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**'SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS AND MEASURES OF THE
VICEROYALTY OF HIS EXCELLENCY LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON
VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA. PART I - The Persian Gulf.'**

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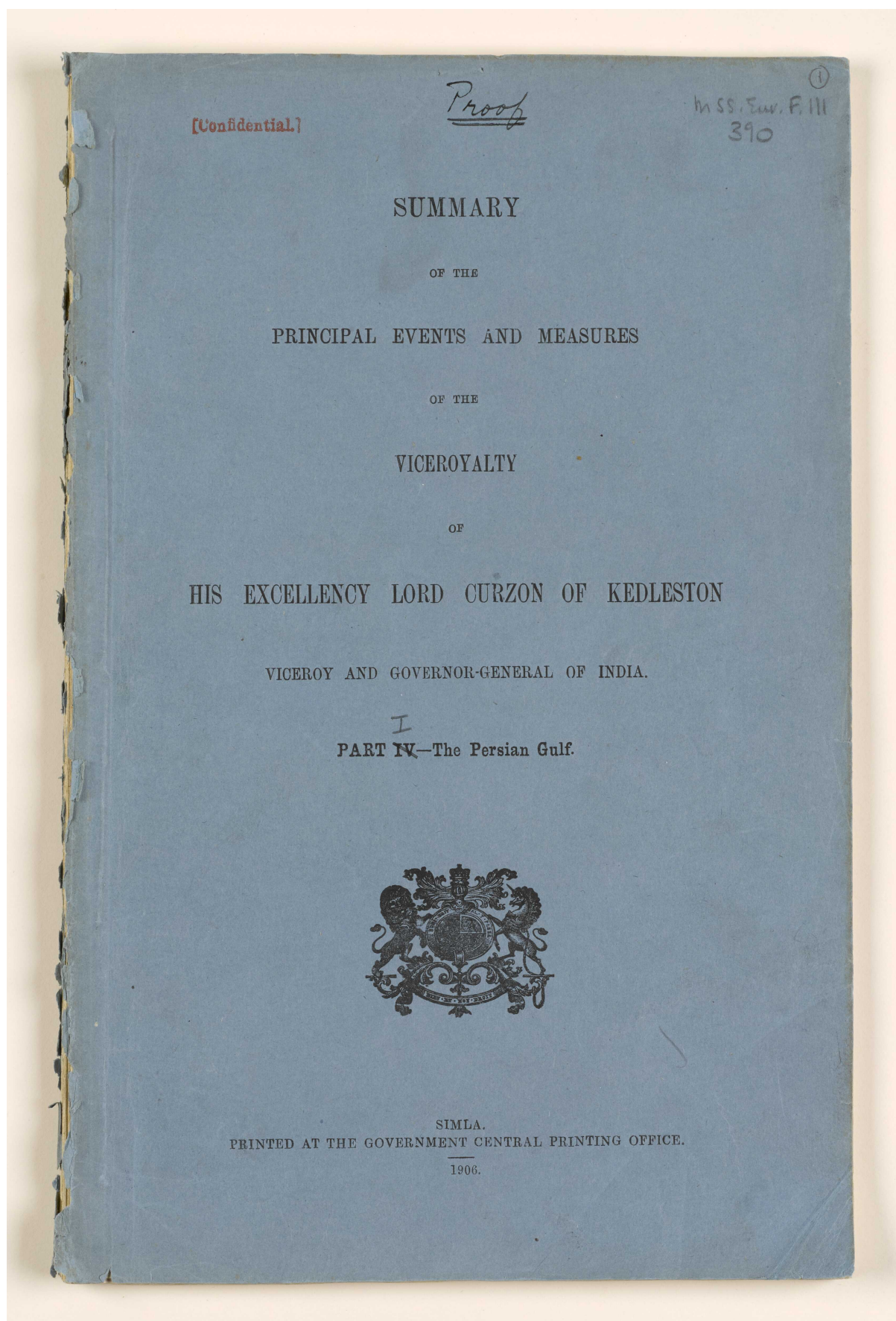


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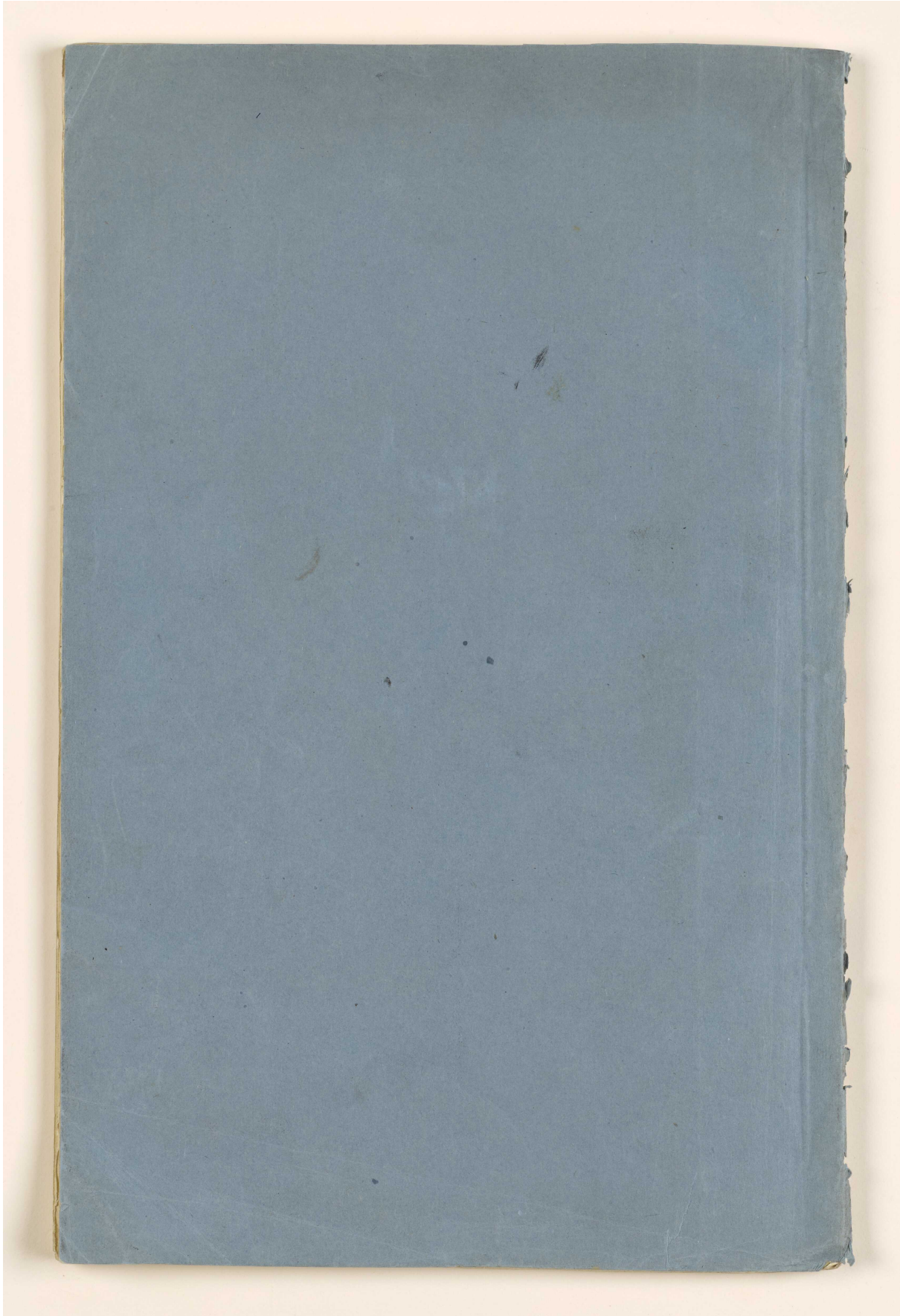
Inscribed 'Proof' on the front cover. The title on the front cover and on the title page on folio 2 has been amended: 'Part IV - The Persian Gulf.' has been corrected to 'Part I - The Persian Gulf.'. Printed at the Government Central Printing Office, Simla.

The volume summarises the main issues concerning the Persian Gulf region (including Persia) during Curzon's period as Viceroy. The volume covers: the Persian Gulf question (i.e. the increasing rivalry of other European powers, notably Russia, to the United Kingdom's position as the dominant power in the region); the activities of Russia, France, Germany and Belgium; British naval strategy; Britain's political and administrative organisation; trade and commerce; communications; pearl fisheries; the arms trade; a survey of political events in the various territories of the Gulf; and the impact on the Gulf of Curzon's period in office as a whole.

'SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS AND MEASURES OF THE VICEROYALTY OF HIS
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I - The Persian Gulf.' [front] (1/92)



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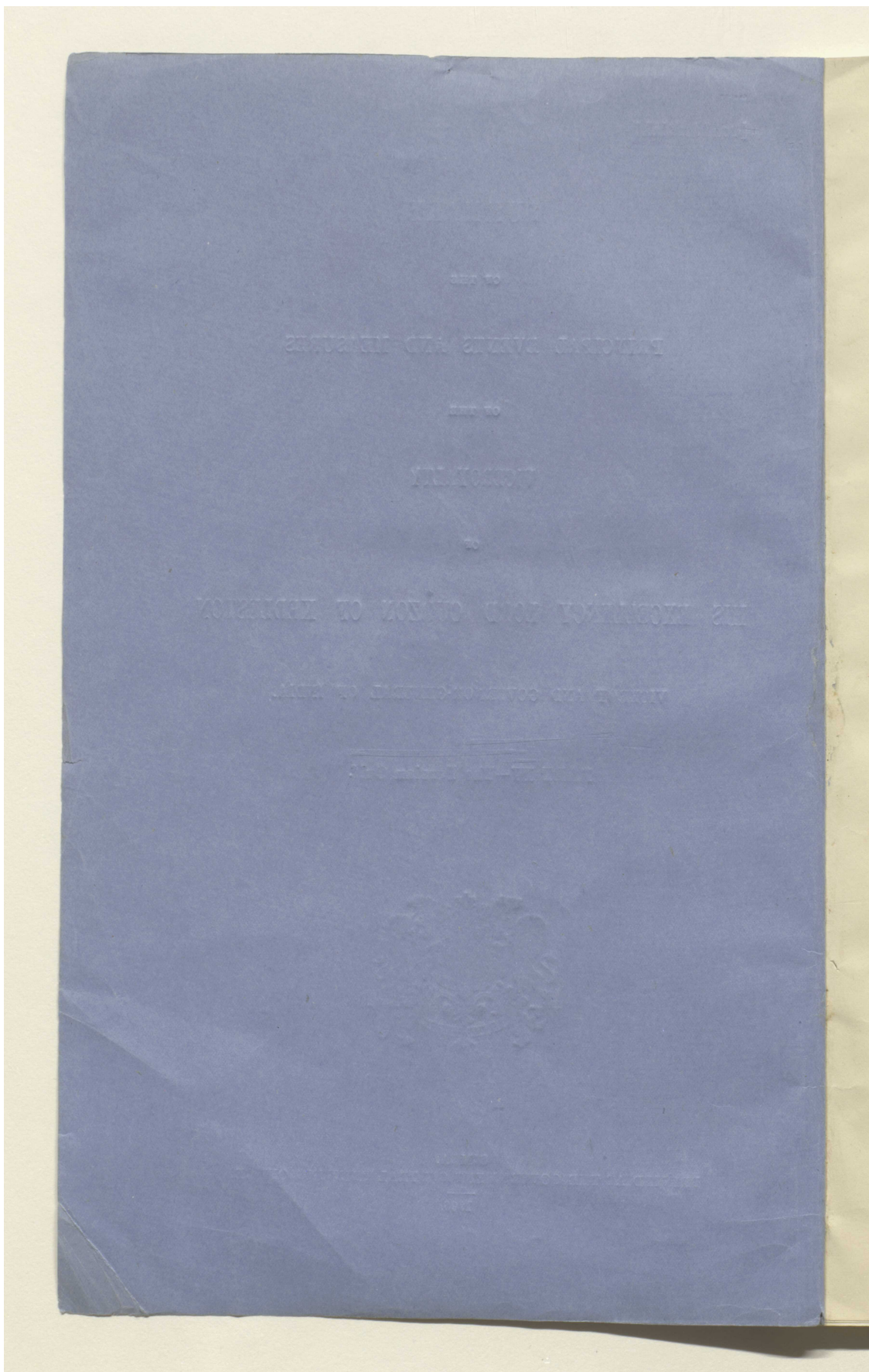
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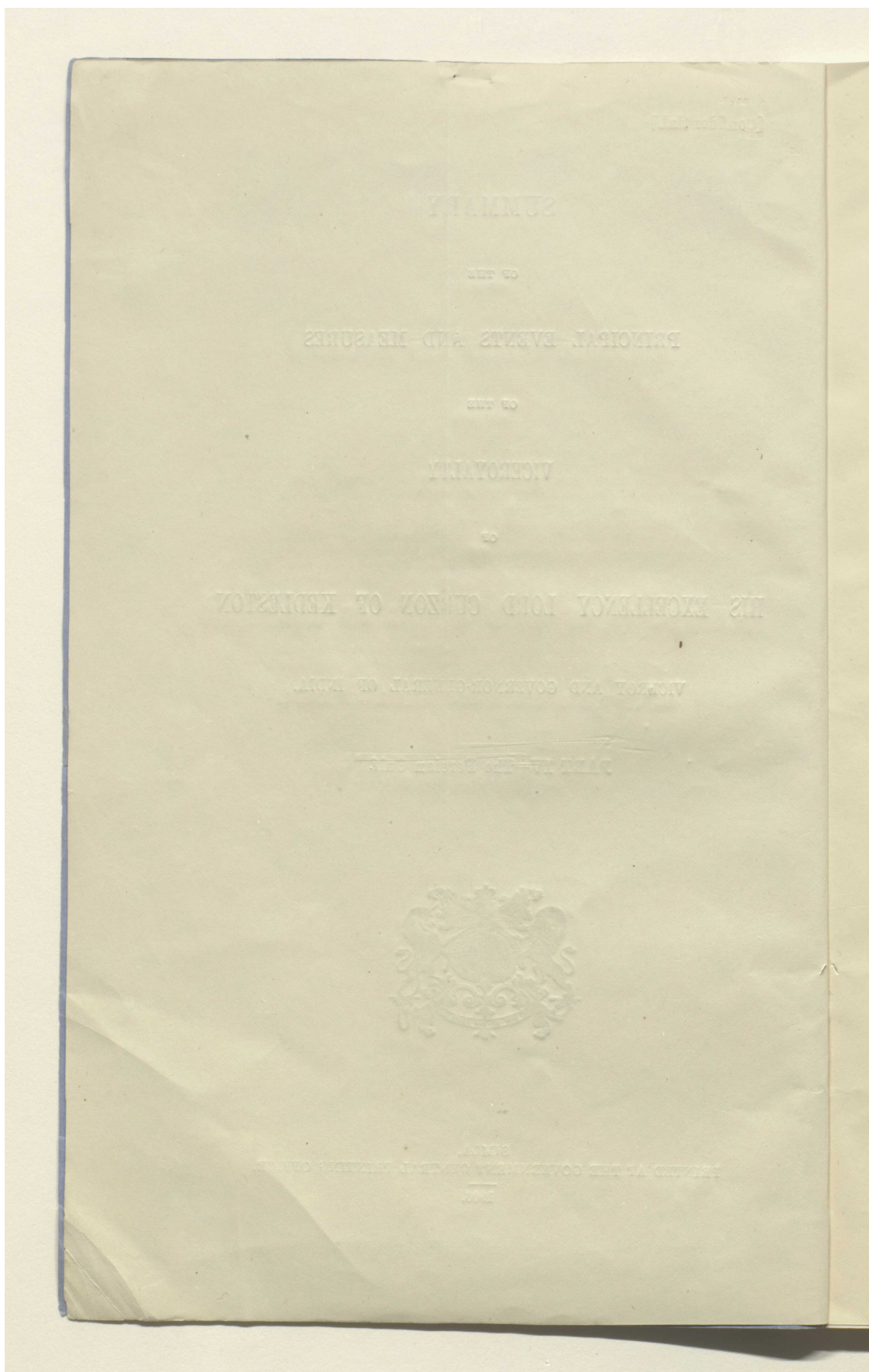
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SUMMARY
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I
PART ~~IV~~—The Persian Gulf.



SIMLA.
PRINTED AT THE GOVERNMENT CENTRAL PRINTING OFFICE.
1906.

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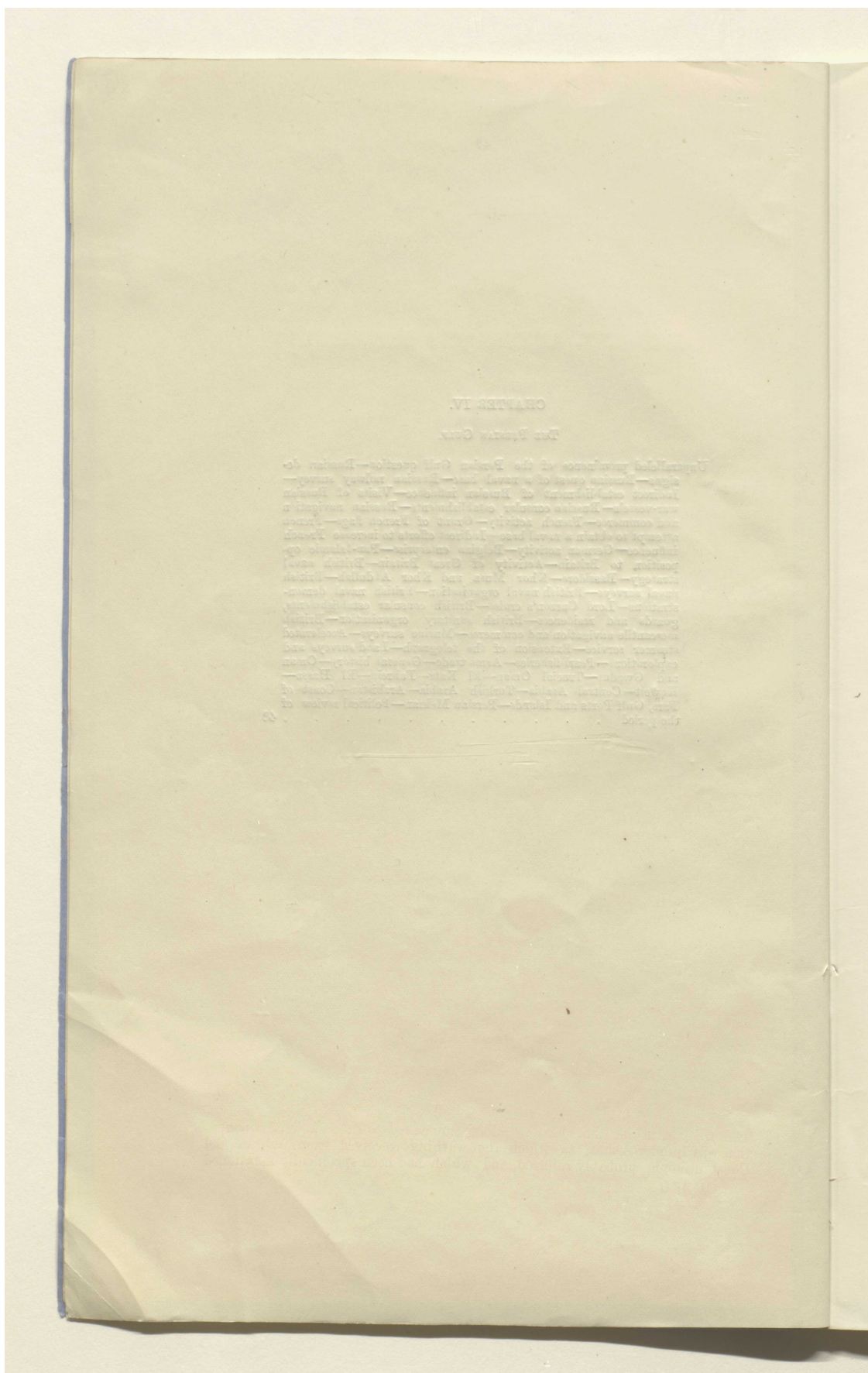
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CHAPTER IV.

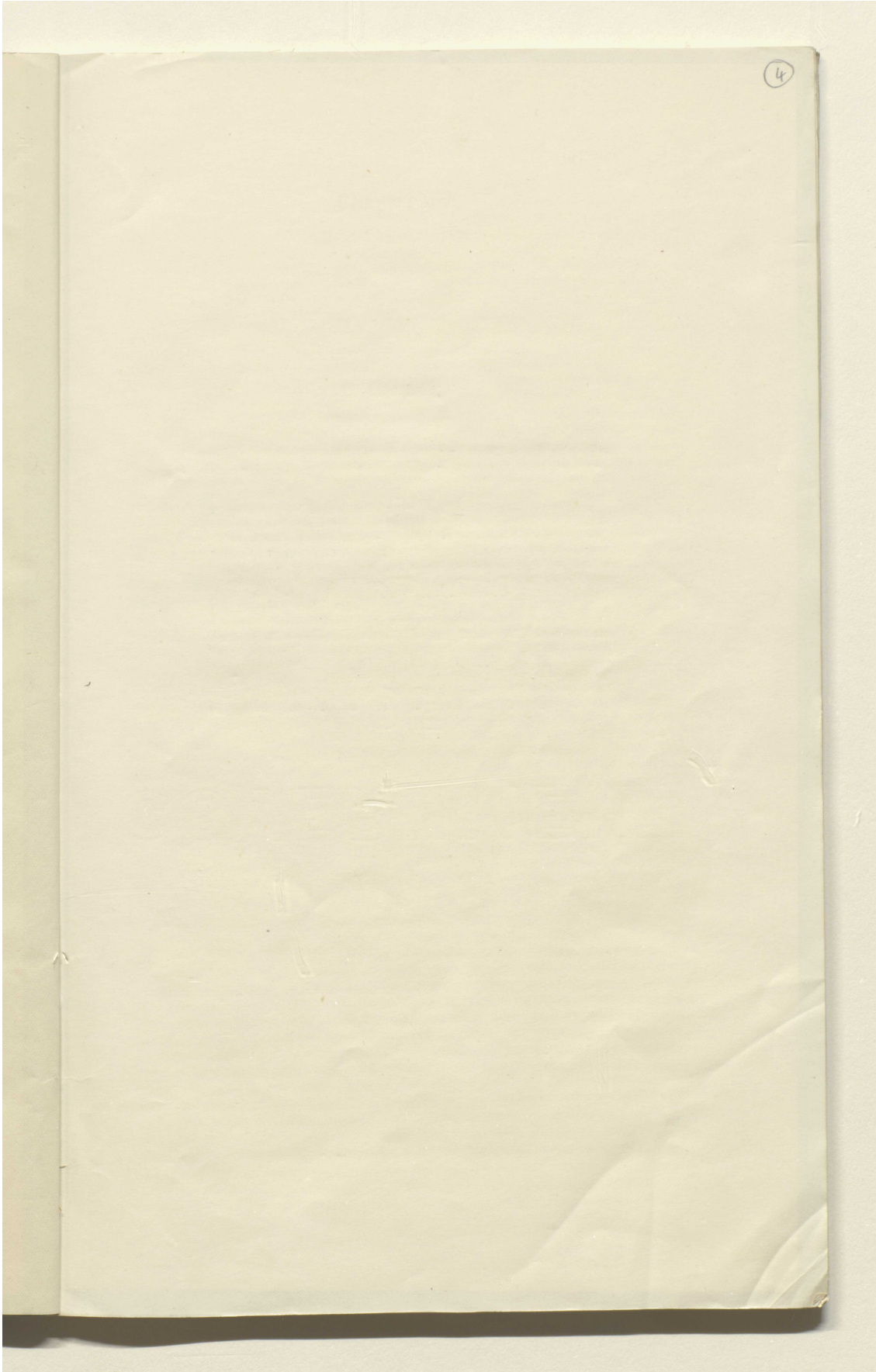
THE PERSIAN GULF.

Unparalleled prominence of the Persian Gulf question—Russian designs—Russian quest of a naval base—Russian railway survey—Indirect establishment of Russian influence—Visits of Russian war-vessels—Russian consular establishments—Russian navigation and commerce—French activity—Grant of French flag—French attempt to obtain a naval base—Indirect efforts to increase French influence—German activity—Belgian enterprise—Pan-Islamic opposition to Britain—Activity of Great Britain—British naval strategy—Bassidore—Khor Musa and Khor Aldullah—British naval surveys—British naval organisation—British naval demonstrations—Lord Curzon's cruise—British consular establishments, guards and residences—British sanitary organisation—British mercantile navigation and commerce—Marine surveys—Accelerated steamer service—Extension of the telegraph—Land surveys and explorations—Pearl fisheries—Arms trade—General history—Oman and Gwadar—Trucial Oman—El Katr—Bahrein—El Hassa—Koweit—Central Arabia—Turkish Arabia—Arabistan—Coast of Fars, Gulf Ports and Islands—Persian Mekran—Political review of the period 42

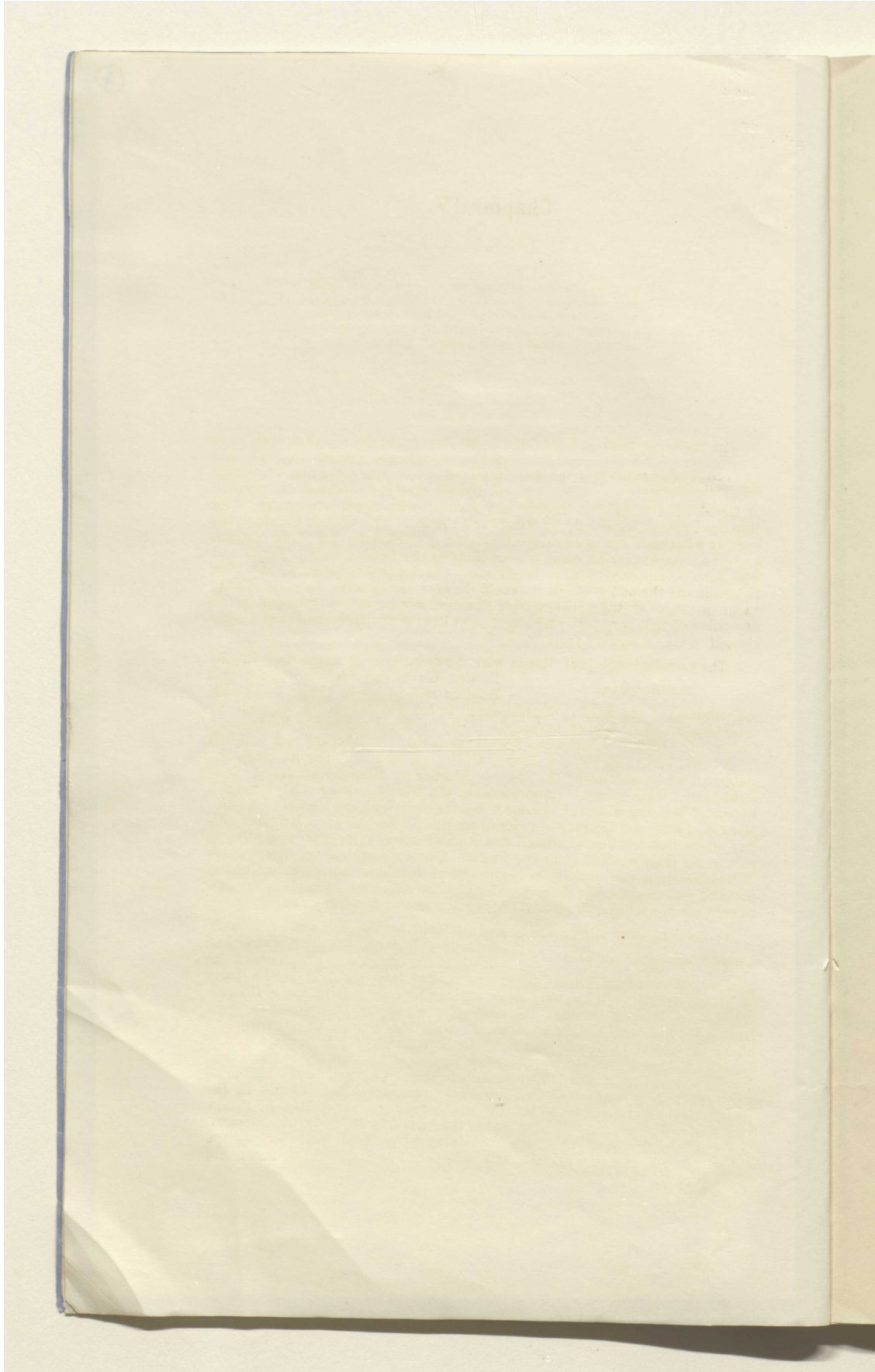
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Chapter IV.

THE PERSIAN GULF.

"I should regard the concession of a port upon the Persian Gulf to Russia by any power as a deliberate insult to Great Britain, as a wanton rupture of the *status quo*, and as an intentional provocation to war; and I should impeach the British minister, who was guilty of acquiescing in such a surrender, as a traitor to his country."

—Extract from Lord Curzon's
"Persia and the Persian
Question", Volume II,
page 465.

In the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon the question of the Persian Gulf rose to a prominence greater than it had attained at any time since the beginning of British rule in India, and the position of Great Britain in that region was assailed with much energy by other European powers, especially by Russia and France. The chance by which the conflict was timed was in one respect singularly fortunate, for Lord Curzon had at an earlier period made a close study of the Persian Gulf problem and was deeply impressed with its importance. Several years before he had even foreshadowed the policy which it would behove the British Government to adopt in case of the appearance of European rivalry in the Gulf, and in the execution of that very policy he was now, as head of the Government of India, himself to take a leading part.

The principal objects of Russia were the creation of a naval base in the Persian Gulf, and the construction of a Russian railway across Persia by which the resources of the Russian Empire could be brought to bear for its support; these objects she set herself to compass partly by direct and partly by indirect means. In 1899 it was reported from Tehran that the Russians had acquired from Persia certain rights in a Persian Gulf port, and two months later the statement was confirmed by the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs at Constantinople, while almost simultaneously the St. Petersburg "Viedomosti" advocated the acquisition of Bunder Abbas together with the islands of Kishm, Henjam, Larak and Hormuz in order to provide a terminus for a Russian railway across Persia. The existence of a Russo-Persian agreement regarding a port in the Gulf was denied by the Persian Government, but the proceedings of Russian ships and railway surveyors soon furnished corroboration of the prevailing rumours. We shall consider first the direct means used by Russia to promote her schemes for a naval base and a strategic railway.

The attention of Russia was at first attracted by the harbour of Koweit. In 1898 a Russian, Count Kapnist, had obtained from the Porte a concession for a railway to run from Tripoli in Syria to Koweit, and early in 1899 a party of Russo-Armenian spies were set at work in Koweit by the Russian Consul-General in Turkish Arabia; the designs of Russia in this direction were frustrated, however, by an engagement with the British Government into which the Shaikh of Koweit entered at the beginning of 1899 and by which he bound himself not to alienate any portion of his territory to foreigners. Koweit was visited by Russian war-vessels in 1900, 1902 and 1903; but from 1899 onwards it was clear that Russia had abandoned her interest in the place in favour of schemes better adapted to promote her policy in Persia. The first point on the Persian side threatened with a Russian occupation was Bunder Abbas, to which the warnings received from Tehran and Constantinople probably referred, and which had been specifically mentioned

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by the "Viedomosti." Here an attempt was made in February 1900 to establish a Russian coal depôt on shore by the landing of an artificially arranged surplus of coal from the Russian gun-boat "Gilyak"; the Persian Deputy Governor, however, encouraged possibly by the presence of H. M. S. "Pomone" which had been sent to shadow the "Gilyak", refused to permit the operation. The coal was accordingly transferred to native boats and was afterwards deposited in a Persian Government building where it has since remained. Subsequently to this incident visits were paid to Bunder Abbas by various Russian officials, but direct action was not again attempted. There is reason to think that after 1900 the eye of Russia was fixed not on Bunder Abbas but on Chahbar, a port of Persian Mekran, which was the principal objective of a Russian railway survey of Southern Persia carried out in 1900. Though Koweit, Bunder Abbas and Chahbar were each in succession the pivot of Russian policy in the Gulf, some interest was also shown by Russian officials and travellers in Persian Arabistan, Oman, Bahrein and even Central Arabia; but it does not appear that the designs of Russia in those countries were serious, unless possibly in Arabistan where it is believed that strong efforts were made by the Russians in 1900-02 to obtain control of the Mohammedrah customs.

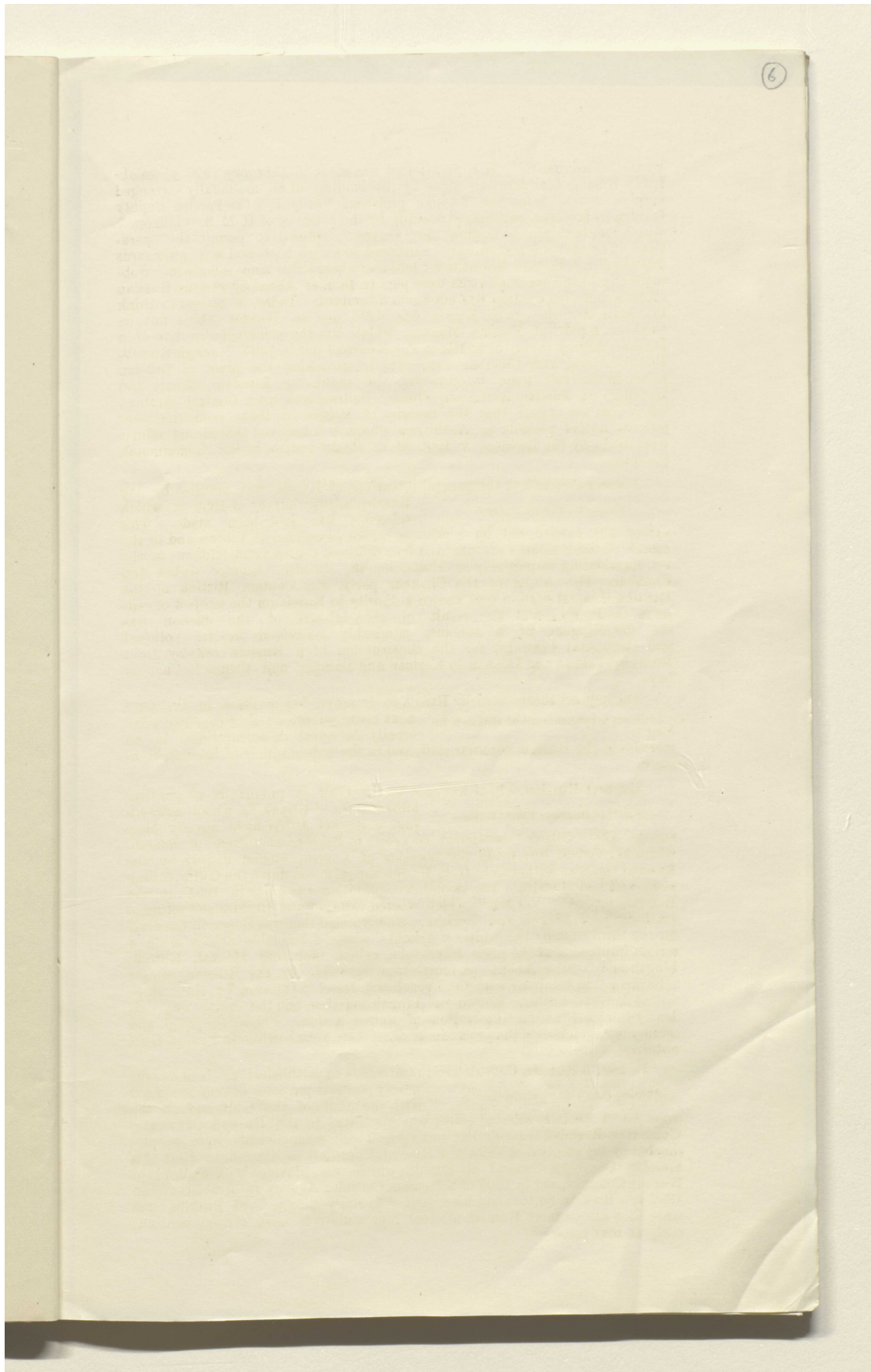
Clearer evidence of the general intentions of Russia was afforded by the Russian railway survey of 1900 to which reference has just been made. This survey was carried out by a mission which assembled at Tehran and in the course of three months reconnoitred four different routes from Isfahan to the sea, terminating respectively at Mohammedrah, Bushire, Bunder Abbas and Chahbar. The leader of the Chahbar party was Captain Rittich of the Russian General Staff, a well known authority in Russia on the subject of railways in Persia; and the result of the labours of the mission was the development of a scheme, admirably conceived in its political and strategical bearings, for the construction of a Russian railway from Resht by Tehran and Isfahan to Kerman and Bampur and thence to Chahbar bay.

The indirect means used by Russia to improve her position in the Gulf next claim attention; they consisted principally in naval demonstrations, in an increase of the Russian consular staff, and in the subsidisation of Russian commerce.

