hugh, and so it has continued. As a small boy I took great pride in the legend that St. Dunstan had tweaked the Devil's nose with a pair of redhot tongs. Later I learnt that he had also, in fact, been a great Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of England in the tenth century. My younger brother Patrick arrived six years after me on the 18th March 1918.

I cannot remember the outbreak of the first War but I know that my father, one of his sisters and some friends were on holiday in Brittany at the time and the first they knew about it was when a gendarme galloped through the forest where they were picnicking, shouting "C'est la guerre"; and I still have the "laissez passer" which my father was given to enable him to return to England as soon as possible.

When the German aircraft raided London they used to follow the Thames upwards and on their return drop any spare bombs they had on Southend. This usually seems to have been at night and on these occasions we children were brought downstairs and put under the very solid dining-room table and given chocolates to eat to keep us quiet. This seems to have had the desired effect and I cannot remember ever being frightened. I can, however, recall one day-light raid when our aircraft intercepted those of the enemy and there was a dog-fight high in the sky. To me they looked like toys circling round each other and I was too young to realise what was really going on. Round about that time a Zeppelin was brought down near Billericay and someone presented me with a minute part of the wreckage. Soon after this we were evacuated to a small village about twenty miles from Southend and I can remember no more excitements.

Early in 1918 my father was appointed as Vicar of St. Margaret's, Leytonstone - a large East End parish - and we moved there a month or so after my younger brother Patrick was born. The last air-raid of the war was on Whitsunday 1918, which happened to be my 6th Birthday, and I remember being most annoyed at being woken up in the middle of the night and taken downstairs. It seemed a most unpleasant birthday present. Later that year on November 11th at last came the Armistice, and my father took me out to buy union jacks and other decorations with which we festooned the outside of the Vicarage. All the rest of the family, except for the baby, must have been away at school.



When we first arrived at St. Margaret's Leytonstone Vicarage the one acre garden was a wilderness, and apart from trees, including two handsome may trees on either side of the front door, there seemed nothing but a forest of Jerusalem Artichokes and a mass of marigolds. I enjoyed playing cowboys and Indians amongst the artichokes but never to this day have I overcome my aversion for artichoke soup and the smell of marigolds.

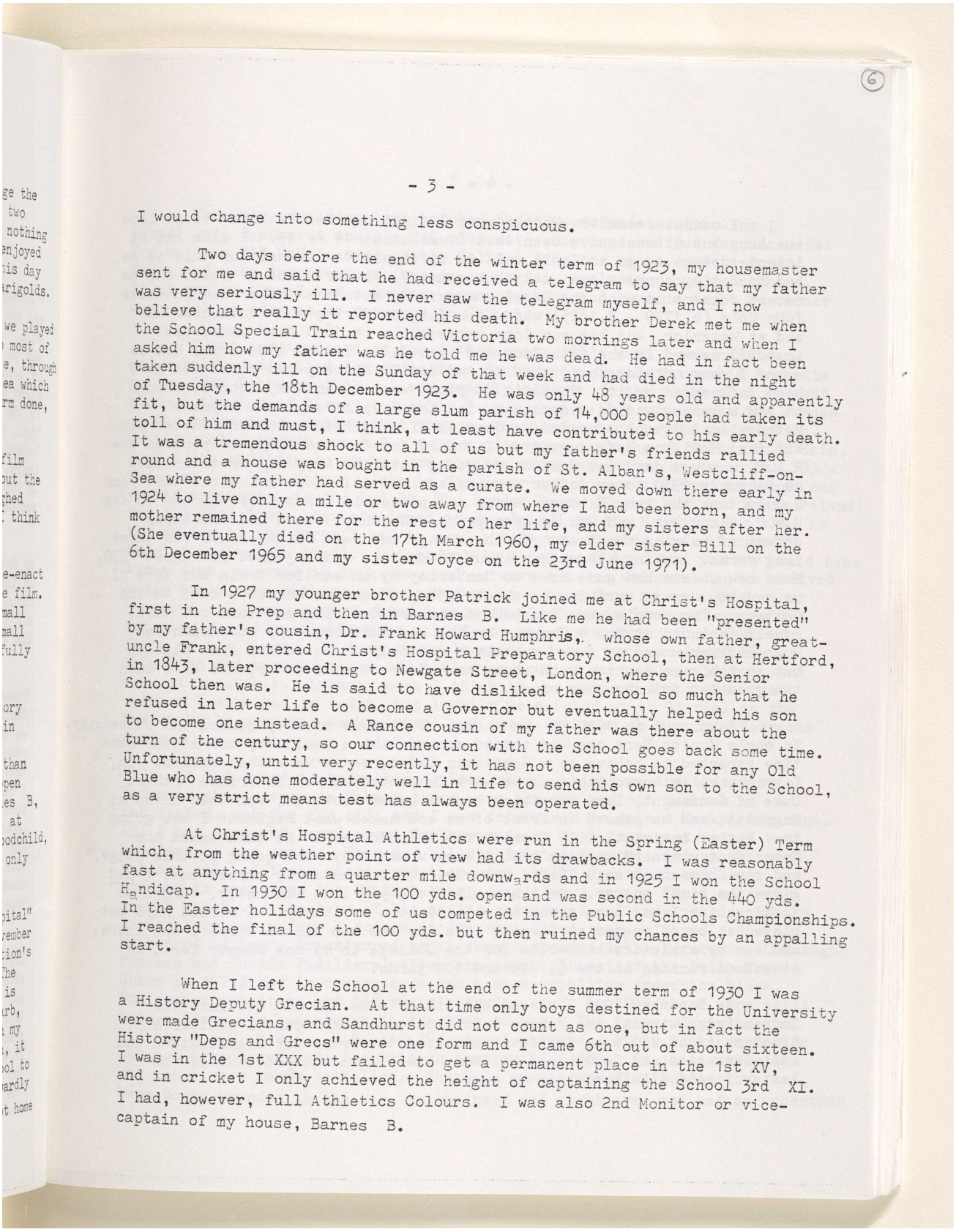
Fairly soon the lawn in front of the house was cleared and we played cricket on it with a hard ball. My elder brother Derek made me do most of the bowling and one day contrived to hit a ball over our tall fence, through the open kitchen window of the house nextdoor, and into a cup of tea which our neighbour was about to drink. No one was hurt and no great harm done, but for some weeks after the Vicarage boys were not very popular.

About that same time my father took us children to see the film "The Way of An Eagle" by Ethel M. Dell. It was a dramatic film about the North West Frontier of India, but we all, including my father, laughed so much in the wrong places that had he not been the local parson I think we would have been thrown out of the cinema.

That same evening my two sisters, brother and I decided to re-enact the story for the benefit of my mother and aunt who had not seen the film. All went well until halfway through my mother discovered that the small "baby" being hurled about in casual fashion was not a doll but my small brother Patrick, then only about six weeks old. However he successfully survived the drama and we were forgiven.

In September 1921 I went to Christ's Hospital to the Preparatory School (Prep A). I won a few prizes but my chief claim to fame was in scoring two tries, out of three in the Rugger Cup Tie with our rivals Prep B whom we thereby defeated. My brother Derek, six years older than I, had gone straight into the Senior School in 1918, qualifying by open examination, and he left in December 1922. I followed him into Barnes B, my senior house, in January 1923, after only four terms in the Prep. at the tender age of 10½. From Prep B at the same time came Cosmo Goodchild, also the son of a parson, and we remained lifelong friends, and his only child, Frances Susan, is my god-daughter.

"The Religious, Royal and Ancient Foundation of Christ's Hospital" was founded in 1552, and the first children admitted on the 23rd November of that year, though the Boy King Edward VI did not sign the Foundation's Charter until the 26th June 1553, only ten days before his death. The uniform of long blue coat, black knee breeches and yellow stockings is still worn, a modified version of the original Tudor apprentice's garb, and the boys are very proud of it. I must confess, however, that in my first two years there, when we still lived in the East End of London, it was something of an ordeal for a small boy returning from or to School to endure the taunts of the local lads of "Ya, Yalla stockings" or "Cowardly cowardly custard, His legs are made of mustard", and as soon as I got home



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- 3 -

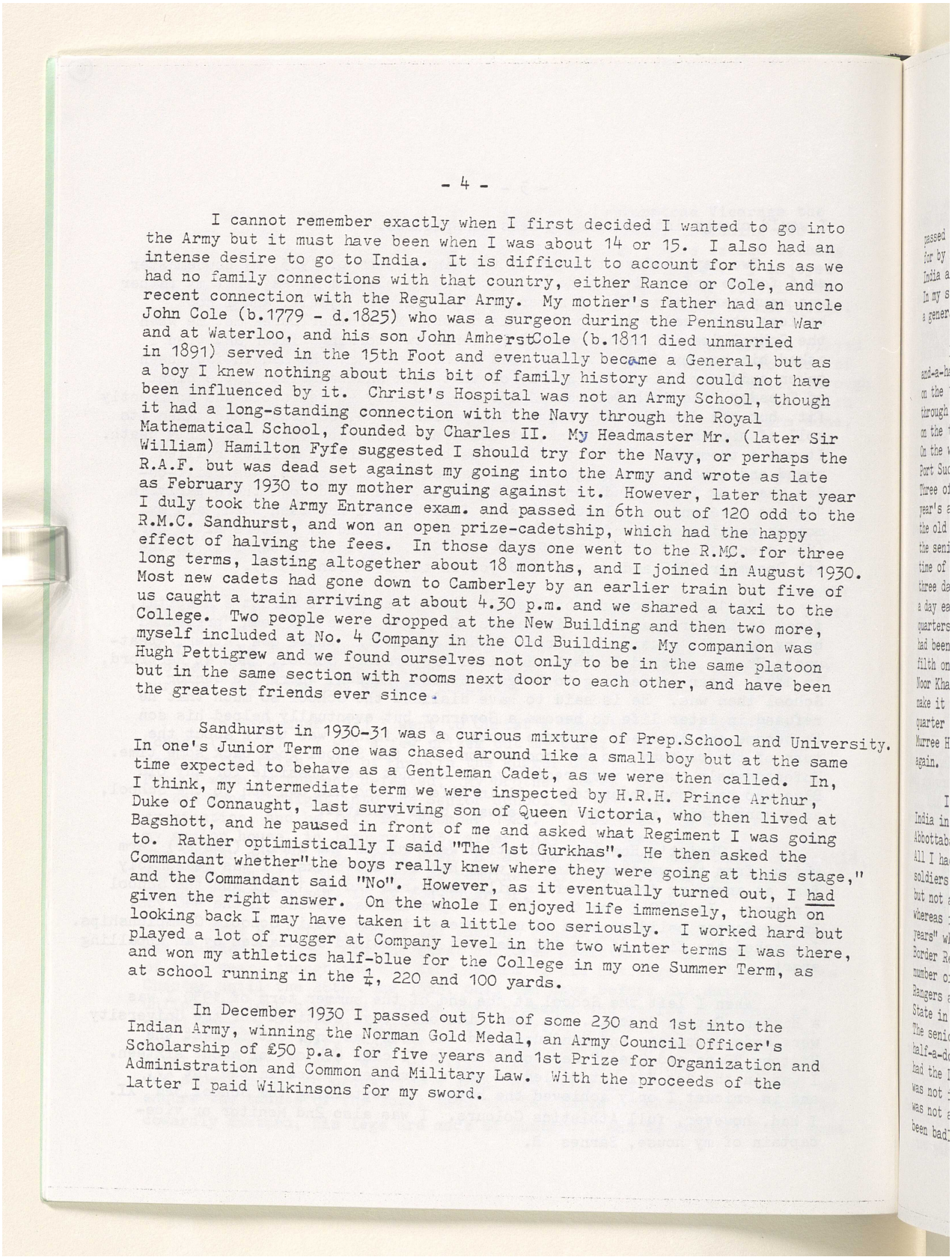
I would change into something less conspicuous.

Two days before the end of the winter term of 1923, my housemaster sent for me and said that he had received a telegram to say that my father was very seriously ill. I never saw the telegram myself, and I now believe that really it reported his death. My brother Derek met me when the School Special Train reached Victoria two mornings later and when I asked him how my father was he told me he was dead. He had in fact been taken suddenly ill on the Sunday of that week and had died in the night of Tuesday, the 18th December 1923. He was only 48 years old and apparently fit, but the demands of a large slum parish of 14,000 people had taken its toll of him and must, I think, at least have contributed to his early death. It was a tremendous shock to all of us but my father's friends rallied round and a house was bought in the parish of St. Alban's, Westcliff-on-Sea where my father had served as a curate. We moved down there early in 1924 to live only a mile or two away from where I had been born, and my mother remained there for the rest of her life, and my sisters after her. (She eventually died on the 17th March 1960, my elder sister Bill on the 6th December 1965 and my sister Joyce on the 23rd June 1971).

In 1927 my younger brother Patrick joined me at Christ's Hospital, first in the Prep and then in Barnes B. Like me he had been "presented" by my father's cousin, Dr. Frank Howard Humphris, whose own father, great-uncle Frank, entered Christ's Hospital Preparatory School, then at Hertford, in 1843, later proceeding to Newgate Street, London, where the Senior School then was. He is said to have disliked the School so much that he refused in later life to become a Governor but eventually helped his son to become one instead. A Rance cousin of my father was there about the turn of the century, so our connection with the School goes back some time. Unfortunately, until very recently, it has not been possible for any Old Blue who has done moderately well in life to send his own son to the School, as a very strict means test has always been operated.

At Christ's Hospital Athletics were run in the Spring (Easter) Term which, from the weather point of view had its drawbacks. I was reasonably fast at anything from a quarter mile downwards and in 1925 I won the School Handicap. In 1930 I won the 100 yds. open and was second in the 440 yds. In the Easter holidays some of us competed in the Public Schools Championships. I reached the final of the 100 yds. but then ruined my chances by an appalling start.

When I left the School at the end of the summer term of 1930 I was a History Deputy Grecian. At that time only boys destined for the University were made Grecians, and Sandhurst did not count as one, but in fact the History "Deps and Grecs" were one form and I came 6th out of about sixteen. I was in the 1st XXX but failed to get a permanent place in the 1st XV, and in cricket I only achieved the height of captaining the School 3rd XI. I had, however, full Athletics Colours. I was also 2nd Monitor or vice-captain of my house, Barnes B.

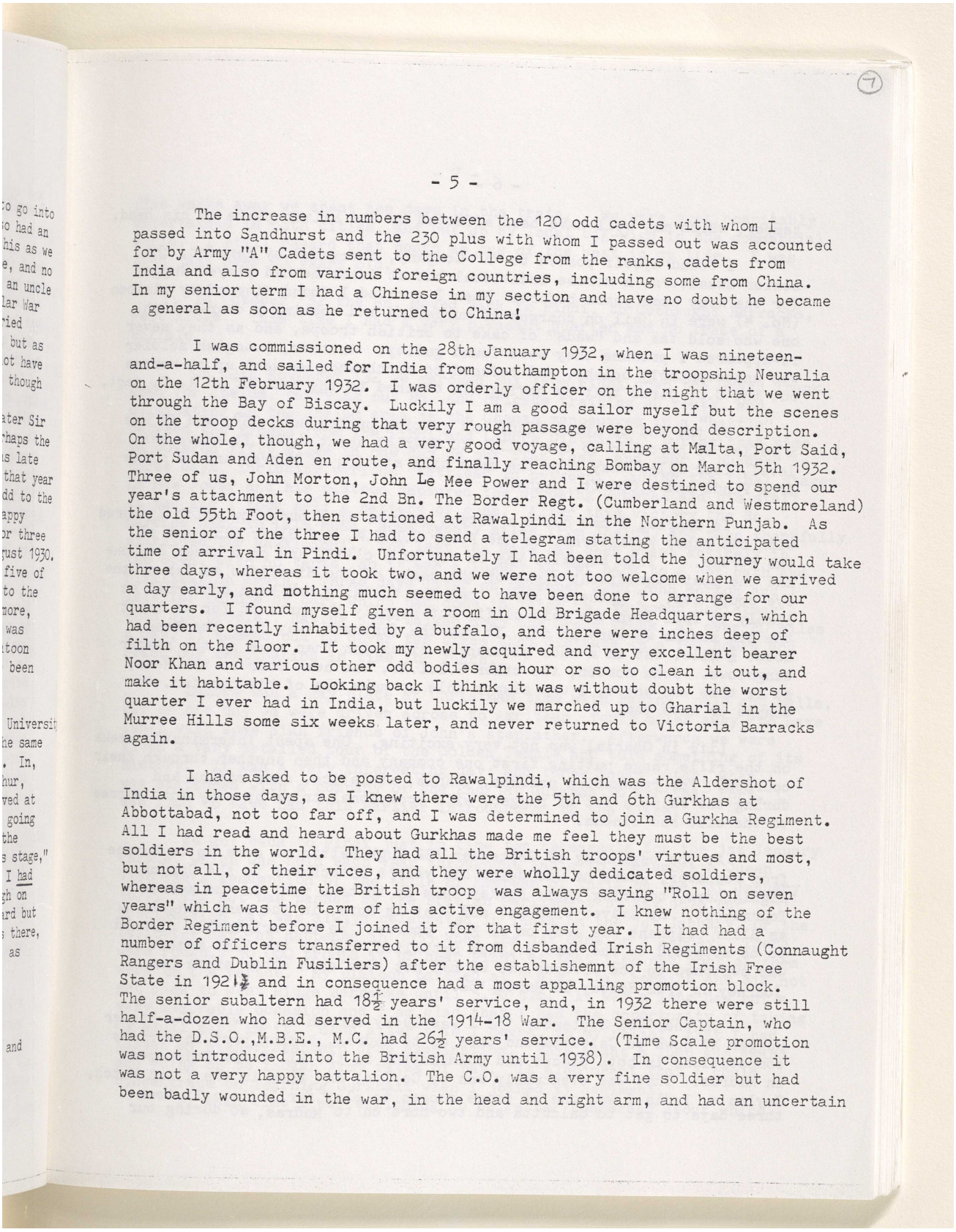


- 4 -

I cannot remember exactly when I first decided I wanted to go into the Army but it must have been when I was about 14 or 15. I also had an intense desire to go to India. It is difficult to account for this as we had no family connections with that country, either Rance or Cole, and no recent connection with the Regular Army. My mother's father had an uncle John Cole (b.1779 - d.1825) who was a surgeon during the Peninsular War and at Waterloo, and his son John AmherstCole (b.1811 died unmarried in 1891) served in the 15th Foot and eventually became a General, but as a boy I knew nothing about this bit of family history and could not have been influenced by it. Christ's Hospital was not an Army School, though it had a long-standing connection with the Navy through the Royal Mathematical School, founded by Charles II. My Headmaster Mr. (later Sir William) Hamilton Fyfe suggested I should try for the Navy, or perhaps the R.A.F. but was dead set against my going into the Army and wrote as late as February 1930 to my mother arguing against it. However, later that year I duly took the Army Entrance exam. and passed in 6th out of 120 odd to the R.M.C. Sandhurst, and won an open prize-cadetship, which had the happy effect of halving the fees. In those days one went to the R.MC. for three long terms, lasting altogether about 18 months, and I joined in August 1930. Most new cadets had gone down to Camberley by an earlier train but five of us caught a train arriving at about 4.30 p.m. and we shared a taxi to the College. Two people were dropped at the New Building and then two more, myself included at No. 4 Company in the Old Building. My companion was Hugh Pettigrew and we found ourselves not only to be in the same platoon but in the same section with rooms next door to each other, and have been the greatest friends ever since.

Sandhurst in 1930-31 was a curious mixture of Prep.School and University. In one's Junior Term one was chased around like a small boy but at the same time expected to behave as a Gentleman Cadet, as we were then called. In, I think, my intermediate term we were inspected by H.R.H. Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, last surviving son of Queen Victoria, who then lived at Bagshott, and he paused in front of me and asked what Regiment I was going to. Rather optimistically I said "The 1st Gurkhas". He then asked the Commandant whether"the boys really knew where they were going at this stage," and the Commandant said "No". However, as it eventually turned out, I had given the right answer. On the whole I enjoyed life immensely, though on looking back I may have taken it a little too seriously. I worked hard but played a lot of rugger at Company level in the two winter terms I was there, and won my athletics half-blue for the College in my one Summer Term, as at school running in the ¼, 220 and 100 yards.

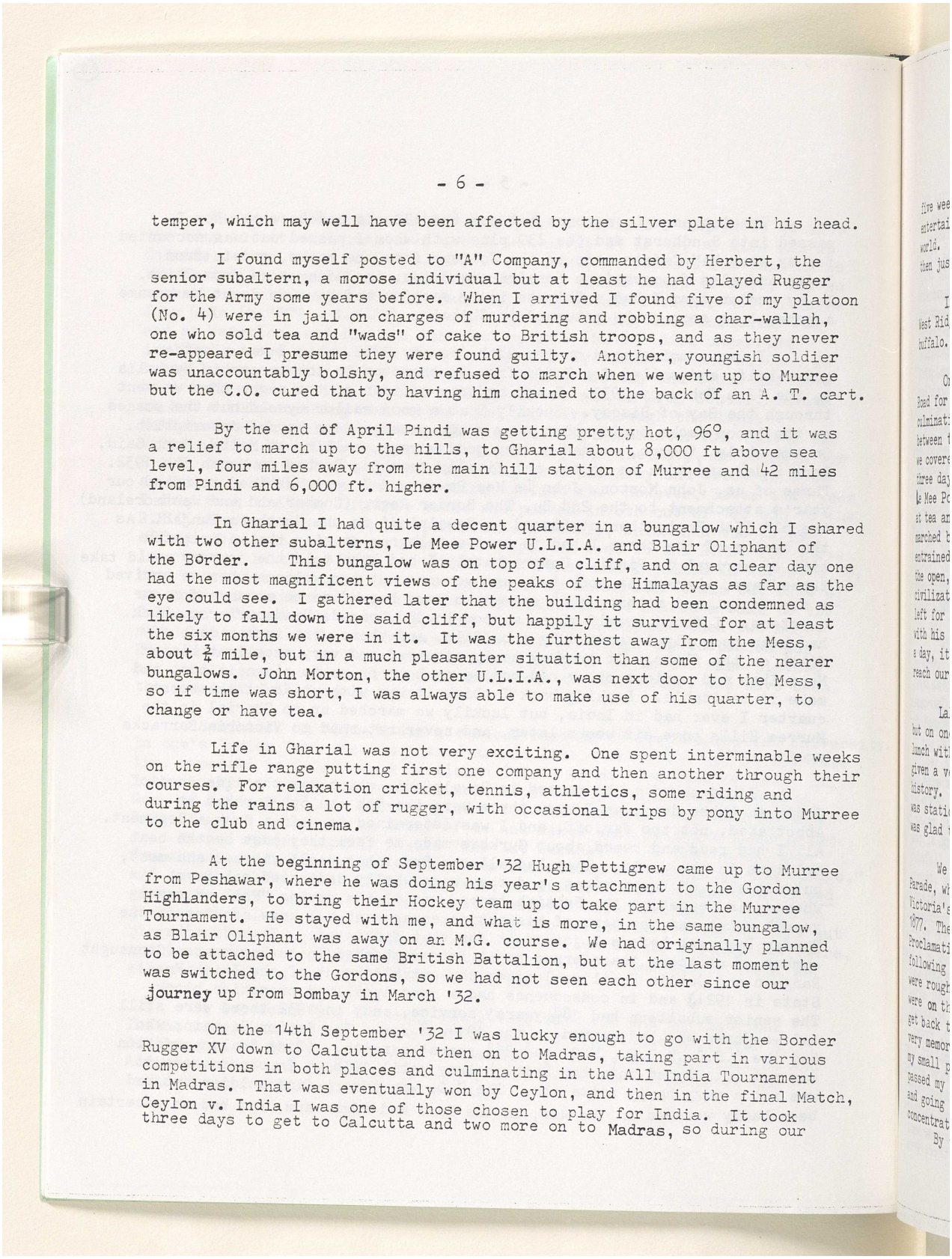
In December 1930 I passed out 5th of some 230 and 1st into the Indian Army, winning the Norman Gold Medal, an Army Council Officer's Scholarship of £50 p.a. for five years and 1st Prize for Organization and Administration and Common and Military Law. With the proceeds of the latter I paid Wilkinsons for my sword.



The increase in numbers between the 120 odd cadets with whom I passed into Sandhurst and the 230 plus with whom I passed out was accounted for by Army "A" Cadets sent to the College from the ranks, cadets from India and also from various foreign countries, including some from China. In my senior term I had a Chinese in my section and have no doubt he became a general as soon as he returned to China!

I was commissioned on the 28th January 1932, when I was nineteen-and-a-half, and sailed for India from Southampton in the troopship Neuralia on the 12th February 1932. I was orderly officer on the night that we went through the Bay of Biscay. Luckily I am a good sailor myself but the scenes on the troop decks during that very rough passage were beyond description. On the whole, though, we had a very good voyage, calling at Malta, Port Said, Port Sudan and Aden en route, and finally reaching Bombay on March 5th 1932. Three of us, John Morton, John Le Mee Power and I were destined to spend our year's attachment to the 2nd Bn. The Border Regt. (Cumberland and Westmoreland) the old 55th Foot, then stationed at Rawalpindi in the Northern Punjab. As the senior of the three I had to send a telegram stating the anticipated time of arrival in Pindi. Unfortunately I had been told the journey would take three days, whereas it took two, and we were not too welcome when we arrived a day early, and nothing much seemed to have been done to arrange for our quarters. I found myself given a room in Old Brigade Headquarters, which had been recently inhabited by a buffalo, and there were inches deep of filth on the floor. It took my newly acquired and very excellent bearer Noor Khan and various other odd bodies an hour or so to clean it out, and make it habitable. Looking back I think it was without doubt the worst quarter I ever had in India, but luckily we marched up to Gharial in the Murree Hills some six weeks later, and never returned to Victoria Barracks again.

I had asked to be posted to Rawalpindi, which was the Aldershot of India in those days, as I knew there were the 5th and 6th Gurkhas at Abbottabad, not too far off, and I was determined to join a Gurkha Regiment. All I had read and heard about Gurkhas made me feel they must be the best soldiers in the world. They had all the British troops' virtues and most, but not all, of their vices, and they were wholly dedicated soldiers, whereas in peacetime the British troop was always saying "Roll on seven years" which was the term of his active engagement. I knew nothing of the Border Regiment before I joined it for that first year. It had had a number of officers transferred to it from disbanded Irish Regiments (Connaught Rangers and Dublin Fusiliers) after the establishemnt of the Irish Free State in 1921½ and in consequence had a most appalling promotion block. The senior subaltern had 18½ years' service, and, in 1932 there were still half-a-dozen who had served in the 1914-18 War. The Senior Captain, who had the D.S.O.,M.B.E., M.C. had 26½ years' service. (Time Scale promotion was not introduced into the British Army until 1938). In consequence it was not a very happy battalion. The C.O. was a very fine soldier but had been badly wounded in the war, in the head and right arm, and had an uncertain



temper, which may well have been affected by the silver plate in his head.

I found myself posted to "A" Company, commanded by Herbert, the senior subaltern, a morose individual but at least he had played Rugger for the Army some years before. When I arrived I found five of my platoon (No. 4) were in jail on charges of murdering and robbing a char-wallah, one who sold tea and "wads" of cake to British troops, and as they never re-appeared I presume they were found guilty. Another, youngish soldier was unaccountably bolshy, and refused to march when we went up to Murree but the C.O. cured that by having him chained to the back of an A. T. cart.

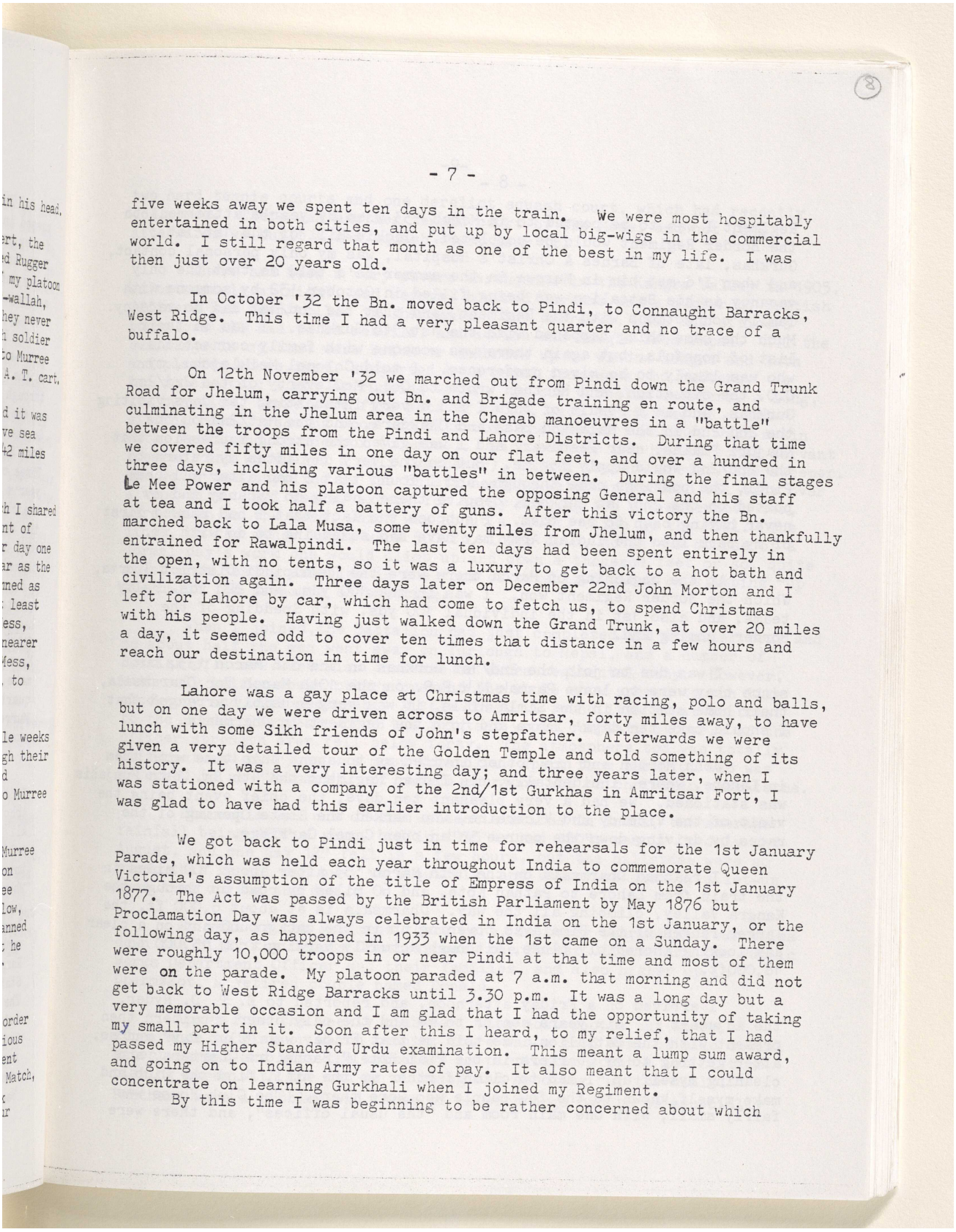
By the end of April Pindi was getting pretty hot, 96°, and it was a relief to march up to the hills, to Gharial about 8,000 ft above sea level, four miles away from the main hill station of Murree and 42 miles from Pindi and 6,000 ft. higher.

In Gharial I had quite a decent quarter in a bungalow which I shared with two other subalterns, Le Mee Power U.L.I.A. and Blair Oliphant of the Border. This bungalow was on top of a cliff, and on a clear day one had the most magnificent views of the peaks of the Himalayas as far as the eye could see. I gathered later that the building had been condemned as likely to fall down the said cliff, but happily it survived for at least the six months we were in it. It was the furthest away from the Mess, about ¾ mile, but in a much pleasanter situation than some of the nearer bungalows. John Morton, the other U.L.I.A., was next door to the Mess, so if time was short, I was always able to make use of his quarter, to change or have tea.

Life in Gharial was not very exciting. One spent interminable weeks on the rifle range putting first one company and then another through their courses. For relaxation cricket, tennis, athletics, some riding and during the rains a lot of rugger, with occasional trips by pony into Murree to the club and cinema.

At the beginning of September '32 Hugh Pettigrew came up to Murree from Peshawar, where he was doing his year's attachment to the Gordon Highlanders, to bring their Hockey team up to take part in the Murree Tournament. He stayed with me, and what is more, in the same bungalow, as Blair Oliphant was away on an M.G. course. We had originally planned to be attached to the same British Battalion, but at the last moment he was switched to the Gordons, so we had not seen each other since our journey up from Bombay in March '32.

On the 14th September '32 I was lucky enough to go with the Border Rugger XV down to Calcutta and then on to Madras, taking part in various competitions in both places and culminating in the All India Tournament in Madras. That was eventually won by Ceylon, and then in the final Match, Ceylon v. India I was one of those chosen to play for India. It took three days to get to Calcutta and two more on to Madras, so during our



five weeks away we spent ten days in the train. We were most hospitably entertained in both cities, and put up by local big-wigs in the commercial world. I still regard that month as one of the best in my life. I was then just over 20 years old.

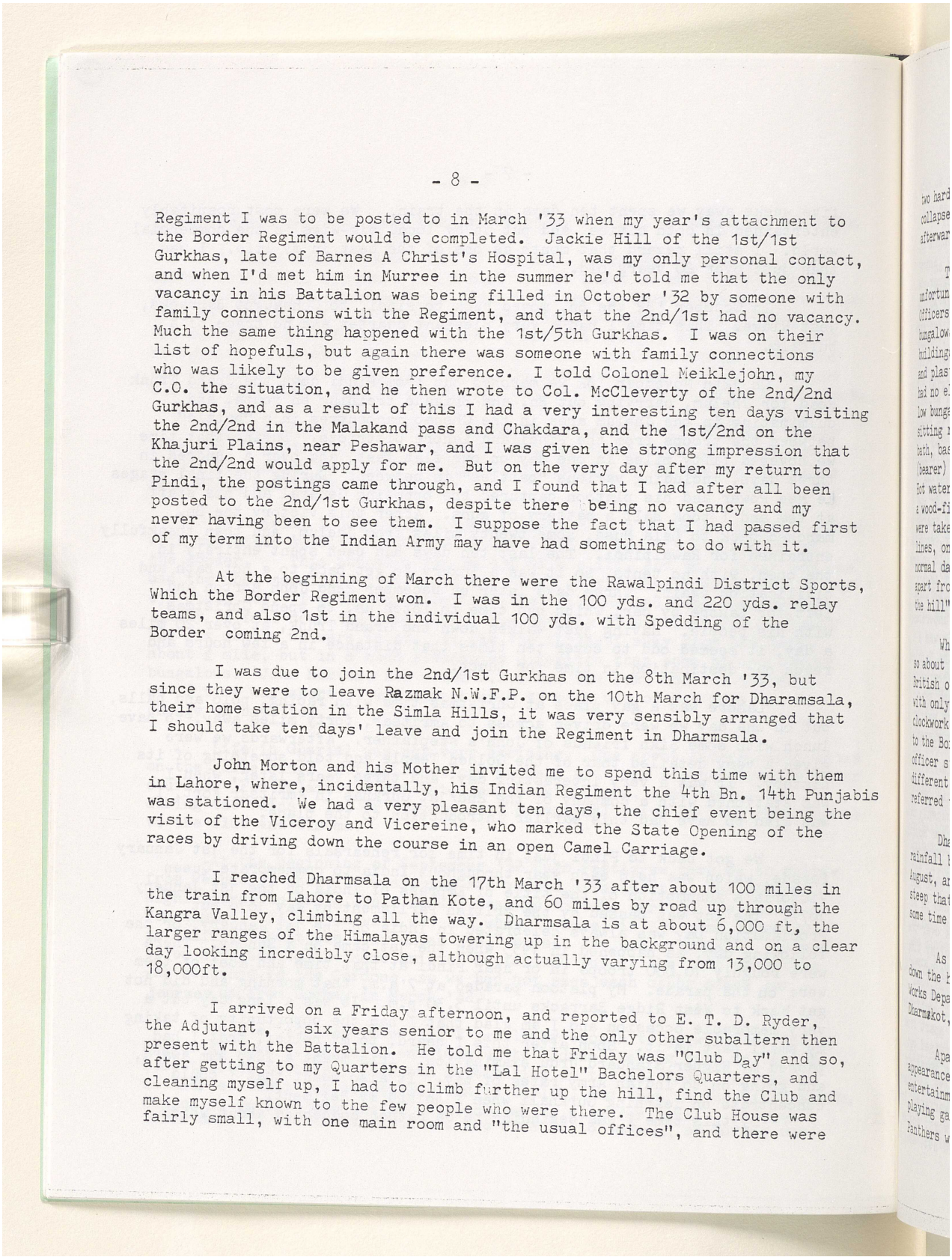
In October '32 the Bn. moved back to Pindi, to Connaught Barracks, West Ridge. This time I had a very pleasant quarter and no trace of a buffalo.

On 12th November '32 we marched out from Pindi down the Grand Trunk Road for Jhelum, carrying out Bn. and Brigade training en route, and culminating in the Jhelum area in the Chenab manoeuvres in a "battle" between the troops from the Pindi and Lahore Districts. During that time we covered fifty miles in one day on our flat feet, and over a hundred in three days, including various "battles" in between. During the final stages Le Mee Power and his platoon captured the opposing General and his staff at tea and I took half a battery of guns. After this victory the Bn. marched back to Lala Musa, some twenty miles from Jhelum, and then thankfully entrained for Rawalpindi. The last ten days had been spent entirely in the open, with no tents, so it was a luxury to get back to a hot bath and civilization again. Three days later on December 22nd John Morton and I left for Lahore by car, which had come to fetch us, to spend Christmas with his people. Having just walked down the Grand Trunk, at over 20 miles a day, it seemed odd to cover ten times that distance in a few hours and reach our destination in time for lunch.

Lahore was a gay place at Christmas time with racing, polo and balls, but on one day we were driven across to Amritsar, forty miles away, to have lunch with some Sikh friends of John's stepfather. Afterwards we were given a very detailed tour of the Golden Temple and told something of its history. It was a very interesting day; and three years later, when I was stationed with a company of the 2nd/1st Gurkhas in Amritsar Fort, I was glad to have had this earlier introduction to the place.

We got back to Pindi just in time for rehearsals for the 1st January Parade, which was held each year throughout India to commemorate Queen Victoria's assumption of the title of Empress of India on the 1st January 1877. The Act was passed by the British Parliament by May 1876 but Proclamation Day was always celebrated in India on the 1st January, or the following day, as happened in 1933 when the 1st came on a Sunday. There were roughly 10,000 troops in or near Pindi at that time and most of them were on the parade. My platoon paraded at 7 a.m. that morning and did not get back to West Ridge Barracks until 3.30 p.m. It was a long day but a very memorable occasion and I am glad that I had the opportunity of taking my small part in it. Soon after this I heard, to my relief, that I had passed my Higher Standard Urdu examination. This meant a lump sum award, and going on to Indian Army rates of pay. It also meant that I could concentrate on learning Gurkhali when I joined my Regiment.

By this time I was beginning to be rather concerned about which



Regiment I was to be posted to in March '33 when my year's attachment to the Border Regiment would be completed. Jackie Hill of the 1st/1st Gurkhas, late of Barnes A Christ's Hospital, was my only personal contact, and when I'd met him in Murree in the summer he'd told me that the only vacancy in his Battalion was being filled in October '32 by someone with family connections with the Regiment, and that the 2nd/1st had no vacancy. Much the same thing happened with the 1st/5th Gurkhas. I was on their list of hopefuls, but again there was someone with family connections who was likely to be given preference. I told Colonel Meiklejohn, my C.O. the situation, and he then wrote to Col. McCleverty of the 2nd/2nd Gurkhas, and as a result of this I had a very interesting ten days visiting the 2nd/2nd in the Malakand pass and Chakdara, and the 1st/2nd on the Khajuri Plains, near Peshawar, and I was given the strong impression that the 2nd/2nd would apply for me. But on the very day after my return to Pindi, the postings came through, and I found that I had after all been posted to the 2nd/1st Gurkhas, despite there being no vacancy and my never having been to see them. I suppose the fact that I had passed first of my term into the Indian Army may have had something to do with it.

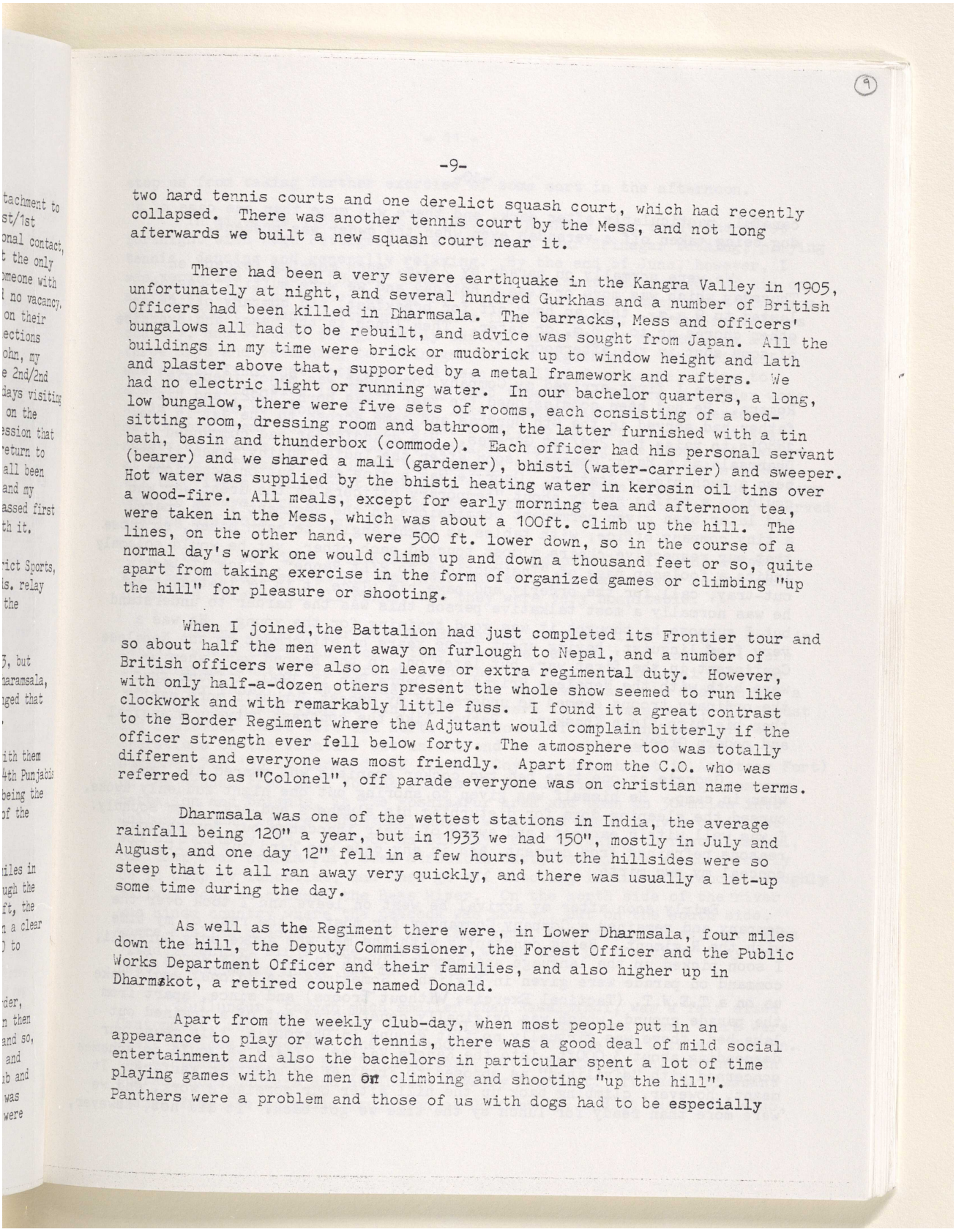
At the beginning of March there were the Rawalpindi District Sports, Which the Border Regiment won. I was in the 100 yds. and 220 yds. relay teams, and also 1st in the individual 100 yds. with Spedding of the Border coming 2nd.

I was due to join the 2nd/1st Gurkhas on the 8th March '33, but since they were to leave Razmak N.W.F.P. on the 10th March for Dharamsala, their home station in the Simla Hills, it was very sensibly arranged that I should take ten days' leave and join the Regiment in Dharmsala.

John Morton and his Mother invited me to spend this time with them in Lahore, where, incidentally, his Indian Regiment the 4th Bn. 14th Punjabis was stationed. We had a very pleasant ten days, the chief event being the visit of the Viceroy and Vicereine, who marked the State Opening of the races by driving down the course in an open Camel Carriage.

I reached Dharmsala on the 17th March '33 after about 100 miles in the train from Lahore to Pathan Kote, and 60 miles by road up through the Kangra Valley, climbing all the way. Dharmsala is at about 6,000 ft, the larger ranges of the Himalayas towering up in the background and on a clear day looking incredibly close, although actually varying from 13,000 to 18,000ft.

I arrived on a Friday afternoon, and reported to E. T. D. Ryder, the Adjutant, six years senior to me and the only other subaltern then present with the Battalion. He told me that Friday was "Club Day" and so, after getting to my Quarters in the "Lal Hotel" Bachelors Quarters, and cleaning myself up, I had to climb further up the hill, find the Club and make myself known to the few people who were there. The Club House was fairly small, with one main room and "the usual offices", and there were



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-9-

two hard tennis courts and one derelict squash court, which had recently collapsed. There was another tennis court by the Mess, and not long afterwards we built a new squash court near it.

There had been a very severe earthquake in the Kangra Valley in 1905, unfortunately at night, and several hundred Gurkhas and a number of British Officers had been killed in Dharmsala. The barracks, Mess and officers' bungalows all had to be rebuilt, and advice was sought from Japan. All the buildings in my time were brick or mudbrick up to window height and lath and plaster above that, supported by a metal framework and rafters. We had no electric light or running water. In our bachelor quarters, a long, low bungalow, there were five sets of rooms, each consisting of a bed-sitting room, dressing room and bathroom, the latter furnished with a tin bath, basin and thunderbox (commode). Each officer had his personal servant (bearer) and we shared a mali (gardener), bhisti (water-carrier) and sweeper. Hot water was supplied by the bhisti heating water in kerosin oil tins over a wood-fire. All meals, except for early morning tea and afternoon tea, were taken in the Mess, which was about a 100ft. climb up the hill. The lines, on the other hand, were 500 ft. lower down, so in the course of a normal day's work one would climb up and down a thousand feet or so, quite apart from taking exercise in the form of organized games or climbing "up the hill" for pleasure or shooting.

When I joined, the Battalion had just completed its Frontier tour and so about half the men went away on furlough to Nepal, and a number of British officers were also on leave or extra regimental duty. However, with only half-a-dozen others present the whole show seemed to run like clockwork and with remarkably little fuss. I found it a great contrast to the Border Regiment where the Adjutant would complain bitterly if the officer strength ever fell below forty. The atmosphere too was totally different and everyone was most friendly. Apart from the C.O. who was referred to as "Colonel", off parade everyone was on christian name terms.

Dharmsala was one of the wettest stations in India, the average rainfall being 120" a year, but in 1933 we had 150", mostly in July and August, and one day 12" fell in a few hours, but the hillsides were so steep that it all ran away very quickly, and there was usually a let-up some time during the day.

As well as the Regiment there were, in Lower Dharmsala, four miles down the hill, the Deputy Commissioner, the Forest Officer and the Public Works Department Officer and their families, and also higher up in Dharmakot, a retired couple named Donald.

Apart from the weekly club-day, when most people put in an appearance to play or watch tennis, there was a good deal of mild social entertainment and also the bachelors in particular spent a lot of time playing games with the men on climbing and shooting "up the hill". Panthers were a problem and those of us with dogs had to be especially

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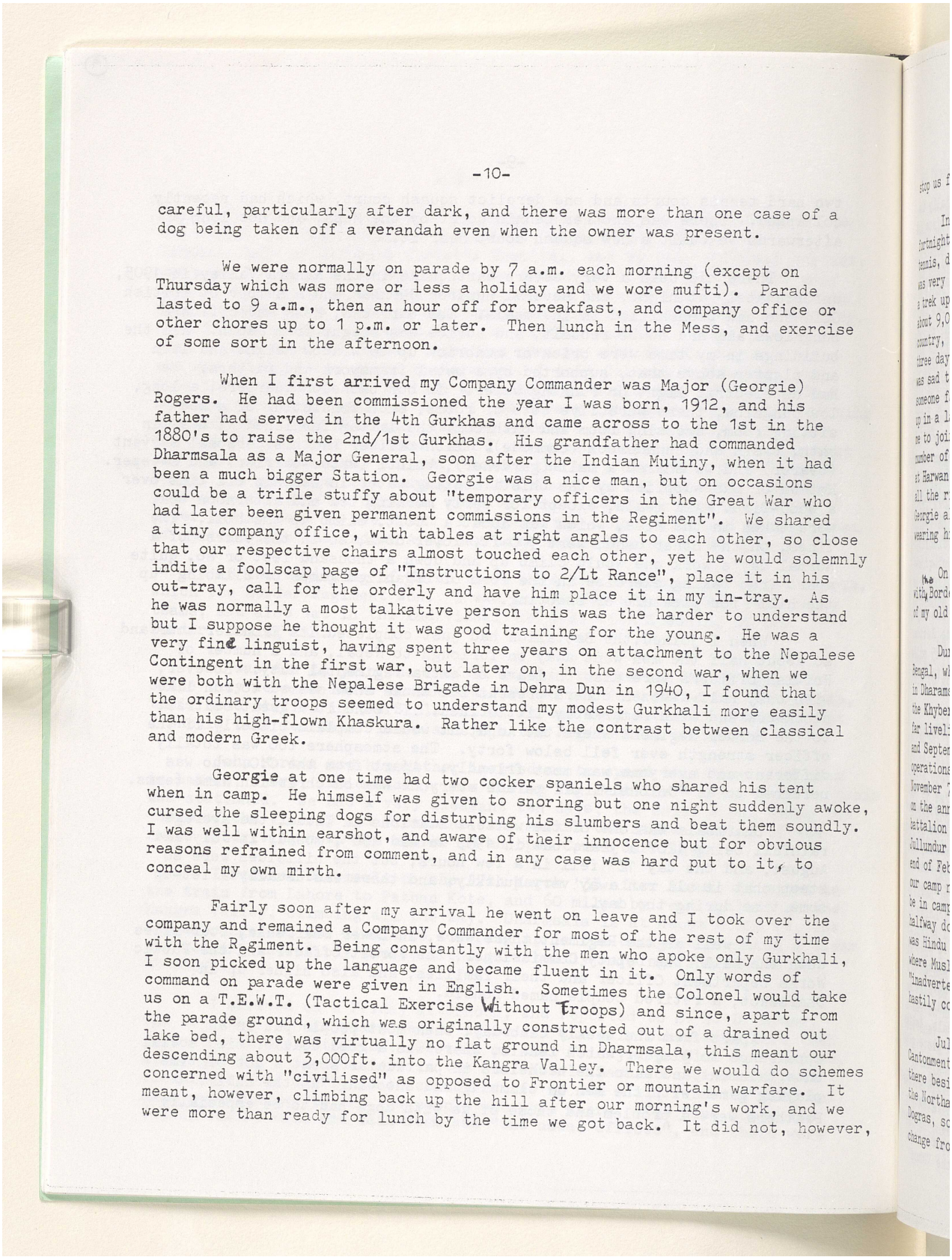


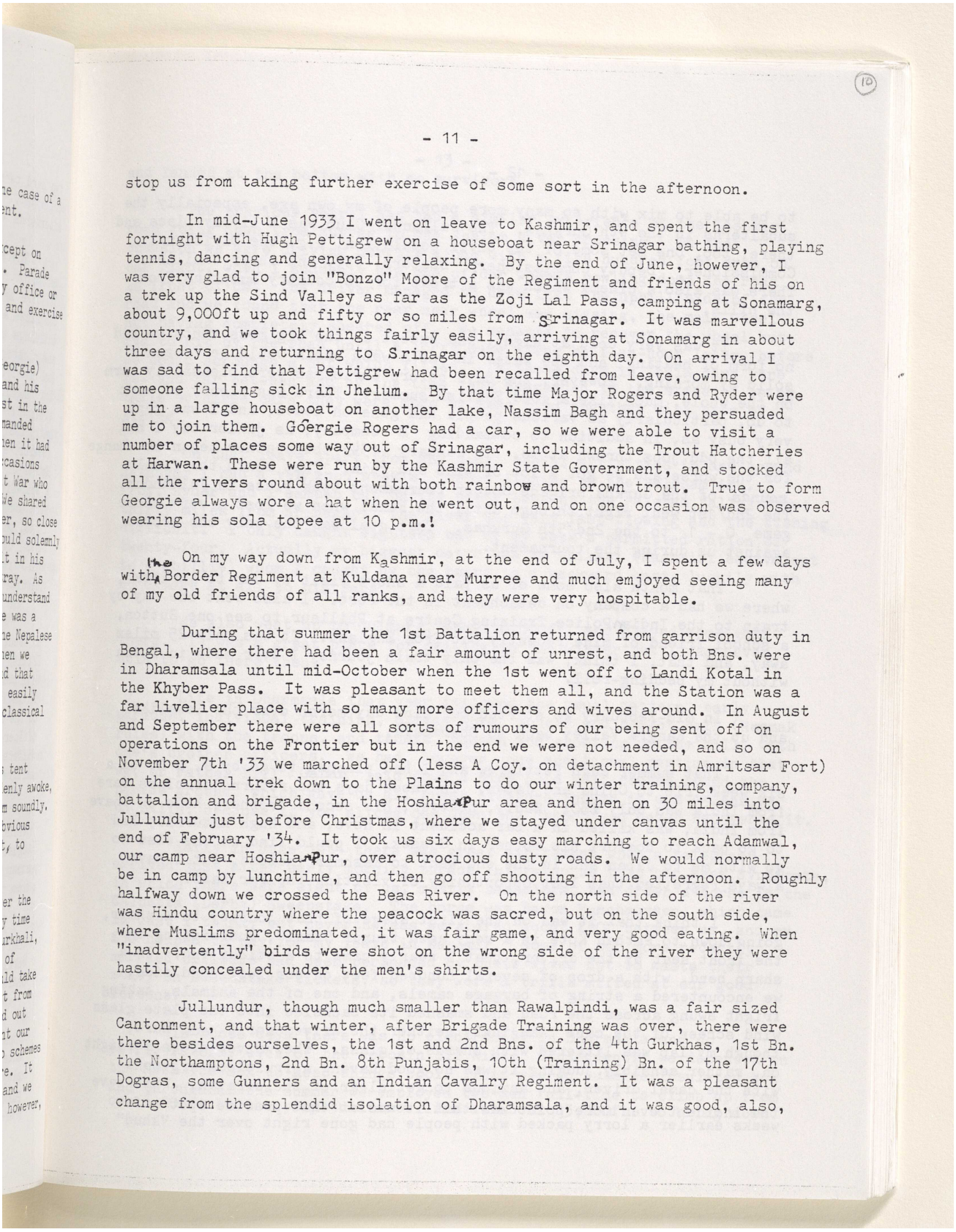
careful, particularly after dark, and there was more than one case of a dog being taken off a verandah even when the owner was present.

We were normally on parade by 7 a.m. each morning (except on Thursday which was more or less a holiday and we wore mufti). Parade lasted to 9 a.m., then an hour off for breakfast, and company office or other chores up to 1 p.m. or later. Then lunch in the Mess, and exercise of some sort in the afternoon.

When I first arrived my Company Commander was Major (Georgie) Rogers. He had been commissioned the year I was born, 1912, and his father had served in the 4th Gurkhas and came across to the 1st in the 1880's to raise the 2nd/1st Gurkhas. His grandfather had commanded Dharmsala as a Major General, soon after the Indian Mutiny, when it had been a much bigger Station. Georgie was a nice man, but on occasions could be a trifle stuffy about "temporary officers in the Great War who had later been given permanent commissions in the Regiment". We shared a tiny company office, with tables at right angles to each other, so close that our respective chairs almost touched each other, yet he would solemnly indite a foolscap page of "Instructions to 2/Lt Rance", place it in his out-tray, call for the orderly and have him place it in my in-tray. As he was normally a most talkative person this was the harder to understand but I suppose he thought it was good training for the young. He was a very fine linguist, having spent three years on attachment to the Nepalese Contingent in the first war, but later on, in the second war, when we were both with the Nepalese Brigade in Dehra Dun in 1940, I found that the ordinary troops seemed to understand my modest Gurkhali more easily than his high-flown Khaskura. Rather like the contrast between classical and modern Greek.

Georgie at one time had two cocker spaniels who shared his tent when in camp. He himself was given to snoring but one night suddenly awoke, cursed the sleeping dogs for disturbing his slumbers and beat them soundly. I was well within earshot, and aware of their innocence but for obvious reasons refrained from comment, and in any case was hard put to it, to conceal my own mirth.

Fairly soon after my arrival he went on leave and I took over the company and remained a Company Commander for most of the rest of my time with the Regiment. Being constantly with the men who apoke only Gurkhali, I soon picked up the language and became fluent in it. Only words of command on parade were given in English. Sometimes the Colonel would take us on a T.E.W.T. (Tactical Exercise Without Troops) and since, apart from the parade ground, which was originally constructed out of a drained out lake bed, there was virtually no flat ground in Dharmsala, this meant our descending about 3,000ft. into the Kangra Valley. There we would do schemes concerned with "civilised" as opposed to Frontier or mountain warfare. It meant, however, climbing back up the hill after our morning's work, and we were more than ready for lunch by the time we got back. It did not, however,



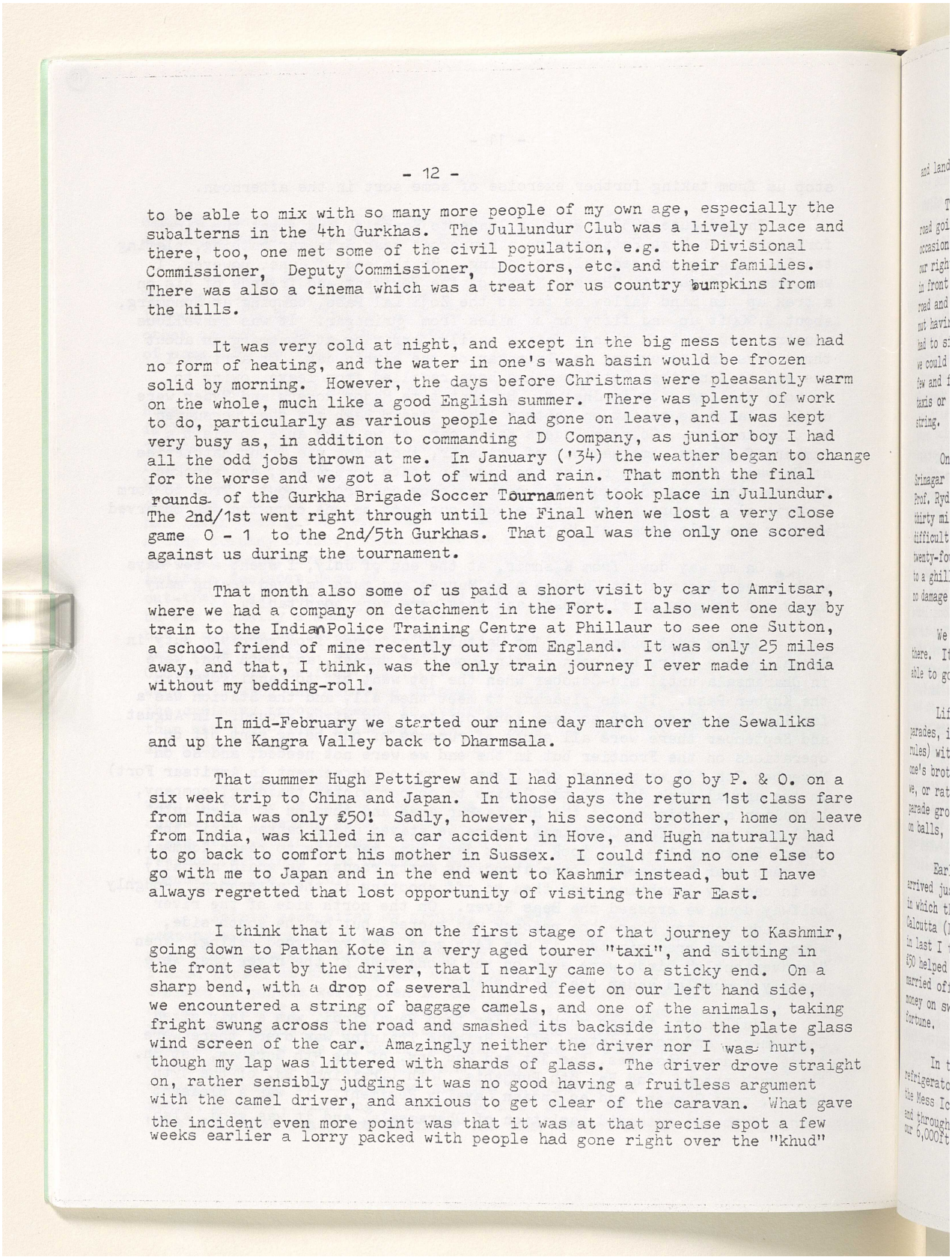
stop us from taking further exercise of some sort in the afternoon.

In mid-June 1933 I went on leave to Kashmir, and spent the first fortnight with Hugh Pettigrew on a houseboat near Srinagar bathing, playing tennis, dancing and generally relaxing. By the end of June, however, I was very glad to join "Bonzo" Moore of the Regiment and friends of his on a trek up the Sind Valley as far as the Zoji Lal Pass, camping at Sonamarg, about 9,000ft up and fifty or so miles from Srinagar. It was marvellous country, and we took things fairly easily, arriving at Sonamarg in about three days and returning to Srinagar on the eighth day. On arrival I was sad to find that Pettigrew had been recalled from leave, owing to someone falling sick in Jhelum. By that time Major Rogers and Ryder were up in a large houseboat on another lake, Nassim Bagh and they persuaded me to join them. Georgie Rogers had a car, so we were able to visit a number of places some way out of Srinagar, including the Trout Hatcheries at Harwan. These were run by the Kashmir State Government, and stocked all the rivers round about with both rainbow and brown trout. True to form Georgie always wore a hat when he went out, and on one occasion was observed wearing his sola topee at 10 p.m.!

On my way down from Kashmir, at the end of July, I spent a few days with the Border Regiment at Kuldana near Murree and much emjoyed seeing many of my old friends of all ranks, and they were very hospitable.

During that summer the 1st Battalion returned from garrison duty in Bengal, where there had been a fair amount of unrest, and both Bns. were in Dharamsala until mid-October when the 1st went off to Landi Kotal in the Khyber Pass. It was pleasant to meet them all, and the Station was a far livelier place with so many more officers and wives around. In August and September there were all sorts of rumours of our being sent off on operations on the Frontier but in the end we were not needed, and so on November 7th '33 we marched off (less A Coy. on detachment in Amritsar Fort) on the annual trek down to the Plains to do our winter training, company, battalion and brigade, in the Hoshiarpur area and then on 30 miles into Jullundur just before Christmas, where we stayed under canvas until the end of February '34. It took us six days easy marching to reach Adamwal, our camp near Hoshiarpur, over atrocious dusty roads. We would normally be in camp by lunchtime, and then go off shooting in the afternoon. Roughly halfway down we crossed the Beas River. On the north side of the river was Hindu country where the peacock was sacred, but on the south side, where Muslims predominated, it was fair game, and very good eating. When "inadvertently" birds were shot on the wrong side of the river they were hastily concealed under the men's shirts.

Jullundur, though much smaller than Rawalpindi, was a fair sized Cantonment, and that winter, after Brigade Training was over, there were there besides ourselves, the 1st and 2nd Bns. of the 4th Gurkhas, 1st Bn. the Northamptons, 2nd Bn. 8th Punjabis, 10th (Training) Bn. of the 17th Dogras, some Gunners and an Indian Cavalry Regiment. It was a pleasant change from the splendid isolation of Dharamsala, and it was good, also,



to be able to mix with so many more people of my own age, especially the subalterns in the 4th Gurkhas. The Jullundur Club was a lively place and there, too, one met some of the civil population, e.g. the Divisional Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Doctors, etc. and their families. There was also a cinema which was a treat for us country bumpkins from the hills.

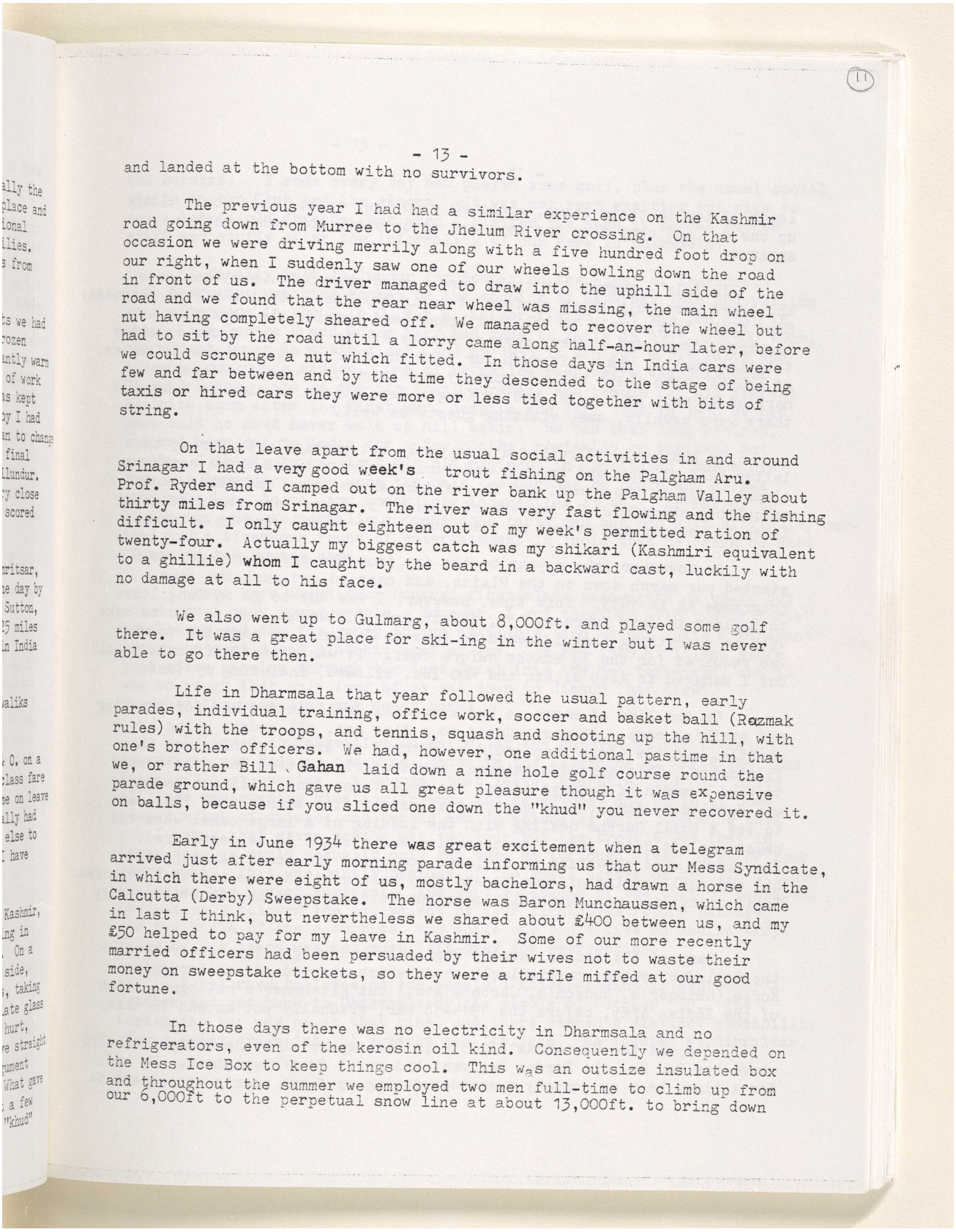
It was very cold at night, and except in the big mess tents we had no form of heating, and the water in one's wash basin would be frozen solid by morning. However, the days before Christmas were pleasantly warm on the whole, much like a good English summer. There was plenty of work to do, particularly as various people had gone on leave, and I was kept very busy as, in addition to commanding D Company, as junior boy I had all the odd jobs thrown at me. In January ('34) the weather began to change for the worse and we got a lot of wind and rain. That month the final rounds of the Gurkha Brigade Soccer Tournament took place in Jullundur. The 2nd/1st went right through until the Final when we lost a very close game 0 - 1 to the 2nd/5th Gurkhas. That goal was the only one scored against us during the tournament.

That month also some of us paid a short visit by car to Amritsar, where we had a company on detachment in the Fort. I also went one day by train to the Indian Police Training Centre at Phillaur to see one Sutton, a school friend of mine recently out from England. It was only 25 miles away, and that, I think, was the only train journey I ever made in India without my bedding-roll.

In mid-February we started our nine day march over the Sewaliks and up the Kangra Valley back to Dharmsala.

That summer Hugh Pettigrew and I had planned to go by P. & O. on a six week trip to China and Japan. In those days the return 1st class fare from India was only £50! Sadly, however, his second brother, home on leave from India, was killed in a car accident in Hove, and Hugh naturally had to go back to comfort his mother in Sussex. I could find no one else to go with me to Japan and in the end went to Kashmir instead, but I have always regretted that lost opportunity of visiting the Far East.

I think that it was on the first stage of that journey to Kashmir, going down to Pathan Kote in a very aged tourer "taxi", and sitting in the front seat by the driver, that I nearly came to a sticky end. On a sharp bend, with a drop of several hundred feet on our left hand side, we encountered a string of baggage camels, and one of the animals, taking fright swung across the road and smashed its backside into the plate glass wind screen of the car. Amazingly neither the driver nor I was hurt, though my lap was littered with shards of glass. The driver drove straight on, rather sensibly judging it was no good having a fruitless argument with the camel driver, and anxious to get clear of the caravan. What gave the incident even more point was that it was at that precise spot a few weeks earlier a lorry packed with people had gone right over the "khud"



- 13 -

and landed at the bottom with no survivors.

The previous year I had had a similar experience on the Kashmir road going down from Murree to the Jhelum River crossing. On that occasion we were driving merrily along with a five hundred foot drop on our right, when I suddenly saw one of our wheels bowling down the road in front of us. The driver managed to draw into the uphill side of the road and we found that the rear near wheel was missing, the main wheel nut having completely sheared off. We managed to recover the wheel but had to sit by the road until a lorry came along half-an-hour later, before we could scrounge a nut which fitted. In those days in India cars were few and far between and by the time they descended to the stage of being taxis or hired cars they were more or less tied together with bits of string.

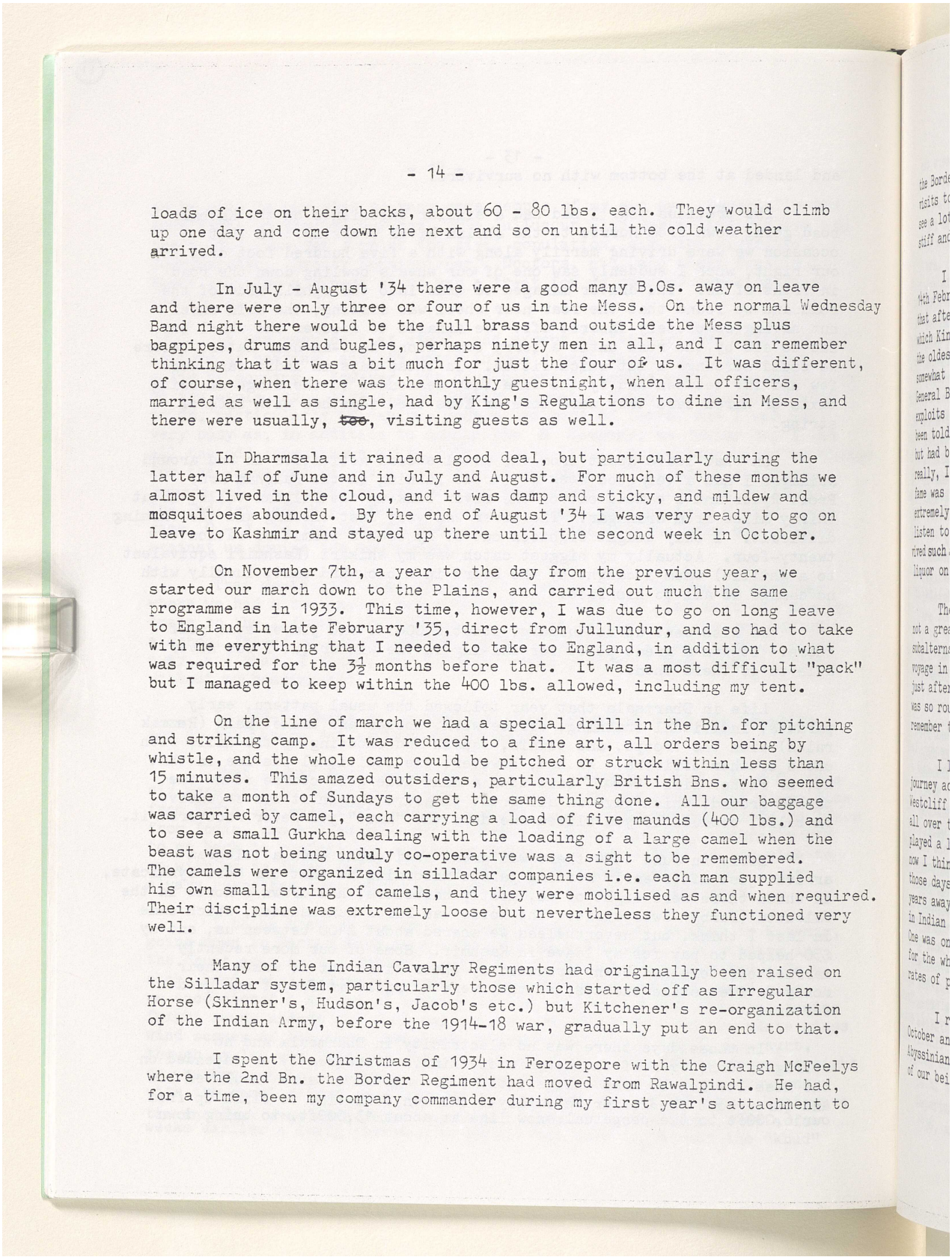
On that leave apart from the usual social activities in and around Srinagar I had a very good week's trout fishing on the Palgham Aru. Prof. Ryder and I camped out on the river bank up the Palgham Valley about thirty miles from Srinagar. The river was very fast flowing and the fishing difficult. I only caught eighteen out of my week's permitted ration of twenty-four. Actually my biggest catch was my shikari (Kashmiri equivalent to a ghillie) whom I caught by the beard in a backward cast, luckily with no damage at all to his face.

