

1925

KENYA
UGANDA

53196

27 NOV 25

268

DATE

25th November 1925.

FOREIGN OFFICE.

FOR CIRCULATION:-

hastily 2/11/25

MIGRATIONS FROM SOUTHERN ABYSSINIA INTO KENYA.

For U.S. of S.

R. Shackley

Fwd copy of memorandum which has been sent to Addis Ababa to enable ~~Mr~~ Charles H. Bentinck to make representations to Abyssinian Govt. as occasion arises. Suggest persons be invited from Kenya and Uganda.

From U.S. of S.

For U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

operative

Previous Paper

MINUTES

Mr Shackley & I went through this memo: with Mr Ronald, F.O., and revised especially the section on Kenya policy - on the last page but one & the one before it.

F.O. letter sent: A copy should now go out to Kenya for views, especially a text note, to be sent despatched. Copy also to Uganda (this is not so much concerned) for views. W. G. ... 27/11/25

[I send to each (1.0) a copy of the memo for his info: as being a useful summary of the position in this area, as to which the Govts of Kenya & Uganda are likely to have views when we discuss the territories to be taken by ...]

*copy to Sir Uganda Conf comm. - 6 AUG 1926
copy to Kenya Conf comm. - 4/12/25
copy to Kenya Conf comm. - 4/12/25
copy to Kenya Conf comm. - 4/12/25
copy to Kenya Conf comm. - 4/12/25*

Subsequent Paper

30/53754

apex

27 15

11. A. H. G. v. 227/26
whether we can now apply to our
landlord of 2 Dec:

S. J. Rowley

31.7.26

at once

x R Sfr

7.10

In any further communication
on this subject, please quote

No. J 3367/1121/1

Address

any person by name

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

C.O.
53186
27 NOV 1925

35 269

Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

25th November, 1925.

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to request you to lay before the Secretary of State for the Colonies the accompanying memorandum regarding migrations from Southern Abyssinia into Kenya which has been prepared in the Foreign Office with the assistance of your department.

2. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa under cover of a draft, of which a copy is enclosed herein. While awaiting Mr. Bentinck's views, Mr. Amery will no doubt desire to invite the observations of the Governments of Kenya and Uganda.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,



Secretary of State,
Colonial Office.

MEMORANDUM

CONFIDENTIAL.
 It is to be published without
 the authority of H.M.'s
 Government

Southern Frontier of Abyssinia.

The Colonial Office have recently shown marked uneasiness concerning the Abyssinian refugees in Kenya whose repatriation has been found necessary and, in a letter dated the 12th October, asked us to impress on the Abyssinian Government the urgent need for restoring order in Southern Abyssinia in order to remove the root causes of the migration of tribes across the frontier. In deference to our arguments the Colonial Office subsequently agreed to withdraw their request for immediate representations, but, as the whole subject has a certain importance which may increase at any moment if the friction on the Kenya frontier intensifies, it may be convenient to place on record an outline of its history.

The two largest Abyssinian Provinces marching with Kenya are the Boran and Liban (Yaben). Disorders in these provinces have for years caused great anxiety to the Kenya authorities. The Abyssinian officials and soldiers in these districts receive no pay from their government and depend on the taxes they can extort from the local tribes: in the process of collection they do not shrink from the most appalling brutalities. To escape from these persecutions the local tribes have from time to time been forced to flee into Kenya, the Borana leaving the Boran and the Degodia the Liban. Across the frontier grazing accommodation is very limited and water extremely scarce: the available

available pasturage consequently becomes a field for dispute between the original inhabitants and the newcomers. The Kenya authorities have thus been confronted with a dilemma: the interests of their own subjects demand the expulsion of the immigrants, but to return them without guarantee of good treatment to the horrors from which they had escaped would, except for grave reason, be an act of inhumanity.

For greater clearness it will be convenient if the two migrations, Borana and Degodia, are dealt with separately.

A. The Boran province belongs to the Minister of War, Hapta Giorgis, and is administered by a local Governor who is directly responsible to him. The Boran tribe, who are a law-abiding and peaceful people of Galla extraction, are divided into two main sections, Sabbu (chief-Ceydu) and Gona (chief-Gayu.) The Abyssinian Governor of Boran is Pitaurari Ayella who, though Governor of the whole province, is only responsible for taxing the Gona section, one Pitaurari Halde Gabriel being responsible for the taxation of the Sabbu section.

There are two general taxes:-

(a) an annual tax of £16 a year per karra (100 head of cattle, camels or horses) or its equivalent in stock.