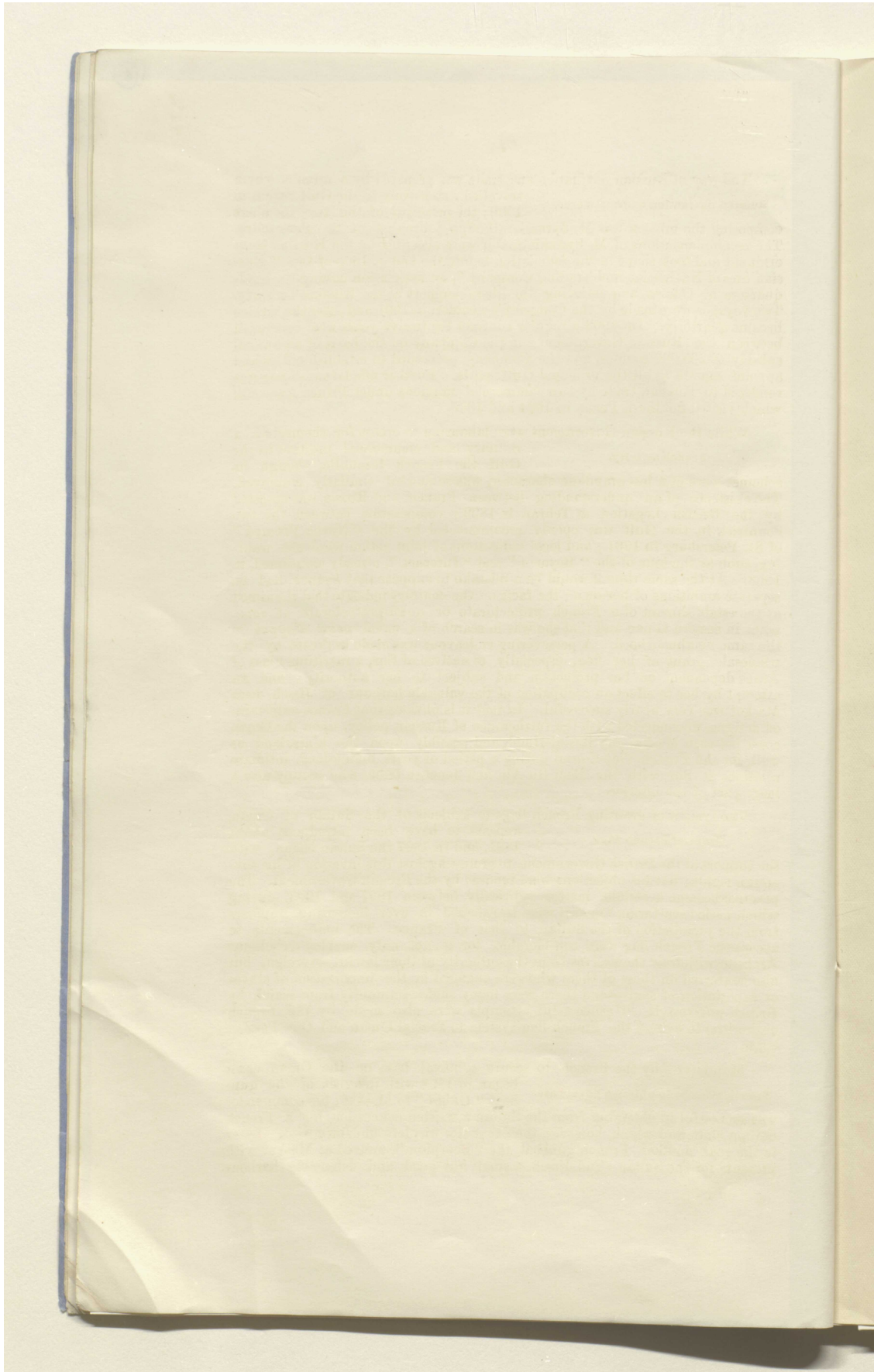
The first Russian ship of war sent to the Gulf in pursuance of political aims was the "Gilyak", whose proceedings at Bunder Abbas have already been noted. The "Gilyak" continued her cruise to Bushire and thence to Basrah, where her arrival was made the occasion of a great official display by the Russian consular authorities; from Basrah she returned down the Gulf, calling at Koweit and Bushire. The second demonstration was made in 1901 by the Russian cruiser "Varyag" which visited Maskat and Bushire and returned southwards by Lingah and Bushire. The Russian flag was shown in the Gulf for the third time by the cruiser "Askold" whose formidable aspect made a serious impression at the ports where she called, including Maskat, Koweit, Lingah and Bunder Abbas. A fourth tour was made by the Russian cruiser "Boyarin" in company with the French war vessel "Infernet"; these ships visited Maskat, Bushire, Koweit and Lingah together, and the cruise was evidently intended as an illustration of united action. Excessive pomp and ceremony characterised the proceedings of all these vessels while in Persian Gulf waters.

In 1897 a Russian Consulate-General had been established at Isfahan for purely political purposes not unconnected with the affairs of the Gulf, and in the same year a specially selected officer was appointed to the Russian Consulate-General at Baghdad from similar motives. These arrangements were supplemented by the creation in 1899 of a Russian Consulate at Basrah, in 1901 of a Russian Consulate-General at Bushire which was provided with a guard of Russian Cossacks, and in 1902 of a Russian Consular Agency in Arabistan. In 1897 two Russian doctors had been sent "to study plague" at Bushire, and since then one or more Russian medical representatives have resided continuously at that place.

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The way of Russian navigation and trade was prepared by a mission which travelled extensively in the Gulf region in 1900; the principal of the two members composing the mission was M. Syromiatnikoff, a journalist of St. Petersburg. The recommendations of M. Syromiatnikoff were accepted by the Russian Government and took shape in the foundation before the end of 1900 of the "Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company", an association having its headquarters at Odessa and enjoying the liberal support of the Russian Treasury. Two voyages were made by the Company's steamers in 1901 and later the service became quarterly. In 1903 a regular contract for twelve years was concluded between the Russian Government and the Company on the basis of an annual subsidy of 200,000 roubles, and the Company proceeded to establish offices and appoint agents at all the principal Gulf ports. Further official assistance was rendered to Russian trade by two commercial missions under Prince Anatouni which visited Southern Persia in 1904 and 1905.

While the Russian Government were labouring to create for themselves a military and commercial position in the Gulf the French Republic, though its schemes were of a less grandiose character, was somewhat similarly employed. The existence of an understanding between France and Russia was detected by the British Legation at Tehran in 1899; co-operation between the two countries in the Gulf was openly recommended by the "Novoe Vremya" of St. Petersburg in 1901; and local indications of joint action were not wanting, such as the tour of the "Boyarin" and "Infernet", already mentioned, in 1903. At the same time it would be a mistake to suppose that France had no separate ambitions of her own; the facts on the contrary indicate that she aimed at the establishment of a French protectorate or quasi-protectorate at some point in eastern Oman and that she was in search of a naval *point d'appui* in the same neighbourhood. A persevering endeavour was made to create by the wholesale grant of her flag, especially to natives of Sur, a maritime class of Arabs dependent on her protection and subject to her authority; and an attempt by her to effect an occupation of the valuable harbour of Jisseh near Maskat was very nearly successful. In fact it is obvious that France entertained designs, unconnected with the furtherance of Russian policy, upon the Oman coast between Maskat and Ras-al-Hadd, and possibly upon the hinterland as well, for the French Vice-Consul during a period of years maintained intimate relations at Sur with the Beni Bu Ali and Jenebeh tribes who occupy also a large part of the interior.

The system of granting French flags to subjects of the Sultan of Oman appears to have been introduced about 1891, and in 1897 the Sultan began, with the support of the British Government, to protest against this invasion of his sovereign rights; but his objections were ignored by the French Government. The practice became a serious matter politically between 1897 and 1903, during which period sea-faring Omanis were transferred in ever increasing numbers from the jurisdiction of the Sultan to that of France. The inducements to accept the French flag were considerable, for it not only enabled rebellious Arabs to withdraw themselves from the authority of their lawful sovereign, but also conferred on those of them who were engaged in the importation of slaves or exportation of arms—and there were many such—immunity from search by British war-vessels. Unsuccessful attempts were also made by the French authorities to extend the French flag system to Trucial Oman and the Persian coast.

Manœuvres by the French to secure a naval base on the Oman coast began in 1898 with the visit of the gun-boat "Gabès" to Maskat; her commander was successful in obtaining from the Sultan a written concession for a French coaling station of which, however, the exact site was left undetermined. Later in the year another French gunboat, the "Scorpion", arrived at Maskat with presents for the Sultan; and Jisseh, a small but good and defensible harbour

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five miles south-east of Maskat, was inspected by the French officers. In November 1898 it was announced in the "Journal des Débats" that a French man-of-war had established a coaling station at Bunder Jisseh.

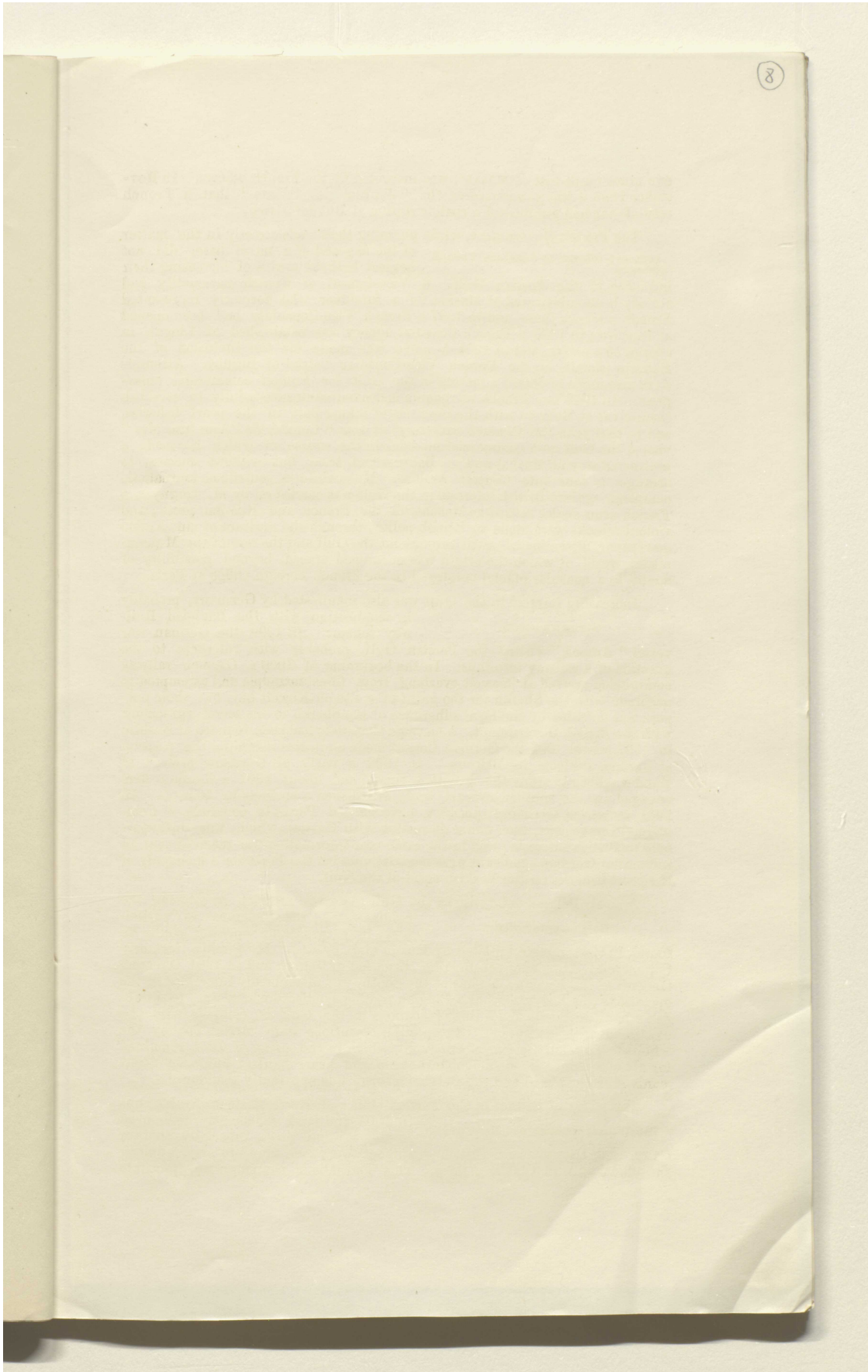
The French Government, while pursuing their ends directly in the matter of the flag and of a naval base, did not neglect indirect means of increasing their influence in the Persian Gulf. A Vice-Consul of French nationality had already been substituted at Maskat for a foreigner who formerly represented French interests there, and in 1897 a French Vice-Consulate had been opened at Bushire; in 1899 a French Consular agency was established at Lingah in charge of a native, and in 1904 a move was made for the inclusion of the Bahrein islands in the French Vice-Consular district of Bushire. Attempts were also made to obtain a footing in the Gulf for French commercial enterprise. In 1903 two French merchants endeavoured unsuccessfully to establish themselves at Bahrein with the intention of taking part in the pearl fisheries, and in that year the General Secretary of the "Comité de l'Asie française" visited the Gulf on a commercial mission, in the course of which he made a protracted stay at Maskat and in Bahrein and tried, but without success, to arrange a tour into Central Arabia. Meanwhile a scurrilous journalistic campaign against British interests in the Gulf was carried on by M. Goguyer, a French arms dealer settled at Maskat, in the French and Russian press; and violent attacks were made on British policy, through the medium of an Arabic newspaper, disseminated gratis throughout the Gulf and the rest of the Muhammadan world, of which the origin was in the end traced, beyond possibility of doubt, to a consular official employed in the French Foreign Office at Paris.

Increasing interest in the Gulf was also manifested by Germany, probably in connection with the Baghdad Railway scheme. In 1899 the German war vessel "Arcona" visited the Persian Gulf, probably with reference to the question of a railway terminus. In the beginning of 1900 a German railway commission arrived at Koweit overland from Constantinople and attempted to negotiate with the Sheikh for the grant of a site on Koweit bay, but their purpose was defeated by the loyal adherence of the Sheikh to his secret agreement with the British Government. A German Consulate had been founded at Bushire in 1897, and in 1905 the German Consul made enquiries regarding the position of German subjects in Bahrein. In 1899 a party of Germans arrived at Bunder Abbas to study the situation there, and about 1901 a German firm engaged in the mother-of-pearl trade established a business in Bahrein. In 1901, moreover, Germany appears to have advised Persia to conclude a Commercial Convention, then under discussion with Russia, which was unfavourable to British interests; and in the same year information was received that an influential German syndicate were negotiating with the Porte for a monopoly of the pearl fisheries on the Turkish coast of the Gulf.

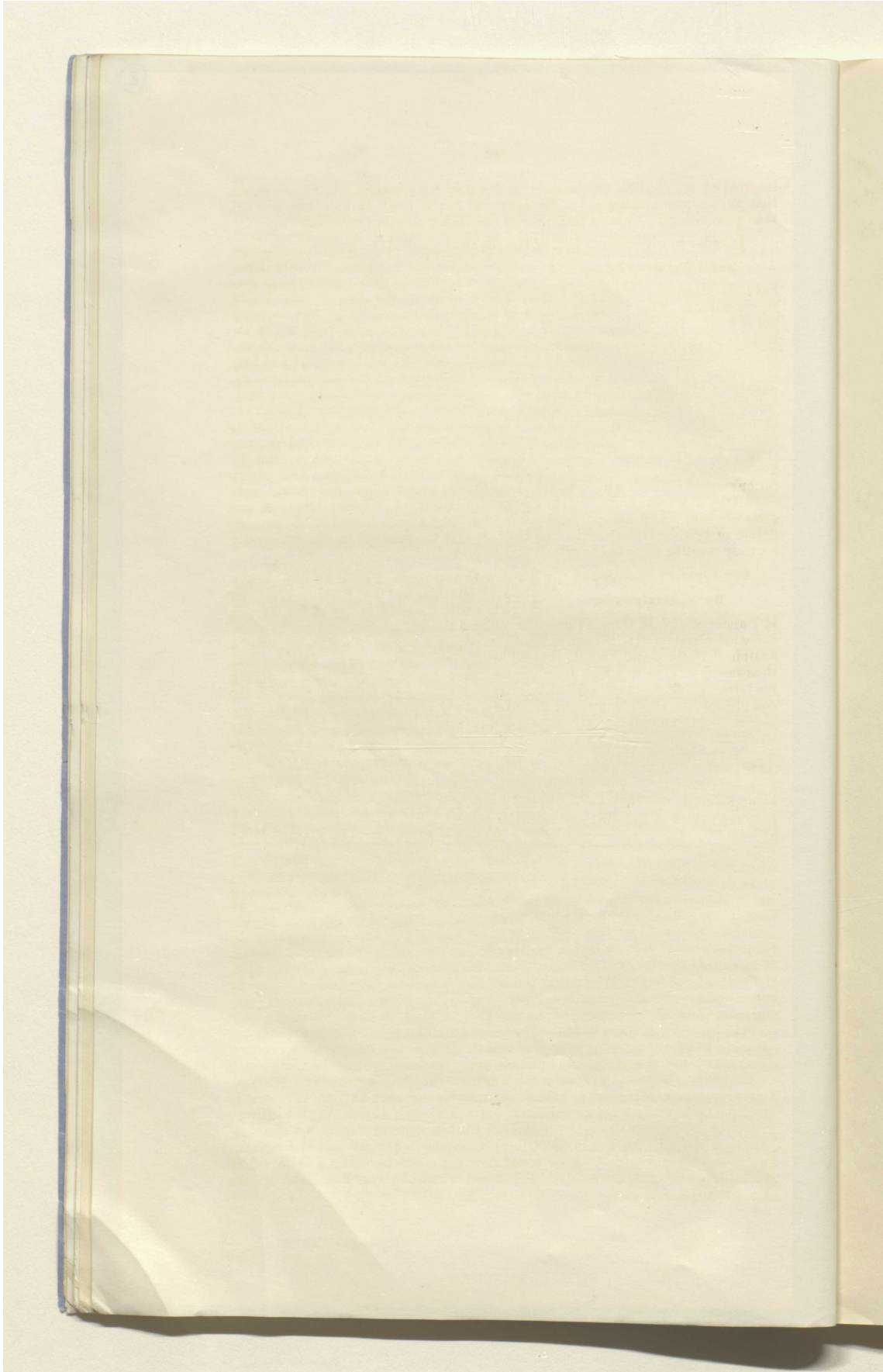
A small Belgian enterprise in the Gulf deserves mention as showing the readiness of the Belgians to participate, if a profitable opening could be found, in the scramble initiated by Russia and France. M. Simais, formerly Commercial Attaché of the Belgian Legation at Tehran and in 1901 Director-General of the Persian Customs of the South, was undoubtedly interested in the operations; he had visions of a Belgian trading syndicate which was to establish a bank in Persia and a line of steamers in the Gulf to compete with the existing British institutions. Prospecting operations were carried out by the "Selika", a small Belgian steam yacht, which in the spring of 1901 remained for about a month in the neighbourhood of the pearl banks; but soon afterwards M. Simais died and the Belgian project was apparently abandoned.

The policy of Britain in the Persian Gulf and North-Eastern Arabia was in 1904 and 1905 vehemently denounced in the Arabic press, especially that of Cairo, and strongly anti-British sentiments were soon found to prevail among the official class in Turkish Arabia. This journalistic campaign was probably

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inspired by pan-Islamic propaganda, and it may have been due to an impression that Britain was making use of her influence in the Gulf to give the struggle then proceeding in Nejd an ending unfavourable to Turkish interests.

In order to give a clear idea of the aims and methods of Britain's principal rivals in the Persian Gulf we have dwelt at some length on their proceedings and have abstained from reference to the counter-policy of the British and Indian Governments. That policy it is now time to examine, and we proceed to consider it under two principal heads. Under the first head matters of which the scope is co-extensive, or nearly so, with the Gulf are discussed, while the second is concerned with those possessing a more restricted significance. The first head falls naturally into divisions which correspond with the subjects of naval strategy, naval organisation, naval and political demonstrations, mercantile navigation, commerce, miscellaneous undertakings, pearl fisheries and arms trade; under the divisions of mercantile navigation and commerce are included such matters as steamer, postal and telegraphic services, commercial missions and concessions. The second head, relating to the affairs of particular localities, can be most conveniently distributed according to territorial divisions. The multifarious activities with which we are about to deal under these two heads were not all, by any means, directed to the neutralisation of foreign influence, and some of them had a non-political origin; but they all ministered to the consolidation of British influence in the Gulf, and, in the measure in which they did so, they must be regarded as of political importance.

The apparent intention of the Russian Government in 1900 to establish a naval station in the Persian Gulf, together with the proceedings of the French at Bunder Jisseh in the previous year, obliged the British Government to consider what counteractive measures would be required in case of a Russian, or of a combined Russian and French, scheme being carried into effect. The question thus raised was one to which Lord Curzon gave unremitting attention during his term of office, more especially after his cruise in the Persian Gulf at the end of 1903, by which he profited to make a study upon the spot of the physical elements of the problem. His attention was from the first concentrated on the entrance of the Gulf, command of which implied control of its internal waters, and he early recognised that the cluster of islands lying off Bunder Abbas together with the mountainous, deeply indented promontory of Musandim on the Arabian side constituted the key of the situation. In 1901 Lord Curzon recommended that, in the event of the Russians occupying any Persian harbour near the mouth of the Gulf, or acquiring political or naval privileges there such as would constitute a violation of the integrity of Persia, the British Naval Officer Commanding in the Persian Gulf should have instructions at once to plant the British flag upon the three islands of Hormuz, Henjam and Kishm; Hormuz would be occupied, not with the idea of making it a principal naval station, but in order to prevent its being seized by Russia, and for the sake of commanding Bunder Abbas; while Henjam was required on account of the anchorage situated between it and Kishm, and Kishm must necessarily be taken both as a base of supplies for Henjam and because of the British station of Bassidore already existing there. The harbour of Elphinstone Inlet upon the western side of the Musandim promontory was held by Lord Curzon to possess many advantages but to be less suitable, because of its distance from the main track of steamers and from the Persian coast, its total lack of supplies and the uncivilised character of aboriginal inhabitants of Musandim, for an ultimate British naval station at the mouth of the Gulf; he saw, however, no objection to the hoisting, in the contingency contemplated, of the British flag on the isthmus of Maklab between the heads of the Elphinstone and Malcolm Inlets, not necessarily with a view to ulterior occupation but in order to anticipate seizure by any other Power. His Majesty's Government concurred generally in the views enunciated by Lord Curzon, but in regard to the instructions to be given to the Naval Officer Commanding they were of opinion that these should not be of the nature of standing orders investing a local officer with discretionary powers. In 1902, great stress having been laid by the

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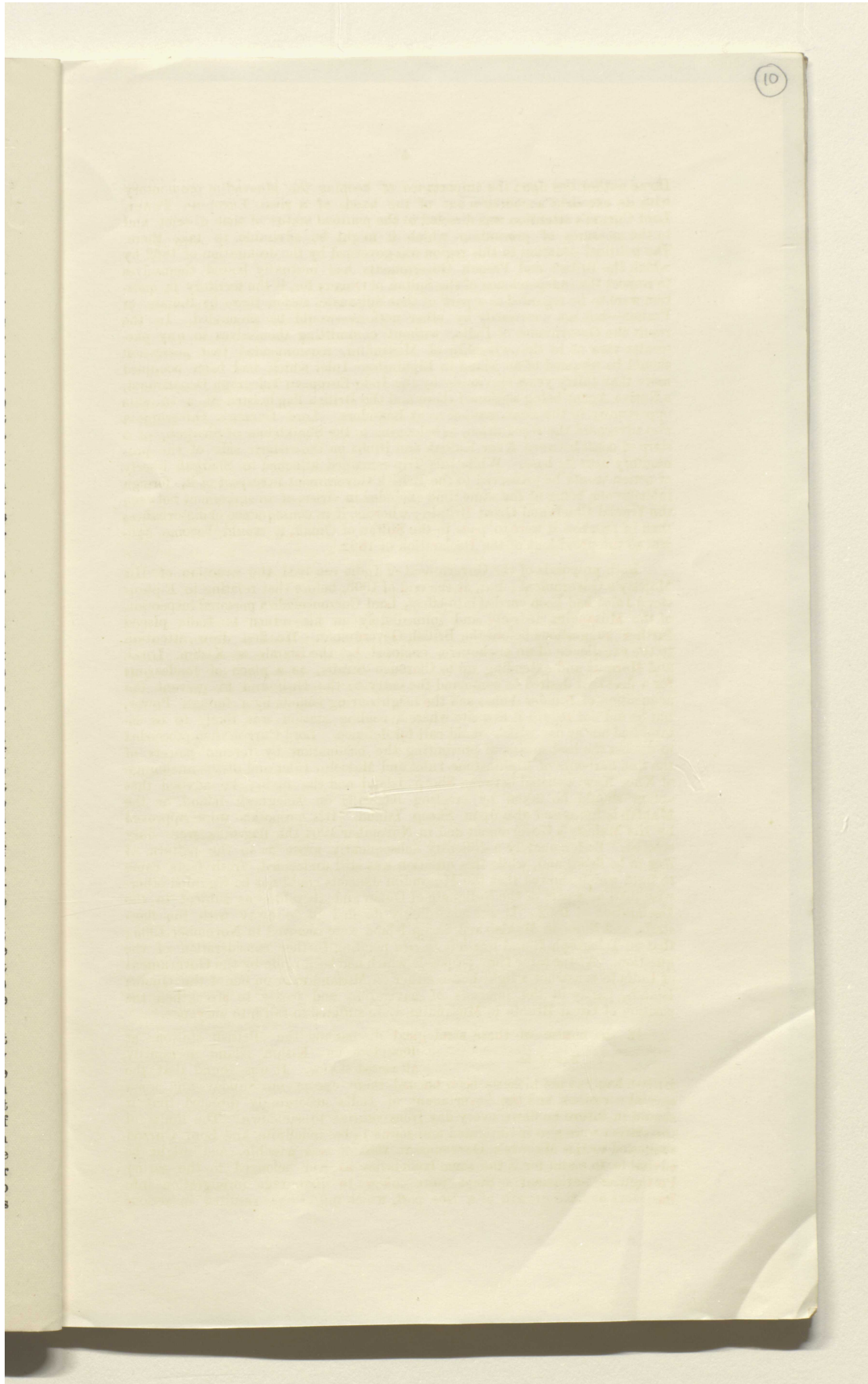
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Home authorities upon the importance of keeping the Musandim promontory with its excellent anchorages out of the hands of a rival European Power, Lord Curzon's attention was directed to the political status of that district and to the measures of precaution which it might be advisable to take there. The political situation in this region was governed by the declaration of 1862 by which the British and French Governments had mutually bound themselves to respect the independence of the Sultan of Oman; for, if the territory in question were to be regarded as a part of that Sultanate, action there by Britain or France—but not necessarily by other nations—would be precluded. In the result the Government of India, without committing themselves to any particular view as to the ownership of Musandim, recommended that possession should be resumed of an island in Elphinstone Inlet which had been occupied more than thirty years previously by the Indo-European Telegraph Department, a Native Agent being stationed there and the British flag hoisted at a suitable opportunity in the same manner as at Bassidore. Lord Curzon's Government also advocated the recognition, as belonging to the Shaikhdom of Shargah, of a strip of coast between Khor Kalbah and Dibba on the eastern side of the promontory near its base. While this strip remained attached to Shargah liberty of action would be preserved to the British Government in respect of it, foreign interference being at the same time excluded in virtue of an agreement between the Trucial Chiefs and Great Britain; whereas, if in consequence of disturbances then in progress it were to pass to the Sultan of Oman, it would become subject to the provisions of the Declaration of 1862.

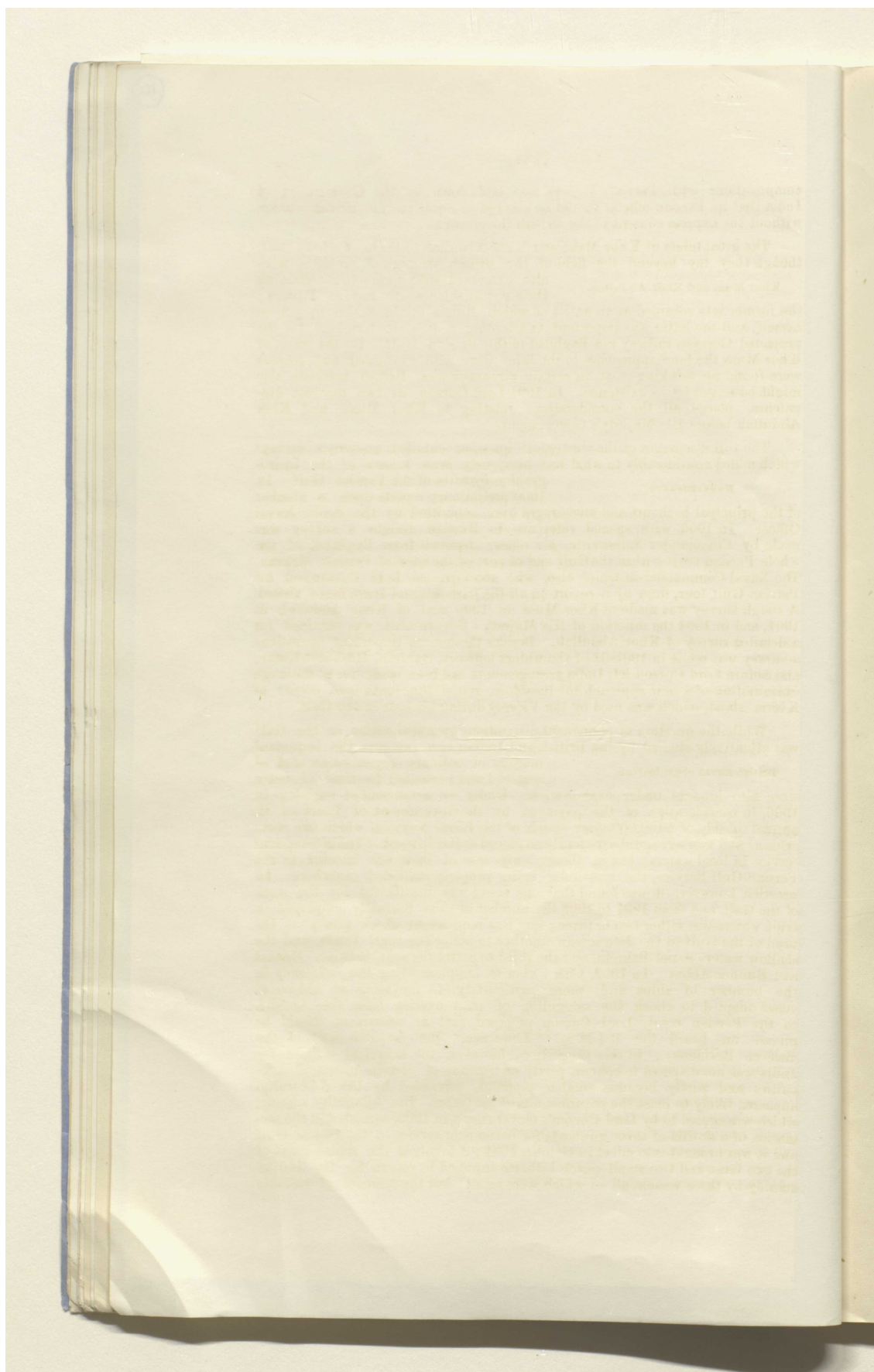
Both proposals of the Government of India received the sanction of His Majesty's Government; but, at the end of 1903, before that relating to Elphinstone Inlet had been carried into effect, Lord Curzon made a personal inspection of the Musandim districts and immediately on his return to India placed further suggestions before the British Government. He first drew attention to the excellence of an anchorage, enclosed by the islands of Kishm, Larak and Hormuz and extending up to Clarence Straits, as a place of rendezvous for a fleet that desired to command the entry to the Gulf and to prevent the acquisition of Bunder Abbas and the neighbouring islands by a foreign Power, but he did not regard it as a site where a coaling station was likely to be established nor as one which would call for defence. Lord Curzon then proceeded to discuss the best means of preventing the occupation by foreign powers of the fine harbours of Elphinstone Inlet and Malcolm Inlet and of the anchorage of Khor Kawi situated between Sheep Island and the main; he advised that action should be taken by erecting flagstaffs on Telegraph Island, on the Maklab isthmus and also upon Sheep Island. His proposals were approved by His Majesty's Government and in November 1904 the flagstaffs were duly erected. Unfortunately a difficulty subsequently arose as to the pattern of flag to be flown and, while this question was still undecided, fresh facts came to light which showed that the Musandim districts could not be regarded otherwise than as a part of the Sultanate of Oman and therefore as subject to the Declaration of 1862. It was accordingly decided to do away with the flagstaffs, and those on Maklab and Sheep Island were removed in November 1905; that on Telegraph Island was left *in situ* pending further consideration of the question. At the same time proposals which had been made by the Government of India to construct a light-house either on Musandim or on one of the Quoins Islands, partly in the interests of navigation and partly to strengthen the position of Great Britain in Musandim, were suffered to fall into abeyance.

In the course of these strategical discussions the British station at Bassidore. Bassidore on Kishm island necessarily attracted notice. It was found that the British flag had not hitherto been hoisted there except on Sundays and upon special occasions, and the Government of India accordingly directed that it should in future be flown every day from sunrise to sundown. The limits of the station were also investigated and found to be indefinite, and Lord Curzon suggested to His Majesty's Government that it was possible, and might be advisable, to claim for it the same boundaries as had belonged to the earlier Portuguese settlement. Steps were taken to discourage immigration into Bassidore and the growth of a free port, which might have resulted in serious

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complications with Persia. It was also laid down by the Government of India that no Persian official should be allowed to reside in the British station without the express consent of the British Government.

The great inlets of Khor Musa and Khor Abdullah at the head of the Gulf, though they lay beyond the field of the British strategical problem, were also examined with a view to ascertaining their serviceableness to foreign Powers; the former was regarded as an outlet of which Russia might desire to possess herself, and the latter was important as affording a possible terminus for the projected German railway *via* Baghdad to the Persian Gulf. In the case of Khor Musa the land approaches to the inlet were also examined and reasons were found for thinking that, in certain circumstances, British interests also might be served by its existence. In 1904 Lord Curzon, in two separate despatches, placed all the considerations relating to Khor Musa and Khor Abdullah before His Majesty's Government.

The full discussion of the strategical question entailed numerous surveys which added considerably to what had previously been known of the hydrographic features of the Persian Gulf. In 1900 preliminary reports upon a number of the principal harbours and anchorages were submitted by the Senior Naval Officer. In 1903, with special reference to Russian designs, a survey was made by Commander Somerville, an officer deputed from England, of the whole Persian coast within the Gulf and of part of the coast of Persian Mekran. The Naval Commander-in-Chief also, who accompanied Lord Curzon on his Persian Gulf tour, drew up a report on all the harbours and anchorages visited. A rough survey was made of Khor Musa in 1905 and of Khor Abdullah in 1904, and in 1904 the sanction of His Majesty's Government was obtained for a detailed survey of Khor Abdullah. Besides these more important operations a survey was made in 1901-02 of the waters between Bahrein, Hasa and Katar; and before Lord Curzon left India arrangements had been made for a thorough examination of a new approach to Bassidore, round the south-west corner of Kishm island, which was used by the Viceroy during his tour in the Gulf.

While the question of permanent dispositions for naval action in the Gulf was attentively studied by the British and Indian Governments, the important matters of ordinary organisation and of matériel and personnel in time of peace were also brought under examination. Under an arrangement expiring in 1906, in consideration of the payment by the Government of India of an annual subsidy of £100,000, four vessels of the Royal Navy, of which two were cruisers and two were gunboats, had been placed at the disposal of India for special service in local waters; but in theory only one of these was affected to the Persian Gulf Service, the remainder being properly stationed elsewhere. In practice, however, it was found that one vessel was insufficient for the work of the Gulf, and from 1897 to 1902 the number of ships normally employed in Gulf waters was either two or three; one was required to check piracy at the head of the Gulf in the date season, another to police the pearl banks and the shallow waters round Bahrein, and the third to patrol the seas between Maskat and Bunder Abbas. In 1902, with a view to supplementing the deficiency in the number of ships and, more particularly, to providing an additional vessel adapted to check the smuggling of arms oversea from the Arabian to the Persian coast, Lord Curzon proposed that an armament should be placed on board the R.I.M.S. "Lawrence," the despatch boat of the Bushire Residency; in this suggestion, however, the Secretary of State for India was not disposed to concur, partly on account of certain technical difficulties and partly because another proposal, advanced by the Admiralty, appeared likely to meet the requirements of the case. The Admiralty scheme, which was agreed to by Lord Curzon's Government in 1903, consisted in the formation of a flotilla of three gunboats for permanent service in the Persian Gulf and it was brought into effect in October 1904; it involved the replacement of the two large and two small vessels hitherto supplied in return for the Indian subsidy by three vessels, all of which were small; but the increase of suitable

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ships in the Persian Gulf was considered by the Government of India a sufficient advantage to compensate for the loss in other directions. At the same time, by the reduction in the size of the vessels and by the substitution of natives for Europeans in respect of stoker ratings, a notable economy was effected in the wastage of European life and health in Indian waters. In 1905 the Admiralty made a fresh proposal: it was to the effect that the duties carried on in Indian waters by ships of His Majesty's Navy should be made to devolve on ships of the Royal Indian Marine, and that the three subsidised gunboats then in the Gulf should be handed over to the Government of India for incorporation in the Royal Indian Marine. The scheme however did not commend itself to Lord Curzon's Government; they foresaw certain advantages in the shape of more immediate control by themselves over a portion of the naval force in Indian waters, in the formation of a body of officers possessing special local qualifications, and in an enhancement of the status of the Royal Indian Marine; but they held that these would be outweighed by loss of prestige in the Persian Gulf, where the regular war-vessels of other European nations were now frequently seen, by decreased naval efficiency, by a serious sacrifice of economy, by imperfect cooperation between the Royal Navy and the Royal Indian Marine, by the difficulty of arranging reliefs and consequent prejudice to the health of crews, and by cessation of direct interest in the Persian Gulf on the part of the British naval authorities; they therefore adhered to the opinion which they had expressed in 1902, that the true remedy for the difficulties of the situation was to arm particular ships of the Royal Indian Marine, when necessary, as auxiliaries to, but not as substitutes for, ships of the Royal Navy. The scheme of the Admiralty was not in the end adopted, and the arrangements introduced in 1904 accordingly continued to be in force.