We also went up to Gulmarg, about 8,000ft. and played some golf there. It was a great place for ski-ing in the winter but I was never able to go there then.

Life in Dharmsala that year followed the usual pattern, early parades, individual training, office work, soccer and basket ball (Razmak rules) with the troops, and tennis, squash and shooting up the hill, with one's brother officers. We had, however, one additional pastime in that we, or rather Bill Gahan laid down a nine hole golf course round the parade ground, which gave us all great pleasure though it was expensive on balls, because if you sliced one down the "khud" you never recovered it.

Early in June 1934 there was great excitement when a telegram arrived just after early morning parade informing us that our Mess Syndicate, in which there were eight of us, mostly bachelors, had drawn a horse in the Calcutta (Derby) Sweepstake. The horse was Baron Munchaussen, which came in last I think, but nevertheless we shared about £400 between us, and my £50 helped to pay for my leave in Kashmir. Some of our more recently married officers had been persuaded by their wives not to waste their money on sweepstake tickets, so they were a trifle miffed at our good fortune.

In those days there was no electricity in Dharmsala and no refrigerators, even of the kerosin oil kind. Consequently we depended on the Mess Ice Box to keep things cool. This was an outsize insulated box and throughout the summer we employed two men full-time to climb up from our 6,000ft to the perpetual snow line at about 13,000ft. to bring down



loads of ice on their backs, about 60 - 80 lbs. each. They would climb up one day and come down the next and so on until the cold weather arrived.

In July - August '34 there were a good many B.Os. away on leave and there were only three or four of us in the Mess. On the normal Wednesday Band night there would be the full brass band outside the Mess plus bagpipes, drums and bugles, perhaps ninety men in all, and I can remember thinking that it was a bit much for just the four of us. It was different, of course, when there was the monthly guestnight, when all officers, married as well as single, had by King's Regulations to dine in Mess, and there were usually, ~~too~~, visiting guests as well.

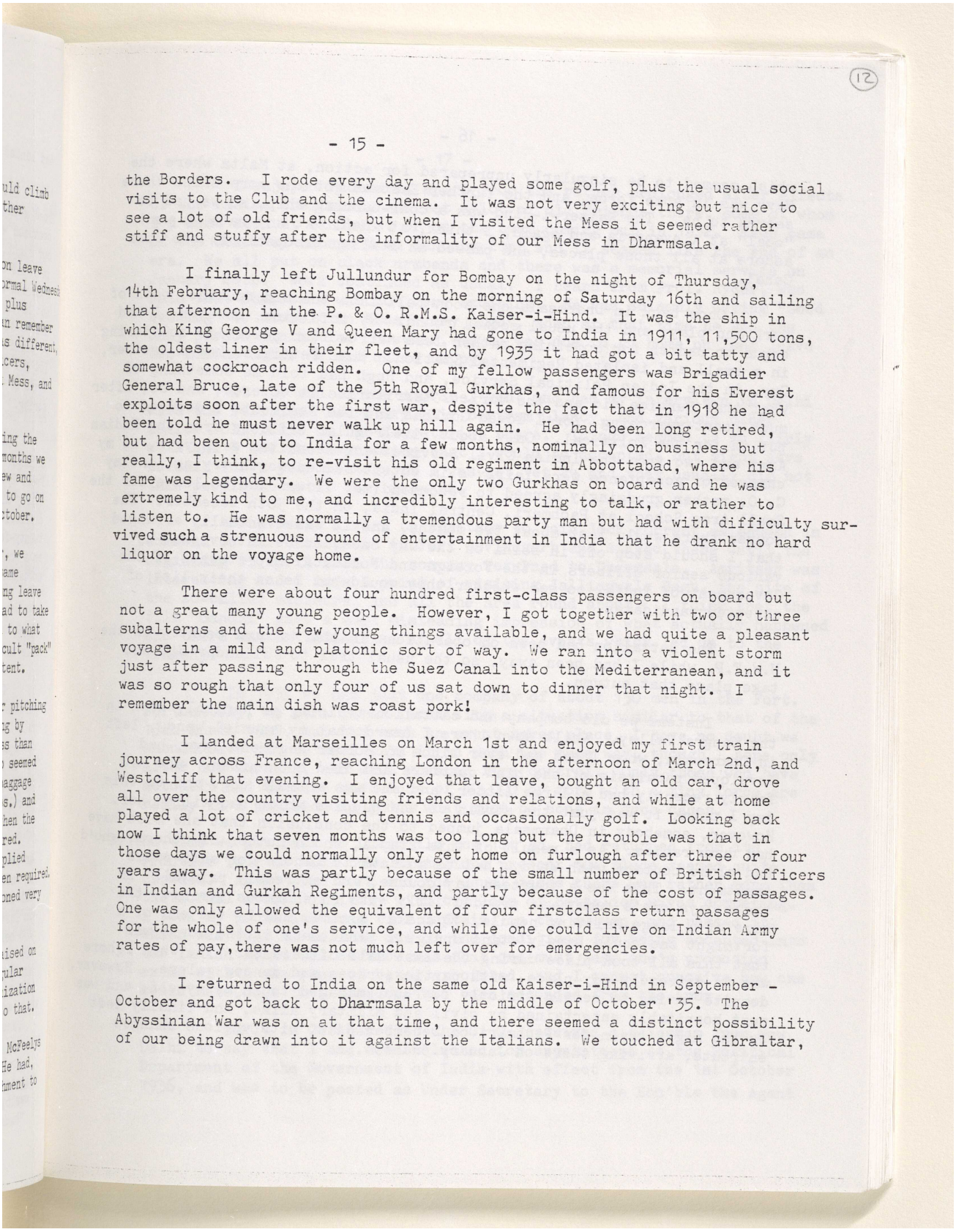
In Dharmsala it rained a good deal, but particularly during the latter half of June and in July and August. For much of these months we almost lived in the cloud, and it was damp and sticky, and mildew and mosquitoes abounded. By the end of August '34 I was very ready to go on leave to Kashmir and stayed up there until the second week in October.

On November 7th, a year to the day from the previous year, we started our march down to the Plains, and carried out much the same programme as in 1933. This time, however, I was due to go on long leave to England in late February '35, direct from Jullundur, and so had to take with me everything that I needed to take to England, in addition to what was required for the 3½ months before that. It was a most difficult "pack" but I managed to keep within the 400 lbs. allowed, including my tent.

On the line of march we had a special drill in the Bn. for pitching and striking camp. It was reduced to a fine art, all orders being by whistle, and the whole camp could be pitched or struck within less than 15 minutes. This amazed outsiders, particularly British Bns. who seemed to take a month of Sundays to get the same thing done. All our baggage was carried by camel, each carrying a load of five maunds (400 lbs.) and to see a small Gurkha dealing with the loading of a large camel when the beast was not being unduly co-operative was a sight to be remembered. The camels were organized in silladar companies i.e. each man supplied his own small string of camels, and they were mobilised as and when required. Their discipline was extremely loose but nevertheless they functioned very well.

Many of the Indian Cavalry Regiments had originally been raised on the Silladar system, particularly those which started off as Irregular Horse (Skinner's, Hudson's, Jacob's etc.) but Kitchener's re-organization of the Indian Army, before the 1914-18 war, gradually put an end to that.

I spent the Christmas of 1934 in Ferozepore with the Craigh McFeelys where the 2nd Bn. the Border Regiment had moved from Rawalpindi. He had, for a time, been my company commander during my first year's attachment to



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- 15 -

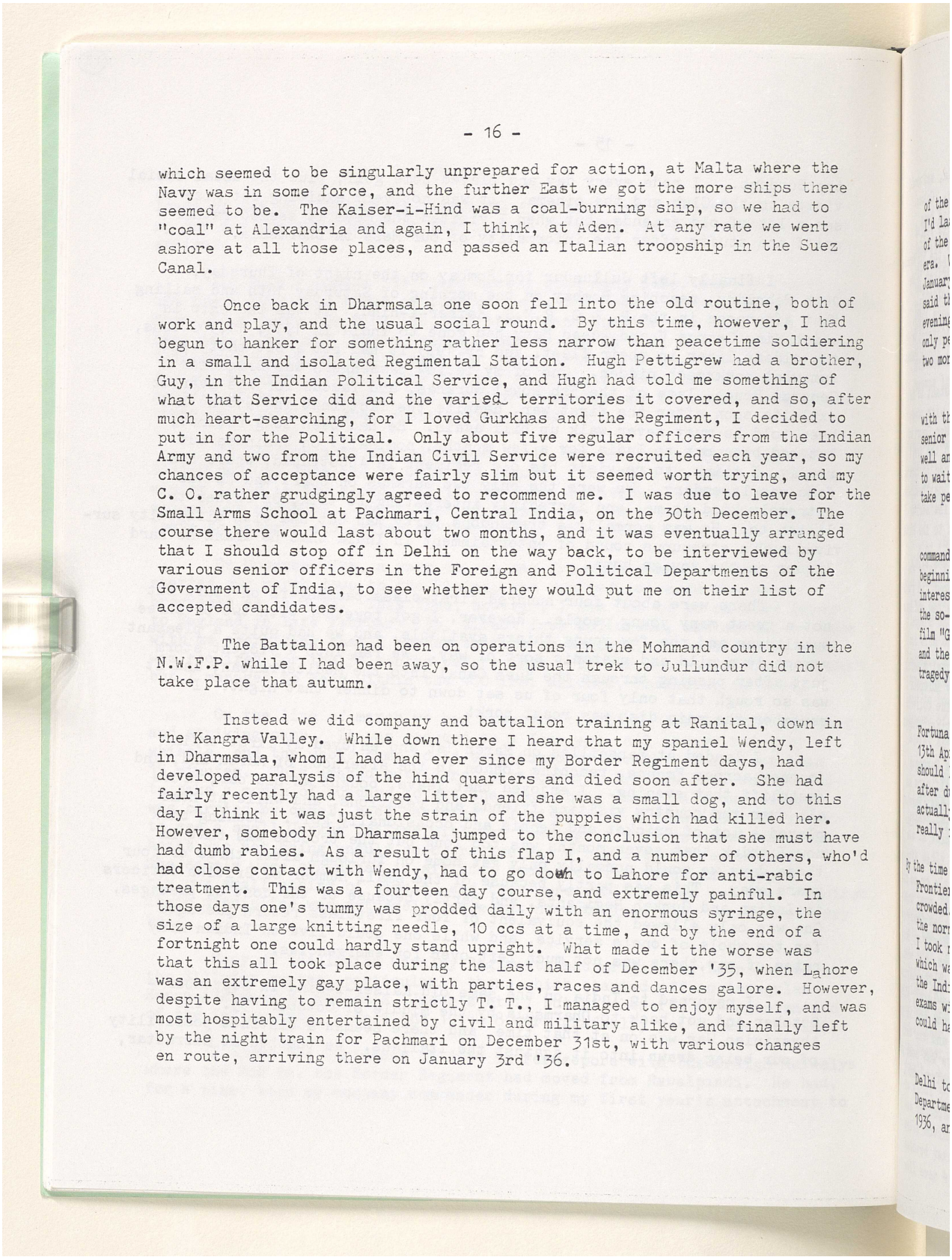
the Borders. I rode every day and played some golf, plus the usual social visits to the Club and the cinema. It was not very exciting but nice to see a lot of old friends, but when I visited the Mess it seemed rather stiff and stuffy after the informality of our Mess in Dharmsala.

I finally left Jullundur for Bombay on the night of Thursday, 14th February, reaching Bombay on the morning of Saturday 16th and sailing that afternoon in the P. & O. R.M.S. Kaiser-i-Hind. It was the ship in which King George V and Queen Mary had gone to India in 1911, 11,500 tons, the oldest liner in their fleet, and by 1935 it had got a bit tatty and somewhat cockroach ridden. One of my fellow passengers was Brigadier General Bruce, late of the 5th Royal Gurkhas, and famous for his Everest exploits soon after the first war, despite the fact that in 1918 he had been told he must never walk up hill again. He had been long retired, but had been out to India for a few months, nominally on business but really, I think, to re-visit his old regiment in Abbottabad, where his fame was legendary. We were the only two Gurkhas on board and he was extremely kind to me, and incredibly interesting to talk, or rather to listen to. He was normally a tremendous party man but had with difficulty survived such a strenuous round of entertainment in India that he drank no hard liquor on the voyage home.

There were about four hundred first-class passengers on board but not a great many young people. However, I got together with two or three subalterns and the few young things available, and we had quite a pleasant voyage in a mild and platonic sort of way. We ran into a violent storm just after passing through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean, and it was so rough that only four of us sat down to dinner that night. I remember the main dish was roast pork!

I landed at Marseilles on March 1st and enjoyed my first train journey across France, reaching London in the afternoon of March 2nd, and Westcliff that evening. I enjoyed that leave, bought an old car, drove all over the country visiting friends and relations, and while at home played a lot of cricket and tennis and occasionally golf. Looking back now I think that seven months was too long but the trouble was that in those days we could normally only get home on furlough after three or four years away. This was partly because of the small number of British Officers in Indian and Gurkah Regiments, and partly because of the cost of passages. One was only allowed the equivalent of four firstclass return passages for the whole of one's service, and while one could live on Indian Army rates of pay,there was not much left over for emergencies.

I returned to India on the same old Kaiser-i-Hind in September - October and got back to Dharmsala by the middle of October '35. The Abyssinian War was on at that time, and there seemed a distinct possibility of our being drawn into it against the Italians. We touched at Gibraltar,

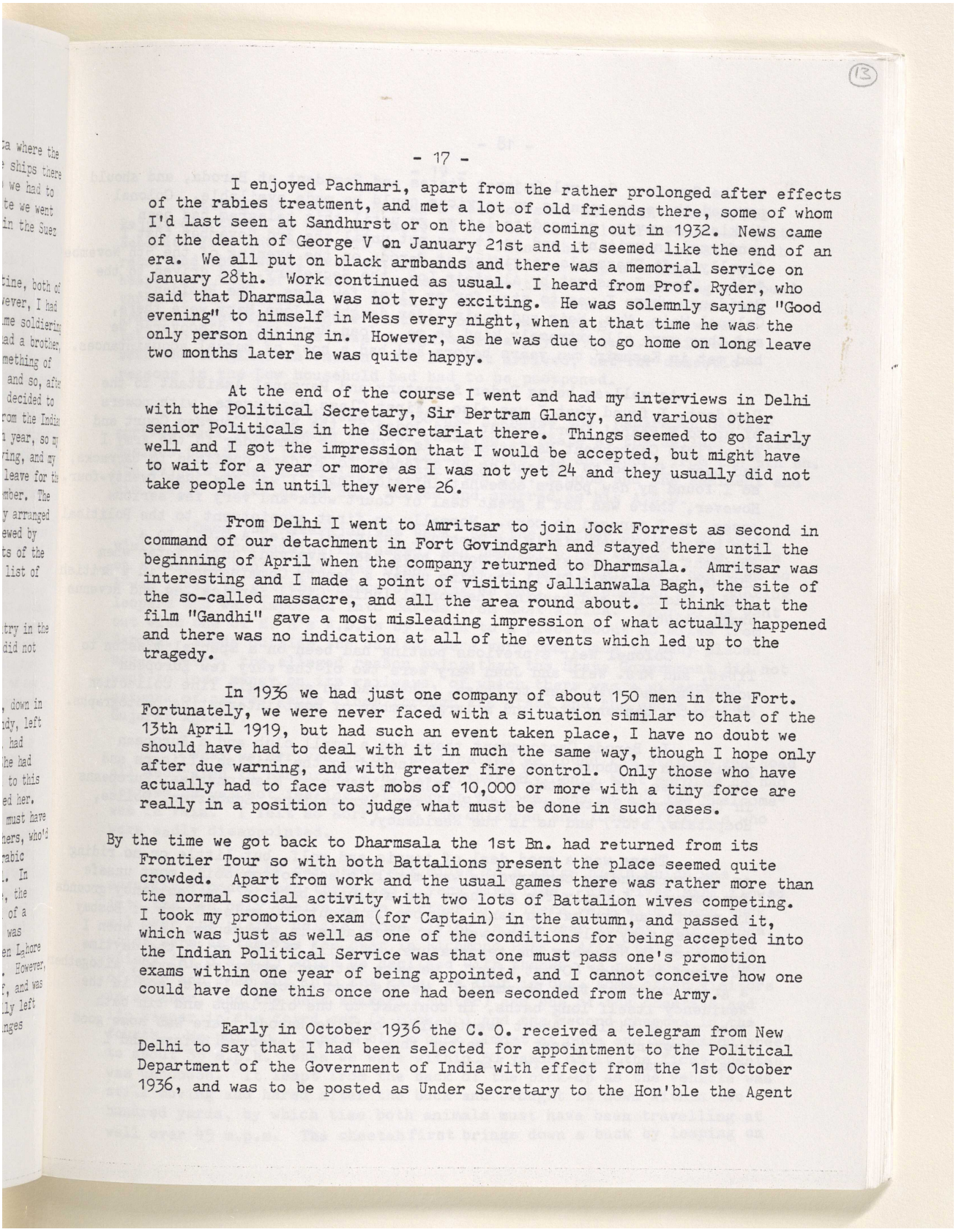


which seemed to be singularly unprepared for action, at Malta where the Navy was in some force, and the further East we got the more ships there seemed to be. The Kaiser-i-Hind was a coal-burning ship, so we had to "coal" at Alexandria and again, I think, at Aden. At any rate we went ashore at all those places, and passed an Italian troopship in the Suez Canal.

Once back in Dharmsala one soon fell into the old routine, both of work and play, and the usual social round. By this time, however, I had begun to hanker for something rather less narrow than peacetime soldiering in a small and isolated Regimental Station. Hugh Pettigrew had a brother, Guy, in the Indian Political Service, and Hugh had told me something of what that Service did and the varied territories it covered, and so, after much heart-searching, for I loved Gurkhas and the Regiment, I decided to put in for the Political. Only about five regular officers from the Indian Army and two from the Indian Civil Service were recruited each year, so my chances of acceptance were fairly slim but it seemed worth trying, and my C. O. rather grudgingly agreed to recommend me. I was due to leave for the Small Arms School at Pachmari, Central India, on the 30th December. The course there would last about two months, and it was eventually arranged that I should stop off in Delhi on the way back, to be interviewed by various senior officers in the Foreign and Political Departments of the Government of India, to see whether they would put me on their list of accepted candidates.

The Battalion had been on operations in the Mohmand country in the N.W.F.P. while I had been away, so the usual trek to Jullundur did not take place that autumn.

Instead we did company and battalion training at Ranital, down in the Kangra Valley. While down there I heard that my spaniel Wendy, left in Dharmsala, whom I had had ever since my Border Regiment days, had developed paralysis of the hind quarters and died soon after. She had fairly recently had a large litter, and she was a small dog, and to this day I think it was just the strain of the puppies which had killed her. However, somebody in Dharmsala jumped to the conclusion that she must have had dumb rabies. As a result of this flap I, and a number of others, who'd had close contact with Wendy, had to go down to Lahore for anti-rabic treatment. This was a fourteen day course, and extremely painful. In those days one's tummy was prodded daily with an enormous syringe, the size of a large knitting needle, 10 ccs at a time, and by the end of a fortnight one could hardly stand upright. What made it the worse was that this all took place during the last half of December '35, when Lahore was an extremely gay place, with parties, races and dances galore. However, despite having to remain strictly T. T., I managed to enjoy myself, and was most hospitably entertained by civil and military alike, and finally left by the night train for Pachmari on December 31st, with various changes en route, arriving there on January 3rd '36.



- 17 -

I enjoyed Pachmari, apart from the rather prolonged after effects of the rabies treatment, and met a lot of old friends there, some of whom I'd last seen at Sandhurst or on the boat coming out in 1932. News came of the death of George V on January 21st and it seemed like the end of an era. We all put on black armbands and there was a memorial service on January 28th. Work continued as usual. I heard from Prof. Ryder, who said that Dharmsala was not very exciting. He was solemnly saying "Good evening" to himself in Mess every night, when at that time he was the only person dining in. However, as he was due to go home on long leave two months later he was quite happy.

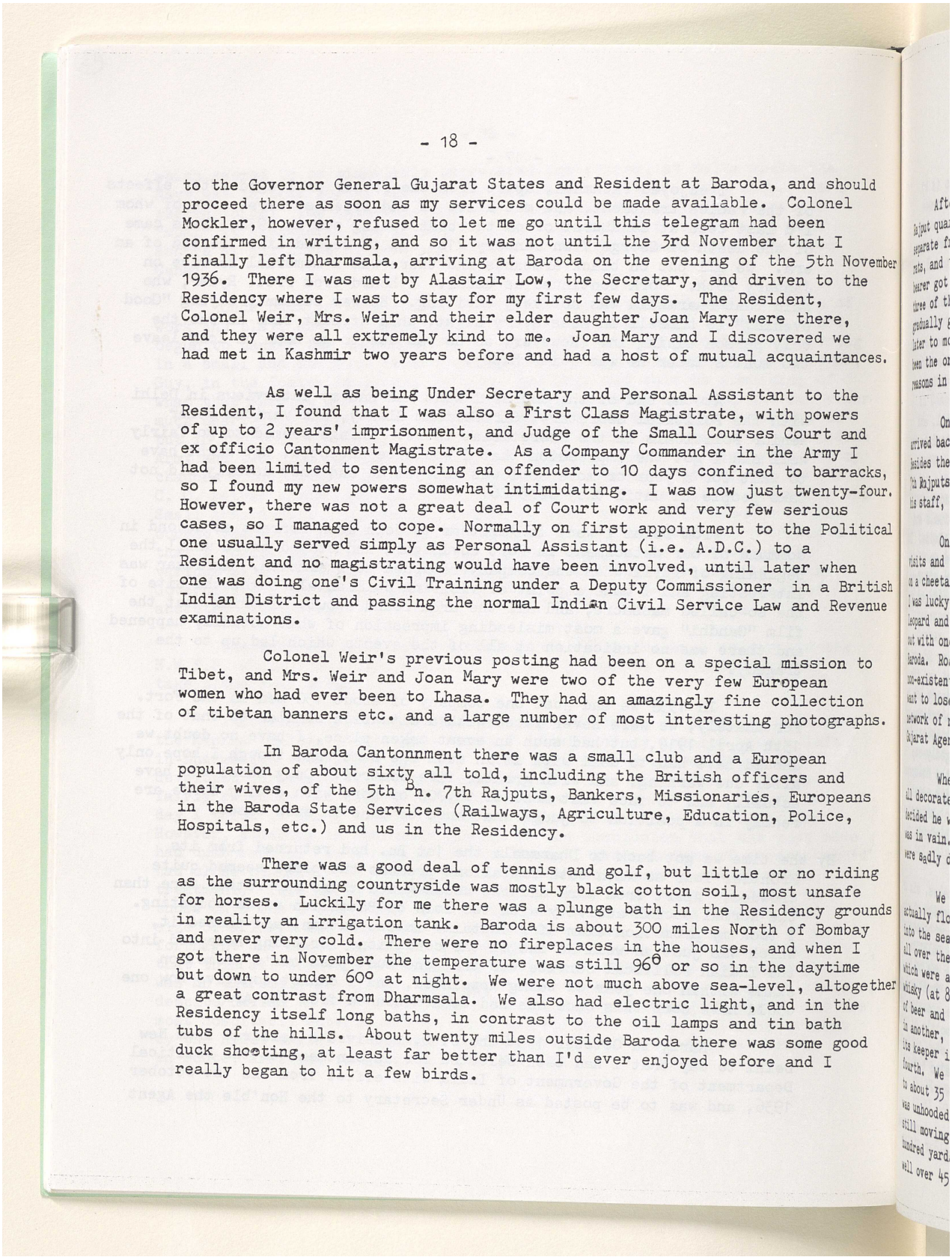
At the end of the course I went and had my interviews in Delhi with the Political Secretary, Sir Bertram Glancy, and various other senior Politicals in the Secretariat there. Things seemed to go fairly well and I got the impression that I would be accepted, but might have to wait for a year or more as I was not yet 24 and they usually did not take people in until they were 26.

From Delhi I went to Amritsar to join Jock Forrest as second in command of our detachment in Fort Govindgarh and stayed there until the beginning of April when the company returned to Dharmsala. Amritsar was interesting and I made a point of visiting Jallianwala Bagh, the site of the so-called massacre, and all the area round about. I think that the film "Gandhi" gave a most misleading impression of what actually happened and there was no indication at all of the events which led up to the tragedy.

In 1936 we had just one company of about 150 men in the Fort. Fortunately, we were never faced with a situation similar to that of the 13th April 1919, but had such an event taken place, I have no doubt we should have had to deal with it in much the same way, though I hope only after due warning, and with greater fire control. Only those who have actually had to face vast mobs of 10,000 or more with a tiny force are really in a position to judge what must be done in such cases.

By the time we got back to Dharmsala the 1st Bn. had returned from its Frontier Tour so with both Battalions present the place seemed quite crowded. Apart from work and the usual games there was rather more than the normal social activity with two lots of Battalion wives competing. I took my promotion exam (for Captain) in the autumn, and passed it, which was just as well as one of the conditions for being accepted into the Indian Political Service was that one must pass one's promotion exams within one year of being appointed, and I cannot conceive how one could have done this once one had been seconded from the Army.

Early in October 1936 the C. O. received a telegram from New Delhi to say that I had been selected for appointment to the Political Department of the Government of India with effect from the 1st October 1936, and was to be posted as Under Secretary to the Hon'ble the Agent



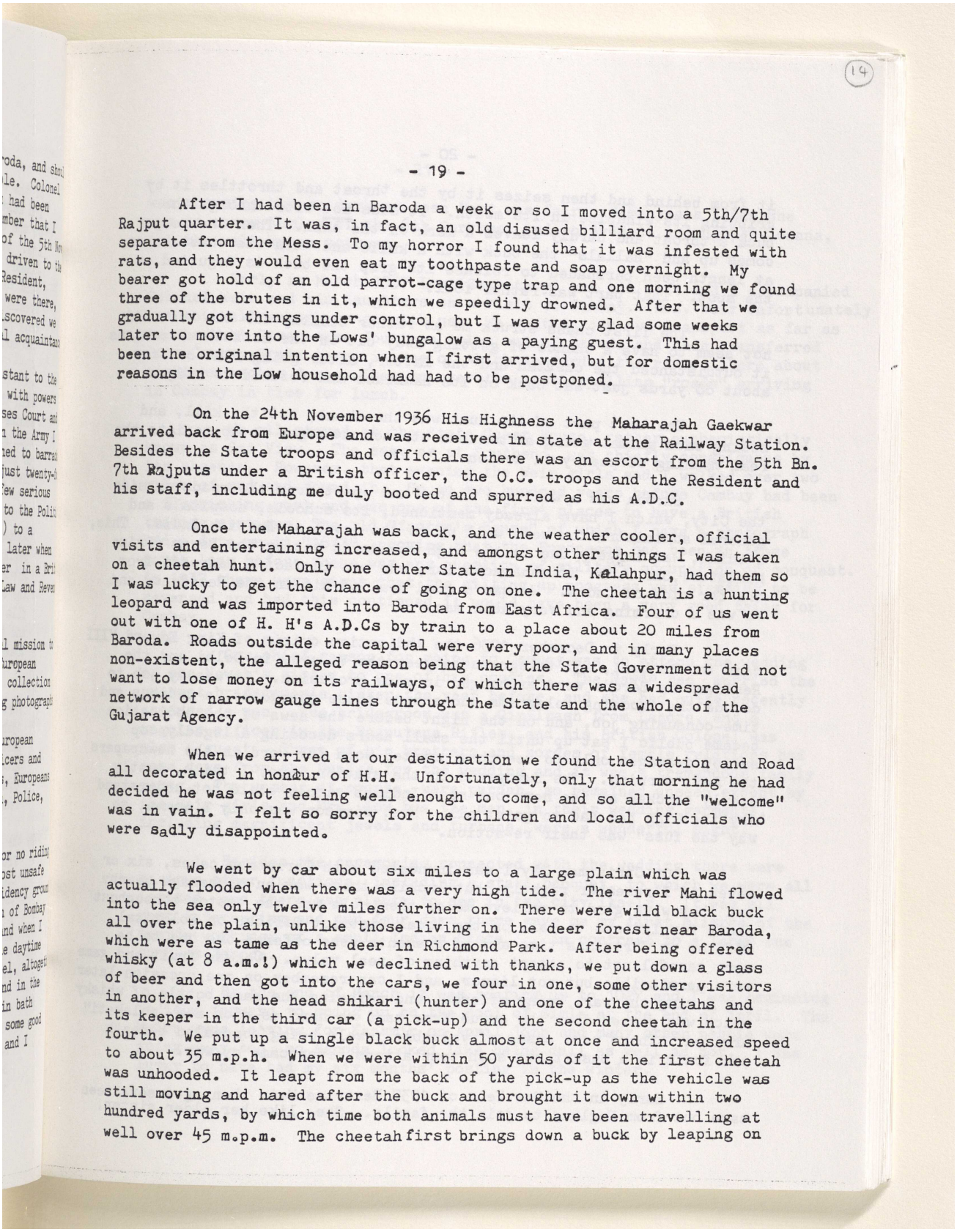
to the Governor General Gujarat States and Resident at Baroda, and should proceed there as soon as my services could be made available. Colonel Mockler, however, refused to let me go until this telegram had been confirmed in writing, and so it was not until the 3rd November that I finally left Dharmsala, arriving at Baroda on the evening of the 5th November 1936. There I was met by Alastair Low, the Secretary, and driven to the Residency where I was to stay for my first few days. The Resident, Colonel Weir, Mrs. Weir and their elder daughter Joan Mary were there, and they were all extremely kind to me. Joan Mary and I discovered we had met in Kashmir two years before and had a host of mutual acquaintances.

As well as being Under Secretary and Personal Assistant to the Resident, I found that I was also a First Class Magistrate, with powers of up to 2 years' imprisonment, and Judge of the Small Courses Court and ex officio Cantonment Magistrate. As a Company Commander in the Army I had been limited to sentencing an offender to 10 days confined to barracks, so I found my new powers somewhat intimidating. I was now just twenty-four. However, there was not a great deal of Court work and very few serious cases, so I managed to cope. Normally on first appointment to the Political one usually served simply as Personal Assistant (i.e. A.D.C.) to a Resident and no magistrating would have been involved, until later when one was doing one's Civil Training under a Deputy Commissioner in a British Indian District and passing the normal Indian Civil Service Law and Revenue examinations.

Colonel Weir's previous posting had been on a special mission to Tibet, and Mrs. Weir and Joan Mary were two of the very few European women who had ever been to Lhasa. They had an amazingly fine collection of tibetan banners etc. and a large number of most interesting photographs.

In Baroda Cantonnment there was a small club and a European population of about sixty all told, including the British officers and their wives, of the 5th ^{B}n. 7th Rajputs, Bankers, Missionaries, Europeans in the Baroda State Services (Railways, Agriculture, Education, Police, Hospitals, etc.) and us in the Residency.

There was a good deal of tennis and golf, but little or no riding as the surrounding countryside was mostly black cotton soil, most unsafe for horses. Luckily for me there was a plunge bath in the Residency grounds in reality an irrigation tank. Baroda is about 300 miles North of Bombay and never very cold. There were no fireplaces in the houses, and when I got there in November the temperature was still 96^{0} or so in the daytime but down to under 60^{0} at night. We were not much above sea-level, altogether a great contrast from Dharmsala. We also had electric light, and in the Residency itself long baths, in contrast to the oil lamps and tin bath tubs of the hills. About twenty miles outside Baroda there was some good duck shooting, at least far better than I'd ever enjoyed before and I really began to hit a few birds.



- 19 -

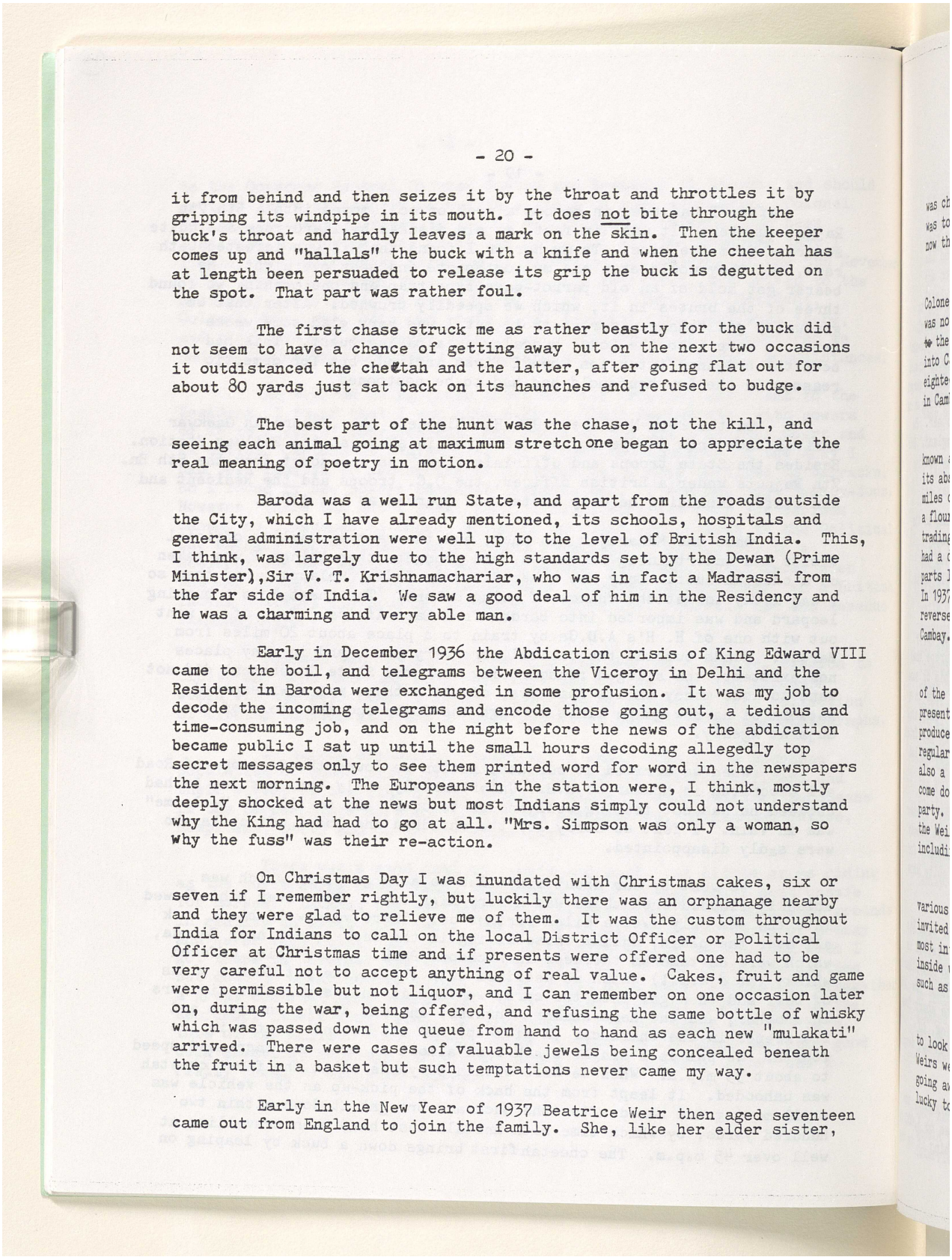
After I had been in Baroda a week or so I moved into a 5th/7th Rajput quarter. It was, in fact, an old disused billiard room and quite separate from the Mess. To my horror I found that it was infested with rats, and they would even eat my toothpaste and soap overnight. My bearer got hold of an old parrot-cage type trap and one morning we found three of the brutes in it, which we speedily drowned. After that we gradually got things under control, but I was very glad some weeks later to move into the Lows' bungalow as a paying guest. This had been the original intention when I first arrived, but for domestic reasons in the Low household had had to be postponed.

On the 24th November 1936 His Highness the Maharajah Gaekwar arrived back from Europe and was received in state at the Railway Station. Besides the State troops and officials there was an escort from the 5th Bn. 7th Rajputs under a British officer, the O.C. troops and the Resident and his staff, including me duly booted and spurred as his A.D.C.

Once the Maharajah was back, and the weather cooler, official visits and entertaining increased, and amongst other things I was taken on a cheetah hunt. Only one other State in India, Kalahpur, had them so I was lucky to get the chance of going on one. The cheetah is a hunting leopard and was imported into Baroda from East Africa. Four of us went out with one of H. H's A.D.Cs by train to a place about 20 miles from Baroda. Roads outside the capital were very poor, and in many places non-existent, the alleged reason being that the State Government did not want to lose money on its railways, of which there was a widespread network of narrow gauge lines through the State and the whole of the Gujarat Agency.

When we arrived at our destination we found the Station and Road all decorated in honour of H.H. Unfortunately, only that morning he had decided he was not feeling well enough to come, and so all the "welcome" was in vain. I felt so sorry for the children and local officials who were sadly disappointed.

We went by car about six miles to a large plain which was actually flooded when there was a very high tide. The river Mahi flowed into the sea only twelve miles further on. There were wild black buck all over the plain, unlike those living in the deer forest near Baroda, which were as tame as the deer in Richmond Park. After being offered whisky (at 8 a.m.!) which we declined with thanks, we put down a glass of beer and then got into the cars, we four in one, some other visitors in another, and the head shikari (hunter) and one of the cheetahs and its keeper in the third car (a pick-up) and the second cheetah in the fourth. We put up a single black buck almost at once and increased speed to about 35 m.p.h. When we were within 50 yards of it the first cheetah was unhooded. It leapt from the back of the pick-up as the vehicle was still moving and hared after the buck and brought it down within two hundred yards, by which time both animals must have been travelling at well over 45 m.p.m. The cheetah first brings down a buck by leaping on



it from behind and then seizes it by the throat and throttles it by gripping its windpipe in its mouth. It does not bite through the buck's throat and hardly leaves a mark on the skin. Then the keeper comes up and "hallals" the buck with a knife and when the cheetah has at length been persuaded to release its grip the buck is degutted on the spot. That part was rather foul.

The first chase struck me as rather beastly for the buck did not seem to have a chance of getting away but on the next two occasions it outdistanced the cheetah and the latter, after going flat out for about 80 yards just sat back on its haunches and refused to budge.

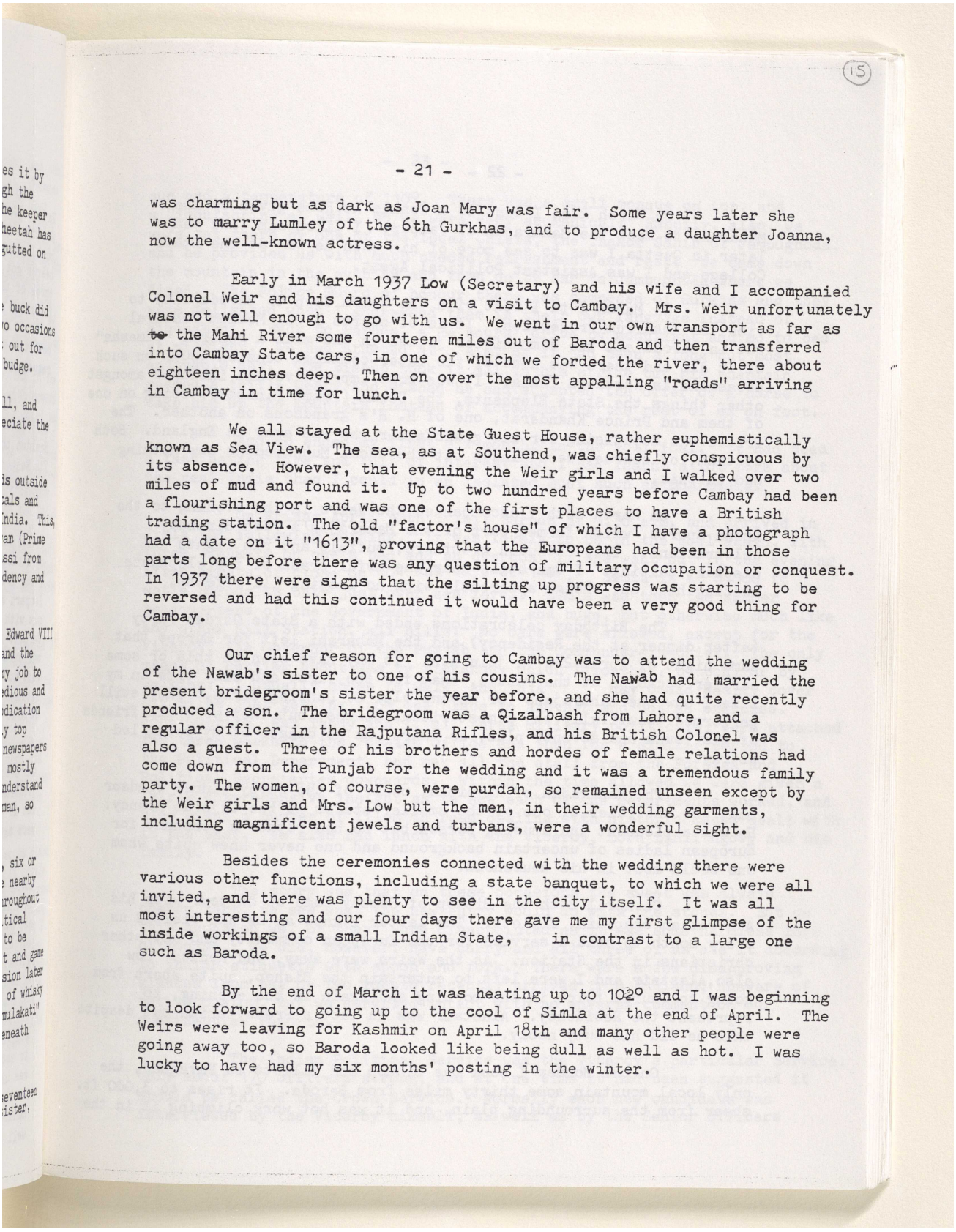
The best part of the hunt was the chase, not the kill, and seeing each animal going at maximum stretch one began to appreciate the real meaning of poetry in motion.

Baroda was a well run State, and apart from the roads outside the City, which I have already mentioned, its schools, hospitals and general administration were well up to the level of British India. This, I think, was largely due to the high standards set by the Dewan (Prime Minister),Sir V. T. Krishnamachariar, who was in fact a Madrassi from the far side of India. We saw a good deal of him in the Residency and he was a charming and very able man.

Early in December 1936 the Abdication crisis of King Edward VIII came to the boil, and telegrams between the Viceroy in Delhi and the Resident in Baroda were exchanged in some profusion. It was my job to decode the incoming telegrams and encode those going out, a tedious and time-consuming job, and on the night before the news of the abdication became public I sat up until the small hours decoding allegedly top secret messages only to see them printed word for word in the newspapers the next morning. The Europeans in the station were, I think, mostly deeply shocked at the news but most Indians simply could not understand why the King had had to go at all. "Mrs. Simpson was only a woman, so why the fuss" was their re-action.

On Christmas Day I was inundated with Christmas cakes, six or seven if I remember rightly, but luckily there was an orphanage nearby and they were glad to relieve me of them. It was the custom throughout India for Indians to call on the local District Officer or Political Officer at Christmas time and if presents were offered one had to be very careful not to accept anything of real value. Cakes, fruit and game were permissible but not liquor, and I can remember on one occasion later on, during the war, being offered, and refusing the same bottle of whisky which was passed down the queue from hand to hand as each new "mulakati" arrived. There were cases of valuable jewels being concealed beneath the fruit in a basket but such temptations never came my way.

Early in the New Year of 1937 Beatrice Weir then aged seventeen came out from England to join the family. She, like her elder sister,



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- 21 -

was charming but as dark as Joan Mary was fair. Some years later she was to marry Lumley of the 6th Gurkhas, and to produce a daughter Joanna, now the well-known actress.

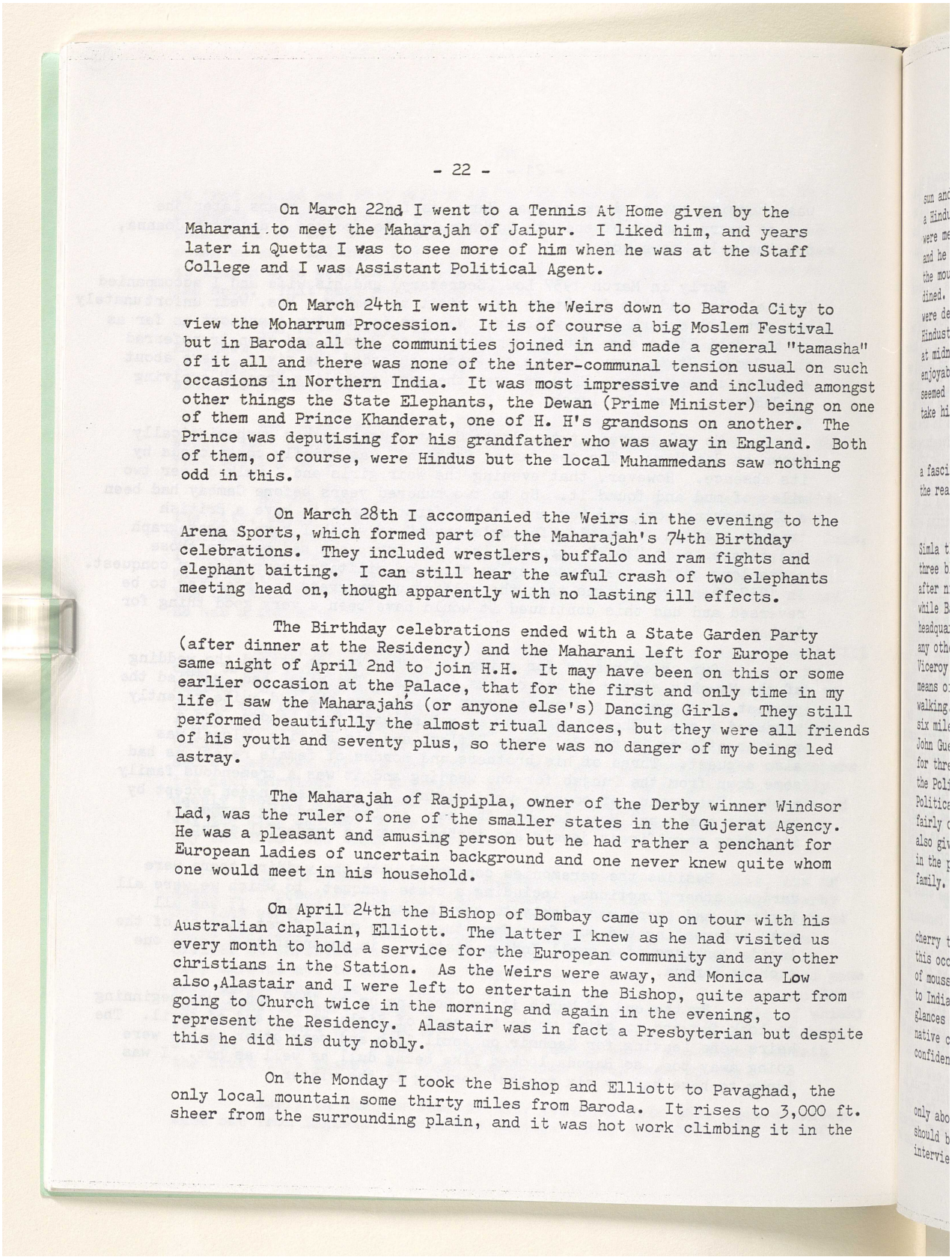
Early in March 1937 Low (Secretary) and his wife and I accompanied Colonel Weir and his daughters on a visit to Cambay. Mrs. Weir unfortunately was not well enough to go with us. We went in our own transport as far as ~~to~~ the Mahi River some fourteen miles out of Baroda and then transferred into Cambay State cars, in one of which we forded the river, there about eighteen inches deep. Then on over the most appalling "roads" arriving in Cambay in time for lunch.

We all stayed at the State Guest House, rather euphemistically known as Sea View. The sea, as at Southend, was chiefly conspicuous by its absence. However, that evening the Weir girls and I walked over two miles of mud and found it. Up to two hundred years before Cambay had been a flourishing port and was one of the first places to have a British trading station. The old "factor's house" of which I have a photograph had a date on it "1613", proving that the Europeans had been in those parts long before there was any question of military occupation or conquest. In 1937 there were signs that the silting up progress was starting to be reversed and had this continued it would have been a very good thing for Cambay.

Our chief reason for going to Cambay was to attend the wedding of the Nawab's sister to one of his cousins. The Nawab had married the present bridegroom's sister the year before, and she had quite recently produced a son. The bridegroom was a Qizalbash from Lahore, and a regular officer in the Rajputana Rifles, and his British Colonel was also a guest. Three of his brothers and hordes of female relations had come down from the Punjab for the wedding and it was a tremendous family party. The women, of course, were purdah, so remained unseen except by the Weir girls and Mrs. Low but the men, in their wedding garments, including magnificent jewels and turbans, were a wonderful sight.

Besides the ceremonies connected with the wedding there were various other functions, including a state banquet, to which we were all invited, and there was plenty to see in the city itself. It was all most interesting and our four days there gave me my first glimpse of the inside workings of a small Indian State, in contrast to a large one such as Baroda.

By the end of March it was heating up to 102° and I was beginning to look forward to going up to the cool of Simla at the end of April. The Weirs were leaving for Kashmir on April 18th and many other people were going away too, so Baroda looked like being dull as well as hot. I was lucky to have had my six months' posting in the winter.



On March 22nd I went to a Tennis At Home given by the Maharani to meet the Maharajah of Jaipur. I liked him, and years later in Quetta I was to see more of him when he was at the Staff College and I was Assistant Political Agent.

On March 24th I went with the Weirs down to Baroda City to view the Moharrum Procession. It is of course a big Moslem Festival but in Baroda all the communities joined in and made a general "tamasha" of it all and there was none of the inter-communal tension usual on such occasions in Northern India. It was most impressive and included amongst other things the State Elephants, the Dewan (Prime Minister) being on one of them and Prince Khanderat, one of H. H's grandsons on another. The Prince was deputising for his grandfather who was away in England. Both of them, of course, were Hindus but the local Muhammedans saw nothing odd in this.

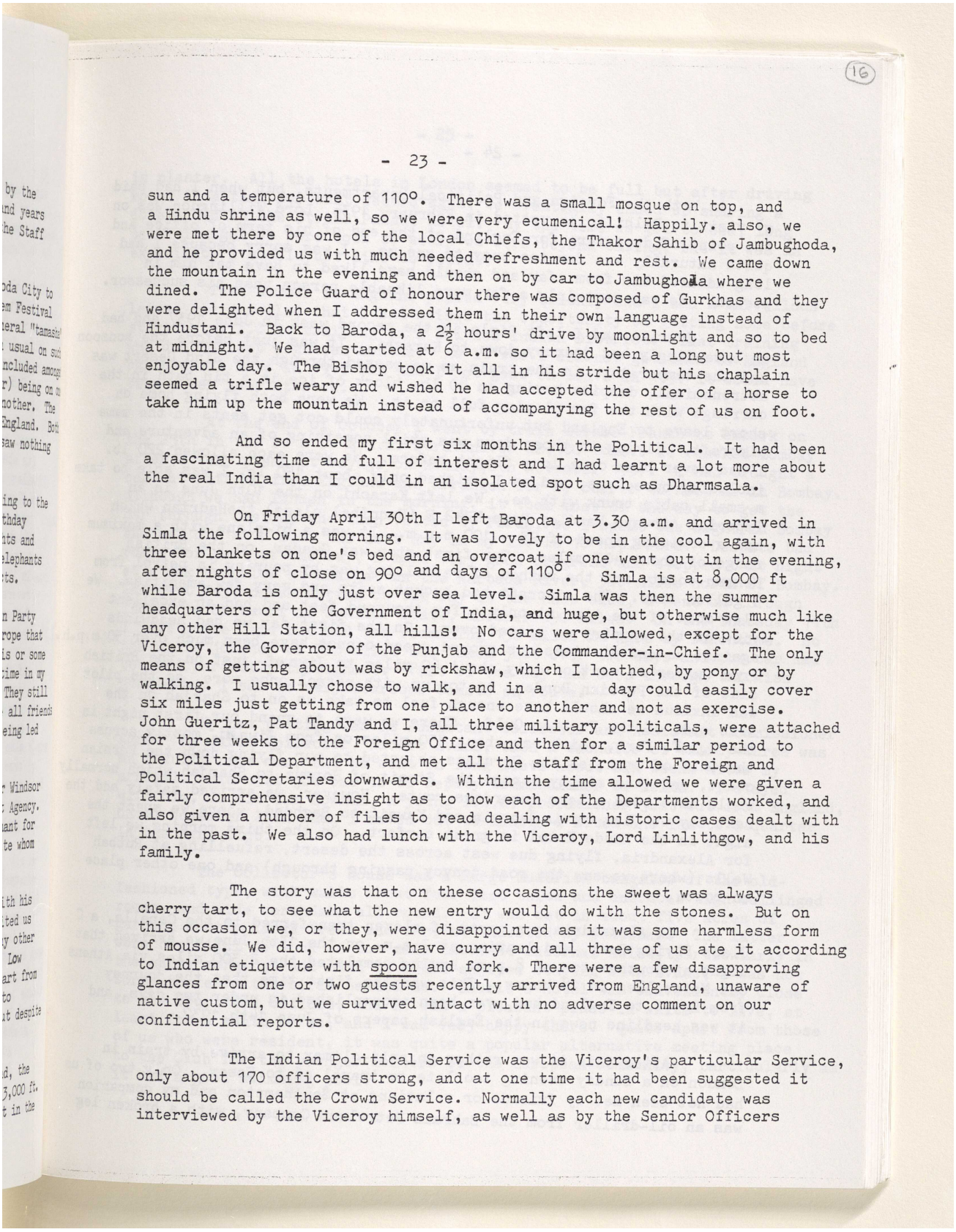
On March 28th I accompanied the Weirs in the evening to the Arena Sports, which formed part of the Maharajah's 74th Birthday celebrations. They included wrestlers, buffalo and ram fights and elephant baiting. I can still hear the awful crash of two elephants meeting head on, though apparently with no lasting ill effects.

The Birthday celebrations ended with a State Garden Party (after dinner at the Residency) and the Maharani left for Europe that same night of April 2nd to join H.H. It may have been on this or some earlier occasion at the Palace, that for the first and only time in my life I saw the Maharajahs (or anyone else's) Dancing Girls. They still performed beautifully the almost ritual dances, but they were all friends of his youth and seventy plus, so there was no danger of my being led astray.

The Maharajah of Rajpipla, owner of the Derby winner Windsor Lad, was the ruler of one of the smaller states in the Gujerat Agency. He was a pleasant and amusing person but he had rather a penchant for European ladies of uncertain background and one never knew quite whom one would meet in his household.

On April 24th the Bishop of Bombay came up on tour with his Australian chaplain, Elliott. The latter I knew as he had visited us every month to hold a service for the European community and any other christians in the Station. As the Weirs were away, and Monica Low also,Alastair and I were left to entertain the Bishop, quite apart from going to Church twice in the morning and again in the evening, to represent the Residency. Alastair was in fact a Presbyterian but despite this he did his duty nobly.

On the Monday I took the Bishop and Elliott to Pavaghad, the only local mountain some thirty miles from Baroda. It rises to 3,000 ft. sheer from the surrounding plain, and it was hot work climbing it in the



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- 23 -

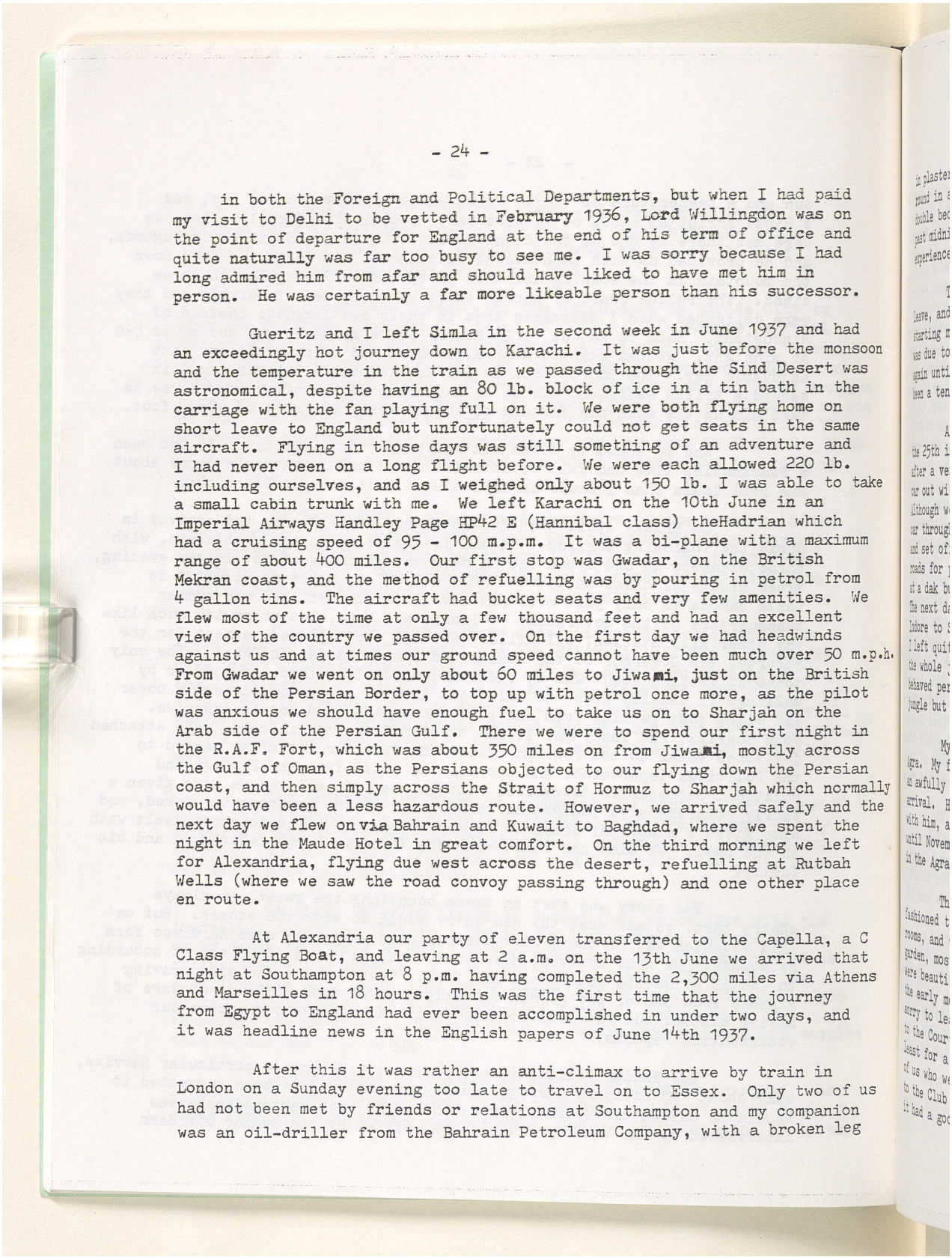
sun and a temperature of 110°. There was a small mosque on top, and a Hindu shrine as well, so we were very ecumenical! Happily. also, we were met there by one of the local Chiefs, the Thakor Sahib of Jambughoda, and he provided us with much needed refreshment and rest. We came down the mountain in the evening and then on by car to Jambughoda where we dined. The Police Guard of honour there was composed of Gurkhas and they were delighted when I addressed them in their own language instead of Hindustani. Back to Baroda, a 2½ hours' drive by moonlight and so to bed at midnight. We had started at 6 a.m. so it had been a long but most enjoyable day. The Bishop took it all in his stride but his chaplain seemed a trifle weary and wished he had accepted the offer of a horse to take him up the mountain instead of accompanying the rest of us on foot.

And so ended my first six months in the Political. It had been a fascinating time and full of interest and I had learnt a lot more about the real India than I could in an isolated spot such as Dharmsala.

On Friday April 30th I left Baroda at 3.30 a.m. and arrived in Simla the following morning. It was lovely to be in the cool again, with three blankets on one's bed and an overcoat if one went out in the evening, after nights of close on 90° and days of 110°. Simla is at 8,000 ft while Baroda is only just over sea level. Simla was then the summer headquarters of the Government of India, and huge, but otherwise much like any other Hill Station, all hills! No cars were allowed, except for the Viceroy, the Governor of the Punjab and the Commander-in-Chief. The only means of getting about was by rickshaw, which I loathed, by pony or by walking. I usually chose to walk, and in a day could easily cover six miles just getting from one place to another and not as exercise. John Gueritz, Pat Tandy and I, all three military politicals, were attached for three weeks to the Foreign Office and then for a similar period to the Political Department, and met all the staff from the Foreign and Political Secretaries downwards. Within the time allowed we were given a fairly comprehensive insight as to how each of the Departments worked, and also given a number of files to read dealing with historic cases dealt with in the past. We also had lunch with the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, and his family.

The story was that on these occasions the sweet was always cherry tart, to see what the new entry would do with the stones. But on this occasion we, or they, were disappointed as it was some harmless form of mousse. We did, however, have curry and all three of us ate it according to Indian etiquette with spoon and fork. There were a few disapproving glances from one or two guests recently arrived from England, unaware of native custom, but we survived intact with no adverse comment on our confidential reports.

The Indian Political Service was the Viceroy's particular Service, only about 170 officers strong, and at one time it had been suggested it should be called the Crown Service. Normally each new candidate was interviewed by the Viceroy himself, as well as by the Senior Officers

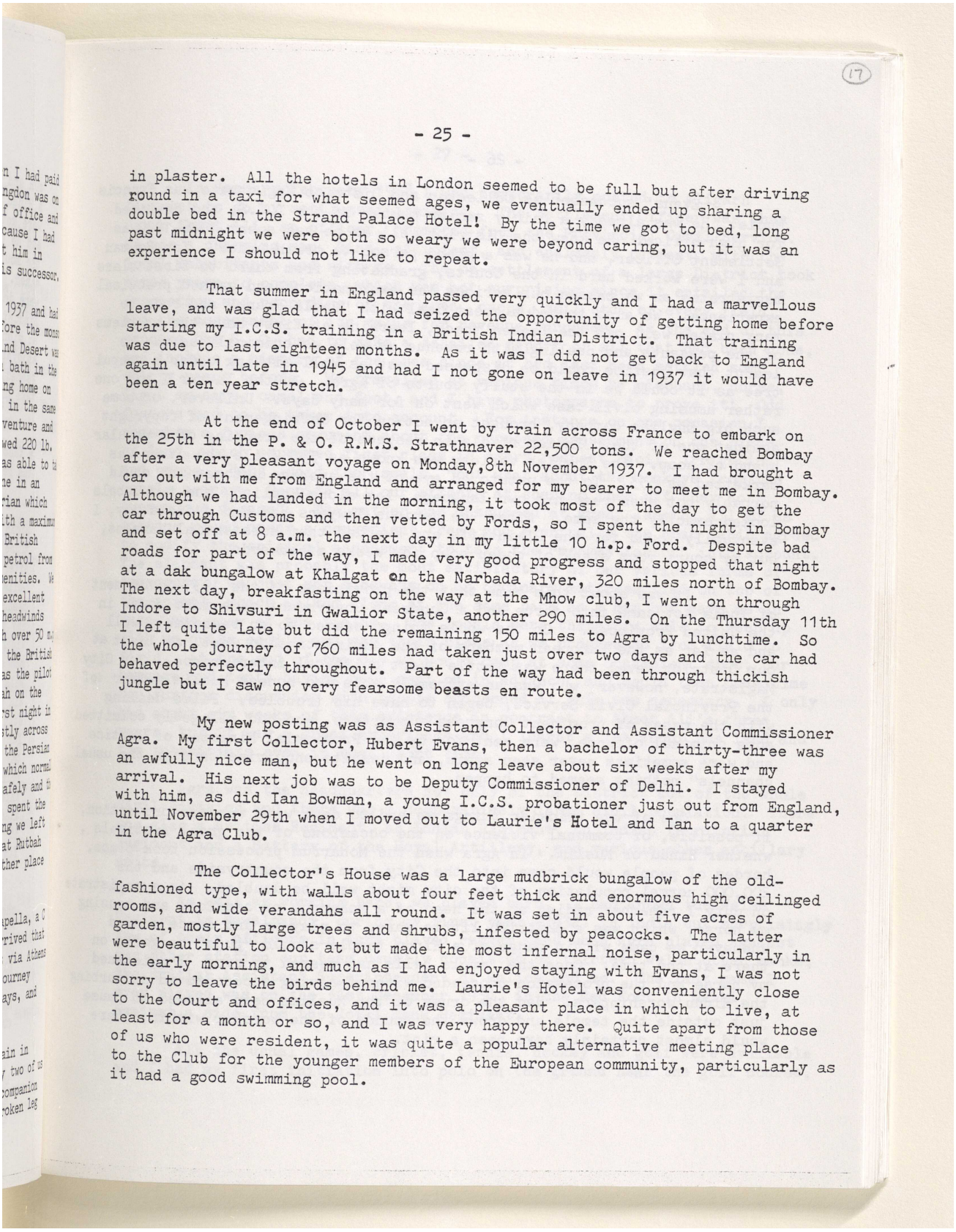


in both the Foreign and Political Departments, but when I had paid my visit to Delhi to be vetted in February 1936, Lord Willingdon was on the point of departure for England at the end of his term of office and quite naturally was far too busy to see me. I was sorry because I had long admired him from afar and should have liked to have met him in person. He was certainly a far more likeable person than his successor.

Gueritz and I left Simla in the second week in June 1937 and had an exceedingly hot journey down to Karachi. It was just before the monsoon and the temperature in the train as we passed through the Sind Desert was astronomical, despite having an 80 lb. block of ice in a tin bath in the carriage with the fan playing full on it. We were both flying home on short leave to England but unfortunately could not get seats in the same aircraft. Flying in those days was still something of an adventure and I had never been on a long flight before. We were each allowed 220 lb. including ourselves, and as I weighed only about 150 lb. I was able to take a small cabin trunk with me. We left Karachi on the 10th June in an Imperial Airways Handley Page HP42 E (Hannibal class) theHadrian which had a cruising speed of 95 - 100 m.p.m. It was a bi-plane with a maximum range of about 400 miles. Our first stop was Gwadar, on the British Mekran coast, and the method of refuelling was by pouring in petrol from 4 gallon tins. The aircraft had bucket seats and very few amenities. We flew most of the time at only a few thousand feet and had an excellent view of the country we passed over. On the first day we had headwinds against us and at times our ground speed cannot have been much over 50 m.p.h. From Gwadar we went on only about 60 miles to Jiwami, just on the British side of the Persian Border, to top up with petrol once more, as the pilot was anxious we should have enough fuel to take us on to Sharjah on the Arab side of the Persian Gulf. There we were to spend our first night in the R.A.F. Fort, which was about 350 miles on from Jiwami, mostly across the Gulf of Oman, as the Persians objected to our flying down the Persian coast, and then simply across the Strait of Hormuz to Sharjah which normally would have been a less hazardous route. However, we arrived safely and the next day we flew on via Bahrain and Kuwait to Baghdad, where we spent the night in the Maude Hotel in great comfort. On the third morning we left for Alexandria, flying due west across the desert, refuelling at Rutbah Wells (where we saw the road convoy passing through) and one other place en route.

At Alexandria our party of eleven transferred to the Capella, a C Class Flying Boat, and leaving at 2 a.m. on the 13th June we arrived that night at Southampton at 8 p.m. having completed the 2,300 miles via Athens and Marseilles in 18 hours. This was the first time that the journey from Egypt to England had ever been accomplished in under two days, and it was headline news in the English papers of June 14th 1937.

After this it was rather an anti-climax to arrive by train in London on a Sunday evening too late to travel on to Essex. Only two of us had not been met by friends or relations at Southampton and my companion was an oil-driller from the Bahrain Petroleum Company, with a broken leg



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- 25 -

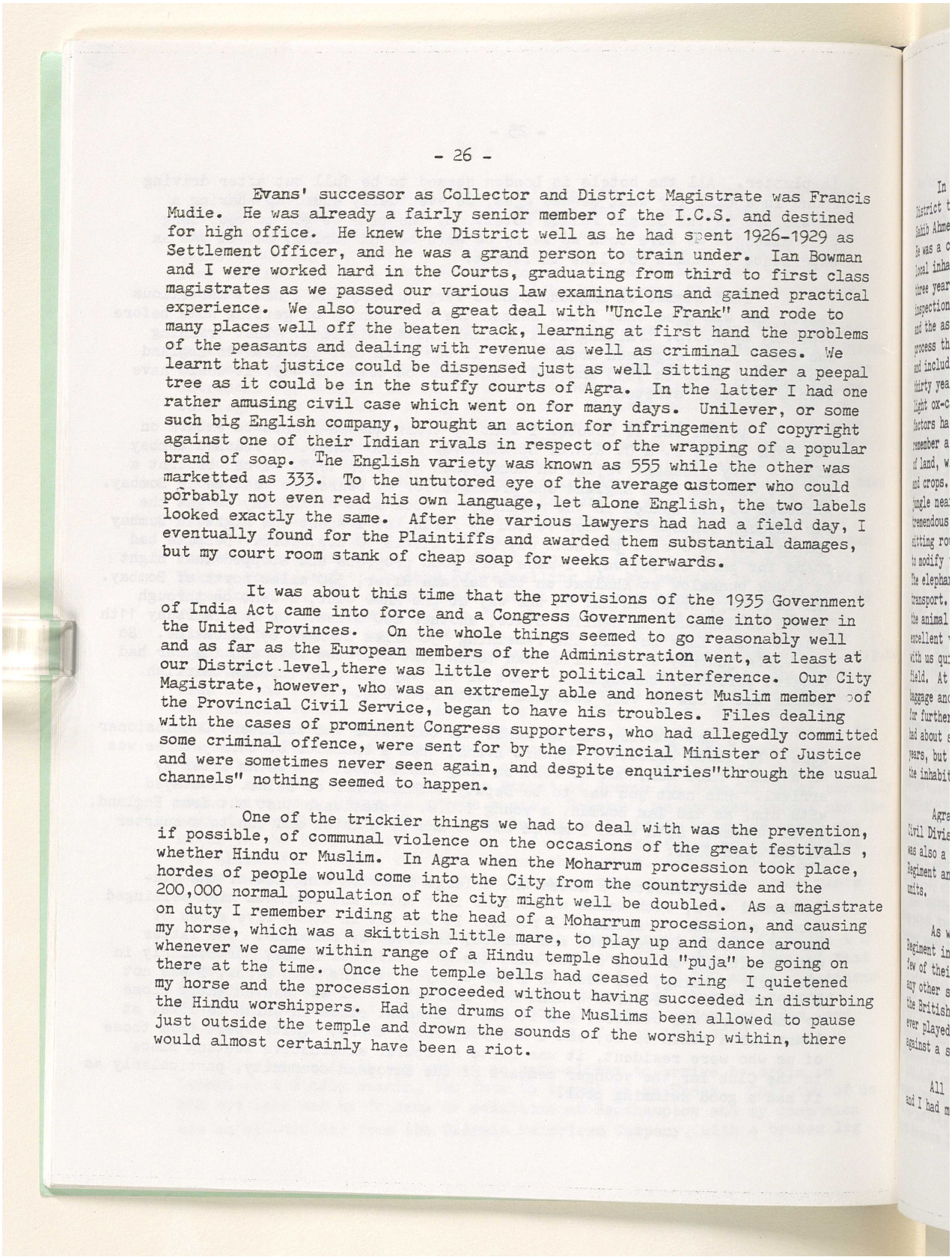
in plaster. All the hotels in London seemed to be full but after driving round in a taxi for what seemed ages, we eventually ended up sharing a double bed in the Strand Palace Hotel! By the time we got to bed, long past midnight we were both so weary we were beyond caring, but it was an experience I should not like to repeat.

That summer in England passed very quickly and I had a marvellous leave, and was glad that I had seized the opportunity of getting home before starting my I.C.S. training in a British Indian District. That training was due to last eighteen months. As it was I did not get back to England again until late in 1945 and had I not gone on leave in 1937 it would have been a ten year stretch.

At the end of October I went by train across France to embark on the 25th in the P. & O. R.M.S. Strathnaver 22,500 tons. We reached Bombay after a very pleasant voyage on Monday,8th November 1937. I had brought a car out with me from England and arranged for my bearer to meet me in Bombay. Although we had landed in the morning, it took most of the day to get the car through Customs and then vetted by Fords, so I spent the night in Bombay and set off at 8 a.m. the next day in my little 10 h.p. Ford. Despite bad roads for part of the way, I made very good progress and stopped that night at a dak bungalow at Khalgat on the Narbada River, 320 miles north of Bombay. The next day, breakfasting on the way at the Mhow club, I went on through Indore to Shivsuri in Gwalior State, another 290 miles. On the Thursday 11th I left quite late but did the remaining 150 miles to Agra by lunchtime. So the whole journey of 760 miles had taken just over two days and the car had behaved perfectly throughout. Part of the way had been through thickish jungle but I saw no very fearsome beasts en route.

My new posting was as Assistant Collector and Assistant Commissioner Agra. My first Collector, Hubert Evans, then a bachelor of thirty-three was an awfully nice man, but he went on long leave about six weeks after my arrival. His next job was to be Deputy Commissioner of Delhi. I stayed with him, as did Ian Bowman, a young I.C.S. probationer just out from England, until November 29th when I moved out to Laurie's Hotel and Ian to a quarter in the Agra Club.

