

fighting was in progress and that the strength and vigour of the enemy was apparently most formidable. He had always regarded the line of the Tugela as the only defensive line which British forces would be strong enough to hold, and had recorded his opinion against placing any troops north of that river.

In spite of this warning Ladysmith had been made a great military depôt, and had consequently come to be considered a place of primary importance. It was again a question of balancing drawbacks. Buller therefore telegraphed to White asking him whether he could entrench and maintain himself pending the arrival of reinforcements. White replied that he was prepared to make a prolonged defence of Ladysmith. To this proposal the General-in-chief assented, observing only 'but the line of the Tugela is very tempting.'

General Buller's plan now seems to have been briefly as follows: First, to establish a *modus vivendi* in the Cape Colony, with sufficient troops to stand strictly on the de-