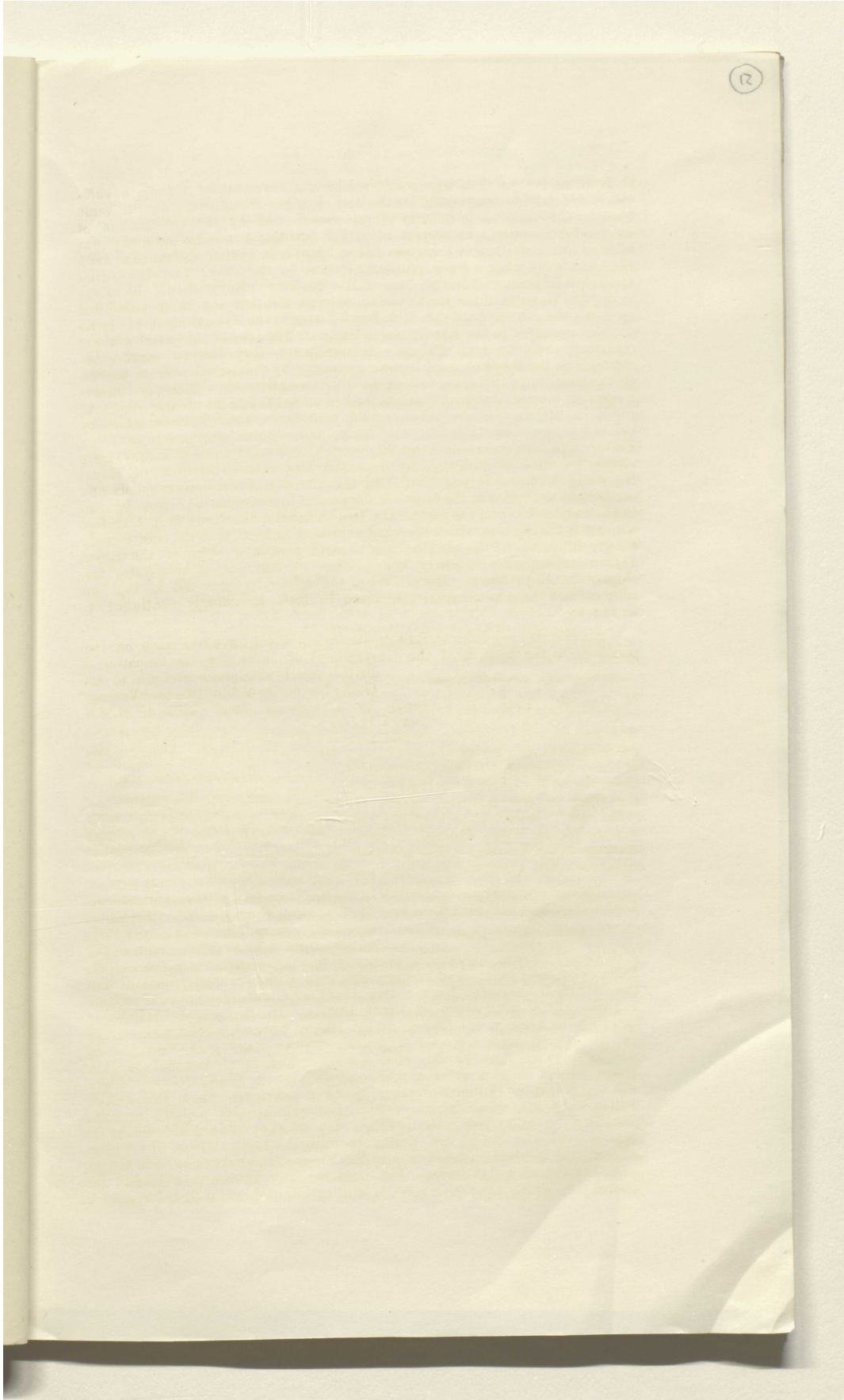
An effective rejoinder to Russian displays of naval force was made on two occasions, at the instance of the Government of India, by the despatch of British vessels of superior strength to the Gulf. The cruise of the Russian "Varyag" in December 1901 was answered by a visit in June 1902 of H.M.S.

British naval demonstrations. "Amphitrite," a first class cruiser of 11,000 tons, to Maskat, Sur, Sib, Barka, Bunder Abbas, Henjam, Bushire and Koweit; the sight of this powerful ship everywhere made a strong impression, especially at Maskat where an exhibition of heavy gun practice was given outside the harbour. The immediate reply to the cruise of the Russian "Askold" in December 1902 was the despatch to the Gulf in the following month of His Majesty's first-class battleship "Renown", which had brought His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught to India for the Delhi Coronation Darbar; the "Renown" visited Maskat, Bushire, Lingah, Bunder Abbas and Jask, and was by far the largest and most imposing vessel which had ever been seen in the Persian Gulf.

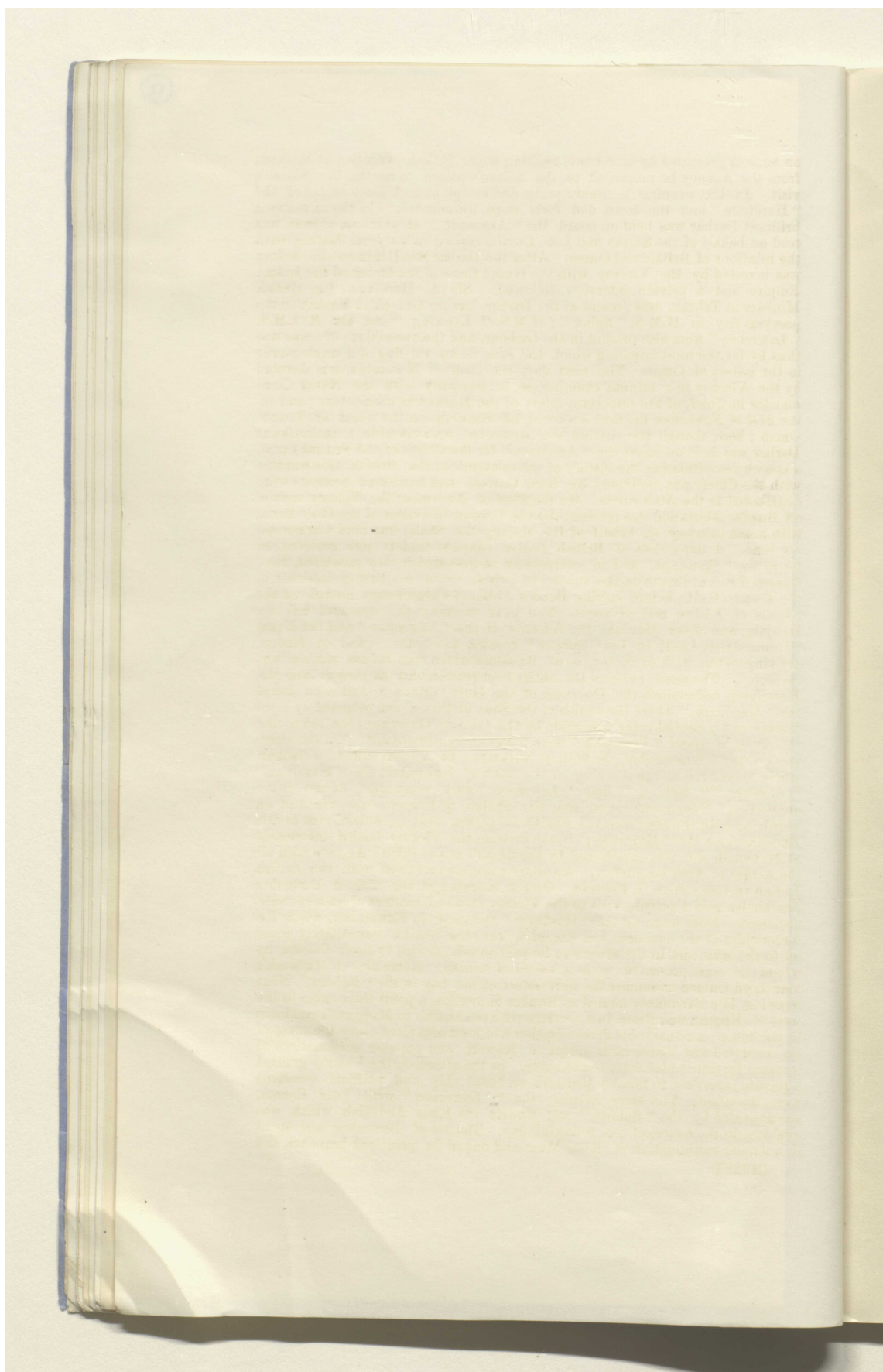
But the principal demonstration of British force in the Persian waters was Lord Curzon's own Persian Gulf tour of 1903, which constituted a display of strength and magnificence that no foreign

Lord Curzon's cruise. nation could hope to rival in such a part of the world: it was undertaken primarily for the purpose of inspecting the Indian establishments and of visiting the Arab Chiefs in treaty relations with the British Government, but also as a visible sign of the paramount political and commercial ascendancy of Great Britain. The R. I. M. S. "Hardinge," carrying the Viceroy, left Karachi on the 16th of November 1903, accompanied by the second class cruiser "Hyacinth"—the flagship of Rear-Admiral Atkinson-Willes—, by the first class cruiser "Argonaut," and by the third class cruisers "Fox" and "Pomone,"—all ships of the Royal Navy. Maskat was reached on the 18th of November; the town was *en fête*, the welcome of the Sultan was cordial in an extreme degree, and evidences of popular rejoicing abounded on every side. On the first day of the visit a deputation of the highest rank was sent by the Sultan to welcome Lord Curzon, the Sultan himself was received on board ship by the Viceroy, and interviews were accorded to the French and American Vice-Consuls; Lord Curzon then landed and visited the British Agency, where he was entertained at lunch and replied to

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an address presented by merchants residing under British protection at Maskat; from the Agency he proceeded to the Sultan's palace to return the Sultan's visit. In the evening a dinner party and reception took place on board the "Hardinge" and the town and forts were illuminated. On the next day a brilliant Darbar was held on board the "Argonaut", at which an address was read on behalf of the Sultan and Lord Curzon replied in a speech dealing with the relations of Britain and Oman. After the Darbar His Highness the Sultan was invested by the Viceroy with the Grand Cross of the Order of the Indian Empire and a private interview followed. Sir A. Hardinge, the British Minister at Tehran, was present at the Darbar, having arrived at Maskat on the previous day in H.M.S. "Sphinx"; H.M.S. "Lapwing" and the R. I. M. S. "Lawrence" were also present in the harbour, and the assemblage of ships was thus by far the most imposing which had ever flown the flag of a single power in the waters of Oman. The next day, the 20th of November, was devoted by the Viceroy to a minute examination, in company with the Naval Commander-in-Chief, of the important inlets of the Musandim promontory; and on the 21st of November the fleet anchored off Shargah on the coast of Trucial Oman; here, though the weather was somewhat unfavourable, a magnificent Darbar was held on board the "Argonaut" for the Chiefs of the Trucial Coast, a speech recapitulating the history of the relations of the British Government with the Chiefs was delivered by Lord Curzon, and handsome presents were distributed to the Arab rulers. On the 22nd of November the Viceroy arrived off Bunder Abbas and was received by the Persian Governor of the Gulf Ports, with much courtesy, on behalf of His Majesty the Shah; but Lord Curzon did not land. A deputation of British Indian subjects traders was received on board the "Hardinge," and, in receiving an address which they presented, Lord Curzon dwelt at length on the subject of British trade and British interests in the Persian Gulf; before leaving Bunder Abbas His Excellency landed on the islands of Kishm and Hormuz. The next morning the squadron left for Henjam, and from Henjam the Viceroy in the "Lawrence" and the Naval Commander-in-Chief in the "Sphinx" coasted along the island of Kishm, arriving on the 24th of November at Bassidore where the British station was inspected. The same evening the entire fleet reassembled at Lingah and His Excellency entertained the Governor of the Gulf Ports at a dinner on board the "Hardinge," where the health of the Shah of Persia was proposed by Lord Curzon and a cordial reply was made by the Persian Governor; the town and the Persian vessel "Persepolis" were handsomely illuminated. On the afternoon of the following day, the 25th of November, the Viceroy sailed for Bahrein where he arrived on the morning of the 26th of November, the "Hardinge," "Pomone," "Sphinx" and "Lawrence" only proceeding to the inner anchorage. Here a deputation from the Shaikh of Bahrein was received on board, and in the afternoon the Shaikh in person paid an official visit to His Excellency on the "Hardinge;" in the evening the Viceroy landed informally at Manamah and was entertained by the Shaikh at the British Agency with all the usages of Arab hospitality. An address was also received from the British Indian traders settled in Bahrein. On the morning of the 27th of December Shaikh Isa paid a private visit to the Viceroy at which matters of business were discussed. Next morning the "Hardinge" anchored in Koweit bay, where the larger ships of the squadron had preceded her; the Shaikh immediately came off to the ship, and in the afternoon he paid an official visit to Lord Curzon by whom he was presented with a sword of honour. After Shaikh Mubarak's visit Lord Curzon examined the headwaters of the bay in the "Sphinx." Next morning His Excellency landed at Bunder Shuweikh, a point three miles to the west of Koweit, and drove in a carriage with the Shaikh to Mubarak's residence in the town; a remarkable demonstration had been organised along the route of the mounted and dismounted forces of Koweit, and popular acclamations of unusual fervour added élat to the scene. In the afternoon the Viceroy granted a private interview to Shaikh Mubarak on board ship and political questions were discussed. The same evening the "Lawrence" with Lord Curzon, accompanied by the "Sphinx," left Koweit for Khor Abdullah which was explored in the course of the following day. The 1st of December was spent in a similar examination of Khor Musa and one of its principal branches, and

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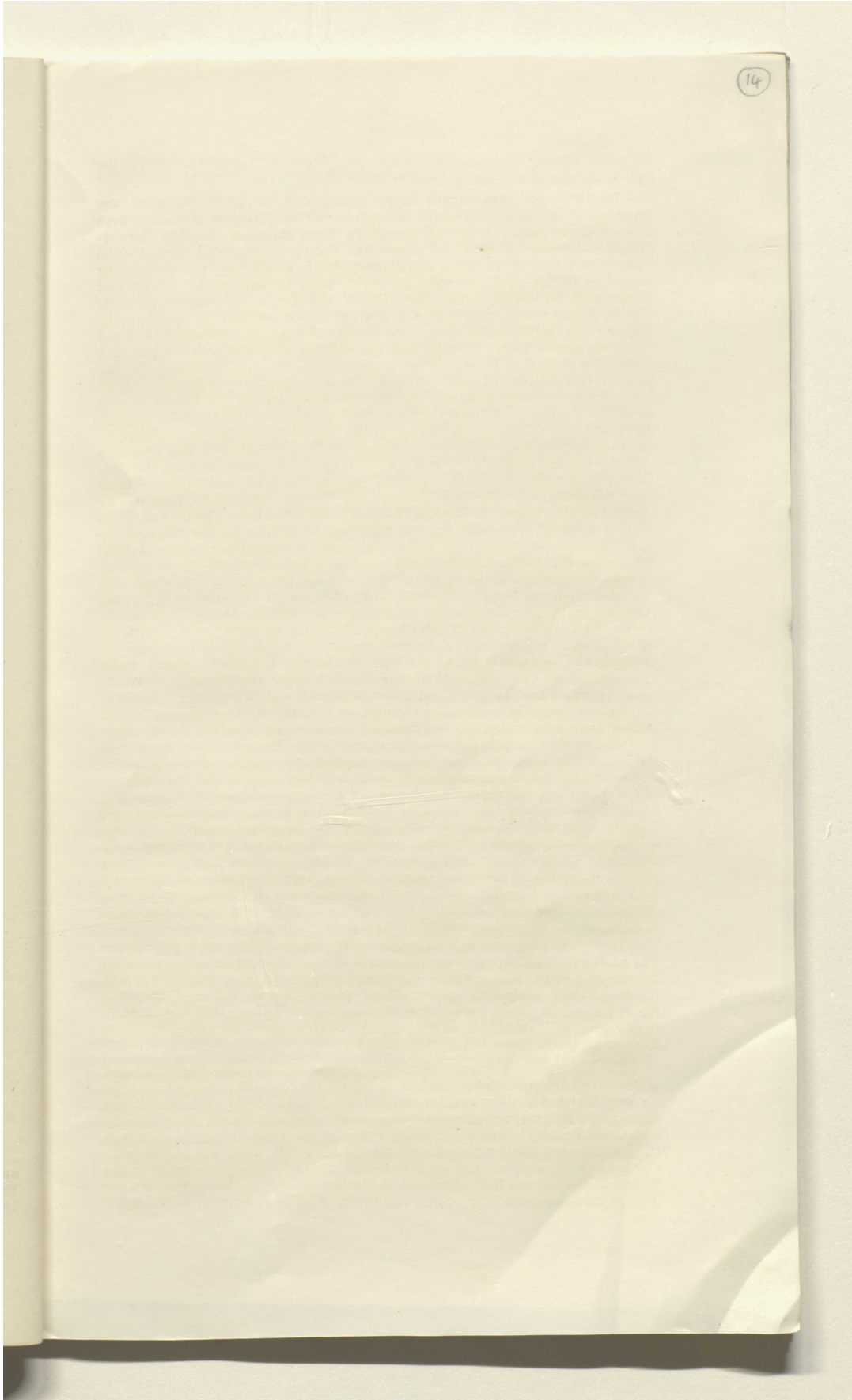
the same evening the "Lawrence" and the "Sphinx" rejoined the rest of the fleet at a rendezvous at sea on the way to Bushire.

Bushire, which was reached on the morning of the 2nd of December, was the scene of an incident by which the success and completeness of the tour were to some extent impaired. It had previously been arranged that the Ala-ud-Dauleh, Governor General of Fars, who had been appointed to receive the Viceroy on behalf of the Shah, should conduct His Excellency from the landing place to a British consular building, which Lord Curzon would occupy and from which he would return the visit of the Persian Governor General. Bunder Abbas was originally fixed as the place of meeting, but subsequently Bushire was substituted. Later the Persian Government prevailed on Lord Curzon to accept the use of a Persian house while on shore, and to agree that on landing at Bushire he should be conducted by the Ala-ud-Dauleh to the Persian Government House. Next it became apparent that the Persian Government would not consent to the first visit being paid by the Ala-ud-Dauleh except on condition that Lord Curzon occupied a house provided by themselves, and that in any other case they expected the first visit to be paid by the Viceroy. Moreover, the Persian Government House at Bushire, where it was proposed that the Viceroy should lodge, was occupied by the Persian Governor General, and in these circumstances the intended exchange of visits was reduced almost to an absurdity. At the last moment the Persian authorities proposed to arrange another house at Bushire for Lord Curzon, but a point had been reached at which it was necessary to vindicate the dignity of the Viceroyalty and Governor-Generalship of India, and after a consultation between Lord Curzon and Sir A. Hardinge it was decided to insist upon adherence by the Persian Government to the spirit of the original programme, by which the Ala-ud-Dauleh was bound to pay the first visit to the Viceroy at a British consular building. The Persian authorities at Bushire having declined to accede to this demand, the British Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran was instructed by telegram to inform the Persian Government that their positive refusal to authorise the ordinary courtesy of a first visit at the British Residency made the question one of principle, involving the dignity of His Majesty's Government, on which the Viceroy could not compromise, and that Lord Curzon was accordingly compelled to abandon the idea of landing at Bushire and would sail for India on the next day. No answer having been received to this communication, the "Hardinge" with the squadron left Bushire on the evening of the 3rd of December, and the incident became the subject of a diplomatic discussion; this discussion lasted for some months and ended in the discomfiture of the Persian Government, who posed as the aggrieved party and demanded reparation which they were not able to obtain. Before leaving Bushire Lord Curzon received on board the "Hardinge" a large deputation of British subjects and residents who presented an address of welcome; the Viceroy took advantage of the opportunity to describe in his reply the past history and present condition of British commercial relations with Persia and especially with Bushire. At Bushire Sir A. Hardinge took leave of Lord Curzon, and the squadron also dispersed. H.M.S. "Fox" however, which had already proceeded to Pasni, remained on duty with the Viceroy.

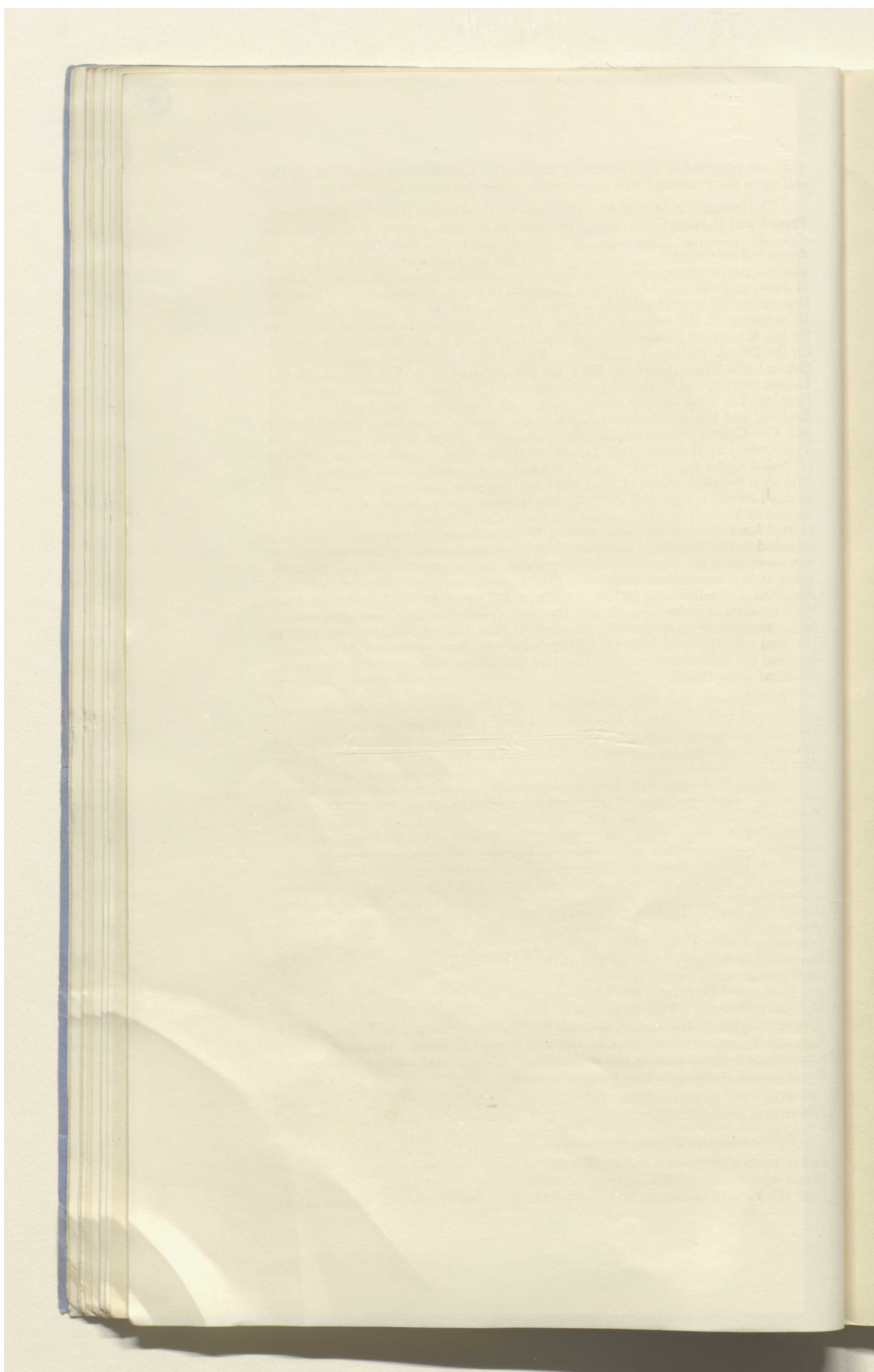
The 4th of December was occupied by the voyage down the Gulf, which was made at a speed probably unprecedented in these seas; Jask was reached on the morning of the 5th, and Pasni in British Mekran, where a Darbar was held for the notables of Western and Southern Baluchistan, on the morning of the 6th of December. This was the first visit paid by a Governor-General of India to any place in Mekran. The next day the "Hardinge" re-entered Karachi harbour after a cruise of exactly three weeks.

The Viceregal tour was a striking exhibition of British power and influence; it was without a precedent in the history of the Gulf, and it is likely to remain for long an event without parallel in local annals. In Persia, it is true, it had an ending which was not calculated to improve the relations of that country with Great Britain, but on the opposite coast of the Gulf it was a complete success and appreciably strengthened the bonds which unite the Arab principalities of Eastern Arabia to the British Empire. The demeanour of the Sultan of Maskat was that of a loyal feudatory of the British Crown rather than of an independent sovereign; and by the Shaikh of Koweit the Viceroy's

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visit was regarded as finally binding him to the British cause and as setting the seal upon the protection and overlordship of the British Power.

The foundation of new consular posts in the Persian Gulf by the Russian, French and German Governments was met by an even greater activity on the British consular establishments, part of Lord Curzon's Government in reorganising and extending their politico-administrative arrangements. A Vice-Consulate was created at Bandar Abbas in 1900, and was raised in 1904 to the status of a full Consulate with jurisdiction extending from the Shibkuh ports on the west to the coast of Persian Baluchistan on the east; the Consul was also appointed Assistant Resident for the Musandim promontory, for the Arab islands of Bu Musa and Tanb and for the British station of Bassidore. The Bushire Residency and Consulate-General was strengthened in 1904 by the addition of a Vice-Consul of the Levant service, and in 1905 by the creation of a Second Assistantship to the Resident; in 1905 also, by arrangement with Persia, the First Assistant to the Resident and the Residency Surgeon were invested with the rank of Consul and Vice-Consul respectively for the ports of Southern Persia. In 1904 the Vice-Consul at Mohammerah, a member of the Levant consular service, was promoted to the dignity of Consul; and a Vice-Consulate for Arabistan, to be held by a political officer of the Indian service, was instituted at Ahwaz. In Turkish Arabia a regular Vice-Consulate in charge of a native gentleman was opened at Kerbela in 1903, taking the place of an honorary agency which had existed for a number of years, and in 1905 an additional subordinate officer was attached to the Baghdad Residency for commercial work. A Political Agency was established at Koweit in 1904, a native news-agency instituted in 1899 being at the same time abolished. In Bahrein an Uncovenanted Political Assistant was substituted in 1900 for the native agent who had until then been the custodian of British interests in the principality; and in 1904 this officer in his turn made way for an Assistant Agent who was shortly afterwards invested with the local rank of Political Agent. Except where the contrary is stated the officers appointed to the new posts were all members of the Indian Political Department.

Closely associated with the subject of political representation is that of the military guards by which the safety of the consular and other officials is assured and the dignity of their office maintained. The manner in which this question was settled for the whole of Persia has already been described, and here it only remains to add that, in the Persian Gulf, the strength of the consular guards at Ahwaz and Bandar Abbas was fixed at 12 sabres and at 4 sabres and 16 rifles, respectively; that an infantry detachment of 28 of all ranks was provided for the protection of the Bahrein Agency; and that arrangements were made for increasing the numbers or improving the composition of the Residency guards at Baghdad and Bushire. The improvement of British consular residences effected under Lord Curzon's orders has already been mentioned in its general aspect; in the Persian Gulf region it was exemplified chiefly in Bahrein where an excellent house for the Political Agent was built in 1901-02, at Basrah where a new double-storeyed Consulate was completed in 1903, at Maskat where in 1904 a handsome block of buildings on the sea front was added to the Agency as quarters for the Agency Surgeon and Telegraph Officer, and at Baghdad where a palatial new Residency on the river bank, with numerous accessory buildings, came into existence in 1904-05. Designs were also prepared for a Consulate building at Bandar Abbas, for a Vice-Consulate at Ahwaz, and for a Political Agency at Koweit. Almost the entire cost of the buildings completed during Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty was borne by the Government of India. In 1905 arrangements were made to provide the R. I. M. S. "Comet," the despatch vessel of the Baghdad Residency, with a motor launch.

While the British political and consular establishments in the Gulf were everywhere utilised to the utmost extent, the services of a British medical staff, drawn from India, were requisitioned at different points for semi-political purposes, and in particular to meet the demand for sanitary precautions on the coast of Persia which followed the outbreak of bubonic plague in India in 1896. In 1897 the Persian Government delegated their sanitary powers in respect of the

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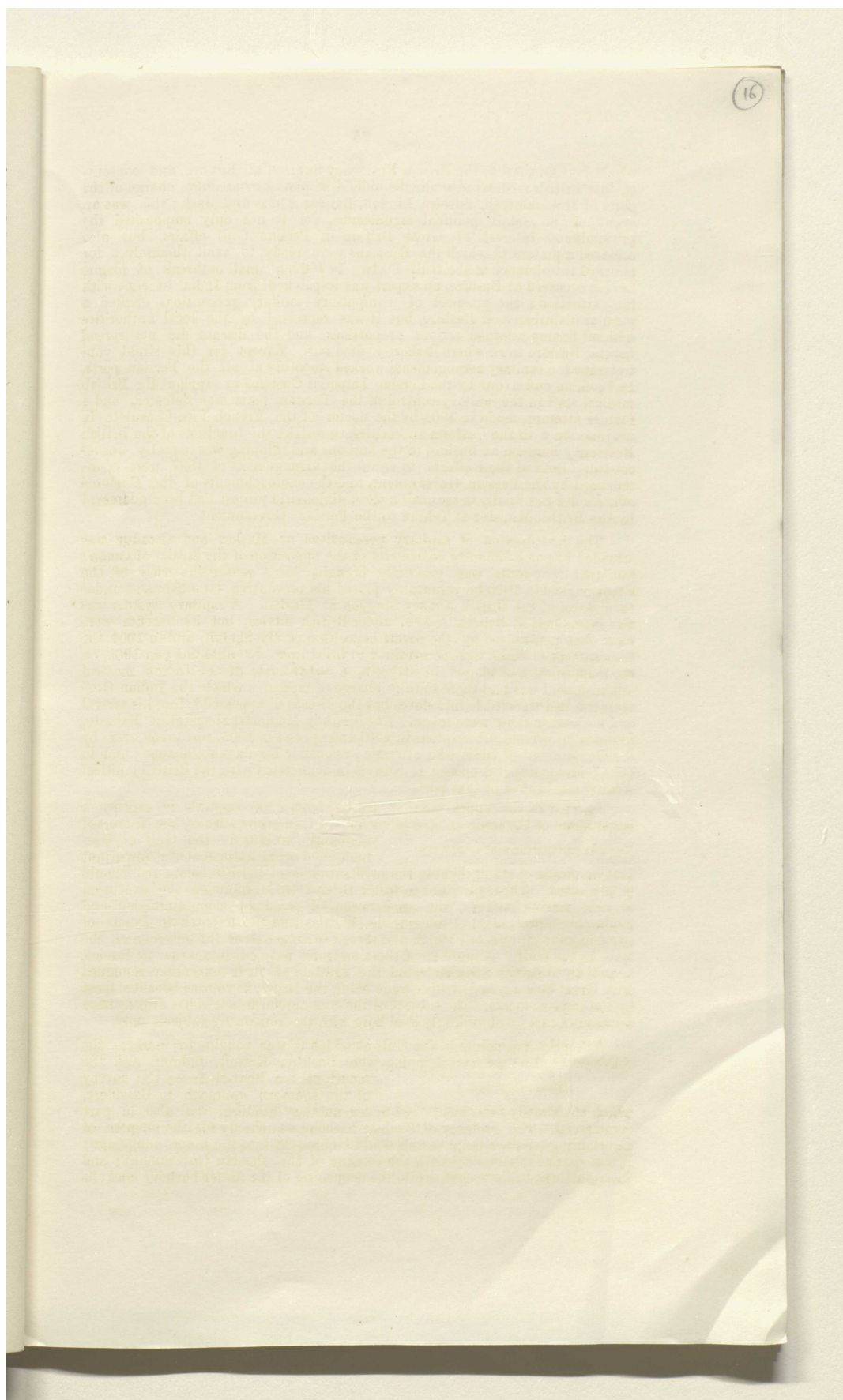
whole Persian coast to the British Residency Surgeon at Bushire, and consented that British medical subordinates should be placed in sanitary charge of the ports of Mohammerah, Bushire, Lingah, Bandar Abbas and Jask; this was an event of no small political significance, for it not only emphasised the predominant interest of Great Britain in Persian Gulf affairs, but also removed a pretext of which the Russians were ready to avail themselves for political interference at the Gulf Ports. In 1899, a small outbreak of plague having occurred at Bushire, an expert was despatched from India to cope with the situation; the prospect of compulsory sanitary precautions excited a popular disturbance at Bushire, but it was repressed by the local authorities without having attained serious proportions, and the disease did not spread beyond Bushire town where it shortly died out. Except for this slight contretemps the sanitary arrangements worked smoothly at all the Persian ports. In 1903, an endeavour by the Persian Imperial Customs to supplant the British medical staff in the sanitary control of the Persian ports was defeated, and a further attempt, made in 1904 by the doctor of the French Vice-Consulate in conjunction with the Customs authorities, to restrict the functions of the British Residency Surgeon at Bushire to the harbour and shipping was equally unsuccessful. Both of these efforts to annul the arrangement of 1897 were countenanced by the Persian Government, and the encroachments of the Customs officials did not finally cease until a stern diplomatic protest had been addressed by the British Minister at Tehran to the Persian Government.

The introduction of sanitary precautions at Maskat and Gwadar was attended by some difficulty on account of the opposition of the Sultan of Oman; but that potentate was gradually brought to a reasonable view of the situation, and in 1900 he voluntarily placed his preventive establishment under the control of the British Agency Surgeon at Maskat. A sanitary system was also introduced at Bahrein in 1897 under British advice, but its benefits were more than neutralised by the covert opposition of the Sheikh, and in 1900 the Government of India were constrained to insist upon its abolition; in 1905, on the reappearance of plague in Bahrein, a subordinate of the Indian medical establishment was sent there to take charge of measures which the Indian Government had resolved to introduce, but the disease disappeared before his arrival and no further steps were taken. The Victoria Memorial Hospital in Bahrein, founded by private subscription in 1901 and opened in 1905, was taken over by the Government of India who are now responsible for its maintenance; and in 1904 a dispensary was opened at Koweit in connection with the British Political Agency established at that port.

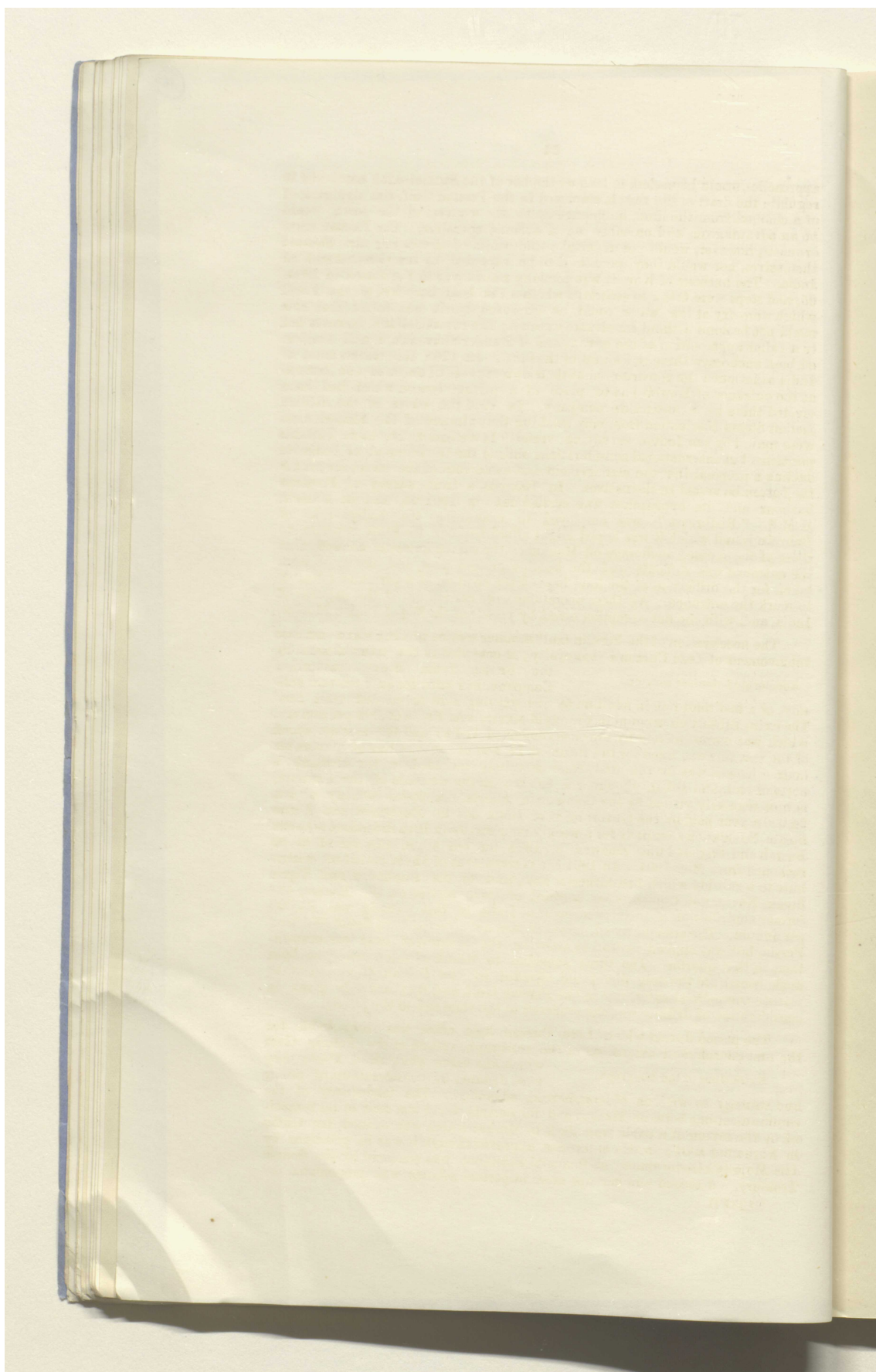
In view of the endeavours of Russia from 1900 onwards to capture a larger share of the trade of the Persian Gulf, in view also of the increased mercantile activity in the Gulf of Germany and other nations, it was important that no means of strengthening the predominance of British commerce should be neglected. The steps taken to foster British trade included the execution of new marine surveys, the acceleration of passenger communication and mails, the improvement of telegraphic facilities, and the despatch to Persia of two commercial missions which also served to some extent the interests of the trade in the Gulf. A number of these measures were advantageous to foreign as well as to British merchants, but the prestige of their execution remained with Great Britain, and British trade being the largest in volume benefited most by the improvements. The subject of the commercial missions has already been disposed of and we accordingly deal here with the remaining subjects only.

The principal points in the Gulf at which it was sought to increase the conveniences for merchant shipping were Bushire, Koweit, Bahrein and the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab; the survey of the southern approach to Bassidore, which has already been mentioned under another heading, was also in part commercial. The resurvey of Bushire harbour was chiefly for the purpose of ascertaining whether large vessels could be brought into the inner anchorage; it was carried out in 1904 with the consent of the Persian Government; and the result was to show that, while the deepening of the inner harbour and its

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approaches would be useless so long as the bar of the Shat-el-Arab continued to regulate the draft of the vessels employed in the Persian Gulf, the dredging of of a channel from the inner anchorage up to the wharves of the town would be an advantageous and probably not a difficult operation. The Persian Government, however, would not undertake the work of deepening the channel themselves, nor would they permit it to be executed by the Government of India. The harbour of Koweit was partially resurveyed in the season of 1904-05, and steps were taken to ascertain whether the boat harbours of the town, which were dry at low water, could be improved, but it was found that this could not be done without inordinate expense; the investigations however led to a fuller appreciation of the advantages of Bunder Shuweikh, a well sheltered boat anchorage three miles west of the town. In 1905 the Government of India sanctioned the construction at their own expense of an improved beacon at the entrance of Koweit bay in place of a private beacon which had been erected there by a steamship company. In 1905 the buoys of the British Indian Steam Navigation Company marking the entrance of the Shat-el-Arab were moved by the Indian surveying vessel "Investigator" to more suitable positions, but international considerations obliged the Government of India to decline a proposal that the management and ownership of the buoys should for the future be vested in themselves. In Bahrein a fresh survey of Manama harbour and its approaches was carried out in 1901-02, and in 1904-05 H.M.S. "Redbreast" was employed in examining the Kaliya inlet of Bahrein island which it was hoped might afford harbour facilities superior to those of the exposed anchorage off Manama; the survey however showed that the entrance was difficult and the holding-ground poor, and no steps were taken for the utilisation of the inlet beyond the erection of a permanent beacon to mark the entrance. All these operations were carried out at the expense of India, and, with the one exception noted, by vessels of the Royal Indian Marine.