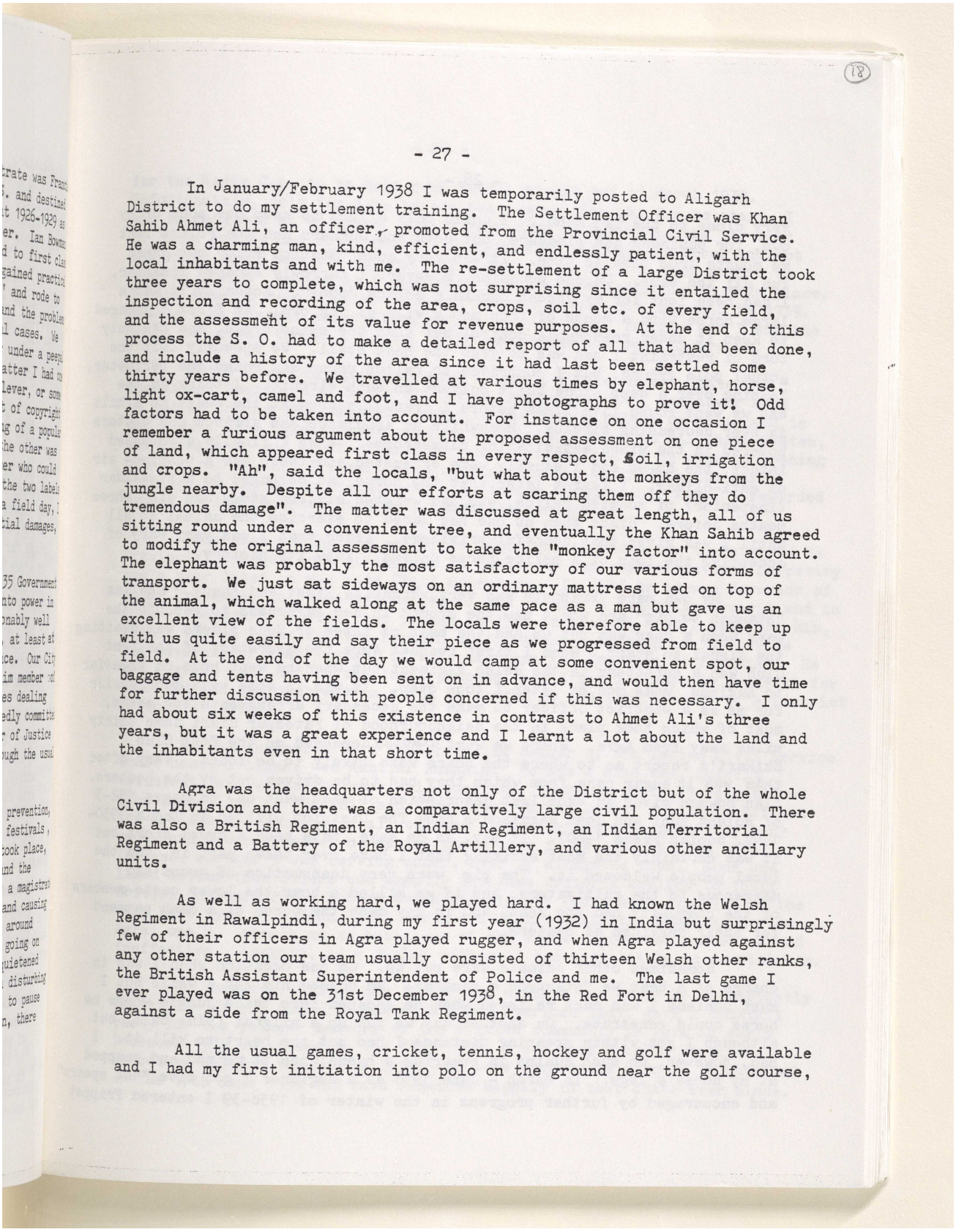
The Collector's House was a large mudbrick bungalow of the old-fashioned type, with walls about four feet thick and enormous high ceilinged rooms, and wide verandahs all round. It was set in about five acres of garden, mostly large trees and shrubs, infested by peacocks. The latter were beautiful to look at but made the most infernal noise, particularly in the early morning, and much as I had enjoyed staying with Evans, I was not sorry to leave the birds behind me. Laurie's Hotel was conveniently close to the Court and offices, and it was a pleasant place in which to live, at least for a month or so, and I was very happy there. Quite apart from those of us who were resident, it was quite a popular alternative meeting place to the Club for the younger members of the European community, particularly as it had a good swimming pool.



Evans' successor as Collector and District Magistrate was Francis Mudie. He was already a fairly senior member of the I.C.S. and destined for high office. He knew the District well as he had spent 1926-1929 as Settlement Officer, and he was a grand person to train under. Ian Bowman and I were worked hard in the Courts, graduating from third to first class magistrates as we passed our various law examinations and gained practical experience. We also toured a great deal with "Uncle Frank" and rode to many places well off the beaten track, learning at first hand the problems of the peasants and dealing with revenue as well as criminal cases. We learnt that justice could be dispensed just as well sitting under a peepal tree as it could be in the stuffy courts of Agra. In the latter I had one rather amusing civil case which went on for many days. Unilever, or some such big English company, brought an action for infringement of copyright against one of their Indian rivals in respect of the wrapping of a popular brand of soap. The English variety was known as 555 while the other was marketted as 333. To the untutored eye of the average customer who could porbably not even read his own language, let alone English, the two labels looked exactly the same. After the various lawyers had had a field day, I eventually found for the Plaintiffs and awarded them substantial damages, but my court room stank of cheap soap for weeks afterwards.

It was about this time that the provisions of the 1935 Government of India Act came into force and a Congress Government came into power in the United Provinces. On the whole things seemed to go reasonably well and as far as the European members of the Administration went, at least at our District level, there was little overt political interference. Our City Magistrate, however, who was an extremely able and honest Muslim member of the Provincial Civil Service, began to have his troubles. Files dealing with the cases of prominent Congress supporters, who had allegedly committed some criminal offence, were sent for by the Provincial Minister of Justice and were sometimes never seen again, and despite enquiries"through the usual channels" nothing seemed to happen.

One of the trickier things we had to deal with was the prevention, if possible, of communal violence on the occasions of the great festivals , whether Hindu or Muslim. In Agra when the Moharrum procession took place, hordes of people would come into the City from the countryside and the 200,000 normal population of the city might well be doubled. As a magistrate on duty I remember riding at the head of a Moharrum procession, and causing my horse, which was a skittish little mare, to play up and dance around whenever we came within range of a Hindu temple should "puja" be going on there at the time. Once the temple bells had ceased to ring I quietened my horse and the procession proceeded without having succeeded in disturbing the Hindu worshippers. Had the drums of the Muslims been allowed to pause just outside the temple and drown the sounds of the worship within, there would almost certainly have been a riot.



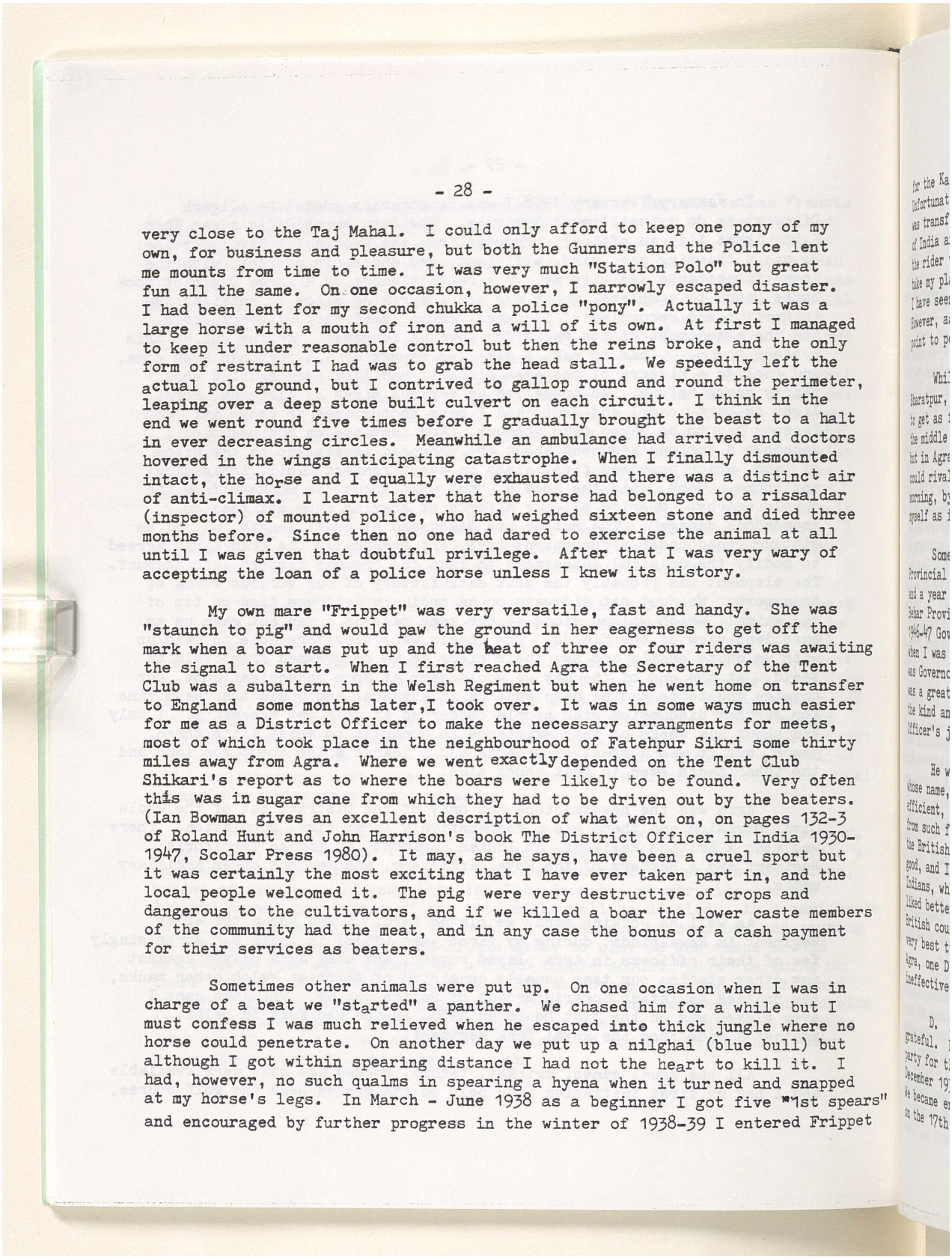
- 27 -

In January/February 1938 I was temporarily posted to Aligarh District to do my settlement training. The Settlement Officer was Khan Sahib Ahmet Ali, an officer promoted from the Provincial Civil Service. He was a charming man, kind, efficient, and endlessly patient, with the local inhabitants and with me. The re-settlement of a large District took three years to complete, which was not surprising since it entailed the inspection and recording of the area, crops, soil etc. of every field, and the assessment of its value for revenue purposes. At the end of this process the S. O. had to make a detailed report of all that had been done, and include a history of the area since it had last been settled some thirty years before. We travelled at various times by elephant, horse, light ox-cart, camel and foot, and I have photographs to prove it! Odd factors had to be taken into account. For instance on one occasion I remember a furious argument about the proposed assessment on one piece of land, which appeared first class in every respect, soil, irrigation and crops. "Ah", said the locals, "but what about the monkeys from the jungle nearby. Despite all our efforts at scaring them off they do tremendous damage". The matter was discussed at great length, all of us sitting round under a convenient tree, and eventually the Khan Sahib agreed to modify the original assessment to take the "monkey factor" into account. The elephant was probably the most satisfactory of our various forms of transport. We just sat sideways on an ordinary mattress tied on top of the animal, which walked along at the same pace as a man but gave us an excellent view of the fields. The locals were therefore able to keep up with us quite easily and say their piece as we progressed from field to field. At the end of the day we would camp at some convenient spot, our baggage and tents having been sent on in advance, and would then have time for further discussion with people concerned if this was necessary. I only had about six weeks of this existence in contrast to Ahmet Ali's three years, but it was a great experience and I learnt a lot about the land and the inhabitants even in that short time.

Agra was the headquarters not only of the District but of the whole Civil Division and there was a comparatively large civil population. There was also a British Regiment, an Indian Regiment, an Indian Territorial Regiment and a Battery of the Royal Artillery, and various other ancillary units.

As well as working hard, we played hard. I had known the Welsh Regiment in Rawalpindi, during my first year (1932) in India but surprisingly few of their officers in Agra played rugger, and when Agra played against any other station our team usually consisted of thirteen Welsh other ranks, the British Assistant Superintendent of Police and me. The last game I ever played was on the 31st December 1938, in the Red Fort in Delhi, against a side from the Royal Tank Regiment.

All the usual games, cricket, tennis, hockey and golf were available and I had my first initiation into polo on the ground near the golf course,



very close to the Taj Mahal. I could only afford to keep one pony of my own, for business and pleasure, but both the Gunners and the Police lent me mounts from time to time. It was very much "Station Polo" but great fun all the same. On one occasion, however, I narrowly escaped disaster. I had been lent for my second chukka a police "pony". Actually it was a large horse with a mouth of iron and a will of its own. At first I managed to keep it under reasonable control but then the reins broke, and the only form of restraint I had was to grab the head stall. We speedily left the actual polo ground, but I contrived to gallop round and round the perimeter, leaping over a deep stone built culvert on each circuit. I think in the end we went round five times before I gradually brought the beast to a halt in ever decreasing circles. Meanwhile an ambulance had arrived and doctors hovered in the wings anticipating catastrophe. When I finally dismounted intact, the horse and I equally were exhausted and there was a distinct air of anti-climax. I learnt later that the horse had belonged to a rissaldar (inspector) of mounted police, who had weighed sixteen stone and died three months before. Since then no one had dared to exercise the animal at all until I was given that doubtful privilege. After that I was very wary of accepting the loan of a police horse unless I knew its history.

My own mare "Frippet" was very versatile, fast and handy. She was "staunch to pig" and would paw the ground in her eagerness to get off the mark when a boar was put up and the heat of three or four riders was awaiting the signal to start. When I first reached Agra the Secretary of the Tent Club was a subaltern in the Welsh Regiment but when he went home on transfer to England some months later,I took over. It was in some ways much easier for me as a District Officer to make the necessary arrangments for meets, most of which took place in the neighbourhood of Fatehpur Sikri some thirty miles away from Agra. Where we went exactly depended on the Tent Club Shikari's report as to where the boars were likely to be found. Very often this was in sugar cane from which they had to be driven out by the beaters. (Ian Bowman gives an excellent description of what went on, on pages 132-3 of Roland Hunt and John Harrison's book The District Officer in India 1930-1947, Scolar Press 1980). It may, as he says, have been a cruel sport but it was certainly the most exciting that I have ever taken part in, and the local people welcomed it. The pig were very destructive of crops and dangerous to the cultivators, and if we killed a boar the lower caste members of the community had the meat, and in any case the bonus of a cash payment for their services as beaters.

Sometimes other animals were put up. On one occasion when I was in charge of a beat we "started" a panther. We chased him for a while but I must confess I was much relieved when he escaped into thick jungle where no horse could penetrate. On another day we put up a nilghai (blue bull) but although I got within spearing distance I had not the heart to kill it. I had, however, no such qualms in spearing a hyena when it turned and snapped at my horse's legs. In March - June 1938 as a beginner I got five "1st spears" and encouraged by further progress in the winter of 1938-39 I entered Frippet

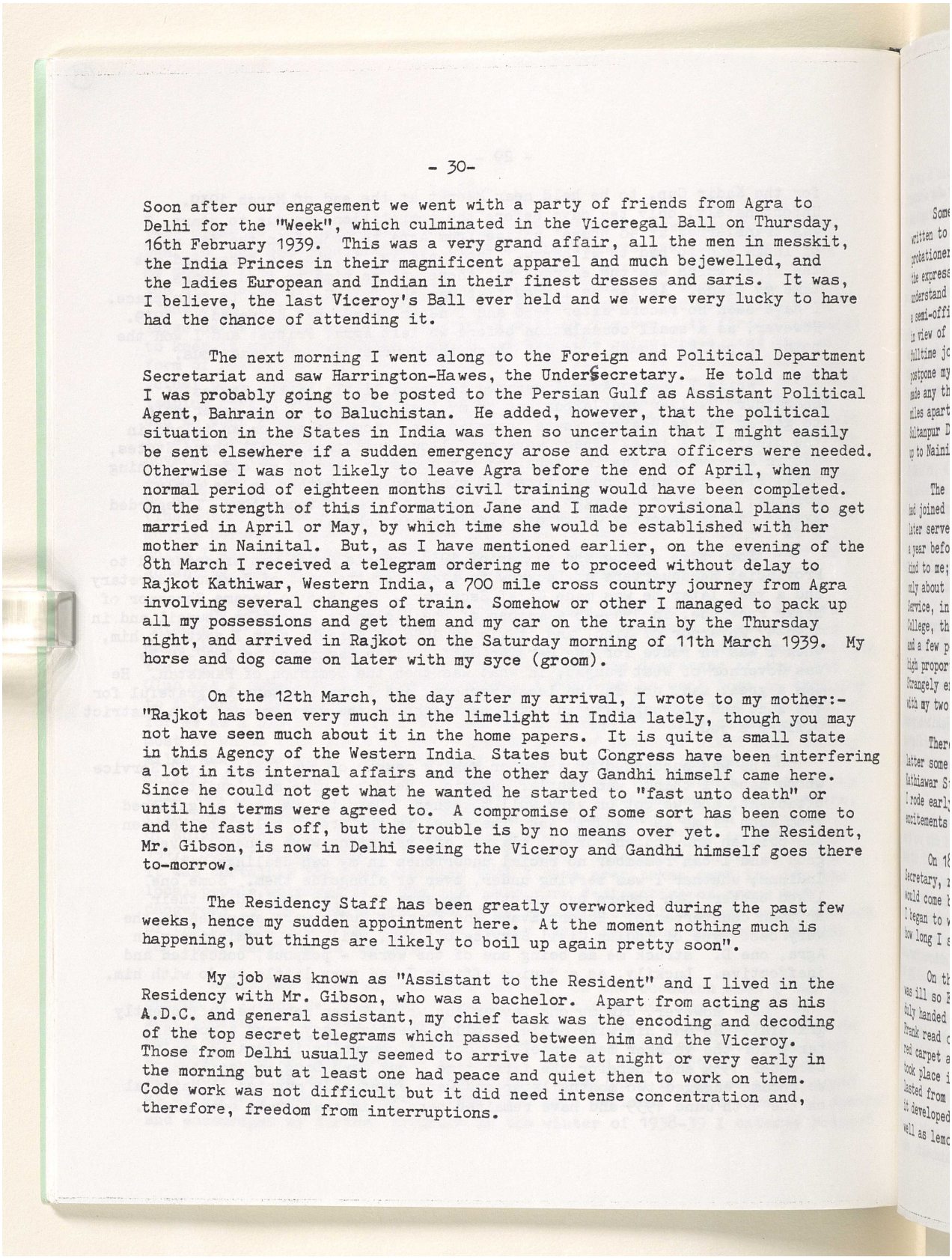
for the Kadir Cup, to be held near Meerut at the end of March 1939. Unfortunately, only ten days before the competition was due to start, I was transferred at 48 hours' notice from Agra to Rajkot in the far west of India and so had to withdraw. Incidentally, it was the horse and not the rider which was the entrant but there was no time to find anyone to take my place. As far as I know that was the last Kadir Cup to take place. I have seen no record after 1938 and I never heard what happened in 1939. However, as a small consolation before we left Agra, Frippet and I won the point to point, though I do not think the course was very hazardous.

While I was in Agra I managed to see a little of the States of Bharatpur, Gwalior and Jaipur but to my lasting regret I was never able to get as far as Udaipur where there is the famous Palace on an island in the middle of a lake. There were marvellous buildings in all those States, but in Agra we had the Taj Mahal on our doorstep, and in my opinion nothing could rival it, and I never tired of visiting it, whether in the early morning, by day or by night, and as Assistant Commissioner Agra, I regarded myself as its honorary Chowkidar (caretaker/watchman).

Some time during the summer of 1938 Francis Mudie was transferred to Provincial Headquarters at Lucknow to take over the post of Revenue Secretary and a year later he was made Chief Secretary. In 1943 he became Governor of Behar Province, in 1944-45 a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and in 1946-47 Governor of Sind, and it was in 1946 in Karachi that I next met him, when I was en route for the Persian Gulf. After partition in 1947-49 he was Governor of West Punjab, in what was then the Dominion of Pakistan. He was a great man, not in the least pompous, and I shall always be grateful for the kind and thorough way in which he taught me the very essence of a District Officer's job.

He was succeeded by a senior Muslim member of the Indian Civil Service whose name, I think, was Akhtiar Hussain. He was a nice man, quietly efficient, and we got on very well together. Despite what may be gathered from such films as "Gandhi" and "The Jewel in the Crown" relations between the British and Indians of all classes and religions were generally very good, and I can remember no racial undertones in my own dealings with Indians, whether I was serving under, over or alongside them. Some one liked better than others but exactly the same criteria applied to their British counterparts. Hubert Evans and Francis Mudie were examples of the very best type of Indian Civil Service officer, while the Commissioner in Agra, one D. struck me as being one of the worst - pompous, conceited and ineffective. Luckily, as a junior officer I had very little to do with him.

D. however, did me one favour for which I can never be sufficiently grateful. He and his wife Sadie, a plump American lady, gave a cocktail party for the younger members of the British community in Agra in early December 1938 and therefor the first time I met Jane Douglas Hamilton. We became engaged two months later and were eventually married in Nainital on the 17th June 1939 and have remained happily in that state ever since.



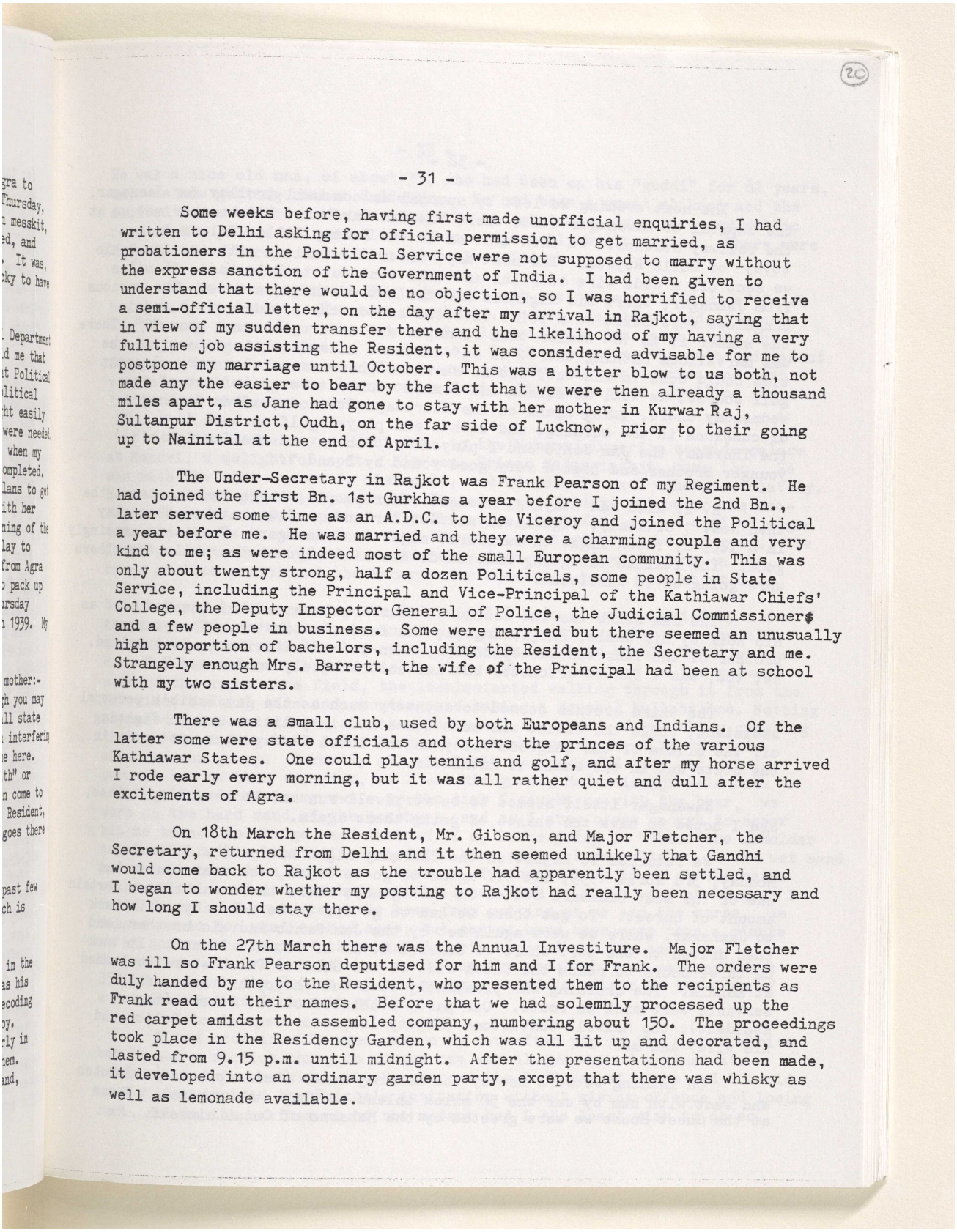
Soon after our engagement we went with a party of friends from Agra to Delhi for the "Week", which culminated in the Viceregal Ball on Thursday, 16th February 1939. This was a very grand affair, all the men in messkit, the India Princes in their magnificent apparel and much bejewelled, and the ladies European and Indian in their finest dresses and saris. It was, I believe, the last Viceroy's Ball ever held and we were very lucky to have had the chance of attending it.

The next morning I went along to the Foreign and Political Department Secretariat and saw Harrington-Hawes, the Undersecretary. He told me that I was probably going to be posted to the Persian Gulf as Assistant Political Agent, Bahrain or to Baluchistan. He added, however, that the political situation in the States in India was then so uncertain that I might easily be sent elsewhere if a sudden emergency arose and extra officers were needed. Otherwise I was not likely to leave Agra before the end of April, when my normal period of eighteen months civil training would have been completed. On the strength of this information Jane and I made provisional plans to get married in April or May, by which time she would be established with her mother in Nainital. But, as I have mentioned earlier, on the evening of the 8th March I received a telegram ordering me to proceed without delay to Rajkot Kathiwar, Western India, a 700 mile cross country journey from Agra involving several changes of train. Somehow or other I managed to pack up all my possessions and get them and my car on the train by the Thursday night, and arrived in Rajkot on the Saturday morning of 11th March 1939. My horse and dog came on later with my syce (groom).

On the 12th March, the day after my arrival, I wrote to my mother:- "Rajkot has been very much in the limelight in India lately, though you may not have seen much about it in the home papers. It is quite a small state in this Agency of the Western India States but Congress have been interfering a lot in its internal affairs and the other day Gandhi himself came here. Since he could not get what he wanted he started to "fast unto death" or until his terms were agreed to. A compromise of some sort has been come to and the fast is off, but the trouble is by no means over yet. The Resident, Mr. Gibson, is now in Delhi seeing the Viceroy and Gandhi himself goes there to-morrow.

The Residency Staff has been greatly overworked during the past few weeks, hence my sudden appointment here. At the moment nothing much is happening, but things are likely to boil up again pretty soon".

My job was known as "Assistant to the Resident" and I lived in the Residency with Mr. Gibson, who was a bachelor. Apart from acting as his A.D.C. and general assistant, my chief task was the encoding and decoding of the top secret telegrams which passed between him and the Viceroy. Those from Delhi usually seemed to arrive late at night or very early in the morning but at least one had peace and quiet then to work on them. Code work was not difficult but it did need intense concentration and, therefore, freedom from interruptions.



- 31 -

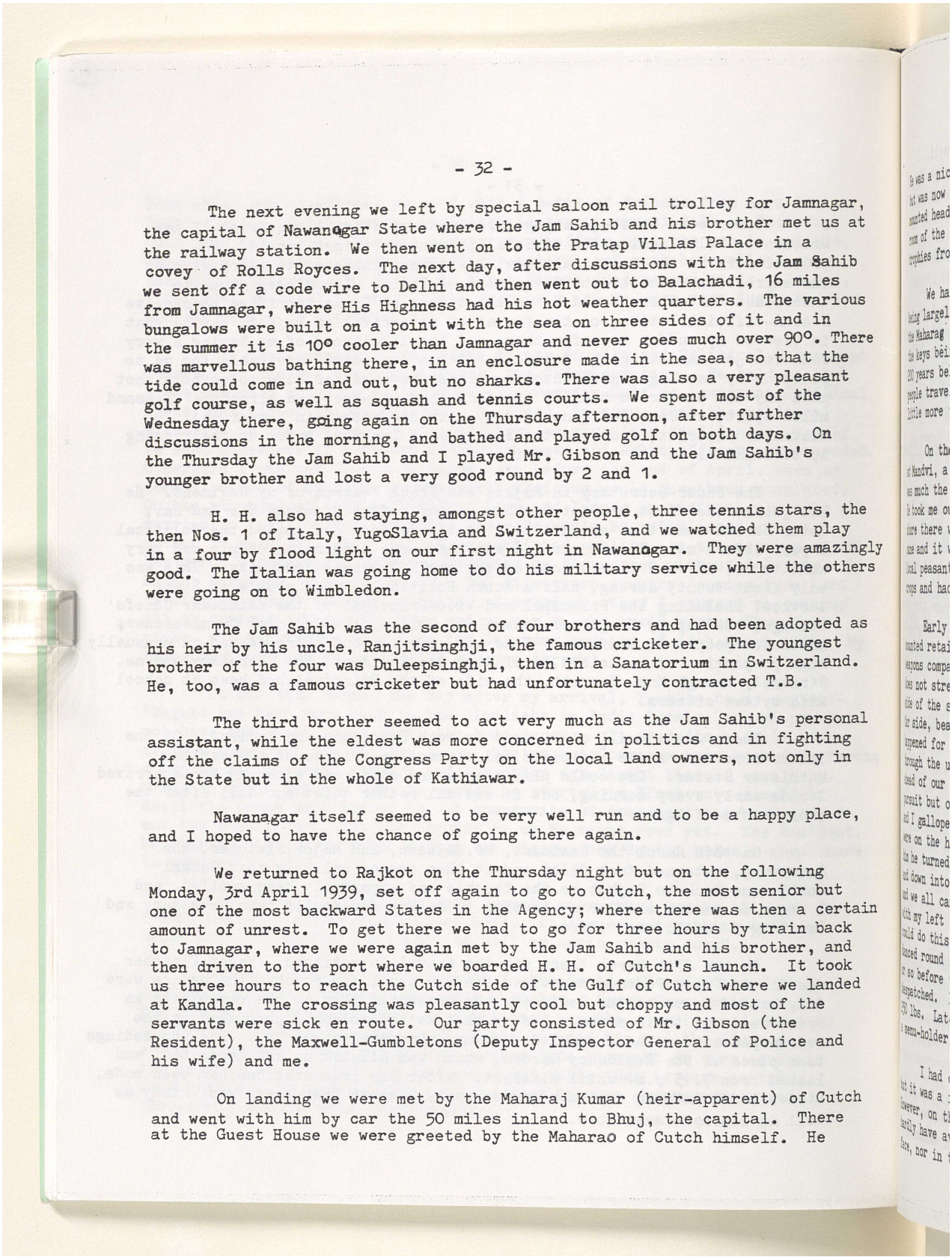
Some weeks before, having first made unofficial enquiries, I had written to Delhi asking for official permission to get married, as probationers in the Political Service were not supposed to marry without the express sanction of the Government of India. I had been given to understand that there would be no objection, so I was horrified to receive a semi-official letter, on the day after my arrival in Rajkot, saying that in view of my sudden transfer there and the likelihood of my having a very fulltime job assisting the Resident, it was considered advisable for me to postpone my marriage until October. This was a bitter blow to us both, not made any the easier to bear by the fact that we were then already a thousand miles apart, as Jane had gone to stay with her mother in Kurwar Raj, Sultanpur District, Oudh, on the far side of Lucknow, prior to their going up to Nainital at the end of April.

The Under-Secretary in Rajkot was Frank Pearson of my Regiment. He had joined the first Bn. 1st Gurkhas a year before I joined the 2nd Bn., later served some time as an A.D.C. to the Viceroy and joined the Political a year before me. He was married and they were a charming couple and very kind to me; as were indeed most of the small European community. This was only about twenty strong, half a dozen Politicals, some people in State Service, including the Principal and Vice-Principal of the Kathiawar Chiefs' College, the Deputy Inspector General of Police, the Judicial Commissioner's and a few people in business. Some were married but there seemed an unusually high proportion of bachelors, including the Resident, the Secretary and me. Strangely enough Mrs. Barrett, the wife of the Principal had been at school with my two sisters.

There was a small club, used by both Europeans and Indians. Of the latter some were state officials and others the princes of the various Kathiawar States. One could play tennis and golf, and after my horse arrived I rode early every morning, but it was all rather quiet and dull after the excitements of Agra.

On 18th March the Resident, Mr. Gibson, and Major Fletcher, the Secretary, returned from Delhi and it then seemed unlikely that Gandhi would come back to Rajkot as the trouble had apparently been settled, and I began to wonder whether my posting to Rajkot had really been necessary and how long I should stay there.

On the 27th March there was the Annual Investiture. Major Fletcher was ill so Frank Pearson deputised for him and I for Frank. The orders were duly handed by me to the Resident, who presented them to the recipients as Frank read out their names. Before that we had solemnly processed up the red carpet amidst the assembled company, numbering about 150. The proceedings took place in the Residency Garden, which was all lit up and decorated, and lasted from 9.15 p.m. until midnight. After the presentations had been made, it developed into an ordinary garden party, except that there was whisky as well as lemonade available.



The next evening we left by special saloon rail trolley for Jamnagar, the capital of Nawanagar State where the Jam Sahib and his brother met us at the railway station. We then went on to the Pratap Villas Palace in a covey of Rolls Royces. The next day, after discussions with the Jam Sahib we sent off a code wire to Delhi and then went out to Balachadi, 16 miles from Jamnagar, where His Highness had his hot weather quarters. The various bungalows were built on a point with the sea on three sides of it and in the summer it is 10° cooler than Jamnagar and never goes much over 90°. There was marvellous bathing there, in an enclosure made in the sea, so that the tide could come in and out, but no sharks. There was also a very pleasant golf course, as well as squash and tennis courts. We spent most of the Wednesday there, going again on the Thursday afternoon, after further discussions in the morning, and bathed and played golf on both days. On the Thursday the Jam Sahib and I played Mr. Gibson and the Jam Sahib's younger brother and lost a very good round by 2 and 1.

H. H. also had staying, amongst other people, three tennis stars, the then Nos. 1 of Italy, YugoSlavia and Switzerland, and we watched them play in a four by flood light on our first night in Nawanagar. They were amazingly good. The Italian was going home to do his military service while the others were going on to Wimbledon.

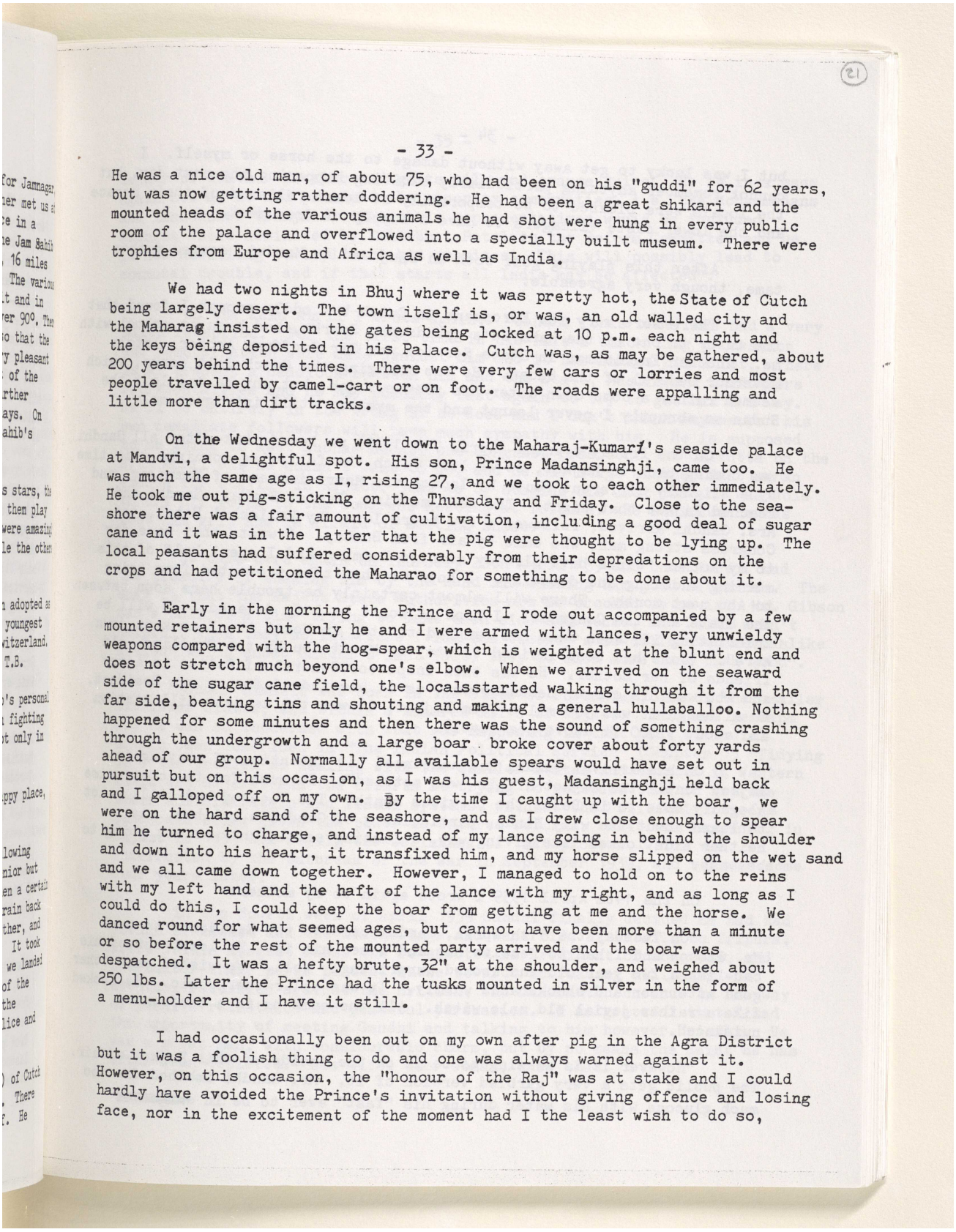
The Jam Sahib was the second of four brothers and had been adopted as his heir by his uncle, Ranjitsinghji, the famous cricketer. The youngest brother of the four was Duleepsinghji, then in a Sanatorium in Switzerland. He, too, was a famous cricketer but had unfortunately contracted T.B.

The third brother seemed to act very much as the Jam Sahib's personal assistant, while the eldest was more concerned in politics and in fighting off the claims of the Congress Party on the local land owners, not only in the State but in the whole of Kathiawar.

Nawanagar itself seemed to be very well run and to be a happy place, and I hoped to have the chance of going there again.

We returned to Rajkot on the Thursday night but on the following Monday, 3rd April 1939, set off again to go to Cutch, the most senior but one of the most backward States in the Agency; where there was then a certain amount of unrest. To get there we had to go for three hours by train back to Jamnagar, where we were again met by the Jam Sahib and his brother, and then driven to the port where we boarded H. H. of Cutch's launch. It took us three hours to reach the Cutch side of the Gulf of Cutch where we landed at Kandla. The crossing was pleasantly cool but choppy and most of the servants were sick en route. Our party consisted of Mr. Gibson (the Resident), the Maxwell-Gumbletons (Deputy Inspector General of Police and his wife) and me.

On landing we were met by the Maharaj Kumar (heir-apparent) of Cutch and went with him by car the 50 miles inland to Bhuj, the capital. There at the Guest House we were greeted by the Maharao of Cutch himself. He



- 33 -

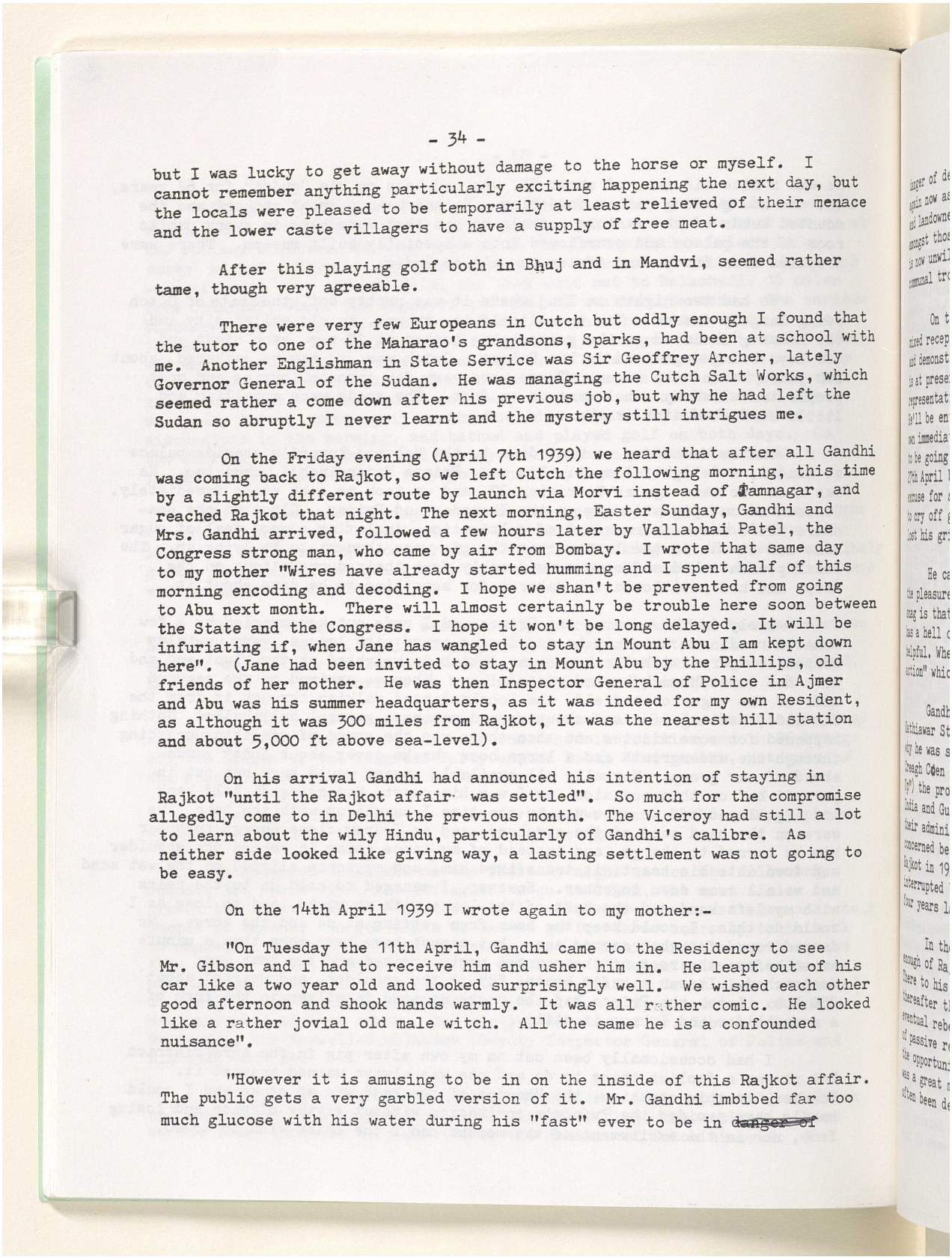
He was a nice old man, of about 75, who had been on his "guddi" for 62 years, but was now getting rather doddering. He had been a great shikari and the mounted heads of the various animals he had shot were hung in every public room of the palace and overflowed into a specially built museum. There were trophies from Europe and Africa as well as India.

We had two nights in Bhuj where it was pretty hot, the State of Cutch being largely desert. The town itself is, or was, an old walled city and the Maharag insisted on the gates being locked at 10 p.m. each night and the keys being deposited in his Palace. Cutch was, as may be gathered, about 200 years behind the times. There were very few cars or lorries and most people travelled by camel-cart or on foot. The roads were appalling and little more than dirt tracks.

On the Wednesday we went down to the Maharaj-Kumari's seaside palace at Mandvi, a delightful spot. His son, Prince Madansinghji, came too. He was much the same age as I, rising 27, and we took to each other immediately. He took me out pig-sticking on the Thursday and Friday. Close to the sea-shore there was a fair amount of cultivation, including a good deal of sugar cane and it was in the latter that the pig were thought to be lying up. The local peasants had suffered considerably from their depredations on the crops and had petitioned the Maharao for something to be done about it.

Early in the morning the Prince and I rode out accompanied by a few mounted retainers but only he and I were armed with lances, very unwieldy weapons compared with the hog-spear, which is weighted at the blunt end and does not stretch much beyond one's elbow. When we arrived on the seaward side of the sugar cane field, the locals started walking through it from the far side, beating tins and shouting and making a general hullaballoo. Nothing happened for some minutes and then there was the sound of something crashing through the undergrowth and a large boar broke cover about forty yards ahead of our group. Normally all available spears would have set out in pursuit but on this occasion, as I was his guest, Madansinghji held back and I galloped off on my own. By the time I caught up with the boar, we were on the hard sand of the seashore, and as I drew close enough to spear him he turned to charge, and instead of my lance going in behind the shoulder and down into his heart, it transfixed him, and my horse slipped on the wet sand and we all came down together. However, I managed to hold on to the reins with my left hand and the haft of the lance with my right, and as long as I could do this, I could keep the boar from getting at me and the horse. We danced round for what seemed ages, but cannot have been more than a minute or so before the rest of the mounted party arrived and the boar was despatched. It was a hefty brute, 32" at the shoulder, and weighed about 250 lbs. Later the Prince had the tusks mounted in silver in the form of a menu-holder and I have it still.

I had occasionally been out on my own after pig in the Agra District but it was a foolish thing to do and one was always warned against it. However, on this occasion, the "honour of the Raj" was at stake and I could hardly have avoided the Prince's invitation without giving offence and losing face, nor in the excitement of the moment had I the least wish to do so,



but I was lucky to get away without damage to the horse or myself. I cannot remember anything particularly exciting happening the next day, but the locals were pleased to be temporarily at least relieved of their menace and the lower caste villagers to have a supply of free meat.

After this playing golf both in Bhuj and in Mandvi, seemed rather tame, though very agreeable.

There were very few Europeans in Cutch but oddly enough I found that the tutor to one of the Maharao's grandsons, Sparks, had been at school with me. Another Englishman in State Service was Sir Geoffrey Archer, lately Governor General of the Sudan. He was managing the Cutch Salt Works, which seemed rather a come down after his previous job, but why he had left the Sudan so abruptly I never learnt and the mystery still intrigues me.

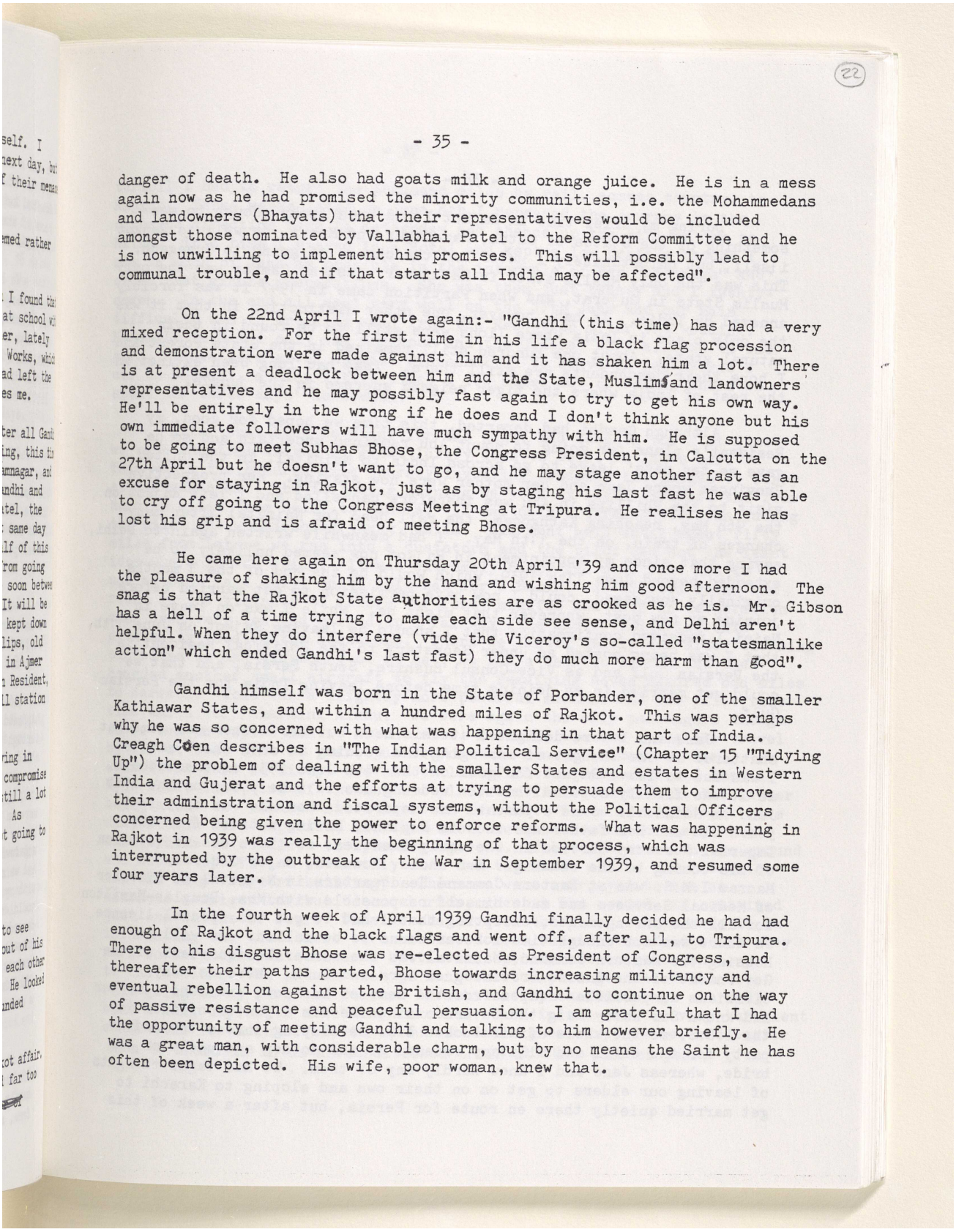
On the Friday evening (April 7th 1939) we heard that after all Gandhi was coming back to Rajkot, so we left Cutch the following morning, this time by a slightly different route by launch via Morvi instead of Jamnagar, and reached Rajkot that night. The next morning, Easter Sunday, Gandhi and Mrs. Gandhi arrived, followed a few hours later by Vallabhai Patel, the Congress strong man, who came by air from Bombay. I wrote that same day to my mother "Wires have already started humming and I spent half of this morning encoding and decoding. I hope we shan't be prevented from going to Abu next month. There will almost certainly be trouble here soon between the State and the Congress. I hope it won't be long delayed. It will be infuriating if, when Jane has wangled to stay in Mount Abu I am kept down here". (Jane had been invited to stay in Mount Abu by the Phillips, old friends of her mother. He was then Inspector General of Police in Ajmer and Abu was his summer headquarters, as it was indeed for my own Resident, as although it was 300 miles from Rajkot, it was the nearest hill station and about 5,000 ft above sea-level).

On his arrival Gandhi had announced his intention of staying in Rajkot "until the Rajkot affair was settled". So much for the compromise allegedly come to in Delhi the previous month. The Viceroy had still a lot to learn about the wily Hindu, particularly of Gandhi's calibre. As neither side looked like giving way, a lasting settlement was not going to be easy.

On the 14th April 1939 I wrote again to my mother:-

"On Tuesday the 11th April, Gandhi came to the Residency to see Mr. Gibson and I had to receive him and usher him in. He leapt out of his car like a two year old and looked surprisingly well. We wished each other good afternoon and shook hands warmly. It was all rather comic. He looked like a rather jovial old male witch. All the same he is a confounded nuisance".

"However it is amusing to be in on the inside of this Rajkot affair. The public gets a very garbled version of it. Mr. Gandhi imbibed far too much glucose with his water during his "fast" ever to be in ~~danger of~~



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- 35 -

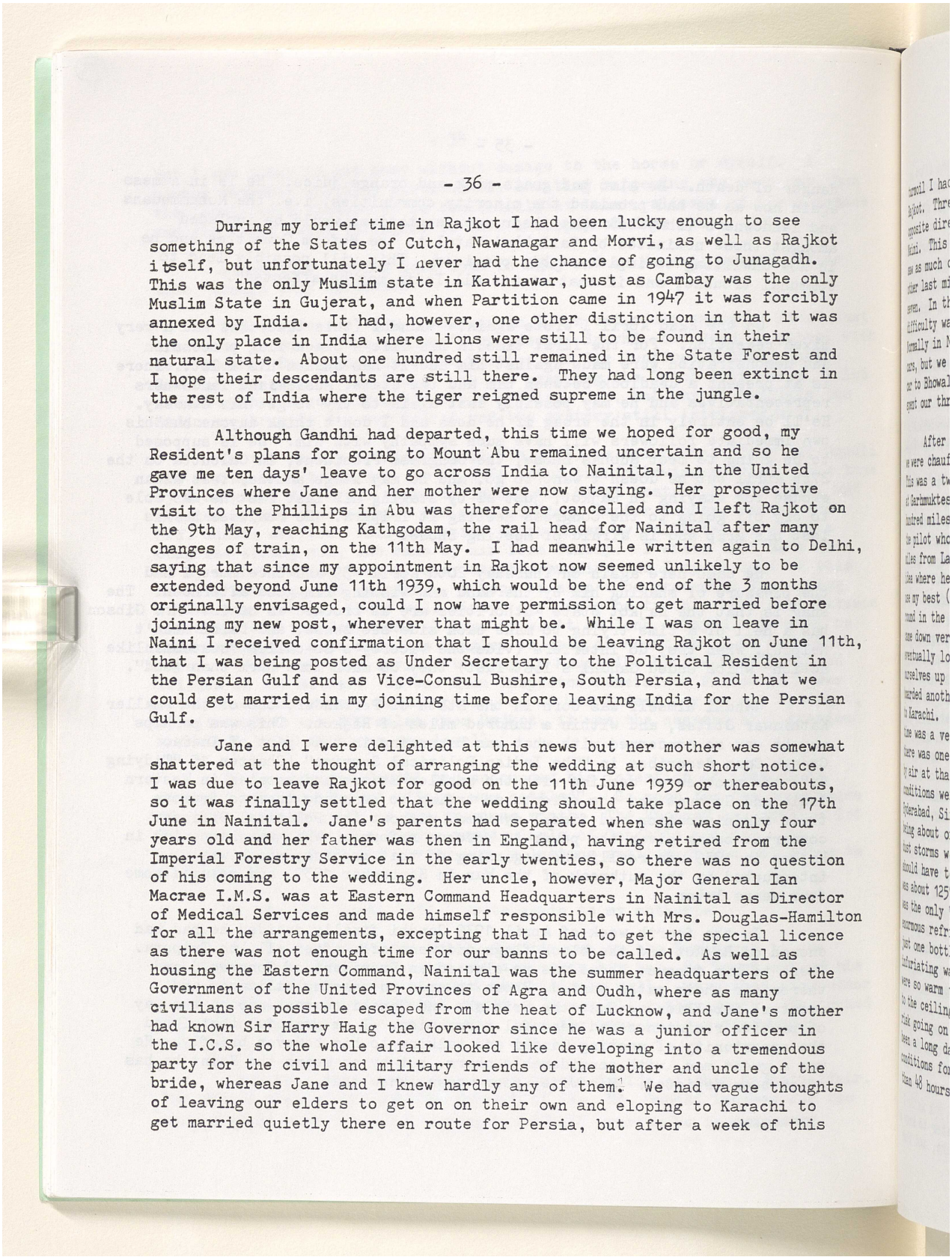
danger of death. He also had goats milk and orange juice. He is in a mess again now as he had promised the minority communities, i.e. the Mohammedans and landowners (Bhayats) that their representatives would be included amongst those nominated by Vallabhai Patel to the Reform Committee and he is now unwilling to implement his promises. This will possibly lead to communal trouble, and if that starts all India may be affected".

On the 22nd April I wrote again:- "Gandhi (this time) has had a very mixed reception. For the first time in his life a black flag procession and demonstration were made against him and it has shaken him a lot. There is at present a deadlock between him and the State, Muslims and landowners representatives and he may possibly fast again to try to get his own way. He'll be entirely in the wrong if he does and I don't think anyone but his own immediate followers will have much sympathy with him. He is supposed to be going to meet Subhas Bhose, the Congress President, in Calcutta on the 27th April but he doesn't want to go, and he may stage another fast as an excuse for staying in Rajkot, just as by staging his last fast he was able to cry off going to the Congress Meeting at Tripura. He realises he has lost his grip and is afraid of meeting Bhose.

He came here again on Thursday 20th April '39 and once more I had the pleasure of shaking him by the hand and wishing him good afternoon. The snag is that the Rajkot State authorities are as crooked as he is. Mr. Gibson has a hell of a time trying to make each side see sense, and Delhi aren't helpful. When they do interfere (vide the Viceroy's so-called "statesmanlike action" which ended Gandhi's last fast) they do much more harm than good".

Gandhi himself was born in the State of Porbander, one of the smaller Kathiawar States, and within a hundred miles of Rajkot. This was perhaps why he was so concerned with what was happening in that part of India. Creagh Coen describes in "The Indian Political Service" (Chapter 15 "Tidying Up") the problem of dealing with the smaller States and estates in Western India and Gujerat and the efforts at trying to persuade them to improve their administration and fiscal systems, without the Political Officers concerned being given the power to enforce reforms. What was happening in Rajkot in 1939 was really the beginning of that process, which was interrupted by the outbreak of the War in September 1939, and resumed some four years later.

In the fourth week of April 1939 Gandhi finally decided he had had enough of Rajkot and the black flags and went off, after all, to Tripura. There to his disgust Bhose was re-elected as President of Congress, and thereafter their paths parted, Bhose towards increasing militancy and eventual rebellion against the British, and Gandhi to continue on the way of passive resistance and peaceful persuasion. I am grateful that I had the opportunity of meeting Gandhi and talking to him however briefly. He was a great man, with considerable charm, but by no means the Saint he has often been depicted. His wife, poor woman, knew that.

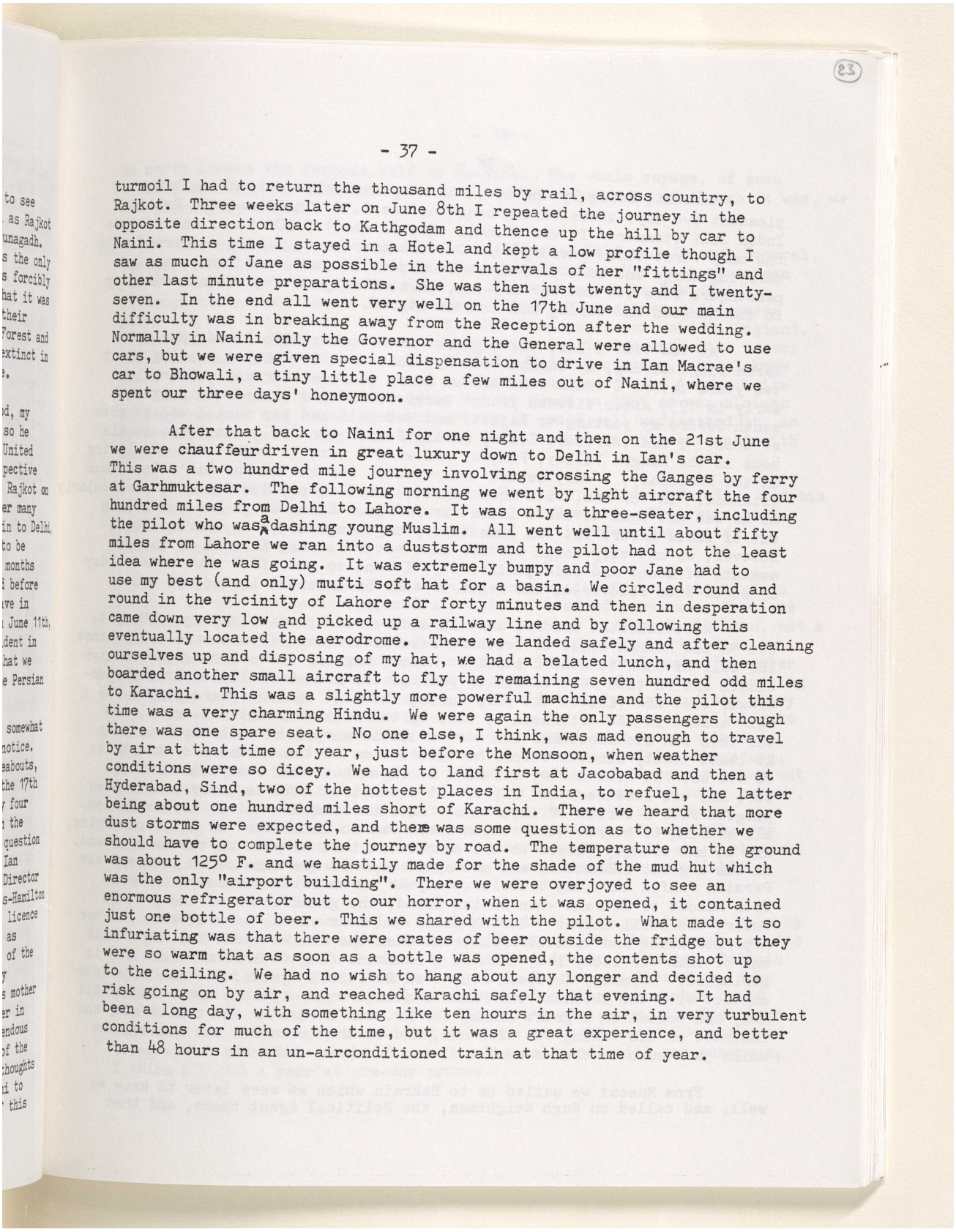


- 36 -

During my brief time in Rajkot I had been lucky enough to see something of the States of Cutch, Nawanagar and Morvi, as well as Rajkot itself, but unfortunately I never had the chance of going to Junagadh. This was the only Muslim state in Kathiawar, just as Cambay was the only Muslim State in Gujerat, and when Partition came in 1947 it was forcibly annexed by India. It had, however, one other distinction in that it was the only place in India where lions were still to be found in their natural state. About one hundred still remained in the State Forest and I hope their descendants are still there. They had long been extinct in the rest of India where the tiger reigned supreme in the jungle.

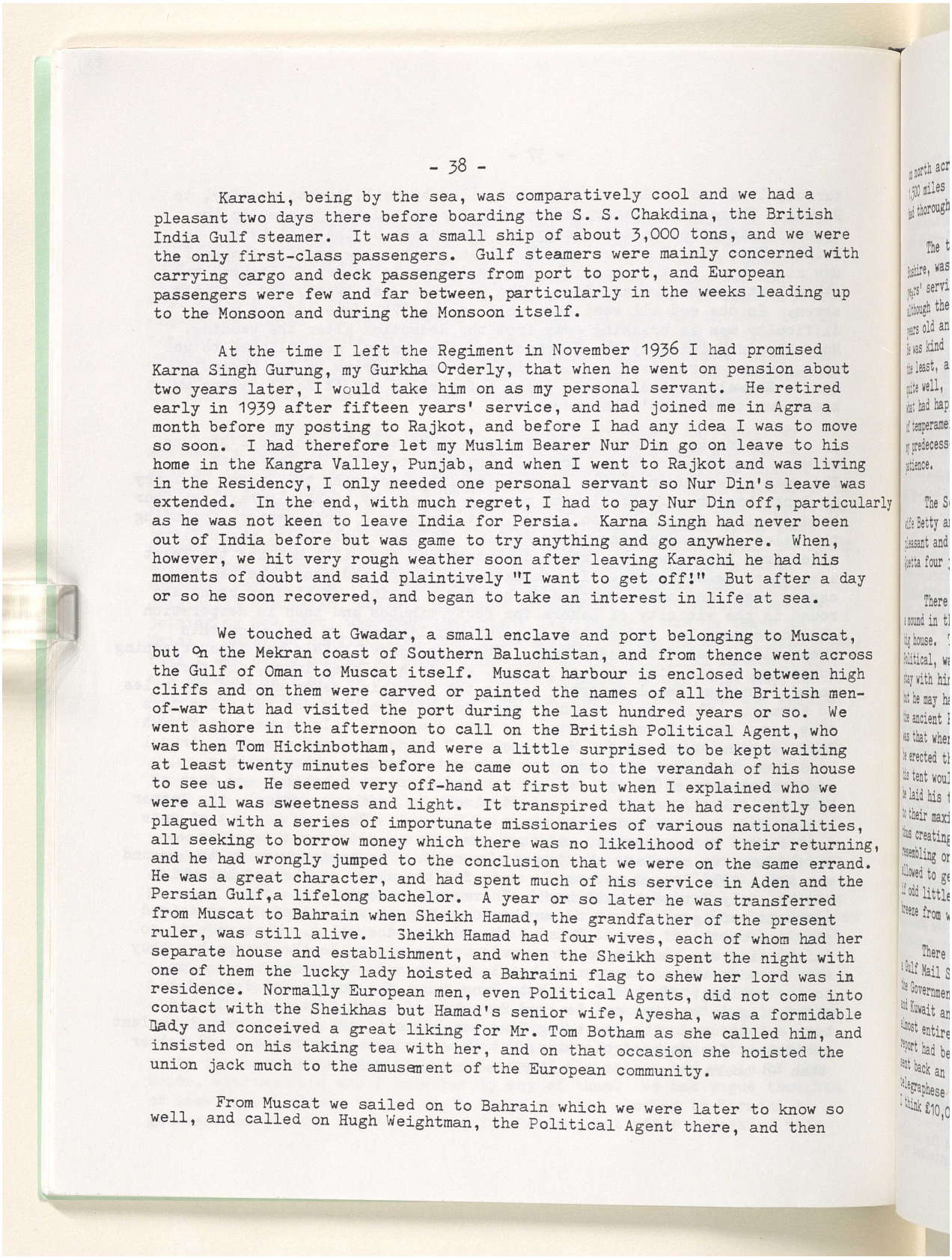
Although Gandhi had departed, this time we hoped for good, my Resident's plans for going to Mount Abu remained uncertain and so he gave me ten days' leave to go across India to Nainital, in the United Provinces where Jane and her mother were now staying. Her prospective visit to the Phillips in Abu was therefore cancelled and I left Rajkot on the 9th May, reaching Kathgodam, the rail head for Nainital after many changes of train, on the 11th May. I had meanwhile written again to Delhi, saying that since my appointment in Rajkot now seemed unlikely to be extended beyond June 11th 1939, which would be the end of the 3 months originally envisaged, could I now have permission to get married before joining my new post, wherever that might be. While I was on leave in Naini I received confirmation that I should be leaving Rajkot on June 11th, that I was being posted as Under Secretary to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf and as Vice-Consul Bushire, South Persia, and that we could get married in my joining time before leaving India for the Persian Gulf.

Jane and I were delighted at this news but her mother was somewhat shattered at the thought of arranging the wedding at such short notice. I was due to leave Rajkot for good on the 11th June 1939 or thereabouts, so it was finally settled that the wedding should take place on the 17th June in Nainital. Jane's parents had separated when she was only four years old and her father was then in England, having retired from the Imperial Forestry Service in the early twenties, so there was no question of his coming to the wedding. Her uncle, however, Major General Ian Macrae I.M.S. was at Eastern Command Headquarters in Nainital as Director of Medical Services and made himself responsible with Mrs. Douglas-Hamilton for all the arrangements, excepting that I had to get the special licence as there was not enough time for our banns to be called. As well as housing the Eastern Command, Nainital was the summer headquarters of the Government of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, where as many civilians as possible escaped from the heat of Lucknow, and Jane's mother had known Sir Harry Haig the Governor since he was a junior officer in the I.C.S. so the whole affair looked like developing into a tremendous party for the civil and military friends of the mother and uncle of the bride, whereas Jane and I knew hardly any of them. We had vague thoughts of leaving our elders to get on on their own and eloping to Karachi to get married quietly there en route for Persia, but after a week of this



turmoil I had to return the thousand miles by rail, across country, to Rajkot. Three weeks later on June 8th I repeated the journey in the opposite direction back to Kathgodam and thence up the hill by car to Naini. This time I stayed in a Hotel and kept a low profile though I saw as much of Jane as possible in the intervals of her "fittings" and other last minute preparations. She was then just twenty and I twenty-seven. In the end all went very well on the 17th June and our main difficulty was in breaking away from the Reception after the wedding. Normally in Naini only the Governor and the General were allowed to use cars, but we were given special dispensation to drive in Ian Macrae's car to Bhowali, a tiny little place a few miles out of Naini, where we spent our three days' honeymoon.

After that back to Naini for one night and then on the 21st June we were chauffeur driven in great luxury down to Delhi in Ian's car. This was a two hundred mile journey involving crossing the Ganges by ferry at Garhmuktesar. The following morning we went by light aircraft the four hundred miles from Delhi to Lahore. It was only a three-seater, including the pilot who was a dashing young Muslim. All went well until about fifty miles from Lahore we ran into a duststorm and the pilot had not the least idea where he was going. It was extremely bumpy and poor Jane had to use my best (and only) mufti soft hat for a basin. We circled round and round in the vicinity of Lahore for forty minutes and then in desperation came down very low and picked up a railway line and by following this eventually located the aerodrome. There we landed safely and after cleaning ourselves up and disposing of my hat, we had a belated lunch, and then boarded another small aircraft to fly the remaining seven hundred odd miles to Karachi. This was a slightly more powerful machine and the pilot this time was a very charming Hindu. We were again the only passengers though there was one spare seat. No one else, I think, was mad enough to travel by air at that time of year, just before the Monsoon, when weather conditions were so dicey. We had to land first at Jacobabad and then at Hyderabad, Sind, two of the hottest places in India, to refuel, the latter being about one hundred miles short of Karachi. There we heard that more dust storms were expected, and there was some question as to whether we should have to complete the journey by road. The temperature on the ground was about 125° F. and we hastily made for the shade of the mud hut which was the only "airport building". There we were overjoyed to see an enormous refrigerator but to our horror, when it was opened, it contained just one bottle of beer. This we shared with the pilot. What made it so infuriating was that there were crates of beer outside the fridge but they were so warm that as soon as a bottle was opened, the contents shot up to the ceiling. We had no wish to hang about any longer and decided to risk going on by air, and reached Karachi safely that evening. It had been a long day, with something like ten hours in the air, in very turbulent conditions for much of the time, but it was a great experience, and better than 48 hours in an un-airconditioned train at that time of year.

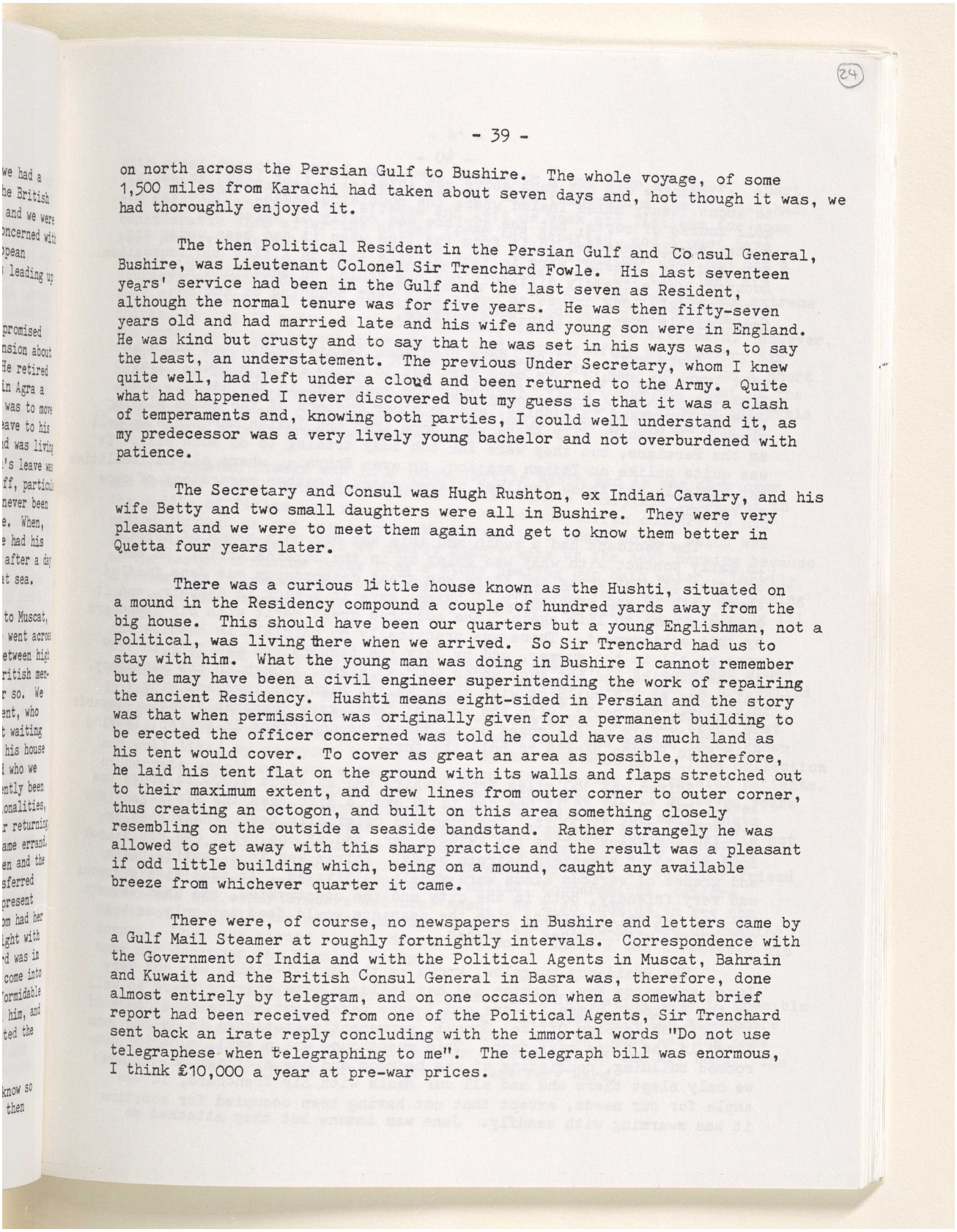


Karachi, being by the sea, was comparatively cool and we had a pleasant two days there before boarding the S. S. Chakdina, the British India Gulf steamer. It was a small ship of about 3,000 tons, and we were the only first-class passengers. Gulf steamers were mainly concerned with carrying cargo and deck passengers from port to port, and European passengers were few and far between, particularly in the weeks leading up to the Monsoon and during the Monsoon itself.

