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C0533/368

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1927

Kenya

No. 10202 C0533/368

SUBJECT

Importation of
Indentured Chinese Labour
into Kenya.

Previous

M/C. 1381/26

Subsequent

See 10513/27

- 1. ----- D.O.T. ----- 28th Feb., 1927.
- 2. ----- F.O. ----- 7th Mar., 1927.
- 3. ----- D.O.T. ----- 10th Mar., 1927.
- 4. ----- F.O. ----- 16th Mar., 1927.

The attached note was nearly completed before the letter from the Foreign Office was received. The action taken by the Convention of Associations seems very mischievous, and the reference to the Official Gazette at the head of their letter is calculated to give a wrong impression that the Colonial Government is in some sense mixed up with these enquiries, which it will be noted definitely relate to indentured labour.

It is interesting to note that Lord Tselanere was almost fiercely sane on this matter, and that he apparently only supported the Committee in the hope that some people might learn sense. I do not know whether the Deputy Trade Commissioner's action was merely normal procedure, but it would surely have been preferable if he could have told the Committee that in a matter of this kind they should approach the Colonial Government.

The Foreign Office enclose a signed reply from the Commercial ^{Commission} ~~Committee~~ at Peking, to be passed on to the Deputy Trade Commissioner if the Colonial Office agree. Paragraphs 1 and 3 of the reply are unexceptionable, but para. 4 seems open to objection on the score that it suggests a continuance of this absurd enquiry. It would therefore seem much better if, subject to the concurrence of the Foreign Office, the matter could be disposed of by a despatch from the Secretary of State to the G.A.G. of Kenya; and I would suggest that a copy of the Governor's statement of policy in XF.6922/26 should be sent to the Foreign Office with an intimation that it accords with the Secretary of State's views; also say that the Secretary

X. 10/10/27

of State had not been informed of the steps being taken by the Committee and does not know what other Governments, if any, have been approached, and that if such a request had been made to the Colonial Government and referred to him he would not have been prepared to approach the Foreign Office with a view to the institution of enquiries of this nature. [Add that the Secretary of State would, if the Foreign Office are prepared to agree, prefer that the reply to the Committee should be made through the O.A.G. as in the draft herewith, which is very much for consideration especially the paragraph relating to legislation.]

(The proposed draft is ~~not~~ ^{is not} severe enough, but it is not undeserved by people who in a serious matter like this ignore the position of His Majesty's Government, the declared policy of the Governor and even the common-sense advice of their own local friends, and show about as much political sense as one might expect of a "bibi" in a native reserve.)

x x x x

Since dictating the above, No. 3 has been received which shows that enquiries have been made about Japanese labour but that the Embassy at Tokio did not submit the questionnaire to the Japanese authorities. In view of this, and the fact that other communications may come trickling in, I think it would be better to amend the action proposed above by omitting the passage in red brackets and saying that the S. of S. would prefer that any replies to the Committee should be made, if possible, only through the O.A.G. of Kenya, and that the D.O.T. has accordingly been asked to ascertain from

the

*
I send it on in this form to shorten the minutes.

* not new sent in 1927

No 4 (relating to an appeal to the Egyptian authorities) is now attached 19/3

X. 10/10/27

the Deputy Trade Commissioner by telegraph what other countries have been included in the enquiries and whether any replies have yet been received and communicated to the Committee, and to instruct the Deputy Trade Commissioner to suspend all action in the matter ~~which~~ ^{as it} is under reference to the F.O. and the C.O., and write to the D.O.T. accordingly, ~~Relieving~~
copy letter to Jo.

1/11/27
12/3/27

Copy proposed, including No 4 in the reference. This action of the "Convention" is a paper nuisance & when this matter is typed of I should like to see the essential papers back & see if anything can be done to prevent it happening again.

2/1/27
C.M.A.

Sec of State

Think you had better see proper letter to F.O.