The acceleration of the Persian Gulf steamer service in 1904 was a notable achievement of Lord Curzon's viceroyalty; it consisted in the establishment by the British India Steam Navigation Company, in return for an increased subsidy, of a fast mail line in addition to the existing slow cargo and mail line. The extra subsidy on account of the rapid service was Rs. 3,00,000 per annum, which was borne entirely by the Government of India; and the average speed of the fast line was fixed for the future at 13, and of the slow line at 8 knots an hour. Koweit was for the first time definitely included in the Company's ports of call, and Dibai, though not entered in the schedule of the contract, is now regularly visited by the Company's vessels. A postal subsidy of Rs. 24,000 a year paid by the Government of India to the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, for a weekly mail service in both directions between Basrah and Baghdad was renewed in 1905 for ten years, this period to be reckoned from May 1904. In 1901 the Government of India ceased to contribute to a subsidy which had hitherto been paid to the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company on account of their service on the Karun; the former contribution of the Government of India to this subsidy was £1,000 per annum. The amount saved, however, was not diverted from South-Western Persia, but was applied instead to assisting the progress of land communications in that quarter. The three subsidies to which allusion has just been made constitute the only direct aid afforded by the British Government to private commercial enterprise in the Persian Gulf, and they are only given in consideration of definite services rendered to the state and to the public.

The period during which Lord Curzon held office was remarkable for the first considerable extensions of the telegraph system of the Persian Gulf which had taken place since 1869; they

Extensions of the telegraph.

were dictated by considerations of policy and strategy as well as of commercial advantage. The inadequacy of the communications between Maskat and the outside world was first of all remedied by the laying of a cable from Jask to Maskat which was opened for traffic in November 1901; in this enterprise, approved though it was in principle by His Majesty's Government, no financial assistance was rendered by the British Treasury. A second and perhaps more important scheme was propounded by

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Lord Curzon's Government in 1900 along with the first, but its realisation was delayed by the refusal of the Home Government to undertake a share in the expenditure and by doubts of a technical nature as to the best means of carrying it into effect; its object was the inclusion of the port of Bunder Abbas in the circuit of the Persian Gulf cables. This it was originally proposed to arrange by looping one of the existing cables between Jask and Bushire into Bunder Abbas bay; but in 1902 a proposal by the Naval Commander-in-Chief, that telegraphic communication should be extended to Bassidore, suggested the alternative of landing a cable on Henjam, where a British telegraph station had existed from 1868 to 1880, and of constructing a branch thence to Bunder Abbas. This alternative project was finally accepted by His Majesty's Government on the advice of Lord Curzon after he had personally visited Henjam in 1903, and in April 1904 one of the Bushire cables was relanded on the island and the telegraph station there reoccupied—without warning to the Persian Government—in virtue of the former concession which had never been revoked. Subsequently in May 1905 the permission of the Shah was obtained by Sir A. Hardinge at Tehran for the construction of a line from Henjam, partly aerial (across Kishm island) and partly submarine, to Bunder Abbas, and it was completed before the close of the year; this line was to be worked by Persian operatives, and on repayment of the cost of construction it was to become the property of the Persian Government.

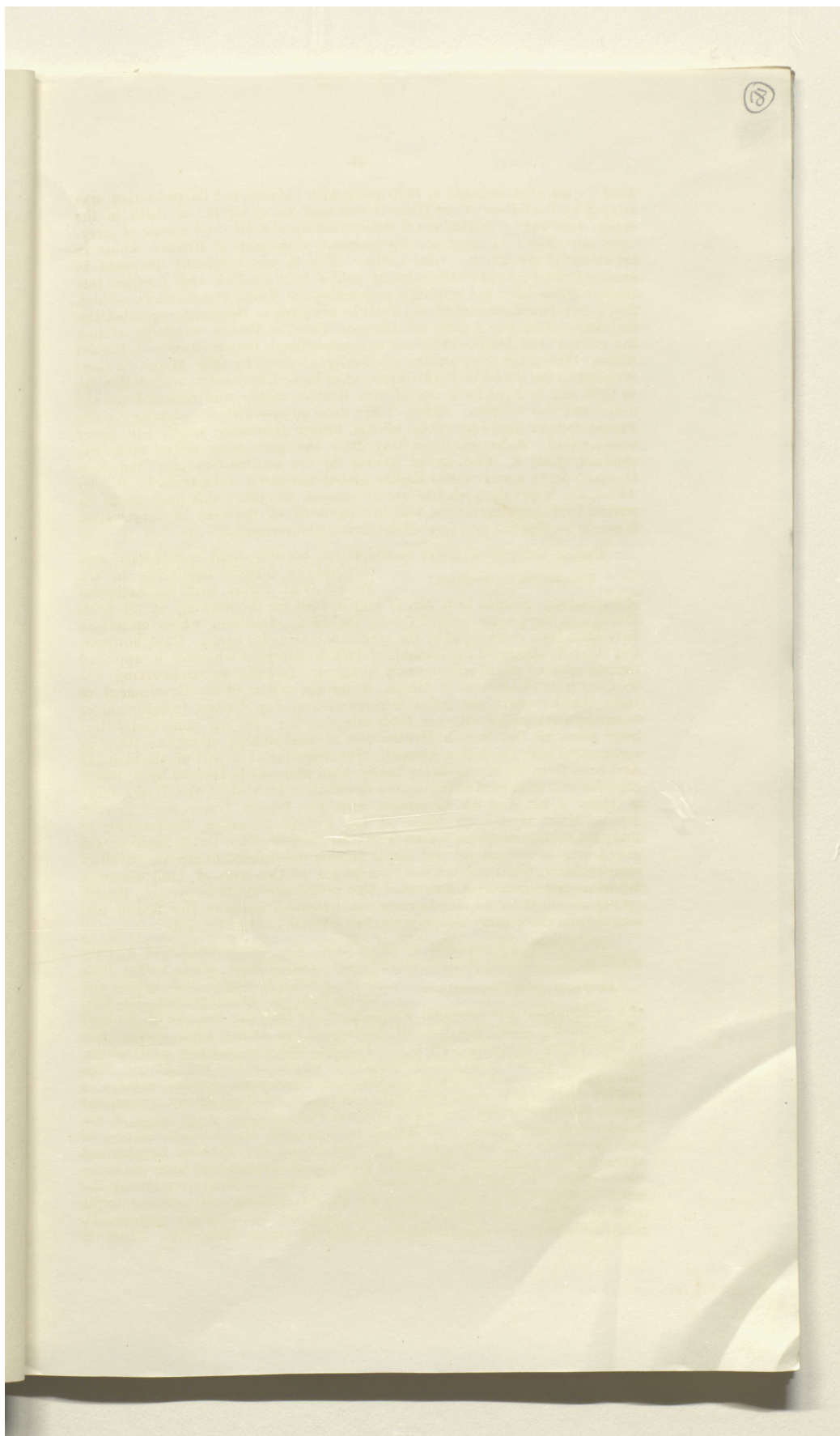
During the period under consideration no important concessions were obtained by British capitalists in the Persian Gulf region with the exception

Commercial concessions. of a monopoly granted to a Mr. D'Arcy in 1901 for the working of oil fields throughout the greater part of Persia, including Arabistan where operations have since been commenced by the syndicate bearing his name. Care, however, was taken to safeguard the interests of British enterprise wherever it appeared that an opening might subsequently be found. In 1902 an undertaking was obtained from the Sultan of Oman, under the orders of the Government of India, that he would not grant a concession to any foreign Government or Company for working the coal fields inland of Sur until an opportunity had been given to the British Government of undertaking operations there in conjunction with the Sultan himself. The irrigation of a part of the plains of Arabistan from the Karun River having been proposed in 1903-04 by a Dutch engineer who succeeded in interesting the Shah in his project, the Government of India, in virtue of an agreement with the Persian Government, in 1905 deputed Major Morton, an officer of the Punjab Irrigation Department, to study the conditions of the Karun tract; the project of the Dutch engineer was soon proved to be fantastic and Major Morton was ordered to prepare an alternative scheme, but it had not been completed at the time of Lord Curzon's departure from India. A guarantee that preference would be given to British agency should it be decided to carry out irrigation works on the Karun was sought from the Persian Government, but it could not be obtained.

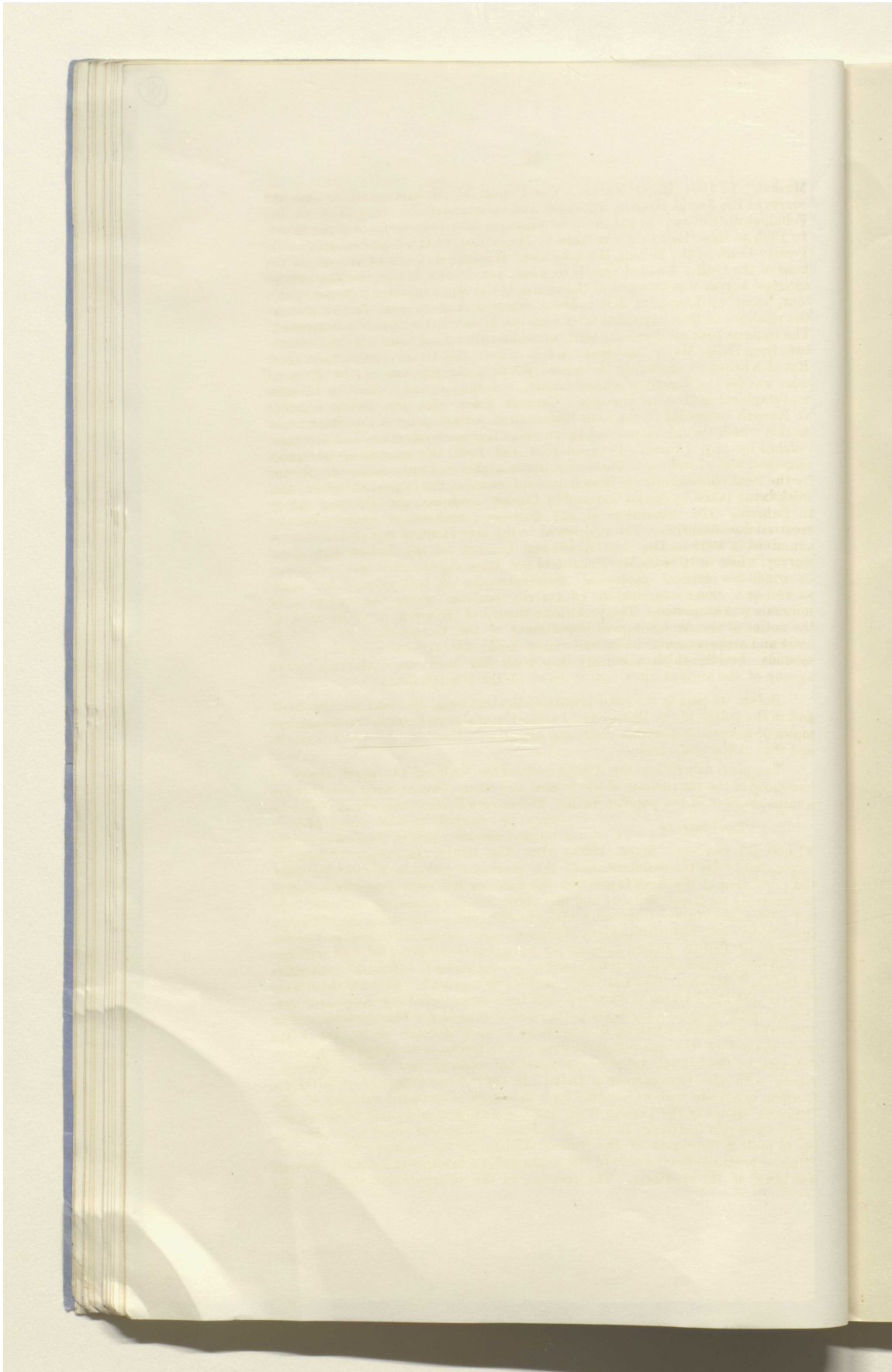
The foregoing paragraphs do not exhaust the manifestations of activity which resulted, during this strenuous period in the Persian Gulf, partly from

Land surveys and explorations. Lord Curzon's direct instructions and partly from his encouragement. The need of a geographical and historical handbook of the Gulf for the use of political officers having made itself felt, Mr. Lorimer of the Indian Civil Service was in 1904 placed on special duty in the Foreign Office to compile a Gazetteer, but the task proved to be one of considerable magnitude and has not yet been completed. In connection with the Gazetteer operations, detailed surveys of various districts were made during the cold season of 1904-05 by a party of Indian surveyors; they resulted in the production of large scale maps of the districts adjoining Maskat and Matrah in Oman, of the Bahrein islands, of the country about Koweit and between Koweit and the Turkish frontier, and of the Bushire peninsula. Numerous journeys of exploration were made by local officers. In 1901 Captain Cox, Political Agent at Maskat, traversed the whole of Wadi Yayin in Oman from the sea to its head and returned to the coast by Wadi Semail; in the following year the same officer performed a remarkable journey across the whole breadth of Oman from Abu Dhabi to

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Maskat. In 1904 Major Burton, Vice-Consul at Mahammerah, traced the course of the Jerahi river in Arabistan and investigated the geography of the Fellahieh district and the nature of the principal land-approaches to Khor Musa. In 1905 an important tour was made by Major Cox, at this time Resident in the Persian Gulf, in the Zaitun, Behbahan and Hindian districts of Persia at the head of the Gulf; it added greatly to what was known of the country and an accurate survey was obtained of the course of the Hindian river; Major Cox's tour, being continued to Khor Musa, enabled him to cast fresh light on the relations of that important inlet with the Karun River and the Bahmeshir. The impulse towards discovery still continuing after Lord Curzon's final departure from India, Major Cox made a trip across the Oman promontory from Ras-el-Kheimah to Sohar, in the course of which the position of the Baraimi oasis was for the first time astronomically determined, and a quantity of new topographical data were obtained; Captain Knox also, the Political Agent at Koweit, succeeded in reaching Hafar, an important point in the interior of Arabia which though mentioned by previous European travellers had not been reached by any of them. Between 1903 and 1905 the geography of many large and almost unknown tracts of Eastern Arabia was successfully elucidated by the local political officers from native information, the largest shares in this work being taken by Major Cox and by Captain Prideaux, the Political Agent in Bahrein. The mineralogical and geological branches of exploration also received due attention. The coal seams in the hinterland of Sur in Oman were examined in 1901 by Drs. von Krafft and Oldham of the Indian Geological Survey, while in 1904-05 Mr. Pilgrim of the same department was employed to conduct a general geological reconnaissance on both sides of the Gulf, as well as a closer examination of certain localities where the existence of minerals was suspected. The prehistoric tumuli of Bahrein were brought to the notice of the Archaeological Department of the Government of India in 1904 and arrangements have now been made for excavating some of the mounds, besides which a cursory inspection has been made through native agency of the ancient sites near Ganawa on the Persian Coast.

Before we pass to the local history of the territorial divisions of the Gulf and to the policy of the British and Indian Governments in each, two remaining topics of general importance claim our attention,—that of the pearl fisheries and that of the arms trade.

The pearl fisheries on the Arabian side of the Gulf are the chief source of livelihood of the inhabitants of the littoral, and on the Persian coast also they are a valuable asset of the popular wealth. The economic importance of the fisheries

Pearl fisheries.

may be gauged by the value of their annual output which in 1904-05 exceeded £1,000,000 sterling. Since 1853, when the British Government assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the maritime peace in the Persian Gulf, the protection of the Arab interest in the fisheries has been generally regarded as devolving on Great Britain; and this obligation the British Government have not neglected to fulfil by opposing, hitherto with success, the intrusion of foreign speculators equipped with modern appliances upon the native industry. Various projects of British Indian subjects for engaging in the pearl fisheries with improved apparatus were discountenanced or prevented by the British authorities in the Gulf between 1900 and 1902 and led to no result. In 1899 there were reports that the Turkish Government had been approached by European projectors with proposals for pearl fishing concessions in the Persian Gulf, and in 1900, the negotiations having then assumed a more definite shape, the Porte were warned of the possession of prescriptive rights, in regard to the Arabian fisheries, by the littoral Arabs whose chiefs had entered into special arrangements with the Government of India. In 1901 it was definitely stated that a German syndicate were negotiating for a monopoly of the pearl fisheries on the Ottoman shores of the Persian Gulf, and the British Ambassador at Constantinople was again instructed to refer to the moral obligation under which British lay to protect the rights of the Trucial Chiefs in the matter; the Turkish Minister promised to take note of the Ambassador's remarks and nothing further was heard of the syndicate. The question of the international status of the

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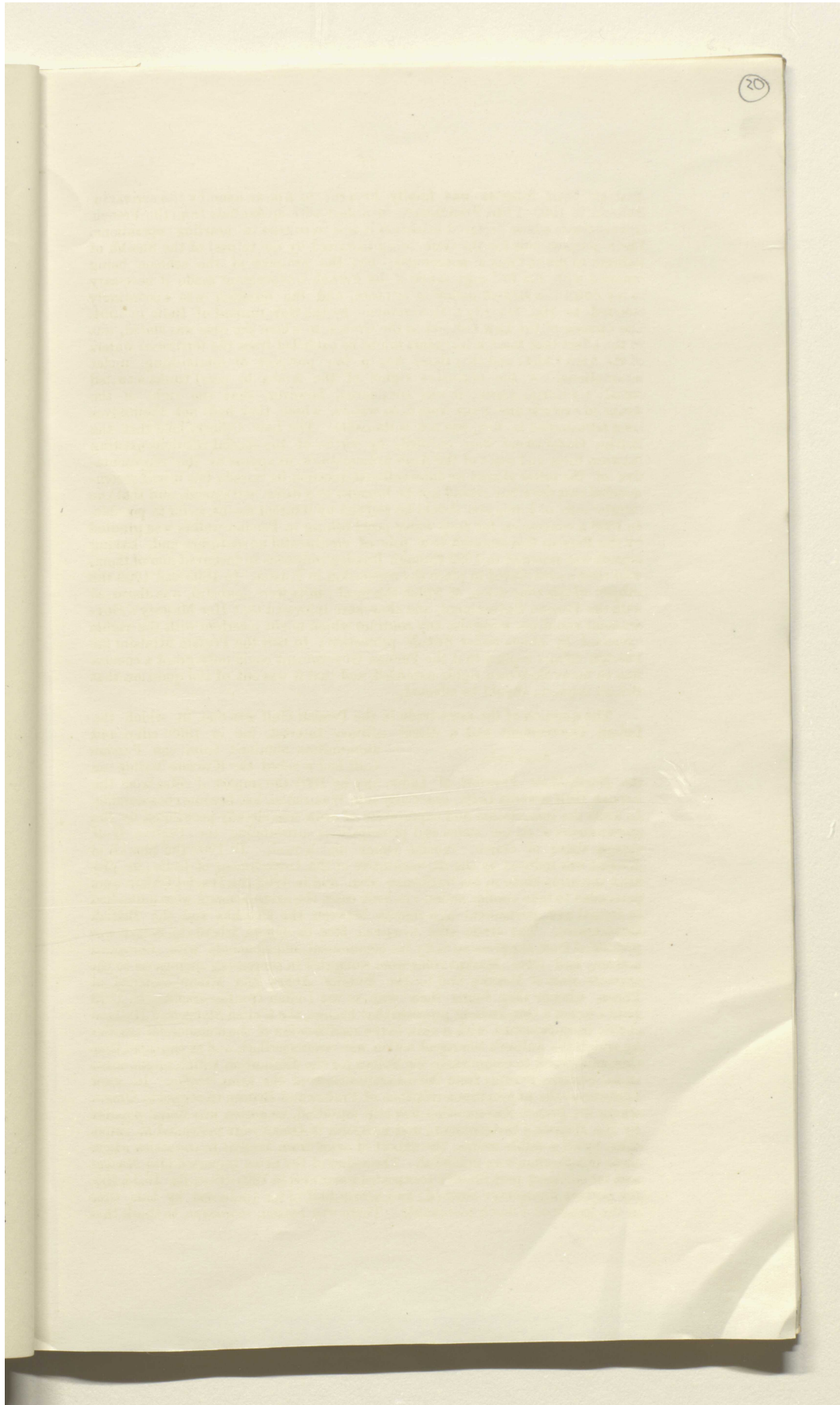
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Arabian pearl fisheries was finally brought to a clear issue by the arrival in Bahrein in 1903 of two Frenchmen, furnished with credentials from the French Government, whose declared intention it was to engage in pearling operations. Their purpose was for the time being thwarted by the refusal of the Shaikh of Bahrein to grant them a concession; but the prospect of the scheme being renewed with the full cognisance of the French Government made it necessary to lay down the British policy in advance, and the question was accordingly referred to His Majesty's Government by the Government of India in 1904. The opinion of the Law Officers to the Crown, to whom the case was stated, was to the effect that foreign intruders might be excluded from the territorial waters of the Arab Chiefs and that there was a fair prospect of establishing, under international law, the exclusive rights of the Arabs to pearl banks situated outside territorial limits; it was considered, however, that the right of the Arabs to exclude foreigners from deep waters, where they had not themselves been accustomed to fish, was not sustainable. The Law Officers held that the British Government were entitled, by virtue of the special relations existing between them and some of the Arab principalities, to appear as the representative of the latter should an international question be raised; but it was recommended that the affair should not be brought to a direct settlement, and that the interference of foreigners should be resisted by indirect means, so far as possible. In 1898 a concession for deep-water pearl fishing in Persian waters was granted by the Persian Government to a pair of continental adventurers and, having lapsed, was renewed in 1899 through Russian influence in favour of one of them, who then endeavoured to place the concession in Russia. In 1899 and 1900 the subject of this concession, of which the local limits were doubtful, was discussed with the Persian Government, and they were informed that Her Majesty's Government could not recognise any contract which might interfere with the rights exercised by chiefs under British protection; to this the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that the Persian Government could only grant a concession so far as their own rights extended, and that it was out of the question that British interests should be affected.

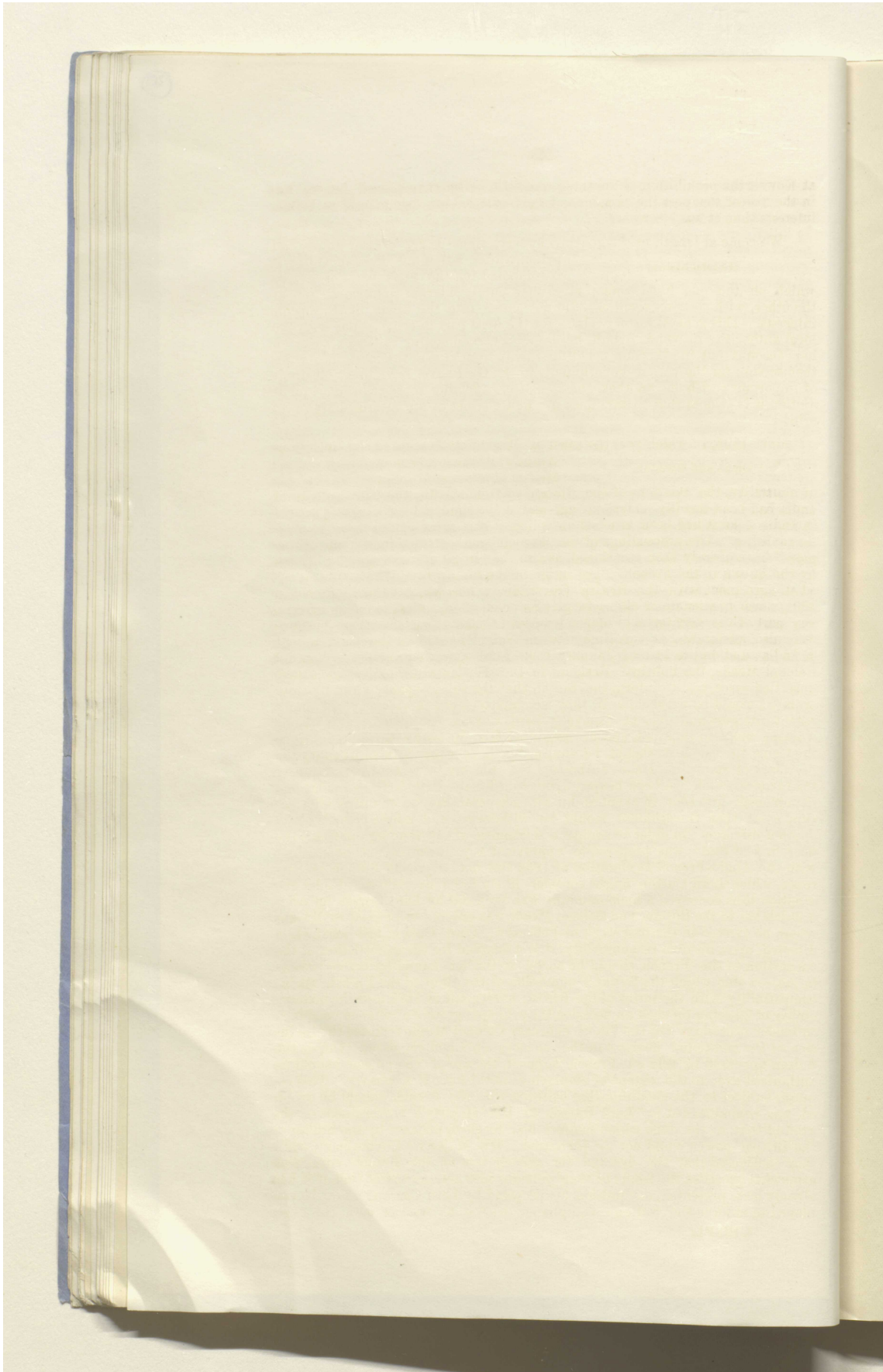
The question of the arms trade in the Persian Gulf was one in which the Indian Government had a direct military interest, for in 1898 rifles and ammunition obtained from the Persian Gulf had reached the Kurram Valley on the North-West Frontier of India, and by 1901 the import of rifles from the Persian Gulf towards India, especially into Waziristan, had become considerable.

In 1899 the importation and exportation of arms was already prohibited by the governments of all the states and principalities surrounding the Persian Gulf except those of Oman, Trucial Oman and Koweit. In 1900 the Shaikh of Koweit was induced by the representative of the Government of India to prohibit the arms trade in his territories also, and in 1902 the Trucial Chiefs were persuaded to take similar action: in both cases the arrangements were embodied in formal and permanent agreements between the Shaikhs and the British Government. The trade still remained free in Oman, where the Sultan was precluded from suppressing it by his commercial engagements with European powers, and from Maskat rifles were smuggled in increasing quantities to the opposite coast of Mekran and to the Bunder Abbas and Minab districts of Persia, whence they found their way to the Indian frontier tracts. In 1902 Lord Curzon's Government proposed that France, the United States and Holland should be approached with a view to the modification of the commercial treaties by which the Sultan's liberty of action was circumscribed, and at the same time they undertook to compensate the Sultan for the diminution which might ensue in his customs receipts from the discontinuance of the arms traffic. In view however of the unpropitious relations of France and Britain in regard to Oman, where the French flag question was still unsettled, no action was found possible by His Majesty's Government; and measures in Oman were restricted to impeding, by all possible means, the export of arms from Maskat to countries where their introduction was unlawful. The value of the arms imported into Maskat and for the most part illicitly reexported amounted in 1904-05 to Rs 16,14,465, the highest figure ever reached; and nearly half of the trade was by this time in the hands of French merchants. There was reason, moreover, to think that

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at Koweit the prohibition of the trade was little better than a dead letter; but in the case of that port the existence of the traffic was less detrimental to British interests than it was elsewhere.

We come at length to the general history, since 1899, of the states and principalities adjoining Persian Gulf; it is composed for the most part of events which on the one hand were of more than purely internal significance and on the other, with certain exceptions, did not enter into the arena of European interests. This general history relates for the most part to transactions with the local authorities in which Britain has been concerned, acting in some cases on her account but in others on behalf of clients from among the local authorities themselves; for the various governments in the Gulf have few direct dealings of importance with one another, and in matters affecting more than one jurisdiction it is seldom that Britain does not figure either as an intermediary or an arbiter.

Since 1895, in which year the town of Maskat was captured by rebellious Arabs while the local representatives of the British Government preserved an attitude of neutrality, the relations of the Sultan of Oman with the Government of India had been steadily deteriorating, and at the time of Lord Curzon's arrival in India a point had been reached at which it was necessary to resort to drastic remedies. The proceedings of the French gunboats "Gabès" and "Scorpion" have already been mentioned, as also the virtual grant of Bunder Jisseh by the Sultan to the French. The action of the Sultan in this case contravened an agreement with the British Government into which he had entered in 1891, never to alienate or otherwise give for occupation, unless to Great Britain, any part of the territories or dependencies of Oman. Various other questions were also outstanding at this time between Saiyid Faisal and the Government of India; and on the 24th of January 1899 Lord Curzon proposed to instruct Colonel Meade, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to deal with these unsettled cases, and to inform the Sultan that the subsidy paid to him by Government would be withheld until they were disposed of; in view of the Sultan's recent intrigues and evident disloyalty Lord Curzon considered that a serious warning was also required, and he consulted His Majesty's Government as to the terms in which it should be administered. On the 25th of January the Secretary of State for India authorised the Viceroy to remind the Sultan of the favours which had been heaped upon him by the British Government and to admonish him that, in event of his attitude continuing to be unfriendly, the support of that Government would be withdrawn and might possibly take another direction: in order to compel a settlement of outstanding questions the Secretary of State was prepared to approve of any measures, not inconsistent with the Anglo-French Declaration of 1862 and not requiring French concurrence, which Lord Curzon might consider likely to be efficacious. Under the sanction thus conveyed a memorandum was prepared by Lord Curzon for communication to the Sultan, and Colonel Meade was ordered to proceed to Maskat where he arrived in the first week of February; Lord Curzon had meanwhile directed, upon his own responsibility, that a demand for the cancellation of the concession to the French should be added to the memorandum before presentation,—a step which the Sultan's admission of the grant to the French, its incompatibility with the terms of the British agreement of 1891 and the undesirability of ignoring on such an occasion the principal ground of offence combined to render necessary. On the 7th of February Colonel Meade reported the inclusion of the additional demand in the memorandum and suggested that, as the Sultan appeared to rely on French support, the use of compulsion should be authorised even to the extent of employing naval force if necessary. This request, subject to the condition that collision with the French should be avoided, was recommended by Lord Curzon to His Majesty's Government on the ground that, at the stage which matters had reached, defiance by the Sultan of the British power could not be permitted. His Majesty's Government, while they considered that the demand for cancellation of the French concession somewhat exceeded the limits of their previous instructions, agreed that, if it had already been presented, compulsion (as proposed by Lord Curzon) might be employed to enforce the Sultan's compliance with it as well as with the other

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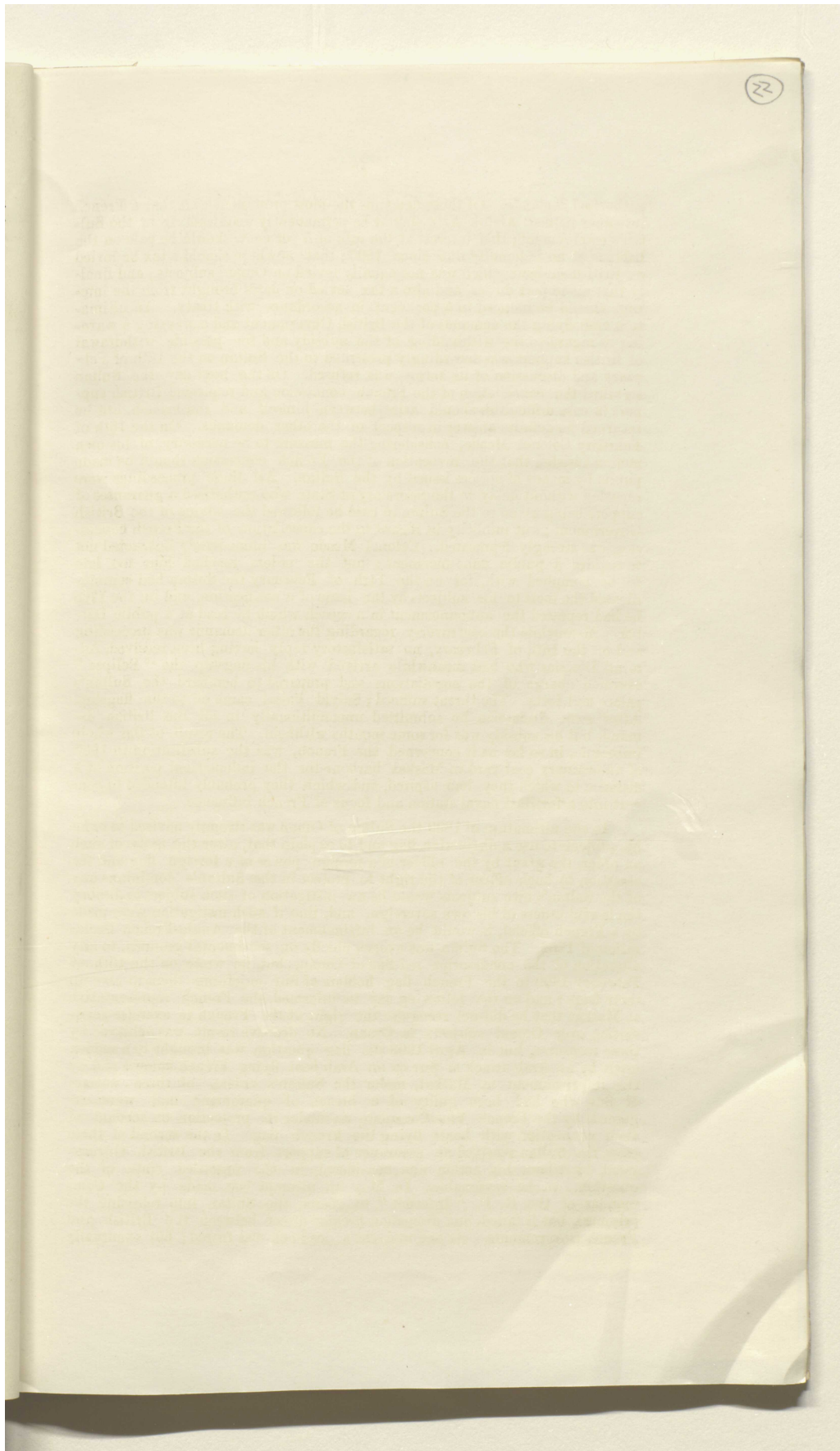
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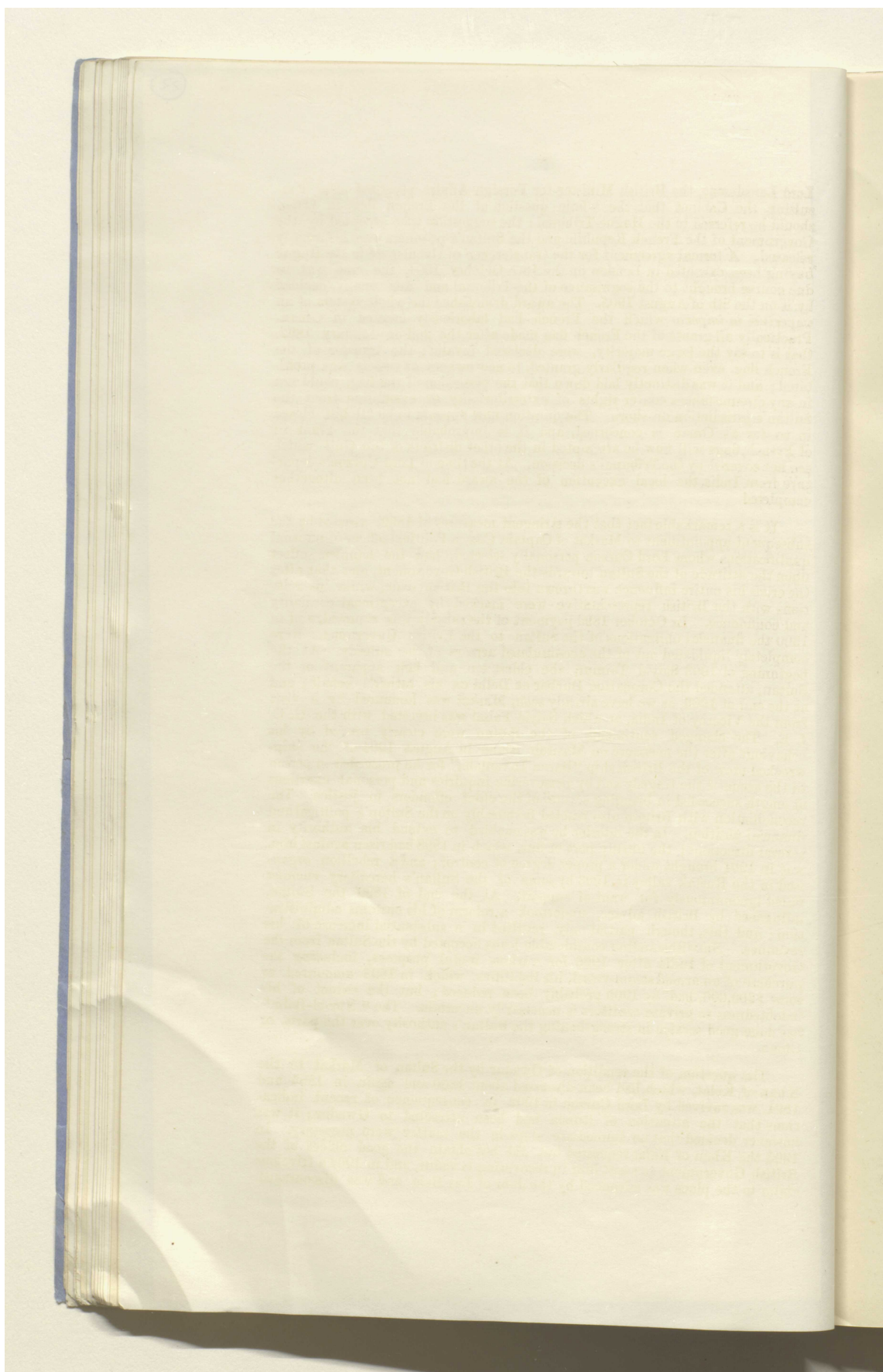
authorised demands. Of those demands the most prominent were that a French intriguer named Abdul Aziz should be permanently dismissed from the Sultan's employment; that interest at the rate of 5 per cent. should be paid on the balance of an indemnity due since 1895; that nowhere should a tax be levied on British subjects which was not equally levied on Omani subjects; and finally that all import duties, and also a tax levied on dates brought from the interior, should be reduced to 5 per cent. in accordance with treaty. An ultimatum embodying the demands of the British Government and conveying a warning in regard to the withholding of the subsidy and the possible withdrawal of British support was accordingly presented to the Sultan on the 13th of February and discussion of its terms was refused. On the next day the Sultan signified the cancellation of the French concession and requested British support in case difficulties should arise between himself and the French, but he returned no definite answer in respect of the other demands. On the 15th of February Colonel Meade, considering the measure to be necessary, of his own motion insisted that the revocation of the French concession should be made public by means of notices issued by the Sultan. All these proceedings were reported without delay to the Secretary of State who authorised a guarantee of support being given to the Sultan in case he followed the advice of the British Government; but publicity in regard to the cancellation of the French concession was strongly deprecated. Colonel Meade was immediately instructed not to require a public announcement; but the orders reached him too late to be complied with, for on the 14th of February the Sultan had communicated the facts to his subjects by the issue of a notification, and on the 17th he had repeated the announcement in a speech which he read at a public Darbar. Meanwhile the controversy regarding the other demands was proceeding and on the 16th of February, no satisfactory reply having been received, Admiral Douglas who had meanwhile arrived with his flagship the "Eclipse" assumed charge of the negotiations and prepared to bombard the Sultan's palace and forts. The threat sufficed; Saiyid Faisal came off to the flagship. After some discussion he submitted unconditionally to all the British demand, but his subsidy was for some months withheld. The result of the whole imbroglio, in so far as it concerned the French, was the substitution in 1900 of an ordinary coal yard in Maskat harbour for the independent position at a distance to which they had aspired, and which they probably intended to convert into a fortified naval station and focus of French influence.