At the time I left the Regiment in November 1936 I had promised Karna Singh Gurung, my Gurkha Orderly, that when he went on pension about two years later, I would take him on as my personal servant. He retired early in 1939 after fifteen years' service, and had joined me in Agra a month before my posting to Rajkot, and before I had any idea I was to move so soon. I had therefore let my Muslim Bearer Nur Din go on leave to his home in the Kangra Valley, Punjab, and when I went to Rajkot and was living in the Residency, I only needed one personal servant so Nur Din's leave was extended. In the end, with much regret, I had to pay Nur Din off, particularly as he was not keen to leave India for Persia. Karna Singh had never been out of India before but was game to try anything and go anywhere. When, however, we hit very rough weather soon after leaving Karachi he had his moments of doubt and said plaintively "I want to get off!" But after a day or so he soon recovered, and began to take an interest in life at sea.

We touched at Gwadar, a small enclave and port belonging to Muscat, but on the Mekran coast of Southern Baluchistan, and from thence went across the Gulf of Oman to Muscat itself. Muscat harbour is enclosed between high cliffs and on them were carved or painted the names of all the British men-of-war that had visited the port during the last hundred years or so. We went ashore in the afternoon to call on the British Political Agent, who was then Tom Hickinbotham, and were a little surprised to be kept waiting at least twenty minutes before he came out on to the verandah of his house to see us. He seemed very off-hand at first but when I explained who we were all was sweetness and light. It transpired that he had recently been plagued with a series of importunate missionaries of various nationalities, all seeking to borrow money which there was no likelihood of their returning, and he had wrongly jumped to the conclusion that we were on the same errand. He was a great character, and had spent much of his service in Aden and the Persian Gulf,a lifelong bachelor. A year or so later he was transferred from Muscat to Bahrain when Sheikh Hamad, the grandfather of the present ruler, was still alive. Sheikh Hamad had four wives, each of whom had her separate house and establishment, and when the Sheikh spent the night with one of them the lucky lady hoisted a Bahraini flag to shew her lord was in residence. Normally European men, even Political Agents, did not come into contact with the Sheikhas but Hamad's senior wife, Ayesha, was a formidable lady and conceived a great liking for Mr. Tom Botham as she called him, and insisted on his taking tea with her, and on that occasion she hoisted the union jack much to the amusement of the European community.

From Muscat we sailed on to Bahrain which we were later to know so well, and called on Hugh Weightman, the Political Agent there, and then



24

- 39 -

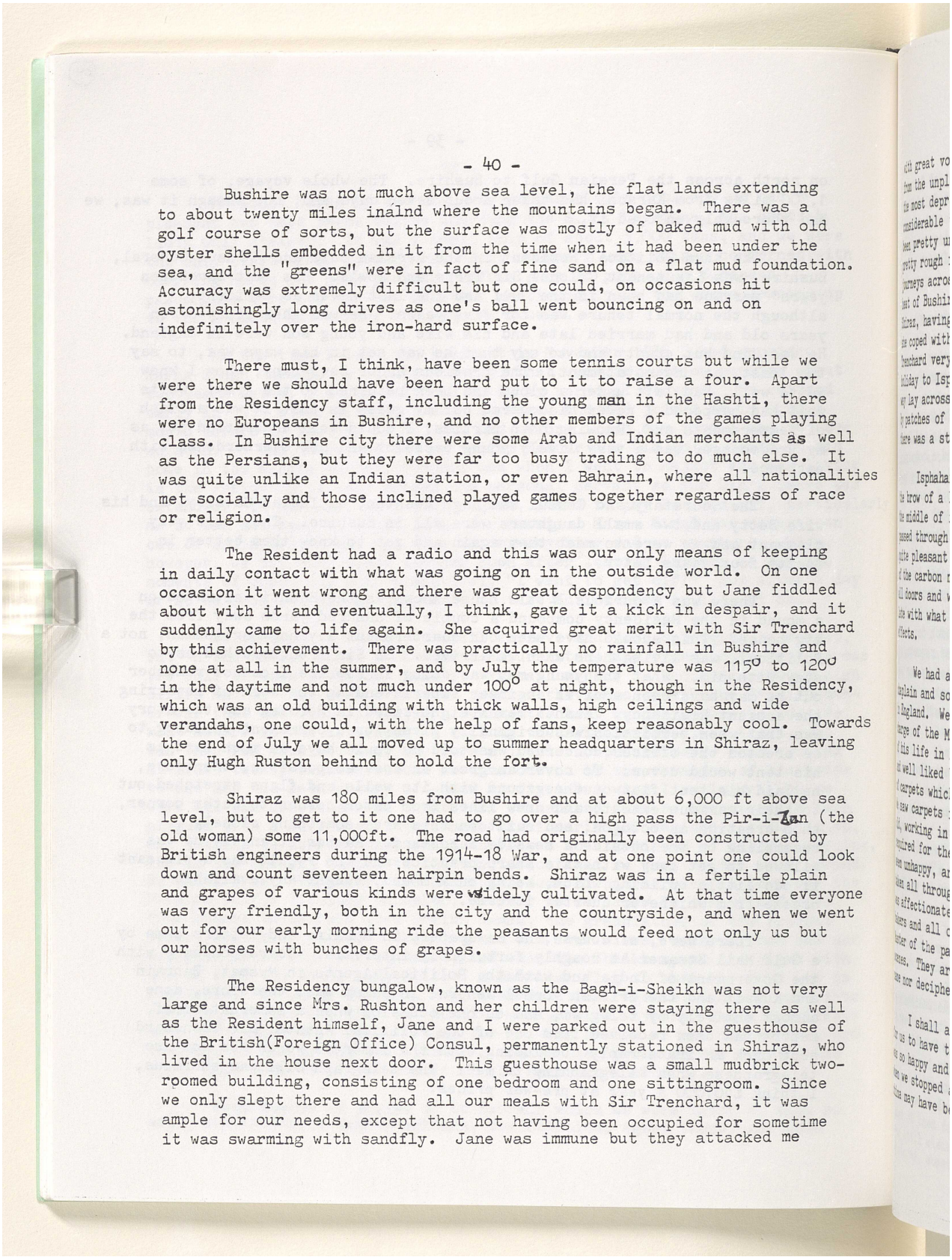
on north across the Persian Gulf to Bushire. The whole voyage, of some 1,500 miles from Karachi had taken about seven days and, hot though it was, we had thoroughly enjoyed it.

The then Political Resident in the Persian Gulf and Consul General, Bushire, was Lieutenant Colonel Sir Trenchard Fowle. His last seventeen years' service had been in the Gulf and the last seven as Resident, although the normal tenure was for five years. He was then fifty-seven years old and had married late and his wife and young son were in England. He was kind but crusty and to say that he was set in his ways was, to say the least, an understatement. The previous Under Secretary, whom I knew quite well, had left under a cloud and been returned to the Army. Quite what had happened I never discovered but my guess is that it was a clash of temperaments and, knowing both parties, I could well understand it, as my predecessor was a very lively young bachelor and not overburdened with patience.

The Secretary and Consul was Hugh Rushton, ex Indian Cavalry, and his wife Betty and two small daughters were all in Bushire. They were very pleasant and we were to meet them again and get to know them better in Quetta four years later.

There was a curious little house known as the Hushti, situated on a mound in the Residency compound a couple of hundred yards away from the big house. This should have been our quarters but a young Englishman, not a Political, was living there when we arrived. So Sir Trenchard had us to stay with him. What the young man was doing in Bushire I cannot remember but he may have been a civil engineer superintending the work of repairing the ancient Residency. Hushti means eight-sided in Persian and the story was that when permission was originally given for a permanent building to be erected the officer concerned was told he could have as much land as his tent would cover. To cover as great an area as possible, therefore, he laid his tent flat on the ground with its walls and flaps stretched out to their maximum extent, and drew lines from outer corner to outer corner, thus creating an octogon, and built on this area something closely resembling on the outside a seaside bandstand. Rather strangely he was allowed to get away with this sharp practice and the result was a pleasant if odd little building which, being on a mound, caught any available breeze from whichever quarter it came.

There were, of course, no newspapers in Bushire and letters came by a Gulf Mail Steamer at roughly fortnightly intervals. Correspondence with the Government of India and with the Political Agents in Muscat, Bahrain and Kuwait and the British Consul General in Basra was, therefore, done almost entirely by telegram, and on one occasion when a somewhat brief report had been received from one of the Political Agents, Sir Trenchard sent back an irate reply concluding with the immortal words "Do not use telegraphese when telegraphing to me". The telegraph bill was enormous, I think £10,000 a year at pre-war prices.



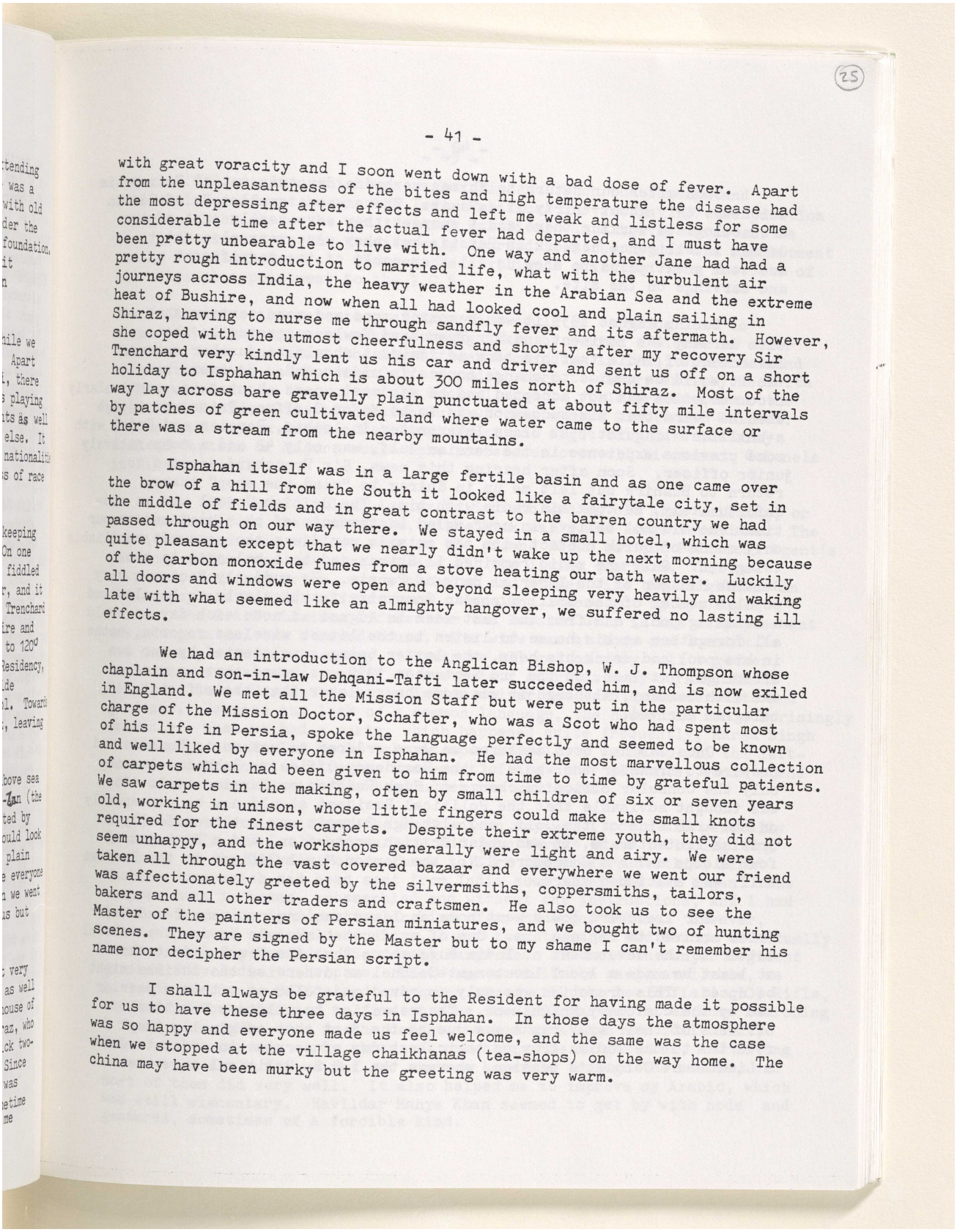
Bushire was not much above sea level, the flat lands extending to about twenty miles inalnd where the mountains began. There was a golf course of sorts, but the surface was mostly of baked mud with old oyster shells embedded in it from the time when it had been under the sea, and the "greens" were in fact of fine sand on a flat mud foundation. Accuracy was extremely difficult but one could, on occasions hit astonishingly long drives as one's ball went bouncing on and on indefinitely over the iron-hard surface.

There must, I think, have been some tennis courts but while we were there we should have been hard put to it to raise a four. Apart from the Residency staff, including the young man in the Hashti, there were no Europeans in Bushire, and no other members of the games playing class. In Bushire city there were some Arab and Indian merchants as well as the Persians, but they were far too busy trading to do much else. It was quite unlike an Indian station, or even Bahrain, where all nationalities met socially and those inclined played games together regardless of race or religion.

The Resident had a radio and this was our only means of keeping in daily contact with what was going on in the outside world. On one occasion it went wrong and there was great despondency but Jane fiddled about with it and eventually, I think, gave it a kick in despair, and it suddenly came to life again. She acquired great merit with Sir Trenchard by this achievement. There was practically no rainfall in Bushire and none at all in the summer, and by July the temperature was 115° to 120° in the daytime and not much under 100° at night, though in the Residency, which was an old building with thick walls, high ceilings and wide verandahs, one could, with the help of fans, keep reasonably cool. Towards the end of July we all moved up to summer headquarters in Shiraz, leaving only Hugh Ruston behind to hold the fort.

Shiraz was 180 miles from Bushire and at about 6,000 ft above sea level, but to get to it one had to go over a high pass the Pir-i-Zan (the old woman) some 11,000ft. The road had originally been constructed by British engineers during the 1914-18 War, and at one point one could look down and count seventeen hairpin bends. Shiraz was in a fertile plain and grapes of various kinds were widely cultivated. At that time everyone was very friendly, both in the city and the countryside, and when we went out for our early morning ride the peasants would feed not only us but our horses with bunches of grapes.

The Residency bungalow, known as the Bagh-i-Sheikh was not very large and since Mrs. Rushton and her children were staying there as well as the Resident himself, Jane and I were parked out in the guesthouse of the British(Foreign Office) Consul, permanently stationed in Shiraz, who lived in the house next door. This guesthouse was a small mudbrick two-roomed building, consisting of one bedroom and one sittingroom. Since we only slept there and had all our meals with Sir Trenchard, it was ample for our needs, except that not having been occupied for sometime it was swarming with sandfly. Jane was immune but they attacked me

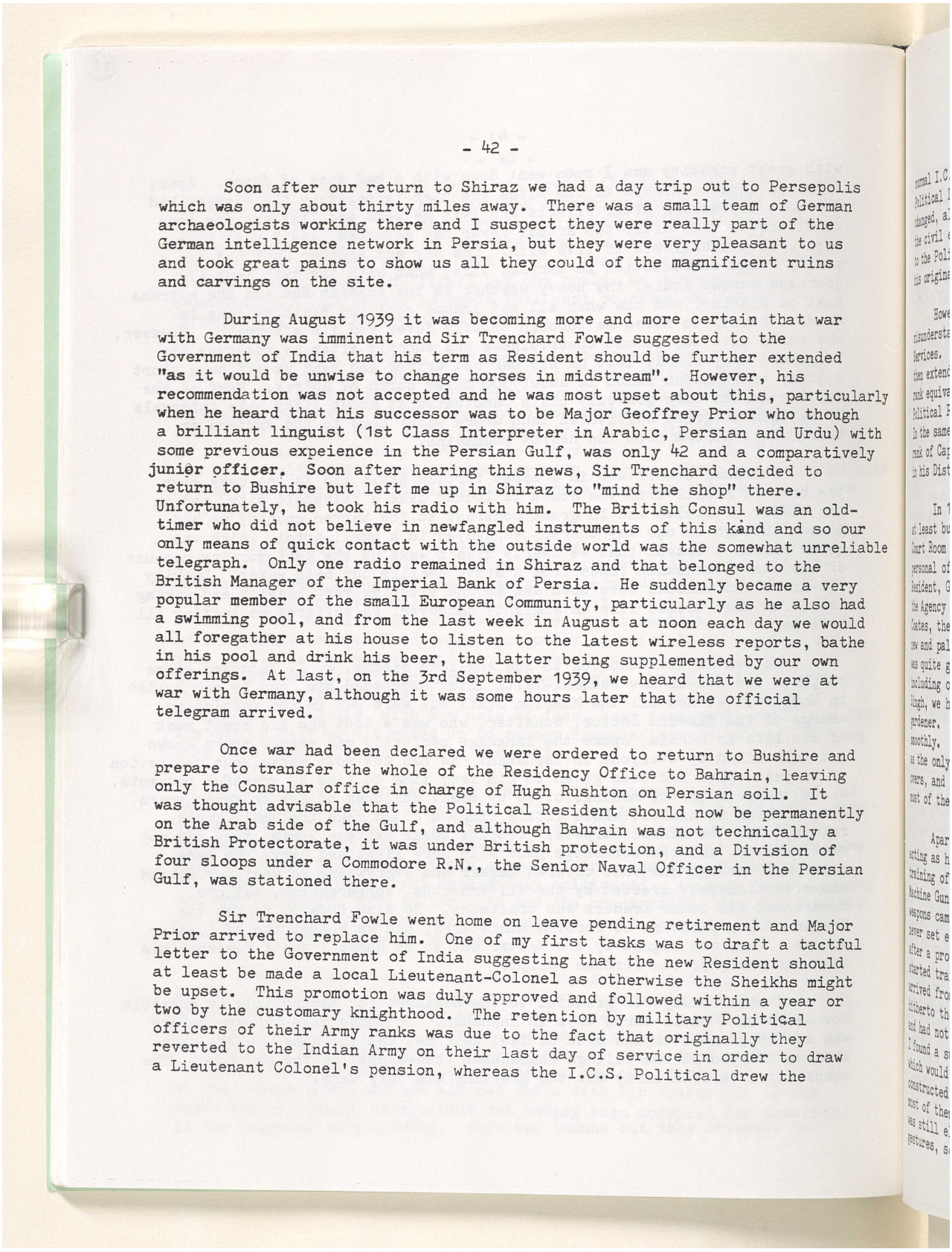


with great voracity and I soon went down with a bad dose of fever. Apart from the unpleasantness of the bites and high temperature the disease had the most depressing after effects and left me weak and listless for some considerable time after the actual fever had departed, and I must have been pretty unbearable to live with. One way and another Jane had had a pretty rough introduction to married life, what with the turbulent air journeys across India, the heavy weather in the Arabian Sea and the extreme heat of Bushire, and now when all had looked cool and plain sailing in Shiraz, having to nurse me through sandfly fever and its aftermath. However, she coped with the utmost cheerfulness and shortly after my recovery Sir Trenchard very kindly lent us his car and driver and sent us off on a short holiday to Isphahan which is about 300 miles north of Shiraz. Most of the way lay across bare gravelly plain punctuated at about fifty mile intervals by patches of green cultivated land where water came to the surface or there was a stream from the nearby mountains.

Isphahan itself was in a large fertile basin and as one came over the brow of a hill from the South it looked like a fairytale city, set in the middle of fields and in great contrast to the barren country we had passed through on our way there. We stayed in a small hotel, which was quite pleasant except that we nearly didn't wake up the next morning because of the carbon monoxide fumes from a stove heating our bath water. Luckily all doors and windows were open and beyond sleeping very heavily and waking late with what seemed like an almighty hangover, we suffered no lasting ill effects.

We had an introduction to the Anglican Bishop, W. J. Thompson whose chaplain and son-in-law Dehqani-Tafti later succeeded him, and is now exiled in England. We met all the Mission Staff but were put in the particular charge of the Mission Doctor, Schafter, who was a Scot who had spent most of his life in Persia, spoke the language perfectly and seemed to be known and well liked by everyone in Isphahan. He had the most marvellous collection of carpets which had been given to him from time to time by grateful patients. We saw carpets in the making, often by small children of six or seven years old, working in unison, whose little fingers could make the small knots required for the finest carpets. Despite their extreme youth, they did not seem unhappy, and the workshops generally were light and airy. We were taken all through the vast covered bazaar and everywhere we went our friend was affectionately greeted by the silvermsiths, coppersmiths, tailors, bakers and all other traders and craftsmen. He also took us to see the Master of the painters of Persian miniatures, and we bought two of hunting scenes. They are signed by the Master but to my shame I can't remember his name nor decipher the Persian script.

I shall always be grateful to the Resident for having made it possible for us to have these three days in Isphahan. In those days the atmosphere was so happy and everyone made us feel welcome, and the same was the case when we stopped at the village chaikhanas (tea-shops) on the way home. The china may have been murky but the greeting was very warm.



Soon after our return to Shiraz we had a day trip out to Persepolis which was only about thirty miles away. There was a small team of German archaeologists working there and I suspect they were really part of the German intelligence network in Persia, but they were very pleasant to us and took great pains to show us all they could of the magnificent ruins and carvings on the site.

During August 1939 it was becoming more and more certain that war with Germany was imminent and Sir Trenchard Fowle suggested to the Government of India that his term as Resident should be further extended "as it would be unwise to change horses in midstream". However, his recommendation was not accepted and he was most upset about this, particularly when he heard that his successor was to be Major Geoffrey Prior who though a brilliant linguist (1st Class Interpreter in Arabic, Persian and Urdu) with some previous expeience in the Persian Gulf, was only 42 and a comparatively junior officer. Soon after hearing this news, Sir Trenchard decided to return to Bushire but left me up in Shiraz to "mind the shop" there. Unfortunately, he took his radio with him. The British Consul was an old-timer who did not believe in newfangled instruments of this kand and so our only means of quick contact with the outside world was the somewhat unreliable telegraph. Only one radio remained in Shiraz and that belonged to the British Manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia. He suddenly became a very popular member of the small European Community, particularly as he also had a swimming pool, and from the last week in August at noon each day we would all foregather at his house to listen to the latest wireless reports, bathe in his pool and drink his beer, the latter being supplemented by our own offerings. At last, on the 3rd September 1939, we heard that we were at war with Germany, although it was some hours later that the official telegram arrived.

Once war had been declared we were ordered to return to Bushire and prepare to transfer the whole of the Residency Office to Bahrain, leaving only the Consular office in charge of Hugh Rushton on Persian soil. It was thought advisable that the Political Resident should now be permanently on the Arab side of the Gulf, and although Bahrain was not technically a British Protectorate, it was under British protection, and a Division of four sloops under a Commodore R.N., the Senior Naval Officer in the Persian Gulf, was stationed there.

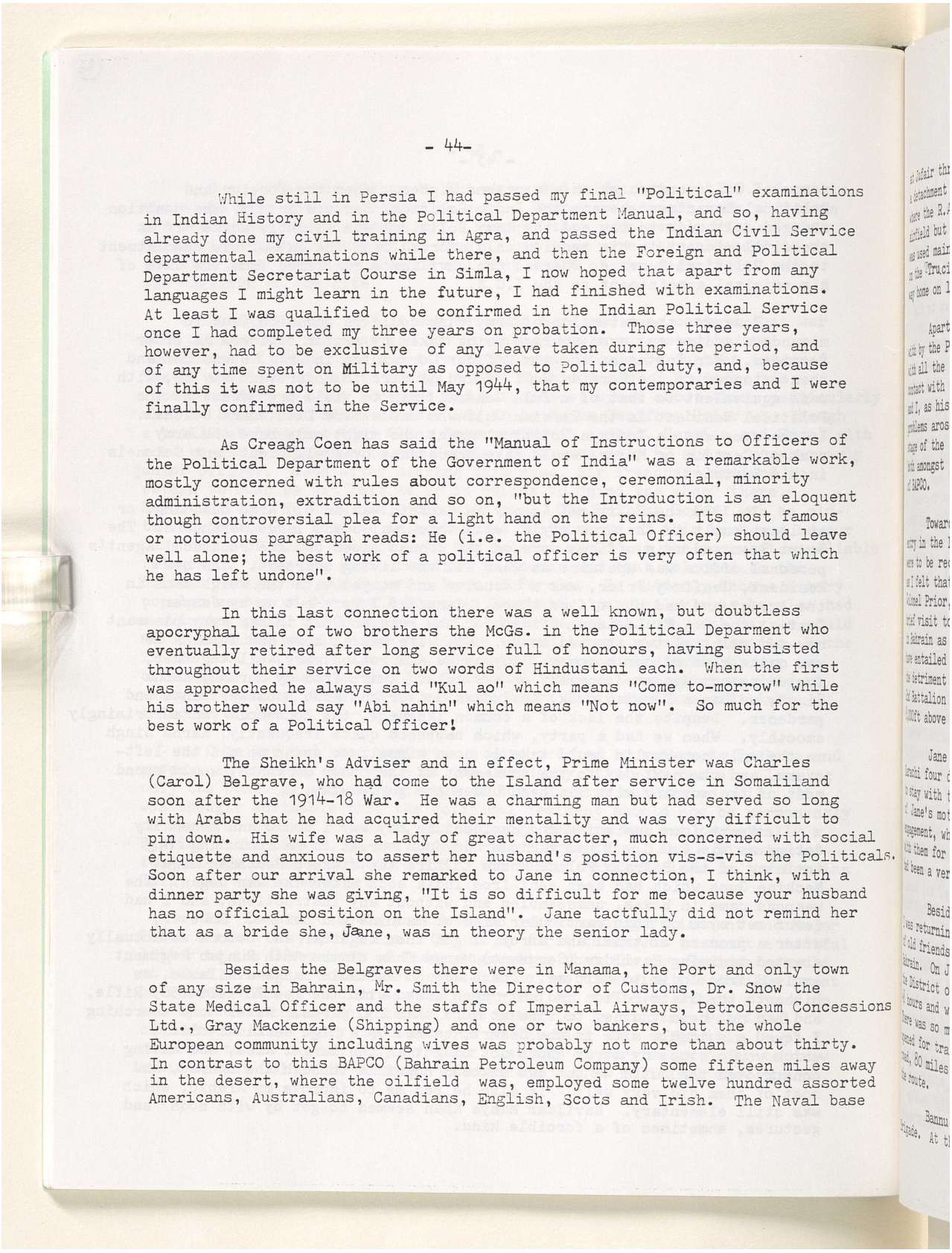
Sir Trenchard Fowle went home on leave pending retirement and Major Prior arrived to replace him. One of my first tasks was to draft a tactful letter to the Government of India suggesting that the new Resident should at least be made a local Lieutenant-Colonel as otherwise the Sheikhs might be upset. This promotion was duly approved and followed within a year or two by the customary knighthood. The retention by military Political officers of their Army ranks was due to the fact that originally they reverted to the Indian Army on their last day of service in order to draw a Lieutenant Colonel's pension, whereas the I.C.S. Political drew the

normal I.C.S. pension which was rather higher. When the Foreign and Political Department became the India Political Service in 1937 the position changed, although to the end the Army Political was slightly worse off as the civil element in his pension only accrued from the date of his appointment to the Political Service, whereas the civilian's qualified from the date of his original appointment to the I.C.S.

However, the retention of Army rank could on occasion lead to misunderstanding and even umbrage being taken by senior officers in other Services. For instance, the Air Officer Commanding in Iraq, whose command then extended to the Persian Gulf, found it hard to understand why he, with rank equivalent to that of a full General, had to yield precedence to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf who was a mere Lieutenant Colonel. In the same way in India a Political Agent who might only have the army rank of Captain or Major, would take precedence over all Lieutenant Colonels in his District.

In 1939 the Political Agency in Bahrain was an old Arab building, or at least built in the Arab style, with thick walls and large verandahs. The Court Room and main offices were on the ground floor but the Political Agent's personal office was upstairs as were all the living quarters. The new Resident, Geoffrey Prior, was a bachelor and stayed with the Weightmans in the Agency and had his office there. Jane and I were put up by Jasper Coates, the R.A.F. Liaison Officer for the Persian Gulf in his very pleasant new and palatial two storied house. His wife was at home and I think he was quite glad of our company. Anyway we all got on very well together, including our assorted company of servants. Apart from my Gurkha, Karna Singh, we had a Persian cook, an Indian driver and Arab house-servants and gardener. Despite the lack of a common language, the household ran surprisingly smoothly. When we had a party, which happened quite frequently, Karna Singh as the only non-Muslim would take it upon himself to drink up all the left-overs, and the next day to the amusement of the other servants, would spend most of the morning with his head under the garden-tap.

Apart from assisting the Resident in any way I could and generally acting as his A.D.C., I had various odd jobs thrust on me including the training of the Bahrain Police Force to fire the Vickers Berthier Light Machine Guns which had been sent from India soon after the war began. The weapons came in boxes, unassembled and without any instructions, and I had never set eyes on this particular kind of machine gun before. However, after a process of trial and error, I got them together and before we actually started training Havildar (Sergeant) Manya Khan of the 16th Punjab Regiment arrived from India to help me. There was no suitable range available, as hitherto the State Police had only been armed with the Lee Enfield .303 Rifle, and had not been trained to fire at more than 200 yards. After some searching I found a suitable site in the desert, backed by a high vertical cliff, which would stop any stray shots not caught in the target area, and having constructed the butts we put our sixteen hopefuls through the course, and most of them did very well. It also helped me to improve my Arabic, which was still elementary. Havildar Manya Khan seemed to get by with nods and gestures, sometimes of a forcible kind.



While still in Persia I had passed my final "Political" examinations in Indian History and in the Political Department Manual, and so, having already done my civil training in Agra, and passed the Indian Civil Service departmental examinations while there, and then the Foreign and Political Department Secretariat Course in Simla, I now hoped that apart from any languages I might learn in the future, I had finished with examinations. At least I was qualified to be confirmed in the Indian Political Service once I had completed my three years on probation. Those three years, however, had to be exclusive of any leave taken during the period, and of any time spent on Military as opposed to Political duty, and, because of this it was not to be until May 1944, that my contemporaries and I were finally confirmed in the Service.

As Creagh Coen has said the "Manual of Instructions to Officers of the Political Department of the Government of India" was a remarkable work, mostly concerned with rules about correspondence, ceremonial, minority administration, extradition and so on, "but the Introduction is an eloquent though controversial plea for a light hand on the reins. Its most famous or notorious paragraph reads: He (i.e. the Political Officer) should leave well alone; the best work of a political officer is very often that which he has left undone".

In this last connection there was a well known, but doubtless apocryphal tale of two brothers the McGs. in the Political Deparment who eventually retired after long service full of honours, having subsisted throughout their service on two words of Hindustani each. When the first was approached he always said "Kul ao" which means "Come to-morrow" while his brother would say "Abi nahin" which means "Not now". So much for the best work of a Political Officer!

The Sheikh's Adviser and in effect, Prime Minister was Charles (Carol) Belgrave, who had come to the Island after service in Somaliland soon after the 1914-18 War. He was a charming man but had served so long with Arabs that he had acquired their mentality and was very difficult to pin down. His wife was a lady of great character, much concerned with social etiquette and anxious to assert her husband's position vis-s-vis the Politicals. Soon after our arrival she remarked to Jane in connection, I think, with a dinner party she was giving, "It is so difficult for me because your husband has no official position on the Island". Jane tactfully did not remind her that as a bride she, Jane, was in theory the senior lady.

Besides the Belgraves there were in Manama, the Port and only town of any size in Bahrain, Mr. Smith the Director of Customs, Dr. Snow the State Medical Officer and the staffs of Imperial Airways, Petroleum Concessions Ltd., Gray Mackenzie (Shipping) and one or two bankers, but the whole European community including wives was probably not more than about thirty. In contrast to this BAPCO (Bahrain Petroleum Company) some fifteen miles away in the desert, where the oilfield was, employed some twelve hundred assorted Americans, Australians, Canadians, English, Scots and Irish. The Naval base

at Jufair three miles from Manama had a small shore-based staff and the R.A.F. a detachment on Moharraq, the small island attached to Bahrain by a causeway, where the R.A.F. Aerodrome was. At that time there was no separate civil airfield but flying boats landed on the sea between the two islands. Moharraq was used mainly as a staging post and there was another airfield at Sharjah, on the Trucial Coast, also staffed by the R.A.F. where I had landed on my way home on leave in 1937.

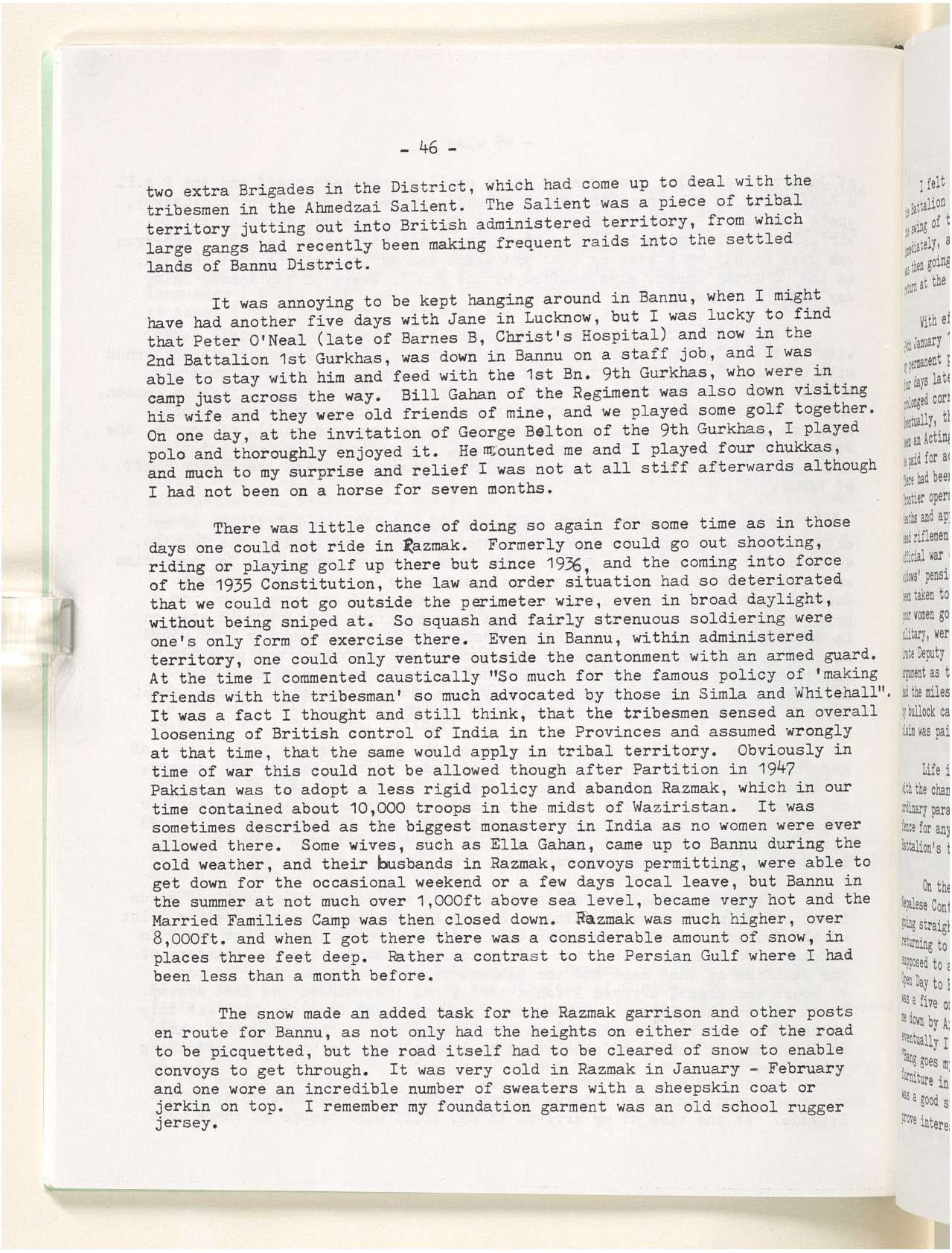
Apart from the problems in Bahrain itself, which were mainly dealt with by the Political Agent and his staff, the Political Resident was concerned with all the other Gulf States, and with Saudi Arabia, and was in constant contact with the Government of India and also with the Foreign Office in London, and I, as his dogsbody, was kept fully occupied. All kinds of additional problems arose as a result of the war, though it was then still, of course, the stage of the "phoney war". There was, too, a good deal of social activity, both amongst the small European community in Manama and with the senior staff of BAPCO.

Towards the end of 1939 news came that the Military Officers of my entry in the Political Service, the senior not yet confirmed in the Service, were to be recalled to the Army. I had been worrying about this for some time as I felt that now there was a war on I should be back with my Regiment. Colonel Prior, however, wanted to keep me in the Gulf and came back from a brief visit to Delhi to say that it had been arranged that I should stay on in Bahrain as "Staff Officer in the Persian Gulf". What exactly this would have entailed I never discovered for, much to his annoyance and probably to the detriment of my career as a Political, I insisted on rejoining the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Gurkhas. They were then stationed in Razmak, about 8,000ft above sea level, in the midst of tribal territory.

Jane and I left Bahrain by sea on the 31st December 1939, landed at Karachi four days later, and arrived in Lucknow by rail on the 4th January, to stay with the Barrons. He was in the I.C.S. and they were old friends of Jane's mother. We had previously known them in Bareilly just after our engagement, when he was Deputy Commissioner there. In fact Jane had stayed with them for the "Bareilly Week" while I had stayed at the Club, for what had been a very memorable few days.

Besides actual travelling time I had two weeks "joining time" since I was returning from outside India, and we had two happy weeks, meeting a lot of old friends and relaxing after what had been a very hectic last month in Bahrain. On January 16th I set off by train for Bannu, the Headquarters of the District of that name and the nearest rail head for Razmak. It took 48 hours and when I arrived I found that I had just missed the last convoy. There was so much unrest in those days in Waziristan that the road was only opened for traffic to Razmak about once a week and on those days the whole road, 80 miles, had to be picquetted by troops from the various posts along the route.

Bannu was quite a large Cantonment and the Headquarters of a Brigade. At the time of my arrival it was stiff with troops as there were

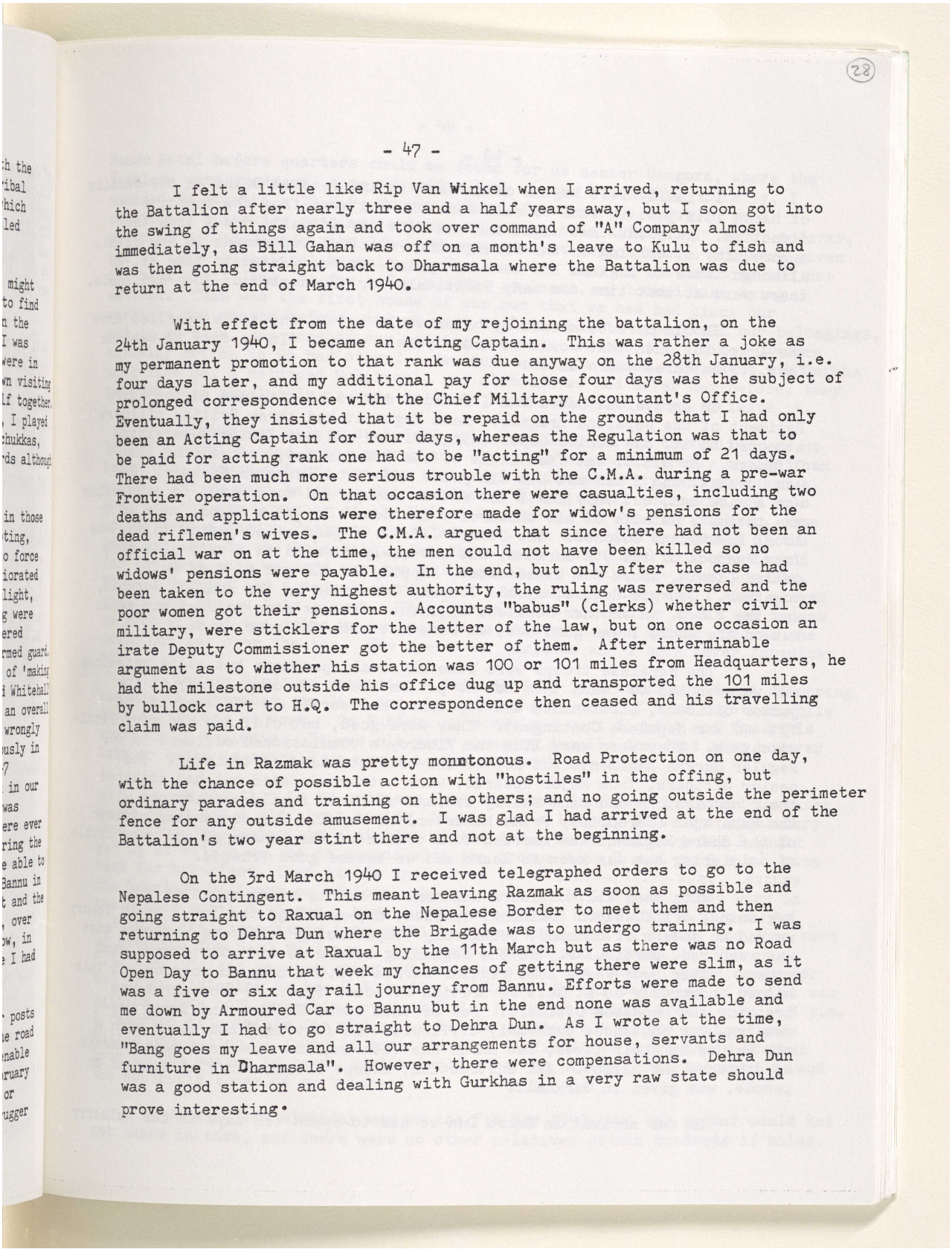


two extra Brigades in the District, which had come up to deal with the tribesmen in the Ahmedzai Salient. The Salient was a piece of tribal territory jutting out into British administered territory, from which large gangs had recently been making frequent raids into the settled lands of Bannu District.

It was annoying to be kept hanging around in Bannu, when I might have had another five days with Jane in Lucknow, but I was lucky to find that Peter O'Neal (late of Barnes B, Christ's Hospital) and now in the 2nd Battalion 1st Gurkhas, was down in Bannu on a staff job, and I was able to stay with him and feed with the 1st Bn. 9th Gurkhas, who were in camp just across the way. Bill Gahan of the Regiment was also down visiting his wife and they were old friends of mine, and we played some golf together. On one day, at the invitation of George Belton of the 9th Gurkhas, I played polo and thoroughly enjoyed it. He mounted me and I played four chukkas, and much to my surprise and relief I was not at all stiff afterwards although I had not been on a horse for seven months.

There was little chance of doing so again for some time as in those days one could not ride in Razmak. Formerly one could go out shooting, riding or playing golf up there but since 1936, and the coming into force of the 1935 Constitution, the law and order situation had so deteriorated that we could not go outside the perimeter wire, even in broad daylight, without being sniped at. So squash and fairly strenuous soldiering were one's only form of exercise there. Even in Bannu, within administered territory, one could only venture outside the cantonment with an armed guard. At the time I commented caustically "So much for the famous policy of 'making friends with the tribesman' so much advocated by those in Simla and Whitehall". It was a fact I thought and still think, that the tribesmen sensed an overall loosening of British control of India in the Provinces and assumed wrongly at that time, that the same would apply in tribal territory. Obviously in time of war this could not be allowed though after Partition in 1947 Pakistan was to adopt a less rigid policy and abandon Razmak, which in our time contained about 10,000 troops in the midst of Waziristan. It was sometimes described as the biggest monastery in India as no women were ever allowed there. Some wives, such as Ella Gahan, came up to Bannu during the cold weather, and their husbands in Razmak, convoys permitting, were able to get down for the occasional weekend or a few days local leave, but Bannu in the summer at not much over 1,000ft above sea level, became very hot and the Married Families Camp was then closed down. Razmak was much higher, over 8,000ft. and when I got there there was a considerable amount of snow, in places three feet deep. Rather a contrast to the Persian Gulf where I had been less than a month before.

The snow made an added task for the Razmak garrison and other posts en route for Bannu, as not only had the heights on either side of the road to be picquetted, but the road itself had to be cleared of snow to enable convoys to get through. It was very cold in Razmak in January - February and one wore an incredible number of sweaters with a sheepskin coat or jerkin on top. I remember my foundation garment was an old school rugger jersey.



(28)

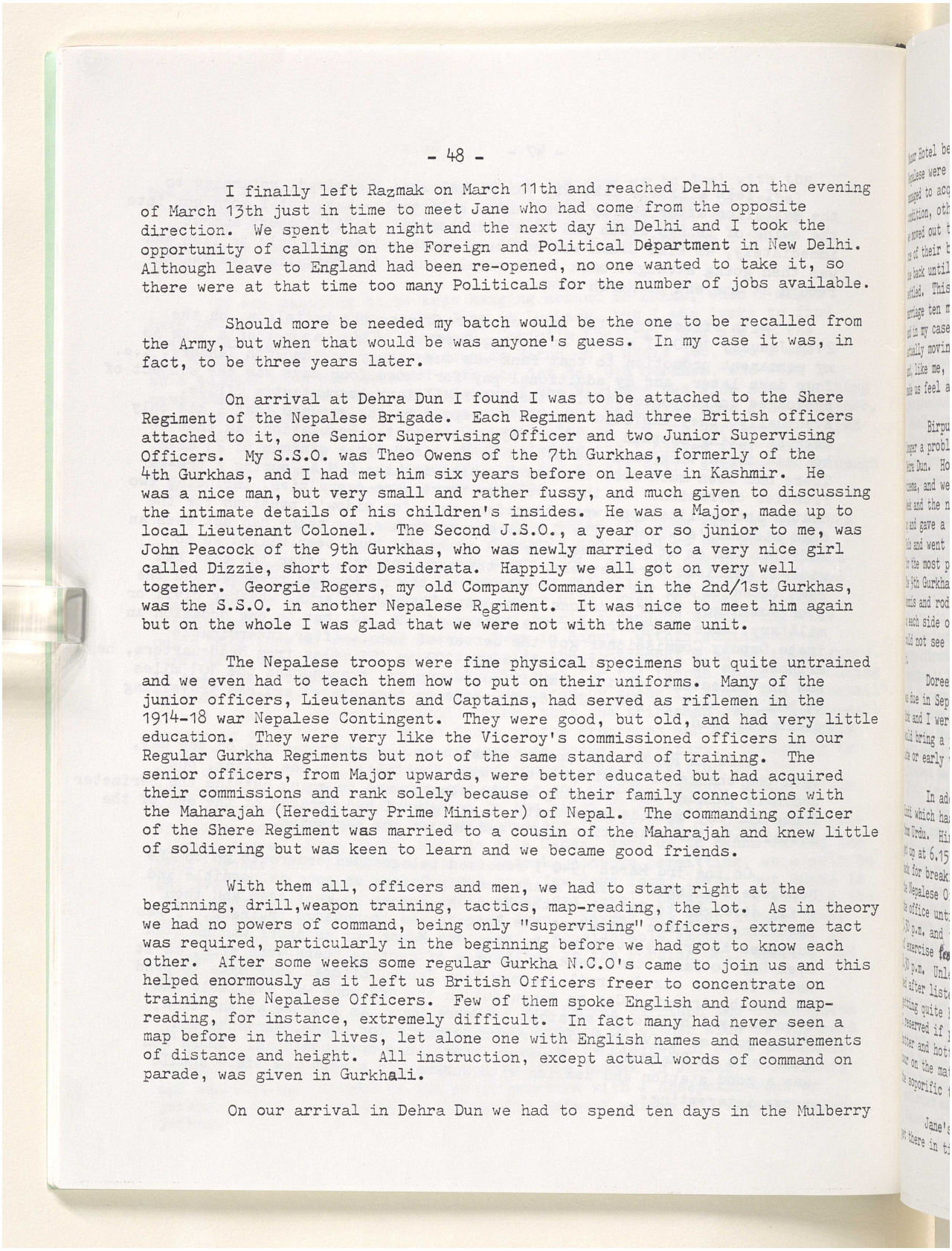
- 47 -

I felt a little like Rip Van Winkel when I arrived, returning to the Battalion after nearly three and a half years away, but I soon got into the swing of things again and took over command of "A" Company almost immediately, as Bill Gahan was off on a month's leave to Kulu to fish and was then going straight back to Dharmsala where the Battalion was due to return at the end of March 1940.

With effect from the date of my rejoining the battalion, on the 24th January 1940, I became an Acting Captain. This was rather a joke as my permanent promotion to that rank was due anyway on the 28th January, i.e. four days later, and my additional pay for those four days was the subject of prolonged correspondence with the Chief Military Accountant's Office. Eventually, they insisted that it be repaid on the grounds that I had only been an Acting Captain for four days, whereas the Regulation was that to be paid for acting rank one had to be "acting" for a minimum of 21 days. There had been much more serious trouble with the C.M.A. during a pre-war Frontier operation. On that occasion there were casualties, including two deaths and applications were therefore made for widow's pensions for the dead riflemen's wives. The C.M.A. argued that since there had not been an official war on at the time, the men could not have been killed so no widows' pensions were payable. In the end, but only after the case had been taken to the very highest authority, the ruling was reversed and the poor women got their pensions. Accounts "babus" (clerks) whether civil or military, were sticklers for the letter of the law, but on one occasion an irate Deputy Commissioner got the better of them. After interminable argument as to whether his station was 100 or 101 miles from Headquarters, he had the milestone outside his office dug up and transported the 101 miles by bullock cart to H.Q. The correspondence then ceased and his travelling claim was paid.

Life in Razmak was pretty monntonous. Road Protection on one day, with the chance of possible action with "hostiles" in the offing, but ordinary parades and training on the others; and no going outside the perimeter fence for any outside amusement. I was glad I had arrived at the end of the Battalion's two year stint there and not at the beginning.

On the 3rd March 1940 I received telegraphed orders to go to the Nepalese Contingent. This meant leaving Razmak as soon as possible and going straight to Raxual on the Nepalese Border to meet them and then returning to Dehra Dun where the Brigade was to undergo training. I was supposed to arrive at Raxual by the 11th March but as there was no Road Open Day to Bannu that week my chances of getting there were slim, as it was a five or six day rail journey from Bannu. Efforts were made to send me down by Armoured Car to Bannu but in the end none was available and eventually I had to go straight to Dehra Dun. As I wrote at the time, "Bang goes my leave and all our arrangements for house, servants and furniture in Dharmsala". However, there were compensations. Dehra Dun was a good station and dealing with Gurkhas in a very raw state should prove interesting.



- 48 -

I finally left Razmak on March 11th and reached Delhi on the evening of March 13th just in time to meet Jane who had come from the opposite direction. We spent that night and the next day in Delhi and I took the opportunity of calling on the Foreign and Political Department in New Delhi. Although leave to England had been re-opened, no one wanted to take it, so there were at that time too many Politicals for the number of jobs available.

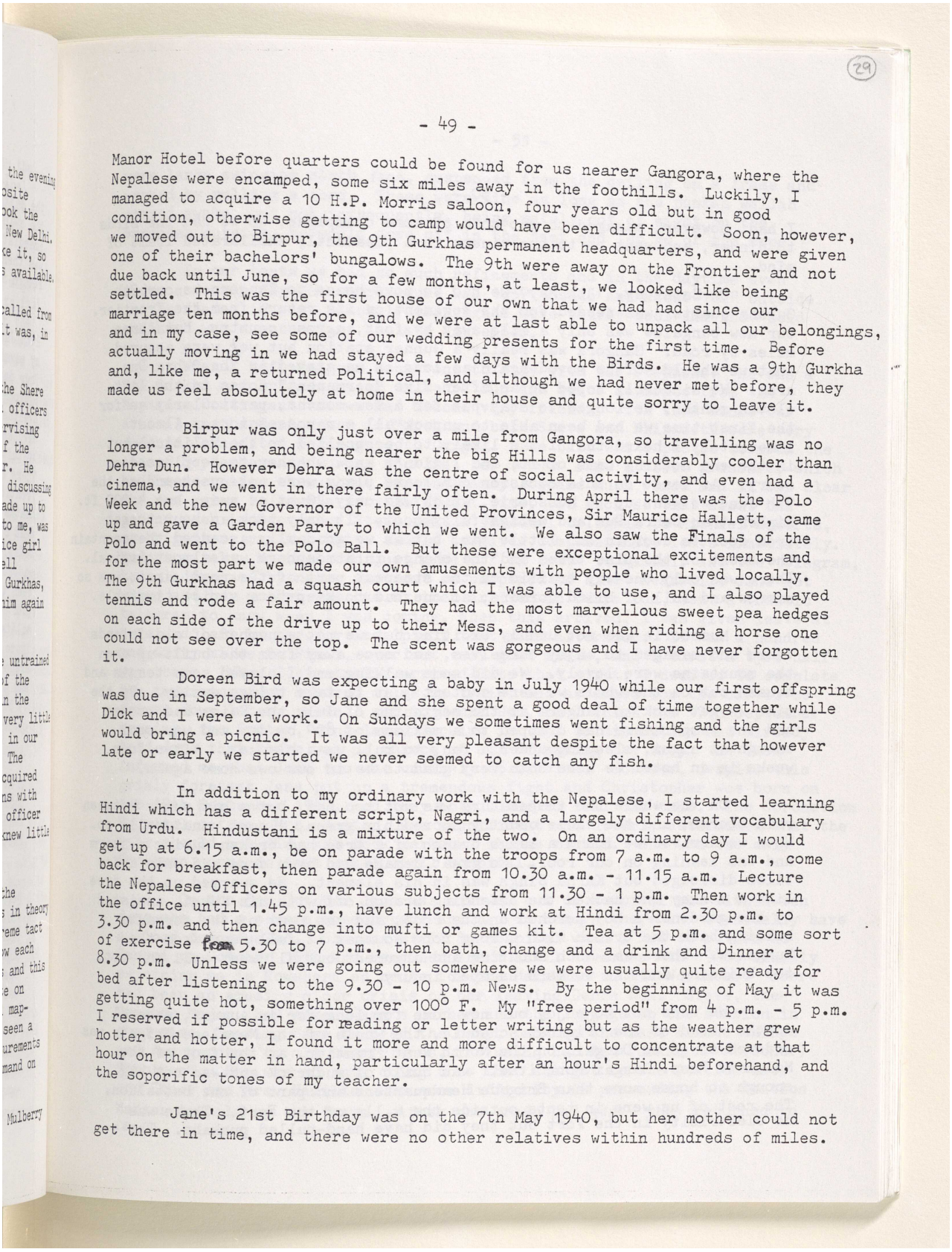
Should more be needed my batch would be the one to be recalled from the Army, but when that would be was anyone's guess. In my case it was, in fact, to be three years later.

On arrival at Dehra Dun I found I was to be attached to the Shere Regiment of the Nepalese Brigade. Each Regiment had three British officers attached to it, one Senior Supervising Officer and two Junior Supervising Officers. My S.S.O. was Theo Owens of the 7th Gurkhas, formerly of the 4th Gurkhas, and I had met him six years before on leave in Kashmir. He was a nice man, but very small and rather fussy, and much given to discussing the intimate details of his children's insides. He was a Major, made up to local Lieutenant Colonel. The Second J.S.O., a year or so junior to me, was John Peacock of the 9th Gurkhas, who was newly married to a very nice girl called Dizzie, short for Desiderata. Happily we all got on very well together. Georgie Rogers, my old Company Commander in the 2nd/1st Gurkhas, was the S.S.O. in another Nepalese Regiment. It was nice to meet him again but on the whole I was glad that we were not with the same unit.

The Nepalese troops were fine physical specimens but quite untrained and we even had to teach them how to put on their uniforms. Many of the junior officers, Lieutenants and Captains, had served as riflemen in the 1914-18 war Nepalese Contingent. They were good, but old, and had very little education. They were very like the Viceroy's commissioned officers in our Regular Gurkha Regiments but not of the same standard of training. The senior officers, from Major upwards, were better educated but had acquired their commissions and rank solely because of their family connections with the Maharajah (Hereditary Prime Minister) of Nepal. The commanding officer of the Shere Regiment was married to a cousin of the Maharajah and knew little of soldiering but was keen to learn and we became good friends.

With them all, officers and men, we had to start right at the beginning, drill,weapon training, tactics, map-reading, the lot. As in theory we had no powers of command, being only "supervising" officers, extreme tact was required, particularly in the beginning before we had got to know each other. After some weeks some regular Gurkha N.C.O's came to join us and this helped enormously as it left us British Officers freer to concentrate on training the Nepalese Officers. Few of them spoke English and found map-reading, for instance, extremely difficult. In fact many had never seen a map before in their lives, let alone one with English names and measurements of distance and height. All instruction, except actual words of command on parade, was given in Gurkhali.

On our arrival in Dehra Dun we had to spend ten days in the Mulberry



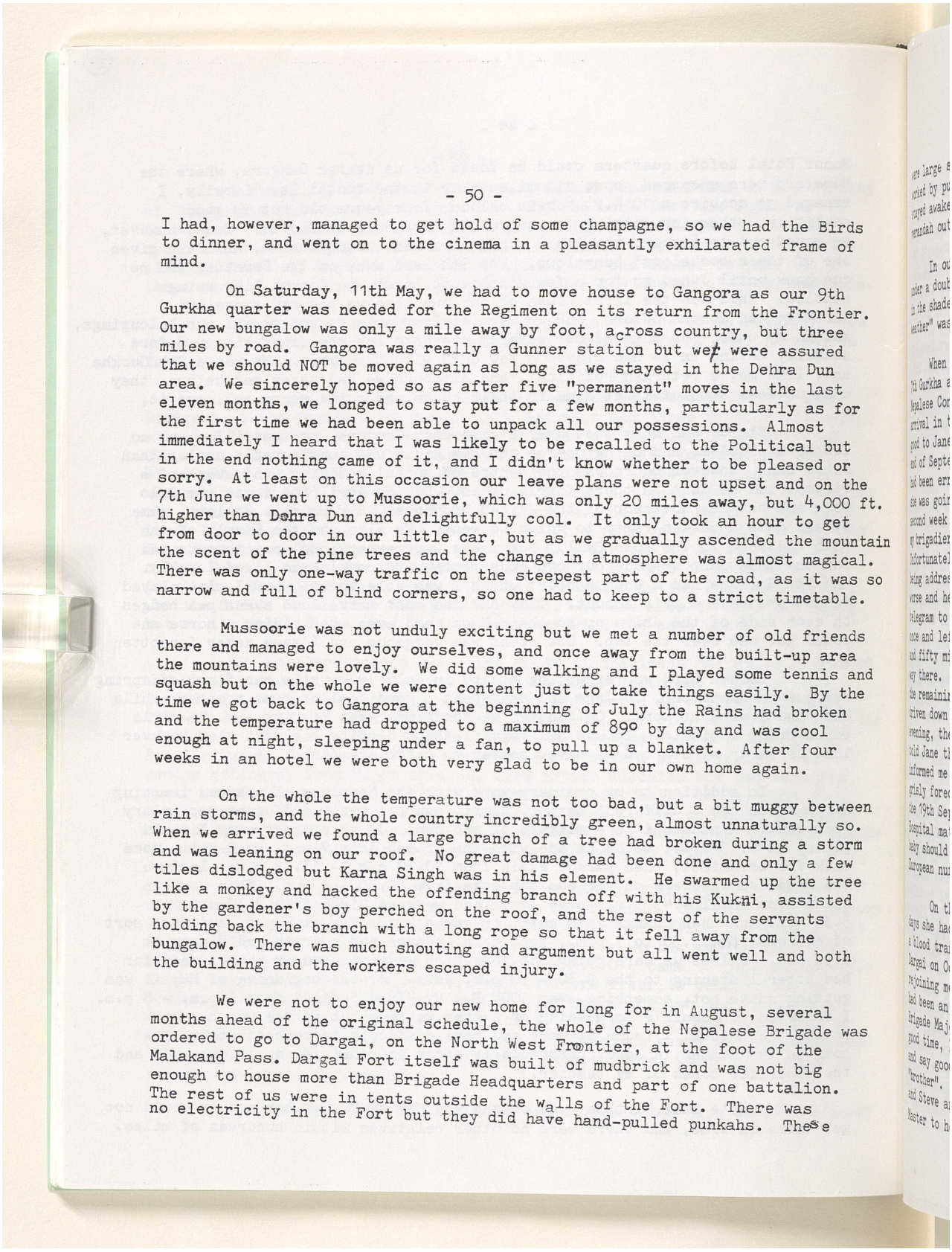
Manor Hotel before quarters could be found for us nearer Gangora, where the Nepalese were encamped, some six miles away in the foothills. Luckily, I managed to acquire a 10 H.P. Morris saloon, four years old but in good condition, otherwise getting to camp would have been difficult. Soon, however, we moved out to Birpur, the 9th Gurkhas permanent headquarters, and were given one of their bachelors' bungalows. The 9th were away on the Frontier and not due back until June, so for a few months, at least, we looked like being settled. This was the first house of our own that we had had since our marriage ten months before, and we were at last able to unpack all our belongings, and in my case, see some of our wedding presents for the first time. Before actually moving in we had stayed a few days with the Birds. He was a 9th Gurkha and, like me, a returned Political, and although we had never met before, they made us feel absolutely at home in their house and quite sorry to leave it.

Birpur was only just over a mile from Gangora, so travelling was no longer a problem, and being nearer the big Hills was considerably cooler than Dehra Dun. However Dehra was the centre of social activity, and even had a cinema, and we went in there fairly often. During April there was the Polo Week and the new Governor of the United Provinces, Sir Maurice Hallett, came up and gave a Garden Party to which we went. We also saw the Finals of the Polo and went to the Polo Ball. But these were exceptional excitements and for the most part we made our own amusements with people who lived locally. The 9th Gurkhas had a squash court which I was able to use, and I also played tennis and rode a fair amount. They had the most marvellous sweet pea hedges on each side of the drive up to their Mess, and even when riding a horse one could not see over the top. The scent was gorgeous and I have never forgotten it.

Doreen Bird was expecting a baby in July 1940 while our first offspring was due in September, so Jane and she spent a good deal of time together while Dick and I were at work. On Sundays we sometimes went fishing and the girls would bring a picnic. It was all very pleasant despite the fact that however late or early we started we never seemed to catch any fish.

In addition to my ordinary work with the Nepalese, I started learning Hindi which has a different script, Nagri, and a largely different vocabulary from Urdu. Hindustani is a mixture of the two. On an ordinary day I would get up at 6.15 a.m., be on parade with the troops from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., come back for breakfast, then parade again from 10.30 a.m. - 11.15 a.m. Lecture the Nepalese Officers on various subjects from 11.30 - 1 p.m. Then work in the office until 1.45 p.m., have lunch and work at Hindi from 2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. and then change into mufti or games kit. Tea at 5 p.m. and some sort of exercise from 5.30 to 7 p.m., then bath, change and a drink and Dinner at 8.30 p.m. Unless we were going out somewhere we were usually quite ready for bed after listening to the 9.30 - 10 p.m. News. By the beginning of May it was getting quite hot, something over 100° F. My "free period" from 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. I reserved if possible for reading or letter writing but as the weather grew hotter and hotter, I found it more and more difficult to concentrate at that hour on the matter in hand, particularly after an hour's Hindi beforehand, and the soporific tones of my teacher.

Jane's 21st Birthday was on the 7th May 1940, but her mother could not get there in time, and there were no other relatives within hundreds of miles.



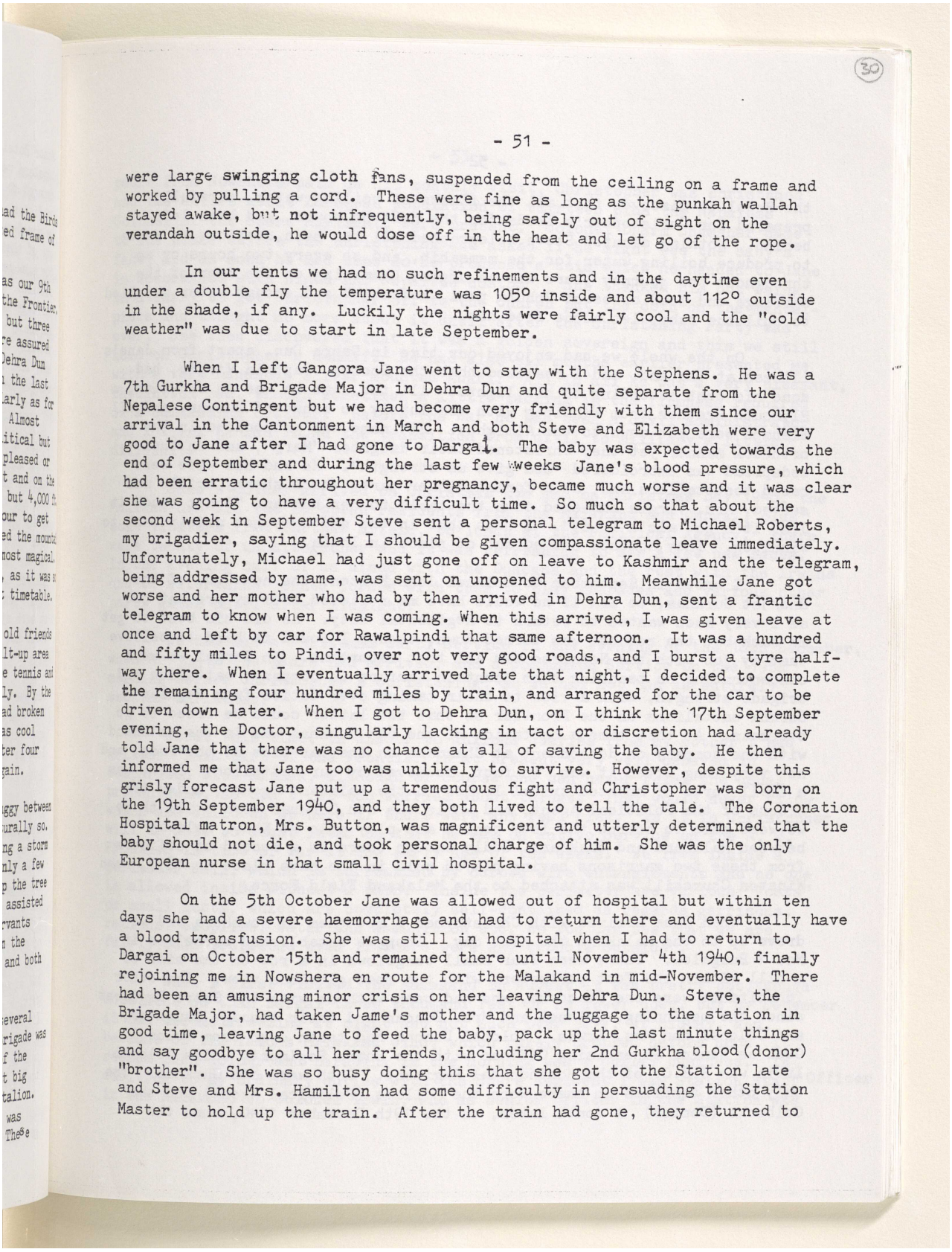
I had, however, managed to get hold of some champagne, so we had the Birds to dinner, and went on to the cinema in a pleasantly exhilarated frame of mind.

On Saturday, 11th May, we had to move house to Gangora as our 9th Gurkha quarter was needed for the Regiment on its return from the Frontier. Our new bungalow was only a mile away by foot, across country, but three miles by road. Gangora was really a Gunner station but we were assured that we should NOT be moved again as long as we stayed in the Dehra Dun area. We sincerely hoped so as after five "permanent" moves in the last eleven months, we longed to stay put for a few months, particularly as for the first time we had been able to unpack all our possessions. Almost immediately I heard that I was likely to be recalled to the Political but in the end nothing came of it, and I didn't know whether to be pleased or sorry. At least on this occasion our leave plans were not upset and on the 7th June we went up to Mussoorie, which was only 20 miles away, but 4,000 ft. higher than Dehra Dun and delightfully cool. It only took an hour to get from door to door in our little car, but as we gradually ascended the mountain the scent of the pine trees and the change in atmosphere was almost magical. There was only one-way traffic on the steepest part of the road, as it was so narrow and full of blind corners, so one had to keep to a strict timetable.

Mussoorie was not unduly exciting but we met a number of old friends there and managed to enjoy ourselves, and once away from the built-up area the mountains were lovely. We did some walking and I played some tennis and squash but on the whole we were content just to take things easily. By the time we got back to Gangora at the beginning of July the Rains had broken and the temperature had dropped to a maximum of 89° by day and was cool enough at night, sleeping under a fan, to pull up a blanket. After four weeks in an hotel we were both very glad to be in our own home again.

On the whole the temperature was not too bad, but a bit muggy between rain storms, and the whole country incredibly green, almost unnaturally so. When we arrived we found a large branch of a tree had broken during a storm and was leaning on our roof. No great damage had been done and only a few tiles dislodged but Karna Singh was in his element. He swarmed up the tree like a monkey and hacked the offending branch off with his Kukri, assisted by the gardener's boy perched on the roof, and the rest of the servants holding back the branch with a long rope so that it fell away from the bungalow. There was much shouting and argument but all went well and both the building and the workers escaped injury.

We were not to enjoy our new home for long for in August, several months ahead of the original schedule, the whole of the Nepalese Brigade was ordered to go to Dargai, on the North West Frontier, at the foot of the Malakand Pass. Dargai Fort itself was built of mudbrick and was not big enough to house more than Brigade Headquarters and part of one battalion. The rest of us were in tents outside the walls of the Fort. There was no electricity in the Fort but they did have hand-pulled punkahs. These

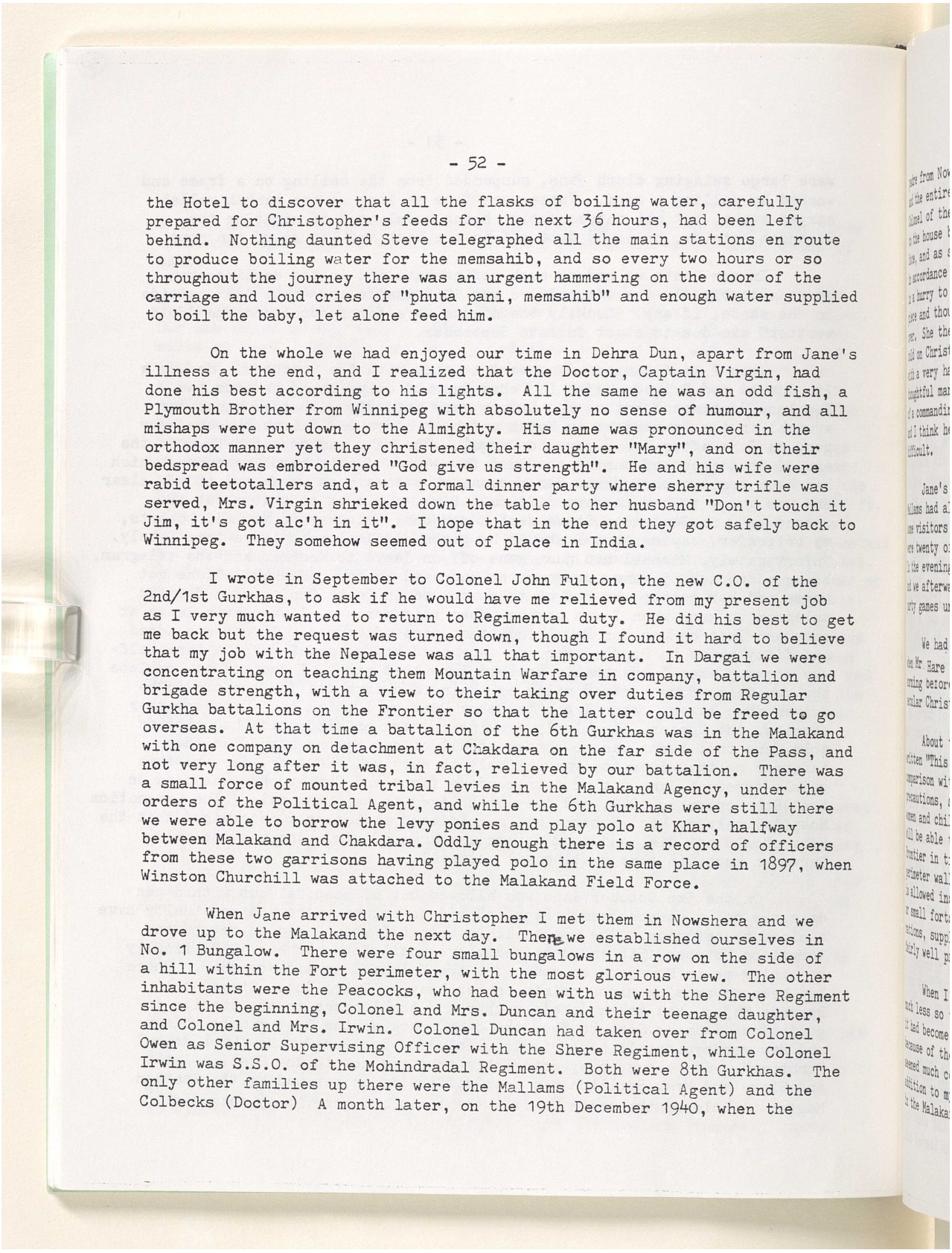


were large swinging cloth fans, suspended from the ceiling on a frame and worked by pulling a cord. These were fine as long as the punkah wallah stayed awake, but not infrequently, being safely out of sight on the verandah outside, he would dose off in the heat and let go of the rope.

In our tents we had no such refinements and in the daytime even under a double fly the temperature was 105° inside and about 112° outside in the shade, if any. Luckily the nights were fairly cool and the "cold weather" was due to start in late September.