(b) a tax levied by the Minister for war on both sections of the Boran in equal proportions. This has only been levied twice, once after the Shellie war in 1916 when 1600 head were taken and since in 1923 when a thousand

thousand bullocks were taken.

The yield of the general tax is applied to paying the salaries of the local officials. The chief officials, the Fitauraris, have allotted to them the yield on 100 karras each, that is, at \$16 a karra, \$1600 each (roughly a little over £200). Minor officials receive between 160 and 48 dollars as their share.

The tax in itself is not onerous but the system of farming out taxation is radically vicious and results in abuses during collection. The Abyssinian tax collector orders the Boran owner to pay his tax on certain dates. If he cannot pay in dollars, he produces stock, supposedly valued by the Boran elders of the Manyatta (village), but usually valued by the tax collector himself to his own advantage. The stock is then handed back to the Boran owner to hold until the collector requires it. If anything happens to the stock in the meanwhile through robbery, pestilence, etc., the Boran has to pay his tax over again.

In addition to paying this tax the Boran have to feed all Abyssinian soldiers billeted on them during the collection of the taxes or stationed at their Manyattas as protection against robbers. Most of these soldiers appropriate a large quantity of milk which they make into butter and sell for their own profit. Any official passing through Borana has to be fed on meat and milk. This system of purveyances is the subject of
bitter

bitter complaint by the natives, as the feeding of the large retinue accompanying an Abyssinian official is a considerable drain on their milk and meat supplies, especially in the dry season. The Abyssinian soldiery, moreover, on the move from place to place do not scruple to rob Manyattas of their stock.

At the three great Abyssinian festivals, Easter, Muscal and Christmas, the Boran have to provide bullocks for the Abyssinian officials. As well as this, at all times of the year they are liable to be called out for forced labour and have to provide transport for any officials who happen to be travelling through their district.

As well as being preyed on by officials and soldiers the Borana are at all times exposed to the violence of the robber bands against which the soldiers are supposed to protect them. Unfortunately the soldiers are usually kept waiting too long for their pay and in despair, far from acting as a defence, too frequently leave the wretched natives to their fate or actually join the robbers in the plunder. The higher officials, of whom the Boran do not complain, are not strong enough to put an end to the brutalities of their subordinates or to suppress the robber bands.

Some sections of the Boran tribe, migrants of an earlier date, now live permanently across the frontier in British territory. The Abyssinian Boran, being in the habit of pasturing their flocks at certain seasons of the year across the frontier, see their kinsfolk living
in

in comparative comfort and labouring under no form of oppression. They are consequently disinclined to return to their homes and, instead of driving their flocks back into Abyssinia at the end of the season, prefer to remain in British territory.

E166/1 B. Unlike the Borana, the Degodia, who have migrated from Liban, are a warlike Somali tribe. History shows a constant trend of migration of all Somali tribes to the south and west. Somali immigrants only reached Jubaland some sixty years ago and before that there were none in the area which is now Kenya Colony. The method employed is invariably peaceful penetration until a sound footing in the area is obtained when a quarrel is picked with the inhabitants and the warlike Somali defeats the more peaceful earlier population who are enslaved, expelled or exterminated. As soon as Kenya took over the administration of the northern area it became clear that the Somalis, following their normal trend of migration, would oust all the weaker tribes such as the Galla unless definite steps were taken to regulate the movements of all Somali tribes. It has therefore been the constant policy of Kenya to prevent Somali migration to the west of the present boundary between Jubaland and the Northern Frontier Province, and a Somali incursion from the north into the protected area is greatly to be deprecated.

Conditions

Conditions in the Liban province have been very similar to those prevailing in Beran. In the former province official persecution was perhaps more rigorous and the violence of robber bands greater. The climate of the Liban is highly distasteful to most Abyssinians and only those officials whose hopes of personal gain outweigh their dislikes of the climatic conditions can be prevailed on to accept appointments there. All this, coupled with the instinctive desire of the Degodia to migrate southwards, has caused them from time to time to move in large bodies into Kenya. There the original inhabitants were the Gurrah, a tribe with whom the Degodia had always been on the worst of terms. The conflicts between these tribes were temporarily regulated in 1922, but a year later (August 1923) the local British authorities found it necessary to round up all Degodia refugees and their stock and escort them back across the frontier (No. 57 Africa, Part VIII 1923). The refugees were then handed over to the Abyssinian authorities against an undertaking that they would not be maltreated in future.