In the ultimatum of 1899 the Sultan of Oman was strongly advised to order his subjects to use a distinctive flag and to explain that, after the issue of such an order, the grant by the officer of a foreign power of a foreign flag and the assertion by such officer of the right to protect in the Sultan's dominions any of the Sultan's own subjects would be an instigation of such subject to disobey the lawful orders of his own sovereign, and, that if such instigation were made by a French official, it would be an infringement of the Anglo-French Declaration of 1862. The Sultan was averse, chiefly on sentimental grounds, to any alteration of the nondescript red flag of Oman, but he wrote on the 16th of February 1899 to the French flag holders of Sur enjoining them to give up their flags; and on the following day he informed the French representative at Maskat that he did not recognise the right of the French to exercise jurisdiction over Omani subjects in Oman. No decisive result was achieved by these measures, but in April 1903 the flag question was brought to a sudden crisis by an Arab attack at Sur on an Arab boat flying French colours and by the imprisonment at Maskat, under the Sultan's orders, of three natives of Sur who had been guilty of a breach of quarantine and were regarded by the French Vice-Consulate as under its protection on account of their connection with boats flying the French flag. In the second of these cases the Sultan received an assurance of support from the British Government by whom his action was considered, in the unsettled state of the question, to be reasonable. In May an attempt was made by the Commander of the R. F. "Infernet" to coerce the Sultan into releasing the prisoners, but it failed, and discussion became direct between the British and French Governments. At one moment a deadlock was feared; but eventually

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Lord Lansdowne, the British Minister for Foreign Affairs, proposed after consulting the Cabinet that the whole question of the French flag in Oman should be referred to the Hague Tribunal: the suggestion was accepted by the Government of the French Republic and the Sultan's prisoners were informally released. A formal agreement for the transference of the dispute to the Hague having been executed in London on the 13th October 1904, the case was in due course brought to the cognisance of the Tribunal and was finally decided by it on the 8th of August 1905. The award demolished the whole system of an *imperium in imperio* which the French had laboriously erected in Oman. Practically all grants of the French flag made after the 2nd of January 1892, that is to say the large majority, were declared invalid; the transfer of the French flag, even when regularly granted, to new owners or vessels was prohibited; and it was distinctly laid down that the possession of the flag, could not in any circumstances confer rights of extraterritoriality or exemption from the Sultan's jurisdiction on shore. The question now appears to be all but closed in so far as Oman is concerned, and it is improbable that the grant of French flags will now be attempted in the other districts of the Gulf which are not covered by the Tribunal's decision. At the time of Lord Curzon's departure from India the local execution of the award had not been altogether completed.

It is a remarkable fact that the stringent measures of 1899, assisted by the subsequent appointment to Maskat of Captain Cox, a Political officer of unusual qualifications whom Lord Curzon personally selected, had the happiest effect upon the attitude of the Sultan towards the British Government, and that after the crisis his entire influence was thrown into the British scale, while his relations with the British representative were marked by exceptional cordiality and confidence. In October 1899 payment of the subsidy was resumed, and in 1900 the financial obligations of the Sultan to the British Government were completely liquidated out of the accumulated arrears of the subsidy. At the beginning of 1903 Saiyid Taimur, the eldest son and heir apparent of the Sultan, attended the Coronation Durbar at Delhi on his father's behalf; and at the end of 1903, as we have already seen, Maskat was honoured by a visit from the Viceroy of India, at which Saiyid Faisal was invested with the G. C. I. E. The changed sentiments of the Sultan were clearly proved by his behaviour after the massacre on Masirah island in August 1904 of the shipwrecked crew of the British ship "Baron Inverdale," for he proceeded in person to the scene of the tragedy and by persevering inquiries and personal exertions at length succeeded in bringing several of the chief offenders to justice. The reconciliation with Britain also reacted favourably on the Sultan's political and financial position. In the interior he was enabled to extend his authority in several directions; the unruly port of Sur, which in 1898 had risen against him, was in 1901 brought under a proper degree of control; and a rebellion organised in the Rustak valley in 1903 by some of the Sultan's hereditary enemies failed ignominiously for want of support. At the end of 1899 the Sultan, influenced by British advice, undertook a reform of his customs administration; and this, though partial only, resulted in a substantial increase of his revenues. Notwithstanding considerable loans accepted by the Sultan from the Government of India after 1900 for various useful purposes, including the purchase of an armed steam-vessel, his liabilities, which in 1893 amounted to some \$200,000, had by 1905 probably been reduced; but the extent of his indebtedness to private creditors is necessarily uncertain. The "Nur-el-Bahr" has done good service in strengthening the Sultan's authority over the ports of Oman.

The question of the rendition of Gwadar by the Sultan of Maskat to the Khan of Kelat, which had been discussed about 1860 and again in 1885 and 1891, was revived by Lord Curzon in 1902 in consequence of recent indications that the attention of Russia had been attracted to Gwadar; it was however decided that no immediate steps in the matter were necessary. In 1903 the Khan of Kelat requested but did not obtain the good offices of the British Government to assist him in recovering Gwadar, and in 1904 a frivolous claim to the place was advanced by the Jam of Las Bela and was discouraged.

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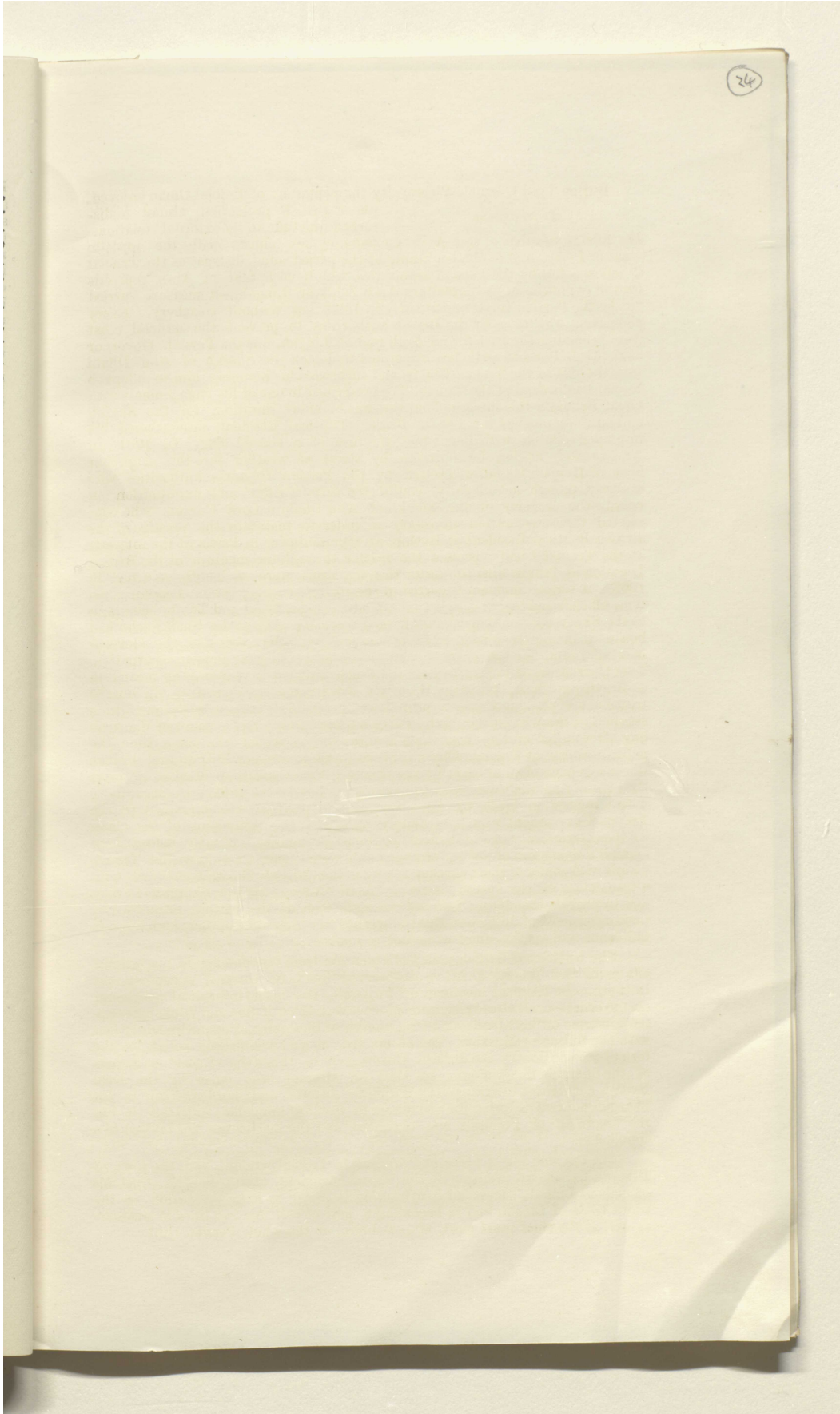
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During Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty the pentarchy of Trucial Oman enjoyed, under British protection, almost undisturbed quietude in its external relations. The foreign dealings of this Arab confederacy are chiefly with the opposite coast of Persia, and at the beginning of the period some distrust of the Trucial Chiefs was felt by the Persian authorities, who lived in fear of Arab reprisals for the expulsion of the hereditary Arab Zabit of Lingah,—a measure carried out by the Persian Government early in 1899, not without treachery. Every precaution was taken by the British authorities to prevent the Trucial coast from becoming the base for an Arab raid on Lingah, but the Persian Governor of the Gulf Ports nevertheless attempted to detach the Shaikh of Abu Dhabi from the rest of the Trucial Chiefs, and succeeded in inducing him to adopt a special flag instead of the Trucial flag prescribed in one of his engagements with Great Britain; this intrigue however, was of short duration, for the Shaikh on being admonished through the British Political Resident, discontinued his improper relations with Persia and the use of a special flag. In 1901 an Arab vessel, having been driven by stress of weather into the neighbourhood of Henjam island, was seized by the Persian Customs authorities who unjustly, though not illegally, confiscated certain rifles and ammunition on board, the property of the Shaikh of Abu Dhabi; Lord Curzon, who considered their restoration necessary in order to maintain the prestige of the British Political Resident at Bushire as representative in Persia of the interests of the Trucial Chiefs, pressed the matter through the medium of the British Legation at Tehran with the result that the arms were at length returned in 1903. A serious incident occurred in the spring of 1904, when Persian Customs officials suddenly occupied the islands of Abu Musa and Tamb, belonging to the Shaikhdom of Shargah, and hauled down the flag of the Shaikh who had hoisted it in the previous year, in accordance with the advice of the Government of India, for the express purpose of preventing a Persian usurpation. Lord Curzon urged the removal of the Persian flags and employés by means of a British gunboat, but His Majesty's Government preferred a diplomatic treatment of the question; a protest was accordingly lodged at Tehran which resulted in the withdrawal of the Persian posts and the replacement of the Arab flag after an interval of about three months only. About the same time the political status of Trucial Oman came in question between Britain and France in consequence of an attempt by the French Vice-Consul at Maskat to press the claim of an alleged French subject on the Shaikh of Dibai; in accordance with a suggestion made by Lord Curzon the position was explained to the French Government who immediately agreed to the settlement of the claim by the intermediacy of the British political authorities. Shortly before Lord Curzon's demission of office, arrangements were made to supply the Trucial Chiefs with copies of their agreements with the British Government and with a translation of the speech made by Lord Curzon at the Shargah Darbar, and to provide them from time to time with flags of the pattern prescribed by their agreement of 1820,—in rigid adherence to which some of them had, through indolence and apathy, shown themselves remiss.

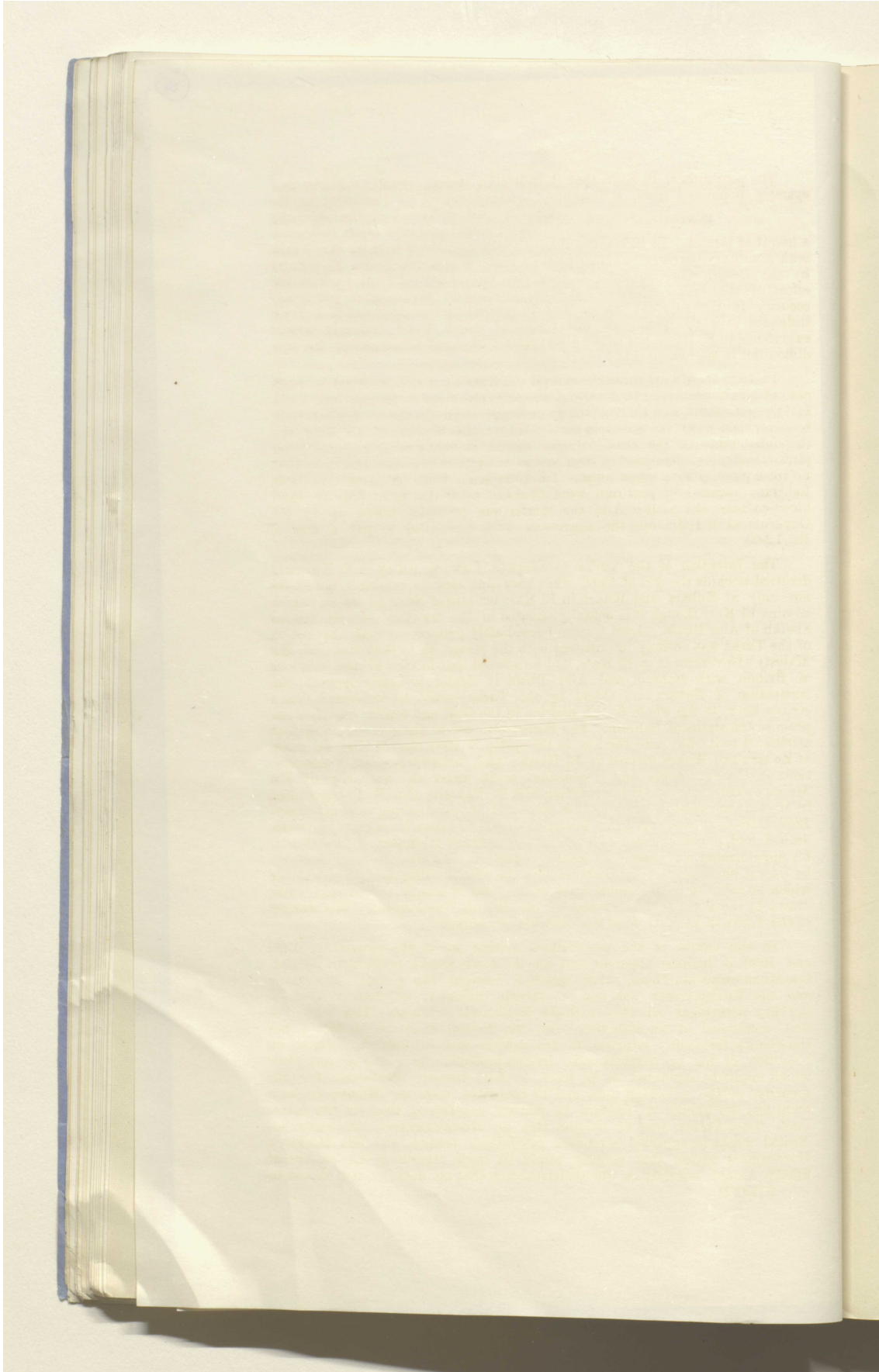
The traditional British policy of abstention from interference in the internal affairs of the Trucial Coast was observed by Lord Curzon, except in one instance. In 1900 the headman of Fujeirah, the most influential personage on the coast—once already mentioned—between Khor Kalba and Dibba, attempted to throw off his allegiance to the Sheikh of Shargah and opened negotiations with the Sultan of Maskat. The events led, as we have already noted, to the formal recognition by the British Government of this strip of coast as a part of the Shargah Shaikhdom. In 1902 an attempt was made by the local British authorities to arrange the Fujeirah dispute, and Lord Curzon in his Shargah address exhorted the disputants to seek an amicable settlement; but the headman of Fujeirah was obstinate, and the matter was not pressed to a conclusion.

The era was one of peace and progress in Trucial Oman, and the town of Dibai in particular, profiting by the mismanagement of the Persian Customs officials at Lingah, succeeded in attracting to itself a large proportion of the transit trade of Lingah and in becoming a port of call for two lines of steamers as well as the chief pearl mart, after Bahrein, of the whole Persian Gulf.

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The peninsula of El Katr, though in itself a barren, poverty-stricken and sparsely populated tract, is important on account of its proximity to the Arabian pearl banks and of the tendency

El Katr.

which its coast has always shown to become a haunt of pirates. El Bidaa, the chief place in El Katr, is held by the Turks with a military garrison, but their position there is not recognised as regular by the British Government. During the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon the efforts of the Indian Government were directed to maintaining peace and security in the adjacent waters and to preventing the extension of Turkish influence over the peninsula, one result of which would certainly be—as experience in El Hassa has shown—an increase of piracy accompanied by new difficulties in repressing that form of crime.

In 1899 there were three piracies off the Katr coast and in 1900 a fresh case of piracy occurred; but various obstacles prevented a prompt and satisfactory settlement and in 1902 the proceedings were dropped. Lord Curzon, however, laid down the principle that in future the Sheikh of El Katr and the inhabitants of the coast villages should be held strictly responsible for piratical offences committed in their waters or with connivance, and since 1905 no fresh piracies have taken place. In 1900 some boats of Amamara from Bahrein, engaged in pearling, were attacked off Wakra in El Katr by their blood-enemies, the Al Bin Ali; the matter was promptly taken up by the Government of India and the aggressors were compelled to pay a fine of Rs. 1,500.

The intention of the Turks to adopt a forward policy in El Katr was declared towards the end of 1902, when they prepared to establish Mudirates not only at Zubara and Wakra in El Katr but also at Khor El Odeid, which adjoins El Katr though it is actually situated in the territory of the Trucial Sheikh of Abu Dhabi. Lord Curzon immediately pointed out that the action of the Turks was entirely inconsistent with the policy, up to that time, of His Majesty's Government in El Katr, and he advised that in view of the relations of Britain with Bahrein and Abu Dhabi it should be firmly opposed; the occupation of Zubara and Odeid by the Turks would, he considered, deal a serious blow to the whole British position in the Gulf and would gravely compromise the status of Bahrein. The Porte continued to disclaim the intentions attributed to it; but none the less, in the spring of 1903, the Mudirs designate of Zubara and Wakra arrived in El Hassa; and, notwithstanding representations at Constantinople and dispositions made under the authority of His Majesty's Government for intercepting him in Bahrein, the Mudir appointed to Wakra succeeded in reaching that place and in establishing himself there. Lord Curzon at once urged that measures should be taken to obtain his withdrawal, and, in consequence of a peremptory demand addressed to the Porte, his appointment was shortly afterwards cancelled. He was replaced however by a local nominee, equally invested with the official status of Mudir—a status which he retained until October 1904 when it was at length definitively withdrawn by the Porte at the instance of the British Government. The designs of the Turks in El Katr were thus effectually checked.

In the course of the negotiations arising out of the piracies of 1899 and 1900 it became apparent that the *de facto* Sheikh of El Katr, Ahmed-bin-Muhammad-bin-Thani, whose position between the pirates, the Turks and the British power was one of extreme difficulty, was desirous of entering into permanent relations with the British Government. This wish was first mentioned at an interview with the British Resident in 1899; but the Sheikh frequently returned to the subject and in 1902 he offered, on condition of his being taken under British protection, to reside at any place which might be appointed in El Katr, to hold himself responsible for the security of the adjoining seas, and to cooperate with the British Government and the Sheikh of Bahrein in matters concerning them on the mainland. Lord Curzon was of opinion that an arrangement of the nature indicated might be expected to produce satisfactory results, and His Majesty's Government agreed that enquiry might be made regarding the position of Sheikh Ahmad, but only on the understanding that no decisive step should be

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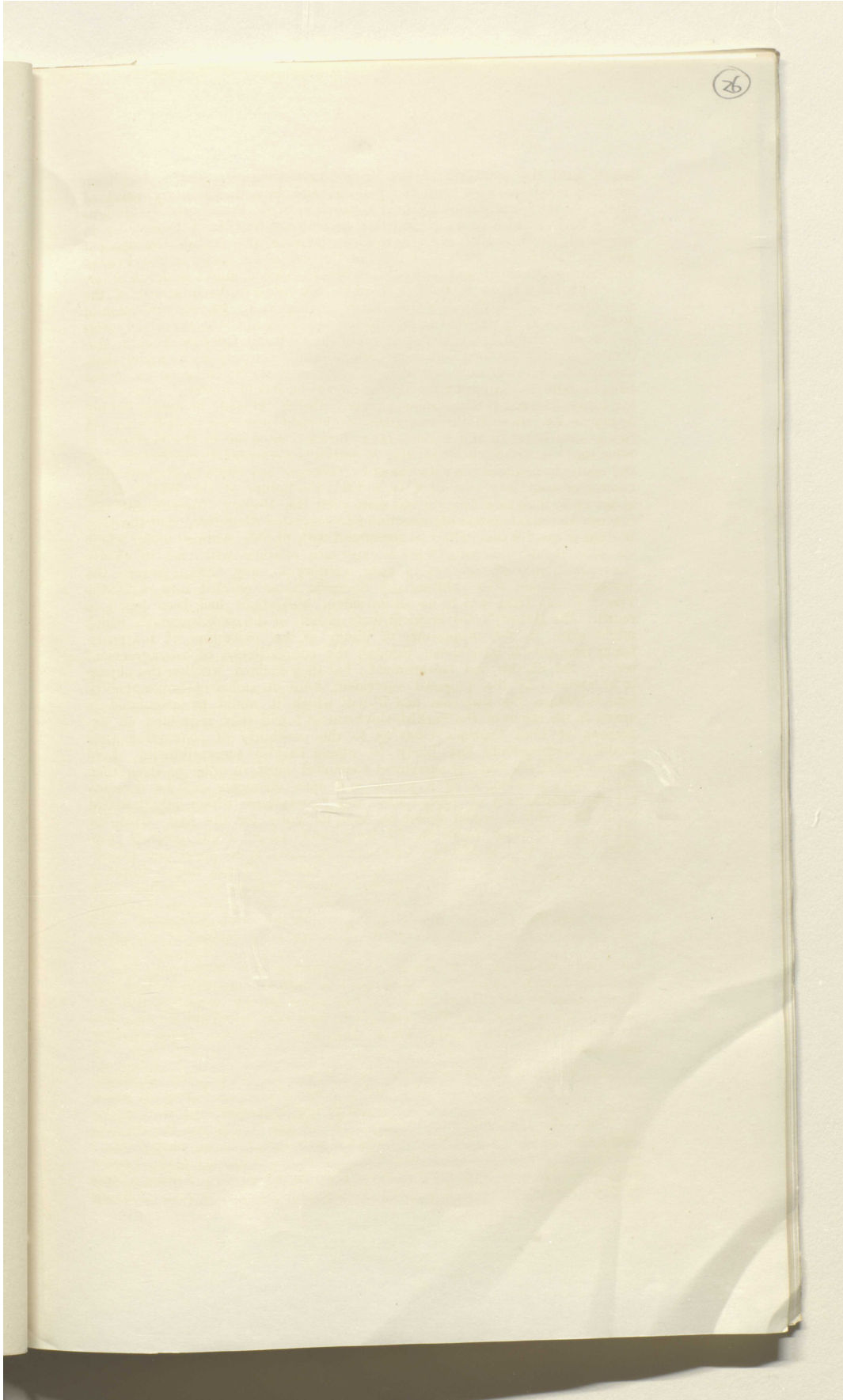
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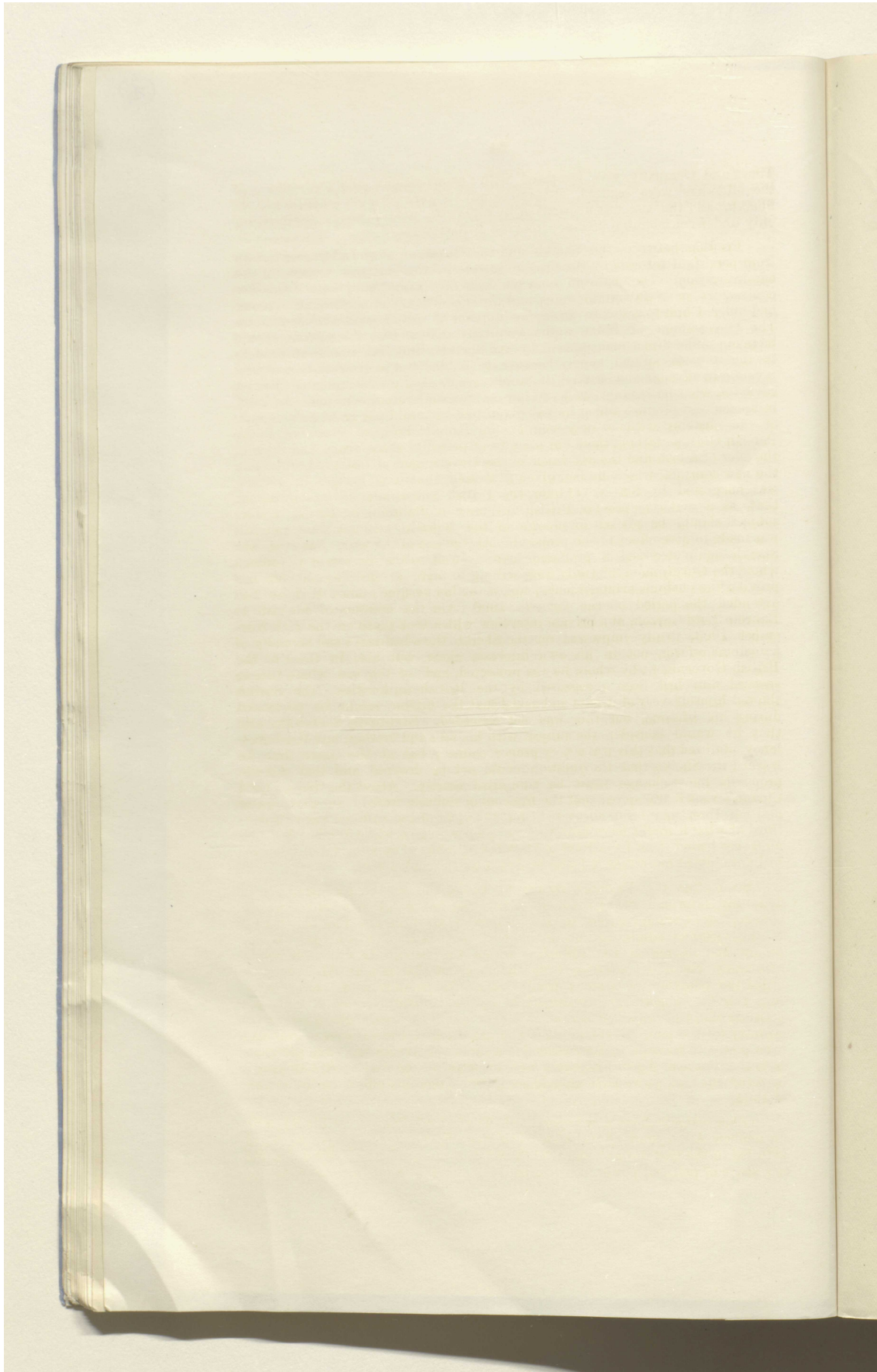
taken until the extension of the British protectorate in Arabia had been carefully considered both from the political and from the military point of view. At the beginning of 1903, in connection with the aggressive designs of the Turks in El Katr which had then become manifest, Lord Curzon again suggested the conclusion of an agreement between the British Government and the Sheikh. In November 1903, on the eve of his cruise in the Persian Gulf, during which it was thought that Sheikh Ahmad might seek an interview with the Viceroy in Bahrein, Lord Curzon asked to be informed of the final decision of His Majesty's Government in regard to British protection of El Katr: the reply was that in view of the adherence of the Turks to the *status quo*, as exemplified in the abandonment of their scheme for new Turkish Muridates, negotiations for a British protectorate could not properly be undertaken, and that in these circumstances communications to the Sheikh must be limited to assurances of continued friendship so long as he should abstain from entering into engagements with other powers. Sheikh Ahmad, however, did not appear in Bahrein and the assurances authorised remained undelivered. A few months later, in March 1904, Lord Curzon pointed out to the Secretary of State that the *status quo* which His Majesty's Government desired to recognise and maintain included the withdrawal by Turkey of any claim to administrative control or suzerainty over El Katr, and that the failure of the Turks, so far, to act up to their assurances in this matter left His Majesty's Government free to reconsider the question of protection; he suggested therefore, that the time was opportune for concluding an agreement with Sheikh Ahmad under which the latter should bind himself not to enter into relations with, not to receive the representative of, and not to cede territory to, any foreign power: the agreement would thus substantially resemble those entered into with the Trucial Chiefs from which no inconvenient obligations had been found to result. His Majesty's Government were sensible of the inconveniences which might arise, in the suppression of piracy or the protection of the pearl-banks from outside interference, through the non-existence of an agreement between the Sheikh and Government; but they doubted whether the objects to be attained by the proposed agreement were of sufficient importance to counterbalance the suspicion and ill-will which it would be calculated to arouse in the minds of the Turkish Government; and they requested an expression of Lord Curzon's views as to the possibility of concluding some modified arrangement less likely to wound Turkish susceptibilities. Lord Curzon considered that any agreement concluded must, in order to strengthen the Sheikh's position, be of a public and open character and he deprecated the introduction of precautions and reservations which might defeat their own object, which might be held to imply for the first time the existence of Turkish rights in El Katr, and which might possibly preclude a completely satisfactory agreement at some more opportune season: as an alternative, however, he suggested that Sheikh Ahmad might formally admit that the treaty of 1868, concluded with his father, was binding upon himself also—a step which would afford a basis for a certain degree of British control over the maritime relations of the Sheikh with foreigners. His Majesty's Government, however, saw no advantage in a revival of the agreement of 1868 because, for the purpose in view, it could only be made effective by giving it an interpretation considerably in excess of what its actual terms would bear; and, having regard to the general sense of insecurity and suspicion prevailing in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf, they were unwilling to raise any question touching the *status quo* in that quarter. This decision was reached in February 1905, after which there were no further proceedings in the matter.

The islands of the Bahrein archipelago, though subject to a British protectorate, were the scene, during the period under review, of incessant political trouble for which the obstinacy and incompetence of Isa, the ruling Sheikh, were chiefly responsible; in 1904 these difficulties culminated in an open rupture between the Sheikh and the British Government. The first symptom of something amiss was a burglary committed in 1899, in which two British Indian subjects were wounded and property belonging to the British firm of Fracis

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Times and Company was tampered with; compensation and punishment of the offenders were secured, but the criminals were personal favourites of the Sheikh, and the case was disposed of by him in an unsatisfactory manner and only under considerable pressure from the British authorities.

Friction between the Sheikh and the Government of India arose largely from persistent refusals by the former to reform the customs branch of his administration. The Bahrein customs had for many years been farmed to contractors at unfavourable rates, and the insufficiency of the Sheikh's income had obliged him to resort to irregular imposts to make good the deficiency. The Government of India were accordingly anxious that the customs should be taken under direct management by the Sheikh; but Isa clung obstinately to the ancient system, partly because it enabled him to draw on the customs revenue in advance and partly, it would seem, because he resented British advice in what he regarded as a matter of internal administration. In 1899, in breach of a promise which he had given that he would not grant a new lease of the customs without reference to the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, he farmed them out for a fresh period of three years and rejected the offer of a loan and the assistance of the Government of India in terminating the new contract, which he had given to British Indian subjects. In 1901 it was suggested by Sir N. O'Connor, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, that, as a material proof of British authority in Bahrein, a British Indian subject should be placed in charge of the Bahrein customs, and an effort was made to give effect to the proposal. At the end of the year, however, the Sheikh again declined a proffered loan as well as the services of an official whom the Government of India were willing to place at his disposal for improving the customs arrangements; and it further became known that he had extended the period of the farm to 1906. On the occasion of his visit to Bahrein Lord Curzon, at a private interview which took place on the 27th November 1903, firmly impressed on the Sheikh the advantages and necessity of a customs reform, not in his own interests alone, but also in those of the British Government by whom he was protected, and of the son whose title to succeed him had been recognised by the British authorities. The Sheikh showed himself very obstinate and asked that the matter might be postponed during his lifetime, but this was not conceded. Eventually Sheikh Isa said that he would consider the subject with his sons and brother, and His Excellency admitted that this was a very proper course; but at the same time he warned the Sheikh that the question could not be dropped and that definite proposals for a change must be submitted shortly. About the time of Lord Curzon's visit it transpired that the finances of Bahrein were in an even worse position than had been suspected, for the yield of the customs was only one-third of what it might have been under a proper system, while Sheikh Isa had moreover leased them from 1903 to 1905 for 5½ lakhs of rupees, and of this sum had anticipated more than 2 lakhs by drafts on the contractors.

Soon after the Viceroy's return to India, the Sheikh having at length definitely informed the British Resident that he would not agree to any change, Lord Curzon reported to His Majesty's Government that the reform of the customs administration in Bahrein had become a test case of the nature and degree of the influence which the British Government might reasonably claim to exercise over the ruler of the islands. He therefore urged the adoption of various pacific means for acquiring a proper influence over the Sheikh, the principal being the substitution of a European political officer of superior status accompanied by a small guard of native infantry for the political subordinate who, at Lord Curzon's suggestion, had been posted to Bahrein in 1900 replacing a former native agent. The proposals as to the Political Agent and guard were eventually approved by His Majesty's Government and, as we have already seen, both came into effect in the course of 1904.