28.3.27
S.H.6.

X. 10202
 To F.O. ^{Cons. 215} w/copy Gov's Statement
 nos 224 and 26 }
 To D.O.T. ²¹⁵ (w/copy above) }
 (nos 223 and 26) }
 9 MAR 1927

7 April 1927
 your terms of Ed. to H.M. Deputy Trade
 Commr at Batavia and his reply

DESTROYED UNDER 17700/1

Basic copy of ~~our~~ ^{your} is being forwarded to
 the Cons. and for his info. Inquire what reply Cons. will
 send to your copy in reply to para 2 of his despatch.

Submit drafts *casca* in
 accordance with the attached note (signed
 Flag Kela)
 W. Allen

27/4/27

Mr. Pringle
 Sec of State

I think you had better see
 draft marked A

W. Allen
 9.5.27.

To F.O. w/cand. w/copy nos 106
 and dft despatch }
 To D.O.T. w/copy 9 ¹⁰⁶ }
 (dft despatch) }
 14 MAY 1927
 17 MAY 1927

X. 10202
 5
 5

Foreign Office 26 May, 1927

Progress in terms of draft despatch H.M.
 Reps at Peking, Tokyo and Batavia ^{have been returned} accordingly

dft despatch returned for info.
 2807
 C/4 6 20. L.F.S.

W. Allen
 28.5.27
 1927

2 Secy to Gov. 464 (w/copy last copy to 1)
 vide dft of 12
 Page 8 of 13 To F.O. 215 } w/copy no 12
 President's Book 4 To D.O.T. 215 } w/copy no 12
 4 JUN 1927

15 ----- Foreign Office ----- 10th August, 1927.

Forward copy despatch from Br. Consul Gen. at
 Batavia enclosing copy corres. between the Deputy
 Trade Commr at Nairobi and H.M. Commercial Agent,
 Batavia, regarding the importation of labour from
 Netherlands East Indies.

It is perhaps desirable for future
 guidance for Kenya to know that the
 door of the N.E.I. is barred.

Copy of 20. letter, W. Allen's, &
 Dr. Muehler's reply to W. Allen, 15094, L.F.S.
 for info

W. Allen
 11.8.27

To Secy 11/3 11 AUG 1927

In any further correspondence on this subject please quote

No. *F 6664/1680/61*

and address—*not to any person by name, but to—*

"The Under-Secretary of State," Foreign Office, London, S.W. 1.

RECEIVED
11 AUG 1927
COL. OFFICE

15/6

THE Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to *the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies* and, by direction of the Secretary of State, transmits herewith copies of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office,

10 August, 1927.

Reference to previous correspondence:

No. 9
Colonial Office letter 102102/27 of 14 May.

Description of Enclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject.
British Consul General at Batavia No. 82 4 July.	Importation of labour from Netherlands East Indies into Kenya Colony.

Similar letter sent to

14 (14964) 8/25 (2)
(16184) 5/27

copy + copy inclos marked X to Enr. 4/3 17 AUG 1927

COPY

No. 82.

HIS MAJESTY'S CONSULATE-GENERAL,

BATAVIA. 7

July 4th, 1927.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Foreign Office despatch No. 28 of May 24th last (F 4920/1880/61) regarding the possible importation of foreign labour from the Netherlands East Indies into Kenya Colony.

3. In this connection, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a letter (with enclosures) addressed to Mr. Bluett, His Majesty's Commercial Agent at Batavia, on December 15th last, by the Deputy Trade Commissioner at Nairobi.

3. A copy of Mr. Bluett's reply, dated January 11th last, is also enclosed.

I have the honour to be,

With the highest respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

(SIGNED) J. CROSSBY,

Consul-General.

The Right Honourable

Sir Auston Chamberlain, K.G., P.C., M.P.,

etc., etc., etc.

Handwritten notes:
x Copy below No. 11.
Trade Commissioner Nairobi to Deputy Trade Commissioner Batavia 11/1/27
Deputy Trade Commissioner Batavia to Trade Commissioner Nairobi 11/1/27

COPY

His Majesty's Trade Commissioner, Nairobi

to

His Majesty's Commercial Agent, Batavia.

