

P



E. AFRICA
21488

C. O.
21488
Recd.
12 JUN 14

anti-slavery &
Aboriginal Protection Society

Native Labour Commission Report.

1914

11 June

Last previous Paper.

Ho/c

16905

Submits views on report & evidence. Requests amendments as to (1) safe guarding of native labour (2) rules on compulsory labour for private profit. Requests info as to (a) compulsory labour on public works (b) travelling facilities for labourers (c) appl of special officers for protection of labourers. Proposes to publish this letter.

Mr. G. Fiddler. Sir J. Anderson

Atk. + say that the contents of their l^r have been noted - that Mr. Harcourt is awaiting detailed recommendations from the Governor on various points & that he proposes to take due course to present papers to Parl^t showing what action has been taken on the whole question - + send a copy of answer to the Gov^{rn} for info. D.F.?

Atk. 12 June 14 ✓
Mr. 25 June 14 ✓
So for 608 inf - 26 June '14 ✓

Next subsequent Paper.
Kd/c
21630

this in order to ask about the
trasty case mentioned on p 5
of the letter. Mr Read tells me
that neither Mr Bowring, Mr Hollis
or Mr Lane (Prov^l Fort Hall Dist)
know ^{anything} of the incident & nothing
can be found in the local newspapers
of the time. The 3 offls all agree
no white jury would ^{in such a case} convict!!
The whole ~~case~~ ^{story} wd be an absolute
delight to our French friends & I
doubt like the idea of its appearing
in print just now; but it is
already public property & it wd not
be justifiable to ask them to delete
it, while it is rather odd to telegraph
out about.

E 19.6.14.

H 19.6.14

It occurs
in Aug
H. 7. 14

21488
CHURTON, LONDON

2168

The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society

(in which are incorporated the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines Protection Society)

SECRETARY:
Travers Buxton, M.A.
and Mrs. Harris.

21488
REC^d
REG^d 12 JUN 14

DENISON HOUSE,
VAUXHALL BRIDGE ROAD,
LONDON, S.W.

363



(CLOSE TO VICTORIA STATION)

11th June, 1914.

To the Rt. Hon. Lewis Harcourt, M.P.,
H.M. Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies,
COLONIAL OFFICE, S.W.

Sir,

In forwarding the enclosed letter on the subject of native labour in East Africa, I beg to say that we propose publishing the letter unless you inform us that you have any objection to that course.

etc
I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Travers Buxton
Secretary.

Agents: J. WOOD, CHURTON, LONDON.
Agents: VICTORIA.

Encl in 10

21788
REC^d
REG^d 12 JUN 14

The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society

(in which are incorporated the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines Protection Society)

SECRETARY:
Travers Buxton M.A.

DENISON HOUSE,

364

VAUXHALL BRIDGE ROAD,

LONDON, S.W.

CHAIRMAN'S SECRETARIES:
REV. J. H. and Mrs. Harris.

(CLOSE TO TELEGRAPH STATIONS)

11th June, 1914.

To the Rt. Hon. Lewis Harcourt, M.P.,
H.M. Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies,
COLONIAL OFFICE, S.W.

Sir,

The Committee of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society has had under consideration the evidence and report of the Commission upon Native Labour in the Protectorate of East Africa.

With most of the recommendations of the Commission the Society finds itself in hearty agreement, but in several respects the Commission is less pronounced than we should have desired. In view of the fact that ultimate decision upon several points of vital importance to the Protectorate is left with His Majesty's Government, we beg to appeal to you for a declaration upon specific issues, either to the Society direct, or in some other manner which may seem to

you

you desirable. The Committee of the Society believes 369
that it is asking for nothing to which His Majesty's Govern-
ment would take exception, but it does feel strongly that the
permanent welfare of the Protectorate would be enhanced by a
declaration from yourself in the near future.

The main contention of the planters in East Africa is
that there is an ample supply of labour in the Protectorate
but that the natives are so content with their lot in the
Reserves, that they will not emerge in sufficient numbers to
labour for the white man; and that, in view of this position
of affairs, it is the duty of His Majesty's Government to
take adequate steps to force the labour out of the Reserves.
The Society begs to challenge at the outset the contention that
it is part of the duty of an administration to secure a
labour supply for industrial development. Any form of ad-
ministrative recruitment is bound sooner or later, as was point-
ed out by the Commission, to lead to compulsion, and, in the
opinion of the Society, forced labour for private profit
is slavery. The Committee trusts that the
Colonial advisers of His Majesty's Government may also

accept

accept this view, which is, we beg to point out, that of Sir Edward Grey, and, moreover, is endorsed by that eminent administrator, the Earl of Cromer.

The best incentive to a flow of free labour is a good name, and it is worthy of notice that in the evidence before the Labour Commission several witnesses expressed the opinion that with better treatment there need be little fear with reference to the labour supply. Mr. Ainsworth, the Provincial Commission of the Nyanza Province, stated:-

"He had yet to learn that there was any actual shortage of labour in the Protectorate; he considered, however, that there was a considerable amount of waste or unemployed labour. Where natives had not been properly looked after, or where the work or climate was uncongenial, it was only to be expected that they would show a disinclination to return there, and at such places there might be some difficulty as regards the labour supply."