Other complications now supervened. The bad relations of the Sheikh with his nephew Ali, a youth of turbulent character whose father had been associated with Isa in the Government and who therefore conceived himself to be entitled to a share of political power, constituted in the end a more serious cause of

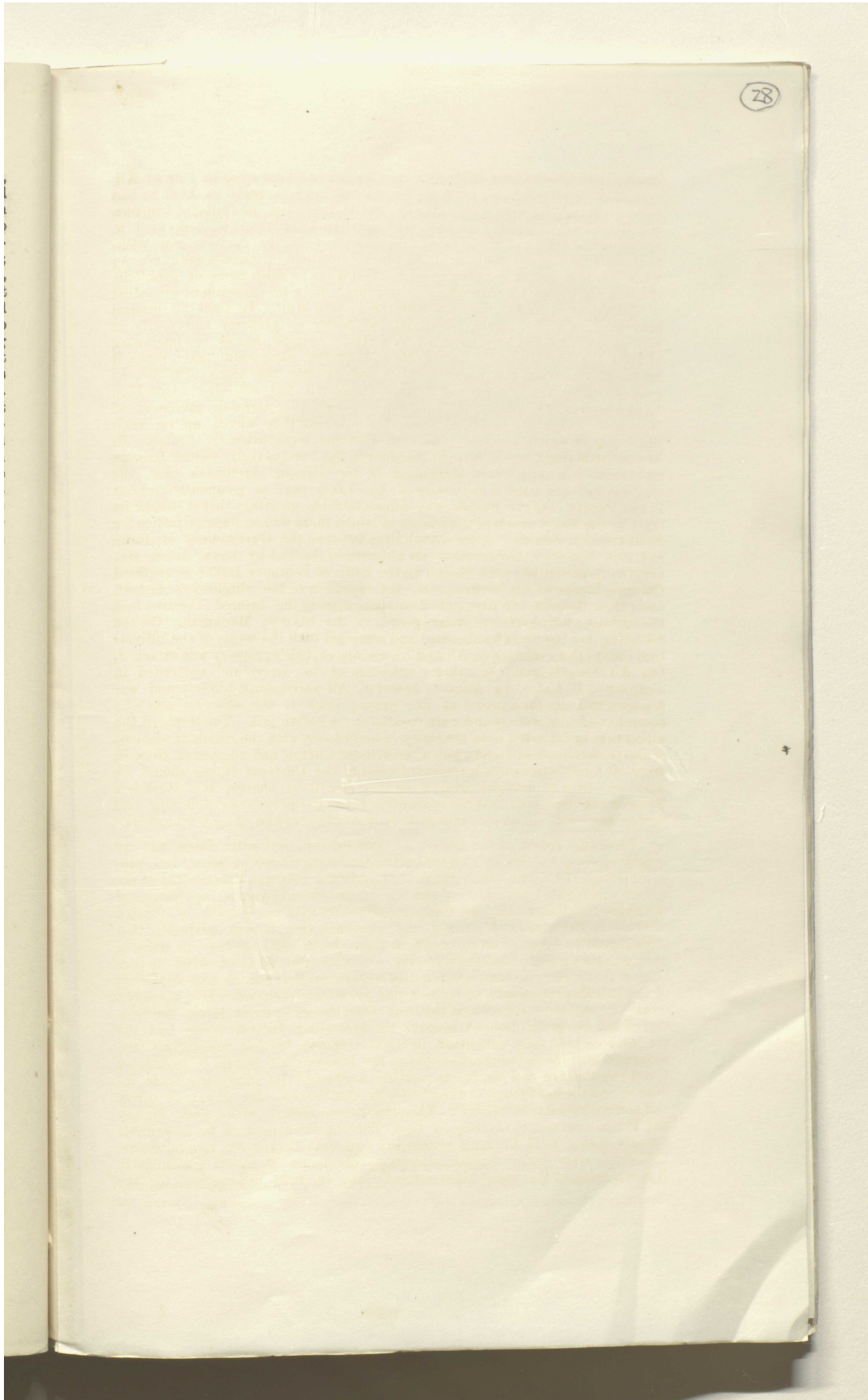
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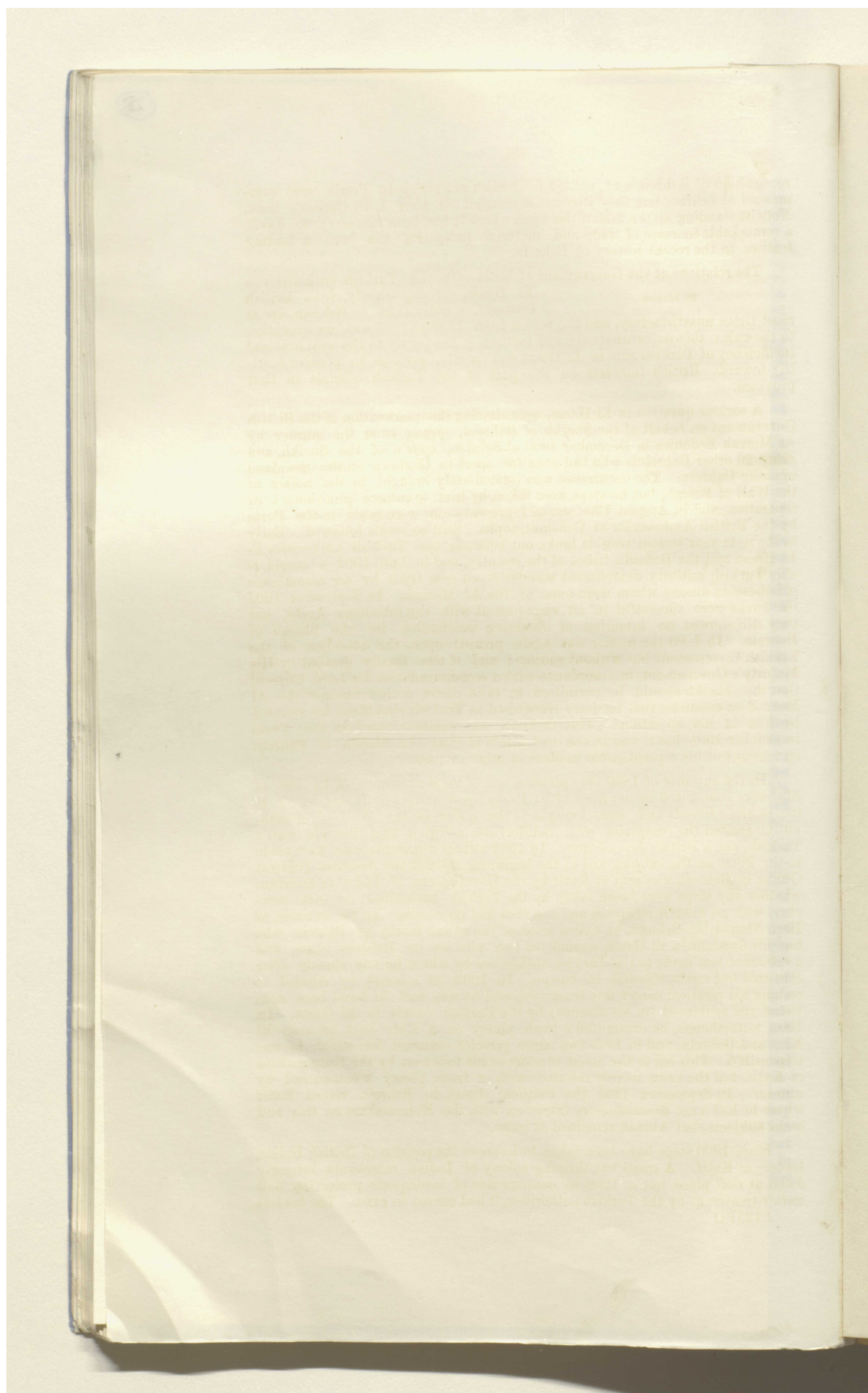
trouble than the Customs difficulty. The Sheikh had long stood in fear of Ali, over whose actions he had little or no control, and as early as 1897 he had pressed strongly for the recognition by the Government of India of his own son Hamad as his lawful heir and successor. In 1899 it had been decided to recognise the claims of Hamad, but announcement of the decision was withheld until 1901 in consequence of the Sheikh's attitude in the customs question; when it was at length communicated to Sheikh Isa he shed tears of gratitude, but this was the only return which he ever made for a favour without precedent in the history of British relations with the Persian Gulf. In 1899 the quarrel between Ali and his uncle, which related partly to property and partly to political matters, had been adjusted by a family council; but at the beginning of 1904, the formal recognition of Hamad having meanwhile taken place, it broke out afresh and the town of Manamah became the scene of numerous excesses committed by a gang of ruffians whom Ali had collected round him. In September 1904 some of Ali's followers assaulted a German merchant at Manamah, and in the month of November following they stirred up an anti-Shiah riot in which several inoffensive Persians were brutally beaten. In December Major Cox, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, visited Bahrein and secured a satisfactory settlement of the German merchant's case, the ringleaders being flogged and a sum of Rs. 1,000 paid as compensation; but in the Persian case the Sheikh was impracticable, insisting that it should be tried by the Shara courts of the islands in which there was no hope of justice for Shiahs against Sunnis. After consultation between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government an ultimatum, backed by naval force, was eventually presented to the Sheikh on the 25th of February 1905; it required the banishment of Ali for five years, the expulsion of the ringleaders in both cases from Bahrein, the payment of compensation to the injured Persians and the maintenance of efficient bazar guard in the town of Manamah. On the following day the Sheikh submitted and complied with the terms of the ultimatum except those relating to Ali and his associates; Ali's property was attached, but Ali himself and the other ringleaders evaded arrest and succeeded in escaping to El Katr. In August, however, Ali surrendered himself and was deported to India for a period of five years; some of the other outlaws who accompanied him were sent for six months to an Indian jail. The terms of the ultimatum as delivered were generally in accordance with the recommendations of the Government of India; but whereas Lord Curzon had suggested that, in event of forcible measures becoming necessary, the Customs House should be seized and only be restored with a British official in charge, His Majesty's Government considered that the connection between the customs difficulty and the lawlessness of Ali was too remote to warrant the adoption of such a measure.

The direct results of the crisis were satisfactory, but still there was no improvement in the Sheikh's general attitude; he continued to resist the proposed reform of his customs administration, and the internal government of the islands was highly unsatisfactory and was characterised by gross oppression of the aboriginal Baharineh. In 1901, in connection with the growth of foreign interests in Bahrein, Lord Curzon had indicated that it was advisable that steps should be taken at an early date to place the British position in Bahrein upon a more assured and definite footing, and after the crisis of 1905 he considered that a clear decision was required regarding the nature and limits of the British protectorate, so far as it had yet been developed. His Majesty's Government, however, held that the time for defining in strict terms the position of the Sheikh of Bahrein towards the protecting British power had not yet arrived; but they concurred in Lord Curzon's further suggestions and requested that the political authorities in the Persian Gulf should be instructed to act "by steadily, and as far as possible unobtrusively, increasing their influence and the confidence of the Sheikh in their advice and power to direct and control his external affairs". The preposterous claims which both Turkey and Persia entertain to sovereignty over Bahrein were resisted in a suitable manner during Lord Curzon's viceroyalty: in 1905 Turkey was reminded that the islands were under British protection, discussion of recent incidents in Bahrein being at the same time refused; and in 1904 negotiations for the

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recognition of Bahrein as entitled to British protection in Persia were commenced at Tehran, but they were not concluded till after Lord Curzon's time. Notwithstanding all the difficulties upon which it has been necessary to dwell, a remarkable increase of trade and material prosperity has been a leading feature in the recent history of Bahrein.

The relations of the Government of India with the Turkish authorities in El Hassa, arising chiefly from British interests or obligations in Bahrein, are at most times unsatisfactory, and the period from 1899 to 1905 was no exception to the rule: this unfortunate state of matters is due partly to the weakness and inefficiency of Turkish rule in El Hassa and partly, perhaps, to positive hostility towards British interests on the part of the Turkish officials in that province.

A serious question in El Hassa, necessitating the intervention of the British Government on behalf of the Sheikh of Bahrein, sprang from the murder by Al Morrah Bedouins in December 1900 of Selman, cousin of the Sheikh, and about 20 other Bahreinis who had gone for sport to Dhahran on the mainland opposite Bahrein. The occurrence was immediately brought to the notice of the Wali of Basrah, but no steps were taken by him to enforce punishment or reparation, and in August 1900 strong representations were made to the Porte by the British Ambassador at Constantinople. Still no result followed. Early in the next year serious trouble broke out between the Turkish authorities in El Hassa and the Bedouin tribes of the country, and in April 1902 a considerable Turkish military detachment was destroyed near Ojair by an assemblage of tribesmen among whom were some of the Al Morrah. In September 1902 the Turks were successful in an engagement with the rebellious Arabs, but they still showed no intention of obtaining satisfaction for the Sheikh of Bahrein. In 1903 the matter was again pressed upon the attention of the Turkish Government but without success; and it was finally decided by His Majesty's Government, in accordance with a recommendation by Lord Curzon, that the Sheikh should be permitted to take direct action against the Al Morrah on condition that territory recognised as Turkish should not be violated by him in his operations. This decision was communicated to the Porte in October 1904, but it was in the end withheld from the Sheikh of Bahrein on account of his reprehensible conduct in other matters.

In the summer of 1899 four piracies, one of them accompanied by loss of life, were committed by denizens of El Hassa upon sailing craft belonging to the Bahrein islands and were brought to the notice of the Wali of Basrah, but he treated the complaint with indifference, alleging that Bahrein was a Turkish, not a British dependency. In 1901 serious representations were made to the Porte on the subject, and at the beginning of 1902 the Assistant Political Officer in Bahrein was sent to Katif by the Government of India to ascertain whether any steps were being taken by the Turkish authorities; he met, however, with an uncivil reception and the visit had no results. In the summer of 1902 Ahmad-bin-Selman, an exiled scion of the ruling family of Bahrein who had his domicile in El Hassa, committed two piracies on Bahrein boats, and a reference was made to the Turkish authorities by whom he was shortly after captured but again allowed to escape. In 1903 an attempt by Ahmad to resume his piratical career was frustrated, and he was said to have been convicted and sentenced (in his absence) by the Turkish courts in El Hassa. In 1904, nevertheless, he committed a fresh piracy on a Katr boat between El Kair and Bahrein, and in 1905 two more piracies occurred for which he was responsible. This led to the arrest of some of his followers by the Kaimmakam of Katif, but the gang merely retorted with a fresh piracy accompanied by murder. In September 1905 the Political Agent in Bahrein visited Katif where he had a not unsatisfactory interview with the Kaimmakam on this and other subjects, but Ahmad remained at large.

Since 1900 steps have been taken to improve the position of British Indian traders at Katif. A small but thriving colony of Indian merchants formerly dwelt at that place, but in 1900, in consequence of inadequate protection and unfair treatment by the Turkish authorities, it had ceased to exist. The traders
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had been obliged to retire to Bahrein and thence to conduct their business with Katif at a disadvantage. In 1900, and again in 1903 on the occasion of the Viceroy's visit to Bahrein, they petitioned that arrangements should be made for British consular representation at Katif, and they even offered to contribute towards the expense of the measure. In 1903 the rebates of customs duty at Katif to which they were entitled and which they could not obtain amounted to Rs. 25,000. In 1904 Lord Curzon suggested that either the British Assistant Political Agent in Bahrein should be appointed Vice-Consul for El Hassa, a native Consular Agent being at the same time stationed at Katif, or that a clear statement should be made to the Porte of the disabilities to which the British Indian traders were being subjected at Katif in order that measures might be taken for their mitigation or removal. The second of these alternatives was preferred by His Majesty's Government, and, representations having been made to the Turkish Government, a promise of complete redress and future good treatment was eventually obtained.

During Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty the Arab principality of Koweit, hitherto obscure, was forced into a prominent place in Persian Gulf politics by a conflict of British and Turkish interests. The ruler of Koweit at this time

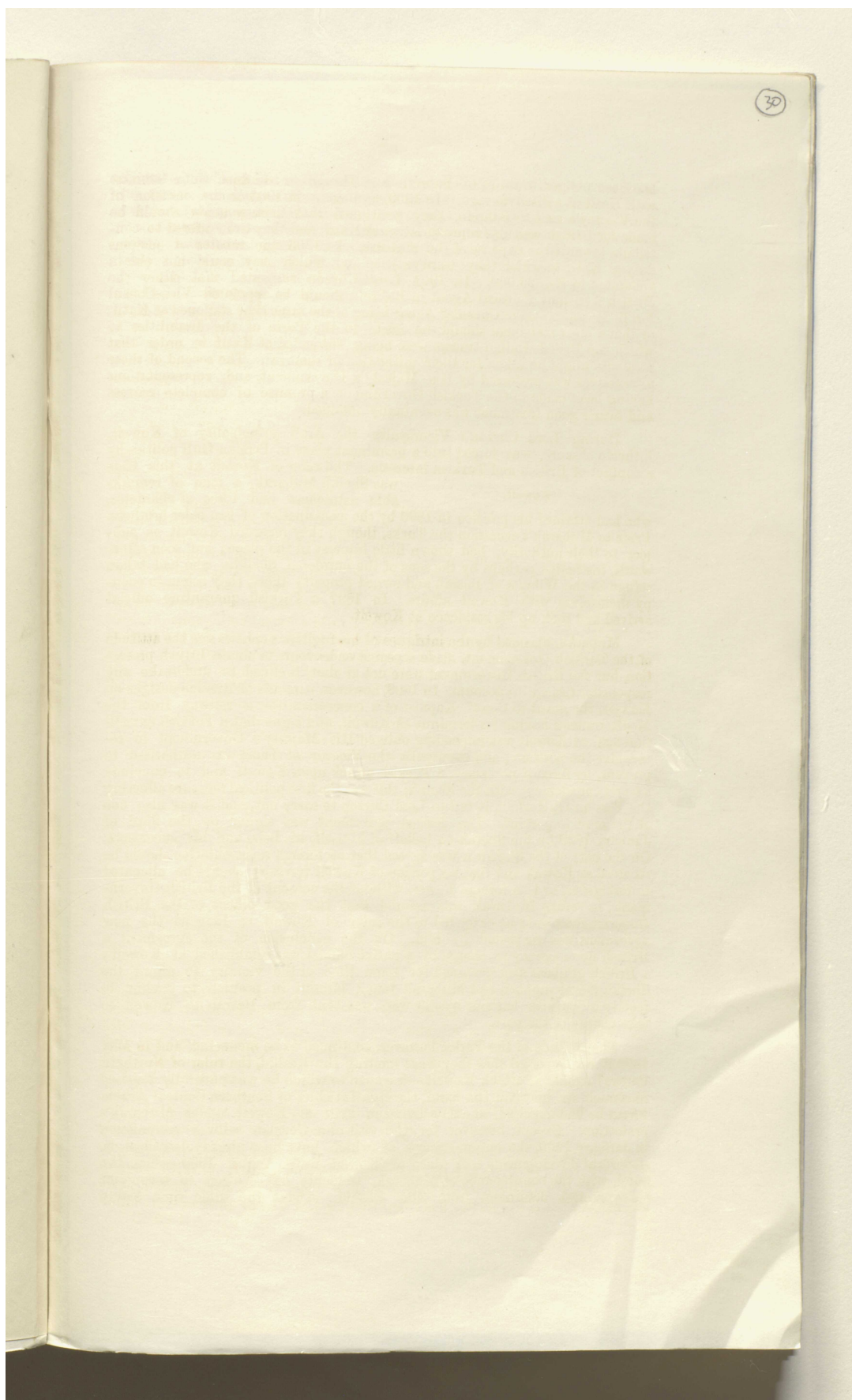
Koweit,

was Sheikh Mubarak, a man of remarkable astuteness and force of character, who had attained his position in 1896 by the assassination of two elder brothers. Prior to Mubarak's accession the Turks, though they regarded Koweit as subject to their authority, had shown little interest in the place; but soon afterwards, instigated perhaps by the sons of the murdered Sheikhs who had taken refuge in the Wilayat of Basrah and owned property there, they began to occupy themselves with Koweit affairs. In 1897 a Turkish quarantine official arrived and took up his residence at Koweit.

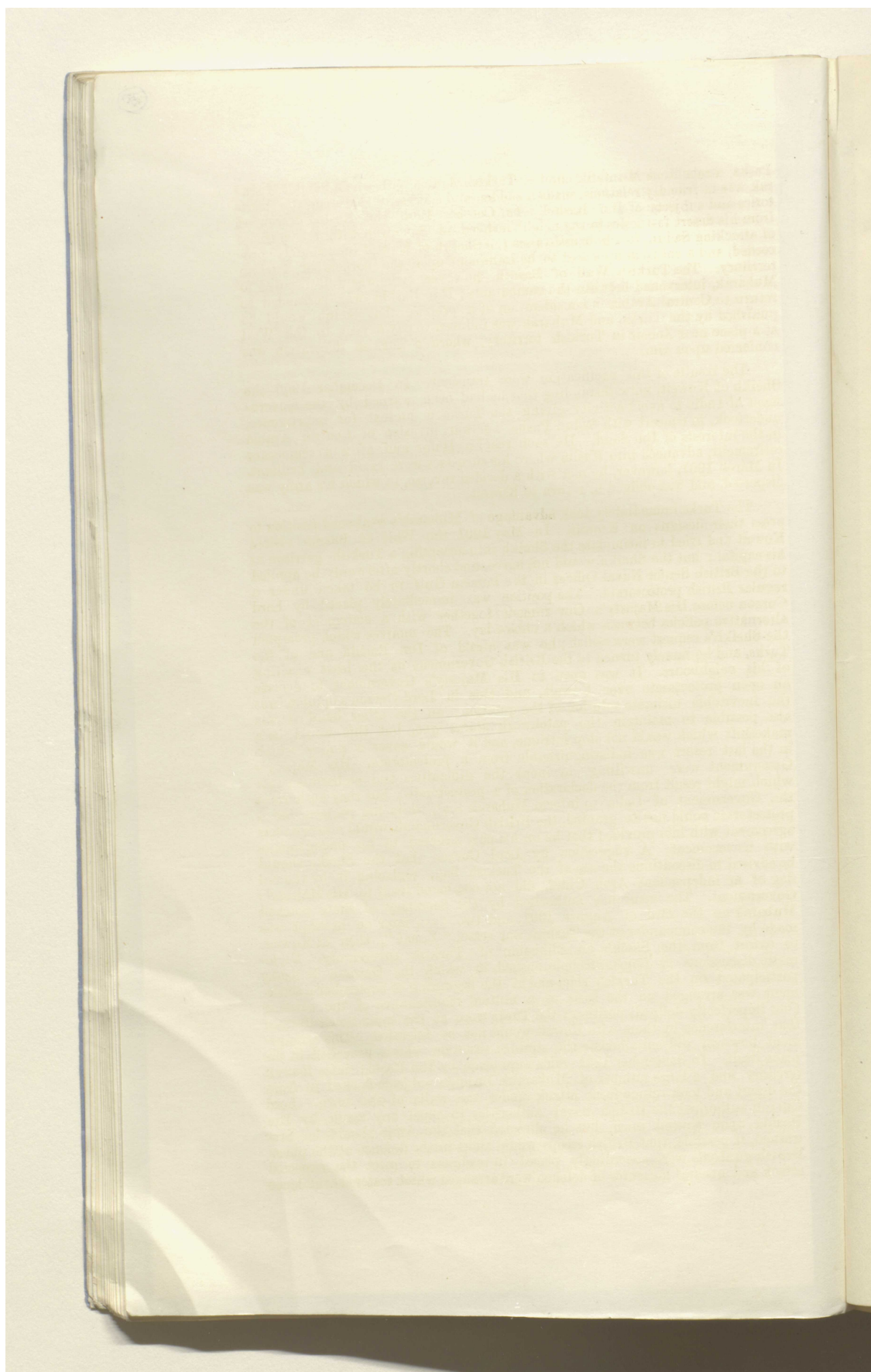
Mubarak, alarmed by the intrigues of his fugitive nephews and the attitude of the Turkish Government, made repeated endeavours to obtain British protection, but the British Government were not at first inclined to undertake any responsibilities on his account. In 1898, however, rumours of Russian designs on Koweit, the grant to Count Kapnist of a concession for a railway from the Mediterranean having its terminus at Koweit, and signs that a Turkish expedition against Koweit was impending obliged His Majesty's Government to reconsider the position; and eventually the Viceroy of India was authorised to prevent, by force if necessary, a Turkish attack upon Koweit and to conclude a secret engagement with the Sheikh; this was the first political measure affecting the Persian Gulf which it fell to Lord Curzon to carry out, and it was also one of the most important. The desired agreement was signed on the 23rd of January 1899 by the Sheikh on behalf of himself, his heirs and his successors. On the part of the Sheikh it was agreed that no foreign representative should be received at Koweit and that no portion of Koweit territory should be alienated to foreigners, or to a foreign Power, without the consent of the British Government; in return Mubarak was assured that the good offices of the British Government would be extended to the ruler of Koweit so long as the new agreement was respected by him. On the conclusion of the agreement a British news-agency in charge of a native official was established at Koweit; a British gunboat also remained for some time in the vicinity to afford the Sheikh moral support, and Mubarak found himself in position to decline to receive a Turkish harbour master who was sent from Basrah to Koweit to take charge of the port.

The attitude of the Turks, however, continued to be menacing, and in May 1899 it was reported that they were inciting Ibn Rashid, the ruler of Northern Central Arabia to attack Koweit,—a course to which he was naturally disposed inasmuch as his rival Ibn Saud, the rightful chief of Southern Central Arabia whom he had expelled, was then living in exile at Koweit under Mubarak's protection. Except however for the visit of a German railway commission in January 1900, the circumstances of which have been already described, no important developments took place at Koweit until August 1900 when Ibn Saud, with the countenance of Mubarak, suddenly left Koweit to reconquer his ancestral dominions from Ibn Rashid. About the same time Sadun

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Pasha, a rebellious Muntafik chief of Turkish Arabia with whom Sheikh Mubarak was in friendly relations, made a sudden and successful raid upon the territories and subjects of Ibn Rashid. In October 1900 Ibn Rashid descended from his desert fastnesses to the neighbourhood of Samawah with the purpose of attacking Sadun, to whose assistance the Sheikh of Koweit immediately proceeded, and a collision appeared to be imminent upon the borders of Turkish territory. The Turkish Wali of Basrah, however, who was well disposed to Mubarak, intervened between the combatants; Ibn Rashid was persuaded to return to Central Arabia in consideration of a promise that Sadun would be punished by the Turks, and Mubarak was induced to pay a visit to the Wali at a place near Zobeir in Turkish territory, where a Turkish decoration was conferred upon him.

The results of this pacification were transient. In December 1900 the Sheikh of Koweit, notwithstanding that he had been warned by the Government of India to avoid activity giving the Turks a pretext for interference, undertook, in concert with Sadun Pasha, a serious invasion of Central Arabia in the interests of Ibn Saud. He soon reached Hafar and, after a temporary retirement, advanced into Kasim where his successes were rapid and brilliant. In March 1901, however, he met with a decided reverse, in which his army was dispersed, and was obliged to return to Koweit.

The Turks immediately took advantage of Mubarak's weakened position to press their designs on Koweit. In May 1901 the Wali of Basrah visited Koweit and tried to intimidate the Sheikh into accepting a Turkish garrison at his capital; but the Sheikh would not agree, and shortly afterwards he applied to the British Senior Naval Officer in the Persian Gulf to be taken under a regular British protectorate. The position was immediately placed by Lord Curzon before His Majesty's Government together with a statement of the alternative policies between which a choice lay. The motives which prompted the Sheikh's request were selfish; he was afraid of Ibn Rashid and of the Turks, and he merely turned to the British Government as the least exacting of his neighbours. It was open to His Majesty's Government to declare an open protectorate over Koweit, and this in Lord Curzon's opinion was the inevitable ultimate solution of the question; on the other hand it was also possible to maintain the patchwork *status quo*, but this would be a makeshift which would not stop intrigue, and it would cover a policy which in the last resort was indistinguishable from a protectorate. His Majesty's Government were unwilling to incur the difficulties and embarrassments which might result from the declaration of a protectorate; but they authorised the Government of India to inform Mubarak that, while his request for a protectorate could not be granted, the British Government, would observe their agreement with him provided that he on his part adhered to his engagements with Government. A suggestion by Lord Curzon that the Sheikh should be advised to discontinue the use of the Turkish flag, replacing it by the red flag of an independent Arab Chief, did not commend itself to His Majesty's Government. The assurance authorised by the Secretary of State reached Mubarak on the 23rd of August 1901, and two days later an attempt was made by the commander of the Turkish war vessel "Zuhaf", then at Koweit, to extort from the Sheikh an admission of Turkish sovereignty. Diplomatic discussions at Constantinople ensued, in which the German Embassy participated on the Turkish side, and at the beginning of September a settlement was arranged on the basis of a mutual maintenance of the existing (but imperfectly defined) position: the Turks were at the same time informed that interference by them with Koweit would not be tolerated. This arrangement however did not alleviate the strained situation which prevailed at the place itself. In September 1901 raids were made by Ibn Rashid into Koweit territory and a large number of Mubarak's Bedouin subjects flocked in from the desert and took refuge from attack under the walls of the town. Lord Curzon authorised the British naval authorities to repel any assault by Ibn Rashid upon Koweit town, but he directed that the Amir should be first warned, if possible, that British troops would assist in the defence of the place. British gunboats were accordingly placed in readiness to meet the expected attack and general measures of defence were arranged which restored confidence

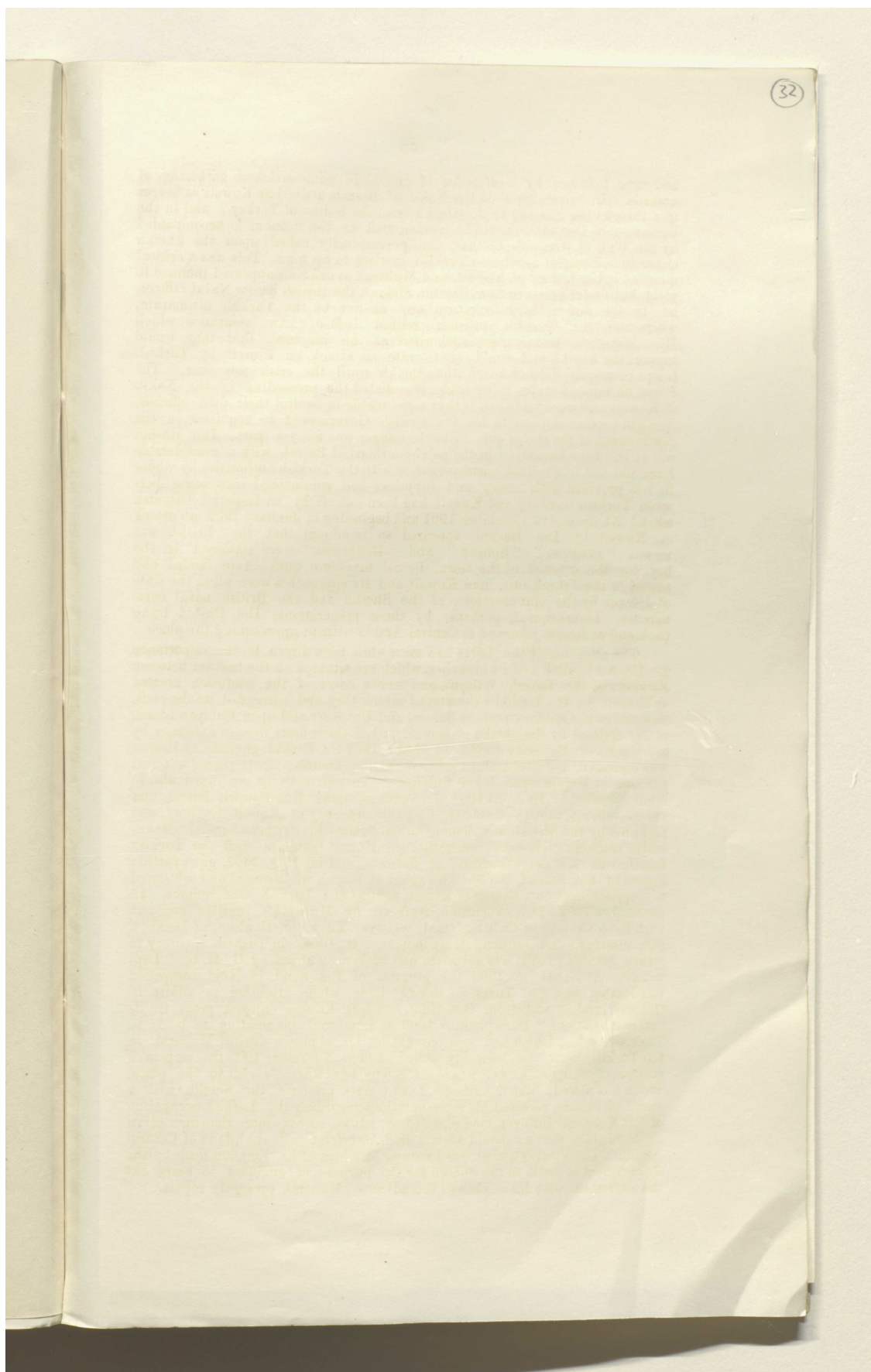
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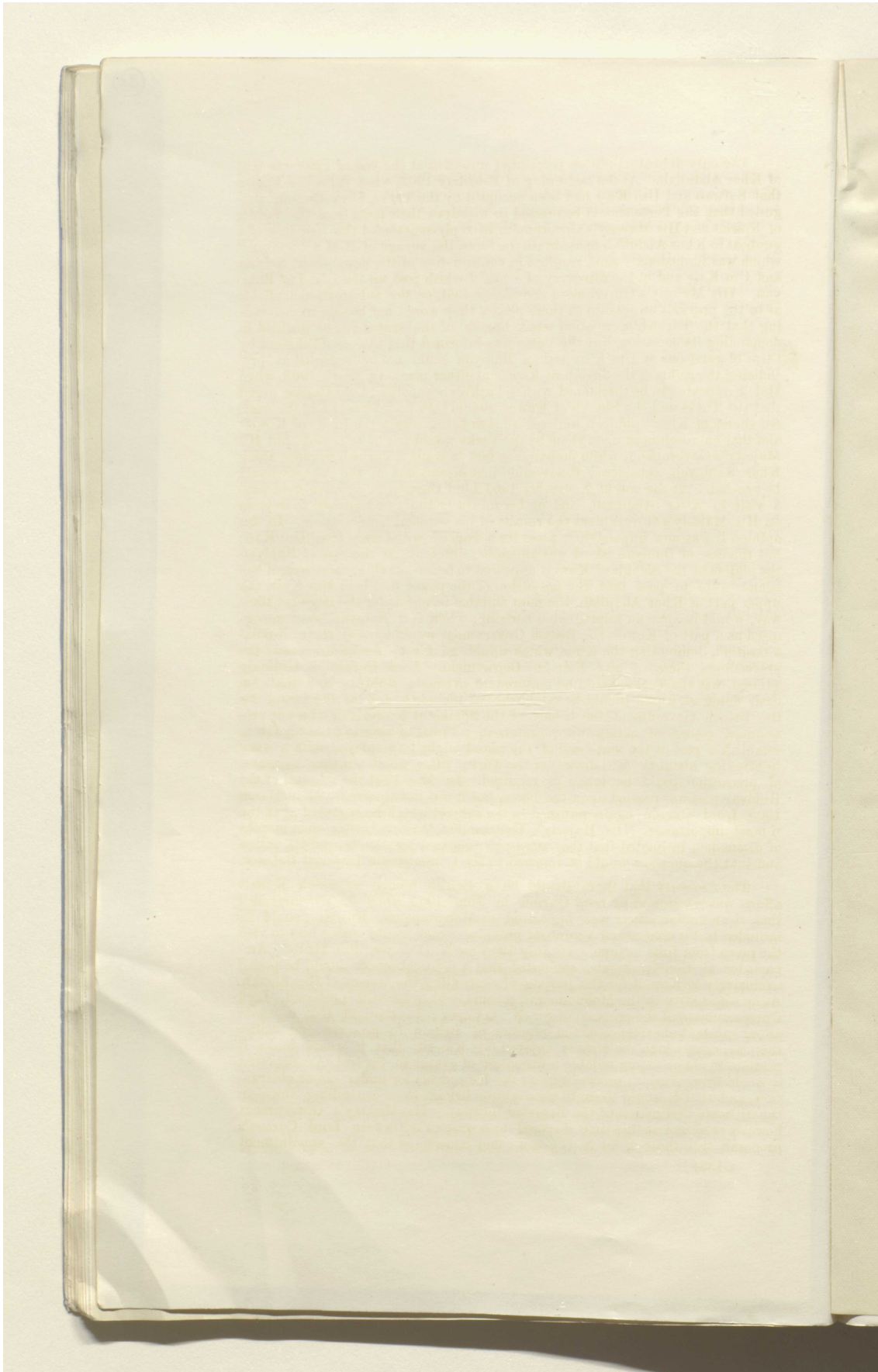
and were followed by a dispersal of the huge panic-stricken gathering of nomads. In November 1901 the Nakib of Basrah arrived at Koweit as bearer of a threatening message to the Sheikh from the Sultan of Turkey; and in the beginning of December he paid a second visit in the "Zuhaf", accompanied by the Wali of Basrah's brother, and peremptorily called upon the Sheikh either to abdicate or to admit a Turkish garrison to his town. This was a critical moment in the history of Koweit, and Mubarak at one time appeared inclined to yield, but under pressure from Captain Simons, the British Senior Naval Officer, he in the end refused to return any answer to the Turkish ultimatum, whereupon the Turkish mission retired baffled. An assurance which His Majesty's Government authorised at this juncture, that they would support the Sheikh and would not tolerate an attack on Koweit by Turkish troops or vessels, did not reach the Sheikh until the crisis was over. The Porte, on remonstrances being made, repudiated the proceedings of the Nakib at Koweit and were told that, if they were unable to control their own officials, it might become impossible for the British Government to acquiesce in the continuance of the *status quo*. But the danger was not yet past. Ibn Rashid was at this time encamped in the neighbourhood of Basrah with a considerable force and was in constant correspondence with the Turkish authorities by whom he was provided with money and supplies; and commercial intercourse between Turkish territory and Koweit had been cut off by an Imperial Ottoman edict. At the end of December 1901 and beginning of January 1902 an attack on Koweit by Ibn Rashid appeared so imminent that the British war vessels "Pomone," "Sphinx" and "Redbreast" were stationed in the bay for the defence of the town, British machine guns were landed and placed in the Jahrah fort, and Koweit and its approaches were set in the state of defence by the joint exertions of the Sheikh and the British naval commander. Disheartened, perhaps, by these preparations, Ibn Rashid hung back and at length returned to Central Arabia without approaching the place.

The attention of the Turks had meanwhile been drawn to the importance for Khor Abdullah and its branches, which are situated on the frontier between Koweit and the Basrah Wilayat, and under cover of the confusion created at Koweit by Ibn Rashid's threatened attack they had succeeded, unobserved, in establishing military posts at Safwan and Um Kasr and upon Bubiyan island, places claimed by the Sheikh of Koweit; all of these posts were in existence by the middle of February 1902. In March 1902 the Turkish garrison at Basrah was increased, and Mubarak to prevent further encroachments placed a tribal garrison at Hejeje upon Khor Subliyah. Turkish activity continued also in other directions. In April 1902 the Turks occupied Musallamieh island, and the movement, though it did not affect the integrity of Koweit territory, was regarded by the Sheikh as a demonstration against his southern border. Meanwhile frequent raids were committed on Koweit subjects near the Turkish frontier in the neighbourhood of Safwan; and in May 1902, as a further means of harassment, the Sheikh's agent at Basrah was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment on a charge of treason against the Turkish Government. In September 1902 a boat expedition, arranged by Mubarak's fugitive nephews with the assistance of their maternal relative Yusuf-bin-Ibrahim of Dorah, a rich merchant and influential landholder, left Dorah in Turkish territory to attack Koweit; but it was surprised and broken up at sea by H. M. S. "Lapwing." At length in 1903 the progress of Ibn Saud in Nejd compelled Ibn Rashid and the Turks to devote their whole attention to affairs in Central Arabia, and from this time onwards Koweit enjoyed peace in its external relations. In September 1903 an important suit relating to lands in Turkish Arabia, which had been brought by his nephews against Mubarak in the Turkish courts, was amicably settled; and in November 1903 the improved position of affairs at Koweit was signalled by Lord Curzon's visit to the place, which has already been described. Lord Curzon presented the Sheikh with a sword of honour, received his representations regarding the Turkish occupation of Um Kasr and Bubiyan, and repeated the advice, already more than once given to the Sheikh, that he should abstain from interference in the affairs of Central Arabia. The Viceroy's visit was followed by a loan of Rs. 1,00,000 made by the Government of India to the Sheikh for the purpose of enabling to carry out the settlement with his nephews: this advance Mubarak promptly repaid.

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The only delicate question remaining unsettled at the end of 1903 was that of Khor Abdullah. At the beginning of February 1902, when it became known that Safwan and Um Kasr had been occupied by the Turks, Lord Curzon suggested that the Porte should be pressed to withdraw their posts from the border of Koweit and His Majesty's Government in reply sanctioned the despatch of a gunboat to Khor Abdullah to ascertain the facts; the voyage of H.M.S. "Sphinx," which was immediately sent, resulted in confirmation of the news about Safwan and Um Kasr and in the discovery of a new Turkish post on the island of Bubiyan. His Majesty's Government considered that, on the information available as to the previous ownership of these places, they would not be safe in contending that the Turkish occupation was a breach of the *status quo* or justified in demanding its cessation, but the Porte was informed that the establishment by them of garrisons at Um Kasr and on Bubiyan could not be regarded as prejudicing the rights of the Sheikh of Koweit at either place. In March 1902, when Hejeje appeared to be threatened with a Turkish occupation, Lord Curzon urged that the Turks and the Sheikh of Koweit should both be informed that the western shores of Khor Subbiyeh were regarded as being within the limits of Koweit and that encroachment upon them by the Turks would not be tolerated; but His Majesty's Government, while prepared in fact to resist a Turkish advance along Khor Subbiyeh, considered it advisable that discussions on the subject should be avoided. At the end of November 1903 Lord Curzon, as we have seen, paid a visit to Khor Abdullah, and on his return to India he hastened to impress on His Majesty's Government the results of his personal observations. In his opinion it was now impossible to press for a Turkish withdrawal from Um Kasr, but the case of Bubiyan island was altogether different. In the case of Bubiyan the claims of the Sheikh of Koweit appeared to be sustainable; moreover, if the island were to pass into the possession of the power that held Um Kasr, the upper part of Khor Abdullah, the most suitable terminus for the Baghdad Railway, would become an impregnable harbour; whereas if Bubiyan were recognised as a part of Koweit the British Government would have at their disposal a position, dominating the Khor, which would go far to render innocuous the proceedings there of any Foreign Department. Lord Curzon accordingly advised that the Turks should be required to evacuate Bubiyan and that, on their doing so, a post should be established at the north end of the island by the British Government on behalf of the Sheikh of Koweit; or, if a less pronounced course of action were preferred, a threat of assisting the Sheikh to establish a post at the north end of the island might be employed with a view to bringing about the withdrawal of the Turks, after which further measures of precaution could be taken as required. In May 1904 the removal of the Bubiyan post was pressed upon the Porte, but it was not obtained, and in March 1905 Lord Curzon again returned to the subject which he regarded as of the utmost importance. His Majesty's Government, however, after some months of discussion, intimated that they were not prepared to take immediate action and that the question would be referred to the Committee of Imperial Defence.