When I left Gangora Jane went to stay with the Stephens. He was a 7th Gurkha and Brigade Major in Dehra Dun and quite separate from the Nepalese Contingent but we had become very friendly with them since our arrival in the Cantonment in March and both Steve and Elizabeth were very good to Jane after I had gone to Dargai. The baby was expected towards the end of September and during the last few weeks Jane's blood pressure, which had been erratic throughout her pregnancy, became much worse and it was clear she was going to have a very difficult time. So much so that about the second week in September Steve sent a personal telegram to Michael Roberts, my brigadier, saying that I should be given compassionate leave immediately. Unfortunately, Michael had just gone off on leave to Kashmir and the telegram, being addressed by name, was sent on unopened to him. Meanwhile Jane got worse and her mother who had by then arrived in Dehra Dun, sent a frantic telegram to know when I was coming. When this arrived, I was given leave at once and left by car for Rawalpindi that same afternoon. It was a hundred and fifty miles to Pindi, over not very good roads, and I burst a tyre half-way there. When I eventually arrived late that night, I decided to complete the remaining four hundred miles by train, and arranged for the car to be driven down later. When I got to Dehra Dun, on I think the 17th September evening, the Doctor, singularly lacking in tact or discretion had already told Jane that there was no chance at all of saving the baby. He then informed me that Jane too was unlikely to survive. However, despite this grisly forecast Jane put up a tremendous fight and Christopher was born on the 19th September 1940, and they both lived to tell the tale. The Coronation Hospital matron, Mrs. Button, was magnificent and utterly determined that the baby should not die, and took personal charge of him. She was the only European nurse in that small civil hospital.

On the 5th October Jane was allowed out of hospital but within ten days she had a severe haemorrhage and had to return there and eventually have a blood transfusion. She was still in hospital when I had to return to Dargai on October 15th and remained there until November 4th 1940, finally rejoining me in Nowshera en route for the Malakand in mid-November. There had been an amusing minor crisis on her leaving Dehra Dun. Steve, the Brigade Major, had taken Jame's mother and the luggage to the station in good time, leaving Jane to feed the baby, pack up the last minute things and say goodbye to all her friends, including her 2nd Gurkha blood (donor) "brother". She was so busy doing this that she got to the Station late and Steve and Mrs. Hamilton had some difficulty in persuading the Station Master to hold up the train. After the train had gone, they returned to

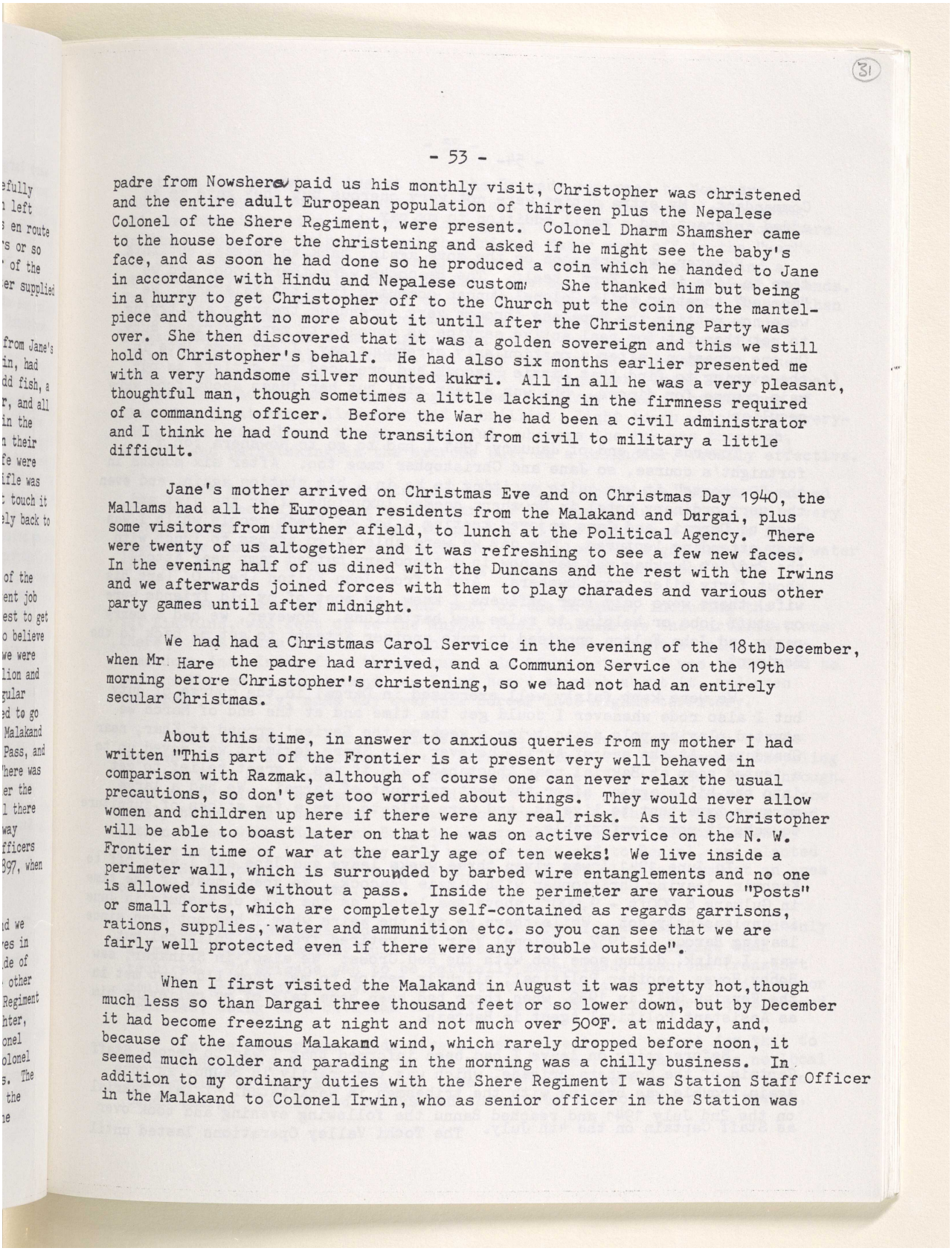


the Hotel to discover that all the flasks of boiling water, carefully prepared for Christopher's feeds for the next 36 hours, had been left behind. Nothing daunted Steve telegraphed all the main stations en route to produce boiling water for the memsahib, and so every two hours or so throughout the journey there was an urgent hammering on the door of the carriage and loud cries of "phuta pani, memsahib" and enough water supplied to boil the baby, let alone feed him.

On the whole we had enjoyed our time in Dehra Dun, apart from Jane's illness at the end, and I realized that the Doctor, Captain Virgin, had done his best according to his lights. All the same he was an odd fish, a Plymouth Brother from Winnipeg with absolutely no sense of humour, and all mishaps were put down to the Almighty. His name was pronounced in the orthodox manner yet they christened their daughter "Mary", and on their bedspread was embroidered "God give us strength". He and his wife were rabid teetotallers and, at a formal dinner party where sherry trifle was served, Mrs. Virgin shrieked down the table to her husband "Don't touch it Jim, it's got alc'h in it". I hope that in the end they got safely back to Winnipeg. They somehow seemed out of place in India.

I wrote in September to Colonel John Fulton, the new C.O. of the 2nd/1st Gurkhas, to ask if he would have me relieved from my present job as I very much wanted to return to Regimental duty. He did his best to get me back but the request was turned down, though I found it hard to believe that my job with the Nepalese was all that important. In Dargai we were concentrating on teaching them Mountain Warfare in company, battalion and brigade strength, with a view to their taking over duties from Regular Gurkha battalions on the Frontier so that the latter could be freed to go overseas. At that time a battalion of the 6th Gurkhas was in the Malakand with one company on detachment at Chakdara on the far side of the Pass, and not very long after it was, in fact, relieved by our battalion. There was a small force of mounted tribal levies in the Malakand Agency, under the orders of the Political Agent, and while the 6th Gurkhas were still there we were able to borrow the levy ponies and play polo at Khar, halfway between Malakand and Chakdara. Oddly enough there is a record of officers from these two garrisons having played polo in the same place in 1897, when Winston Churchill was attached to the Malakand Field Force.

When Jane arrived with Christopher I met them in Nowshera and we drove up to the Malakand the next day. There we established ourselves in No. 1 Bungalow. There were four small bungalows in a row on the side of a hill within the Fort perimeter, with the most glorious view. The other inhabitants were the Peacocks, who had been with us with the Shere Regiment since the beginning, Colonel and Mrs. Duncan and their teenage daughter, and Colonel and Mrs. Irwin. Colonel Duncan had taken over from Colonel Owen as Senior Supervising Officer with the Shere Regiment, while Colonel Irwin was S.S.O. of the Mohindradal Regiment. Both were 8th Gurkhas. The only other families up there were the Mallams (Political Agent) and the Colbecks (Doctor) A month later, on the 19th December 1940, when the



- 53 -

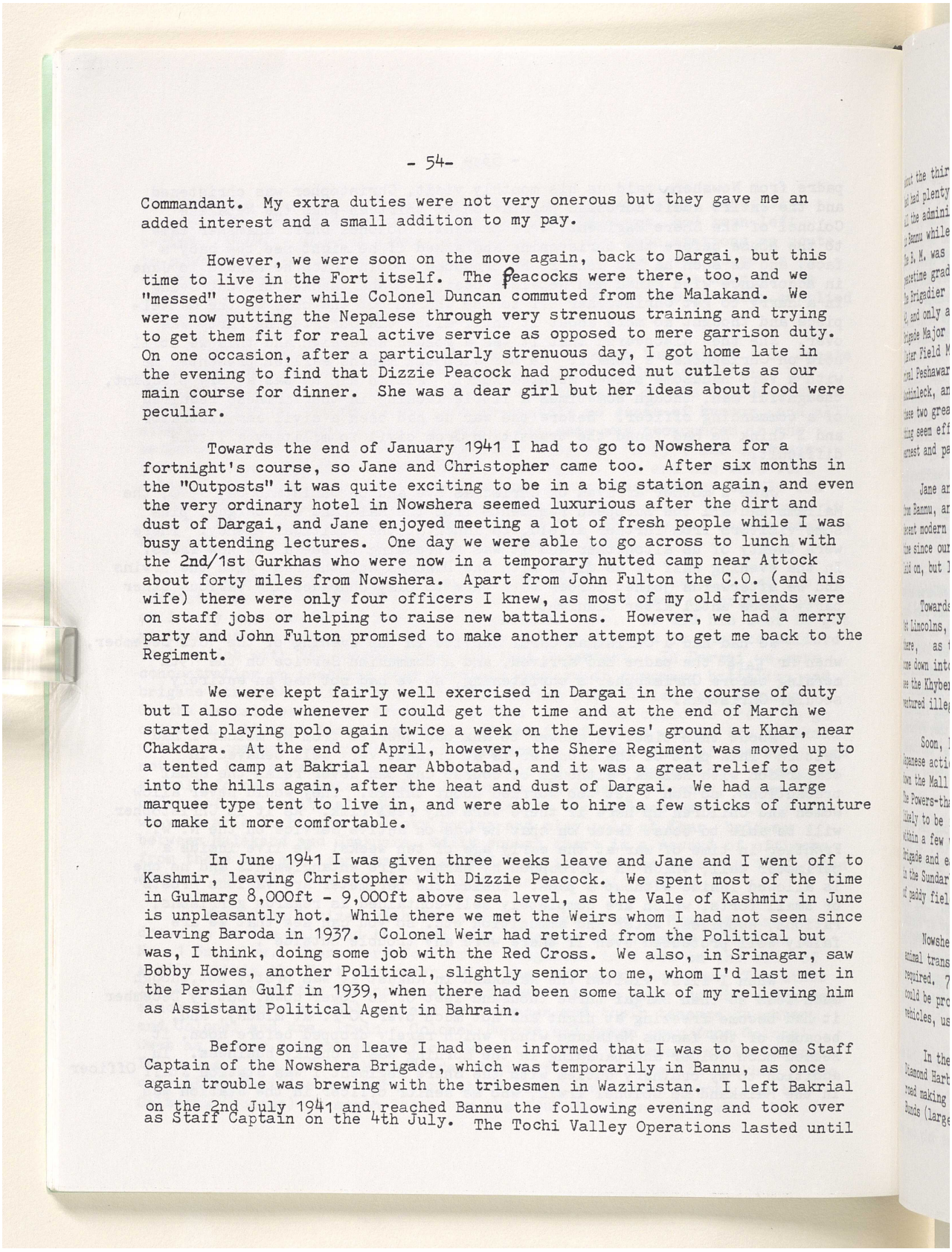
padre from Nowshera paid us his monthly visit, Christopher was christened and the entire adult European population of thirteen plus the Nepalese Colonel of the Shere Regiment, were present. Colonel Dharm Shamsher came to the house before the christening and asked if he might see the baby's face, and as soon he had done so he produced a coin which he handed to Jane in accordance with Hindu and Nepalese custom. She thanked him but being in a hurry to get Christopher off to the Church put the coin on the mantel-piece and thought no more about it until after the Christening Party was over. She then discovered that it was a golden sovereign and this we still hold on Christopher's behalf. He had also six months earlier presented me with a very handsome silver mounted kukri. All in all he was a very pleasant, thoughtful man, though sometimes a little lacking in the firmness required of a commanding officer. Before the War he had been a civil administrator and I think he had found the transition from civil to military a little difficult.

Jane's mother arrived on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day 1940, the Mallams had all the European residents from the Malakand and Durgai, plus some visitors from further afield, to lunch at the Political Agency. There were twenty of us altogether and it was refreshing to see a few new faces. In the evening half of us dined with the Duncans and the rest with the Irwins and we afterwards joined forces with them to play charades and various other party games until after midnight.

We had had a Christmas Carol Service in the evening of the 18th December, when Mr. Hare the padre had arrived, and a Communion Service on the 19th morning before Christopher's christening, so we had not had an entirely secular Christmas.

About this time, in answer to anxious queries from my mother I had written "This part of the Frontier is at present very well behaved in comparison with Razmak, although of course one can never relax the usual precautions, so don't get too worried about things. They would never allow women and children up here if there were any real risk. As it is Christopher will be able to boast later on that he was on active Service on the N. W. Frontier in time of war at the early age of ten weeks! We live inside a perimeter wall, which is surrounded by barbed wire entanglements and no one is allowed inside without a pass. Inside the perimeter are various "Posts" or small forts, which are completely self-contained as regards garrisons, rations, supplies, water and ammunition etc. so you can see that we are fairly well protected even if there were any trouble outside".

When I first visited the Malakand in August it was pretty hot, though much less so than Dargai three thousand feet or so lower down, but by December it had become freezing at night and not much over 50°F. at midday, and, because of the famous Malakand wind, which rarely dropped before noon, it seemed much colder and parading in the morning was a chilly business. In addition to my ordinary duties with the Shere Regiment I was Station Staff Officer in the Malakand to Colonel Irwin, who as senior officer in the Station was



Commandant. My extra duties were not very onerous but they gave me an added interest and a small addition to my pay.

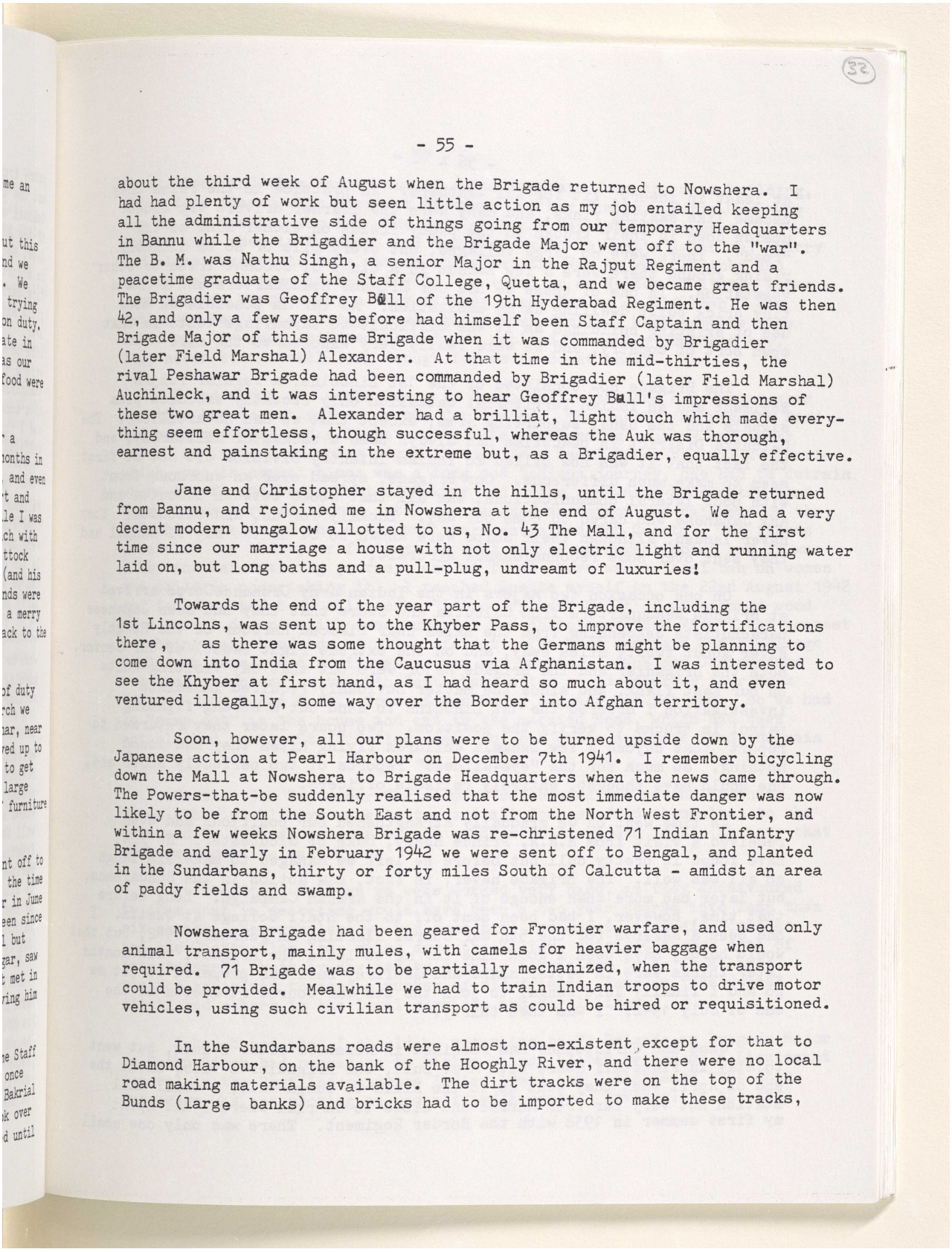
However, we were soon on the move again, back to Dargai, but this time to live in the Fort itself. The Peacocks were there, too, and we "messed" together while Colonel Duncan commuted from the Malakand. We were now putting the Nepalese through very strenuous training and trying to get them fit for real active service as opposed to mere garrison duty. On one occasion, after a particularly strenuous day, I got home late in the evening to find that Dizzie Peacock had produced nut cutlets as our main course for dinner. She was a dear girl but her ideas about food were peculiar.

Towards the end of January 1941 I had to go to Nowshera for a fortnight's course, so Jane and Christopher came too. After six months in the "Outposts" it was quite exciting to be in a big station again, and even the very ordinary hotel in Nowshera seemed luxurious after the dirt and dust of Dargai, and Jane enjoyed meeting a lot of fresh people while I was busy attending lectures. One day we were able to go across to lunch with the 2nd/1st Gurkhas who were now in a temporary hutted camp near Attock about forty miles from Nowshera. Apart from John Fulton the C.O. (and his wife) there were only four officers I knew, as most of my old friends were on staff jobs or helping to raise new battalions. However, we had a merry party and John Fulton promised to make another attempt to get me back to the Regiment.

We were kept fairly well exercised in Dargai in the course of duty but I also rode whenever I could get the time and at the end of March we started playing polo again twice a week on the Levies' ground at Khar, near Chakdara. At the end of April, however, the Shere Regiment was moved up to a tented camp at Bakrial near Abbotabad, and it was a great relief to get into the hills again, after the heat and dust of Dargai. We had a large marquee type tent to live in, and were able to hire a few sticks of furniture to make it more comfortable.

In June 1941 I was given three weeks leave and Jane and I went off to Kashmir, leaving Christopher with Dizzie Peacock. We spent most of the time in Gulmarg 8,000ft - 9,000ft above sea level, as the Vale of Kashmir in June is unpleasantly hot. While there we met the Weirs whom I had not seen since leaving Baroda in 1937. Colonel Weir had retired from the Political but was, I think, doing some job with the Red Cross. We also, in Srinagar, saw Bobby Howes, another Political, slightly senior to me, whom I'd last met in the Persian Gulf in 1939, when there had been some talk of my relieving him as Assistant Political Agent in Bahrain.

Before going on leave I had been informed that I was to become Staff Captain of the Nowshera Brigade, which was temporarily in Bannu, as once again trouble was brewing with the tribesmen in Waziristan. I left Bakrial on the 2nd July 1941 and reached Bannu the following evening and took over as Staff Captain on the 4th July. The Tochi Valley Operations lasted until



about the third week of August when the Brigade returned to Nowshera. I had had plenty of work but seen little action as my job entailed keeping all the administrative side of things going from our temporary Headquarters in Bannu while the Brigadier and the Brigade Major went off to the "war". The B. M. was Nathu Singh, a senior Major in the Rajput Regiment and a peacetime graduate of the Staff College, Quetta, and we became great friends. The Brigadier was Geoffrey Bull of the 19th Hyderabad Regiment. He was then 42, and only a few years before had himself been Staff Captain and then Brigade Major of this same Brigade when it was commanded by Brigadier (later Field Marshal) Alexander. At that time in the mid-thirties, the rival Peshawar Brigade had been commanded by Brigadier (later Field Marshal) Auchinleck, and it was interesting to hear Geoffrey Bull's impressions of these two great men. Alexander had a brilliat, light touch which made everything seem effortless, though successful, whereas the Auk was thorough, earnest and painstaking in the extreme but, as a Brigadier, equally effective.

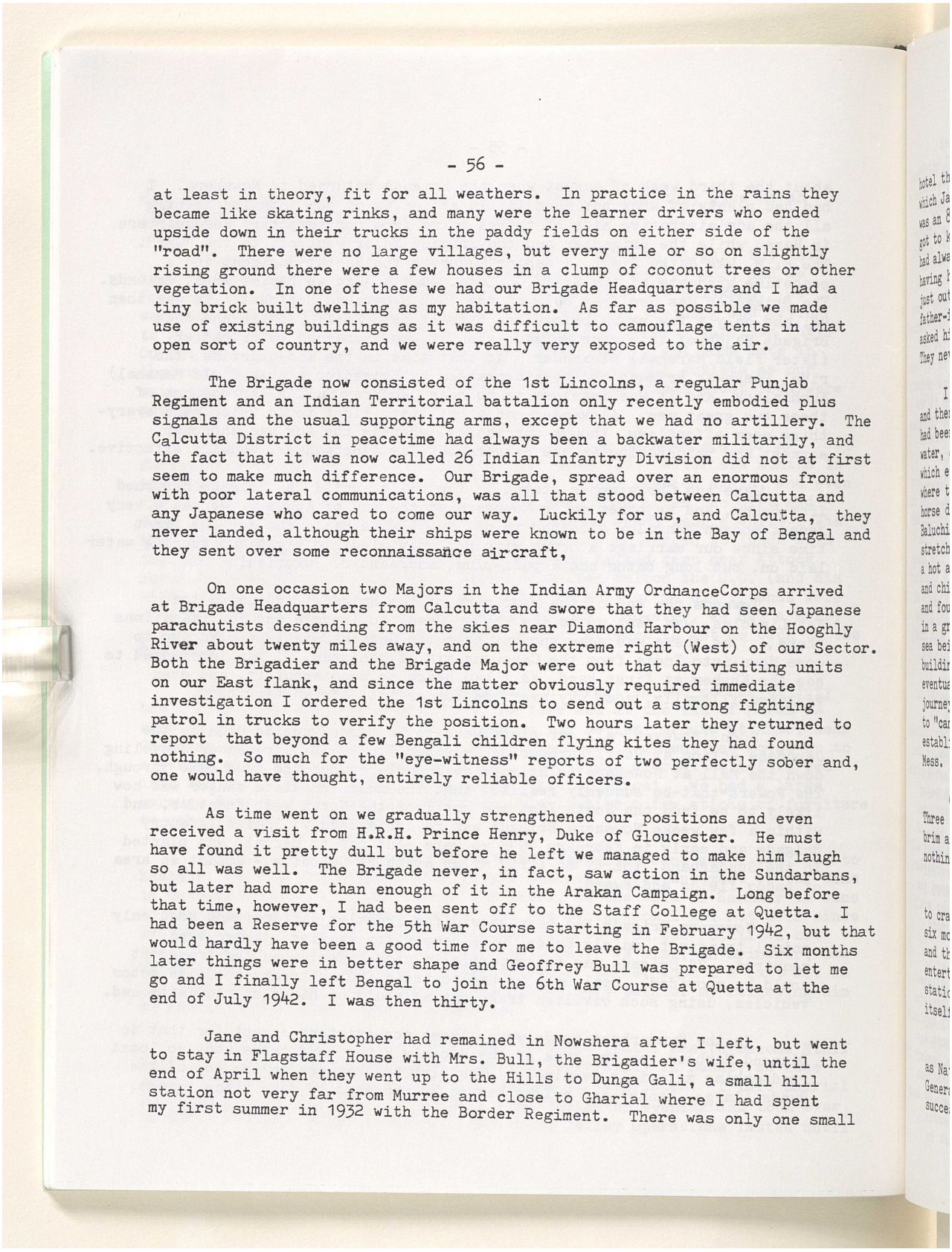
Jane and Christopher stayed in the hills, until the Brigade returned from Bannu, and rejoined me in Nowshera at the end of August. We had a very decent modern bungalow allotted to us, No. 43 The Mall, and for the first time since our marriage a house with not only electric light and running water laid on, but long baths and a pull-plug, undreamt of luxuries!

Towards the end of the year part of the Brigade, including the 1st Lincolns, was sent up to the Khyber Pass, to improve the fortifications there, as there was some thought that the Germans might be planning to come down into India from the Caucusus via Afghanistan. I was interested to see the Khyber at first hand, as I had heard so much about it, and even ventured illegally, some way over the Border into Afghan territory.

Soon, however, all our plans were to be turned upside down by the Japanese action at Pearl Harbour on December 7th 1941. I remember bicycling down the Mall at Nowshera to Brigade Headquarters when the news came through. The Powers-that-be suddenly realised that the most immediate danger was now likely to be from the South East and not from the North West Frontier, and within a few weeks Nowshera Brigade was re-christened 71 Indian Infantry Brigade and early in February 1942 we were sent off to Bengal, and planted in the Sundarbans, thirty or forty miles South of Calcutta - amidst an area of paddy fields and swamp.

Nowshera Brigade had been geared for Frontier warfare, and used only animal transport, mainly mules, with camels for heavier baggage when required. 71 Brigade was to be partially mechanized, when the transport could be provided. Mealwhile we had to train Indian troops to drive motor vehicles, using such civilian transport as could be hired or requisitioned.

In the Sundarbans roads were almost non-existent, except for that to Diamond Harbour, on the bank of the Hooghly River, and there were no local road making materials available. The dirt tracks were on the top of the Bunds (large banks) and bricks had to be imported to make these tracks,



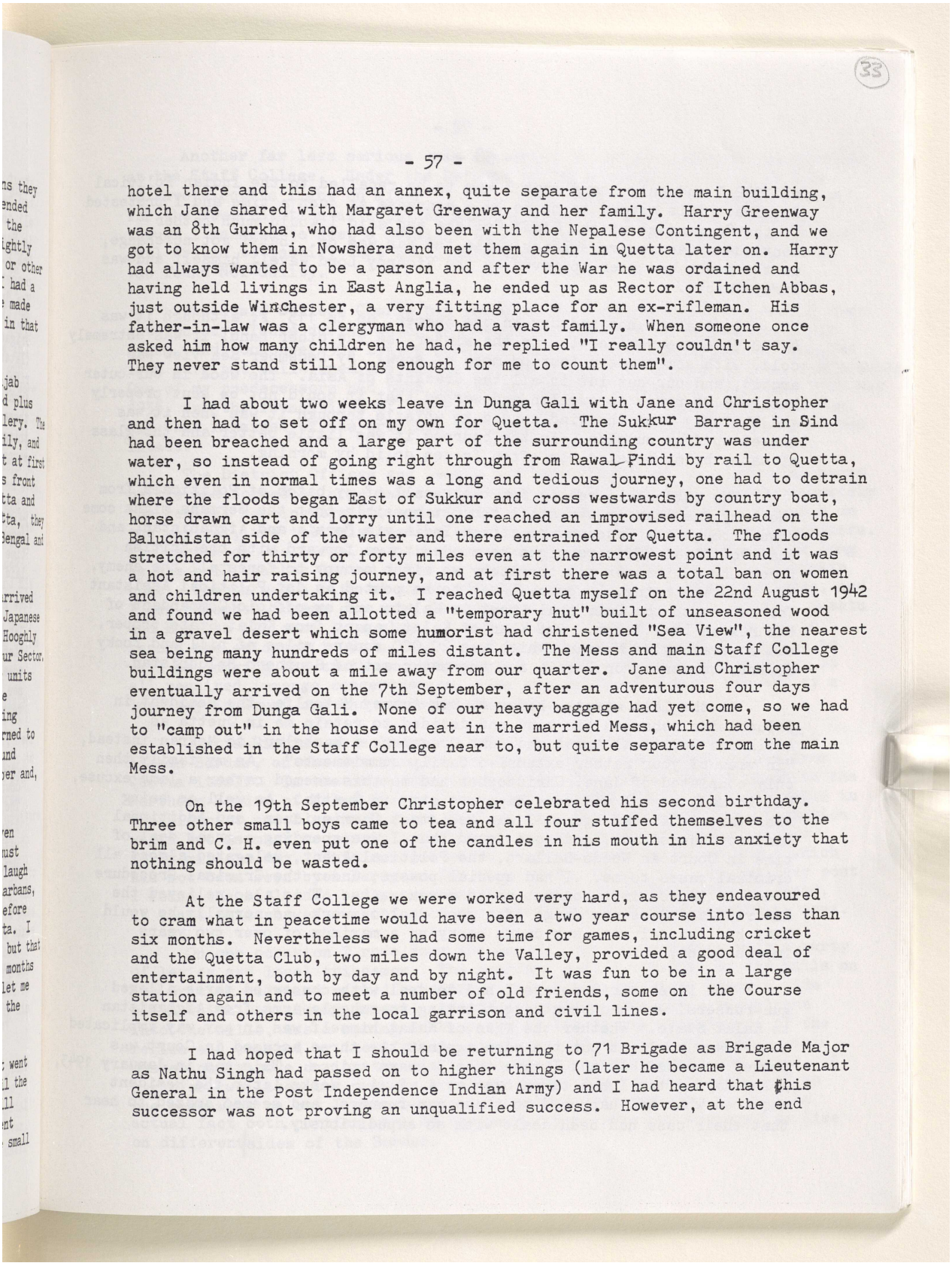
at least in theory, fit for all weathers. In practice in the rains they became like skating rinks, and many were the learner drivers who ended upside down in their trucks in the paddy fields on either side of the "road". There were no large villages, but every mile or so on slightly rising ground there were a few houses in a clump of coconut trees or other vegetation. In one of these we had our Brigade Headquarters and I had a tiny brick built dwelling as my habitation. As far as possible we made use of existing buildings as it was difficult to camouflage tents in that open sort of country, and we were really very exposed to the air.

The Brigade now consisted of the 1st Lincolns, a regular Punjab Regiment and an Indian Territorial battalion only recently embodied plus signals and the usual supporting arms, except that we had no artillery. The Calcutta District in peacetime had always been a backwater militarily, and the fact that it was now called 26 Indian Infantry Division did not at first seem to make much difference. Our Brigade, spread over an enormous front with poor lateral communications, was all that stood between Calcutta and any Japanese who cared to come our way. Luckily for us, and Calcutta, they never landed, although their ships were known to be in the Bay of Bengal and they sent over some reconnaissance aircraft,

On one occasion two Majors in the Indian Army OrdnanceCorps arrived at Brigade Headquarters from Calcutta and swore that they had seen Japanese parachutists descending from the skies near Diamond Harbour on the Hooghly River about twenty miles away, and on the extreme right (West) of our Sector. Both the Brigadier and the Brigade Major were out that day visiting units on our East flank, and since the matter obviously required immediate investigation I ordered the 1st Lincolns to send out a strong fighting patrol in trucks to verify the position. Two hours later they returned to report that beyond a few Bengali children flying kites they had found nothing. So much for the "eye-witness" reports of two perfectly sober and, one would have thought, entirely reliable officers.

As time went on we gradually strengthened our positions and even received a visit from H.R.H. Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester. He must have found it pretty dull but before he left we managed to make him laugh so all was well. The Brigade never, in fact, saw action in the Sundarbans, but later had more than enough of it in the Arakan Campaign. Long before that time, however, I had been sent off to the Staff College at Quetta. I had been a Reserve for the 5th War Course starting in February 1942, but that would hardly have been a good time for me to leave the Brigade. Six months later things were in better shape and Geoffrey Bull was prepared to let me go and I finally left Bengal to join the 6th War Course at Quetta at the end of July 1942. I was then thirty.

Jane and Christopher had remained in Nowshera after I left, but went to stay in Flagstaff House with Mrs. Bull, the Brigadier's wife, until the end of April when they went up to the Hills to Dunga Gali, a small hill station not very far from Murree and close to Gharial where I had spent my first summer in 1932 with the Border Regiment. There was only one small



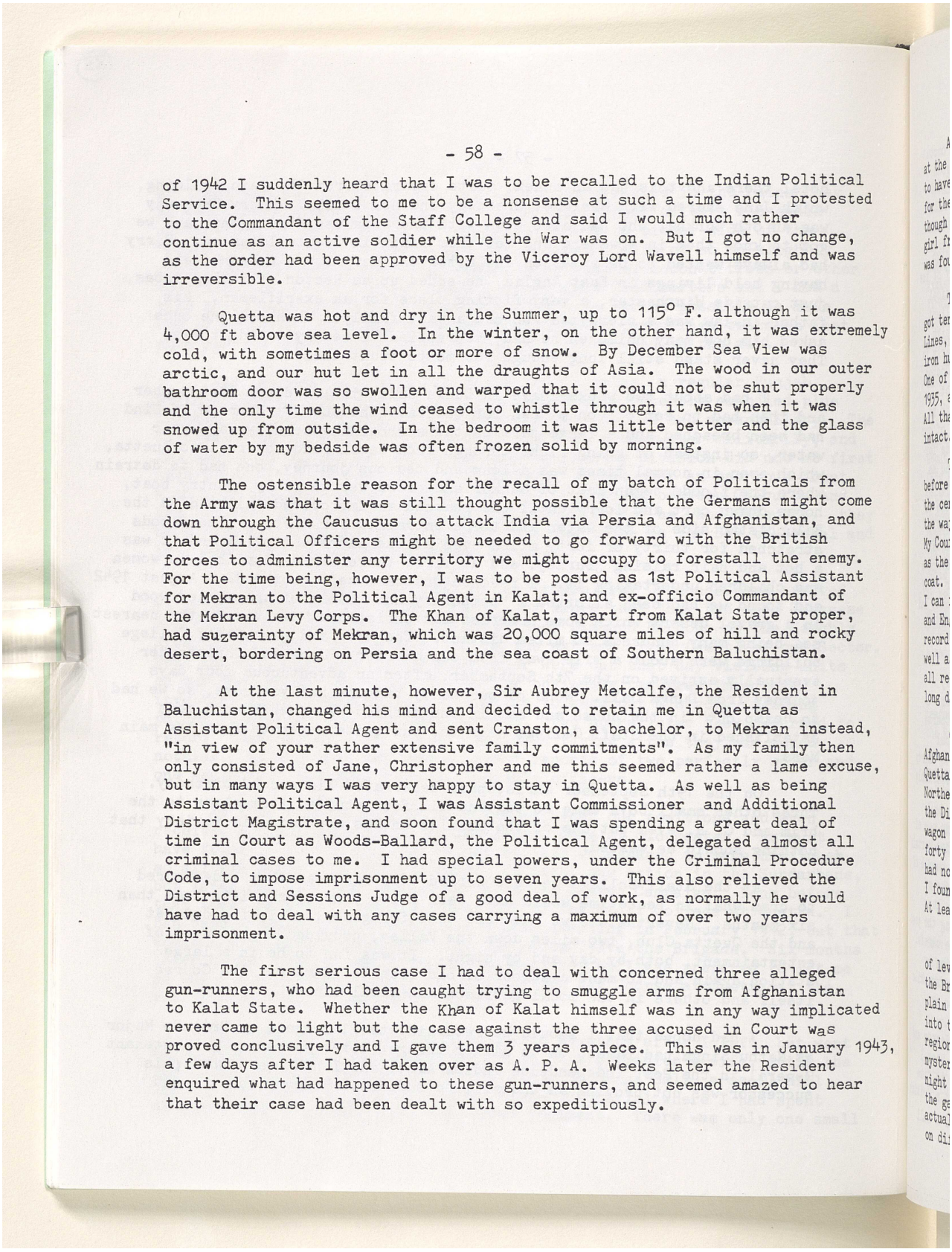
hotel there and this had an annex, quite separate from the main building, which Jane shared with Margaret Greenway and her family. Harry Greenway was an 8th Gurkha, who had also been with the Nepalese Contingent, and we got to know them in Nowshera and met them again in Quetta later on. Harry had always wanted to be a parson and after the War he was ordained and having held livings in East Anglia, he ended up as Rector of Itchen Abbas, just outside Winchester, a very fitting place for an ex-rifleman. His father-in-law was a clergyman who had a vast family. When someone once asked him how many children he had, he replied "I really couldn't say. They never stand still long enough for me to count them".

I had about two weeks leave in Dunga Gali with Jane and Christopher and then had to set off on my own for Quetta. The Sukkur Barrage in Sind had been breached and a large part of the surrounding country was under water, so instead of going right through from Rawal Pindi by rail to Quetta, which even in normal times was a long and tedious journey, one had to detrain where the floods began East of Sukkur and cross westwards by country boat, horse drawn cart and lorry until one reached an improvised railhead on the Baluchistan side of the water and there entrained for Quetta. The floods stretched for thirty or forty miles even at the narrowest point and it was a hot and hair raising journey, and at first there was a total ban on women and children undertaking it. I reached Quetta myself on the 22nd August 1942 and found we had been allotted a "temporary hut" built of unseasoned wood in a gravel desert which some humorist had christened "Sea View", the nearest sea being many hundreds of miles distant. The Mess and main Staff College buildings were about a mile away from our quarter. Jane and Christopher eventually arrived on the 7th September, after an adventurous four days journey from Dunga Gali. None of our heavy baggage had yet come, so we had to "camp out" in the house and eat in the married Mess, which had been established in the Staff College near to, but quite separate from the main Mess.

On the 19th September Christopher celebrated his second birthday. Three other small boys came to tea and all four stuffed themselves to the brim and C. H. even put one of the candles in his mouth in his anxiety that nothing should be wasted.

At the Staff College we were worked very hard, as they endeavoured to cram what in peacetime would have been a two year course into less than six months. Nevertheless we had some time for games, including cricket and the Quetta Club, two miles down the Valley, provided a good deal of entertainment, both by day and by night. It was fun to be in a large station again and to meet a number of old friends, some on the Course itself and others in the local garrison and civil lines.

I had hoped that I should be returning to 71 Brigade as Brigade Major as Nathu Singh had passed on to higher things (later he became a Lieutenant General in the Post Independence Indian Army) and I had heard that this successor was not proving an unqualified success. However, at the end



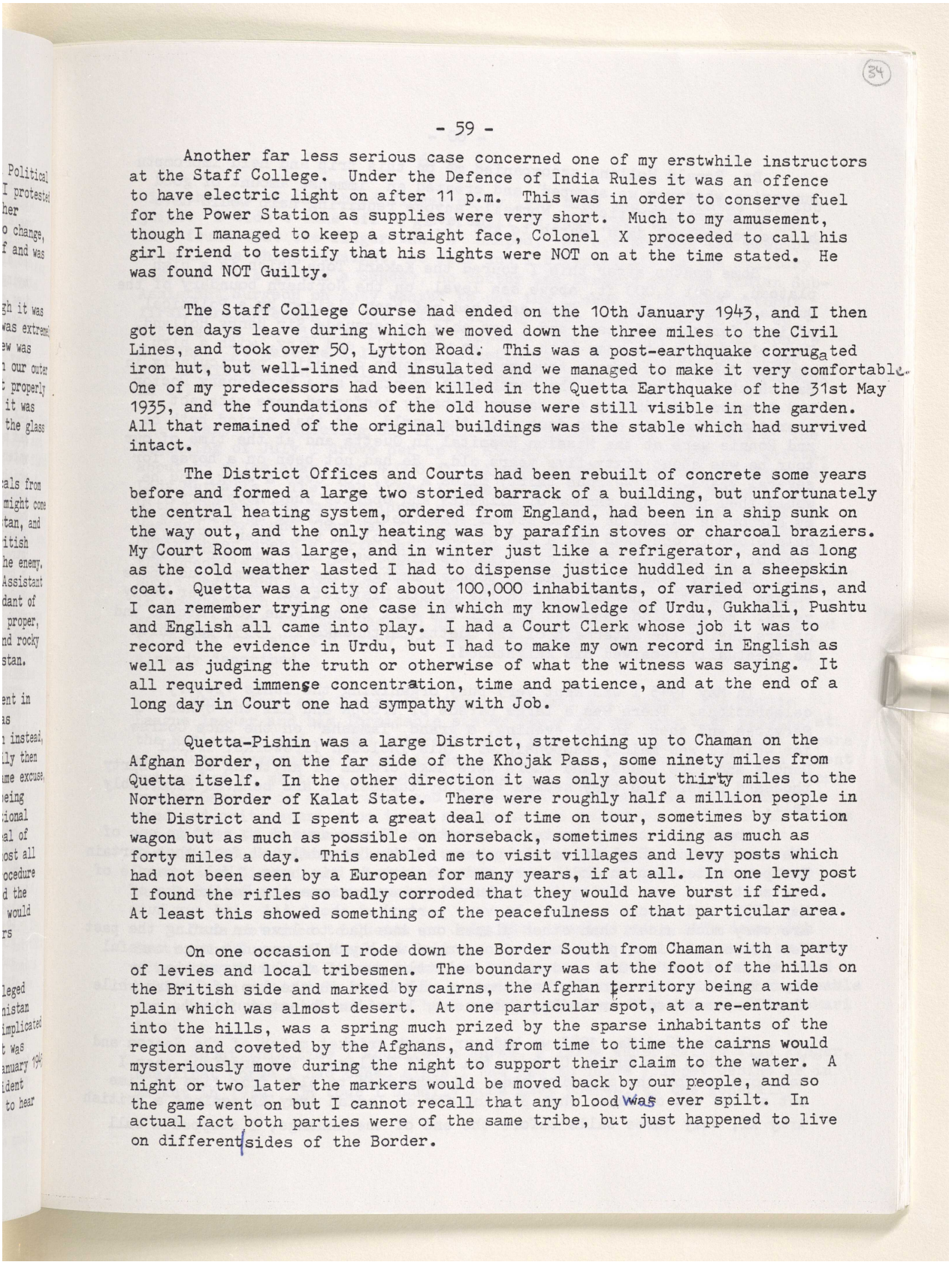
of 1942 I suddenly heard that I was to be recalled to the Indian Political Service. This seemed to me to be a nonsense at such a time and I protested to the Commandant of the Staff College and said I would much rather continue as an active soldier while the War was on. But I got no change, as the order had been approved by the Viceroy Lord Wavell himself and was irreversible.

Quetta was hot and dry in the Summer, up to 115° F. although it was 4,000 ft above sea level. In the winter, on the other hand, it was extremely cold, with sometimes a foot or more of snow. By December Sea View was arctic, and our hut let in all the draughts of Asia. The wood in our outer bathroom door was so swollen and warped that it could not be shut properly and the only time the wind ceased to whistle through it was when it was snowed up from outside. In the bedroom it was little better and the glass of water by my bedside was often frozen solid by morning.

The ostensible reason for the recall of my batch of Politicals from the Army was that it was still thought possible that the Germans might come down through the Caucusus to attack India via Persia and Afghanistan, and that Political Officers might be needed to go forward with the British forces to administer any territory we might occupy to forestall the enemy. For the time being, however, I was to be posted as 1st Political Assistant for Mekran to the Political Agent in Kalat; and ex-officio Commandant of the Mekran Levy Corps. The Khan of Kalat, apart from Kalat State proper, had suzerainty of Mekran, which was 20,000 square miles of hill and rocky desert, bordering on Persia and the sea coast of Southern Baluchistan.

At the last minute, however, Sir Aubrey Metcalfe, the Resident in Baluchistan, changed his mind and decided to retain me in Quetta as Assistant Political Agent and sent Cranston, a bachelor, to Mekran instead, "in view of your rather extensive family commitments". As my family then only consisted of Jane, Christopher and me this seemed rather a lame excuse, but in many ways I was very happy to stay in Quetta. As well as being Assistant Political Agent, I was Assistant Commissioner and Additional District Magistrate, and soon found that I was spending a great deal of time in Court as Woods-Ballard, the Political Agent, delegated almost all criminal cases to me. I had special powers, under the Criminal Procedure Code, to impose imprisonment up to seven years. This also relieved the District and Sessions Judge of a good deal of work, as normally he would have had to deal with any cases carrying a maximum of over two years imprisonment.

The first serious case I had to deal with concerned three alleged gun-runners, who had been caught trying to smuggle arms from Afghanistan to Kalat State. Whether the Khan of Kalat himself was in any way implicated never came to light but the case against the three accused in Court was proved conclusively and I gave them 3 years apiece. This was in January 1943, a few days after I had taken over as A. P. A. Weeks later the Resident enquired what had happened to these gun-runners, and seemed amazed to hear that their case had been dealt with so expeditiously.



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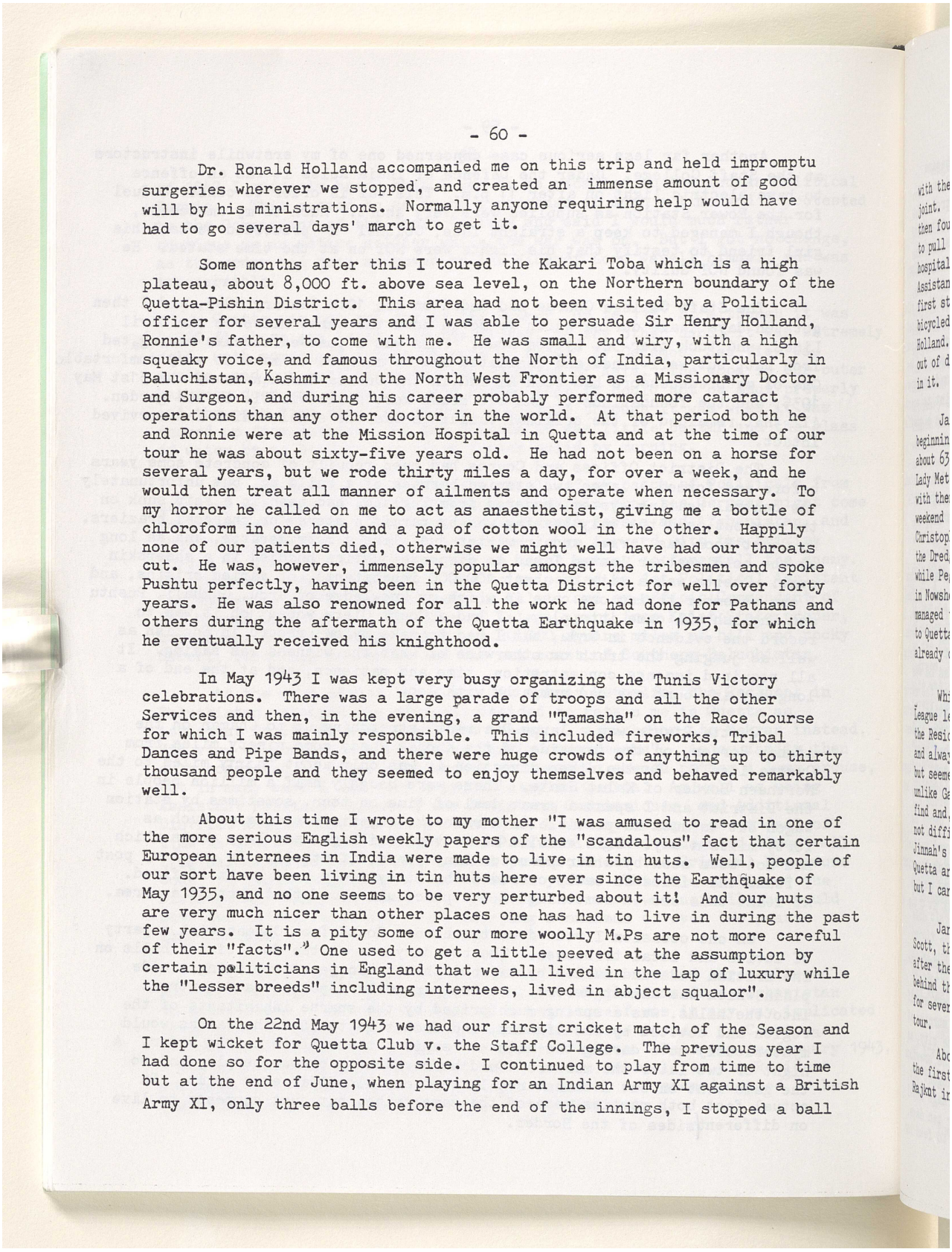
Another far less serious case concerned one of my erstwhile instructors at the Staff College. Under the Defence of India Rules it was an offence to have electric light on after 11 p.m. This was in order to conserve fuel for the Power Station as supplies were very short. Much to my amusement, though I managed to keep a straight face, Colonel X proceeded to call his girl friend to testify that his lights were NOT on at the time stated. He was found NOT Guilty.

The Staff College Course had ended on the 10th January 1943, and I then got ten days leave during which we moved down the three miles to the Civil Lines, and took over 50, Lytton Road. This was a post-earthquake corrugated iron hut, but well-lined and insulated and we managed to make it very comfortable. One of my predecessors had been killed in the Quetta Earthquake of the 31st May 1935, and the foundations of the old house were still visible in the garden. All that remained of the original buildings was the stable which had survived intact.

The District Offices and Courts had been rebuilt of concrete some years before and formed a large two storied barrack of a building, but unfortunately the central heating system, ordered from England, had been in a ship sunk on the way out, and the only heating was by paraffin stoves or charcoal braziers. My Court Room was large, and in winter just like a refrigerator, and as long as the cold weather lasted I had to dispense justice huddled in a sheepskin coat. Quetta was a city of about 100,000 inhabitants, of varied origins, and I can remember trying one case in which my knowledge of Urdu, Gukhali, Pushtu and English all came into play. I had a Court Clerk whose job it was to record the evidence in Urdu, but I had to make my own record in English as well as judging the truth or otherwise of what the witness was saying. It all required immense concentration, time and patience, and at the end of a long day in Court one had sympathy with Job.

Quetta-Pishin was a large District, stretching up to Chaman on the Afghan Border, on the far side of the Khojak Pass, some ninety miles from Quetta itself. In the other direction it was only about thirty miles to the Northern Border of Kalat State. There were roughly half a million people in the District and I spent a great deal of time on tour, sometimes by station wagon but as much as possible on horseback, sometimes riding as much as forty miles a day. This enabled me to visit villages and levy posts which had not been seen by a European for many years, if at all. In one levy post I found the rifles so badly corroded that they would have burst if fired. At least this showed something of the peacefulness of that particular area.

On one occasion I rode down the Border South from Chaman with a party of levies and local tribesmen. The boundary was at the foot of the hills on the British side and marked by cairns, the Afghan territory being a wide plain which was almost desert. At one particular spot, at a re-entrant into the hills, was a spring much prized by the sparse inhabitants of the region and coveted by the Afghans, and from time to time the cairns would mysteriously move during the night to support their claim to the water. A night or two later the markers would be moved back by our people, and so the game went on but I cannot recall that any blood was ever spilt. In actual fact both parties were of the same tribe, but just happened to live on different sides of the Border.



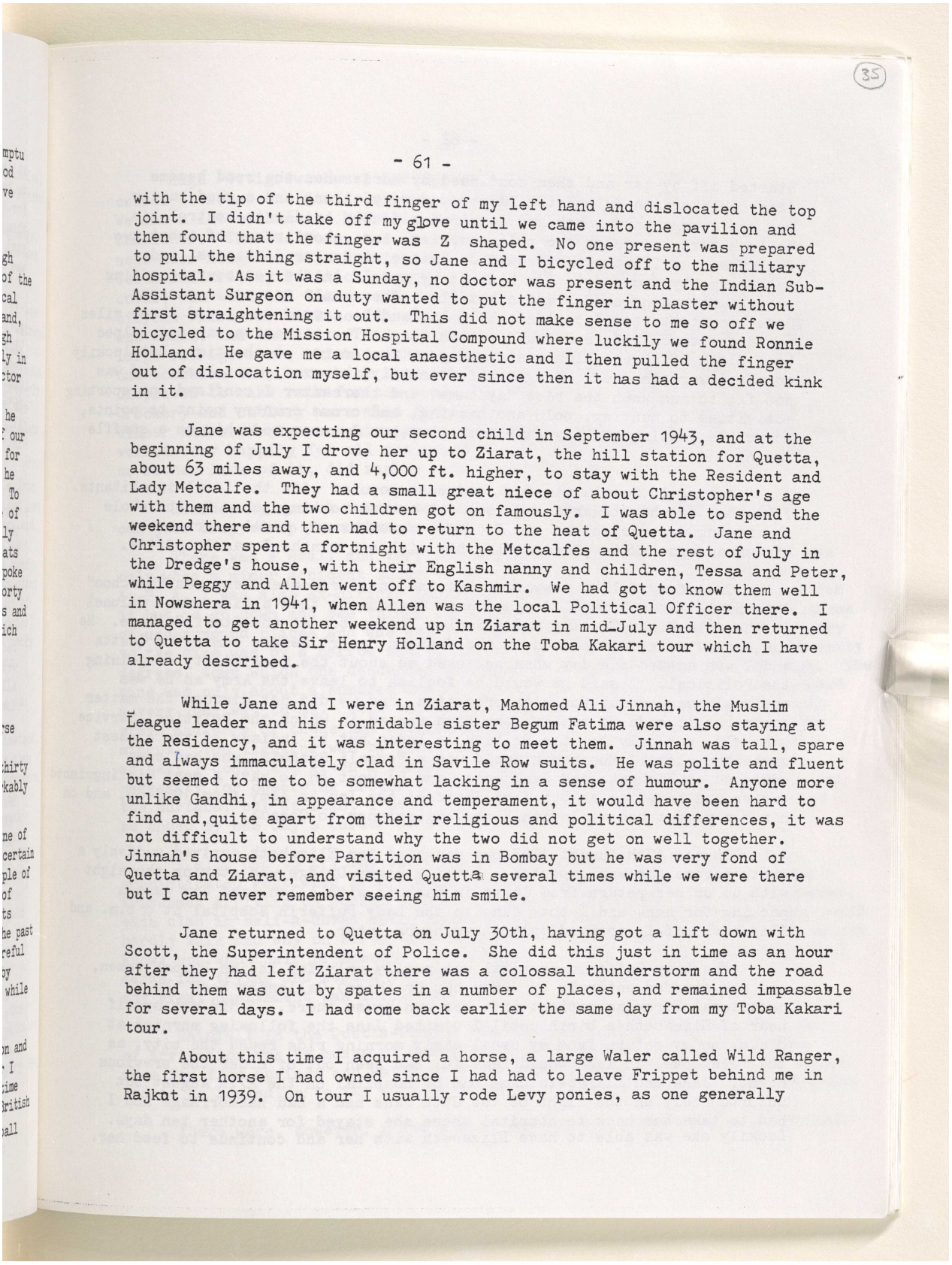
Dr. Ronald Holland accompanied me on this trip and held impromptu surgeries wherever we stopped, and created an immense amount of good will by his ministrations. Normally anyone requiring help would have had to go several days' march to get it.

Some months after this I toured the Kakari Toba which is a high plateau, about 8,000 ft. above sea level, on the Northern boundary of the Quetta-Pishin District. This area had not been visited by a Political officer for several years and I was able to persuade Sir Henry Holland, Ronnie's father, to come with me. He was small and wiry, with a high squeaky voice, and famous throughout the North of India, particularly in Baluchistan, Kashmir and the North West Frontier as a Missionary Doctor and Surgeon, and during his career probably performed more cataract operations than any other doctor in the world. At that period both he and Ronnie were at the Mission Hospital in Quetta and at the time of our tour he was about sixty-five years old. He had not been on a horse for several years, but we rode thirty miles a day, for over a week, and he would then treat all manner of ailments and operate when necessary. To my horror he called on me to act as anaesthetist, giving me a bottle of chloroform in one hand and a pad of cotton wool in the other. Happily none of our patients died, otherwise we might well have had our throats cut. He was, however, immensely popular amongst the tribesmen and spoke Pushtu perfectly, having been in the Quetta District for well over forty years. He was also renowned for all the work he had done for Pathans and others during the aftermath of the Quetta Earthquake in 1935, for which he eventually received his knighthood.

In May 1943 I was kept very busy organizing the Tunis Victory celebrations. There was a large parade of troops and all the other Services and then, in the evening, a grand "Tamasha" on the Race Course for which I was mainly responsible. This included fireworks, Tribal Dances and Pipe Bands, and there were huge crowds of anything up to thirty thousand people and they seemed to enjoy themselves and behaved remarkably well.

About this time I wrote to my mother "I was amused to read in one of the more serious English weekly papers of the "scandalous" fact that certain European internees in India were made to live in tin huts. Well, people of our sort have been living in tin huts here ever since the Earthquake of May 1935, and no one seems to be very perturbed about it! And our huts are very much nicer than other places one has had to live in during the past few years. It is a pity some of our more woolly M.Ps are not more careful of their "facts".' One used to get a little peeved at the assumption by certain politicians in England that we all lived in the lap of luxury while the "lesser breeds" including internees, lived in abject squalor".

On the 22nd May 1943 we had our first cricket match of the Season and I kept wicket for Quetta Club v. the Staff College. The previous year I had done so for the opposite side. I continued to play from time to time but at the end of June, when playing for an Indian Army XI against a British Army XI, only three balls before the end of the innings, I stopped a ball



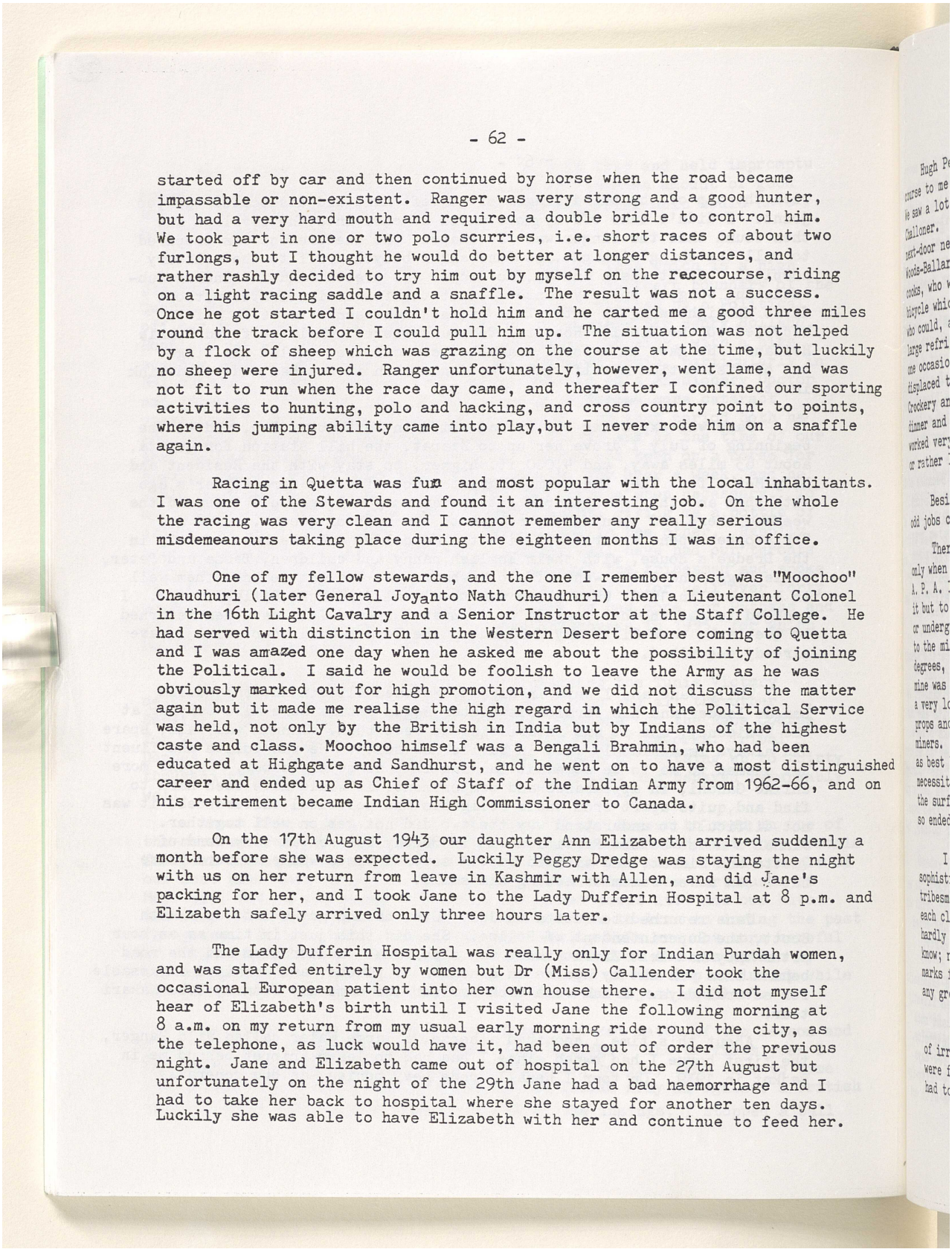
with the tip of the third finger of my left hand and dislocated the top joint. I didn't take off my glove until we came into the pavilion and then found that the finger was Z shaped. No one present was prepared to pull the thing straight, so Jane and I bicycled off to the military hospital. As it was a Sunday, no doctor was present and the Indian Sub-Assistant Surgeon on duty wanted to put the finger in plaster without first straightening it out. This did not make sense to me so off we bicycled to the Mission Hospital Compound where luckily we found Ronnie Holland. He gave me a local anaesthetic and I then pulled the finger out of dislocation myself, but ever since then it has had a decided kink in it.

Jane was expecting our second child in September 1943, and at the beginning of July I drove her up to Ziarat, the hill station for Quetta, about 63 miles away, and 4,000 ft. higher, to stay with the Resident and Lady Metcalfe. They had a small great niece of about Christopher's age with them and the two children got on famously. I was able to spend the weekend there and then had to return to the heat of Quetta. Jane and Christopher spent a fortnight with the Metcalfes and the rest of July in the Dredge's house, with their English nanny and children, Tessa and Peter, while Peggy and Allen went off to Kashmir. We had got to know them well in Nowshera in 1941, when Allen was the local Political Officer there. I managed to get another weekend up in Ziarat in mid-July and then returned to Quetta to take Sir Henry Holland on the Toba Kakari tour which I have already described.

While Jane and I were in Ziarat, Mahomed Ali Jinnah, the Muslim League leader and his formidable sister Begum Fatima were also staying at the Residency, and it was interesting to meet them. Jinnah was tall, spare and always immaculately clad in Savile Row suits. He was polite and fluent but seemed to me to be somewhat lacking in a sense of humour. Anyone more unlike Gandhi, in appearance and temperament, it would have been hard to find and, quite apart from their religious and political differences, it was not difficult to understand why the two did not get on well together. Jinnah's house before Partition was in Bombay but he was very fond of Quetta and Ziarat, and visited Quetta several times while we were there but I can never remember seeing him smile.

Jane returned to Quetta on July 30th, having got a lift down with Scott, the Superintendent of Police. She did this just in time as an hour after they had left Ziarat there was a colossal thunderstorm and the road behind them was cut by spates in a number of places, and remained impassable for several days. I had come back earlier the same day from my Toba Kakari tour.

About this time I acquired a horse, a large Waler called Wild Ranger, the first horse I had owned since I had had to leave Frippet behind me in Rajkot in 1939. On tour I usually rode Levy ponies, as one generally



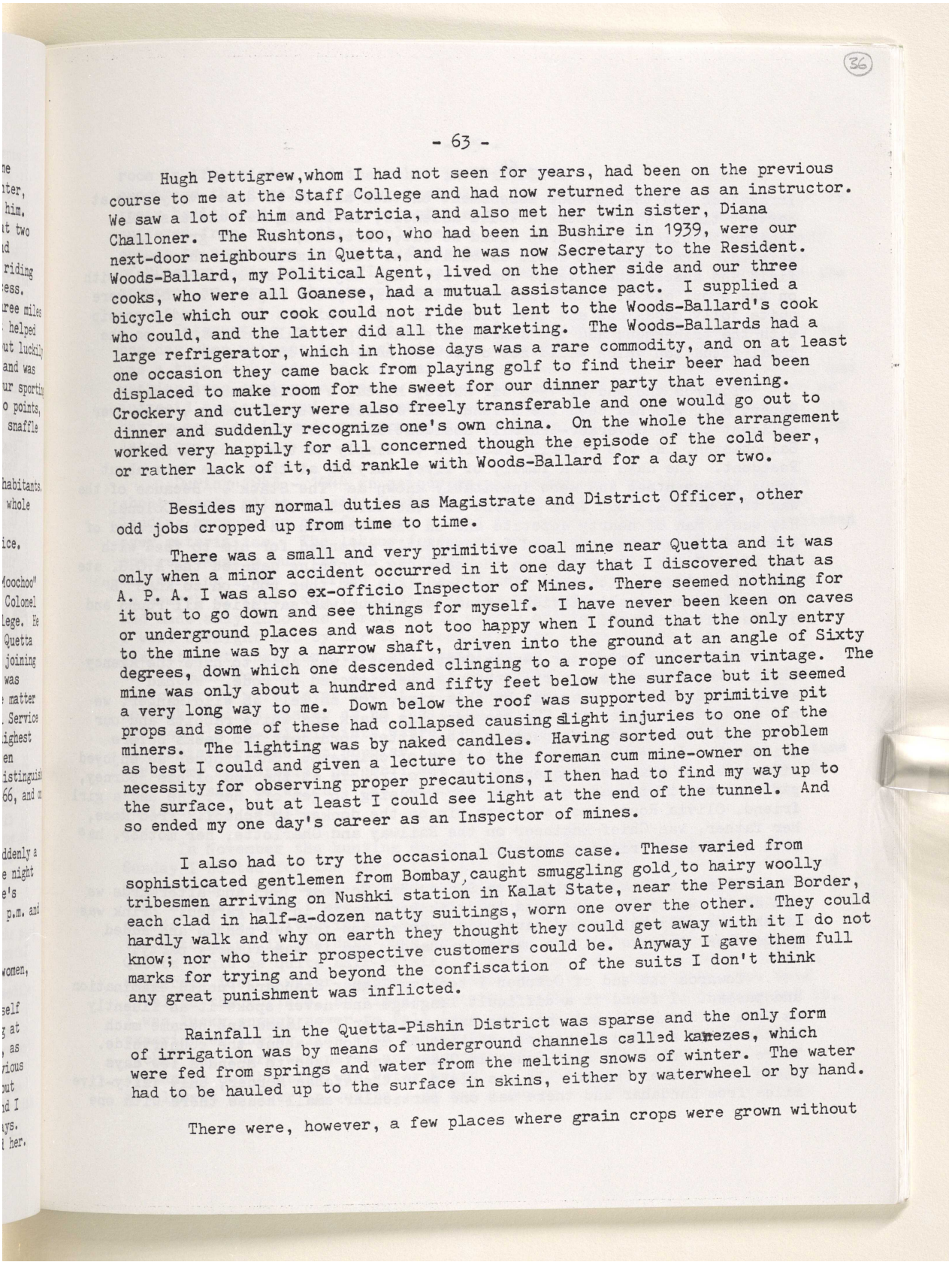
started off by car and then continued by horse when the road became impassable or non-existent. Ranger was very strong and a good hunter, but had a very hard mouth and required a double bridle to control him. We took part in one or two polo scurries, i.e. short races of about two furlongs, but I thought he would do better at longer distances, and rather rashly decided to try him out by myself on the racecourse, riding on a light racing saddle and a snaffle. The result was not a success. Once he got started I couldn't hold him and he carted me a good three miles round the track before I could pull him up. The situation was not helped by a flock of sheep which was grazing on the course at the time, but luckily no sheep were injured. Ranger unfortunately, however, went lame, and was not fit to run when the race day came, and thereafter I confined our sporting activities to hunting, polo and hacking, and cross country point to points, where his jumping ability came into play,but I never rode him on a snaffle again.

Racing in Quetta was fun and most popular with the local inhabitants. I was one of the Stewards and found it an interesting job. On the whole the racing was very clean and I cannot remember any really serious misdemeanours taking place during the eighteen months I was in office.

One of my fellow stewards, and the one I remember best was "Moochoo" Chaudhuri (later General Joyanto Nath Chaudhuri) then a Lieutenant Colonel in the 16th Light Cavalry and a Senior Instructor at the Staff College. He had served with distinction in the Western Desert before coming to Quetta and I was amazed one day when he asked me about the possibility of joining the Political. I said he would be foolish to leave the Army as he was obviously marked out for high promotion, and we did not discuss the matter again but it made me realise the high regard in which the Political Service was held, not only by the British in India but by Indians of the highest caste and class. Moochoo himself was a Bengali Brahmin, who had been educated at Highgate and Sandhurst, and he went on to have a most distinguished career and ended up as Chief of Staff of the Indian Army from 1962-66, and on his retirement became Indian High Commissioner to Canada.

On the 17th August 1943 our daughter Ann Elizabeth arrived suddenly a month before she was expected. Luckily Peggy Dredge was staying the night with us on her return from leave in Kashmir with Allen, and did Jane's packing for her, and I took Jane to the Lady Dufferin Hospital at 8 p.m. and Elizabeth safely arrived only three hours later.

The Lady Dufferin Hospital was really only for Indian Purdah women, and was staffed entirely by women but Dr (Miss) Callender took the occasional European patient into her own house there. I did not myself hear of Elizabeth's birth until I visited Jane the following morning at 8 a.m. on my return from my usual early morning ride round the city, as the telephone, as luck would have it, had been out of order the previous night. Jane and Elizabeth came out of hospital on the 27th August but unfortunately on the night of the 29th Jane had a bad haemorrhage and I had to take her back to hospital where she stayed for another ten days. Luckily she was able to have Elizabeth with her and continue to feed her.



36

- 63 -

Hugh Pettigrew, whom I had not seen for years, had been on the previous course to me at the Staff College and had now returned there as an instructor. We saw a lot of him and Patricia, and also met her twin sister, Diana Challoner. The Rushtons, too, who had been in Bushire in 1939, were our next-door neighbours in Quetta, and he was now Secretary to the Resident. Woods-Ballard, my Political Agent, lived on the other side and our three cooks, who were all Goanese, had a mutual assistance pact. I supplied a bicycle which our cook could not ride but lent to the Woods-Ballard's cook who could, and the latter did all the marketing. The Woods-Ballards had a large refrigerator, which in those days was a rare commodity, and on at least one occasion they came back from playing golf to find their beer had been displaced to make room for the sweet for our dinner party that evening. Crockery and cutlery were also freely transferable and one would go out to dinner and suddenly recognize one's own china. On the whole the arrangement worked very happily for all concerned though the episode of the cold beer, or rather lack of it, did rankle with Woods-Ballard for a day or two.

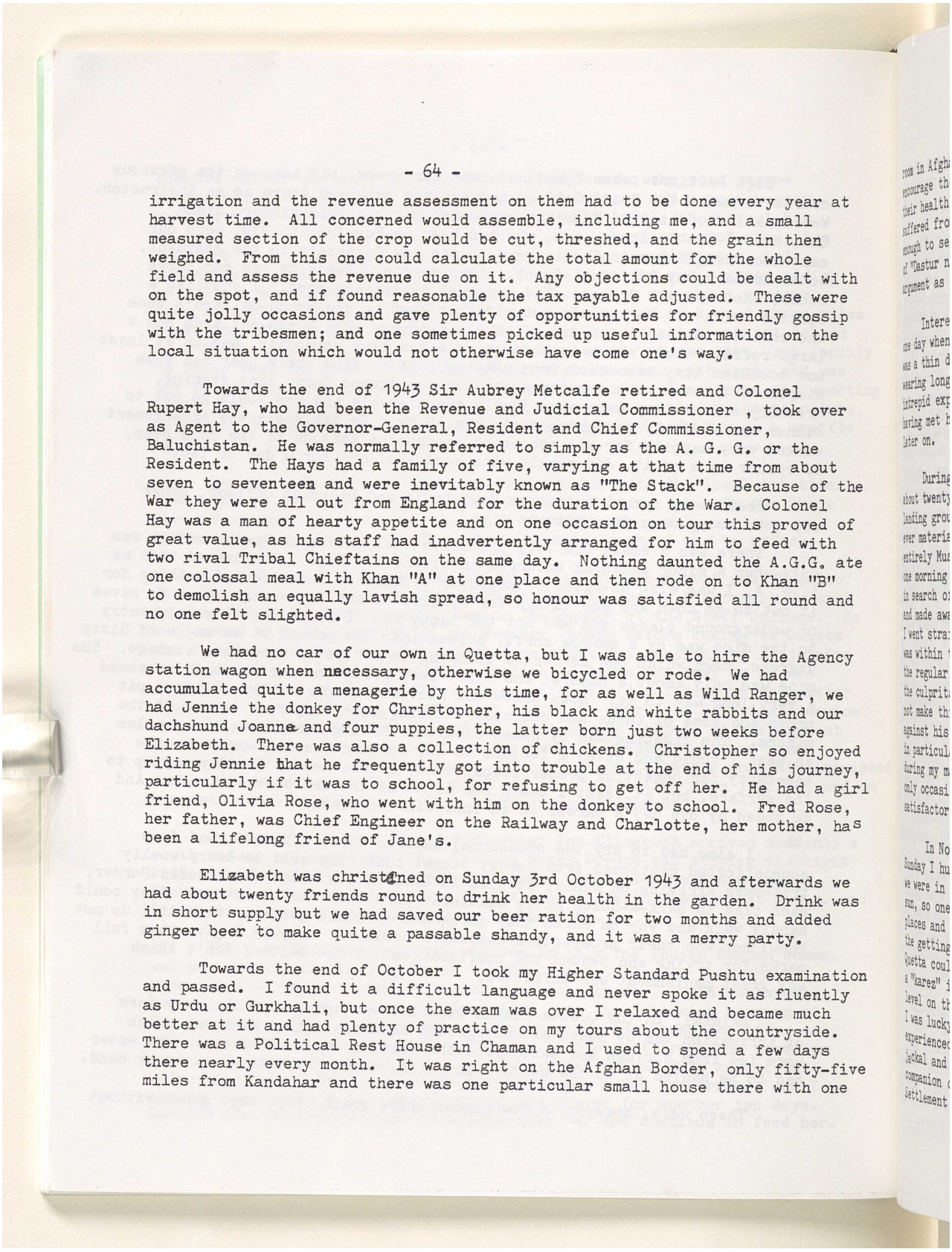
Besides my normal duties as Magistrate and District Officer, other odd jobs cropped up from time to time.