Handwritten notes:
2. 2. 2. 2.
1. 2. 2.

The Committee begs to call attention to two further passages only from the mass of evidence upon this point. The Labour Inspector at Mombasa, Mr. J.M. Pearson, says, with an authority that

not be questioned:-

"In nine cases out of ten it is lack of confidence both in the employer and in the Government protection to which he looks that keeps the native from work. It has been said times without number that such-and-such tribes have no idea of work - and all owing to their shyness. It was said of the Teita, it was said of the Mweru Kikuyu, and those tribes provide the bulk of the labour on the Mombasa water-supply to-day. I am convinced that if, with the proper organization of labour and the kindred remedies suggested below, the natives' confidence could be restored, there would be no lack of labour in this country. If the native believed in fair treatment and in Government protection, his natural curiosity, his inherently childish greed, his spirit of adventure, would once more awake. Once at work in good conditions, he would not care to leave them."

Dr. Norman Leys exposes, with all the force of sound medical opinion, some of the palpable causes which militate against that

confidence

confidence which Mr. Pearson ^{rightly} regards as being essential:-

"The law" says Dr. Leys "in its actual practice, rarely punishes a European, even for brutal assaults. The last case of the kind in my experience occurred in Fort Hall during August. A boy called Maniki was believed by his master to have stolen some of his property and was given at least fifty lashes. Large patches of skin sloughed off. The boy was lodged in jail and was medically treated there for three weeks. The charge against him was then withdrawn and he was released. Nor was his master prosecuted for his brutality. The boy did not charge him and apparently, as the law stands, no one else can. This, the usual ending to such a case, has the worst kind of consequences. One of them is to adversely affect the labour market."

The Committee of the Society beg to suggest that a more extended system of investigation into the condition of employment and the prompt punishment of acts of cruelty and oppression by bad employers is not only imperative, but would soon have the effect of accelerating a flow of free labour to the farms of the just and humane employers. The Committee has learned with much satisfaction that His Majesty's Government has decided to increase the administrative staff in the Protectorate by 30%, and begs to ask whether this increase has yet taken place.

We observe that the members of the Commission found themselves unable to advise His Majesty's Government as to whether existing Reserves are, or are not, too large, and with regard to the undemarcated Reserves, the recommendation is that these should be demarcated, but with a view to reserving sufficient land for the present population only. We cannot help feeling that if the Commission had been able to take the evidence of the same proportion of native as of white residents, the members would have been able to reach a more decisive conclusion.

The Committee is of the opinion that not only should there be a reserve of land for the existing population, ^{that} but any demarcation which may take place should provide an adequate margin for the increase of population. It is, however, by no means clear that existing areas are large enough for the present population.

The Hon. C. Dundas has emphasized this with regard to the Kyambu Reserve:-

"The area of the Kyambu Reserve was some 300 square miles, and the population according to this year's

"year's census, showed 39,282 men, women and children, an average of five acres per head. A good deal of the land was full of bracken and would be of considerably greater value if the natives were induced to plough it up. The population was apparently increasing, but had not recovered more than one quarter of its former standing prior to its decimation by smallpox, but when it was once more normal the Reserve would not be sufficient to maintain it, unless the agricultural methods of the natives were improved."

Mr. C.R. Lane, dealing with the general question of Reserves, says:-

"Reserves were, in his opinion, very wealthy but filling up rapidly with stock, and in a few years would be too small. He would not advocate enlarging the Reserves; reducing them in size might assist the labour supply, but would ruin the natives."

Mr. Ruffell Barlow gives a third and convincing reason for maintaining adequate Reserves:-

"If the Native Reserves were cut down in area or the natives forced to leave their homes for long periods they would become attached to the settlements, the influence of which was to civilize them 'down,' whereas, given a fair chance

"in the Reserves, Christian Missionaries and good Government would civilize them 'up.'"

The Hon. C.W.Hobley and Mr. Watts both point to the injustice of cutting down the Reserves, the latter remarking:-

stale
 "The reduction of the Reserves was a most unjust suggestion. There should be ample room for expansion, for, say, two or three generations."

stale
 He referred only to the Kikuyu Reserves, not having sufficient knowledge of any others to form an opinion upon them."

Mr. C.S.Hemsted in his memorandum has pointed out that once the Reserve areas are reduced it is well-nigh impossible to place more land at the disposal of the native tribes:-

stale
 "The reduction of Native Reserves once undertaken is irrecoverable."