The necessity that there should be a British official to watch Koweit affairs was recognised by Lord Curzon in June 1903 when he recommended that, if an Indian officer were appointed to Mohammerah, Koweit should be included in his charge and a gunboat provided which would enable him to visit the place from time to time. In July 1903 Sir N. O'Connor, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, suggested that a political officer should be posted exclusively to Koweit for the purpose of controlling the actions of the Sheikh. As an alternative to the Mohammerah scheme, which he still preferred, Lord Curzon supported the proposal of Sir N. O'Connor; he thought that it would afford substantial evidence of the intention of Britain to preserve and utilise the privileges which she already enjoyed at Koweit, that it would make it possible to obtain more reliable information of events in Central Arabia, that it would bring Turkish proceedings on the Koweit border under closer observation, and that it would strength the right of Britain to a controlling voice in the ultimate destination of the Baghdad Railway. His Majesty's Government however were not at this time disposed to acquiesce either in Lord Curzon's proposals or in those of Sir N. O'Connor; they considered that the appointment

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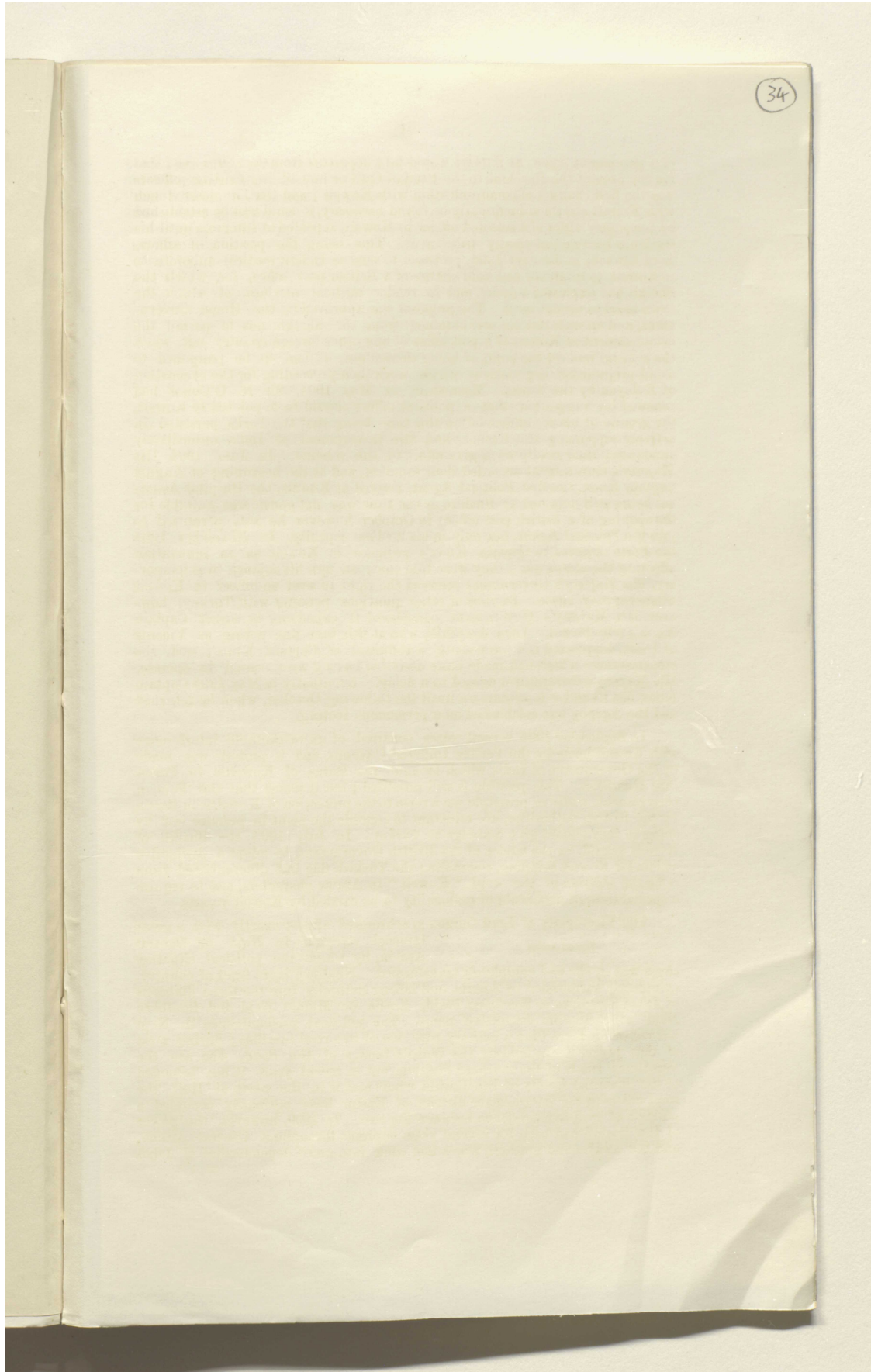
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of a permanent Agent at Koweit would be a departure from the *status quo*; that for the present the Resident in the Persian Gulf or one of his existing officers was the best channel of communication with Koweit; and that, if closer touch with Koweit should subsequently be found necessary, it could best be established by temporary visits of a selected officer to Koweit, repeated at intervals until his residence became practically permanent. This being the position of affairs, Lord Curzon, in January 1904, proposed to send as Indian medical subordinate to Koweit to establish and hold charge of a British post office, for which the Sheikh had expressed a desire, and to render medical services, of which the town stood in urgent need. The proposal was approved by the Home Government, and an undertaking was obtained from the Sheikh not to permit the establishment at Koweit of a post office of any other foreign country, but when the scheme was on the point of being carried out, it had to be postponed to avoid prejudicing negotiations which were then proceeding for the evacuation of Bubiyan by the Turks. Meanwhile, in May 1904, Sir N. O'Connor had renewed his suggestion that a political officer should be appointed to Koweit, the ground of his recommendation this time being that the Turks persisted in actively supporting Ibn Rashid; and the Government of India immediately announced their readiness to give effect to the scheme. In June 1904 His Majesty's Government accorded their sanction, and at the beginning of August Captain Knox, the first Political Agent, arrived at Koweit, the Hospital Assistant being still detained at Bushire as the time was not considered suitable for the opening of a British post office; in October however he was permitted to join the Political Agent, but only in his medical capacity. In November 1904 the Porte objected to Captain Knox's presence in Koweit as an innovation affecting the *status quo*; they were told that, though his sojourn was temporary, His Majesty's Government reserved the right to send an officer to Koweit whenever they chose. In view of other questions pending with Turkey, however, His Majesty's Government considered it expedient to direct Captain Knox's withdrawal. Lord Amthill, who at this time was acting as Viceroy of India, deprecated the immediate withdrawal of Captain Knox; and, the circumstances which had made haste desirable having also ceased to operate, His Majesty's Government agreed to a delay. Eventually in May 1905 Captain Knox fell ill and was withdrawn until the following October, when he returned and the Agency was established on a permanent footing.

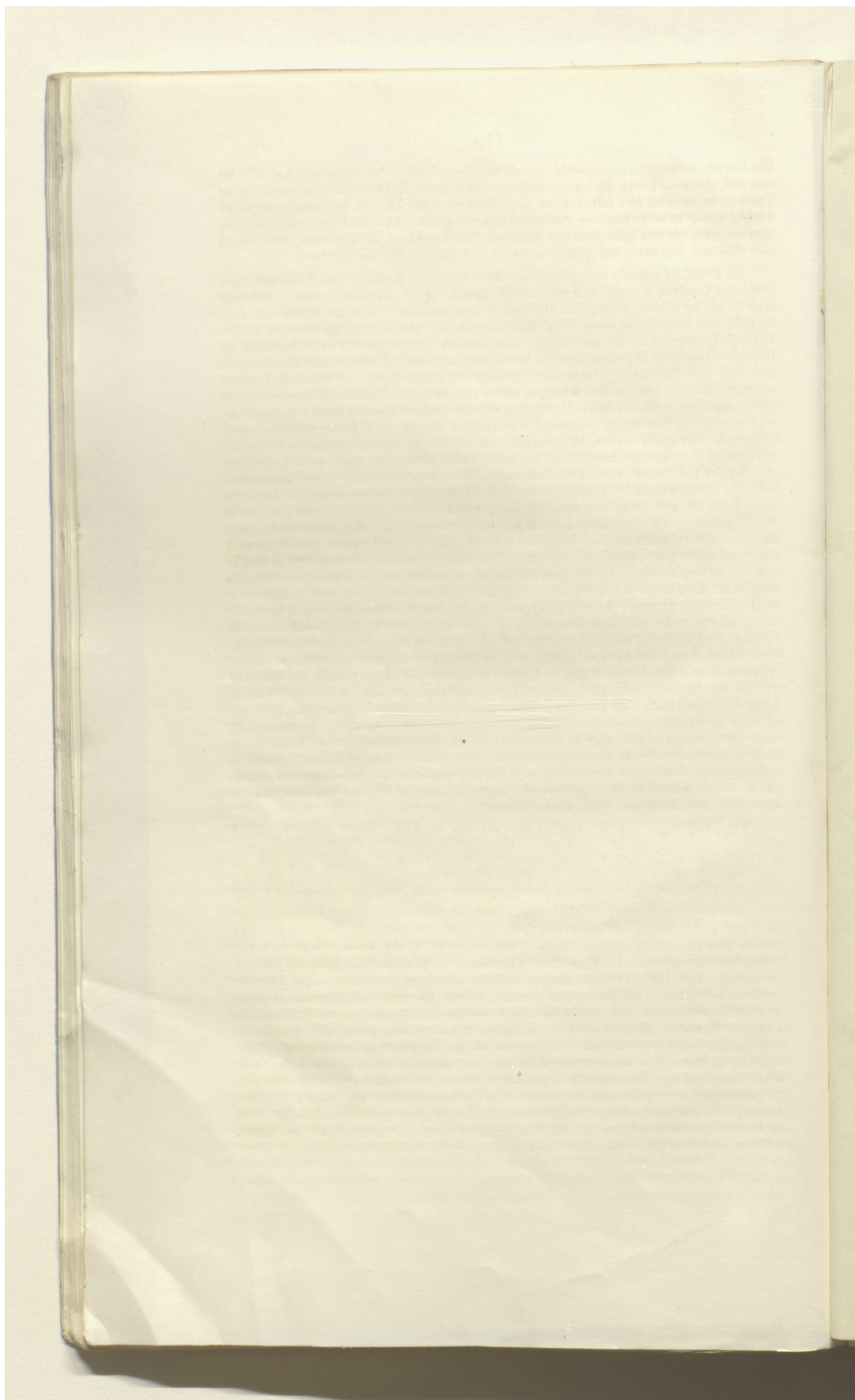
In September 1904 several cases occurred of unwarrantable interference with Koweit boats by the Persian Imperial Customs, and a protest was made by the Government of India which brought the status of Koweitis in Persia into discussion. This question is still unsettled; but it seems that the Persian Government, while in principle not averse to the protection of Koweitis in Persia by the British authorities, are reluctant to concede the point in practice lest by doing so they should give umbrage to Turkey. In July 1905 the Sheikh of Koweit agreed, on the advice of the British Government, to adopt a distinctive colour for Koweit shipping, resembling the Turkish flag but differentiated from it by the addition of the word "Koweit" in Arabic characters, and to require a special form of certificate of nationality to be carried by Koweit vessels.

The Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon synchronised almost exactly with a great internal struggle in Nejd or Central Arabia, by which the political situation there was in the end completely transformed. Nejd is a large tract of country, completely surrounded by deserts, and falling naturally into the three divisions of Jabal Shammar or Northern Nejd, Kasim or Middle Nejd and Southern Nejd which has no distinctive name. The political predominance in Nejd has rested for more than a century with one of two rival families; during most of that period it was held by the Wahabi family of Ibn Saud, who are the hereditary rulers of the southern division, but in recent years it has belonged to the Shammar family of Ibn Rashid whose seat is in the north at Hail, the local chiefs in the intermediate district of Kasim have ordinarily occupied a position of semi-independence between the two. In 1899, however, the power of Ibn Rashid had been for several years supreme throughout Central Arabia, and the middle and southern tracts had sunk into mere dependencies of Jabal

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Shammar, ruled by nominees of the Shammar Amir. In consequence of its natural inaccessibility and economic unimportance, Central Arabia has at most times lain beyond the purview of the British and Indian Governments; but during the period now to be reviewed the situation was somewhat modified, in this respect, through an alliance between the Sheikh of Koweit and Ibn Saud and through the espousal of the cause of Ibn Rashid by the Turks.

In 1900, as already mentioned in the history of Koweit, Ibn Saud left that place for Central Arabia and Sheikh Mubarak made a remarkable incursion into Nejd, by which, though in the end it was unsuccessful, the power of Ibn Rashid was severely shaken. The Shammar Amir soon afterwards applied to the Turkish Government for redress, and an Ottoman Commissioner was deputed to Basrah to report on the situation; but his proceedings were dilatory, and Ibn Rashid, who had been favourably impressed by the advantages that the Sheikh of Koweit derived from his connection with the British Government, made overtures for an understanding between himself and the British power. The views of the Amir, as represented by his agent at Busrah, were that the British Government should undertake to supply him with arms in return for payment and should depose his enemy the actual Sheikh of Koweit, while he on his part would agree to abstain for the future from interference in Koweit affairs and would guarantee the safe construction by British enterprise of railways across Arabia. In June 1901 Lord Curzon stated his opinion that, while to concede the Amir's requests was impossible, his sympathy should not be alienated, and he suggested that a British officer should be sent from the side of Akaba to interview the Amir and ascertain more particularly his views and the nature of his personality; it might even be advisable that the British Government should undertake to restrain the Sheikh of Koweit in future from hostilities against the Amir and to use their good offices to prevent Turkish aggressions on Nejd. His Majesty's Government, however, feared that a mission might give rise to complications with Turkey, and that anything in the nature of a protectorate might involve obligations which could not be discharged without resort to material force, and their approval was therefore withheld. Before many months had passed, as we have seen in the history of Koweit, the hope of amicable British relations with the Amir had vanished; and Ibn Rashid had rejected, in somewhat arrogant terms, an offer of British mediation between himself and the Sheikh of Koweit. At the beginning of 1901 the Government of India contemplated the despatch of Muhammadan agents to obtain reliable information regarding the political and religious conditions prevailing in Central Arabia, the obscurity of which was a cause of hesitation in policy, but execution of the scheme was deferred on account of the disturbed state of the interior.

After the beginning of 1902 the progress of Ibn Saud's arms in Nejd was extraordinarily rapid. In January the Wahabi capital of Riyadh was recovered by his son, Abdul Aziz, and the adjoining districts of Kharij and Harik were soon cleared of the adherents of Ibn Rashid. These reverses caused the northern Amir to appeal again to the Turks, whose apprehensions he did not fail to excite by insinuations that the British Government were assisting Ibn Saud and had designs of their own in Central Arabia. In April a further success was gained by Abdul Aziz and the majority of the Bedouins came over to the Wahabi cause. In May 1902 Ibn Saud in person left Koweit for his hereditary capital of Riyadh, at the same time despatching a letter to the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf in which he made a virtual request for British protection and intimated that he had declined overtures from a Russian official at Koweit because he preferred that his relations should be with the British Government. The action of the Resident in abstaining from replying to this letter was approved by the Government of India, and he was instructed that no encouragement should be given to Ibn Saud. Such was the position when a counter-movement in force was suddenly attempted by Ibn Rashid, who swept southwards and occupied Dilam, the capital of Kharij. On the 1st of November, however, he was totally routed at a great battle in Kharij and fled northwards leaving his camp in the hands of the Wahabis; he then

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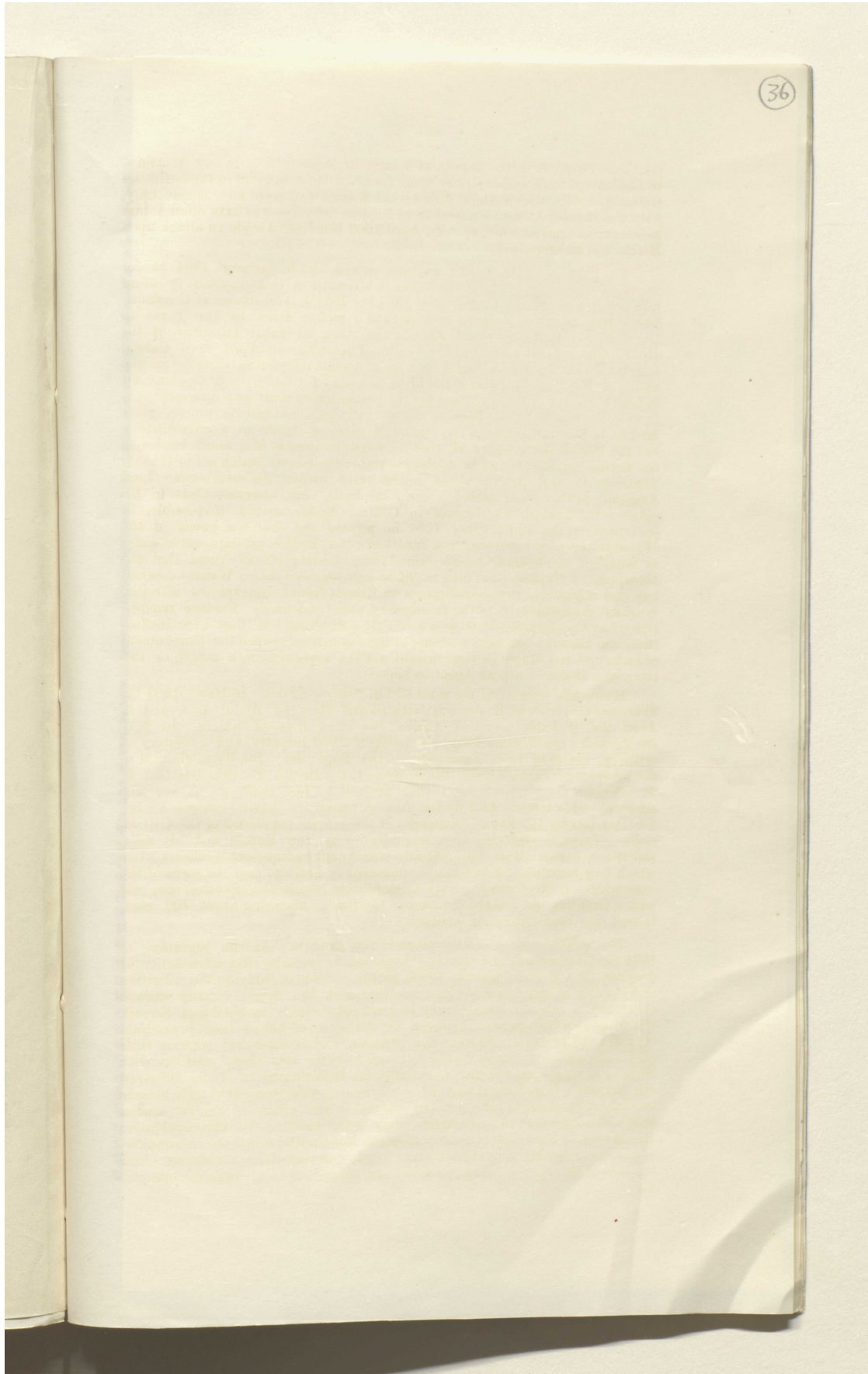
established himself in the district of Kasim, besides which little now remained to him except his own hereditary dominions. A short interval in the hostilities followed, during which Abdul Aziz visited Koweit and there met, accidentally, with the Russian Consul-General from Bushire who seems to have offered him assistance in arms and money. In April 1903 Ibn Rashid made an attack upon Riadh, but was repulsed.

The position of Ibn Rashid was now serious, and in January 1904 he for the third time sought help of the Turks who were at last disposed to afford him active assistance. In February 1904 the British Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed to claim fulfilment of a pledge given by the Turks in October 1901, that they would restrain the Amir of Jabal Shammar if the British Government restrained the Sheikh of Koweit. In April Lord Curzon suggested that the Turks should be warned against interfering directly in the affairs of Nejd, as otherwise it might be necessary for the British Government to take measures in those regions for the protection of their own interests. On news being received that Turkish troops had been ordered to proceed from Medina to Central Arabia, a fresh remonstrance was made at Constantinople, but the British Ambassador felt that the aggressiveness of Ibn Saud weakened the British arguments and he doubted whether the reconstitution of the Wahabi power in Central Arabia would be in every respect an advantage. Lord Ampthill, at this time acting Viceroy of India, was, however, clear in his opinion that Turkish interference in Central Arabia should, if possible, be prevented; at the end of May 1904 he pointed out that the power of the Wahabis was now territorial, not fanatical; that British prestige would suffer at Koweit if the Sheikh were restrained from assisting his ally; and that the absorption of Nejd by the Turks might be a greater evil than a Wahabi domination and might lead to encroachments on Koweit from an unexpected direction in which the boundaries of the principality were undefined. Further remonstrances at Constantinople were accordingly authorised, but they were ineffectual, and the only practical outcome of the discussion between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government was the appointment, a month or two later, of a British Political Agent to Koweit.

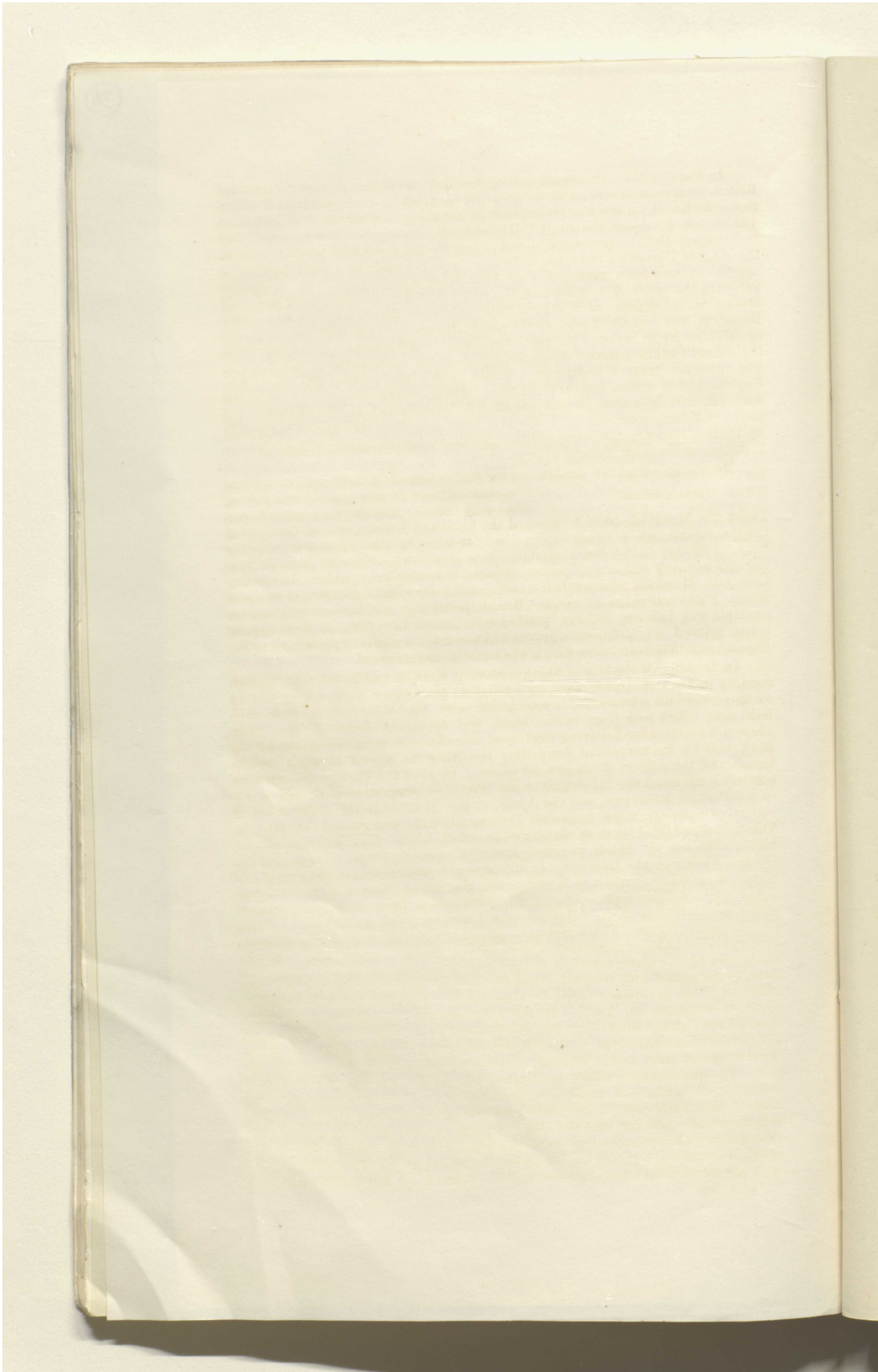
Meanwhile events had not stood still in Central Arabia. In March 1904 the Shammar Governor of Kasim was defeated and slain by Abdul Aziz, and in April the Wahabis occupied Anaiza, the chief town of Kasim. In May the Turkish expeditionary force, consisting of 2,000 infantry and a battery of artillery, marched from Samawah on the Euphrates; Ibn Saud, alarmed at the prospect of Turkish intervention, wrote to the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf requesting British protection, but again no answer was returned to his letter. In July the Turkish expedition, having entered Kasim, was attacked by Ibn Saud's followers and the general population of the district, and the Turks, though they were accompanied by Ibn Rashid and his men, suffered a severe defeat, losing their commandant and numerous officers, after which they remained for two months immured in a village near the scene of the encounter. In September, having attempted to resume the offensive, they met with a fresh reverse, and the remnant of the force, numbering about 700 men, retired into Jabal Shammar territory.

This was the end of another phase in the struggle. At the beginning of 1904 the Government of India had been led to consider the advisability of despatching a British officer to Riadh for the purpose of studying the situation and possibly of entering into closer relations with Ibn Saud; enquiry showed that such a mission could easily be arranged through the Sheikh of Koweit. His Majesty's Government, however, in the state of affairs then prevailing, regarded the proposal with some apprehension, and directed that without their previous sanction no steps should be taken to enter into closer relations with Nejd or to send agents there. Eventually the Government of India informed His Majesty's Government that, while recognising that it might shortly become incumbent on them to take a closer interest in the affairs of Central Arabia, they did not propose to move immediately in the matter. To this conclusion His Majesty's Government readily assented, but they admitted the desirability of obtaining further information about Nejd, and they did not discountenance the idea of the subject being re-opened at a future and more suitable opportunity.

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In October 1904 Ibn Saud, having received no encouragement from the British Government and being alarmed by a fresh concentration of Turkish troops at Kufah on the Euphrates, opened negotiations with the Wali of Basrah and professed a desire to submit. His overtures were favourably received, and in February 1905 he proceeded, accompanied by the Sheikh of Koweit, to meet the Wali of Basrah on the Turkish frontier near Safwan: at this interview it appears to have been arranged that Ibn Saud should retain his dominions proper in the capacity of a Turkish Governor, that Ibn Rashid should similarly remain in possession of Northern Nejd and be restrained from interference in the south, and that the Turks should pacifically occupy the district of Kasim or Middle Nejd between the two rival states. Meanwhile, in January 1905, the second Turkish expedition, consisting of about 2,000 infantry with guns, had marched from Kufah, and a month or two later it effected a junction in Central Arabia with a smaller force from Medina. The programme arranged with Ibn Saud was then carried into effect: Buraida and Anaiza, the principal towns of Kasim, were occupied on the 15th and 18th of April respectively by Turkish military garrisons, and the district was organised in administrative divisions on the usual Turkish system.

Events in Turkish Arabia during the septennium with which we are concerned were mostly internal and did not directly affect British interests. Sadun

Turkish Arabia.

Pasha, the Muntefik chief who joined the Sheikh of Koweit in his invasion of Central Arabia, was a cause of constant trouble to the Turkish authorities between 1900 and 1903, but in the latter year he was with difficulty expelled from Turkish territory and was ultimately reduced to suing for a pardon. In connection with Muntefik affairs it is interesting to observe that in 1899 a brother of Sadun Pasha attempted to obtain British protection for himself and that his example was followed in 1902 by other members of the tribe; on their request being refused the petitioners appear to have made a similar application to the Russian consular authorities which was equally unsuccessful.

In 1903 the Mujtahids or Shiah doctors of Kerbela and Nejef, who, though residing in Turkish Arabia, exercise a religious ascendancy over all classes in Persia, came into prominence in connection with the anti-Customs and anti-Babi riots which took place in the north and centre of Persia in that year. There are grounds for believing that these disturbances were instigated by the Mujtahids for the purpose of compelling the Shah to attend to their remonstrances on the subject of his general policy. In 1904 the Persian Government astutely denounced the Mujtahids to the Porte as supporters of British policy in the Turkish dominions, and the Ataba, as the Mujtahids are called in their collective capacity, were forthwith threatened with deportation to Medina. This menace obliged them to withdraw an edict which they had issued, prohibiting the use by Shiah pilgrims during the continuance of hostilities in Central Arabia of the Hail route to Mecca,—a measure which was capable of being construed as an attempt to favour the Sheikh of Koweit at the expense of the Amir of Jabal Shammar,—and in 1905, when fresh tumultuary risings took place in Persia, their influence was found arrayed on the side of the Persian Government. The Ataba are connected with the British Government by a valuable Indian endowment, known as the Oudh Bequest, which is administered by the Government of India for their benefit, but at the commencement of the period with which we have to do the arrangements for the distribution of the money had fallen into confusion. A reform of these arrangements was begun in 1902. It was a delicate operation and occupied more than a year, but the final result was highly satisfactory, and Major Newmarch, the British Consul-General at Baghdad, received the congratulations of the Government of India on the efficient manner in which he had carried out his task. The qualifications which constitute a Mujtahid were for the first time defined; the names and relative importance of the genuine Mujtahids of Kerbela and Nejef were ascertained and placed on record; the number of recipients was restricted with the effect of rendering the allowances valuable; a simple plan of nomination to vacancies was devised by which the British Resident consulted, but was not bound by, the wishes of the Mujtahids already upon the salaried list; last but not least, a number of Mujtahids, including

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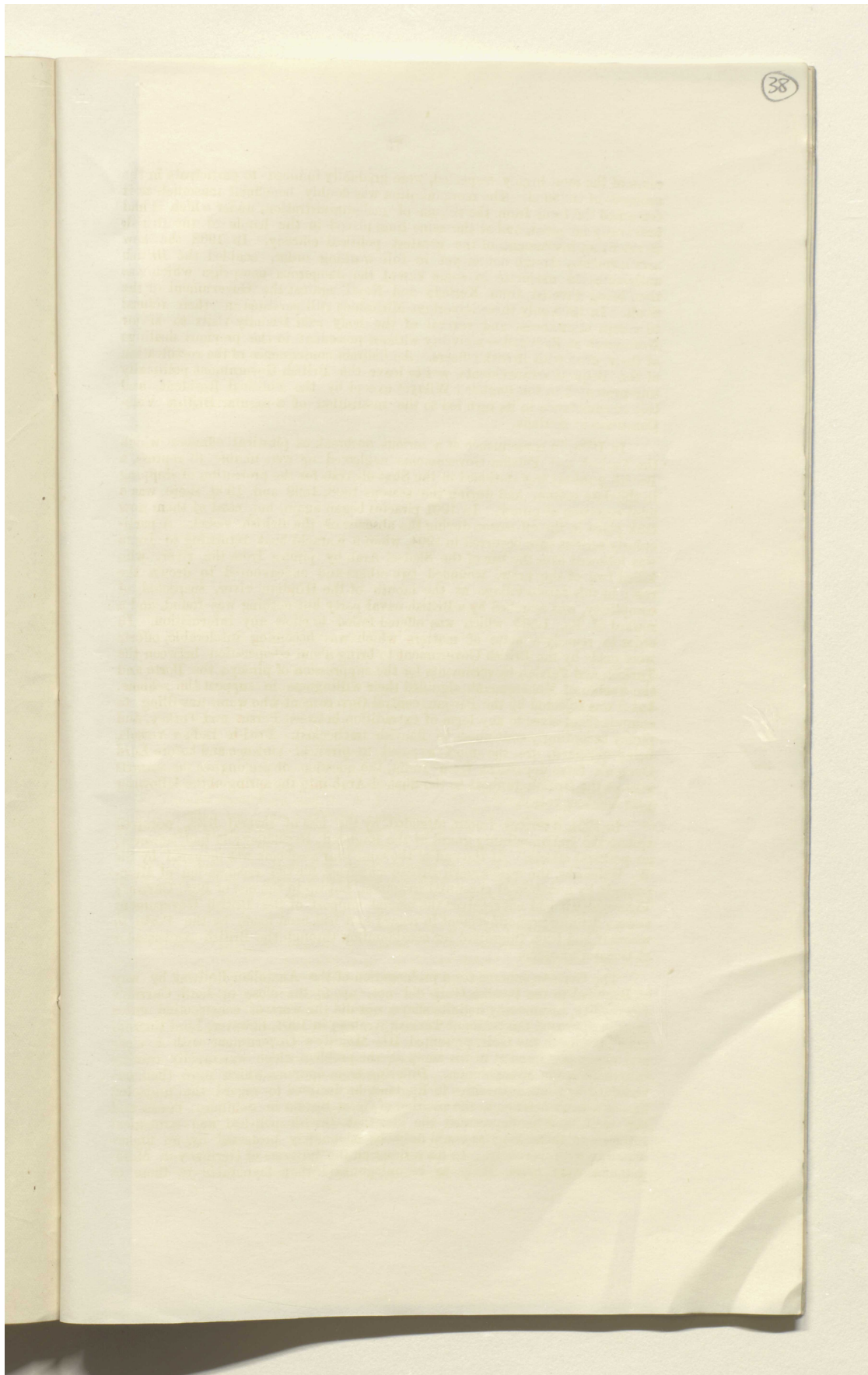
some of the most highly respected, were gradually induced to participate in the proceeds of the fund. The reorganisation was doubly beneficial inasmuch as it redeemed the fund from the stigma of maladministration, under which it had previously laboured, and at the same time placed in the hands of the British Resident an instrument of the greatest political efficacy. In 1903 the new arrangements, though not as yet in full working order, enabled the British authorities to moderate to some extent the dangerous campaign which was then being directed from Kerbela and Nejef against the Government of the Shah. In 1905 only three important Mujtahids still persisted in their refusal to accept allowances, and several of the body paid friendly visits to Major Newmarch at Baghdad,—a civility without precedent in the previous dealings of their class with British officers. An indirect consequence of the rectification of the Bequest arrangements, was to leave the British Government politically unrepresented in the Baghdad Wilayet except by the Political Resident, and this circumstance in its turn led to the institution of a regular British Vice-Consulate at Kerbela.

In 1898, in consequence of a serious outbreak of piratical offences which the Turkish and Persian Governments neglected or were unable to repress, a British gunboat was stationed in the Shat-el-Arab for the protection of shipping in the date season, and during the seasons 1898, 1899 and 1900 there was a total cessation of piracy. In 1901 piracies began again, but most of them now took place in the off-season during the absence of the British vessel. A particularly serious case occurred in 1904, when a Karachi boat returning to India was followed over the bar of the Shat-el-Arab by pirates from the river, who killed two of the crew, wounded two others and endeavoured to drown the rest; in this case a village at the mouth of the Hindian river, suspected of complicity, was searched by a British naval party but nothing was found, and a reward of Rs. 1,000 which was offered failed to elicit any information. In order to remedy a state of matters which was becoming intolerable, efforts were made by the British Government to bring about co-operation between the Turkish and Persian Governments for the suppression of piracy; the Porte and the Sheikh of Mohammerah signified their willingness to support the scheme, but it was rejected by the Persian central Government who were unwilling to commit themselves to any form of extradition between Persia and Turkey, and piracy accordingly continued to flourish unchecked. British Indian vessels, being unarmed, are the most exposed to piratical violence and before Lord Curzon's final departure from India, the question of prolonging the annual visit of the British gunboat to the Shat-el-Arab into the spring of the following year had been raised.