There was a small and very primitive coal mine near Quetta and it was only when a minor accident occurred in it one day that I discovered that as A. P. A. I was also ex-officio Inspector of Mines. There seemed nothing for it but to go down and see things for myself. I have never been keen on caves or underground places and was not too happy when I found that the only entry to the mine was by a narrow shaft, driven into the ground at an angle of Sixty degrees, down which one descended clinging to a rope of uncertain vintage. The mine was only about a hundred and fifty feet below the surface but it seemed a very long way to me. Down below the roof was supported by primitive pit props and some of these had collapsed causing slight injuries to one of the miners. The lighting was by naked candles. Having sorted out the problem as best I could and given a lecture to the foreman cum mine-owner on the necessity for observing proper precautions, I then had to find my way up to the surface, but at least I could see light at the end of the tunnel. And so ended my one day's career as an Inspector of mines.

I also had to try the occasional Customs case. These varied from sophisticated gentlemen from Bombay, caught smuggling gold, to hairy woolly tribesmen arriving on Nushki station in Kalat State, near the Persian Border, each clad in half-a-dozen natty suitings, worn one over the other. They could hardly walk and why on earth they thought they could get away with it I do not know; nor who their prospective customers could be. Anyway I gave them full marks for trying and beyond the confiscation of the suits I don't think any great punishment was inflicted.

Rainfall in the Quetta-Pishin District was sparse and the only form of irrigation was by means of underground channels called kanezes, which were fed from springs and water from the melting snows of winter. The water had to be hauled up to the surface in skins, either by waterwheel or by hand.

There were, however, a few places where grain crops were grown without



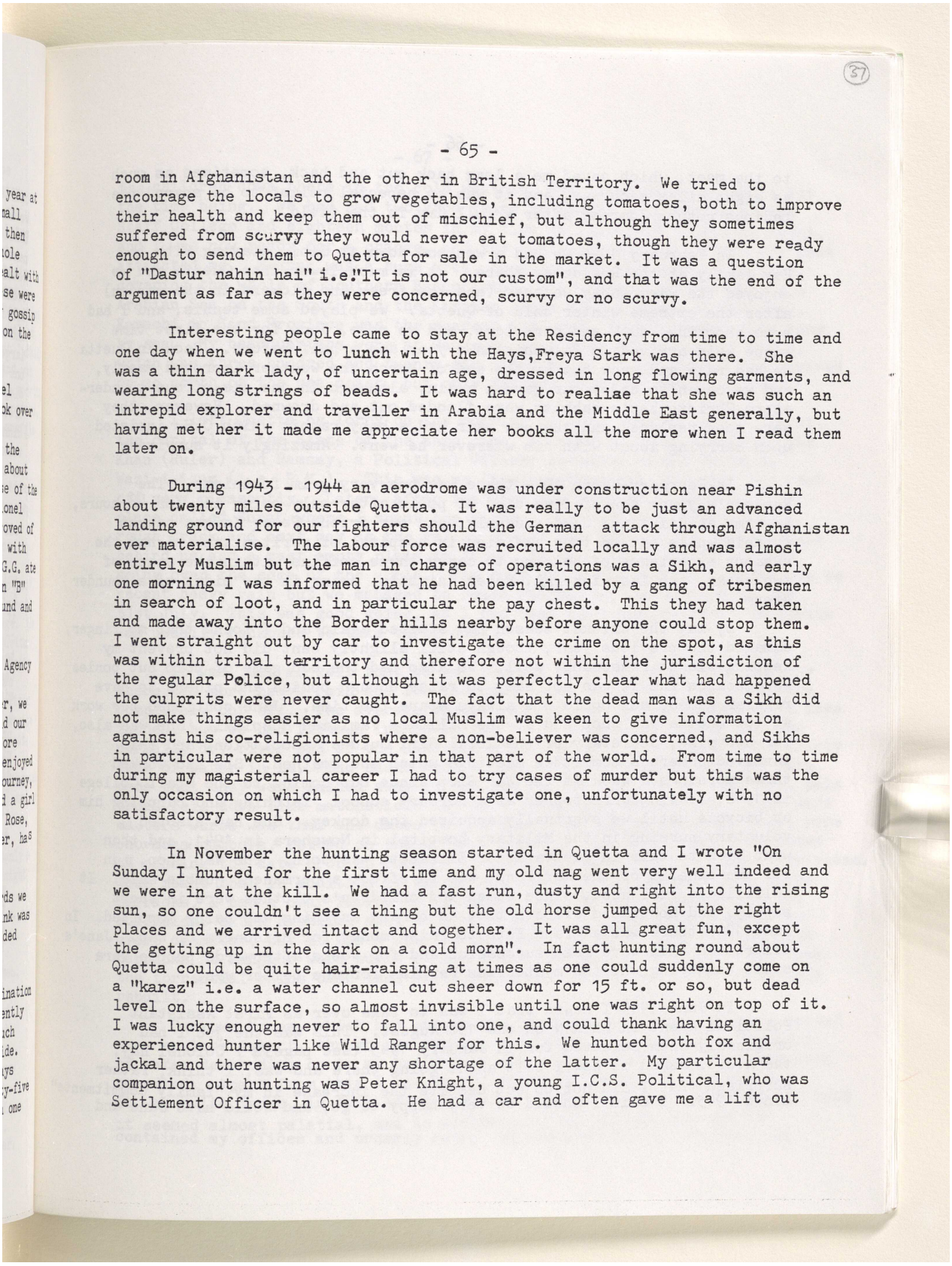
irrigation and the revenue assessment on them had to be done every year at harvest time. All concerned would assemble, including me, and a small measured section of the crop would be cut, threshed, and the grain then weighed. From this one could calculate the total amount for the whole field and assess the revenue due on it. Any objections could be dealt with on the spot, and if found reasonable the tax payable adjusted. These were quite jolly occasions and gave plenty of opportunities for friendly gossip with the tribesmen; and one sometimes picked up useful information on the local situation which would not otherwise have come one's way.

Towards the end of 1943 Sir Aubrey Metcalfe retired and Colonel Rupert Hay, who had been the Revenue and Judicial Commissioner , took over as Agent to the Governor-General, Resident and Chief Commissioner, Baluchistan. He was normally referred to simply as the A. G. G. or the Resident. The Hays had a family of five, varying at that time from about seven to seventeen and were inevitably known as "The Stack". Because of the War they were all out from England for the duration of the War. Colonel Hay was a man of hearty appetite and on one occasion on tour this proved of great value, as his staff had inadvertently arranged for him to feed with two rival Tribal Chieftains on the same day. Nothing daunted the A.G.G. ate one colossal meal with Khan "A" at one place and then rode on to Khan "B" to demolish an equally lavish spread, so honour was satisfied all round and no one felt slighted.

We had no car of our own in Quetta, but I was able to hire the Agency station wagon when necessary, otherwise we bicycled or rode. We had accumulated quite a menagerie by this time, for as well as Wild Ranger, we had Jennie the donkey for Christopher, his black and white rabbits and our dachshund Joanne and four puppies, the latter born just two weeks before Elizabeth. There was also a collection of chickens. Christopher so enjoyed riding Jennie that he frequently got into trouble at the end of his journey, particularly if it was to school, for refusing to get off her. He had a girl friend, Olivia Rose, who went with him on the donkey to school. Fred Rose, her father, was Chief Engineer on the Railway and Charlotte, her mother, has been a lifelong friend of Jane's.

Elizabeth was christened on Sunday 3rd October 1943 and afterwards we had about twenty friends round to drink her health in the garden. Drink was in short supply but we had saved our beer ration for two months and added ginger beer to make quite a passable shandy, and it was a merry party.

Towards the end of October I took my Higher Standard Pushtu examination and passed. I found it a difficult language and never spoke it as fluently as Urdu or Gurkhali, but once the exam was over I relaxed and became much better at it and had plenty of practice on my tours about the countryside. There was a Political Rest House in Chaman and I used to spend a few days there nearly every month. It was right on the Afghan Border, only fifty-five miles from Kandahar and there was one particular small house there with one

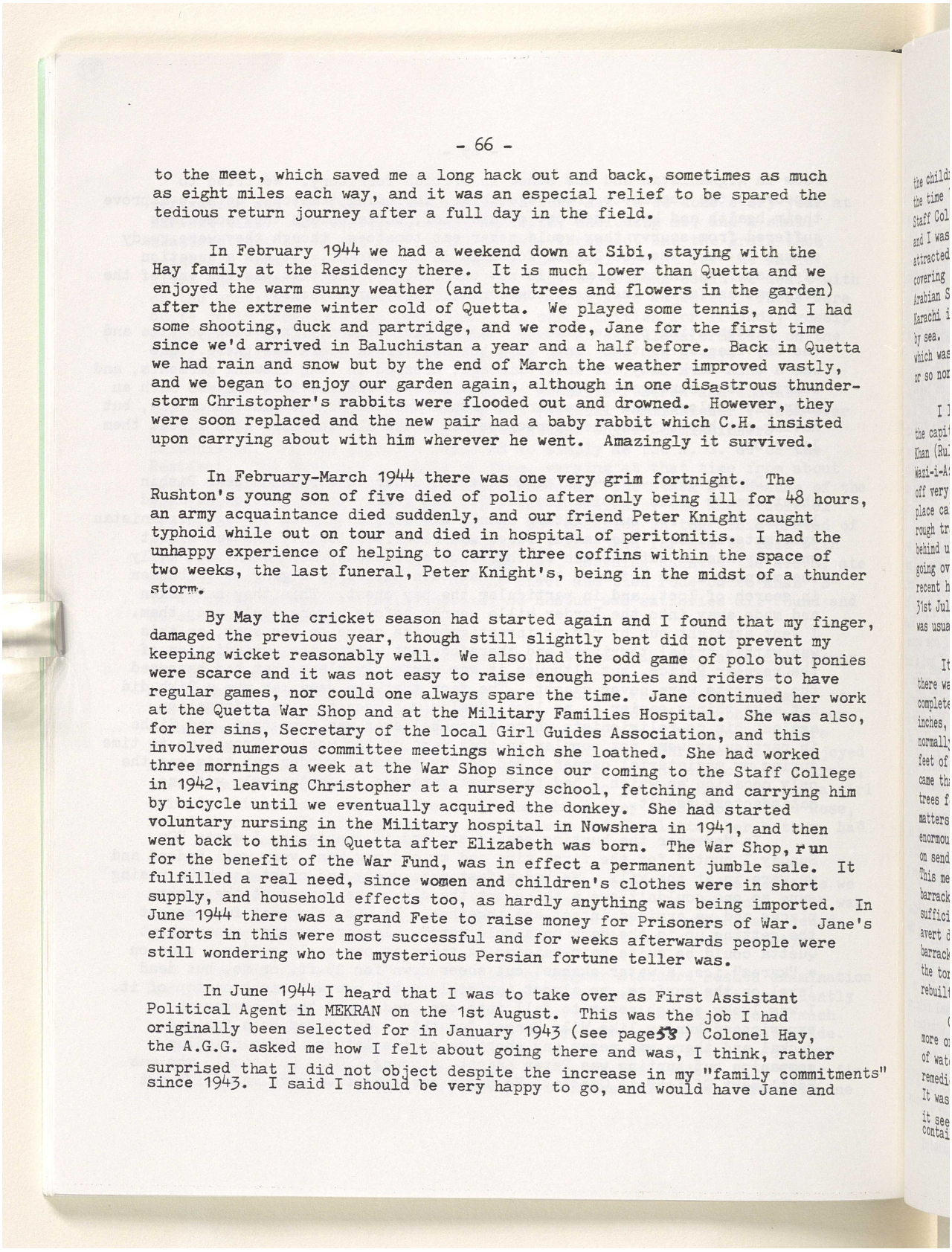


room in Afghanistan and the other in British Territory. We tried to encourage the locals to grow vegetables, including tomatoes, both to improve their health and keep them out of mischief, but although they sometimes suffered from scurvy they would never eat tomatoes, though they were ready enough to send them to Quetta for sale in the market. It was a question of "Dastur nahin hai" i.e."It is not our custom", and that was the end of the argument as far as they were concerned, scurvy or no scurvy.

Interesting people came to stay at the Residency from time to time and one day when we went to lunch with the Hays,Freya Stark was there. She was a thin dark lady, of uncertain age, dressed in long flowing garments, and wearing long strings of beads. It was hard to realiae that she was such an intrepid explorer and traveller in Arabia and the Middle East generally, but having met her it made me appreciate her books all the more when I read them later on.

During 1943 - 1944 an aerodrome was under construction near Pishin about twenty miles outside Quetta. It was really to be just an advanced landing ground for our fighters should the German attack through Afghanistan ever materialise. The labour force was recruited locally and was almost entirely Muslim but the man in charge of operations was a Sikh, and early one morning I was informed that he had been killed by a gang of tribesmen in search of loot, and in particular the pay chest. This they had taken and made away into the Border hills nearby before anyone could stop them. I went straight out by car to investigate the crime on the spot, as this was within tribal territory and therefore not within the jurisdiction of the regular Police, but although it was perfectly clear what had happened the culprits were never caught. The fact that the dead man was a Sikh did not make things easier as no local Muslim was keen to give information against his co-religionists where a non-believer was concerned, and Sikhs in particular were not popular in that part of the world. From time to time during my magisterial career I had to try cases of murder but this was the only occasion on which I had to investigate one, unfortunately with no satisfactory result.

In November the hunting season started in Quetta and I wrote "On Sunday I hunted for the first time and my old nag went very well indeed and we were in at the kill. We had a fast run, dusty and right into the rising sun, so one couldn't see a thing but the old horse jumped at the right places and we arrived intact and together. It was all great fun, except the getting up in the dark on a cold morn". In fact hunting round about Quetta could be quite hair-raising at times as one could suddenly come on a "karez" i.e. a water channel cut sheer down for 15 ft. or so, but dead level on the surface, so almost invisible until one was right on top of it. I was lucky enough never to fall into one, and could thank having an experienced hunter like Wild Ranger for this. We hunted both fox and jackal and there was never any shortage of the latter. My particular companion out hunting was Peter Knight, a young I.C.S. Political, who was Settlement Officer in Quetta. He had a car and often gave me a lift out



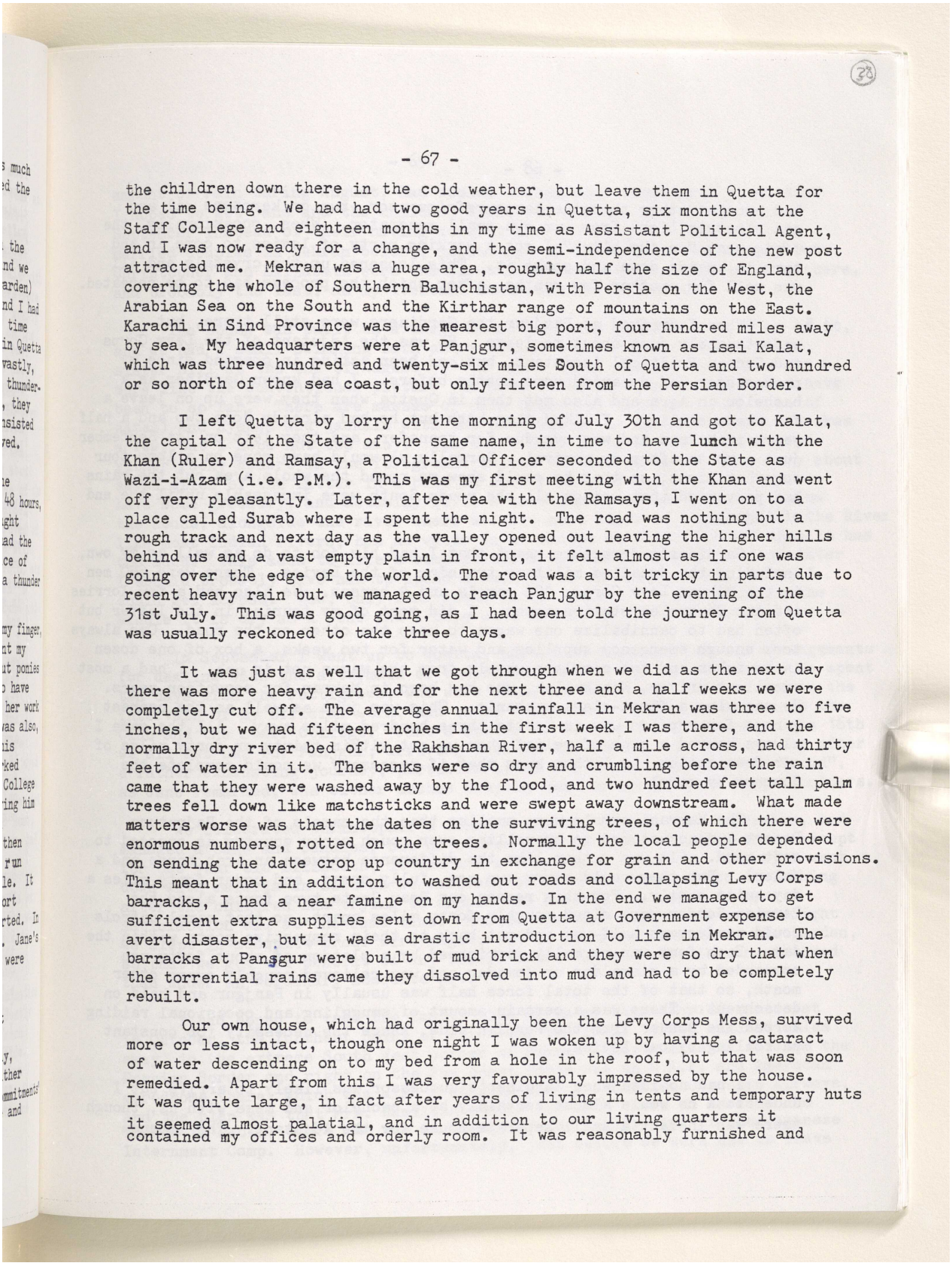
to the meet, which saved me a long hack out and back, sometimes as much as eight miles each way, and it was an especial relief to be spared the tedious return journey after a full day in the field.

In February 1944 we had a weekend down at Sibi, staying with the Hay family at the Residency there. It is much lower than Quetta and we enjoyed the warm sunny weather (and the trees and flowers in the garden) after the extreme winter cold of Quetta. We played some tennis, and I had some shooting, duck and partridge, and we rode, Jane for the first time since we'd arrived in Baluchistan a year and a half before. Back in Quetta we had rain and snow but by the end of March the weather improved vastly, and we began to enjoy our garden again, although in one disastrous thunder-storm Christopher's rabbits were flooded out and drowned. However, they were soon replaced and the new pair had a baby rabbit which C.H. insisted upon carrying about with him wherever he went. Amazingly it survived.

In February-March 1944 there was one very grim fortnight. The Rushton's young son of five died of polio after only being ill for 48 hours, an army acquaintance died suddenly, and our friend Peter Knight caught typhoid while out on tour and died in hospital of peritonitis. I had the unhappy experience of helping to carry three coffins within the space of two weeks, the last funeral, Peter Knight's, being in the midst of a thunder storm.

By May the cricket season had started again and I found that my finger, damaged the previous year, though still slightly bent did not prevent my keeping wicket reasonably well. We also had the odd game of polo but ponies were scarce and it was not easy to raise enough ponies and riders to have regular games, nor could one always spare the time. Jane continued her work at the Quetta War Shop and at the Military Families Hospital. She was also, for her sins, Secretary of the local Girl Guides Association, and this involved numerous committee meetings which she loathed. She had worked three mornings a week at the War Shop since our coming to the Staff College in 1942, leaving Christopher at a nursery school, fetching and carrying him by bicycle until we eventually acquired the donkey. She had started voluntary nursing in the Military hospital in Nowshera in 1941, and then went back to this in Quetta after Elizabeth was born. The War Shop, run for the benefit of the War Fund, was in effect a permanent jumble sale. It fulfilled a real need, since women and children's clothes were in short supply, and household effects too, as hardly anything was being imported. In June 1944 there was a grand Fete to raise money for Prisoners of War. Jane's efforts in this were most successful and for weeks afterwards people were still wondering who the mysterious Persian fortune teller was.

In June 1944 I heard that I was to take over as First Assistant Political Agent in MEKRAN on the 1st August. This was the job I had originally been selected for in January 1943 (see page 53) Colonel Hay, the A.G.G. asked me how I felt about going there and was, I think, rather surprised that I did not object despite the increase in my "family commitments" since 1943. I said I should be very happy to go, and would have Jane and



the children down there in the cold weather, but leave them in Quetta for the time being. We had had two good years in Quetta, six months at the Staff College and eighteen months in my time as Assistant Political Agent, and I was now ready for a change, and the semi-independence of the new post attracted me. Mekran was a huge area, roughly half the size of England, covering the whole of Southern Baluchistan, with Persia on the West, the Arabian Sea on the South and the Kirthar range of mountains on the East. Karachi in Sind Province was the nearest big port, four hundred miles away by sea. My headquarters were at Panjgur, sometimes known as Isai Kalat, which was three hundred and twenty-six miles South of Quetta and two hundred or so north of the sea coast, but only fifteen from the Persian Border.

I left Quetta by lorry on the morning of July 30th and got to Kalat, the capital of the State of the same name, in time to have lunch with the Khan (Ruler) and Ramsay, a Political Officer seconded to the State as Wazi-i-Azam (i.e. P.M.). This was my first meeting with the Khan and went off very pleasantly. Later, after tea with the Ramsays, I went on to a place called Surab where I spent the night. The road was nothing but a rough track and next day as the valley opened out leaving the higher hills behind us and a vast empty plain in front, it felt almost as if one was going over the edge of the world. The road was a bit tricky in parts due to recent heavy rain but we managed to reach Panjgur by the evening of the 31st July. This was good going, as I had been told the journey from Quetta was usually reckoned to take three days.

It was just as well that we got through when we did as the next day there was more heavy rain and for the next three and a half weeks we were completely cut off. The average annual rainfall in Mekran was three to five inches, but we had fifteen inches in the first week I was there, and the normally dry river bed of the Rakhshan River, half a mile across, had thirty feet of water in it. The banks were so dry and crumbling before the rain came that they were washed away by the flood, and two hundred feet tall palm trees fell down like matchsticks and were swept away downstream. What made matters worse was that the dates on the surviving trees, of which there were enormous numbers, rotted on the trees. Normally the local people depended on sending the date crop up country in exchange for grain and other provisions. This meant that in addition to washed out roads and collapsing Levy Corps barracks, I had a near famine on my hands. In the end we managed to get sufficient extra supplies sent down from Quetta at Government expense to avert disaster, but it was a drastic introduction to life in Mekran. The barracks at Panjgur were built of mud brick and they were so dry that when the torrential rains came they dissolved into mud and had to be completely rebuilt.

Our own house, which had originally been the Levy Corps Mess, survived more or less intact, though one night I was woken up by having a cataract of water descending on to my bed from a hole in the roof, but that was soon remedied. Apart from this I was very favourably impressed by the house. It was quite large, in fact after years of living in tents and temporary huts it seemed almost palatial, and in addition to our living quarters it contained my offices and orderly room. It was reasonably furnished and

had amongst other things a large refrigerator, run on kerosene oil and and electric light from our own small generator. When, occasionally, the 'frig went "on the blink" I got a working party of levies to come in and turn it upside down and shake it. This loosened up the crystals and all was well for another few months, after which the process had to be repeated.

When I arrived at Panjgur the Gardiners were still there, but unfortunately just about to leave. He was the Adjutant of the Levy Corps and Second Political Assistant, but had been acting in command since my predecessor had departed some months before. I had known Gardiner as a bachelor in Agra and also met them in Quetta when they were up on leave a few weeks earlier. I liked them both but he had already done two and a half years in Mekran and was overdue for transfer, and they left on 1st September just a month after my arrival. Normally we would have gone on a long tour together first, so that he could shew me round the whole area but the rains had prevented that, since all the roads South were impassable until the end of August.

Gardiner's departure meant that I had his job to do as well as my own, including the detailed military training of the Levies. There were 650 men in the Mekran Levy Corps, 192 camels and 4 horses. We also had a few lorries and two Chevrelet station wagons. I did most of my touring in the latter but often had to cannibalize one wagon to keep the other on the road. One always took enough emergency supplies and water for two weeks, a box of one dozen inner tubes and two complete wheels from the wagon not in use. I had a most excellent driver, Habibullah, who had been in Mekran for seventeen years. He was also a first-class mechanic. This was just as well as the nearest garage for repairs was in Quetta three hundred miles away. All the same I always heaved a sigh of relief when we got within thirty or forty miles of our destination, as I then knew that if necessary we could complete the journey by camel.

The Mekrani camels were smaller than the camels of the Rajputuna Desert and accustomed to travelling over rough rocky country as opposed to soft sand. (It was rather like the difference between an Arab horse and a Waler). But they could carry two men, fully armed, and cover forty miles a day quite easily. For this reason our Beau Geste type forts along the Persian Border were sited roughly forty miles apart, so that camel patrols could rendezvous half-way and get back to their respective posts within the day. Each fort was normally garrisoned by a platoon of about forty men commanded by a rissaldar or jemadar and was relieved roughly every other month, so that of the total force half was usually in Panjgur and half on detachment. There was a certain amount of smuggling and occasional raiding across the Border from the Persian side, hence the necessity for constant patrolling by our Levies.

I had no idea when Gardiner's successor was likely to arrive but I understood he would almost certainly be a bachelor and mess with us, though there was in fact a small separate house for the Adjutant. The immense

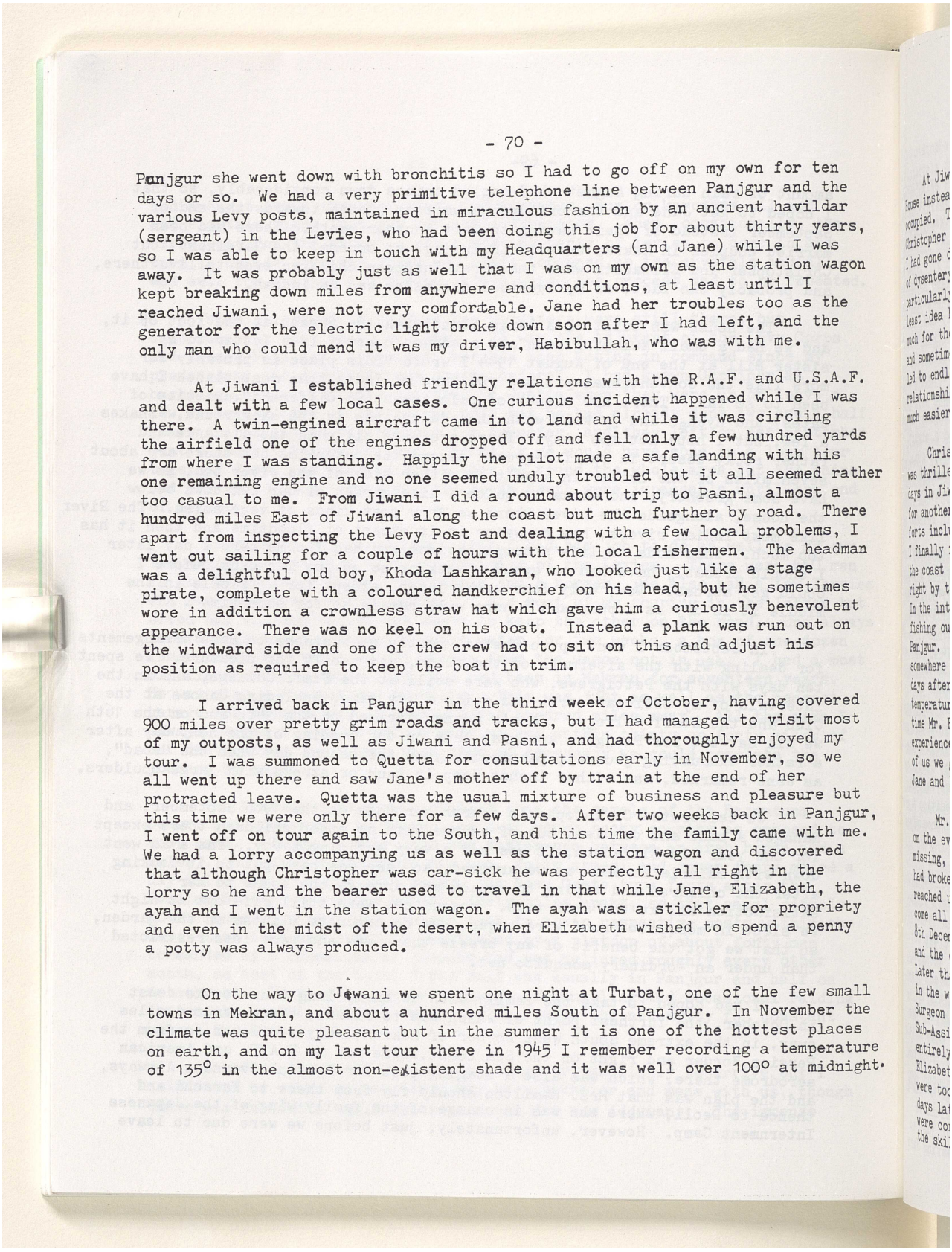
amount of rain during August, had cooled things down considerably, so that I hoped to get Jane and the children down from Quetta towards the end of September instead of their having to wait another month. There had been married couples in Mekran before, including, of course, the Gardiners, but Christopher and Elizabeth were the first European children ever to live there, and probably the last, as my eventual successor was an Indian.

The house was built on a large mound with the garden at the foot of it, and we had a small swimming bath and a squash court. In a letter to my sister Bill at the end of August 1944 I wrote "This place is probably far more like the conventional picture you have of India than most places I have been to so far. There are masses of palm trees (96 different varieties of dates) and hyenas and jackals with the odd cheetah in the background. Snakes a few, but I hope not too many. There are bare hills in the distance and rather rocky desert in the foreground beyond the datepalms but there are about seven miles of the latter in a belt on either side of the river bed, so we have some greenery, and actually quite a nice garden of our own down below the house, alongside the river where we grew most kinds of vegetables. The River like most Indian rivers, has no water in it except at floodtime and then it has too much. This adds to life's complications and had I come here a day later I should probably have had to spend a week or so on the far bank before I could get across. Now, only four weeks later, except for a trickle in the middle it is dry as a bone and I hope will remain so for some time".

In September I went up to Quetta, partly on business to make arrangements for dealing with the aftermath of the flood, and partly for pleasure. We spent ten days with the Pettigrews, who were still at the Staff College, and in the intervals of my official work, had quite a gay time, including dances at the Club and the Staff College. Jane's mother arrived on the 14th and on the 16th we all set out for Panjgur, arriving late on the evening of the next day after a rather exhausting journey, particularly on the second day when the "road", as Jane remarked, was either inches deep in sand or strewn with large boulders.

We celebrated Christopher's fourth birthday on the 19th September, and managed a cake and candles, but of course with no other children there except for one year old Elizabeth, it was not a very exciting party. The ayah went down with malaria as soon as we arrived, so Jane was hard put to it looking after the children and trying to unpack and arrange the house to her satisfaction all at the same time. Mosquitoes were still rife but at night we slept in mosquito-proof wire cages, set on concrete plinths in the garden, so that we got the benefit of any breeze there was and were less restricted than under an ordinary mosquito net.

I had hoped to take the family with me on my long tour to the coast in October, the furthest point of which was to Jiwani, three hundred miles away, in the extreme South West corner of Mekran, only a mile or so from the Persian Border and right on the Sea coast.There was an R.A.F. and American aerodrome there, which was also a staging post for British Overseas Airways, and the plan was that Mrs. Hamilton should fly from there to Karachi and thence to Deoli, where she was in charge of the family wing of the Japanese Internment Camp. However, unfortunately, just before we were due to leave

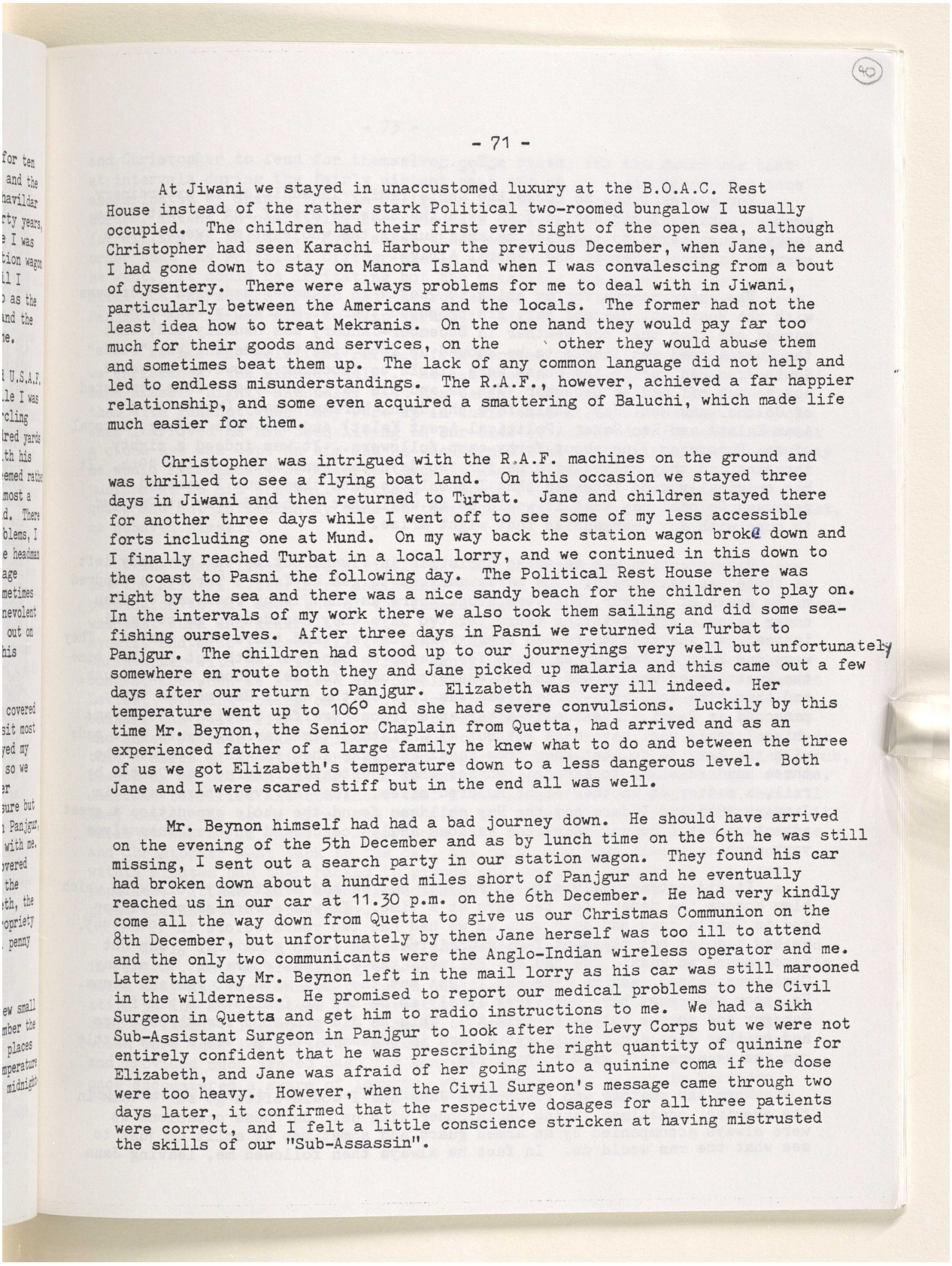


Panjgur she went down with bronchitis so I had to go off on my own for ten days or so. We had a very primitive telephone line between Panjgur and the various Levy posts, maintained in miraculous fashion by an ancient havildar (sergeant) in the Levies, who had been doing this job for about thirty years, so I was able to keep in touch with my Headquarters (and Jane) while I was away. It was probably just as well that I was on my own as the station wagon kept breaking down miles from anywhere and conditions, at least until I reached Jiwani, were not very comfortable. Jane had her troubles too as the generator for the electric light broke down soon after I had left, and the only man who could mend it was my driver, Habibullah, who was with me.

At Jiwani I established friendly relations with the R.A.F. and U.S.A.F. and dealt with a few local cases. One curious incident happened while I was there. A twin-engined aircraft came in to land and while it was circling the airfield one of the engines dropped off and fell only a few hundred yards from where I was standing. Happily the pilot made a safe landing with his one remaining engine and no one seemed unduly troubled but it all seemed rather too casual to me. From Jiwani I did a round about trip to Pasni, almost a hundred miles East of Jiwani along the coast but much further by road. There apart from inspecting the Levy Post and dealing with a few local problems, I went out sailing for a couple of hours with the local fishermen. The headman was a delightful old boy, Khoda Lashkaran, who looked just like a stage pirate, complete with a coloured handkerchief on his head, but he sometimes wore in addition a crownless straw hat which gave him a curiously benevolent appearance. There was no keel on his boat. Instead a plank was run out on the windward side and one of the crew had to sit on this and adjust his position as required to keep the boat in trim.

I arrived back in Panjgur in the third week of October, having covered 900 miles over pretty grim roads and tracks, but I had managed to visit most of my outposts, as well as Jiwani and Pasni, and had thoroughly enjoyed my tour. I was summoned to Quetta for consultations early in November, so we all went up there and saw Jane's mother off by train at the end of her protracted leave. Quetta was the usual mixture of business and pleasure but this time we were only there for a few days. After two weeks back in Panjgur, I went off on tour again to the South, and this time the family came with me. We had a lorry accompanying us as well as the station wagon and discovered that although Christopher was car-sick he was perfectly all right in the lorry so he and the bearer used to travel in that while Jane, Elizabeth, the ayah and I went in the station wagon. The ayah was a stickler for propriety and even in the midst of the desert, when Elizabeth wished to spend a penny a potty was always produced.

On the way to Jiwani we spent one night at Turbat, one of the few small towns in Mekran, and about a hundred miles South of Panjgur. In November the climate was quite pleasant but in the summer it is one of the hottest places on earth, and on my last tour there in 1945 I remember recording a temperature of 135° in the almost non-existent shade and it was well over 100° at midnight.

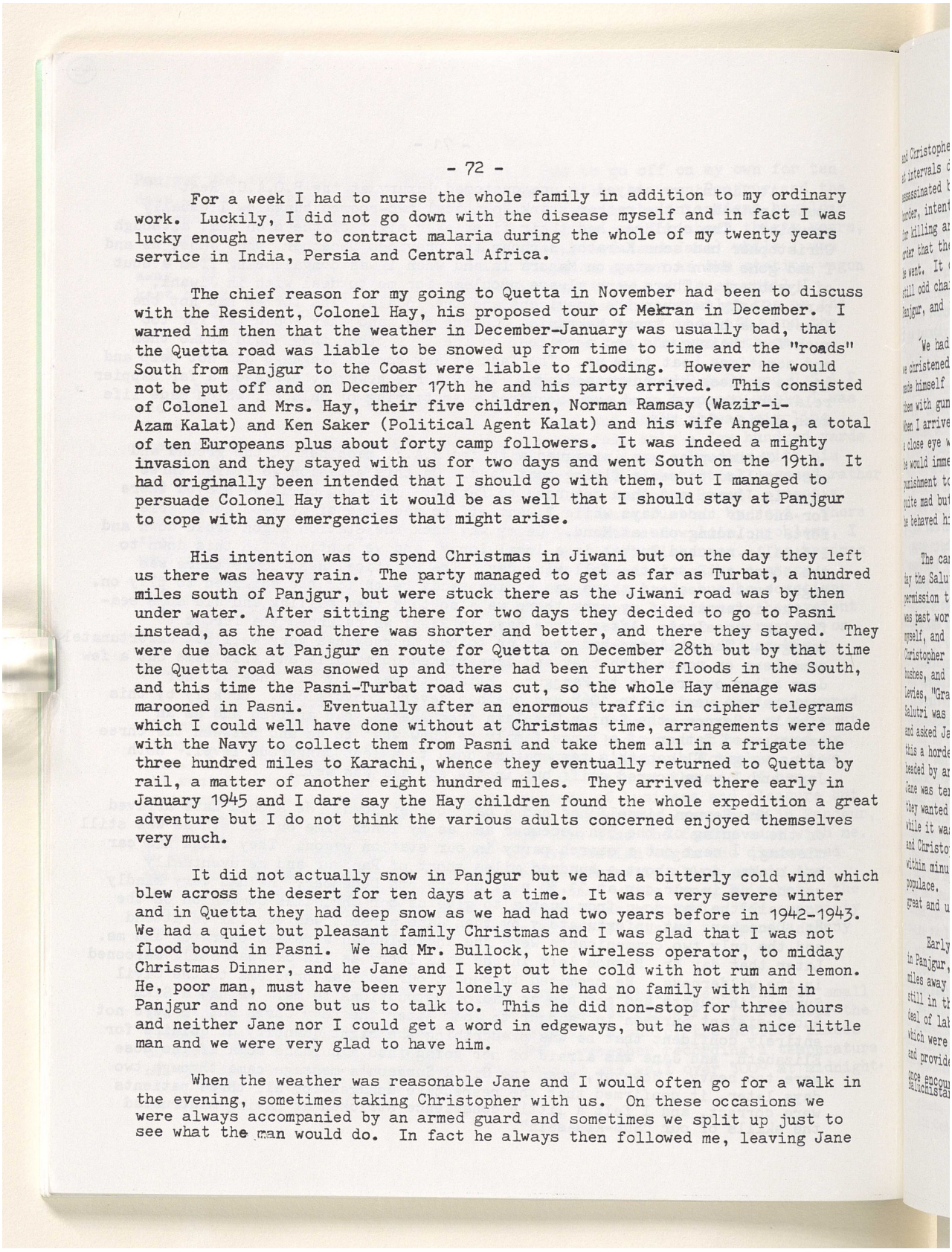


- 71 -

At Jiwani we stayed in unaccustomed luxury at the B.O.A.C. Rest House instead of the rather stark Political two-roomed bungalow I usually occupied. The children had their first ever sight of the open sea, although Christopher had seen Karachi Harbour the previous December, when Jane, he and I had gone down to stay on Manora Island when I was convalescing from a bout of dysentery. There were always problems for me to deal with in Jiwani, particularly between the Americans and the locals. The former had not the least idea how to treat Mekranis. On the one hand they would pay far too much for their goods and services, on the other they would abuse them and sometimes beat them up. The lack of any common language did not help and led to endless misunderstandings. The R.A.F., however, achieved a far happier relationship, and some even acquired a smattering of Baluchi, which made life much easier for them.

Christopher was intrigued with the R.A.F. machines on the ground and was thrilled to see a flying boat land. On this occasion we stayed three days in Jiwani and then returned to Turbat. Jane and children stayed there for another three days while I went off to see some of my less accessible forts including one at Mund. On my way back the station wagon broke down and I finally reached Turbat in a local lorry, and we continued in this down to the coast to Pasni the following day. The Political Rest House there was right by the sea and there was a nice sandy beach for the children to play on. In the intervals of my work there we also took them sailing and did some sea-fishing ourselves. After three days in Pasni we returned via Turbat to Panjgur. The children had stood up to our journeyings very well but unfortunately somewhere en route both they and Jane picked up malaria and this came out a few days after our return to Panjgur. Elizabeth was very ill indeed. Her temperature went up to 106° and she had severe convulsions. Luckily by this time Mr. Beynon, the Senior Chaplain from Quetta, had arrived and as an experienced father of a large family he knew what to do and between the three of us we got Elizabeth's temperature down to a less dangerous level. Both Jane and I were scared stiff but in the end all was well.

Mr. Beynon himself had had a bad journey down. He should have arrived on the evening of the 5th December and as by lunch time on the 6th he was still missing, I sent out a search party in our station wagon. They found his car had broken down about a hundred miles short of Panjgur and he eventually reached us in our car at 11.30 p.m. on the 6th December. He had very kindly come all the way down from Quetta to give us our Christmas Communion on the 8th December, but unfortunately by then Jane herself was too ill to attend and the only two communicants were the Anglo-Indian wireless operator and me. Later that day Mr. Beynon left in the mail lorry as his car was still marooned in the wilderness. He promised to report our medical problems to the Civil Surgeon in Quetta and get him to radio instructions to me. We had a Sikh Sub-Assistant Surgeon in Panjgur to look after the Levy Corps but we were not entirely confident that he was prescribing the right quantity of quinine for Elizabeth, and Jane was afraid of her going into a quinine coma if the dose were too heavy. However, when the Civil Surgeon's message came through two days later, it confirmed that the respective dosages for all three patients were correct, and I felt a little conscience stricken at having mistrusted the skills of our "Sub-Assassin".



For a week I had to nurse the whole family in addition to my ordinary work. Luckily, I did not go down with the disease myself and in fact I was lucky enough never to contract malaria during the whole of my twenty years service in India, Persia and Central Africa.

The chief reason for my going to Quetta in November had been to discuss with the Resident, Colonel Hay, his proposed tour of Mekran in December. I warned him then that the weather in December-January was usually bad, that the Quetta road was liable to be snowed up from time to time and the "roads" South from Panjgur to the Coast were liable to flooding. However he would not be put off and on December 17th he and his party arrived. This consisted of Colonel and Mrs. Hay, their five children, Norman Ramsay (Wazir-i-Azam Kalat) and Ken Saker (Political Agent Kalat) and his wife Angela, a total of ten Europeans plus about forty camp followers. It was indeed a mighty invasion and they stayed with us for two days and went South on the 19th. It had originally been intended that I should go with them, but I managed to persuade Colonel Hay that it would be as well that I should stay at Panjgur to cope with any emergencies that might arise.

His intention was to spend Christmas in Jiwani but on the day they left us there was heavy rain. The party managed to get as far as Turbat, a hundred miles south of Panjgur, but were stuck there as the Jiwani road was by then under water. After sitting there for two days they decided to go to Pasni instead, as the road there was shorter and better, and there they stayed. They were due back at Panjgur en route for Quetta on December 28th but by that time the Quetta road was snowed up and there had been further floods in the South, and this time the Pasni-Turbat road was cut, so the whole Hay ménage was marooned in Pasni. Eventually after an enormous traffic in cipher telegrams which I could well have done without at Christmas time, arrangements were made with the Navy to collect them from Pasni and take them all in a frigate the three hundred miles to Karachi, whence they eventually returned to Quetta by rail, a matter of another eight hundred miles. They arrived there early in January 1945 and I dare say the Hay children found the whole expedition a great adventure but I do not think the various adults concerned enjoyed themselves very much.

It did not actually snow in Panjgur but we had a bitterly cold wind which blew across the desert for ten days at a time. It was a very severe winter and in Quetta they had deep snow as we had had two years before in 1942-1943. We had a quiet but pleasant family Christmas and I was glad that I was not flood bound in Pasni. We had Mr. Bullock, the wireless operator, to midday Christmas Dinner, and he Jane and I kept out the cold with hot rum and lemon. He, poor man, must have been very lonely as he had no family with him in Panjgur and no one but us to talk to. This he did non-stop for three hours and neither Jane nor I could get a word in edgeways, but he was a nice little man and we were very glad to have him.

When the weather was reasonable Jane and I would often go for a walk in the evening, sometimes taking Christopher with us. On these occasions we were always accompanied by an armed guard and sometimes we split up just to see what the man would do. In fact he always then followed me, leaving Jane

and Christopher to fend for themselves. The reason for the guard was that at intervals during the fairly distant past two of my predecessors had been assassinated by Ghazis (Muslim religious fanatics) from across the Persian border, intent on qualifying for immediate admission to paradise as a reward for killing an infidel. Ever since those murders there had been a standing order that the Political Officer should always have an armed escort wherever he went. It could be irritating but the reasoning was sound as there were still odd characters around and the border was only fifteen miles away from Panjgur, and it was easy to slip across in either direction.

We had one political refugee from Persian Mekran living nearby, whom we christened "the wicked uncle". He had been a landowner in Persia, but had made himself highly unpopular with his tenants, by his pastime of peppering them with gunshot when they were up in their date palms harvesting the crop. When I arrived he had been living on our side of the border for some time but a close eye was kept on him and he was warned that if he misbehaved in any way he would immediately be escorted back to his old home and handed over for punishment to his erstwhile victims or their relatives. He was, I think, quite mad but sufficiently sane to take the hint, and during my time, at least, he behaved himself.

The camel lines were a little way out of Panjgur at Haji Khan and one day the Salutri (Veterinary Assistant) came to my office and asked for permission to put down one of the camels, aged thirty, as the poor old creature was past work and generally unfit. I decided to go and have a look at him myself, and also inspect all the other camels there, and took Jane and Christopher with me. It was a flat sandy place with a few small trees and bushes, and when we arrived the camels were all lined up with their attendant Levies, "Grandpa" being on the left of the line. It was obvious that the Salutri was quite right, and I gave permission for the old camel to be shot, and asked Jane to take Christopher out of sight first, but before she could do this a horde of shouting and excited figures erupted from the surrounding scrub, headed by an old man waving a large curved dagger, and headed straight for me. Jane was terrified and convinced that I was about to be assassinated, but all they wanted was to be given the beast to eat after the old man had Hallal'd it while it was still warm, in accordance with Islamic laws and custom. So Jane and Christopher went back to the car, the camel was then slaughtered, and within minutes had been hacked to pieces and joyfully removed by the local populace. It must have been exceedingly tough meat but they counted it a great and unexpected delicacy.

Early in 1945 a detachment of the Desert Locust Control Service arrived in Panjgur, as the breeding grounds of the Desert Locust were only about fifty miles away and they wanted to catch and destroy the locusts while they were still in the hopper stage to prevent their swarming. This entailed a great deal of labour, including the digging of deep trenches to entrap the hoppers which were then incinerated. A good deal of local labour had to be employed and provided much needed cash for many of the tribesmen. I had earlier on once encountered a swarm of locusts, while travelling by car in Northern Baluchistan, and it was a terrifying experience. All the car windows were

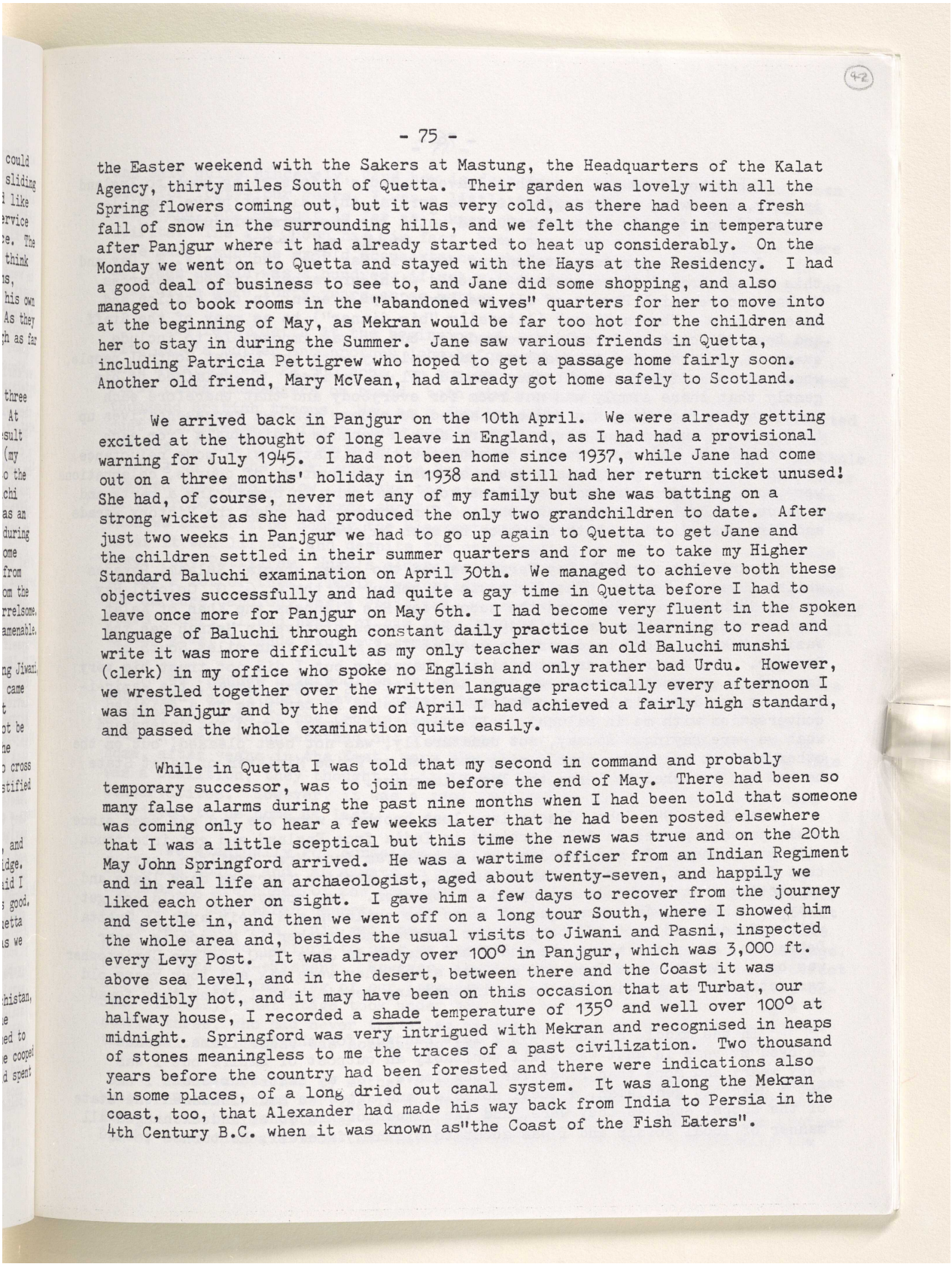
closed but the whole vehicle was smothered with the creatures and one could see nothing. In addition, even before one could stop the car, it was sliding all over the place as the squashed bodies of the locusts made the road like a skid-pan. As far as I remember in 1945 the Desert Locust Control Service acted up to their name and succeeded in scotching the trouble at source. The presence in Panjgur, however, of so many extra bodies, most of whom I think were Indian and not Baluchis or Pathans, provided me with more problems, particularly as the head of the detachment had an exaggerated idea of his own importance and tended to treat our local rustics with some contempt. As they were a proud people this did not make for good public relations, though as far as I recall the peace was never actually broken.

In January I had to make a sudden unscheduled visit to Pasni as three levies out on patrol had been killed in a shooting affray near there. At first I thought that smugglers had been involved in this but as the result of a detailed investigation on the spot, in which the Rissaldar-Major (my senior Levy officer) and the Sub-Assistant Surgeon helped me, I came to the conclusion that there had been an intertribal quarral between two Baluchi Levies and a Brahui Levy, resulting in the deaths of all three. It was an unpleasant business and the only incident of that kind which occurred during my time in Mekran, although the year before I arrived, there had been some intertribal trouble. The Mekran Levy Corps was recruited roughly 50% from Baluchis from the Southern part of the country and 50% from Brahuis from the North. The latter were tough and good soldiers but inclined to be quarrelsome. On the whole I preferred the Baluchis who were more even-tempered and amenable.

In February 1945 I went on a prolonged tour to the South, visiting Jiwani, Pasni and the Levy Forts on the Persian Border. Jane and the children came with me and we were lucky with the weather. The family had their first introduction to riding camels as some of the places we visited could not be reached by car or lorry. One particular place Suntsar, was right on the Border and even had a customs post as well as the Levy Fort. We had to cross a river to reach it, and on this occasion the "ships of the desert" justified their description, being belly deep in water.

On these trips I always took both a .303 and a .22 rifle with me, and shot what I could for the pot, including black buck, bustard and partridge. I could get no shotgun cartridges at that stage of the war, so I'm afraid I resorted to shooting sitting birds with my .22, and they tasted just as good. On one occasion I shot a small crocodile and the skin was sent up to Quetta to be cured by a Chinese shoemaker but that was the last we saw of it as we forgot to collect it before we went on leave to England.

In March Colonel Henry Elliot, the Chief Medical Officer in Baluchistan, paid us a visit and I took him on tour to the coast and on our return he spent two days with us in Panjgur before going back to Quetta. He seemed to enjoy being out in the wild for a bit after spending so much of his time cooped up in an administrative office in Quetta. We followed on March 27th and spent

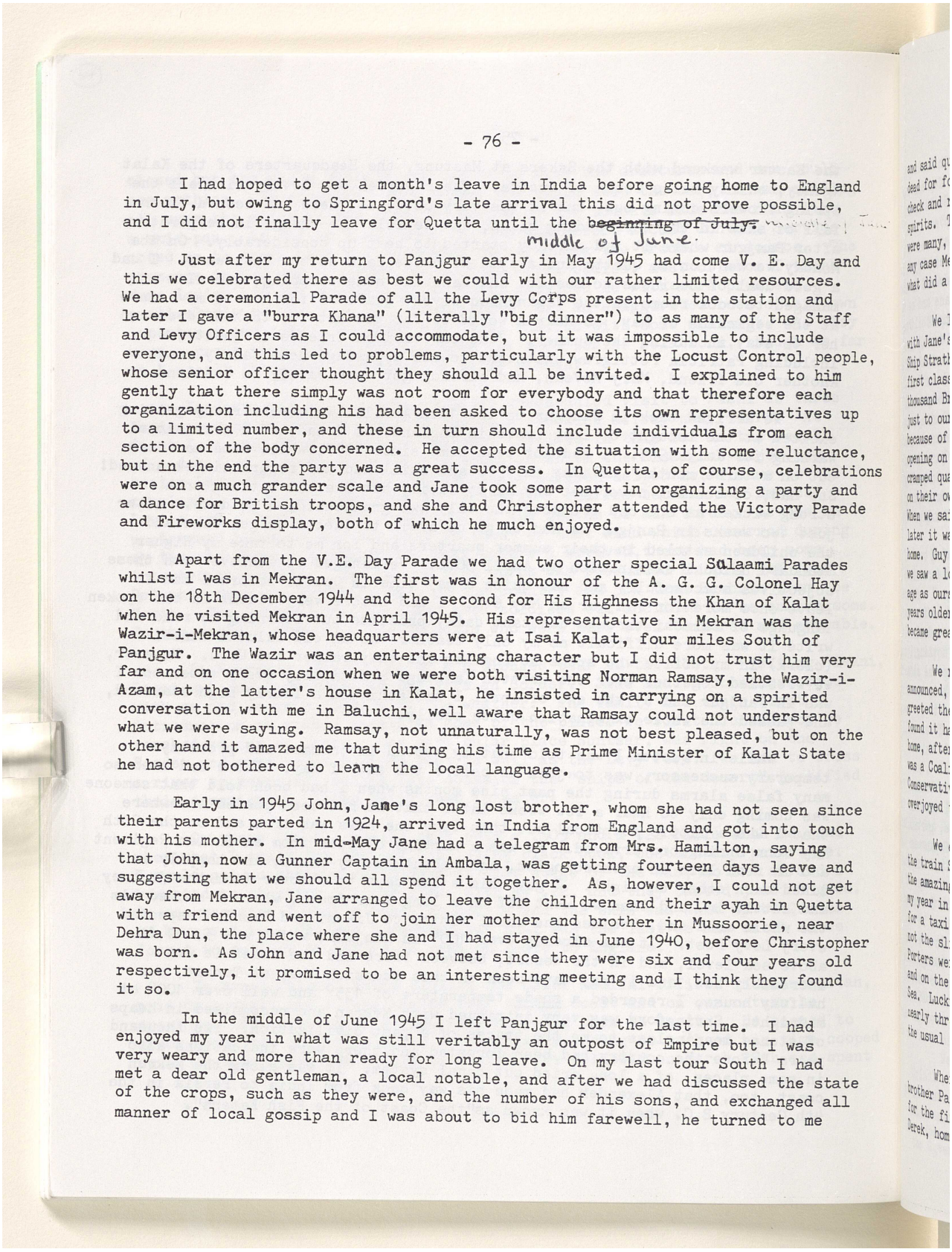


- 75 -

the Easter weekend with the Sakers at Mastung, the Headquarters of the Kalat Agency, thirty miles South of Quetta. Their garden was lovely with all the Spring flowers coming out, but it was very cold, as there had been a fresh fall of snow in the surrounding hills, and we felt the change in temperature after Panjgur where it had already started to heat up considerably. On the Monday we went on to Quetta and stayed with the Hays at the Residency. I had a good deal of business to see to, and Jane did some shopping, and also managed to book rooms in the "abandoned wives" quarters for her to move into at the beginning of May, as Mekran would be far too hot for the children and her to stay in during the Summer. Jane saw various friends in Quetta, including Patricia Pettigrew who hoped to get a passage home fairly soon. Another old friend, Mary McVean, had already got home safely to Scotland.

We arrived back in Panjgur on the 10th April. We were already getting excited at the thought of long leave in England, as I had had a provisional warning for July 1945. I had not been home since 1937, while Jane had come out on a three months' holiday in 1938 and still had her return ticket unused! She had, of course, never met any of my family but she was batting on a strong wicket as she had produced the only two grandchildren to date. After just two weeks in Panjgur we had to go up again to Quetta to get Jane and the children settled in their summer quarters and for me to take my Higher Standard Baluchi examination on April 30th. We managed to achieve both these objectives successfully and had quite a gay time in Quetta before I had to leave once more for Panjgur on May 6th. I had become very fluent in the spoken language of Baluchi through constant daily practice but learning to read and write it was more difficult as my only teacher was an old Baluchi munshi (clerk) in my office who spoke no English and only rather bad Urdu. However, we wrestled together over the written language practically every afternoon I was in Panjgur and by the end of April I had achieved a fairly high standard, and passed the whole examination quite easily.

While in Quetta I was told that my second in command and probably temporary successor, was to join me before the end of May. There had been so many false alarms during the past nine months when I had been told that someone was coming only to hear a few weeks later that he had been posted elsewhere that I was a little sceptical but this time the news was true and on the 20th May John Springford arrived. He was a wartime officer from an Indian Regiment and in real life an archaeologist, aged about twenty-seven, and happily we liked each other on sight. I gave him a few days to recover from the journey and settle in, and then we went off on a long tour South, where I showed him the whole area and, besides the usual visits to Jiwani and Pasni, inspected every Levy Post. It was already over 100° in Panjgur, which was 3,000 ft. above sea level, and in the desert, between there and the Coast it was incredibly hot, and it may have been on this occasion that at Turbat, our halfway house, I recorded a shade temperature of 135° and well over 100° at midnight. Springford was very intrigued with Mekran and recognised in heaps of stones meaningless to me the traces of a past civilization. Two thousand years before the country had been forested and there were indications also in some places, of a long dried out canal system. It was along the Mekran coast, too, that Alexander had made his way back from India to Persia in the 4th Century B.C. when it was known as"the Coast of the Fish Eaters".



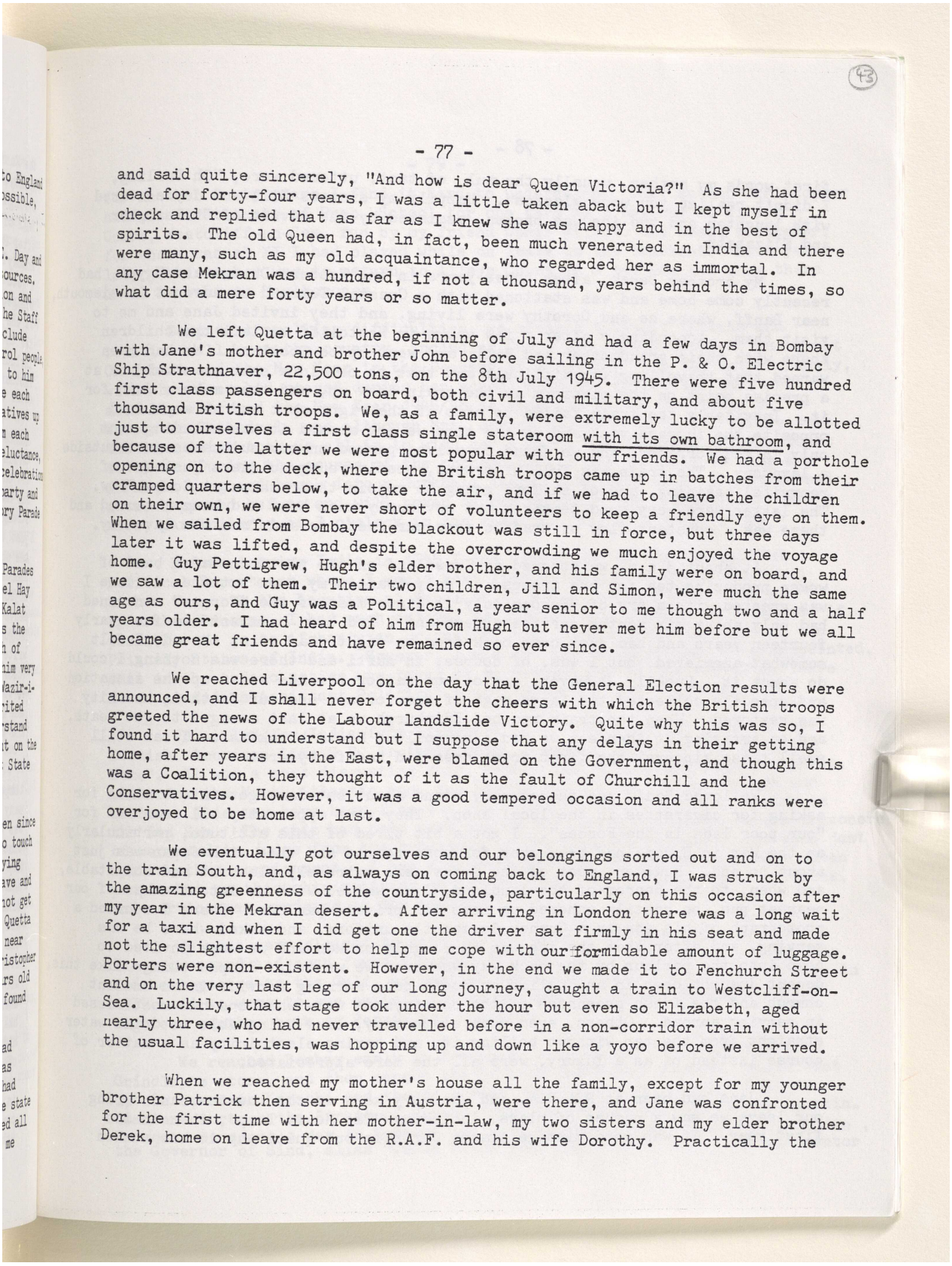
I had hoped to get a month's leave in India before going home to England in July, but owing to Springford's late arrival this did not prove possible, and I did not finally leave for Quetta until the ~~beginning of July.~~ middle of June.

Just after my return to Panjgur early in May 1945 had come V. E. Day and this we celebrated there as best we could with our rather limited resources. We had a ceremonial Parade of all the Levy Corps present in the station and later I gave a "burra Khana" (literally "big dinner") to as many of the Staff and Levy Officers as I could accommodate, but it was impossible to include everyone, and this led to problems, particularly with the Locust Control people, whose senior officer thought they should all be invited. I explained to him gently that there simply was not room for everybody and that therefore each organization including his had been asked to choose its own representatives up to a limited number, and these in turn should include individuals from each section of the body concerned. He accepted the situation with some reluctance, but in the end the party was a great success. In Quetta, of course, celebrations were on a much grander scale and Jane took some part in organizing a party and a dance for British troops, and she and Christopher attended the Victory Parade and Fireworks display, both of which he much enjoyed.

Apart from the V.E. Day Parade we had two other special Salaami Parades whilst I was in Mekran. The first was in honour of the A. G. G. Colonel Hay on the 18th December 1944 and the second for His Highness the Khan of Kalat when he visited Mekran in April 1945. His representative in Mekran was the Wazir-i-Mekran, whose headquarters were at Isai Kalat, four miles South of Panjgur. The Wazir was an entertaining character but I did not trust him very far and on one occasion when we were both visiting Norman Ramsay, the Wazir-i-Azam, at the latter's house in Kalat, he insisted in carrying on a spirited conversation with me in Baluchi, well aware that Ramsay could not understand what we were saying. Ramsay, not unnaturally, was not best pleased, but on the other hand it amazed me that during his time as Prime Minister of Kalat State he had not bothered to learn the local language.

Early in 1945 John, Jane's long lost brother, whom she had not seen since their parents parted in 1924, arrived in India from England and got into touch with his mother. In mid-May Jane had a telegram from Mrs. Hamilton, saying that John, now a Gunner Captain in Ambala, was getting fourteen days leave and suggesting that we should all spend it together. As, however, I could not get away from Mekran, Jane arranged to leave the children and their ayah in Quetta with a friend and went off to join her mother and brother in Mussoorie, near Dehra Dun, the place where she and I had stayed in June 1940, before Christopher was born. As John and Jane had not met since they were six and four years old respectively, it promised to be an interesting meeting and I think they found it so.

In the middle of June 1945 I left Panjgur for the last time. I had enjoyed my year in what was still veritably an outpost of Empire but I was very weary and more than ready for long leave. On my last tour South I had met a dear old gentleman, a local notable, and after we had discussed the state of the crops, such as they were, and the number of his sons, and exchanged all manner of local gossip and I was about to bid him farewell, he turned to me



and said quite sincerely, "And how is dear Queen Victoria?" As she had been dead for forty-four years, I was a little taken aback but I kept myself in check and replied that as far as I knew she was happy and in the best of spirits. The old Queen had, in fact, been much venerated in India and there were many, such as my old acquaintance, who regarded her as immortal. In any case Mekran was a hundred, if not a thousand, years behind the times, so what did a mere forty years or so matter.

We left Quetta at the beginning of July and had a few days in Bombay with Jane's mother and brother John before sailing in the P. & O. Electric Ship Strathnaver, 22,500 tons, on the 8th July 1945. There were five hundred first class passengers on board, both civil and military, and about five thousand British troops. We, as a family, were extremely lucky to be allotted just to ourselves a first class single stateroom with its own bathroom, and because of the latter we were most popular with our friends. We had a porthole opening on to the deck, where the British troops came up in batches from their cramped quarters below, to take the air, and if we had to leave the children on their own, we were never short of volunteers to keep a friendly eye on them. When we sailed from Bombay the blackout was still in force, but three days later it was lifted, and despite the overcrowding we much enjoyed the voyage home. Guy Pettigrew, Hugh's elder brother, and his family were on board, and we saw a lot of them. Their two children, Jill and Simon, were much the same age as ours, and Guy was a Political, a year senior to me though two and a half years older. I had heard of him from Hugh but never met him before but we all became great friends and have remained so ever since.

We reached Liverpool on the day that the General Election results were announced, and I shall never forget the cheers with which the British troops greeted the news of the Labour landslide Victory. Quite why this was so, I found it hard to understand but I suppose that any delays in their getting home, after years in the East, were blamed on the Government, and though this was a Coalition, they thought of it as the fault of Churchill and the Conservatives. However, it was a good tempered occasion and all ranks were overjoyed to be home at last.

We eventually got ourselves and our belongings sorted out and on to the train South, and, as always on coming back to England, I was struck by the amazing greenness of the countryside, particularly on this occasion after my year in the Mekran desert. After arriving in London there was a long wait for a taxi and when I did get one the driver sat firmly in his seat and made not the slightest effort to help me cope with our formidable amount of luggage. Porters were non-existent. However, in the end we made it to Fenchurch Street and on the very last leg of our long journey, caught a train to Westcliff-on-Sea. Luckily, that stage took under the hour but even so Elizabeth, aged nearly three, who had never travelled before in a non-corridor train without the usual facilities, was hopping up and down like a yoyo before we arrived.

When we reached my mother's house all the family, except for my younger brother Patrick then serving in Austria, were there, and Jane was confronted for the first time with her mother-in-law, my two sisters and my elder brother Derek, home on leave from the R.A.F. and his wife Dorothy. Practically the

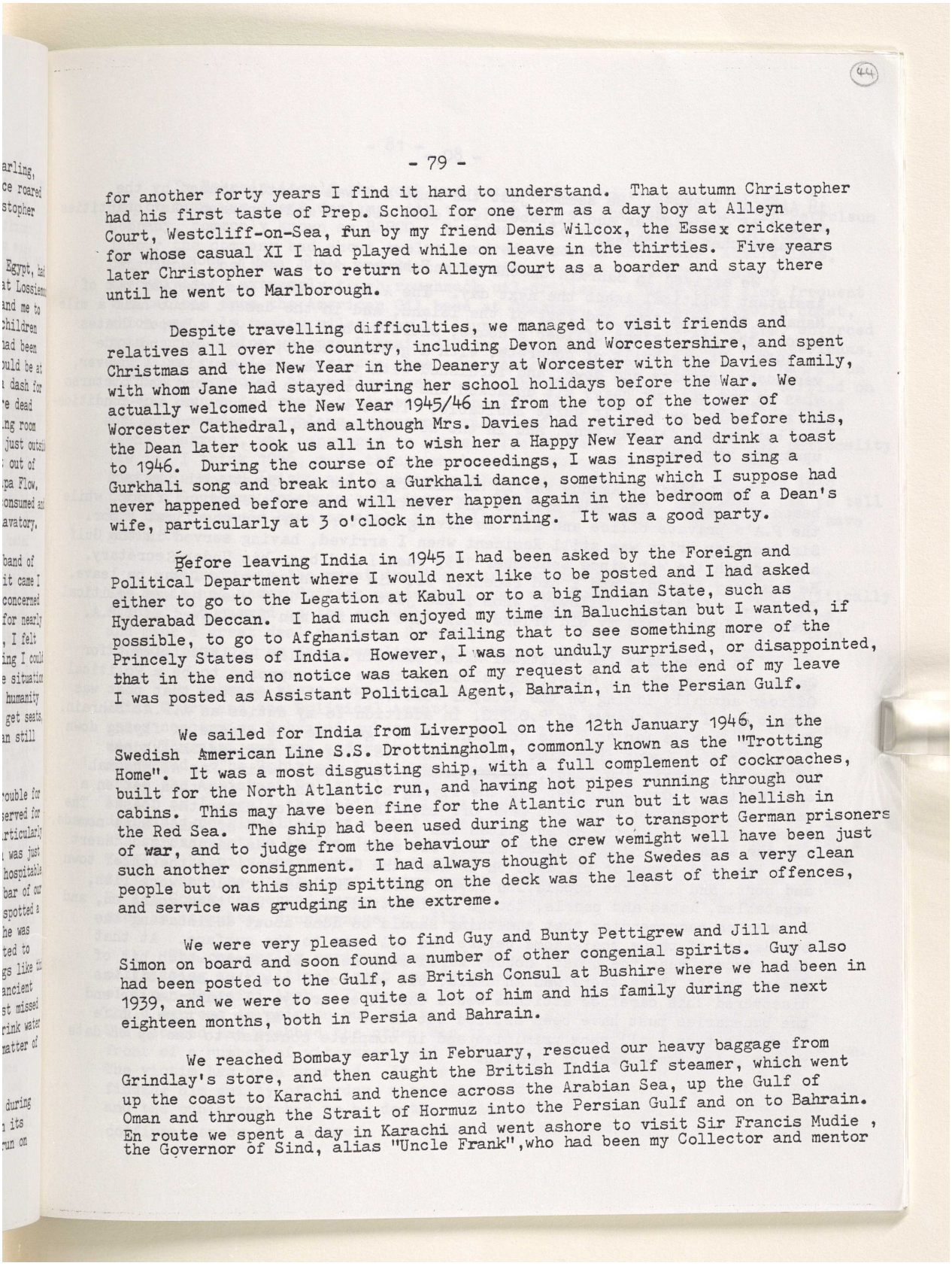
first words my mother, usually the soul of tact, uttered were, "Oh Darling, I didn't realize you wore glasses". Happily my sisters Bill and Joyce roared with laughter and the ice was broken, assisted by the advent of Christopher and Elizabeth.