In connection with the question of Reserves, there is some evidence, not so emphatic as we should have wished to see, that a feature of administrative policy is that of encouraging the native to cultivate and export his own produce. The planters argue that this policy will prejudice East African exports owing to the fact that native grown products are and will continue to be of a low grade quality. We submit that the general progress of the Colony is the paramount consideration

for the Government, and that it is the duty of the merchant and the administrator to encourage, by every means, the native producer, particularly by giving him instructions as to methods of preparing marketable produce. This policy, we beg to remind His Majesty's Government, has proved signally successful in West Africa. As an example we may mention the cocoa industry of the Gold Coast. We believe His Majesty's Government is aware that in 1908 the cocoa export for the Gold Coast was composed of 5 per cent good, 15 per cent fair and 80 per cent common, and that in 1912 the proportions had altered thus: 35 per cent good, 50 per cent fair, and 15 per cent common.

The Committee begs to urge that no expropriation of Reserves shall be allowed to take place without the fullest enquiry as to the desires of the existing inhabitants. That certain white settlers are bent upon this policy is abundantly clear, a typical example being Mr. Boyes of Kyambu, who naively suggests that:-

"The whole population of the Reserve near Nairobi adjacent to the Railway should be shifted and be given land elsewhere, and he suggested

"the bamboo forest where they would still be in their own country and to which they would be pleased to go; while the land vacated by them should be granted to white settlers in holdings of from 200 to 300 acres, which would enable 1,000 white settlers to live within a forty mile radius of the capital."

We hold that the natives have at least an equal right with Europeans to live in fertile and healthy localities, but, as Mr. O.F. Watkins pointedly remarks:-

absent

"The early European immigrant thus found that the most thickly populated areas, the low-lying, fertile, but to him unhealthy lands, were in native occupation. The high, cold country, eminently desirable in Northern eyes, was comparatively bare. He christened these European The malarial lands he called native areas. Then he went home and formed companies."

We trust it may be possible to receive an assurance that natives occupying existing Reserves will not be removed without the fullest enquiry upon the comparative healthiness, fertility and size of the areas to which it may be proposed to move any of the tribes.

The Society desires to place on record its high appreciation of the attitude and conduct of the majority of His Majesty's officials, several of whom appear to hold firmly

to the best traditions of British Colonial statecraft, whilst, exhibiting a readiness to advance original proposals for the economic and moral progress of the Protectorate. But at the same time, the Committee of the Society deplores the fact that the evidence shows that in many parts of the Protectorate there is a lack of sympathetic supervision of native health and life; that compulsory labour is of frequent occurrence, and that incidents of cruelty are by no means rare, whilst the attitude of mind adopted by some settlers towards native rights points to the importance of providing some machinery for the protection of native health, liberty and rights.

We should appreciate being informed as to the steps taken by His Majesty's Government to secure an improvement in the means of travel on the railway lines. The Committee fails to understand why natives travelling to labour centres should be locked in railway coaches, and begs to suggest that it should be made a punishable offence to convey labourers at any time locked in covered goods vans; that such ^{was} should have been at any time a practice constitutes a scandal, the remedy for which brooks no delay.

The Committee begs to urge that some further effort should

be made to watch over the welfare of labourers travelling by road, and that arrangements should be made for the supply at given distances of food, water, fire shelter and medical attendance. That this would be as much in the interest of the settlers as in that of good government is shown by the following passage in the evidence of Dr. Philp:-

insert

"In his opinion the Nairobi-Fort Hall road alone was annually responsible for more deaths than would supply the present demand for labour in this country. The sickness on that road was chiefly malaria and dysentery."

The chief points upon which the Society would appreciate assurances are as follows:-

- insert*
- (a) That the Reserves will not be curtailed, or any of the people at present on Reserves removed without their approval.
- (b) That His Majesty's Government will accept the proposition that forced labour for private profit is a form of slavery that will not therefore be tolerated.

We beg to ask if any information upon the following subjects

can be supplied to the Committee:-

- (a) Under what conditions will compulsory labour for public works be demanded?
- (b) What steps are being taken to improve travelling facilities for the labourers?
- (c) Whether His Majesty's Government proposes to appoint more officials whose sole duty will be that of protecting native labourers?

^{etc}
We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servants,

Francis Buxton

Secretary

John H. Lewis

Organising Secretary.

Vol 21488 / 14 E. Africa

457



S 3

Ans'd 22922

DRAFT.

The Sec.

The Anti-Slavery & Aborigines
Protection Society

MINUTE.

- Mr. Acet 20/6/11
- Mr. Lead 22
- Sir G. Fiddes.
- Sir H. Just.
- Sir J. Anderson.
- Lord Emmott.
- Mr. Harcourt.

25 June 11

Dear Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Sec. Harcourt
to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th of June* & to inform you that he has noted the contents of the letter from the Anti-Slavery & Aborigines Protection Society in the subject of native labour in E.A.

2. Mr. H. is now awaiting detailed recommendations from the Gov. of the East in relation to native labour.

Copy of message
to Gov. East
+ info

copy to Gov. 608 - 26 June '11

No 21488

essions

^{out of}
~~in connection with the report~~
of the Native Labour Commission
in that Ith, she proposes
in due course to present
papers to Parliament
showing what action has
been taken on the whole
matter



9 or etc

READ.
for the Chief Secretary of State