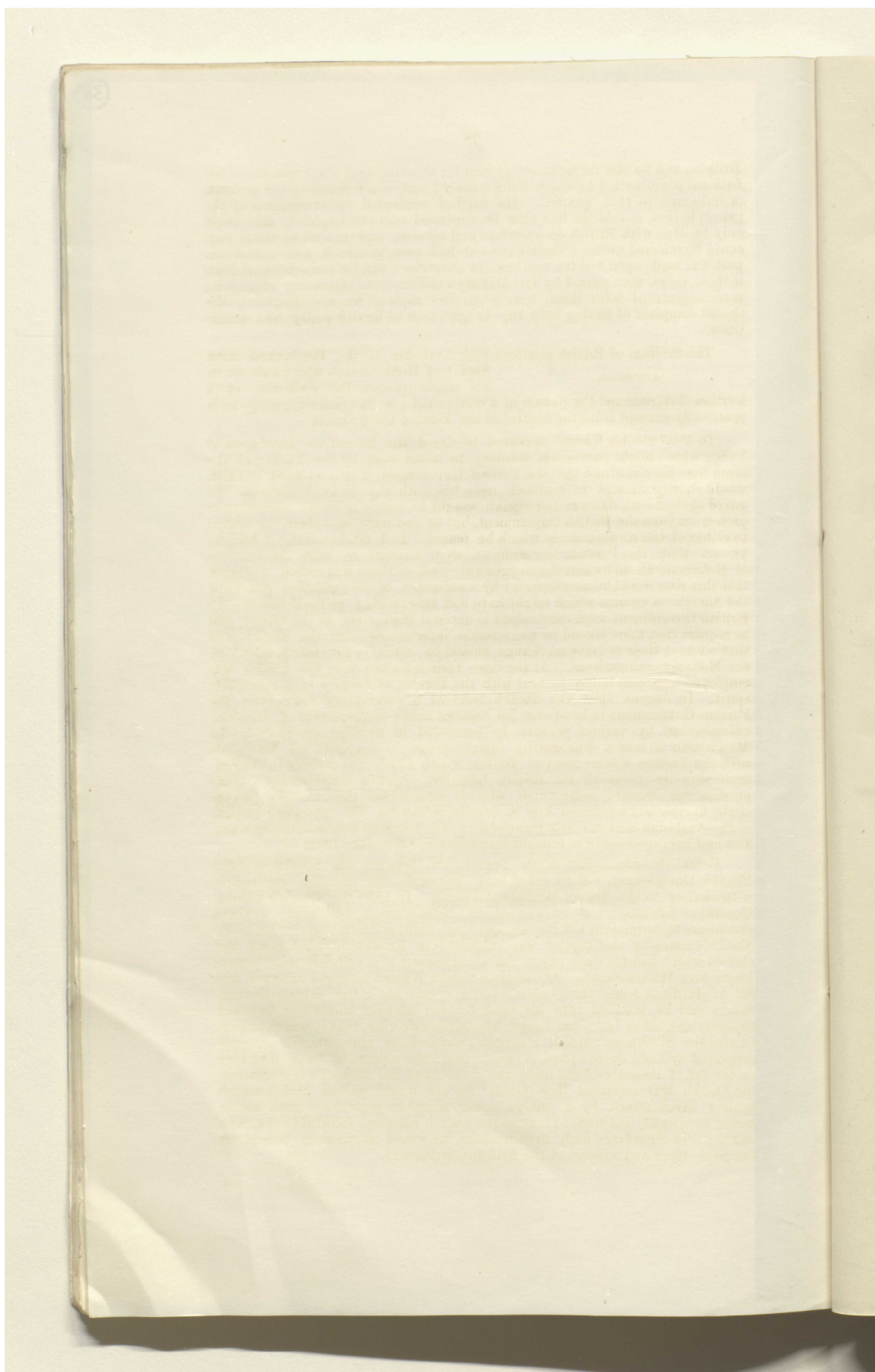
In 1904 a serious fracas, attended by the loss of several lives, occurred among the Indian military guard of the Baghdad Residency; it had, however, no political effects. At the end of the same year a scheme was prepared by Sir W. Willcocks, the well-known British engineer, for the reclamation of Mesopotamia by a system of perennial irrigation, but up to the end of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty it had not received the official support of the British Government and no definite pronouncement in regard to it had been made by the Porte, to whom it had been submitted for consideration through the British Ambassador at Constantinople.

The German scheme for a prolongation of the Anatolian Railway by way of Baghdad to the Persian Gulf did not, up to the close of Lord Curzon's viceroyalty, assume any definite shape, nor did the work of construction enter or even approach the limits of Turkish Arabia; in 1904, however, Lord Curzon, after his tour in the Gulf, presented His Majesty's Government with a clear and vigorous statement of his views on the problem which was rapidly coming into existence in Mesopotamia. Differing from opinions which were then entertained by some authorities in England, he declined to regard the projected line as a flank defence to the position of Great Britain in Southern Persia and the Gulf, and he deprecated the idea that British political and strategical interests in those regions could only be adequately protected by an understanding with Germany. In his estimation the interests of Germany in Mesopotamia were more likely to be antagonistic than favourable to those of

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Britain; and he saw no sufficient ground for thinking that there was any international combination to which Britain should look as a buttress to her interests or influence in that quarter. He further contended for acceptance of the principle that, should the line ever be continued south of Baghdad, this could only be done with British co-operation and consent, and that no terminal port could be selected unless a similar consent had been obtained, and unless the port was made open and international in character; and he recommended that, if these views were shared by His Majesty's Government, Germany should be made acquainted with them, lest, when her railway reached Baghdad, she should complain of having been kept in ignorance of British policy and intentions.

The medium of British relations with Arabistan is the Persianised Arab Sheikh of Mohammerah who combines in his single person the authority of a Persian Governor and the powers of a tribal chief: in the latter capacity he is practically exempt from the control of the Persian Government.

In 1899 Sheikh Khazal appeared to dread the immediate dissolution of Persia which might expose his territory to annexation by the Turks; at the same time he was afraid that the Persian Government, if it continued to exist, would shortly attempt to encroach upon his authority in local matters. To guard against both dangers the Sheikh sought to obtain a secret assurance of protection from the British Government, but at first none was given in regard to either of the contingencies which he feared. In 1900, however, it became known that the Persian Government were anxious to take the customs of Mohammerah under direct management, and, as there was reason to expect that this step would be accompanied by a reduction of the executive powers of the Sheikh—a change which might have had far-reaching political effects—the British Government were constrained to interest themselves in the matter and to request that there should be no forcible interference with the Sheikh and that without their consent no change should be made in the management of the Mohammerah customs. At the time their influence with the Sheikh was employed to persuade him to deal with the Persian authorities in a reasonable spirit. In August 1901 the Sheikh received a peremptory order from the Persian Government to hand over his customs to the management of Imperial officials, but by various pretexts he succeeded in evading compliance. In March 1902 he sent a trustworthy representative to negotiate on his behalf with the Persian Government at Tehran, a step which was entirely in accordance with the views of the British Legation. By this intermediary a compromise was arranged under which, while it safeguarded the executive powers of the Sheikh and confirmed him in certain privileges, the executive control of the Arabistan customs was transferred to the Imperial Customs Department. The new arrangement was brought into effect in September 1902.

Before the conclusion of the negotiations between the Sheikh and the Persian Government, and for some time afterwards, the situation was fraught with anxiety to the British Minister at Tehran. In 1899 the Russian Consul-General at Isfahan, while on a visit to Mohammerah, had made a direct endeavour to intimidate the Sheikh, and there is little doubt that in 1902 the Sheikh's envoy at the capital was subjected to Russian blandishments and threats which had for their object the establishment of a veiled Russian protectorate over Mohammerah. At one time Sheikh Khazal appeared to waver, and Sir A. Hardinge feared that, unless a fuller confidence in the British Government could be instilled into his mind, Russian influence would soon be found supreme and active in his entourage. The Minister's view, that it was expedient to give the Sheikh an explicit assurance, was in these circumstances strongly supported by Lord Curzon; and at length, in a letter written by Sir A. Hardinge on the 7th of December 1902 under the authority of His Majesty's Government, the Sheikh was informed that Great Britain would protect Mohammerah against naval attack by a foreign power, whatever pretext for such action might be alleged, and that, so long as the Sheikh remained faithful to the Shah and acted in accordance with British advice, he would continue to benefit by the good offices and support of the British Government.

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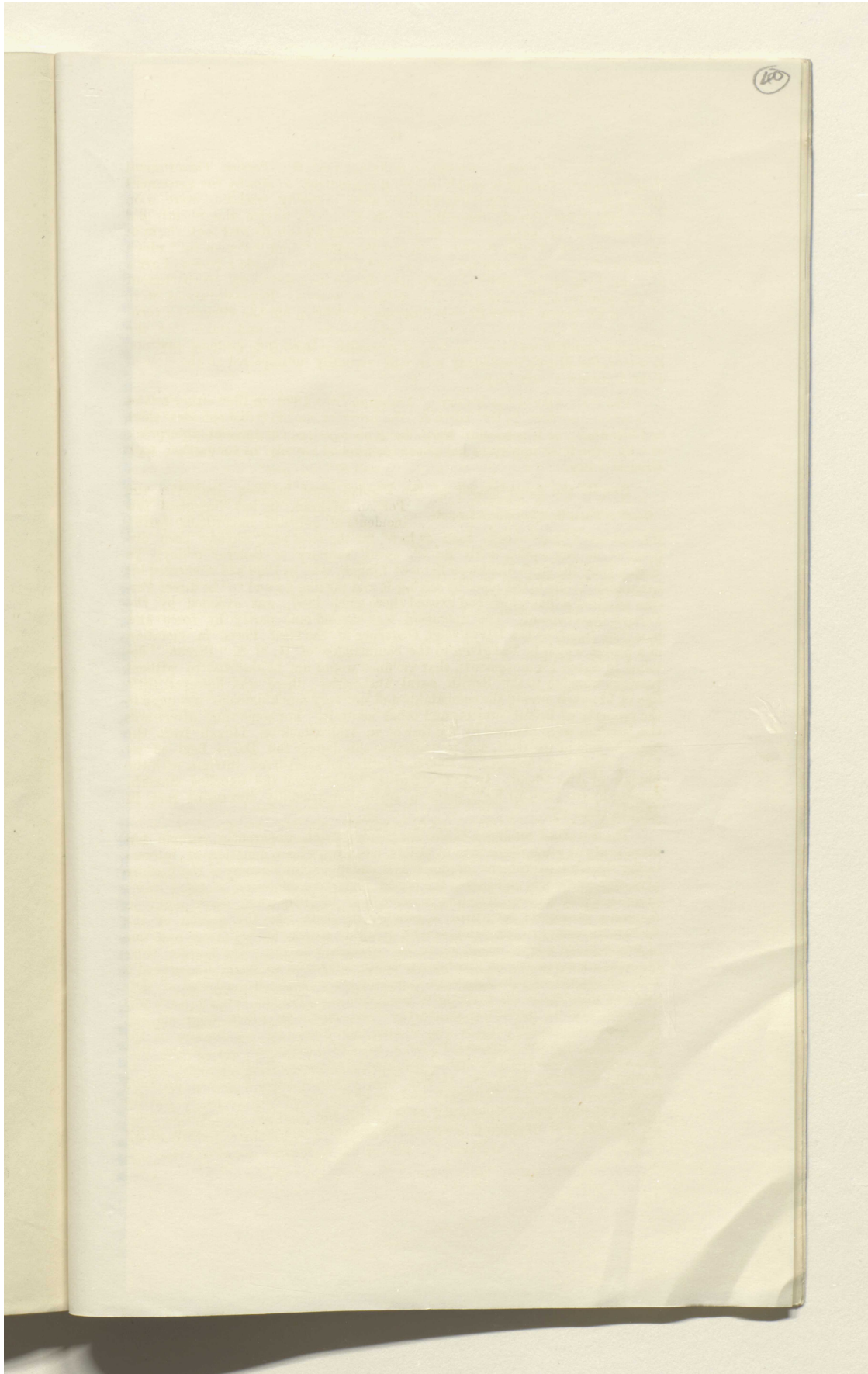
At the end of 1903 the Sheikh complained that the Persian Government were infringing the rights which had been guaranteed to him by the agreement of the previous year; but the infractions were probably trivial or were soon discontinued, for after obtaining the British Minister's advice the Sheikh did not revert to the subject. In September 1904 Sheikh Khazal took alarm at the proceedings of the Persian vessels "Muzaffari" and "Persepolis," which without his consent had visited his territorial waters and made seizures of arms and ammunition carried by native boats; this he regarded as an encroachment by the customs authorities upon his executive powers. Representations were made in his favour by the British Embassy at Tehran, but the Persian Government declined to view the case in the light desired or to undertake that the procedure complained of would not be repeated. In all but customs matters, however, the Sheikh's authority was still virtually unimpaired at the close of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty.

The remainder of the history of Arabistan from 1899 to 1905 either relates to internal disorders in the north of the province and to tribal episodes there and elsewhere, or is concerned with official changes and commercial enterprises of which the most important have been mentioned already in connection with British policy.

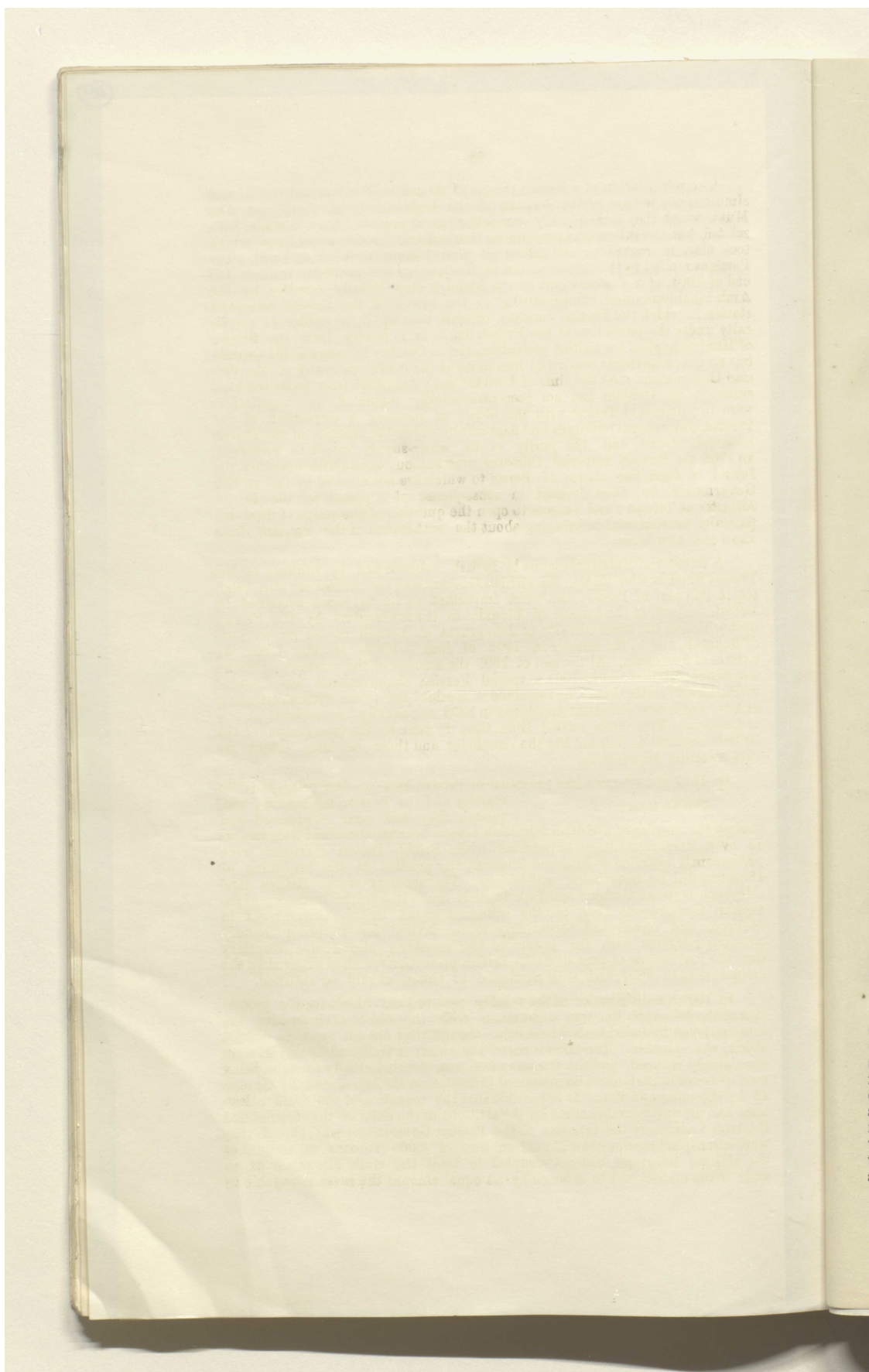
Despite the great extent of the Persian coast between Arabistan and Persian Mekran, it has furnished few incidents of political importance during the last seven years except such as have, for the most part, already been disposed of in connection with British naval, sanitary or general policy. In March 1899 the Arab Sheikh or Zabit of Lingah, who in 1898 had vindicated his hereditary claims to the place by seizing it and putting an end to the direct Persian administration which had existed there since 1887, was expelled by the Persian Government. The operation was carried out, partly by force and partly by fraud, by the Darya Begi, Governor of the Gulf Ports, in violation of a pledge which he had given to the commander of H. M. S. "Pigeon," detailed to watch his movements, that violence would not be resorted to without previous warning to the British naval authorities; there was however little loss of life even among the combatants and not very much damage was done to the property of British subjects and other neutrals. For some time afterwards the Persians were haunted by the fear of an Arab attack on Lingah from the opposite side of the Gulf, and to neutralise this danger the Darya Begi, as we have already seen, engaged in 1900 in a futile and short-lived intrigue with the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi. In 1902 one of the adherents of the expelled Sheikh, coming by sea from El Katr, made a small but partially successful raid in Lingah territory.

The disturbed condition of the Tangistan district, apparently chronic but more acute at some times than at others, has always been a matter of interest to the British Government inasmuch as it endangers the security of the Bushire peninsula and town, and during the period under consideration it twice came prominently to notice. The first occasion was in 1900 when on a night in August a Tangistani gang fired a number of shots into the garden of the British Residency at Sabzabad, several of which struck the buildings and one of which killed a horse belonging to the Resident's escort. The Persian Government, on a demand for satisfaction being addressed to them, despatched a military expedition into Tangistan under the Darya Begi; a good deal of destruction was done to the property of the inhabitants, but the Persian force was not successful in capturing either the rival chiefs to whose misdeeds and rivalries the unsettled state of the district was due. At the request of the British Legation the Nizam-ut-Tujjar, a man of influential connections who was suspected of having instigated the demonstration at Sabzabad in order to discredit the Darya Begi, was at this time removed from Bushire. In 1903 trouble was renewed in Tangistan, and one of the contending chiefs was invited to Bushire and there treacherously arrested by the Persian authorities; some life was lost in a struggle in the town which took place in consequence of his arrest.

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The reinstitution of a British telegraph station on Henjam and the almost simultaneous seizure by the Persians of the Arab Islands of Tanb and Abu Musa, which they were quickly compelled to relinquish, have already been related, but the subsequent position on Henjam and certain proceedings which took place in regard to the island of Sirri remain to be mentioned. The Persians replied to the British action on Henjam by the creation, towards the end of 1904, of a customs post on the island, a step bitterly resented by the Arab inhabitants and compromising to the safety of the British telegraph station in which the Persian customs officials took up their residence, practically under the protection of the British flag. In February 1905 the Sheikh of Henjam applied for British protection, and in October he renewed his request, but no encouragement was given him to resist the lawful authority of the Persian Government. At the time of Lord Curzon's departure from India the local situation on Henjam had not been satisfactorily regulated, but negotiations were in progress at Tehran with the object of securing a disposition of the Persian Government buildings and flagstuffs by which the amenity of the British telegraph station and the purity of its water-supply would be preserved. In 1904 the Persian Imperial Customs were anxious to establish a post on the Island of Sirri, the claims of Persia to which are not allowed by the British Government, but they desisted in consequence of a protest by the British Minister at Tehran; and a threat to open the question of the status of Sirri was partially instrumental in bringing about the withdrawal of the Persians from Tanb and Abu Musa.

A number of unsettled claims by British subjects and by subjects of the Trucial Sheikhs who look to the British Government for redress are still pending in this part of Persia; the most important relate to losses sustained by British subjects at the capture of Lingah, to the confiscation by the Persian authorities on the same occasion of date groves at Lingah owned by subjects of Shargah, and to the murder in 1902 of four subjects of Abu Dhabi by natives of Tawunah. At the end of 1899 the amount of the outstanding claims was about £20,000 and in 1901 a special Persian Commissioner was deputed to Bushire to settle them: he remained at Bushire for a year without disposing of any, and a new Karguzar appointed in 1903 was equally unsuccessful. A few of the claims have been settled from time to time by the intervention of the British Legation at Tehran, but the remainder and those of later origin are still awaiting adjudication.

In 1897 disturbances had prevailed in Persian Mekran, due principally to scarcity and to Persian oppression; and, though they had been suppressed and though the murder of a British telegraph official near the coast had been avenged by a Persian military expedition, while British Indian garrisons were permanently installed at Jask and Chahbar, the position at the beginning of 1899 was still far from being satisfactory. The security of the British land telegraph between Gwadar and Jask depends much less on the authority of the Persian Government than on the influence of the British Government in Mekran, and means had accordingly to be devised for restoring friendly working relations with the people of the country; also it was necessary that the just claims of persons under British protection who had suffered in the disturbances of 1897, and still continued to suffer, should be satisfied.

In 1900 a redistribution of the subsidy paid to local chiefs for the protection of the telegraph line was undertaken with the object of increasing the share enjoyed by individuals whose help, though they did not rank as district chiefs, was valuable. The allowances of the chiefs of Gaih and Dashtyari were accordingly reduced, and the amount saved was devoted chiefly to subsidising men of lesser importance who possessed influence in the tracts actually traversed by the telegraph line. It is possible that the reduction of the Gaih allowance had an unfavourable effect on the attitude of the chief of that district and it affected adversely the interests of the Persian Government who, though they were already in receipt of an annual subsidy of 3,000 Tumans on account of the Mekran telegraph, had not scrupled to treat the Gaih allowance as an asset of the district and to enhance by an equal amount the revenue payable by

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the chief of Gaih ; but it is difficult to discriminate with certainty between the results of this redistribution and those of the general internal disorganisation which began in 1897 and has since increased rather than diminished. The new distribution had at least the effect of adjusting benefits in a more correct proportion to responsibilities.

In 1901 Mir Mahmud Khan, brother of the chief of Dashtyari with whom he was at war, entered on a course of hostility against the British Government ; he raided a number of villages in the neighbourhood of Chahbar and carried off cattle belonging to British Indian subjects and to the British telegraph station. In 1902 the British Legation remonstrated with the Persian Government on the condition of affairs in Mekran, but the admonition passed unheeded ; the Persian officials continued to prey unchecked on the chiefs, the chiefs in their turn to ravage their own territories and even to sell their subjects into slavery, and the people at large to become impoverished and to emigrate. In 1904 Mir Mahmud Khan spontaneously assumed a more correct attitude towards Government and was in the end recognised as joint ruler with his brother of the Dashtyari district ; but general lawlessness and oppression continued unabated.

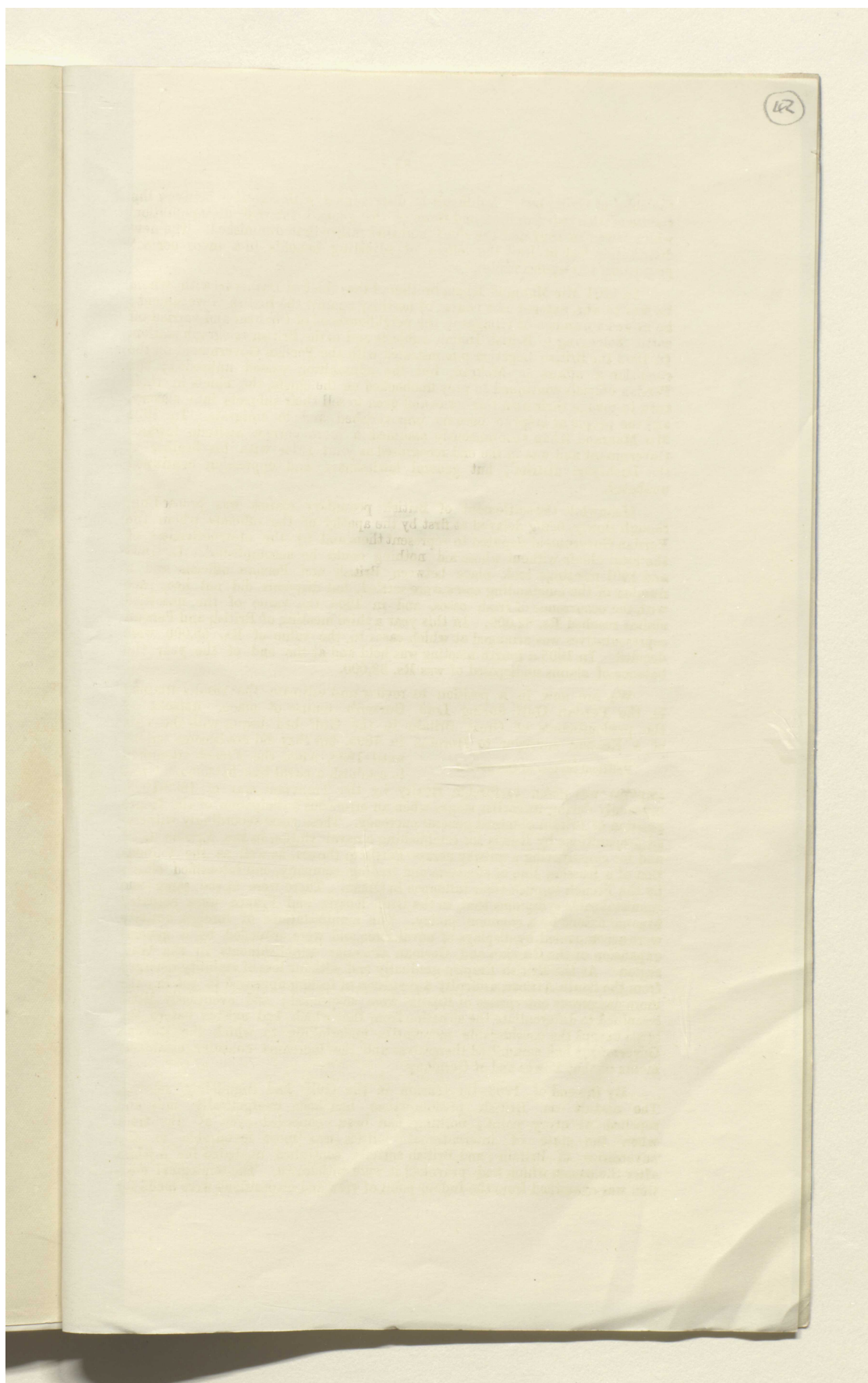
Meanwhile the settlement of British pecuniary claims was proceeding, though slowly, being delayed at first by the apathy of the officials whom the Persian Government deputed to represent them and by the obstructiveness of the local chiefs without whose aid nothing could be accomplished. In 1899 and 1901 meetings took place between British and Persian officials and a number of the outstanding cases were settled, but disposals did not keep pace with the occurrence of fresh cases, and in 1904 the value of the unsettled claims reached Rs. 82,000. In this year a third meeting of British and Persian representatives was arranged at which cases to the value of Rs. 58,000 were decided. In 1905 a fourth meeting was held and at the end of the year the balance of claims undisposed of was Rs. 33,000.

We are now in a position to review and estimate the results attained in the Persian Gulf during Lord Curzon's tenure of office. Attacks on the predominance of Great Britain in the Gulf had begun with the visit of a Russian surveyor to Hormuz in 1895, but they did not become serious until 1898, when the French attempted

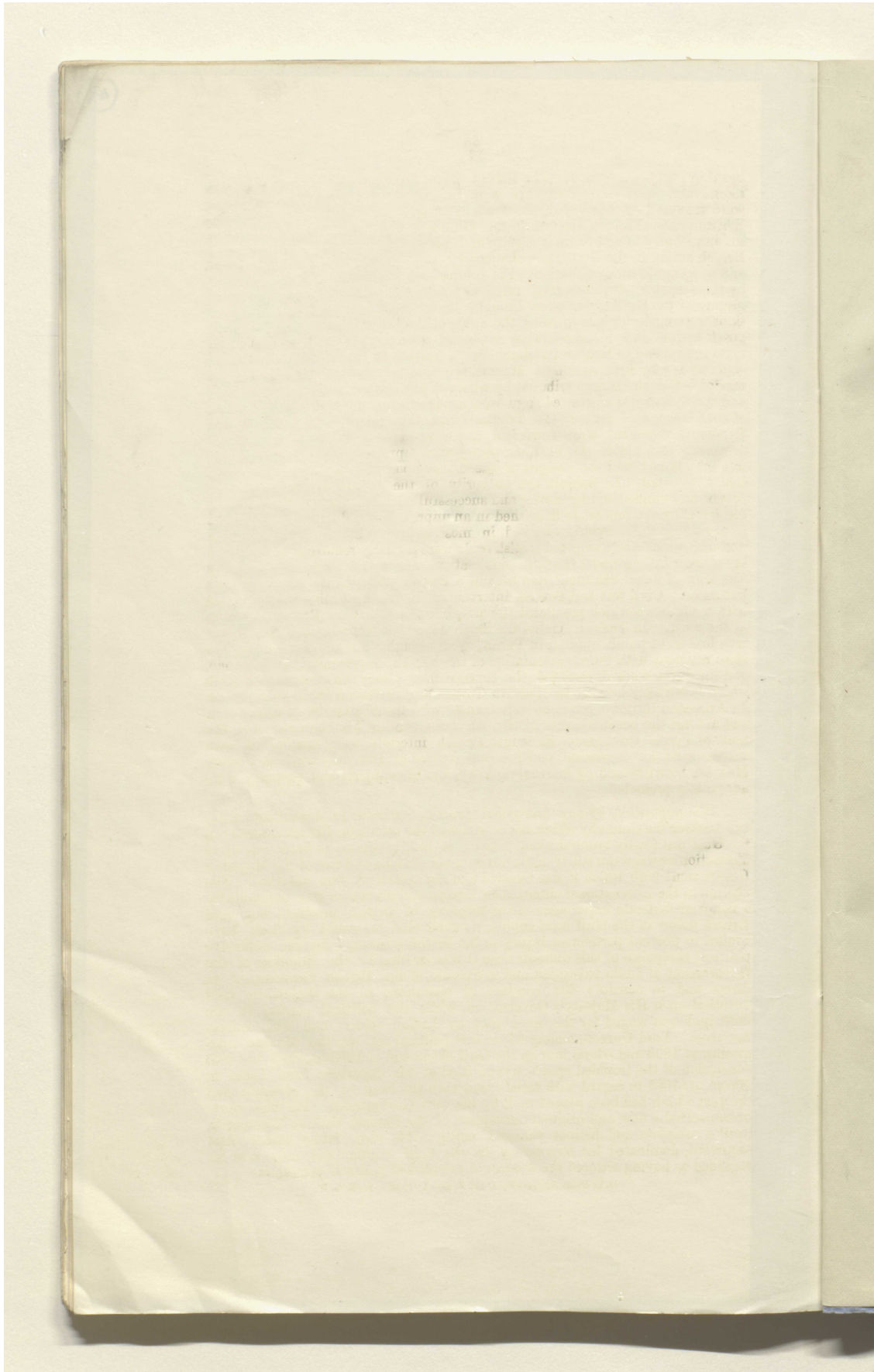
Political review of the period. to establish a naval base in Oman. Great impetus was given to foreign rivalry by the Transvaal war of 1899-1902, especially during its earlier stages when an erroneous anticipation of the future position of Britain obtained general currency. These years accordingly witnessed preparations by Russia for establishing a naval station in the Persian Gulf and for constructing a railway across Persia to the sea, as well as the foundation of a Russian line of steamers and trading company, and intensified efforts by the French to push their influence in Oman. There were at the same time unmistakeable symptoms that, in the Gulf, Russia and France were actuated to some extent by a common policy. The manifestations of foreign activity were accompanied by displays of naval force and were attended by a general expansion of the Russian and German consular establishments in the Gulf region. As the British Empire gradually and without loss of stability emerged from the South African difficulty a revulsion of feeling appeared to set in ; the more dangerous enterprises of Russia were suspended ; and eventually little remained to differentiate the situation from that which had existed before the crisis except the considerable mercantile undertaking to which the Russian Government had committed themselves and the increased consular establishments of that Power and of Germany.

By the end of 1903 the tension in the Gulf had completely relaxed. The assault on British predominance had been energetically met and repelled at every point ; nothing had been conceded even at the time when the state of international politics was most favourable to the adversaries of Britain ; and British activity continued unabated for a while after the causes which had provoked it were withdrawn. The strategical position was examined from the Indian point of view and dispositions were made for

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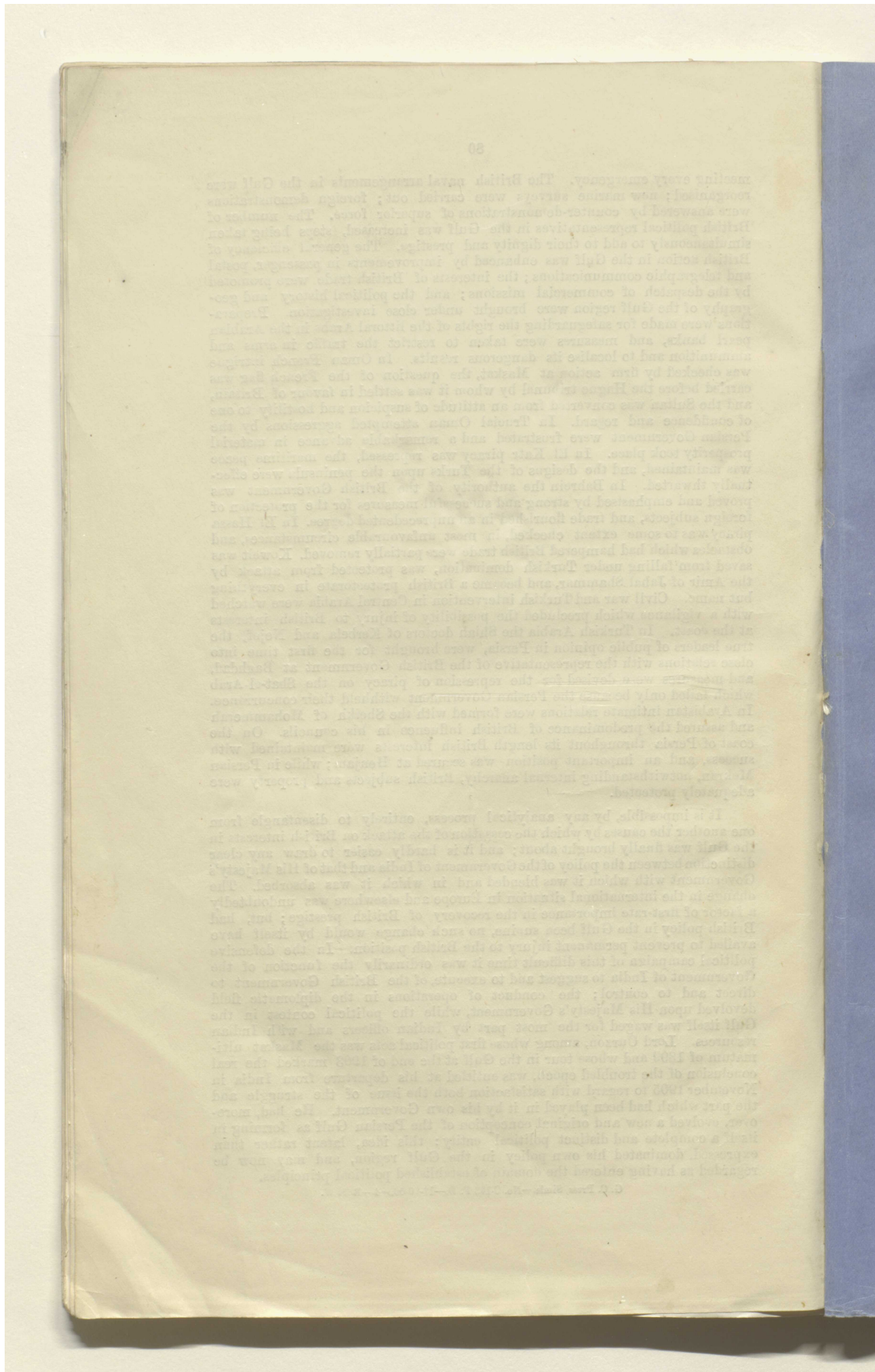
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meeting every emergency. The British naval arrangements in the Gulf were reorganised; new marine surveys were carried out; foreign demonstrations were answered by counter-demonstrations of superior force. The number of British political representatives in the Gulf was increased, steps being taken simultaneously to add to their dignity and prestige. The general efficiency of British action in the Gulf was enhanced by improvements in passenger, postal and telegraphic communications; the interests of British trade were promoted by the despatch of commercial missions; and the political history and geography of the Gulf region were brought under close investigation. Preparations were made for safeguarding the rights of the littoral Arabs in the Arabian pearl banks, and measures were taken to restrict the traffic in arms and ammunition and to localise its dangerous results. In Oman French intrigue was checked by firm action at Maskat, the question of the French flag was carried before the Hague tribunal by whom it was settled in favour of Britain, and the Sultan was converted from an attitude of suspicion and hostility to one of confidence and regard. In Trucial Oman attempted aggressions by the Persian Government were frustrated and a remarkable advance in material prosperity took place. In El Katr piracy was repressed, the maritime peace was maintained, and the designs of the Turks upon the peninsula were effectually thwarted. In Bahrein the authority of the British Government was proved and emphasised by strong and successful measures for the protection of foreign subjects, and trade flourished in an unprecedented degree. In El Hassa piracy was to some extent checked, in most unfavourable circumstances, and obstacles which had hampered British trade were partially removed. Koweit was saved from falling under Turkish domination, was protected from attack by the Amir of Jabal Shammar, and became a British protectorate in everything but name. Civil war and Turkish intervention in Central Arabia were watched with a vigilance which precluded the possibility of injury to British interests at the coast. In Turkish Arabia the Shiah doctors of Kerbela and Nejef, the true leaders of public opinion in Persia, were brought for the first time into close relations with the representative of the British Government at Baghdad, and measures were devised for the repression of piracy on the Shat-el-Arab which failed only because the Persian Government withheld their concurrence. In Arabistan intimate relations were formed with the Sheikh of Mohammerah and assured the predominance of British influence in his councils. On the coast of Persia throughout its length British interests were maintained with success, and an important position was secured at Henjam; while in Persian Mekran, notwithstanding internal anarchy, British subjects and property were adequately protected.

It is impossible, by any analytical process, entirely to disentangle from one another the causes by which the cessation of the attack on British interests in the Gulf was finally brought about; and it is hardly easier to draw any clear distinction between the policy of the Government of India and that of His Majesty's Government with which it was blended and in which it was absorbed. The change in the international situation in Europe and elsewhere was undoubtedly a factor of first-rate importance in the recovery of British prestige; but, had British policy in the Gulf been supine, no such change would by itself have availed to prevent permanent injury to the British position. In the defensive political campaign of this difficult time it was ordinarily the function of the Government of India to suggest and to execute, of the British Government to direct and to control; the conduct of operations in the diplomatic field devolved upon His Majesty's Government, while the political contest in the Gulf itself was waged for the most part by Indian officers and with Indian resources. Lord Curzon, among whose first political acts was the Maskat ultimatum of 1899 and whose tour in the Gulf at the end of 1903 marked the real conclusion of the troubled epoch, was entitled at his departure from India in November 1905 to regard with satisfaction both the issue of the struggle and the part which had been played in it by his own Government. He had, moreover, evolved a new and original conception of the Persian Gulf as forming in itself a complete and distinct political entity: this idea, latent rather than expressed, dominated his own policy in the Gulf region, and may now be regarded as having entered the domain of established political principles.

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