My brother Derek, after three years in the Western Desert and Egypt, had recently come home and was stationed with a Coastal Command squadronat Lossiemouth, near Banff, where he and Dorothy were living, and they invited Jane and me to visit them. Accordingly after a few weeks in Westcliff we left the children there with their grandmother and Bill, and went up to Scotland. We had been warned that travelling was difficult and that to obtain a seat we should be at a precise point on the platform as the train drew up, and then make a dash for it. Inevitably the train failed to stop at the right spot and we were dead opposite the luggage van, and by the time we got aboard it was standing room only in the corridor, and we found ourselves parked on our suitcases just outside a lavatory. The train was full of troops, mostly young soldiers just out of recruits' training, and of sailors going to rejoin their ships at Scapa Flow. The latter were very good tempered but obviously much beer had been consumed and there was a constant flow of traffic over our feet, to and from the lavatory.

At about 3 a.m. we stopped at Crewe and on the platform was a band of women producing tea for the troops. I duly awaited my turn but when it came I was greeted with a cry of "Forces only". Since most of the "Forces" concerned had only about six months service apiece and I had been commissioned for nearly fourteen years and had just come back from an eight year stint abroad, I felt somewhat aggrieved, but I was, of course, in mufti and there was nothing I could do about it. Luckily, however, one of our sailor friends sized up the situation and speedily collected two large mugs of tea for us, and our faith in humanity was restored. When the train reached Edinburgh we at last managed to get seats, and on arriving at Aberdeen we had a marvellous Scots breakfast. I can still smell those kippers, the first fresh ones I'd had for years.

We loved Banff and the country round about but Jane got into trouble for asking for cigarettes in the local shop. They were apparently all reserved for "our poor lads in the Forces". I got a bit tired of this attitude, particularly as the War in Europe had been over for some months and that with Japan was just about to end. However, most of the Scots were extremely pleasant and hospitable, and when, to the horror of the landlord, Jane walked with me into the bar of our nearest pub, he hastily ushered us into his private parlour. There I spotted a photograph of his son in a Gunner Sergeant's uniform, and asked where he was serving, and after that the ice was thoroughly broken and we were invited to come into the parlour by the back way whenever we wanted. Simple things like this, decent draught beer in an English or Scots pub, morning service in an ancient church and the fresh greenness of the countryside were what one had most missed in serving abroad. Others, even more elementary, like being able to drink water straight from the tap without boiling it, and having electricity as a matter of course instead of as a luxury, were all the more appreciated.

Jane had been at R.A.D.A. and was very keen on the theatre, and during our leave we saw a number of plays, including "The Mouse Trap", then in its first year. It was good vintage Agatha Christie but quite why it has run on



for another forty years I find it hard to understand. That autumn Christopher had his first taste of Prep. School for one term as a day boy at Alleyn Court, Westcliff-on-Sea, fun by my friend Denis Wilcox, the Essex cricketer, for whose casual XI I had played while on leave in the thirties. Five years later Christopher was to return to Alleyn Court as a boarder and stay there until he went to Marlborough.

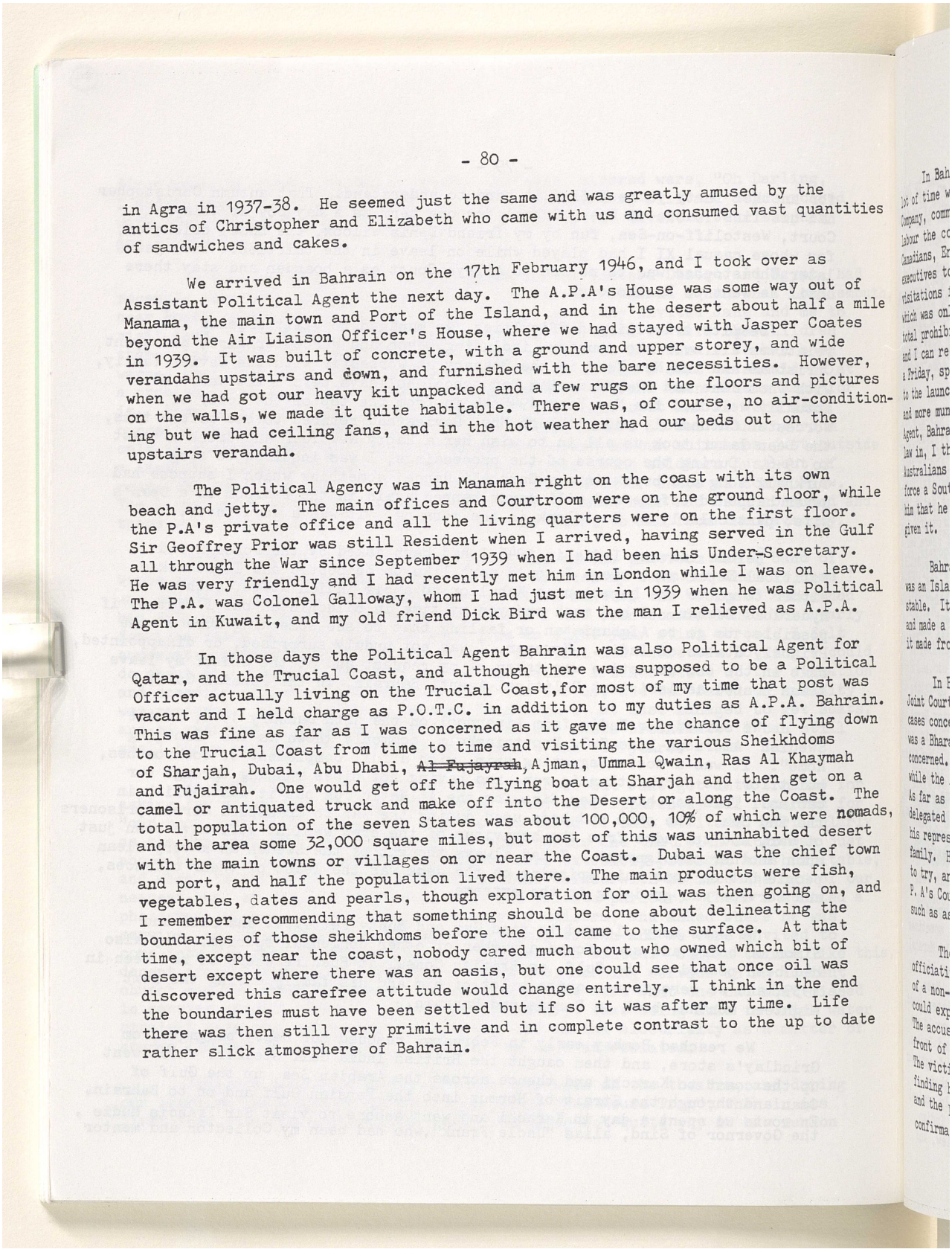
Despite travelling difficulties, we managed to visit friends and relatives all over the country, including Devon and Worcestershire, and spent Christmas and the New Year in the Deanery at Worcester with the Davies family, with whom Jane had stayed during her school holidays before the War. We actually welcomed the New Year 1945/46 in from the top of the tower of Worcester Cathedral, and although Mrs. Davies had retired to bed before this, the Dean later took us all in to wish her a Happy New Year and drink a toast to 1946. During the course of the proceedings, I was inspired to sing a Gurkhali song and break into a Gurkhali dance, something which I suppose had never happened before and will never happen again in the bedroom of a Dean's wife, particularly at 3 o'clock in the morning. It was a good party.

Before leaving India in 1945 I had been asked by the Foreign and Political Department where I would next like to be posted and I had asked either to go to the Legation at Kabul or to a big Indian State, such as Hyderabad Deccan. I had much enjoyed my time in Baluchistan but I wanted, if possible, to go to Afghanistan or failing that to see something more of the Princely States of India. However, I was not unduly surprised, or disappointed, that in the end no notice was taken of my request and at the end of my leave I was posted as Assistant Political Agent, Bahrain, in the Persian Gulf.

We sailed for India from Liverpool on the 12th January 1946, in the Swedish American Line S.S. Drottningholm, commonly known as the "Trotting Home". It was a most disgusting ship, with a full complement of cockroaches, built for the North Atlantic run, and having hot pipes running through our cabins. This may have been fine for the Atlantic run but it was hellish in the Red Sea. The ship had been used during the war to transport German prisoners of war, and to judge from the behaviour of the crew we might well have been just such another consignment. I had always thought of the Swedes as a very clean people but on this ship spitting on the deck was the least of their offences, and service was grudging in the extreme.

We were very pleased to find Guy and Bunty Pettigrew and Jill and Simon on board and soon found a number of other congenial spirits. Guy also had been posted to the Gulf, as British Consul at Bushire where we had been in 1939, and we were to see quite a lot of him and his family during the next eighteen months, both in Persia and Bahrain.

We reached Bombay early in February, rescued our heavy baggage from Grindlay's store, and then caught the British India Gulf steamer, which went up the coast to Karachi and thence across the Arabian Sea, up the Gulf of Oman and through the Strait of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf and on to Bahrain. En route we spent a day in Karachi and went ashore to visit Sir Francis Mudie, the Governor of Sind, alias "Uncle Frank", who had been my Collector and mentor

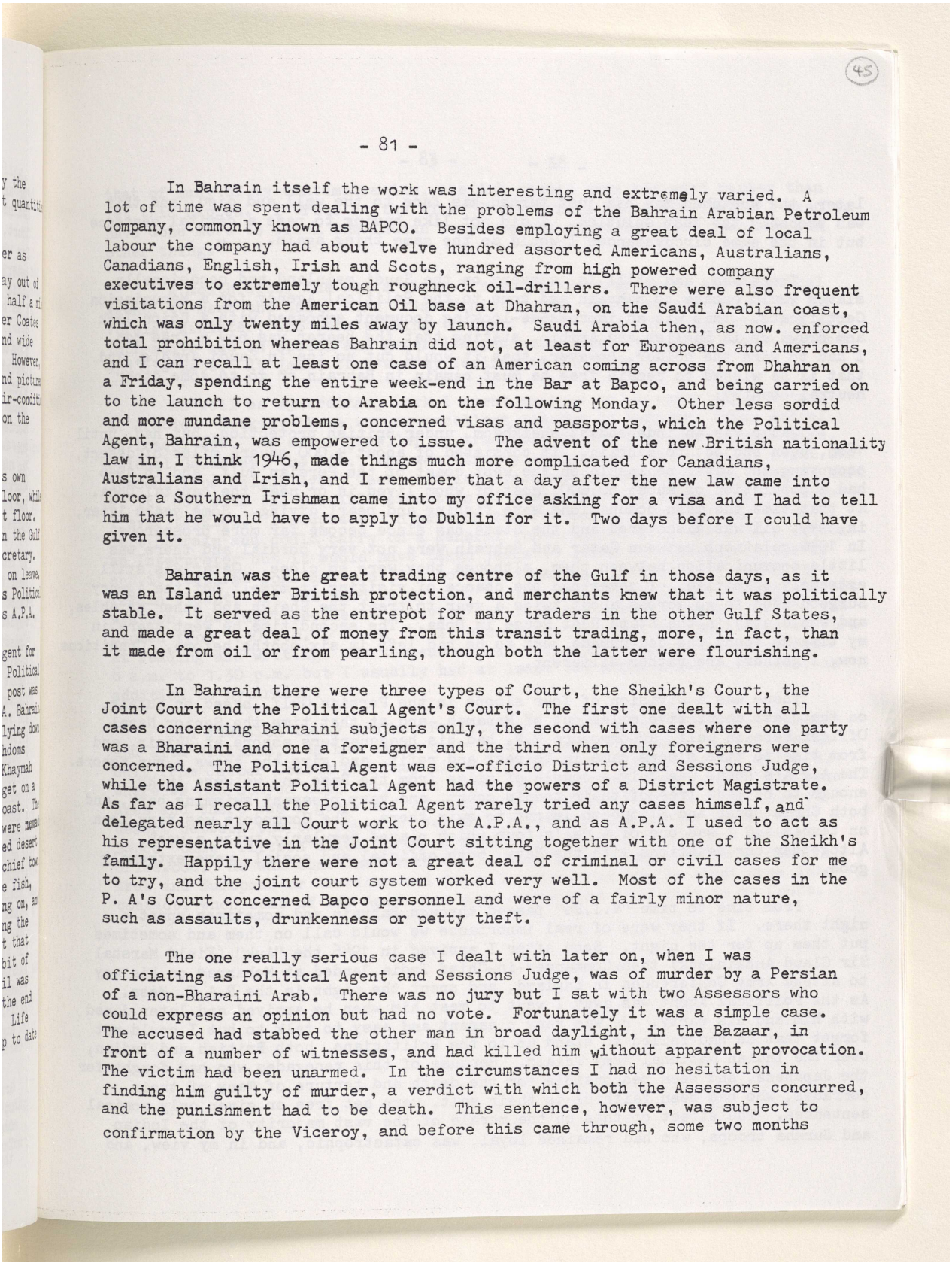


in Agra in 1937-38. He seemed just the same and was greatly amused by the antics of Christopher and Elizabeth who came with us and consumed vast quantities of sandwiches and cakes.

We arrived in Bahrain on the 17th February 1946, and I took over as Assistant Political Agent the next day. The A.P.A's House was some way out of Manama, the main town and Port of the Island, and in the desert about half a mile beyond the Air Liaison Officer's House, where we had stayed with Jasper Coates in 1939. It was built of concrete, with a ground and upper storey, and wide verandahs upstairs and down, and furnished with the bare necessities. However, when we had got our heavy kit unpacked and a few rugs on the floors and pictures on the walls, we made it quite habitable. There was, of course, no air-conditioning but we had ceiling fans, and in the hot weather had our beds out on the upstairs verandah.

The Political Agency was in Manamah right on the coast with its own beach and jetty. The main offices and Courtroom were on the ground floor, while the P.A's private office and all the living quarters were on the first floor. Sir Geoffrey Prior was still Resident when I arrived, having served in the Gulf all through the War since September 1939 when I had been his Under-Secretary. He was very friendly and I had recently met him in London while I was on leave. The P.A. was Colonel Galloway, whom I had just met in 1939 when he was Political Agent in Kuwait, and my old friend Dick Bird was the man I relieved as A.P.A.

In those days the Political Agent Bahrain was also Political Agent for Qatar, and the Trucial Coast, and although there was supposed to be a Political Officer actually living on the Trucial Coast,for most of my time that post was vacant and I held charge as P.O.T.C. in addition to my duties as A.P.A. Bahrain. This was fine as far as I was concerned as it gave me the chance of flying down to the Trucial Coast from time to time and visiting the various Sheikhdoms of Sharjah, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, ~~Al Fujayrah~~, Ajman, Ummal Qwain, Ras Al Khaymah and Fujairah. One would get off the flying boat at Sharjah and then get on a camel or antiquated truck and make off into the Desert or along the Coast. The total population of the seven States was about 100,000, 10% of which were nomads, and the area some 32,000 square miles, but most of this was uninhabited desert with the main towns or villages on or near the Coast. Dubai was the chief town and port, and half the population lived there. The main products were fish, vegetables, dates and pearls, though exploration for oil was then going on, and I remember recommending that something should be done about delineating the boundaries of those sheikhdoms before the oil came to the surface. At that time, except near the coast, nobody cared much about who owned which bit of desert except where there was an oasis, but one could see that once oil was discovered this carefree attitude would change entirely. I think in the end the boundaries must have been settled but if so it was after my time. Life there was then still very primitive and in complete contrast to the up to date rather slick atmosphere of Bahrain.

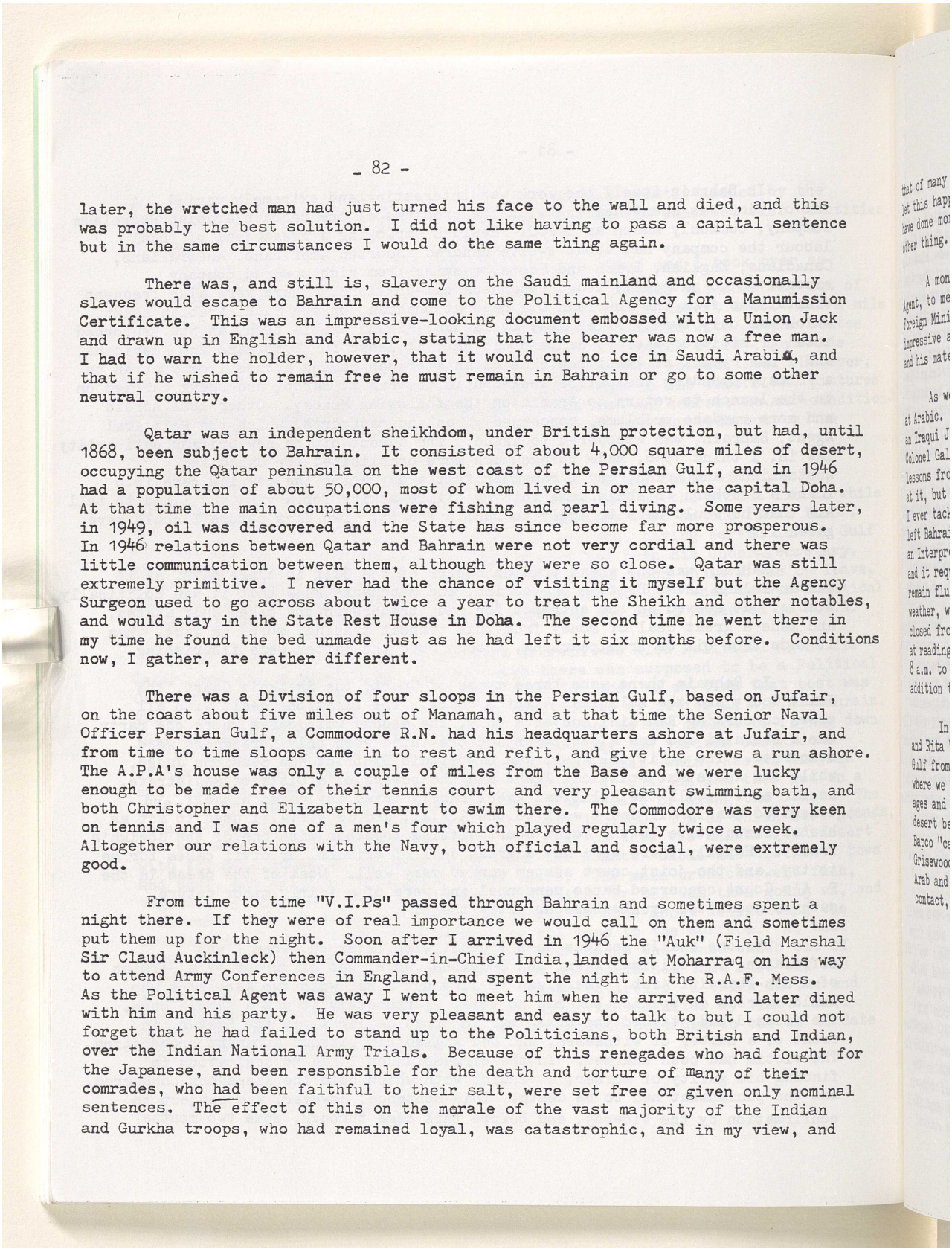


In Bahrain itself the work was interesting and extremely varied. A lot of time was spent dealing with the problems of the Bahrain Arabian Petroleum Company, commonly known as BAPCO. Besides employing a great deal of local labour the company had about twelve hundred assorted Americans, Australians, Canadians, English, Irish and Scots, ranging from high powered company executives to extremely tough roughneck oil-drillers. There were also frequent visitations from the American Oil base at Dhahran, on the Saudi Arabian coast, which was only twenty miles away by launch. Saudi Arabia then, as now. enforced total prohibition whereas Bahrain did not, at least for Europeans and Americans, and I can recall at least one case of an American coming across from Dhahran on a Friday, spending the entire week-end in the Bar at Bapco, and being carried on to the launch to return to Arabia on the following Monday. Other less sordid and more mundane problems, concerned visas and passports, which the Political Agent, Bahrain, was empowered to issue. The advent of the new British nationality law in, I think 1946, made things much more complicated for Canadians, Australians and Irish, and I remember that a day after the new law came into force a Southern Irishman came into my office asking for a visa and I had to tell him that he would have to apply to Dublin for it. Two days before I could have given it.

Bahrain was the great trading centre of the Gulf in those days, as it was an Island under British protection, and merchants knew that it was politically stable. It served as the entrepot for many traders in the other Gulf States, and made a great deal of money from this transit trading, more, in fact, than it made from oil or from pearling, though both the latter were flourishing.

In Bahrain there were three types of Court, the Sheikh's Court, the Joint Court and the Political Agent's Court. The first one dealt with all cases concerning Bahraini subjects only, the second with cases where one party was a Bharaini and one a foreigner and the third when only foreigners were concerned. The Political Agent was ex-officio District and Sessions Judge, while the Assistant Political Agent had the powers of a District Magistrate. As far as I recall the Political Agent rarely tried any cases himself, and delegated nearly all Court work to the A.P.A., and as A.P.A. I used to act as his representative in the Joint Court sitting together with one of the Sheikh's family. Happily there were not a great deal of criminal or civil cases for me to try, and the joint court system worked very well. Most of the cases in the P. A's Court concerned Bapco personnel and were of a fairly minor nature, such as assaults, drunkenness or petty theft.

The one really serious case I dealt with later on, when I was officiating as Political Agent and Sessions Judge, was of murder by a Persian of a non-Bharaini Arab. There was no jury but I sat with two Assessors who could express an opinion but had no vote. Fortunately it was a simple case. The accused had stabbed the other man in broad daylight, in the Bazaar, in front of a number of witnesses, and had killed him without apparent provocation. The victim had been unarmed. In the circumstances I had no hesitation in finding him guilty of murder, a verdict with which both the Assessors concurred, and the punishment had to be death. This sentence, however, was subject to confirmation by the Viceroy, and before this came through, some two months



later, the wretched man had just turned his face to the wall and died, and this was probably the best solution. I did not like having to pass a capital sentence but in the same circumstances I would do the same thing again.

There was, and still is, slavery on the Saudi mainland and occasionally slaves would escape to Bahrain and come to the Political Agency for a Manumission Certificate. This was an impressive-looking document embossed with a Union Jack and drawn up in English and Arabic, stating that the bearer was now a free man. I had to warn the holder, however, that it would cut no ice in Saudi Arabia, and that if he wished to remain free he must remain in Bahrain or go to some other neutral country.

Qatar was an independent sheikhdom, under British protection, but had, until 1868, been subject to Bahrain. It consisted of about 4,000 square miles of desert, occupying the Qatar peninsula on the west coast of the Persian Gulf, and in 1946 had a population of about 50,000, most of whom lived in or near the capital Doha. At that time the main occupations were fishing and pearl diving. Some years later, in 1949, oil was discovered and the State has since become far more prosperous. In 1946 relations between Qatar and Bahrain were not very cordial and there was little communication between them, although they were so close. Qatar was still extremely primitive. I never had the chance of visiting it myself but the Agency Surgeon used to go across about twice a year to treat the Sheikh and other notables, and would stay in the State Rest House in Doha. The second time he went there in my time he found the bed unmade just as he had left it six months before. Conditions now, I gather, are rather different.

There was a Division of four sloops in the Persian Gulf, based on Jufair, on the coast about five miles out of Manamah, and at that time the Senior Naval Officer Persian Gulf, a Commodore R.N. had his headquarters ashore at Jufair, and from time to time sloops came in to rest and refit, and give the crews a run ashore. The A.P.A's house was only a couple of miles from the Base and we were lucky enough to be made free of their tennis court and very pleasant swimming bath, and both Christopher and Elizabeth learnt to swim there. The Commodore was very keen on tennis and I was one of a men's four which played regularly twice a week. Altogether our relations with the Navy, both official and social, were extremely good.

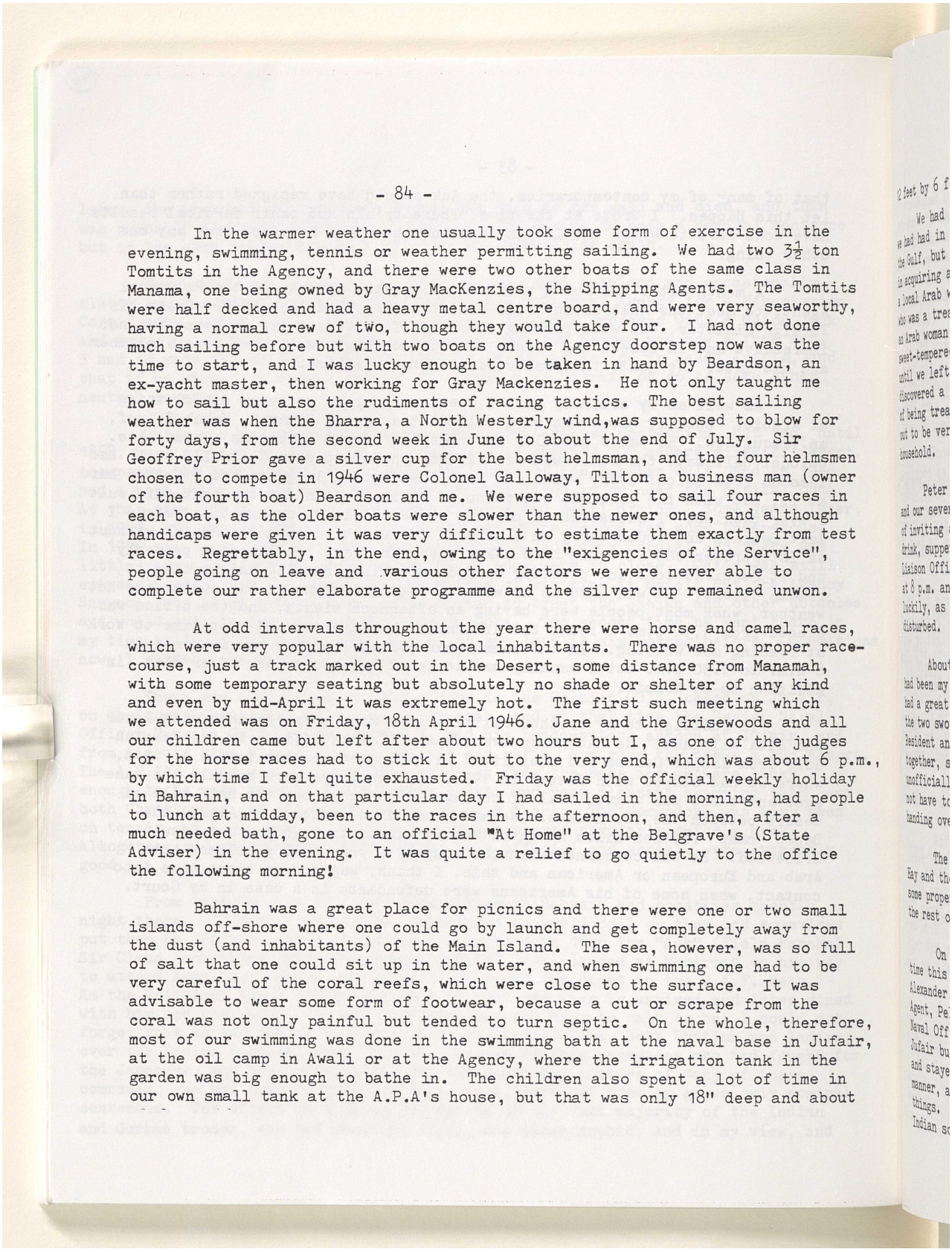
From time to time "V.I.Ps" passed through Bahrain and sometimes spent a night there. If they were of real importance we would call on them and sometimes put them up for the night. Soon after I arrived in 1946 the "Auk" (Field Marshal Sir Claud Auckinleck) then Commander-in-Chief India, landed at Moharraq on his way to attend Army Conferences in England, and spent the night in the R.A.F. Mess. As the Political Agent was away I went to meet him when he arrived and later dined with him and his party. He was very pleasant and easy to talk to but I could not forget that he had failed to stand up to the Politicians, both British and Indian, over the Indian National Army Trials. Because of this renegades who had fought for the Japanese, and been responsible for the death and torture of many of their comrades, who had been faithful to their salt, were set free or given only nominal sentences. The effect of this on the morale of the vast majority of the Indian and Gurkha troops, who had remained loyal, was catastrophic, and in my view, and

that of many of my contemporaries, the Auk should have resigned rather than let this happen. I wrote at the time "These trials and their farcical results have done more to wreck the Indian Army and the other Services than any one other thing."

A month after the Auk's visit I had, in the absence of the Political Agent, to meet the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Chiffley,and Dr. Evatt his Foreign Minister, who were passing through. They were quite pleasant but not impressive and in speech and general appearance might well have been a plumber and his mate. At least that was my feeling at the time.

As well as my ordinary work I spent an hour or so every day swotting at Arabic. Luckily there was an excellent teacher in Manamah, Yakub Zelouf, an Iraqui Jew. He was a jeweller by trade but taught Arabic as a side line. Colonel Galloway, the P.A., who was already an Interpreter Class II, still had lessons from Zelouf every week. It is a fascinating language and I worked hard at it, but with the possible exception of Pushtu I found it the most difficult I ever tackled. I succeeded in passing the Preliminary examination before I left Bahrain and could carry on a general conversation with the Sheikh without an Interpreter but it would have taken years to learn the language properly and it required constant practice both in speaking, reading and writing to remain fluent. It was hard as it was, to fit my lessons in but during the hot weather, when most people were having an afternoon siesta, and the office was closed from 1.30 p.m. I found the afternoon the quietest and best time to work at reading and writing. In the summer our official office hours were from 8 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. but I usually had at least two hours work after that, in addition to my Arabic.

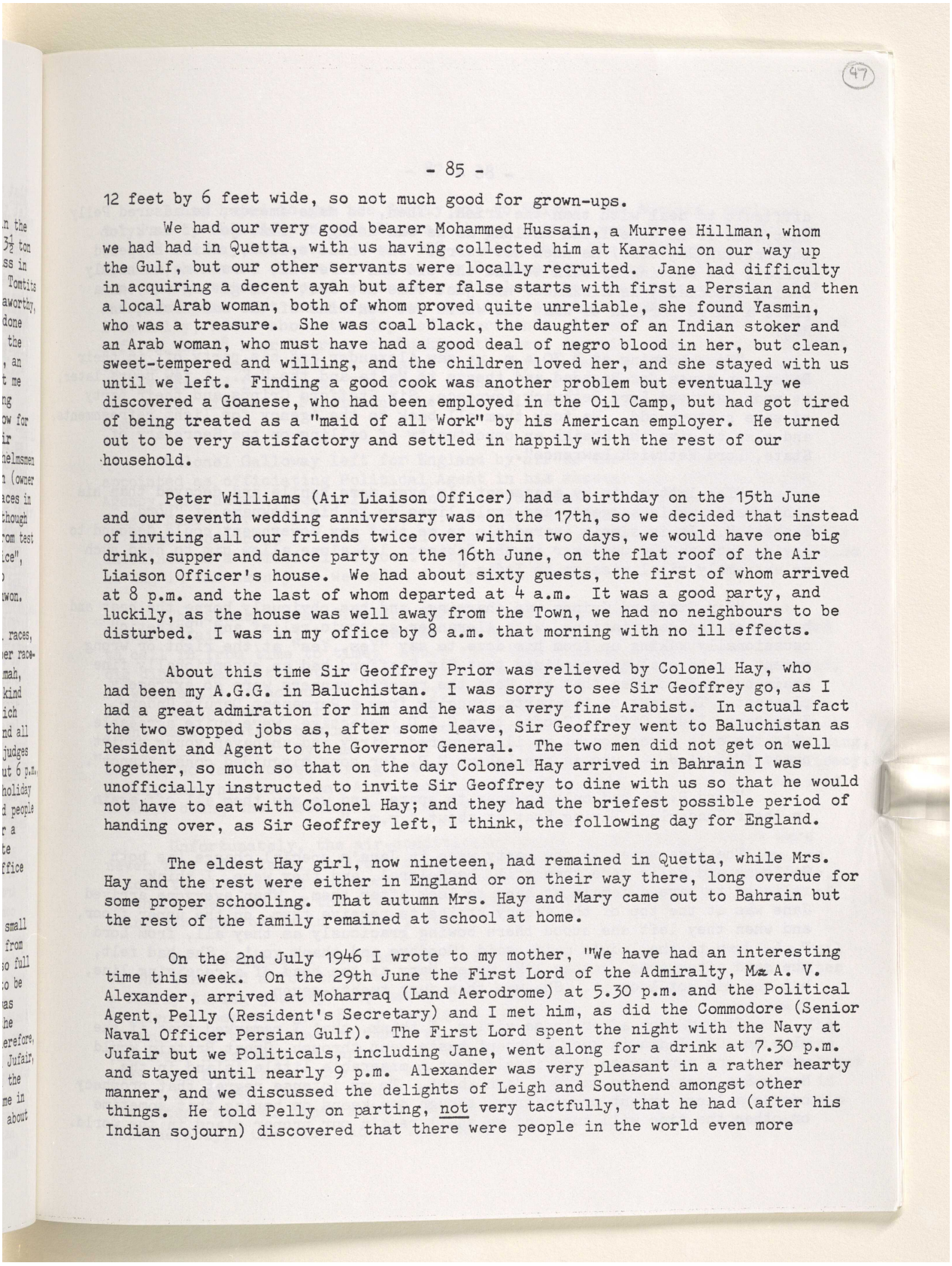
In addition to my brother Politicals we made great friends with Peter and Rita Williams. He had taken over as Air Liaison Officer in the Persian Gulf from Jasper Coates and they lived in the house nearest to the A.P.A's, where we had stayed with Jasper in 1939. Our children were roughly the same ages and there was a good deal of coming and going across the half mile of desert between the two houses. We had a number of friends in Awali, the Bapco "camp" fifteen miles North of Manama; in particular Ken and Ursula Grisewood. He was concerned with the company's personnel problems, both Arab and European or American and this, I think, was how we first came into contact, when some of his Americans were defendants in a case in my Court.



In the warmer weather one usually took some form of exercise in the evening, swimming, tennis or weather permitting sailing. We had two 3½ ton Tomtits in the Agency, and there were two other boats of the same class in Manama, one being owned by Gray MacKenzies, the Shipping Agents. The Tomtits were half decked and had a heavy metal centre board, and were very seaworthy, having a normal crew of two, though they would take four. I had not done much sailing before but with two boats on the Agency doorstep now was the time to start, and I was lucky enough to be taken in hand by Beardson, an ex-yacht master, then working for Gray Mackenzies. He not only taught me how to sail but also the rudiments of racing tactics. The best sailing weather was when the Bharra, a North Westerly wind,was supposed to blow for forty days, from the second week in June to about the end of July. Sir Geoffrey Prior gave a silver cup for the best helmsman, and the four helmsmen chosen to compete in 1946 were Colonel Galloway, Tilton a business man (owner of the fourth boat) Beardson and me. We were supposed to sail four races in each boat, as the older boats were slower than the newer ones, and although handicaps were given it was very difficult to estimate them exactly from test races. Regrettably, in the end, owing to the "exigencies of the Service", people going on leave and various other factors we were never able to complete our rather elaborate programme and the silver cup remained unwon.

At odd intervals throughout the year there were horse and camel races, which were very popular with the local inhabitants. There was no proper race-course, just a track marked out in the Desert, some distance from Manamah, with some temporary seating but absolutely no shade or shelter of any kind and even by mid-April it was extremely hot. The first such meeting which we attended was on Friday, 18th April 1946. Jane and the Grisewoods and all our children came but left after about two hours but I, as one of the judges for the horse races had to stick it out to the very end, which was about 6 p.m., by which time I felt quite exhausted. Friday was the official weekly holiday in Bahrain, and on that particular day I had sailed in the morning, had people to lunch at midday, been to the races in the afternoon, and then, after a much needed bath, gone to an official "At Home" at the Belgrave's (State Adviser) in the evening. It was quite a relief to go quietly to the office the following morning!

Bahrain was a great place for picnics and there were one or two small islands off-shore where one could go by launch and get completely away from the dust (and inhabitants) of the Main Island. The sea, however, was so full of salt that one could sit up in the water, and when swimming one had to be very careful of the coral reefs, which were close to the surface. It was advisable to wear some form of footwear, because a cut or scrape from the coral was not only painful but tended to turn septic. On the whole, therefore, most of our swimming was done in the swimming bath at the naval base in Jufair, at the oil camp in Awali or at the Agency, where the irrigation tank in the garden was big enough to bathe in. The children also spent a lot of time in our own small tank at the A.P.A's house, but that was only 18" deep and about



12 feet by 6 feet wide, so not much good for grown-ups.

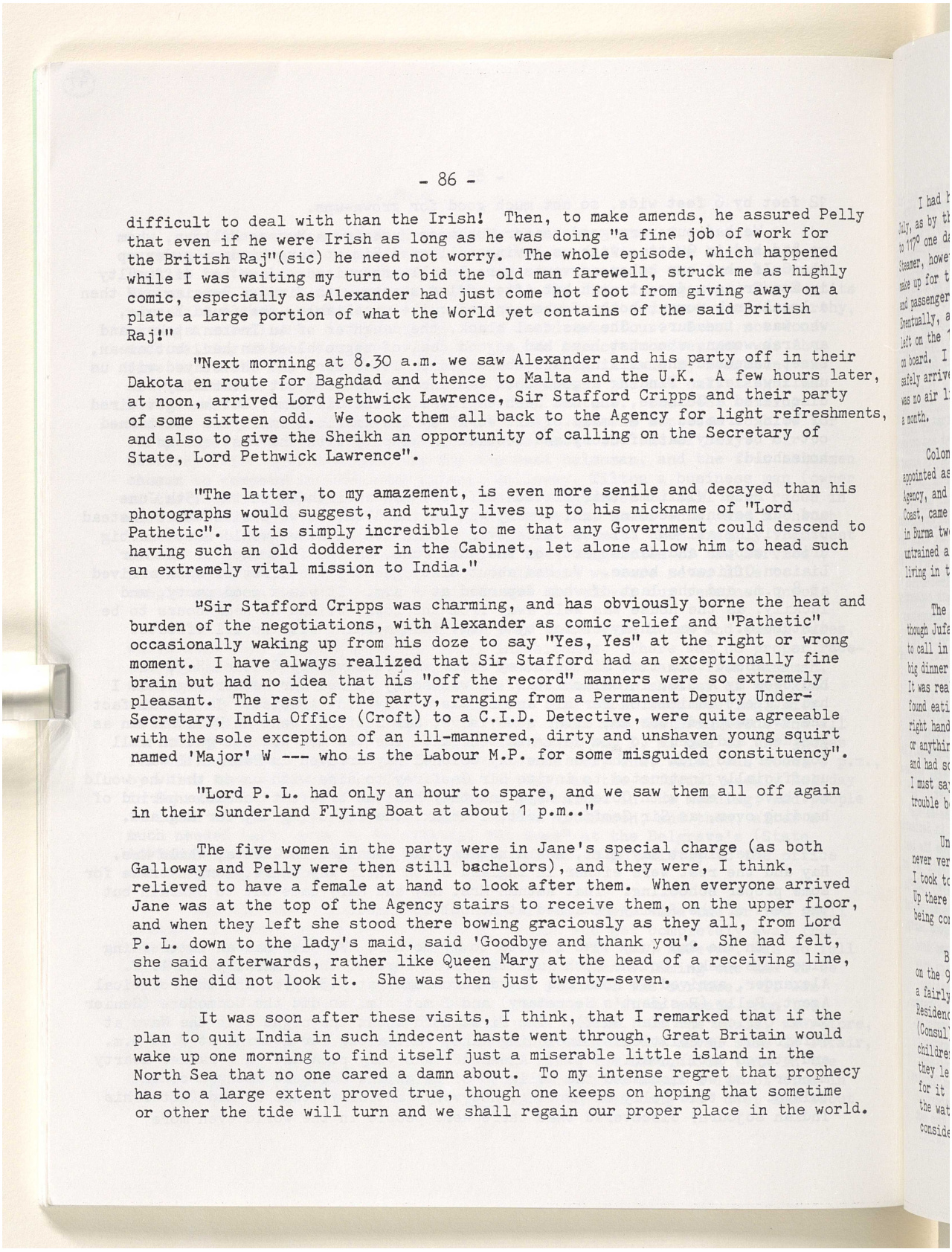
We had our very good bearer Mohammed Hussain, a Murree Hillman, whom we had had in Quetta, with us having collected him at Karachi on our way up the Gulf, but our other servants were locally recruited. Jane had difficulty in acquiring a decent ayah but after false starts with first a Persian and then a local Arab woman, both of whom proved quite unreliable, she found Yasmin, who was a treasure. She was coal black, the daughter of an Indian stoker and an Arab woman, who must have had a good deal of negro blood in her, but clean, sweet-tempered and willing, and the children loved her, and she stayed with us until we left. Finding a good cook was another problem but eventually we discovered a Goanese, who had been employed in the Oil Camp, but had got tired of being treated as a "maid of all Work" by his American employer. He turned out to be very satisfactory and settled in happily with the rest of our household.

Peter Williams (Air Liaison Officer) had a birthday on the 15th June and our seventh wedding anniversary was on the 17th, so we decided that instead of inviting all our friends twice over within two days, we would have one big drink, supper and dance party on the 16th June, on the flat roof of the Air Liaison Officer's house. We had about sixty guests, the first of whom arrived at 8 p.m. and the last of whom departed at 4 a.m. It was a good party, and luckily, as the house was well away from the Town, we had no neighbours to be disturbed. I was in my office by 8 a.m. that morning with no ill effects.

About this time Sir Geoffrey Prior was relieved by Colonel Hay, who had been my A.G.G. in Baluchistan. I was sorry to see Sir Geoffrey go, as I had a great admiration for him and he was a very fine Arabist. In actual fact the two swopped jobs as, after some leave, Sir Geoffrey went to Baluchistan as Resident and Agent to the Governor General. The two men did not get on well together, so much so that on the day Colonel Hay arrived in Bahrain I was unofficially instructed to invite Sir Geoffrey to dine with us so that he would not have to eat with Colonel Hay; and they had the briefest possible period of handing over, as Sir Geoffrey left, I think, the following day for England.

The eldest Hay girl, now nineteen, had remained in Quetta, while Mrs. Hay and the rest were either in England or on their way there, long overdue for some proper schooling. That autumn Mrs. Hay and Mary came out to Bahrain but the rest of the family remained at school at home.

On the 2nd July 1946 I wrote to my mother, "We have had an interesting time this week. On the 29th June the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. A. V. Alexander, arrived at Moharraq (Land Aerodrome) at 5.30 p.m. and the Political Agent, Pelly (Resident's Secretary) and I met him, as did the Commodore (Senior Naval Officer Persian Gulf). The First Lord spent the night with the Navy at Jufair but we Politicals, including Jane, went along for a drink at 7.30 p.m. and stayed until nearly 9 p.m. Alexander was very pleasant in a rather hearty manner, and we discussed the delights of Leigh and Southend amongst other things. He told Pelly on parting, not very tactfully, that he had (after his Indian sojourn) discovered that there were people in the world even more



difficult to deal with than the Irish! Then, to make amends, he assured Pelly that even if he were Irish as long as he was doing "a fine job of work for the British Raj"(sic) he need not worry. The whole episode, which happened while I was waiting my turn to bid the old man farewell, struck me as highly comic, especially as Alexander had just come hot foot from giving away on a plate a large portion of what the World yet contains of the said British Raj!"

"Next morning at 8.30 a.m. we saw Alexander and his party off in their Dakota en route for Baghdad and thence to Malta and the U.K. A few hours later, at noon, arrived Lord Pethwick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and their party of some sixteen odd. We took them all back to the Agency for light refreshments, and also to give the Sheikh an opportunity of calling on the Secretary of State, Lord Pethwick Lawrence".

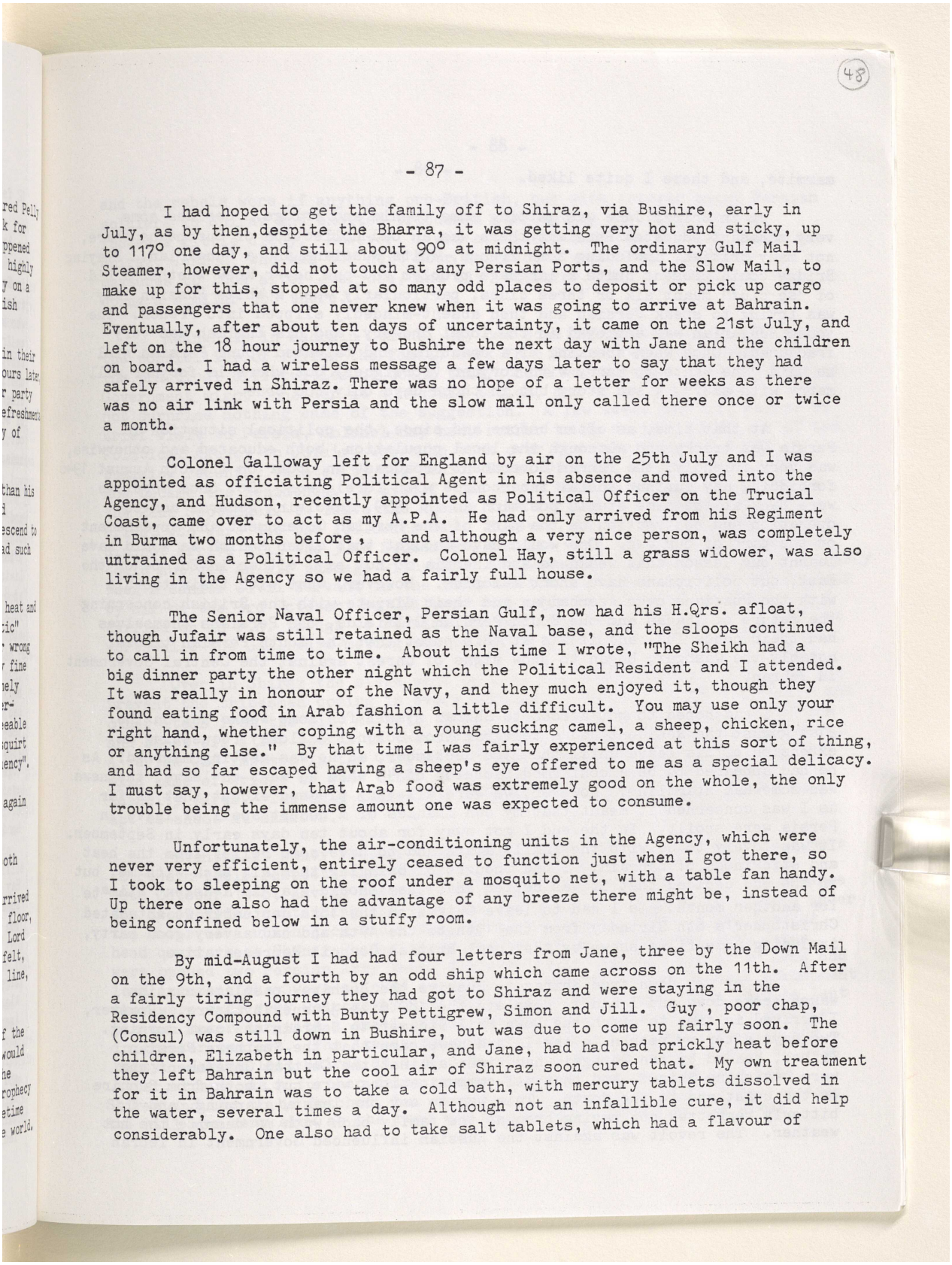
"The latter, to my amazement, is even more senile and decayed than his photographs would suggest, and truly lives up to his nickname of "Lord Pathetic". It is simply incredible to me that any Government could descend to having such an old dodderer in the Cabinet, let alone allow him to head such an extremely vital mission to India."

"Sir Stafford Cripps was charming, and has obviously borne the heat and burden of the negotiations, with Alexander as comic relief and "Pathetic" occasionally waking up from his doze to say "Yes, Yes" at the right or wrong moment. I have always realized that Sir Stafford had an exceptionally fine brain but had no idea that his "off the record" manners were so extremely pleasant. The rest of the party, ranging from a Permanent Deputy Under-Secretary, India Office (Croft) to a C.I.D. Detective, were quite agreeable with the sole exception of an ill-mannered, dirty and unshaven young squirt named 'Major' W --- who is the Labour M.P. for some misguided constituency".

"Lord P. L. had only an hour to spare, and we saw them all off again in their Sunderland Flying Boat at about 1 p.m.."

The five women in the party were in Jane's special charge (as both Galloway and Pelly were then still bachelors), and they were, I think, relieved to have a female at hand to look after them. When everyone arrived Jane was at the top of the Agency stairs to receive them, on the upper floor, and when they left she stood there bowing graciously as they all, from Lord P. L. down to the lady's maid, said 'Goodbye and thank you'. She had felt, she said afterwards, rather like Queen Mary at the head of a receiving line, but she did not look it. She was then just twenty-seven.

It was soon after these visits, I think, that I remarked that if the plan to quit India in such indecent haste went through, Great Britain would wake up one morning to find itself just a miserable little island in the North Sea that no one cared a damn about. To my intense regret that prophecy has to a large extent proved true, though one keeps on hoping that sometime or other the tide will turn and we shall regain our proper place in the world.



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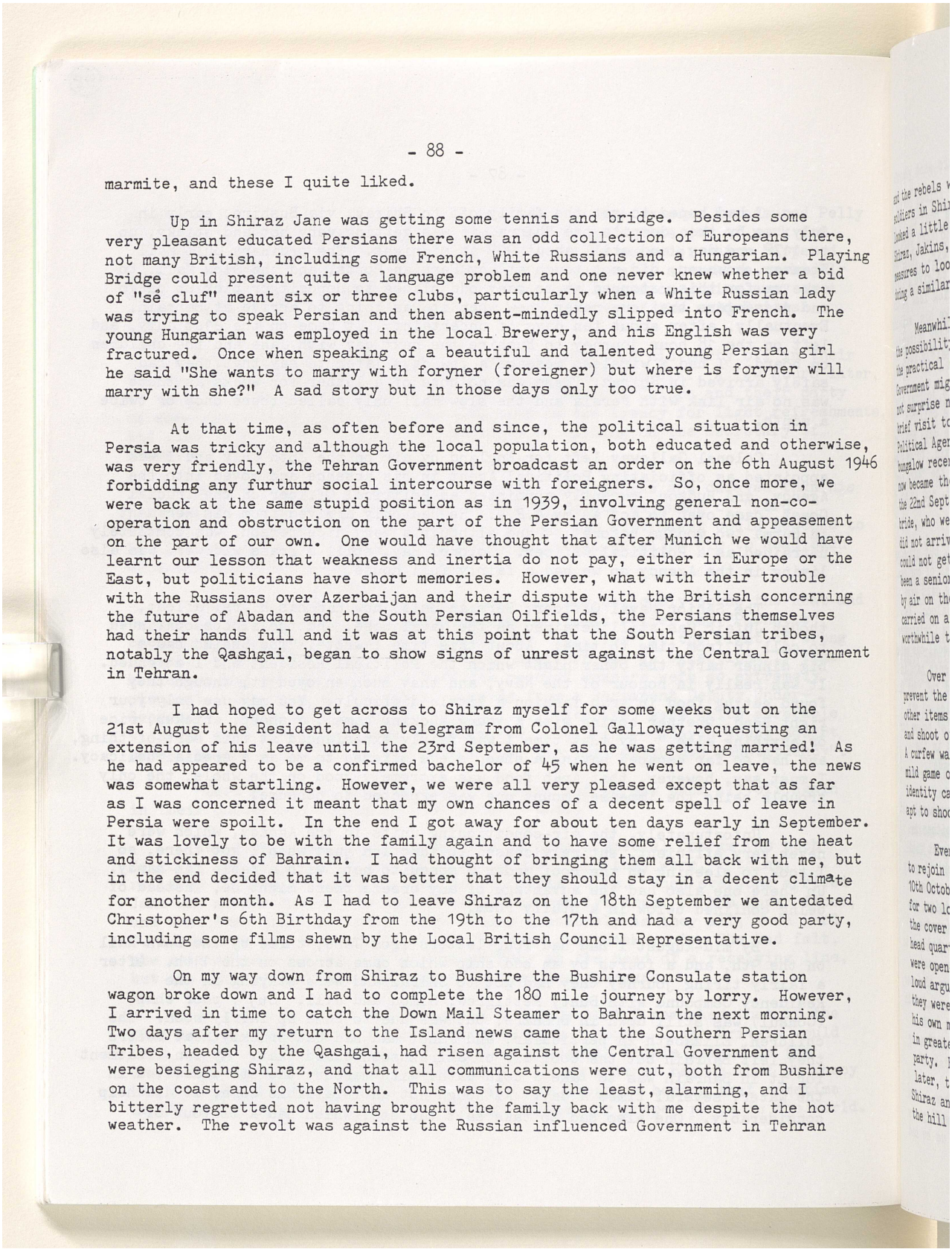
I had hoped to get the family off to Shiraz, via Bushire, early in July, as by then,despite the Bharra, it was getting very hot and sticky, up to 117° one day, and still about 90° at midnight. The ordinary Gulf Mail Steamer, however, did not touch at any Persian Ports, and the Slow Mail, to make up for this, stopped at so many odd places to deposit or pick up cargo and passengers that one never knew when it was going to arrive at Bahrain. Eventually, after about ten days of uncertainty, it came on the 21st July, and left on the 18 hour journey to Bushire the next day with Jane and the children on board. I had a wireless message a few days later to say that they had safely arrived in Shiraz. There was no hope of a letter for weeks as there was no air link with Persia and the slow mail only called there once or twice a month.

Colonel Galloway left for England by air on the 25th July and I was appointed as officiating Political Agent in his absence and moved into the Agency, and Hudson, recently appointed as Political Officer on the Trucial Coast, came over to act as my A.P.A. He had only arrived from his Regiment in Burma two months before , and although a very nice person, was completely untrained as a Political Officer. Colonel Hay, still a grass widower, was also living in the Agency so we had a fairly full house.

The Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf, now had his H.Qrs. afloat, though Jufair was still retained as the Naval base, and the sloops continued to call in from time to time. About this time I wrote, "The Sheikh had a big dinner party the other night which the Political Resident and I attended. It was really in honour of the Navy, and they much enjoyed it, though they found eating food in Arab fashion a little difficult. You may use only your right hand, whether coping with a young sucking camel, a sheep, chicken, rice or anything else." By that time I was fairly experienced at this sort of thing, and had so far escaped having a sheep's eye offered to me as a special delicacy. I must say, however, that Arab food was extremely good on the whole, the only trouble being the immense amount one was expected to consume.

Unfortunately, the air-conditioning units in the Agency, which were never very efficient, entirely ceased to function just when I got there, so I took to sleeping on the roof under a mosquito net, with a table fan handy. Up there one also had the advantage of any breeze there might be, instead of being confined below in a stuffy room.

By mid-August I had had four letters from Jane, three by the Down Mail on the 9th, and a fourth by an odd ship which came across on the 11th. After a fairly tiring journey they had got to Shiraz and were staying in the Residency Compound with Bunty Pettigrew, Simon and Jill. Guy , poor chap, (Consul) was still down in Bushire, but was due to come up fairly soon. The children, Elizabeth in particular, and Jane, had had bad prickly heat before they left Bahrain but the cool air of Shiraz soon cured that. My own treatment for it in Bahrain was to take a cold bath, with mercury tablets dissolved in the water, several times a day. Although not an infallible cure, it did help considerably. One also had to take salt tablets, which had a flavour of



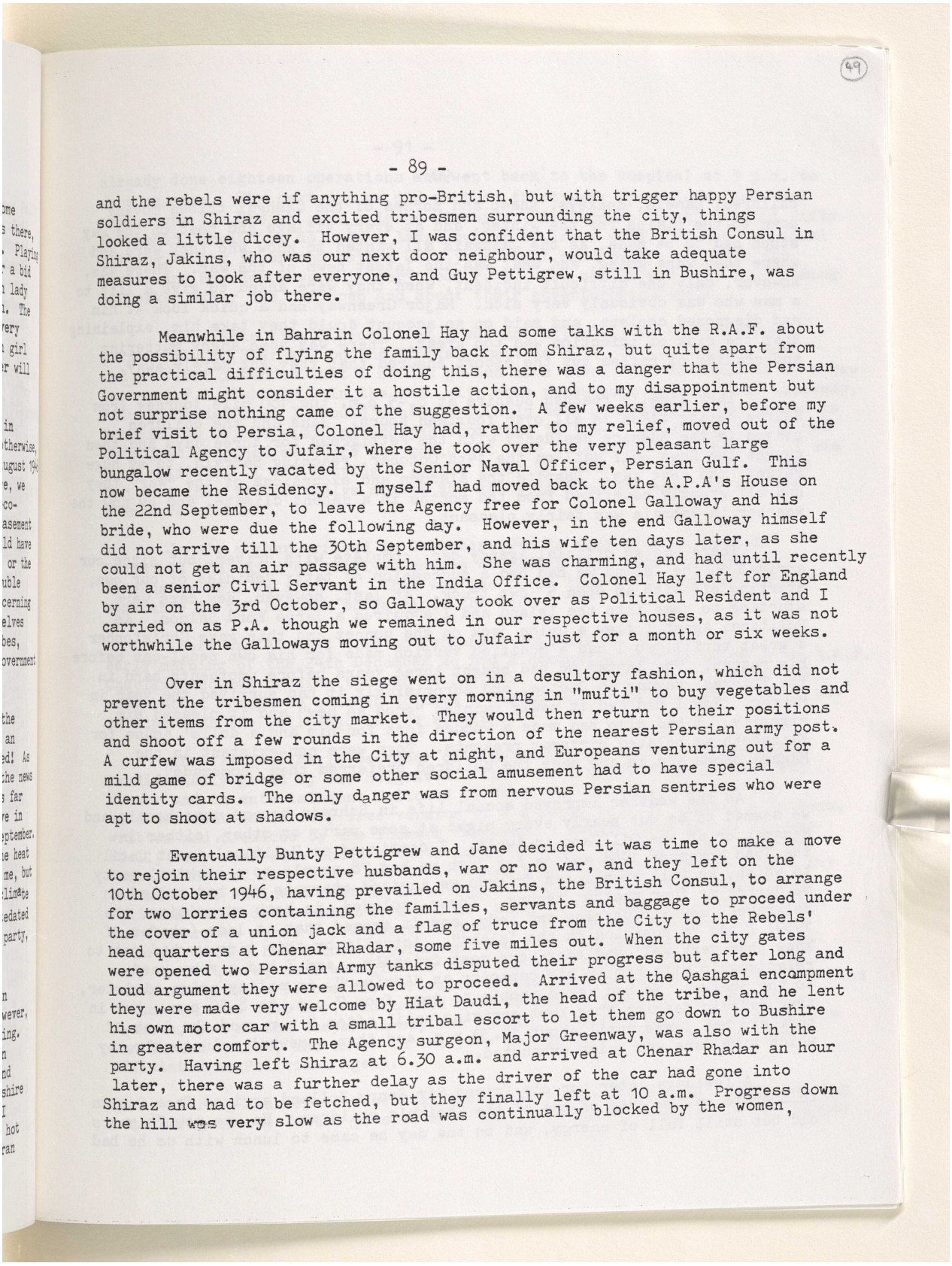
marmite, and these I quite liked.

Up in Shiraz Jane was getting some tennis and bridge. Besides some very pleasant educated Persians there was an odd collection of Europeans there, not many British, including some French, White Russians and a Hungarian. Playing Bridge could present quite a language problem and one never knew whether a bid of "sẽ cluf" meant six or three clubs, particularly when a White Russian lady was trying to speak Persian and then absent-mindedly slipped into French. The young Hungarian was employed in the local Brewery, and his English was very fractured. Once when speaking of a beautiful and talented young Persian girl he said "She wants to marry with foryner (foreigner) but where is foryner will marry with she?" A sad story but in those days only too true.

At that time, as often before and since, the political situation in Persia was tricky and although the local population, both educated and otherwise, was very friendly, the Tehran Government broadcast an order on the 6th August 1946 forbidding any furthur social intercourse with foreigners. So, once more, we were back at the same stupid position as in 1939, involving general non-co-operation and obstruction on the part of the Persian Government and appeasement on the part of our own. One would have thought that after Munich we would have learnt our lesson that weakness and inertia do not pay, either in Europe or the East, but politicians have short memories. However, what with their trouble with the Russians over Azerbaijan and their dispute with the British concerning the future of Abadan and the South Persian Oilfields, the Persians themselves had their hands full and it was at this point that the South Persian tribes, notably the Qashgai, began to show signs of unrest against the Central Government in Tehran.

I had hoped to get across to Shiraz myself for some weeks but on the 21st August the Resident had a telegram from Colonel Galloway requesting an extension of his leave until the 23rd September, as he was getting married! As he had appeared to be a confirmed bachelor of 45 when he went on leave, the news was somewhat startling. However, we were all very pleased except that as far as I was concerned it meant that my own chances of a decent spell of leave in Persia were spoilt. In the end I got away for about ten days early in September. It was lovely to be with the family again and to have some relief from the heat and stickiness of Bahrain. I had thought of bringing them all back with me, but in the end decided that it was better that they should stay in a decent climate for another month. As I had to leave Shiraz on the 18th September we antedated Christopher's 6th Birthday from the 19th to the 17th and had a very good party, including some films shewn by the Local British Council Representative.

On my way down from Shiraz to Bushire the Bushire Consulate station wagon broke down and I had to complete the 180 mile journey by lorry. However, I arrived in time to catch the Down Mail Steamer to Bahrain the next morning. Two days after my return to the Island news came that the Southern Persian Tribes, headed by the Qashgai, had risen against the Central Government and were besieging Shiraz, and that all communications were cut, both from Bushire on the coast and to the North. This was to say the least, alarming, and I bitterly regretted not having brought the family back with me despite the hot weather. The revolt was against the Russian influenced Government in Tehran

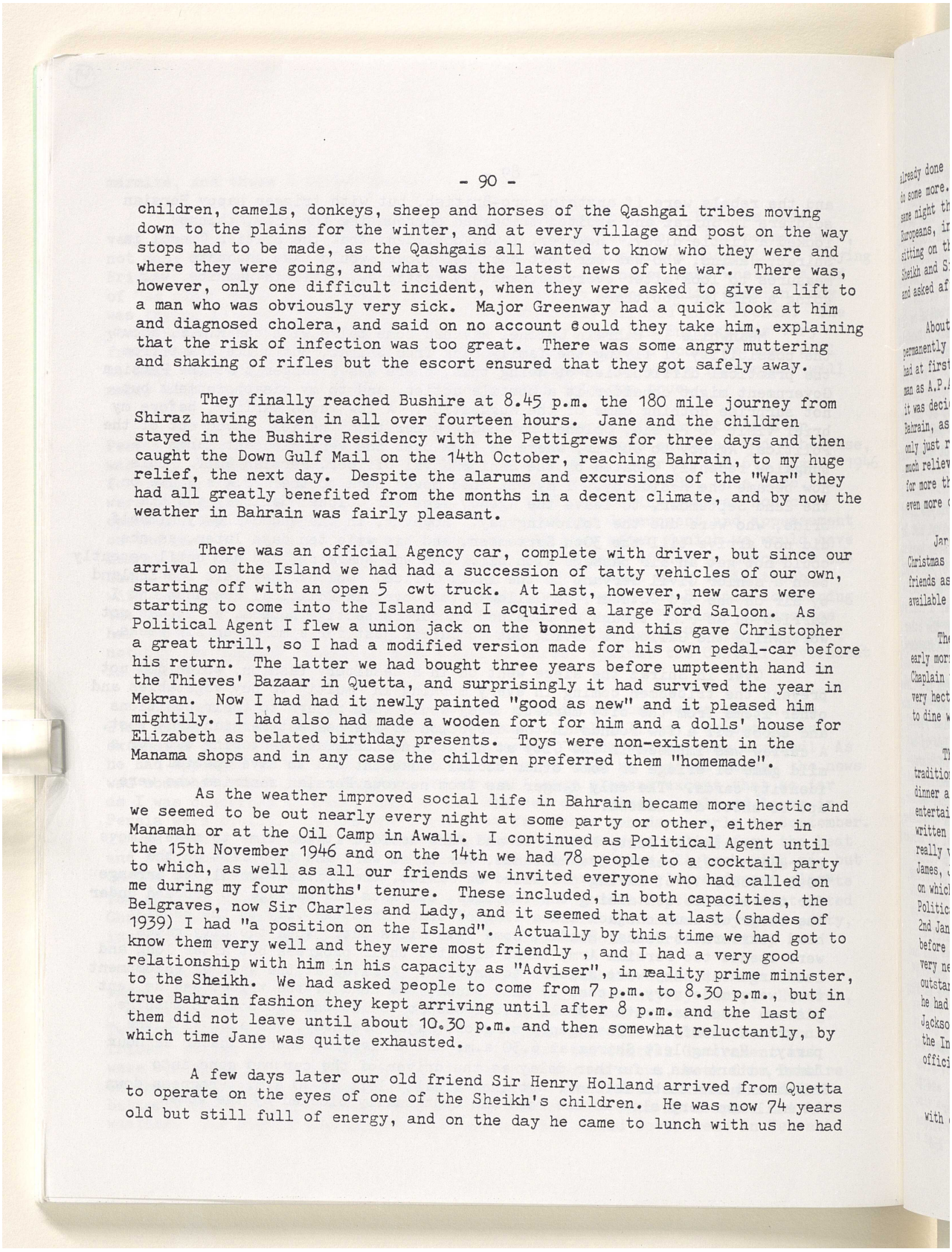


and the rebels were if anything pro-British, but with trigger happy Persian soldiers in Shiraz and excited tribesmen surrounding the city, things looked a little dicey. However, I was confident that the British Consul in Shiraz, Jakins, who was our next door neighbour, would take adequate measures to look after everyone, and Guy Pettigrew, still in Bushire, was doing a similar job there.

Meanwhile in Bahrain Colonel Hay had some talks with the R.A.F. about the possibility of flying the family back from Shiraz, but quite apart from the practical difficulties of doing this, there was a danger that the Persian Government might consider it a hostile action, and to my disappointment but not surprise nothing came of the suggestion. A few weeks earlier, before my brief visit to Persia, Colonel Hay had, rather to my relief, moved out of the Political Agency to Jufair, where he took over the very pleasant large bungalow recently vacated by the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf. This now became the Residency. I myself had moved back to the A.P.A's House on the 22nd September, to leave the Agency free for Colonel Galloway and his bride, who were due the following day. However, in the end Galloway himself did not arrive till the 30th September, and his wife ten days later, as she could not get an air passage with him. She was charming, and had until recently been a senior Civil Servant in the India Office. Colonel Hay left for England by air on the 3rd October, so Galloway took over as Political Resident and I carried on as P.A. though we remained in our respective houses, as it was not worthwhile the Galloways moving out to Jufair just for a month or six weeks.

Over in Shiraz the siege went on in a desultory fashion, which did not prevent the tribesmen coming in every morning in "mufti" to buy vegetables and other items from the city market. They would then return to their positions and shoot off a few rounds in the direction of the nearest Persian army post. A curfew was imposed in the City at night, and Europeans venturing out for a mild game of bridge or some other social amusement had to have special identity cards. The only danger was from nervous Persian sentries who were apt to shoot at shadows.

Eventually Bunty Pettigrew and Jane decided it was time to make a move to rejoin their respective husbands, war or no war, and they left on the 10th October 1946, having prevailed on Jakins, the British Consul, to arrange for two lorries containing the families, servants and baggage to proceed under the cover of a union jack and a flag of truce from the City to the Rebels' head quarters at Chenar Rhadar, some five miles out. When the city gates were opened two Persian Army tanks disputed their progress but after long and loud argument they were allowed to proceed. Arrived at the Qashgai encampment they were made very welcome by Hiat Daudi, the head of the tribe, and he lent his own motor car with a small tribal escort to let them go down to Bushire in greater comfort. The Agency surgeon, Major Greenway, was also with the party. Having left Shiraz at 6.30 a.m. and arrived at Chenar Rhadar an hour later, there was a further delay as the driver of the car had gone into Shiraz and had to be fetched, but they finally left at 10 a.m. Progress down the hill was very slow as the road was continually blocked by the women,



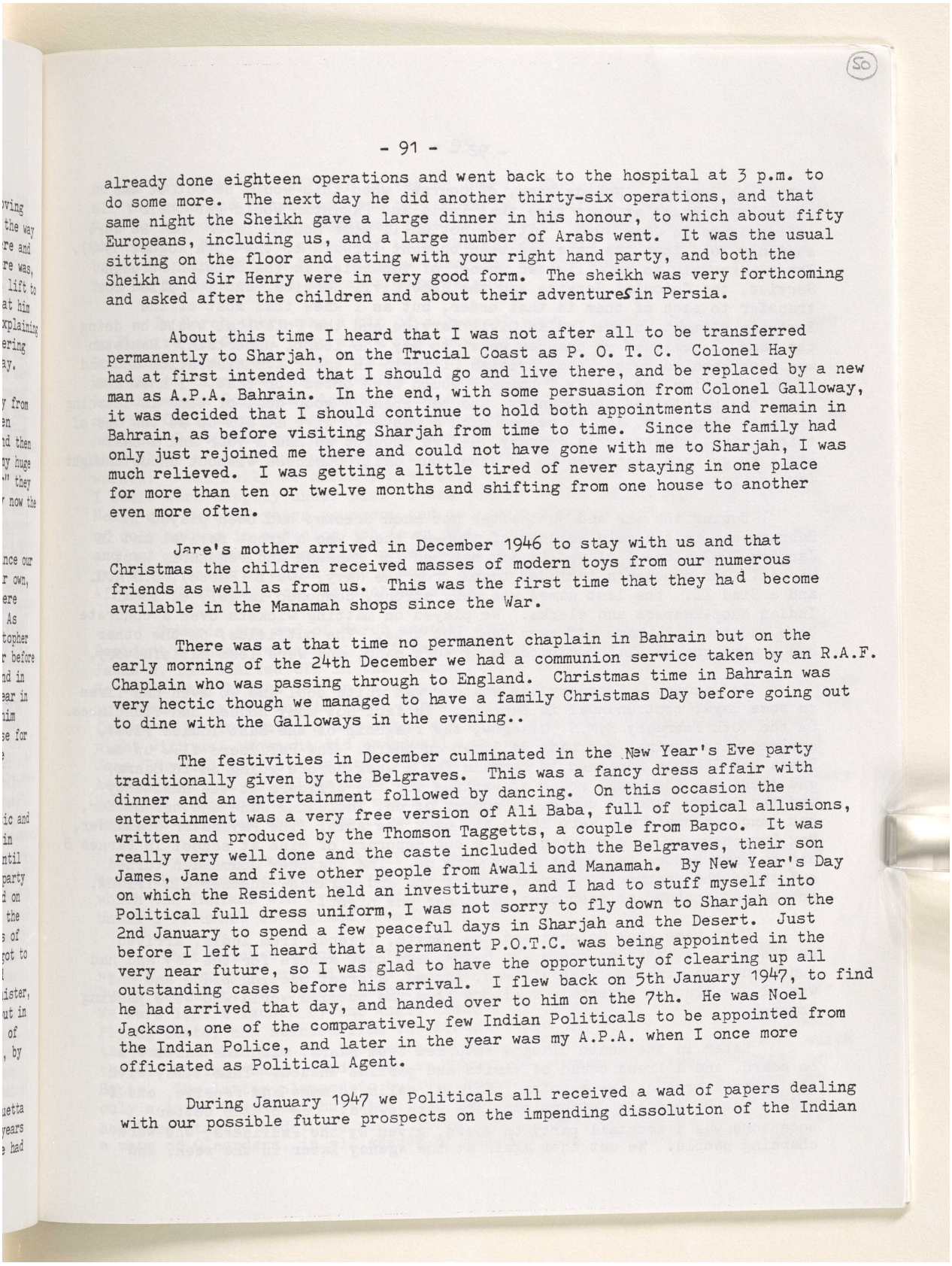
children, camels, donkeys, sheep and horses of the Qashgai tribes moving down to the plains for the winter, and at every village and post on the way stops had to be made, as the Qashgais all wanted to know who they were and where they were going, and what was the latest news of the war. There was, however, only one difficult incident, when they were asked to give a lift to a man who was obviously very sick. Major Greenway had a quick look at him and diagnosed cholera, and said on no account could they take him, explaining that the risk of infection was too great. There was some angry muttering and shaking of rifles but the escort ensured that they got safely away.

They finally reached Bushire at 8.45 p.m. the 180 mile journey from Shiraz having taken in all over fourteen hours. Jane and the children stayed in the Bushire Residency with the Pettigrews for three days and then caught the Down Gulf Mail on the 14th October, reaching Bahrain, to my huge relief, the next day. Despite the alarums and excursions of the "War" they had all greatly benefited from the months in a decent climate, and by now the weather in Bahrain was fairly pleasant.