J. P.

NAIROBI,

KENYA COLONY.

1961/26.

15th December, 1926.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the question of importing labour from outside sources into Kenya Colony has been raised in The Convention of Associations, which is a body to which are affiliated almost all the District Farmers' Associations. The Convention has appointed a Committee to examine the question and that Committee is anxious to obtain information from various sources of labour supply.

The Secretary of The Convention has now asked me if I would pass on to you the enclosed papers with the request that you would be so good as to complete the questionnaire as far as is possible in relation to your area.

It may be of assistance to you if I state my private opinion that allegations of a labour shortage in this Colony has been considerably overstated and that the political disabilities of an importation of Asiatic labour would more than negative any possible advantage of such importation.

At the same time, I should be grateful if you would kindly let me have as complete a reply as you consider necessary for the purposes of The Convention, together, if you consider it advisable, with a confidential note for my own guidance in the matter.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient humble Servant,

(Signed) G. Kemp (?)

Deputy Trade Commissioner.

THE CONVENTION OF ASSOCIATIONS.

Office: The Memorial Hall,
Sixth Avenue, Nairobi.

Chairman:
I.F.H. Harper.

Secretary:
O. Gaitskell,

Telephone No. 481.

Telegrams and Cables:

"GAITSKELL", NAIROBI.

In reply please quote

OL/SI/1/1/588

and Date

P.O. Box 381,

Nairobi,

Kenya Colony,

East Africa.

13th December 1928.

Sir,

Subject:- Overseas Labour

Reference:- The Official Gazette of the Colony
and Protectorate of Kenya 1-12-28
General Notice No. 1288. Convention of
Association Notice No. 2.

This notices give particulars of a Committee appointed
by the Convention of Associations "To make full enquiries
as to the possibility of importing overseas labour to this
country".

- 2. I enclose a copy of a Questionnaire on this subject
which is being addressed to Various Governments.
- 3. I am further instructed to ask under what circumstances,
if any, your Government would allow labour to go from
your Country to Kenya e.g.
 - (a) Would you allow it to be collected and forwarded by
credited agents.
 - (b) Would your Government be willing to give any practical
assistance in recruiting and forwarding.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Yours obedient servant,

Secretary.

THE CONVENTION OF ASSOCIATIONS.

Offices: The Memorial Hall,
Sixth Avenue, Nairobi.

Chairman:
I.F.H.Harpor.

Secretary:

G. Gaitskell,

Telephone No. 481.

Telegrams and Cables:

"GAITSKELL", NAIROBI.

In reply please quote

OL/SI/1/1/538

and Date

P.O.Box 381,

Nairobi,

Kenya Colony,

East Africa.

13th December 1928.

Sir,

Subject:- Overseas Labour

Reference:- The Official Gazette of the Colony
and Protectorate of Kenya 1-12-28
General Notice No.1288. Convention of
Association Notice No. 2.

This notices give particulars of a Committee appointed by the Convention of Associations "To make full enquiries as to the possibility of importing overseas labour to this country".

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 - (a) Would you allow it to be collected and forwarded by credited agents.
 - (b) Would your Government be willing to give any practical assistance in recruiting and forwarding.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Yours obedient servant,

Secretary.

Committee.

10

LO/qi/1/1

QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. LENGTH OF SERVICE.

What would be the maximum period for which indenture would be permitted ?

2. WAGES.

What would be the average wage required by

(a) Overseers or head-men ?

(b) Unskilled Labourers ?

3. TERMS OF PAYMENT.

(a) Would any advance of wages be required ?

(b) Would any deduction be required to be made and deposited for payment at expiration of contract ?

4. RATIONS.

What scale of rations would be required ?

5. HOUSING.

Would any special type of housing be necessary ?

If no, what ?

6. MEDICAL TREATMENT.

Any special medical requirements over and above those at present in force in this Colony on employers ?

