

POISON AFRICAN WELLS

Gen. Botha, Making Charge, Says Germans Admit Practice.

DISEASE GERMS ALSO USED

Boer Commander Quotes Letter From
German Officer Declaring Orders Were
to Infect All Water Supplies—Arseni-
cal Cattle Wash Used—Communica-
tions Are Read in Parliament.

London, May 5.—In support of charges that the Germans had poisoned wells in the southwest African campaign, Lewis Harcourt, secretary of state for the colonies, tonight issued a communication, in which he says that when Gen. Louis Botha, commander of the Union of South Africa forces, occupied Swakopmund he discovered that six wells had been poisoned by an arsenical cattle wash.

Gen. Botha remonstrated with Col. Francke, commander of the German forces. This elicited a response that the German troops had been given orders that "if they possibly can prevent it, not to allow any water supplies to fall into the hands of the enemy in a form which allows it to be used for man or beast."

Tried Salt; Used Arsenic.

When Swakopmund was evacuated, the reply of Col. Francke continued, the officer in charge had cooking salt thrown into the wells. It was found that this "could in a short time be rendered ineffective." Thereafter, Col. Francke's letter said, "we tried the copper dip and found that by using this material any enemy occupying the town would for some time have to rely on water from elsewhere."

The communication says that despite Gen. Botha's protest the practice continued. A message said to have been from Capt. Kruger, of the German protectorate troops, intercepted March 22, is quoted in the communication as saying:

Mine Is Disease Infected.

"The patrol at Gabib has been instructed thoroughly to infect with disease the Ida mine. Approach Swakop and the Ida mine with extreme caution. Don't water there any more."

Since their evacuation of Aus, Warmbad and other places, Gen. Botha says in a letter, "the German troops have consistently poisoned all wells."