There was an official Agency car, complete with driver, but since our arrival on the Island we had had a succession of tatty vehicles of our own, starting off with an open 5 cwt truck. At last, however, new cars were starting to come into the Island and I acquired a large Ford Saloon. As Political Agent I flew a union jack on the bonnet and this gave Christopher a great thrill, so I had a modified version made for his own pedal-car before his return. The latter we had bought three years before umpteenth hand in the Thieves' Bazaar in Quetta, and surprisingly it had survived the year in Mekran. Now I had had it newly painted "good as new" and it pleased him mightily. I had also had made a wooden fort for him and a dolls' house for Elizabeth as belated birthday presents. Toys were non-existent in the Manama shops and in any case the children preferred them "homemade".

As the weather improved social life in Bahrain became more hectic and we seemed to be out nearly every night at some party or other, either in Manamah or at the Oil Camp in Awali. I continued as Political Agent until the 15th November 1946 and on the 14th we had 78 people to a cocktail party to which, as well as all our friends we invited everyone who had called on me during my four months' tenure. These included, in both capacities, the Belgraves, now Sir Charles and Lady, and it seemed that at last (shades of 1939) I had "a position on the Island". Actually by this time we had got to know them very well and they were most friendly , and I had a very good relationship with him in his capacity as "Adviser", in reality prime minister, to the Sheikh. We had asked people to come from 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m., but in true Bahrain fashion they kept arriving until after 8 p.m. and the last of them did not leave until about 10.30 p.m. and then somewhat reluctantly, by which time Jane was quite exhausted.

A few days later our old friend Sir Henry Holland arrived from Quetta to operate on the eyes of one of the Sheikh's children. He was now 74 years old but still full of energy, and on the day he came to lunch with us he had



already done eighteen operations and went back to the hospital at 3 p.m. to do some more. The next day he did another thirty-six operations, and that same night the Sheikh gave a large dinner in his honour, to which about fifty Europeans, including us, and a large number of Arabs went. It was the usual sitting on the floor and eating with your right hand party, and both the Sheikh and Sir Henry were in very good form. The sheikh was very forthcoming and asked after the children and about their adventures in Persia.

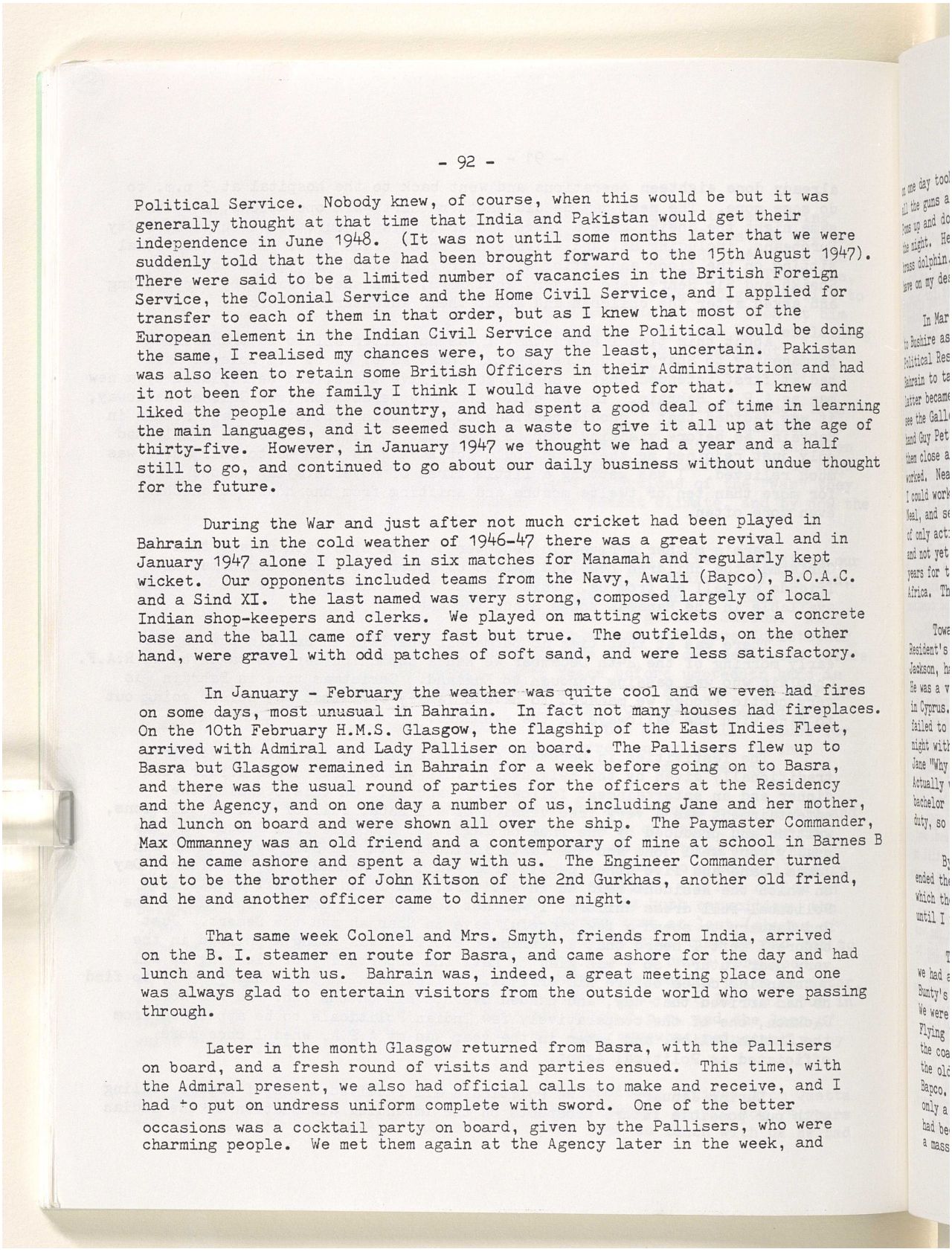
About this time I heard that I was not after all to be transferred permanently to Sharjah, on the Trucial Coast as P. O. T. C. Colonel Hay had at first intended that I should go and live there, and be replaced by a new man as A.P.A. Bahrain. In the end, with some persuasion from Colonel Galloway, it was decided that I should continue to hold both appointments and remain in Bahrain, as before visiting Sharjah from time to time. Since the family had only just rejoined me there and could not have gone with me to Sharjah, I was much relieved. I was getting a little tired of never staying in one place for more than ten or twelve months and shifting from one house to another even more often.

Jane's mother arrived in December 1946 to stay with us and that Christmas the children received masses of modern toys from our numerous friends as well as from us. This was the first time that they had become available in the Manamah shops since the War.

There was at that time no permanent chaplain in Bahrain but on the early morning of the 24th December we had a communion service taken by an R.A.F. Chaplain who was passing through to England. Christmas time in Bahrain was very hectic though we managed to have a family Christmas Day before going out to dine with the Galloways in the evening..

The festivities in December culminated in the New Year's Eve party traditionally given by the Belgraves. This was a fancy dress affair with dinner and an entertainment followed by dancing. On this occasion the entertainment was a very free version of Ali Baba, full of topical allusions, written and produced by the Thomson Taggetts, a couple from Bapco. It was really very well done and the caste included both the Belgraves, their son James, Jane and five other people from Awali and Manamah. By New Year's Day on which the Resident held an investiture, and I had to stuff myself into Political full dress uniform, I was not sorry to fly down to Sharjah on the 2nd January to spend a few peaceful days in Sharjah and the Desert. Just before I left I heard that a permanent P.O.T.C. was being appointed in the very near future, so I was glad to have the opportunity of clearing up all outstanding cases before his arrival. I flew back on 5th January 1947, to find he had arrived that day, and handed over to him on the 7th. He was Noel Jackson, one of the comparatively few Indian Politicals to be appointed from the Indian Police, and later in the year was my A.P.A. when I once more officiated as Political Agent.

During January 1947 we Politicals all received a wad of papers dealing with our possible future prospects on the impending dissolution of the Indian



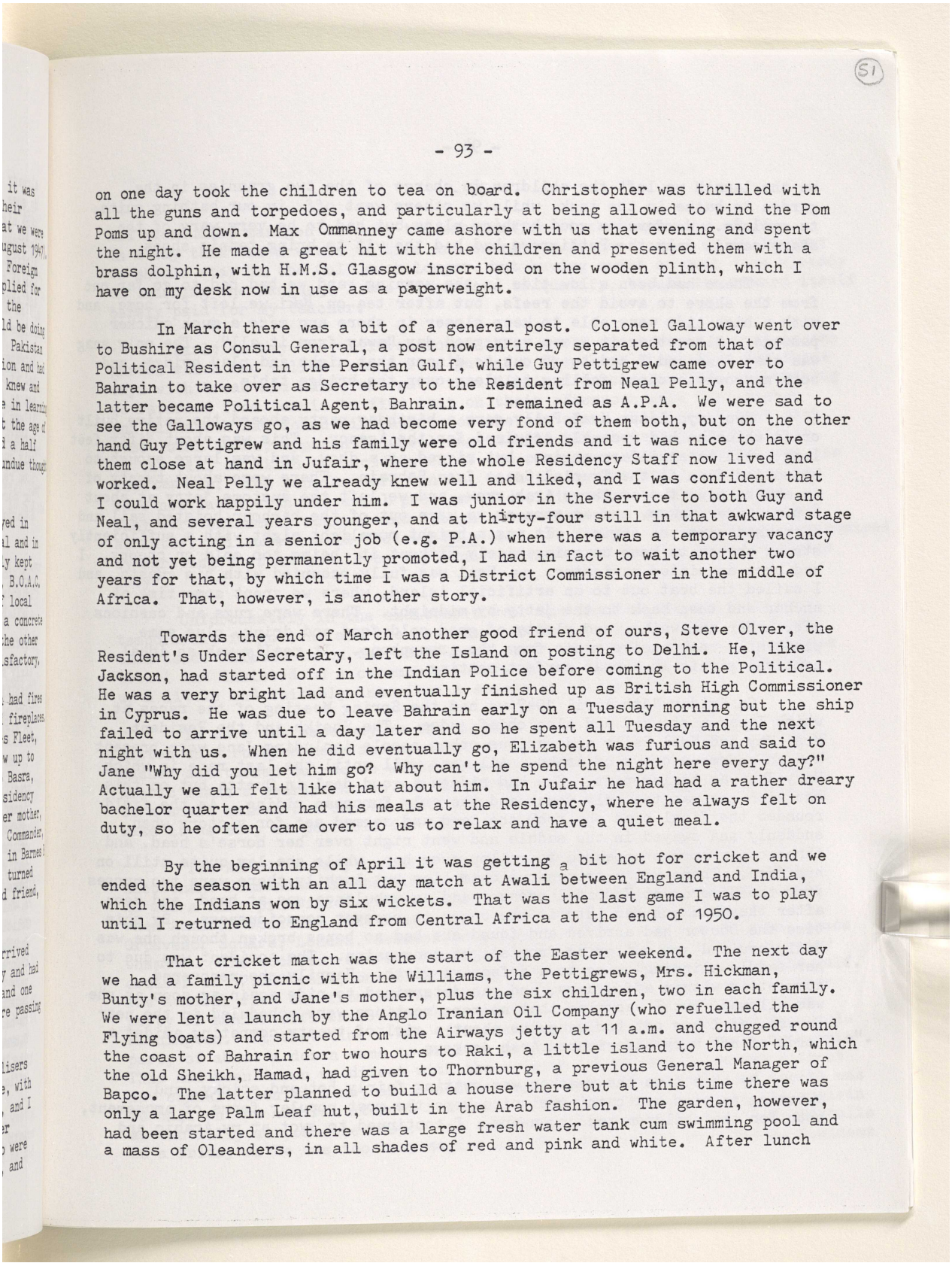
Political Service. Nobody knew, of course, when this would be but it was generally thought at that time that India and Pakistan would get their independence in June 1948. (It was not until some months later that we were suddenly told that the date had been brought forward to the 15th August 1947). There were said to be a limited number of vacancies in the British Foreign Service, the Colonial Service and the Home Civil Service, and I applied for transfer to each of them in that order, but as I knew that most of the European element in the Indian Civil Service and the Political would be doing the same, I realised my chances were, to say the least, uncertain. Pakistan was also keen to retain some British Officers in their Administration and had it not been for the family I think I would have opted for that. I knew and liked the people and the country, and had spent a good deal of time in learning the main languages, and it seemed such a waste to give it all up at the age of thirty-five. However, in January 1947 we thought we had a year and a half still to go, and continued to go about our daily business without undue thought for the future.

During the War and just after not much cricket had been played in Bahrain but in the cold weather of 1946-47 there was a great revival and in January 1947 alone I played in six matches for Manamah and regularly kept wicket. Our opponents included teams from the Navy, Awali (Bapco), B.O.A.C. and a Sind XI. the last named was very strong, composed largely of local Indian shop-keepers and clerks. We played on matting wickets over a concrete base and the ball came off very fast but true. The outfields, on the other hand, were gravel with odd patches of soft sand, and were less satisfactory.

In January - February the weather was quite cool and we even had fires on some days, most unusual in Bahrain. In fact not many houses had fireplaces. On the 10th February H.M.S. Glasgow, the flagship of the East Indies Fleet, arrived with Admiral and Lady Palliser on board. The Pallisers flew up to Basra but Glasgow remained in Bahrain for a week before going on to Basra, and there was the usual round of parties for the officers at the Residency and the Agency, and on one day a number of us, including Jane and her mother, had lunch on board and were shown all over the ship. The Paymaster Commander, Max Ommanney was an old friend and a contemporary of mine at school in Barnes B and he came ashore and spent a day with us. The Engineer Commander turned out to be the brother of John Kitson of the 2nd Gurkhas, another old friend, and he and another officer came to dinner one night.

That same week Colonel and Mrs. Smyth, friends from India, arrived on the B. I. steamer en route for Basra, and came ashore for the day and had lunch and tea with us. Bahrain was, indeed, a great meeting place and one was always glad to entertain visitors from the outside world who were passing through.

Later in the month Glasgow returned from Basra, with the Pallisers on board, and a fresh round of visits and parties ensued. This time, with the Admiral present, we also had official calls to make and receive, and I had to put on undress uniform complete with sword. One of the better occasions was a cocktail party on board, given by the Pallisers, who were charming people. We met them again at the Agency later in the week, and



on one day took the children to tea on board. Christopher was thrilled with all the guns and torpedoes, and particularly at being allowed to wind the Pom Poms up and down. Max Ommanney came ashore with us that evening and spent the night. He made a great hit with the children and presented them with a brass dolphin, with H.M.S. Glasgow inscribed on the wooden plinth, which I have on my desk now in use as a paperweight.

In March there was a bit of a general post. Colonel Galloway went over to Bushire as Consul General, a post now entirely separated from that of Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, while Guy Pettigrew came over to Bahrain to take over as Secretary to the Resident from Neal Pelly, and the latter became Political Agent, Bahrain. I remained as A.P.A. We were sad to see the Galloways go, as we had become very fond of them both, but on the other hand Guy Pettigrew and his family were old friends and it was nice to have them close at hand in Jufair, where the whole Residency Staff now lived and worked. Neal Pelly we already knew well and liked, and I was confident that I could work happily under him. I was junior in the Service to both Guy and Neal, and several years younger, and at thirty-four still in that awkward stage of only acting in a senior job (e.g. P.A.) when there was a temporary vacancy and not yet being permanently promoted, I had in fact to wait another two years for that, by which time I was a District Commissioner in the middle of Africa. That, however, is another story.

Towards the end of March another good friend of ours, Steve Olver, the Resident's Under Secretary, left the Island on posting to Delhi. He, like Jackson, had started off in the Indian Police before coming to the Political. He was a very bright lad and eventually finished up as British High Commissioner in Cyprus. He was due to leave Bahrain early on a Tuesday morning but the ship failed to arrive until a day later and so he spent all Tuesday and the next night with us. When he did eventually go, Elizabeth was furious and said to Jane "Why did you let him go? Why can't he spend the night here every day?" Actually we all felt like that about him. In Jufair he had had a rather dreary bachelor quarter and had his meals at the Residency, where he always felt on duty, so he often came over to us to relax and have a quiet meal.

By the beginning of April it was getting a bit hot for cricket and we ended the season with an all day match at Awali between England and India, which the Indians won by six wickets. That was the last game I was to play until I returned to England from Central Africa at the end of 1950.

That cricket match was the start of the Easter weekend. The next day we had a family picnic with the Williams, the Pettigrews, Mrs. Hickman, Bunty's mother, and Jane's mother, plus the six children, two in each family. We were lent a launch by the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (who refuelled the Flying boats) and started from the Airways jetty at 11 a.m. and chugged round the coast of Bahrain for two hours to Raki, a little island to the North, which the old Sheikh, Hamad, had given to Thornburg, a previous General Manager of Bapco. The latter planned to build a house there but at this time there was only a large Palm Leaf hut, built in the Arab fashion. The garden, however, had been started and there was a large fresh water tank cum swimming pool and a mass of Oleanders, in all shades of red and pink and white. After lunch

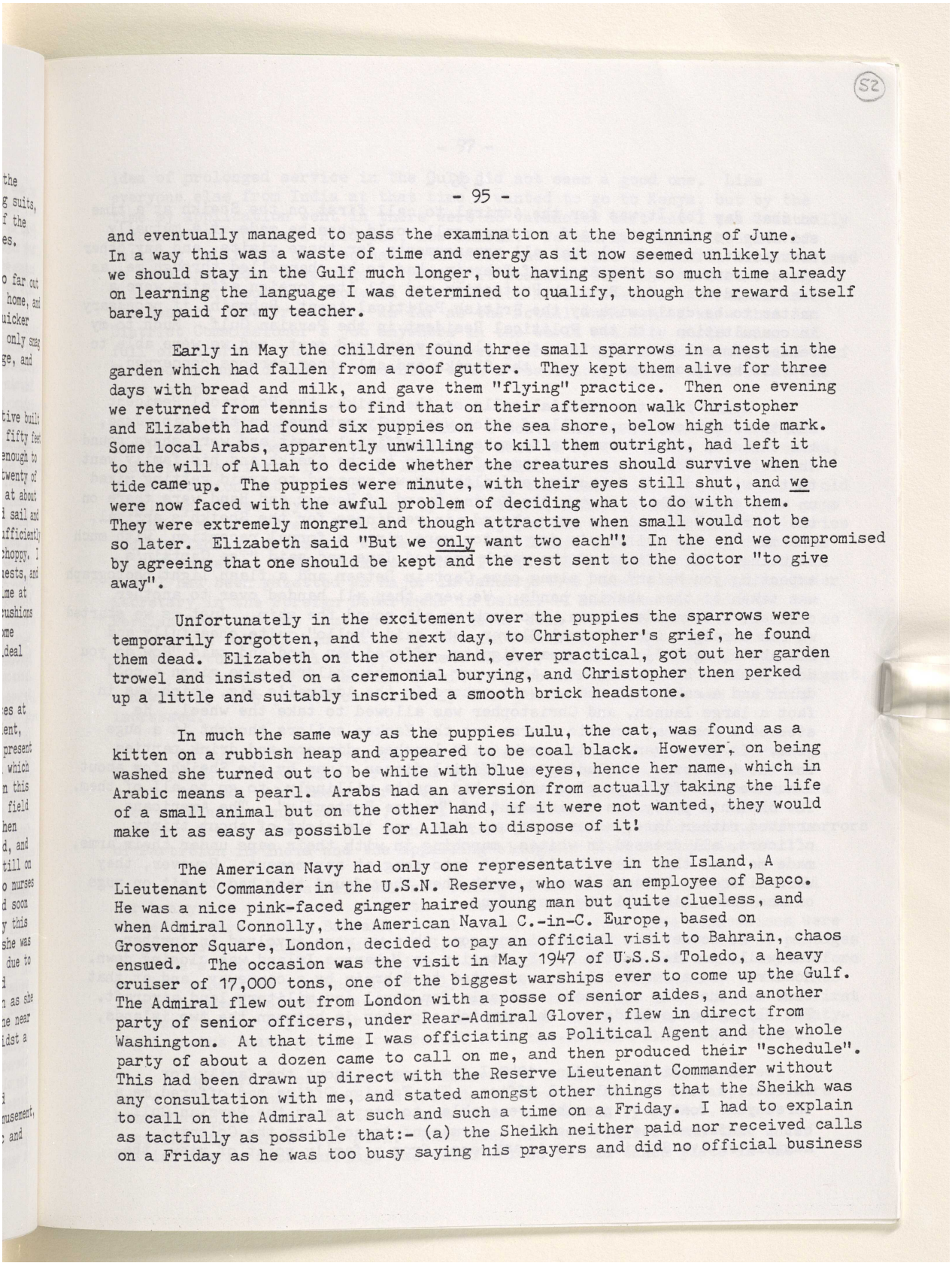
on the launch we left the children in charge of the two grannies in the garden to bathe in the tank, while we others went off, in our bathing suits, to explore. We found a good bathing place but had to be very wary of the sharp coral, only the Pettigrews had had the wit to bring tennis shoes.

There had been a low tide in the morning, and we had had to go far out from the shore to avoid the reefs, but after tea on Raki we left for home, and with a high tide were able to keep closer in shore and made a much quicker passage. Altogether it was a very good day "away from it all". The only snag was that Jane and I had to go out to dinner that night and play bridge, and both narrowly escaped falling to sleep over the bridge table.

Two days later Neal Pelly gave a birthday party aboard the native built craft which he had recently acquired for the Agency. This was about fifty feet long, with an auxiliary engine, but rigged as a dhow, and was large enough to be sailed down to the Trucial Coast from Bahrain. There were about twenty of us aboard plus two or three Arab crew, and we left the customs jetty at about 8 p.m. under power, and as soon as we were out of the harbour hoisted sail and dispensed with the engine. It was a bright moonlight night with a sufficiently strong breeze to keep us going nicely without it being too cold or choppy. I had been appointed navigator, as Neal was fully occupied with his guests, and I sailed the boat out to an artificial island, where we spent some time at anchor and then back to the jetty by midnight. There were rugs and cushions aft, under an awning, and plenty of good cold food and drink, plus some pleasantly unobtrusive music from the gramophone. It really was an ideal nautical picnic in a near perfect setting.

On Friday 11th April 1947 we had the Spring Meeting of the races at which I was a steward and also chief judge. The Sheikh and the Resident, Mrs. Hay and Neal Pelly and various other people including Jane were present and an enormous crowd of Arabs. All went well until the last race in which Mary Hay was taking part. She had ridden a good deal in Quetta but on this occasion she was the only woman and the only European riding. As the field rounded the final bend she took the lead and seemed set for victory when suddenly she swayed in the saddle and went right over her horse's head, and three other horses appeared to gallop over her, while she lay quite still on her face. There was a tremendous commotion but luckily there were two nurses from the Government Hospital present and an ambulance was at hand, and soon after they had got her into it she began to recover consciousness. By this time the Doctor had arrived and found she had no bones broken though she was badly bruised and suffering from slight concussion. The accident was due to her saddle slipping owing to a defective girth. Happily she recovered completely within a few days, and was determined to ride again as soon as she was allowed, but I was glad that no more meetings were scheduled in the near future, as I was not too sanguine about a girl of twenty competing amidst a horde of not very experienced Arab jockeys.

By this time the weather was getting fairly hot and sticky, and swimming parties and bathing picnics were the most popular forms of amusement, both for the children and grown-ups. I continued to swot at my Arabic and



and eventually managed to pass the examination at the beginning of June. In a way this was a waste of time and energy as it now seemed unlikely that we should stay in the Gulf much longer, but having spent so much time already on learning the language I was determined to qualify, though the reward itself barely paid for my teacher.

Early in May the children found three small sparrows in a nest in the garden which had fallen from a roof gutter. They kept them alive for three days with bread and milk, and gave them "flying" practice. Then one evening we returned from tennis to find that on their afternoon walk Christopher and Elizabeth had found six puppies on the sea shore, below high tide mark. Some local Arabs, apparently unwilling to kill them outright, had left it to the will of Allah to decide whether the creatures should survive when the tide came up. The puppies were minute, with their eyes still shut, and we were now faced with the awful problem of deciding what to do with them. They were extremely mongrel and though attractive when small would not be so later. Elizabeth said "But we only want two each"! In the end we compromised by agreeing that one should be kept and the rest sent to the doctor "to give away".

Unfortunately in the excitement over the puppies the sparrows were temporarily forgotten, and the next day, to Christopher's grief, he found them dead. Elizabeth on the other hand, ever practical, got out her garden trowel and insisted on a ceremonial burying, and Christopher then perked up a little and suitably inscribed a smooth brick headstone.

In much the same way as the puppies Lulu, the cat, was found as a kitten on a rubbish heap and appeared to be coal black. However, on being washed she turned out to be white with blue eyes, hence her name, which in Arabic means a pearl. Arabs had an aversion from actually taking the life of a small animal but on the other hand, if it were not wanted, they would make it as easy as possible for Allah to dispose of it!

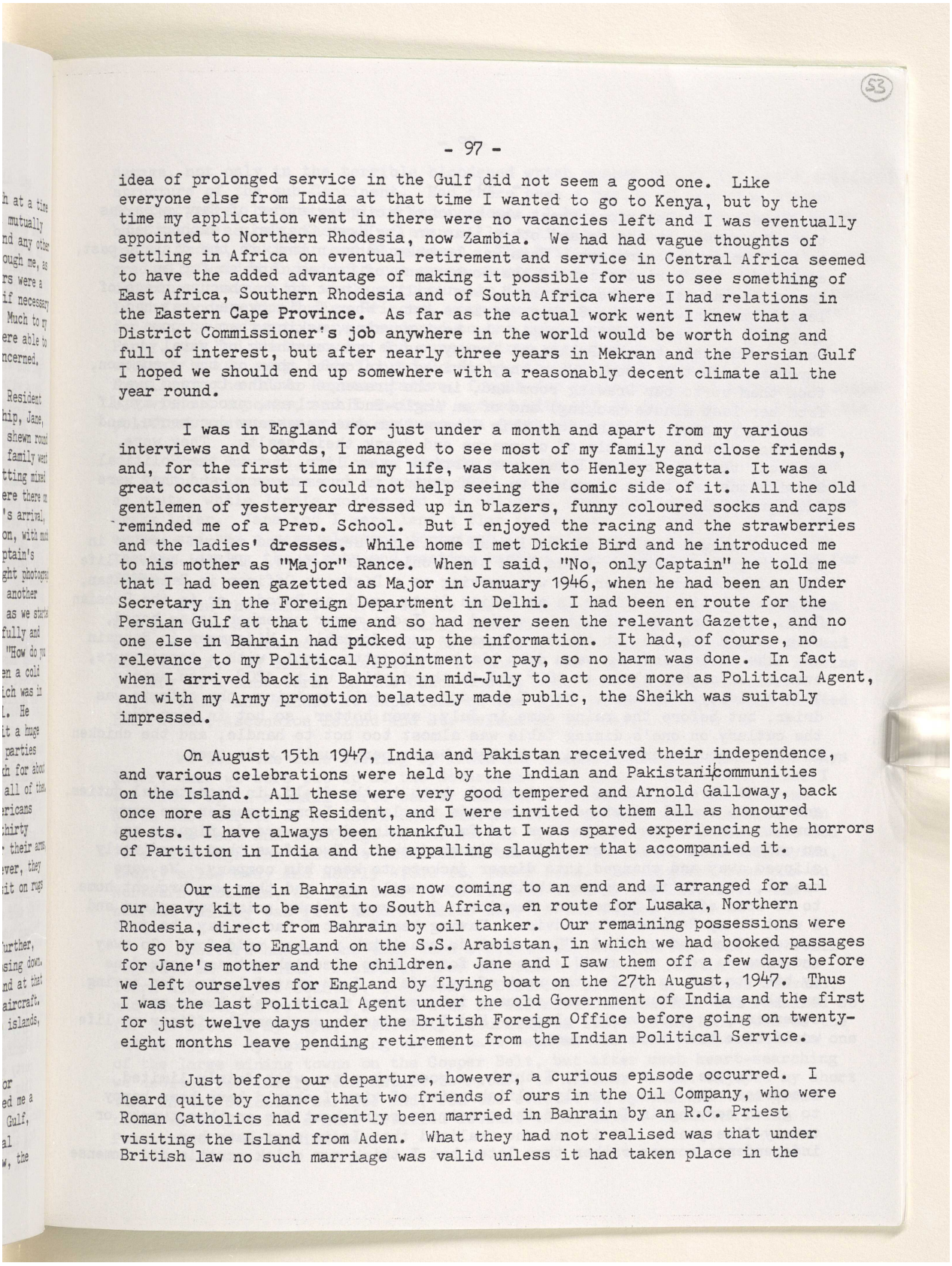
The American Navy had only one representative in the Island, A Lieutenant Commander in the U.S.N. Reserve, who was an employee of Bapco. He was a nice pink-faced ginger haired young man but quite clueless, and when Admiral Connolly, the American Naval C.-in-C. Europe, based on Grosvenor Square, London, decided to pay an official visit to Bahrain, chaos ensued. The occasion was the visit in May 1947 of U.S.S. Toledo, a heavy cruiser of 17,000 tons, one of the biggest warships ever to come up the Gulf. The Admiral flew out from London with a posse of senior aides, and another party of senior officers, under Rear-Admiral Glover, flew in direct from Washington. At that time I was officiating as Political Agent and the whole party of about a dozen came to call on me, and then produced their "schedule". This had been drawn up direct with the Reserve Lieutenant Commander without any consultation with me, and stated amongst other things that the Sheikh was to call on the Admiral at such and such a time on a Friday. I had to explain as tactfully as possible that:- (a) the Sheikh neither paid nor received calls on a Friday as he was too busy saying his prayers and did no official business

on that day (b) It was for the Admiral to call first on the Sheikh at a time suitable to the latter, and a return call would then be made at a mutually convenient time and (c) that all arrangements for these visits, and any other matters concerning the State of Bahrain, had to be channelled through me, as the Island was under British Protection and all its foreign affairs were a matter to be dealt with by the British Political Agent, Bahrain, if necessary in consultation with the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf. Much to my relief Admiral Connolly took this all in very good part, and we were able to redraft his programme to suit the Sheikh and all other persons concerned.

Apart from the official calls on the Sheikh, the Political Resident and the Political Agent, all of which were duly returned on the ship, Jane, the children and I were able to make an unofficial visit and were shewn round the Toledo. This was on the same afternoon as the Sheikh and his family went to tea with Admiral Connolly, and although we managed to avoid getting mixed up with the Sheikh's party, the Marine Guard of Honour and Band were there on the Quarter Deck when we went aboard, in readiness for the Sheikh's arrival, and much to the children's joy we too were given a formal reception, with much saluting. The officer of the watch greeted Jane and said "The Captain's expecting you Ma'am" and along came Captain Detser and a flash light photograph was taken of them shaking hands. We were then all handed over to another officer, a Commander Brown, who took us all round the ship. Just as we started we ran straight into Admiral Glover, who said "Hullo" quite cheerfully and Elizabeth, aged $3\frac{1}{2}$, with great dignity, offered her hand and said "How do you do", much to his amusement. After our tour the children were given a cold drink and a cake each and we went ashore in the Admiral's gig, which was in fact a large launch, and Christopher was allowed to take the wheel. He steered a somewhat erratic course but the Yankee sailors thought it a huge joke. It was a very social week, with lunches, dinners and drink parties for the Americans, including an official dinner given by the Sheikh for about a hundred and fifty people, and we had, quite willingly, to go to all of them. The Sheikh's party was reminiscent of "Madame Butterfly". The Americans arrived rather late, after everyone else, and the sight of about thirty officers, all dressed in whites, marching in with their caps under their arms, made me feel that they should burst into song at any moment. However, they were literally brought down to earth when they found they had to sit on rugs on the floor like all the rest of us.

No sooner had the Americans gone than we were involved in further, farewell, parties as the R.A.F. Station on Moharraq Island was closing down. Moharraq was a small island, connected to Bahrain by a causeway, and at that time was the only aerodrome available for civil and military land aircraft. The flying boats landed on the stretch of water in between the two islands, close to the A.P.A's House.

In the middle of June 1947 I flew home without the family for interviews with the Colonial Office. The Foreign Office had offered me a three year contract, possibly renewable, to stay on in the Persian Gulf, but I preferred the prospect of a permanent transfer to the Colonial Administrative Service, and in any case, from a family point of view, the



idea of prolonged service in the Gulf did not seem a good one. Like everyone else from India at that time I wanted to go to Kenya, but by the time my application went in there were no vacancies left and I was eventually appointed to Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia. We had had vague thoughts of settling in Africa on eventual retirement and service in Central Africa seemed to have the added advantage of making it possible for us to see something of East Africa, Southern Rhodesia and of South Africa where I had relations in the Eastern Cape Province. As far as the actual work went I knew that a District Commissioner's job anywhere in the world would be worth doing and full of interest, but after nearly three years in Mekran and the Persian Gulf I hoped we should end up somewhere with a reasonably decent climate all the year round.

I was in England for just under a month and apart from my various interviews and boards, I managed to see most of my family and close friends, and, for the first time in my life, was taken to Henley Regatta. It was a great occasion but I could not help seeing the comic side of it. All the old gentlemen of yesteryear dressed up in blazers, funny coloured socks and caps reminded me of a Prep. School. But I enjoyed the racing and the strawberries and the ladies' dresses. While home I met Dickie Bird and he introduced me to his mother as "Major" Rance. When I said, "No, only Captain" he told me that I had been gazetted as Major in January 1946, when he had been an Under Secretary in the Foreign Department in Delhi. I had been en route for the Persian Gulf at that time and so had never seen the relevant Gazette, and no one else in Bahrain had picked up the information. It had, of course, no relevance to my Political Appointment or pay, so no harm was done. In fact when I arrived back in Bahrain in mid-July to act once more as Political Agent, and with my Army promotion belatedly made public, the Sheikh was suitably impressed.

On August 15th 1947, India and Pakistan received their independence, and various celebrations were held by the Indian and Pakistani communities on the Island. All these were very good tempered and Arnold Galloway, back once more as Acting Resident, and I were invited to them all as honoured guests. I have always been thankful that I was spared experiencing the horrors of Partition in India and the appalling slaughter that accompanied it.

Our time in Bahrain was now coming to an end and I arranged for all our heavy kit to be sent to South Africa, en route for Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia, direct from Bahrain by oil tanker. Our remaining possessions were to go by sea to England on the S.S. Arabistan, in which we had booked passages for Jane's mother and the children. Jane and I saw them off a few days before we left ourselves for England by flying boat on the 27th August, 1947. Thus I was the last Political Agent under the old Government of India and the first for just twelve days under the British Foreign Office before going on twenty-eight months leave pending retirement from the Indian Political Service.

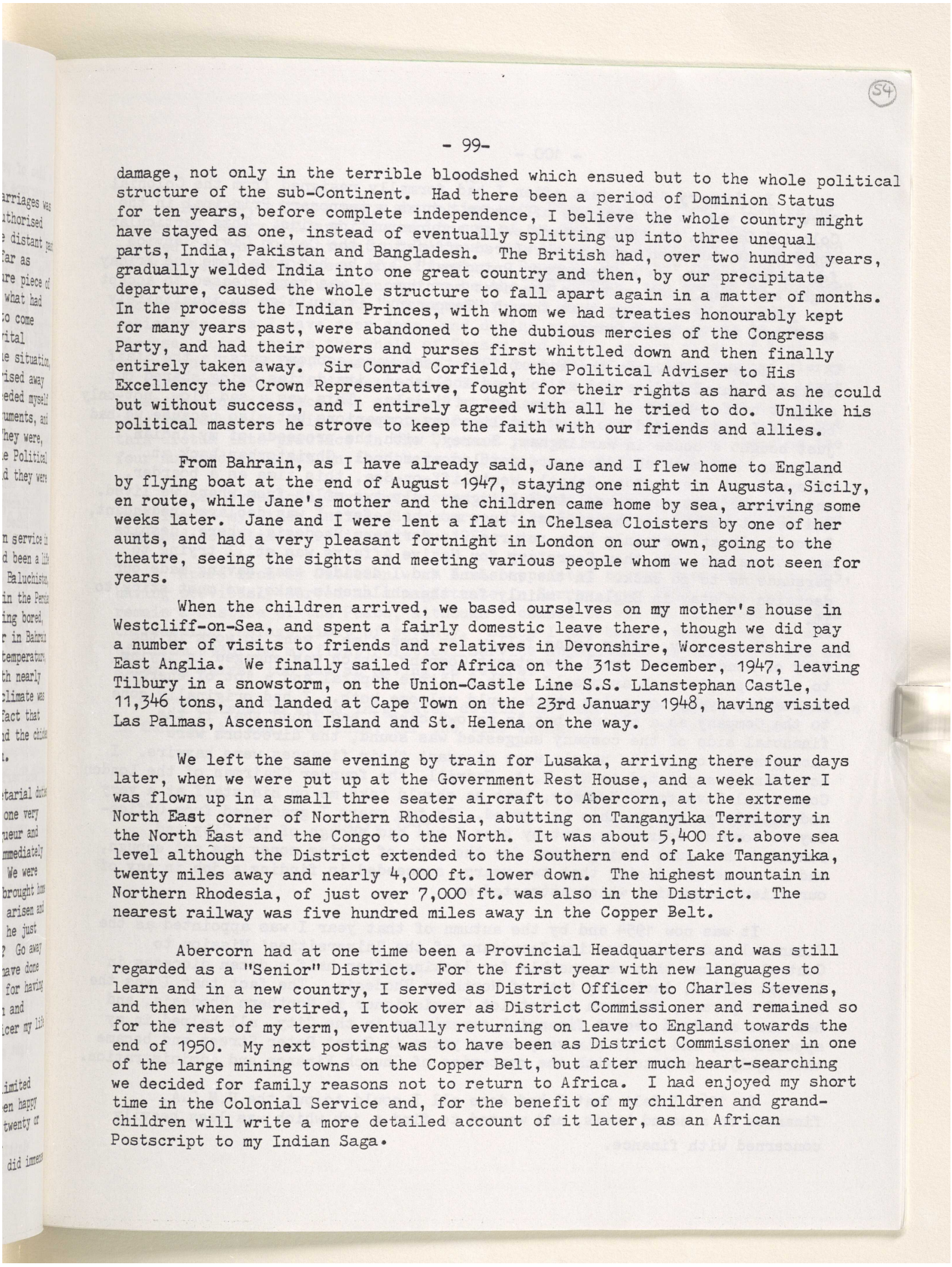
Just before our departure, however, a curious episode occurred. I heard quite by chance that two friends of ours in the Oil Company, who were Roman Catholics had recently been married in Bahrain by an R.C. Priest visiting the Island from Aden. What they had not realised was that under British law no such marriage was valid unless it had taken place in the

presence of the Political Agent who as ex officio Registrar of Marriages was the only person on the Island other than an Anglican Chaplain authorised to perform such a marriage. This was because Bahrain had, in the distant past, come under the jurisdiction of the Government of Bombay, and so far as Christian marriages were concerned, was still subject to an obscure piece of legislation known as the Bombay Marriage Act. When I discovered what had happened, I telephoned the couple the next morning, asking them to come down immediately to the Political Agency, as I had something of vital importance to tell them. When they arrived I informed them of the situation, took them up to our Drawing room and, in the presence of Jane (prised away from her last minute packing) and of an Anglo-Indian clerk, proceeded myself to remarry them.. Having done this I gave them the necessary documents, and we then produced a bottle of champagne and drank their health. They were, in fact, the only couple I had ever married in my life, but in the Political Service one had to be prepared to do anything in an emergency, and they were duly grateful.

I viewed the end of the Indian Political Service and my own service in it with great sadness. I was then still only thirty-five. It had been a life full of interest whether one was serving as a District Officer in Baluchistan, or as a Political Officer in an Indian State, such as Baroda, or in the Persian Gulf. The work was infinitely varied and I can never remember being bored, even though one was, at times, extremely uncomfortable. Midsummer in Bahrain was like living under a warm damp blanket of cotton wool, with a temperature, even at midnight, close to 100° and in the daytime up to 120°, with nearly 100% humidity. In Agra, where I had done my civil training, the climate was drier, but before the rains came in July, even hotter, so hot in fact that the cutlery on one's dining table was almost too hot to handle, and the chicken in the compound went around with their beaks perpetually wide open.

We were, I think, well-trained, both in the field, in Secretarial duties, and in the social niceties. As regards the latter I can remember one very formal occasion when white ties and full evening dress were de rigueur and an unfortunate guest arrived in a dinner jacket. Two of us then immediately slipped away and changed into dinner jackets to keep him company. We were taught, too, to take responsibility at an early age, and this was brought home to me soon after I joined the Service. Some very tricky point had arisen and I went to my Resident for advice. Having heard what I had to say, he just looked at me and snorted, "Boy, What do you think you are paid for? Go away and make up your own mind". I never forgot this admonishment and have done my best to act on it for the rest of my life. I am grateful, too for having had the good fortune to meet so many interesting people, well known and otherwise, in such varied places. Had I remained a regimental officer my life would have been much narrower.

On the whole we did, I think, a good job often with fairly limited resources, and from a purely selfish point of view I should have been happy to go on serving in India and the countries roundabout for another twenty or twenty-five years. As it was one realized that India must have her independence sooner rather than later but I think our quick scuttle did immense



damage, not only in the terrible bloodshed which ensued but to the whole political structure of the sub-Continent. Had there been a period of Dominion Status for ten years, before complete independence, I believe the whole country might have stayed as one, instead of eventually splitting up into three unequal parts, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The British had, over two hundred years, gradually welded India into one great country and then, by our precipitate departure, caused the whole structure to fall apart again in a matter of months. In the process the Indian Princes, with whom we had treaties honourably kept for many years past, were abandoned to the dubious mercies of the Congress Party, and had their powers and purses first whittled down and then finally entirely taken away. Sir Conrad Corfield, the Political Adviser to His Excellency the Crown Representative, fought for their rights as hard as he could but without success, and I entirely agreed with all he tried to do. Unlike his political masters he strove to keep the faith with our friends and allies.

From Bahrain, as I have already said, Jane and I flew home to England by flying boat at the end of August 1947, staying one night in Augusta, Sicily, en route, while Jane's mother and the children came home by sea, arriving some weeks later. Jane and I were lent a flat in Chelsea Cloisters by one of her aunts, and had a very pleasant fortnight in London on our own, going to the theatre, seeing the sights and meeting various people whom we had not seen for years.

When the children arrived, we based ourselves on my mother's house in Westcliff-on-Sea, and spent a fairly domestic leave there, though we did pay a number of visits to friends and relatives in Devonshire, Worcestershire and East Anglia. We finally sailed for Africa on the 31st December, 1947, leaving Tilbury in a snowstorm, on the Union-Castle Line S.S. Llanstephan Castle, 11,346 tons, and landed at Cape Town on the 23rd January 1948, having visited Las Palmas, Ascension Island and St. Helena on the way.

We left the same evening by train for Lusaka, arriving there four days later, when we were put up at the Government Rest House, and a week later I was flown up in a small three seater aircraft to Abercorn, at the extreme North East corner of Northern Rhodesia, abutting on Tanganyika Territory in the North East and the Congo to the North. It was about 5,400 ft. above sea level although the District extended to the Southern end of Lake Tanganyika, twenty miles away and nearly 4,000 ft. lower down. The highest mountain in Northern Rhodesia, of just over 7,000 ft. was also in the District. The nearest railway was five hundred miles away in the Copper Belt.

Abercorn had at one time been a Provincial Headquarters and was still regarded as a "Senior" District. For the first year with new languages to learn and in a new country, I served as District Officer to Charles Stevens, and then when he retired, I took over as District Commissioner and remained so for the rest of my term, eventually returning on leave to England towards the end of 1950. My next posting was to have been as District Commissioner in one of the large mining towns on the Copper Belt, but after much heart-searching we decided for family reasons not to return to Africa. I had enjoyed my short time in the Colonial Service and, for the benefit of my children and grand-children will write a more detailed account of it later, as an African Postscript to my Indian Saga.

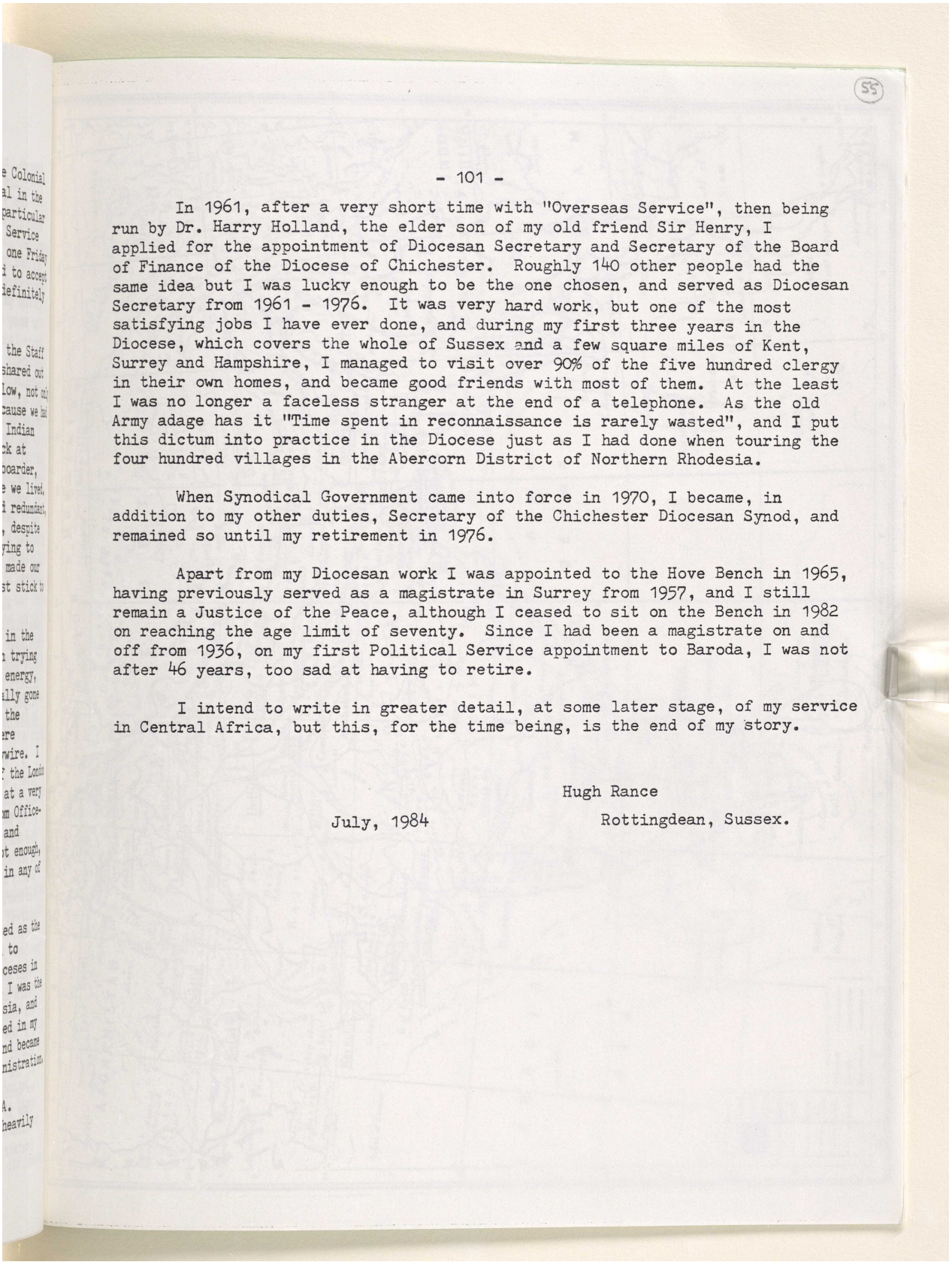
In January 1951, just after I had formally resigned from the Colonial Service, I was to my surprise offered a job as a temporary Principal in the Colonial Office, on their interviewing and recruiting side. This particular appointment had been held by a retired officer of the Ceylon Civil Service for twenty years, as a "temporary Principal", and he had gone home one Friday night and simply not woken up the next morning. I was very pleased to accept the job, rashly assuming that though "Temporary" it would go on indefinitely as it had for my predecessor.

However, towards the end of 1951 there were economy cuts in the Staff of the Colonial Office and my job was abolished, its duties being shared out amongst half-a-dozen of the permanent officials. This was a sad blow, not only because I had enjoyed the work and liked my companions but also because we had just bought a house in Warlingham, Surrey, with the proceeds of my Indian gratuity, and both children were settled at school, Christopher back at Alleyn Court Preparatory School, Westcliff-on-Sea, this time as a boarder, and Elizabeth at day school in Woldingham only two miles from where we lived. Had we not bought the house just three months before I was declared redundant, I would almost certainly have returned to Northern Rhodesia, where, despite my resignation, the then Secretary for Native Affairs was still trying to persuade me to go back. In the end Jane and I decided that having made our decision to stay in England, mainly for the children's sake, we must stick to it.

Eventually, after lying fallow for some time I went to work in the City of London for a small Investment Company, which was engaged in trying to place people such as myself, with a little capital and a lot of energy, in small private companies which would welcome both. I had originally gone to the Company as a client, but in my own case I had found that if the financial side of the company suggested was sound, the directors were uncongenial, or if the people were pleasant their finances were haywire. I accordingly suggested to Mr. R. A. Hadrill, the founder Chairman of the London Commercial Investment Company, that he should take me on his staff at a very modest salary, and to this he agreed. In two years I graduated from Office-boy to Company Secretary, but by then I had had enough of the City and realized that just making money for the sake of making money was not enough, and I had never, during that two years, succeeded in finding a job in any of our client companies which attracted me.

It was now 1954 and by the autumn of that year I was appointed as the Financial and Administrative Secretary of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, then responsible for looking after half a dozen dioceses in Central Africa, including that of Northern Rhodesia. The fact that I was the son of a parson, had been a District Commissioner in Northern Rhodesia, and had also acquired recent financial experience in the City, all helped in my appointment, and I had six very happy years in Great Peter Street and became thoroughly acquainted with the mysteries of Church Finance and Administration.

By 1960 I felt that I had done all I could to put the U.M.C.A. finances on a sound basis, and wanted to find a job which was less heavily concerned with finance.



In 1961, after a very short time with "Overseas Service", then being run by Dr. Harry Holland, the elder son of my old friend Sir Henry, I applied for the appointment of Diocesan Secretary and Secretary of the Board of Finance of the Diocese of Chichester. Roughly 140 other people had the same idea but I was lucky enough to be the one chosen, and served as Diocesan Secretary from 1961 - 1976. It was very hard work, but one of the most satisfying jobs I have ever done, and during my first three years in the Diocese, which covers the whole of Sussex and a few square miles of Kent, Surrey and Hampshire, I managed to visit over 90% of the five hundred clergy in their own homes, and became good friends with most of them. At the least I was no longer a faceless stranger at the end of a telephone. As the old Army adage has it "Time spent in reconnaissance is rarely wasted", and I put this dictum into practice in the Diocese just as I had done when touring the four hundred villages in the Abercorn District of Northern Rhodesia.

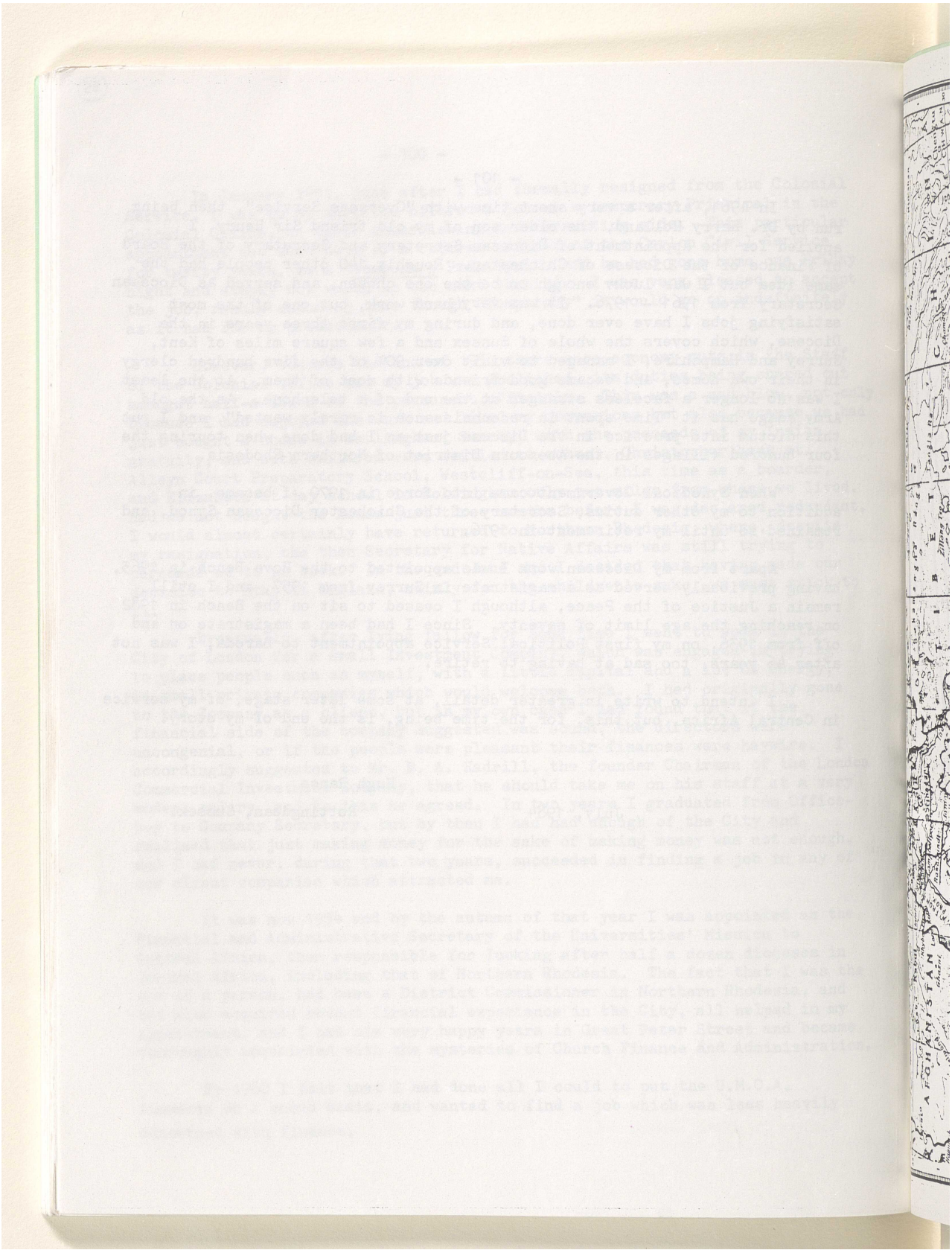
When Synodical Government came into force in 1970, I became, in addition to my other duties, Secretary of the Chichester Diocesan Synod, and remained so until my retirement in 1976.

Apart from my Diocesan work I was appointed to the Hove Bench in 1965, having previously served as a magistrate in Surrey from 1957, and I still remain a Justice of the Peace, although I ceased to sit on the Bench in 1982 on reaching the age limit of seventy. Since I had been a magistrate on and off from 1936, on my first Political Service appointment to Baroda, I was not after 46 years, too sad at having to retire.

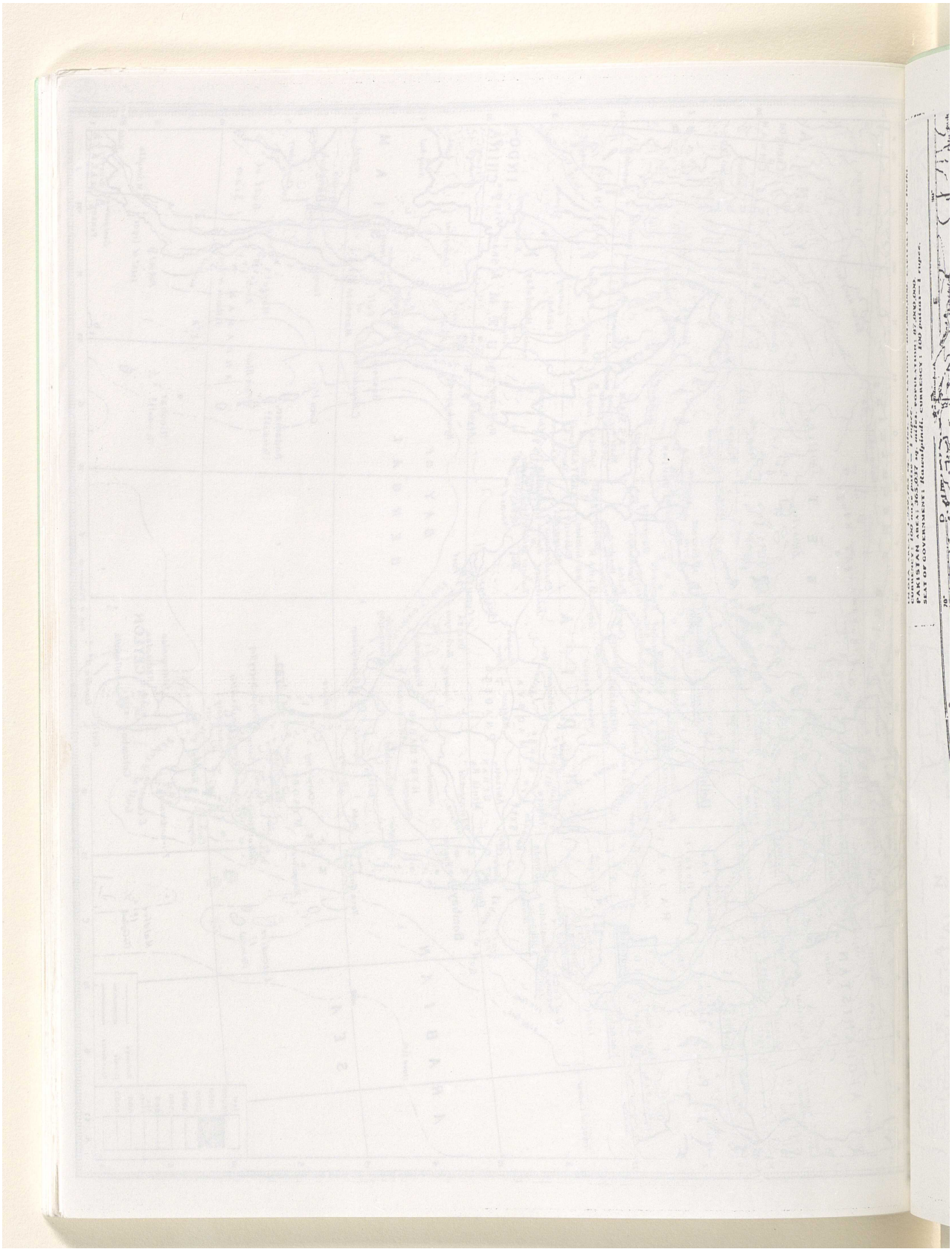
I intend to write in greater detail, at some later stage, of my service in Central Africa, but this, for the time being, is the end of my story.

Hugh Rance

July, 1984 Rottingdean, Sussex.



"حكاية جد: مذكرات معنية في أغلبها بالخدمة في الجيش الهندي والخدمة السياسية الهندية في الهند والخليج الفارسي في الفترة ١٩٣٢-١٩٤٧" [٥٦و] (١١٨/١١١)



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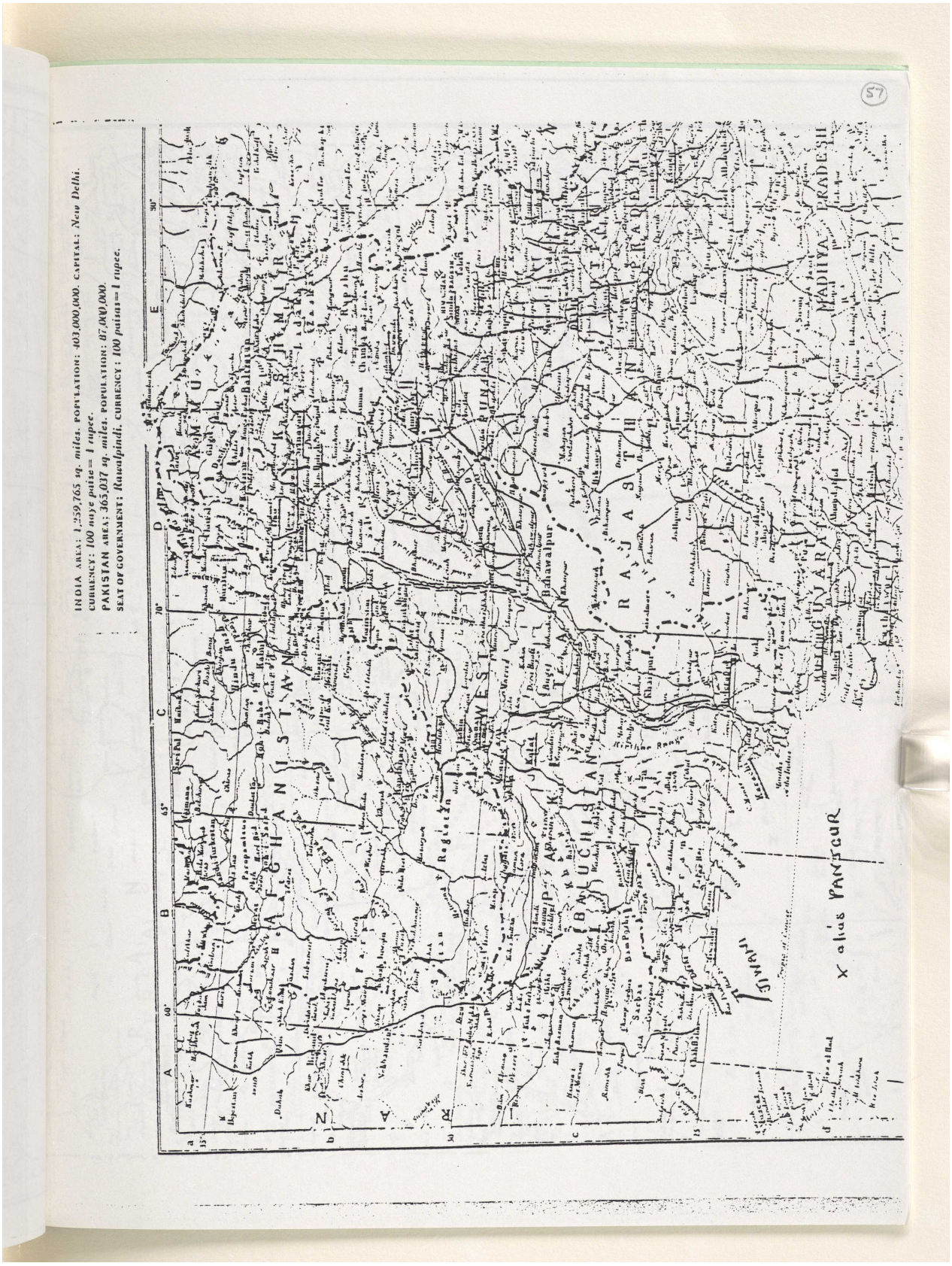

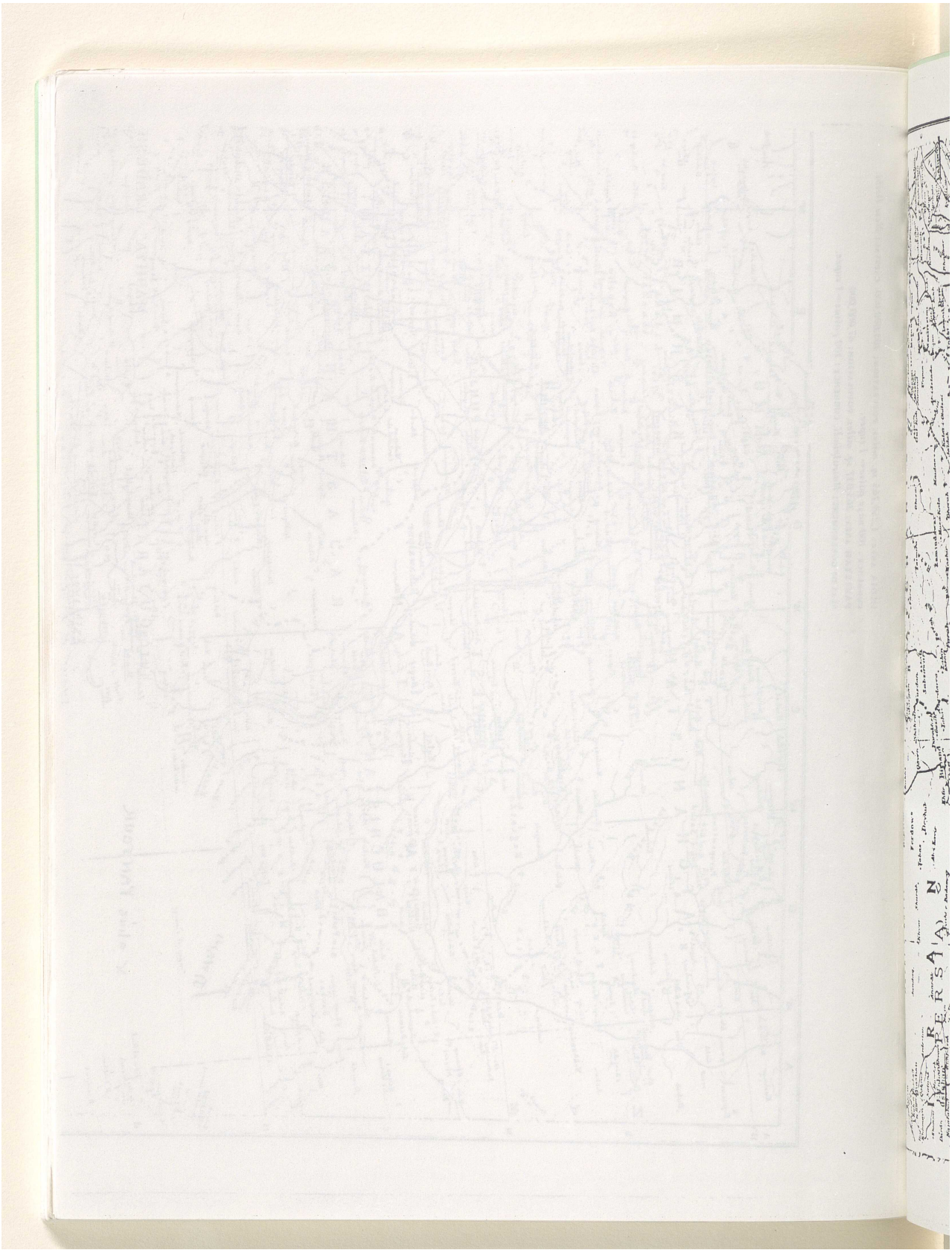

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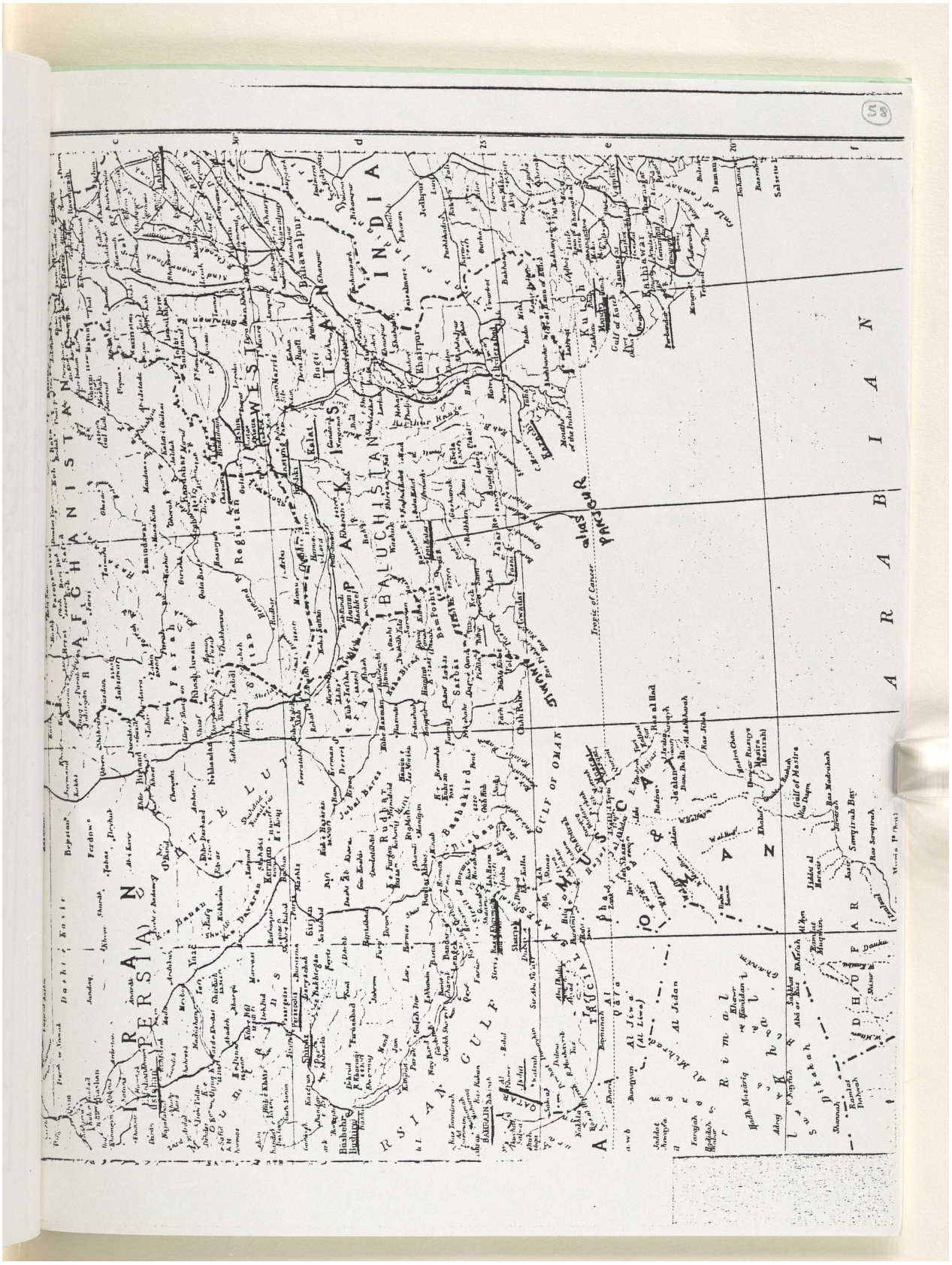

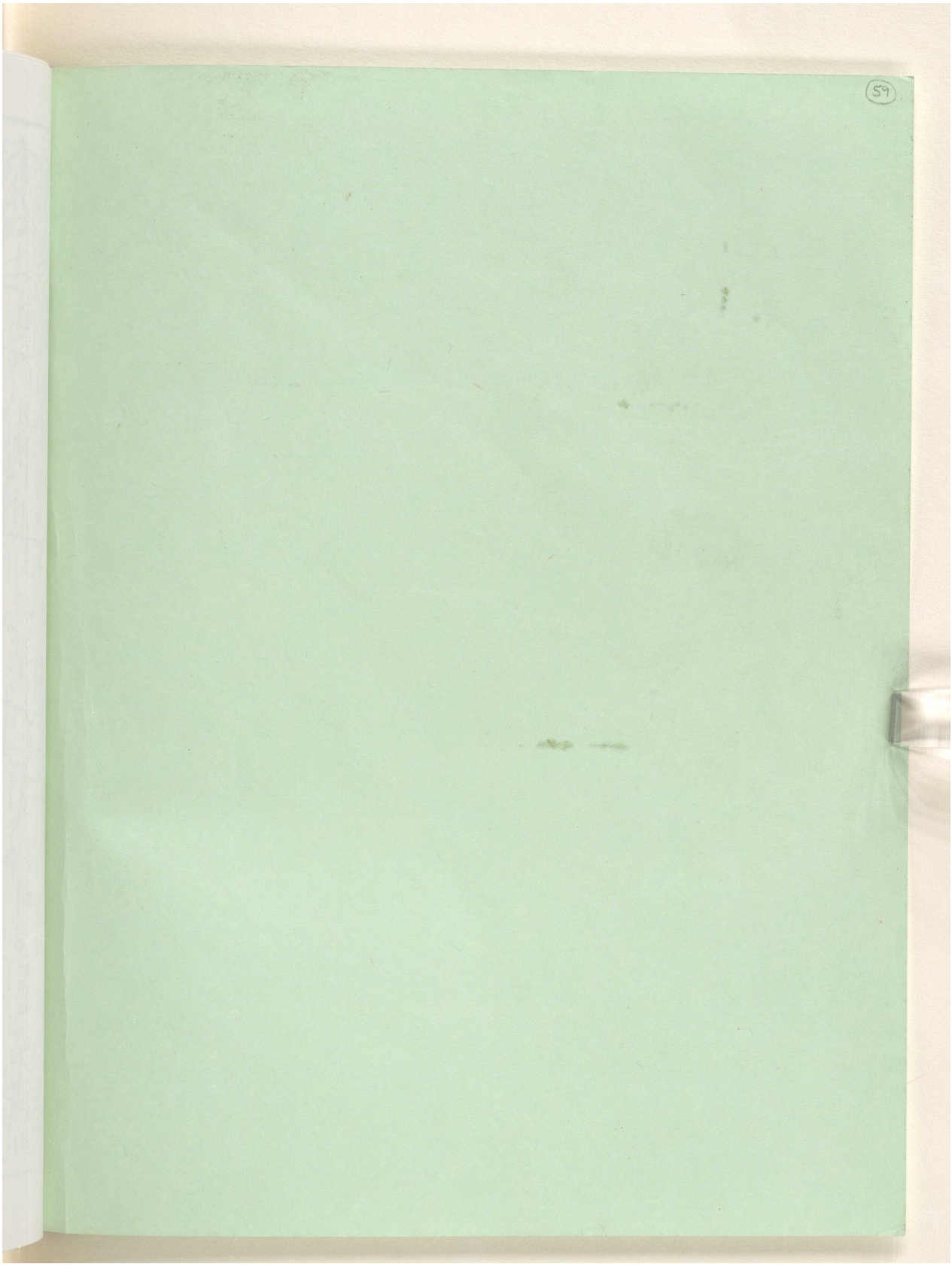

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