Note. The employer is responsible for all necessary medical and surgical treatment and for hospital fees up to the balance of a 30 working day ticket.

7. REPATRIATION.

What regulations for repatriation would be required ?

11

8. NUMBERS AVAILABLE.

What would be the probable limitation as to the numbers recruited ?

9. REMARKS.

Nairobi

11-12-28.

CHARLES GAITSKILL

Secretary

Convention of Associations

Labour Supply Committee.

11/28

COPY

His Majesty's Commercial Agent, Batavia
to

His Majesty's Trade Commissioner, Nairobi.

BATAVIA,

11th January, 1927.

Reference:-
B.S. No. 10/27-C.A.B.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter under reference J.P.1961/26 of the 18th ultimo, to which you append a questionnaire set by The Labour Supply Committee of The Convention of Associations in order to ascertain under what condition indenture labour for Kenya may be obtained from foreign countries.

The questionnaire does not apply to the Netherland East Indies, as by an Ordinance passed as far back as 1887 the recruiting of natives for labour outside the Archipelago is prohibited.

Under separate cover I have mailed you a copy of the Handbook of the Netherland East Indies, which gives on pages 129-138 a précis of the regulations governing immigrations and the inspection and recruiting of coolies. These pages may be of interest to you if you are asked to give information concerning the conditions under which labour is available for agricultural estates in the Outer Islands of the Netherlands India.

The book sent will in any case form, I trust, an interesting addition to your library, and if you can reciprocate by sending me any publication of a similar nature on Kenya, I shall be very glad to have it, as we

are

His Majesty's Commercial Agent, Bombay

His Majesty's Trade Commissioner, Bombay

Reference: -
D. 21 No. 10/54-3-A-B.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the letter of the 11th instant under reference A.M. 101/54 of the 11th instant to which you append a questionnaire set by the Supply Committee of the Government of Assam in order to ascertain under what conditions for Kenya may be obtained from foreign countries. The questionnaire does not apply to the East Indies, and an Ordinance passed in 1954 the restriction of arrival of goods from Singapore is prohibited.

Under separate cover I have enclosed a handbook of the Netherlands and East Indies pages 125-128 a price of the Netherlands and the inspection and restriction of goods. These pages may be of interest to you and to give information concerning the conditions under which labour is available for agricultural purposes in the islands of the Netherlands.

The book sent will in any case form a useful and interesting addition to your library, and if you are interested by sending me any publication of a similar nature on Kenya, I shall be very glad to have it, as we

Yours

13

are often asked questions about Kenya Colony.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) H.A.N. Bluet

H. H. Commercial Agent
for the Netherland East Indies.

K.10202/27 Kenya.

A 12/14

M. Allen 27.4.27.

X Mr. Bothanley 28.4.27 of 28.5.27 fs.

Mr.

Mr. E. J. Harding.

Mr. C. Strachey, 5/5

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Sir G. Grindle.

Sir G. Davis.

X Sir S. Wilson. *pt 6* 9.5.27

X Mr. Ormsby-Gore. 10.5.27

Earl of Clarendon.

X Mr. Amery. *11.11*

C. D.
R 11 MAY.
D 13

C. D.
R 30 MAY
D 2 June

2-12/11

For F.O. concurrence.

Downing Street.

3 JUN 1927 11 1927

Sir,

DRAFT. Caravan.
minall

KENYA

No. 467

O.A.G.

I have, etc., to inform you that

14 MAY 1927
17 MAY 27
F.O. post.
It has been brought to the notice of H.M.G. that at the instance of the Convention of Associations enquiries have been instituted as to the

- From Committee (undated) } *Encl in NOT.*
- Rustenburg
- DO. b. F.O. 29 mch (no 5)
- Co. C. D. O. T. 29 mch (no 6)
- DO. b. Co. 5 Apr (no 7)

Copy dft
Copy to F.O. 20.5.27

possibility of importing foreign labour into Kenya under contract.

2. I enclose a copy of a letter and questionnaire from the Labour Supply Committee of the

Convention, together with copies of correspondence with the Foreign Office and the Department of Overseas Trade,

from

24/5
LET required

from which it appears that the
Deputy Trade Commissioner in Nairobi

was approached with a view to
securing information as to the
possibility of obtaining such labour
from China, Japan and Batavia.

I am also informed by the Secretary
of State for Foreign Affairs that
the Egyptian Government was similarly
approached direct by the Secretary
of the Committee.

3. It will be seen from
the correspondence that the Deputy
Trade Commissioner has already
informed the Convention as stated in
the letter from the D.T.C. of the
5th April, and that he has been
instructed to suspend action in the
matter in order that any further
communication to the Convention
may be made through you.

K.F. 6922/26

4. I request that the Convention may now be informed that the introduction of foreign labour into Kenya under contract is contrary to the policy declared by the Governor in the Legislative Council on the 10th August, 1926. (see Sir ^{Edwards} Grigg's despatch No.822 of the 30th Aug.1926); that H.M.G. is not prepared to countenance any enquiries of foreign Governments with that purpose in view; and that H.M.Representatives at Peking, Tokio and Batavia and the Government of Egypt have been so informed. You should at the same time remind the Convention that a matter of this kind involves political and diplomatic considerations which they may have failed to realise but which H.M.G. cannot ignore.

5. The fact that the appointment of the Labour Supply Committee formed the subject of a General Notice in the

In any further communication
on this subject, please quote

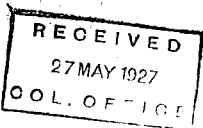
No. F 4920/1680/61

and address—

not to any person by name,

but to—

"The Under-Secretary of State,"
Foreign Office,
London, S.W. 1.



11
16
FOREIGN OFFICE.
S.W.1.

25th May, 1927.

Sir,

11/4
With reference to your letter No. 10202/27 of May
14th last, relative to the question of the importation of
foreign labour into Kenya under contract, I am directed by
Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to inform
Mr. Secretary Amery that he concurs in the terms of the
despatch which it is proposed to address to the Officer
Administering the Government of the Colony on this subject.
2. His Majesty's Representatives at Peking, Tokyo and
Batavia have been informed accordingly in despatches of
which copies are enclosed herewith for the information
of Mr. Amery.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

George Munsey

The Under-Secretary of State,

Colonial Office.

24th May, 1927. 17

Sir,

With reference to a despatch from your Commercial Counsellor No. O.F.(B) 2. of January 26th 1927, regarding the possible importation of Chinese labour into Kenya Colony, I transmit to you the accompanying copy of a letter from the Colonial Office enclosing the draft of a despatch which it is proposed to address to the Officer Administering the Government of Kenya on the subject of the importation of foreign labour into that Colony.

2. I have concurred in the terms of this despatch.

I am, with great truth and regard,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(For the Secretary of State)

(Sd.) GEORGE MOUNCEY,

Sir Miles Lampson, K.C.M.G., G.B.,

etc., etc., etc.,

Peking.

24th May, 1927. 18

Sir,

With reference to a letter from your Commercial Secretary No. 22746/1927 of January 31st, 1927 addressed to His Majesty's Trade Commissioner, Nairobi, regarding the possible importation of Japanese labour into Kenya Colony, I transmit to Your Excellency the accompanying copy of a letter from the Colonial Office enclosing the draft of a despatch which it is proposed to address to the Officer Administering the Government of Kenya on the subject of the importation of foreign labour into that Colony.

2. I have concurred in the terms of this despatch.

I am, with great truth and respect,

Sir,

Your Excellency's obedient Servant,

(For the Secretary of State)

(Sd.) GEORGE ROUNSEY

His Excellency
The Right Honourable
Sir John Tilley, K.C.M.G., C.B.,
etc., etc., etc.
Tokyo.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

CONTINUED ON NEXT FILM

TOTAL EXPOSURES →