This promise was only kept for a few months. The Abyssinian military commander, Ato Gabru, who had treated the remigrants justly, was recalled to Addis Ababa late in 1923 and replaced by one Lij Beli. This individual had been recalled from his previous post and sent to Addis Ababa in chains to answer charges of atrocities perpetrated against his people. He was
apparently

7/6166/
1924)

6/6166/
1924)

apparently pardoned almost immediately and, through the connivance of another unscrupulous official, Lij Ngash, sent to the Degodi country to relieve Ato Gabru. The wretched Degodis were once more subjected to every sort of persecution and barbarity and some three thousand of them, with thirty thousand head of stock, fled into Kenya at the beginning of 1924. The Kenya Government, confronted with the same problem as before, asked His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa to urge the Abyssinian Government at once to recall the brutal Lij Beli. As no satisfaction was obtained at Addis Ababa, except for the recall of Lij Ngash, the Kenya Government, in order to relieve the situation in which their own subjects were placed by the intrusion of so vast a number of migrants, were forced once more to recommend the expulsion of the Degodia (July 1924).

An interdepartmental meeting, attended by representatives of the Colonial Office and Foreign Office, was held on July 31st, 1924, as a result of which it was decided:-

- (1) to obtain supplementary reports from consuls in Abyssinia and from the Government of Kenya.
- (2) on these reports to base representations to the Abyssinian Government urging the appointment of trustworthy officials in Boran and Liban.
- (3) if no satisfaction were obtained by these means, to lay the matter before the League of Nations.

1121/

Instructions in this sense were accordingly sent to Abyssinia and Kenya. Unfortunately, through an oversight, no action was taken at Addis Ababa on receipt of these instructions and without seeing the report from Moyale the Kenya authorities were unable to reply to the questions addressed to them by the Colonial Office.

1121/

Meanwhile correspondence went on intermittently between the Legation at Addis Ababa and the Abyssinian Government on the question of the appointments to Liban and Boran. By May 1925 Mr. Bullock had obtained a promise from Hapta Giorgis that Fitaurari Ayella would return to the Boran by the middle of June and then do all he could to enforce proper administration and governance. As usual, delay supervened and the Governor did not proceed until later to his post. The Kenya Government had meanwhile arranged to repatriate both Boran and Degodia during October, the details for reception being decided on the spot by Fitaurari Ayella and Consul Miles. Mr. Bentinck therefore informed Hapta Giorgis of the arrangements contemplated and asked whether the Abyssinian authorities would be ready to receive refugees and whether he might assure the Government of Kenya that reprisals would not be taken and that junior officials would not be allowed to oppress the remigrants. Hapta Giorgis, in Mr. Bentinck's presence, wrote a letter to Fitaurari Ayella instructing him to receive the refugees, from whom nothing was to be demanded except ordinary annual taxes: arrears were not to be payable. Mr. Bentinck communicated these instructions to the Government

Government of Kenya and in reporting the transaction to the Foreign Office expressed the opinion that Pitaurari Ayella was the best person to receive back the fugitives and assure to them humane treatment thereafter. It remains to be seen if that Governor will have the strength and courage successfully to carry out the difficult task allotted to him.

On the other side, it has been laid down that the arrangements for the repatriation of the Degodia may proceed on the understanding that they will not be removed forcibly and that the Secretary of State for the Colonies will be further consulted if the arrangements for voluntary repatriation break down.

Such is the position at present: there remains to be considered what measures should be taken to safeguard the future. On the Abyssinian side of the frontier administration of a sort already exists though too frequently of a pernicious type. On our side of the frontier there have been military patrols which have been conspicuously successful in checking the progress of incursions from Abyssinia, but which cannot hope entirely to prevent such incursions in the future. A certain amount of civil administration in the Northern Frontier Province is being instituted, but the province is a vast area, largely barren, and only inhabited by scanty tribes which move their flocks and herds over the country, according to the state of the grazing and the position of the water holes. There can be no prospect of substantial economical development, and, consequently, there is little chance of any substantial increase in the expenditure on

the province, which already amounts to about £40,000 a year.

The information received so far from the Government of Kenya does not clearly indicate what their ultimate views are for the future of the province. In 1924, the late Governor, in reply to an enquiry whether room could not be found for refugees from Abyssinia, stated that the only way of increasing the accommodation of the province would be by boring new wells, but the Secretary of State for the Colonies considered that, while a programme of well-boring might be useful, it should be directed primarily to meeting the requirements of the tribes already in British territory. It is intended to make provision for expenditure on this work.

In a recent despatch, the acting Governor of Kenya has suggested that the best way of dealing with the frontier region is to cause the available wells along the border to be occupied to their utmost capacity, and to rely on the natural resistance of this maximum population to further infiltration across the frontier. The scheme does not appear to have any direct relation to the previous proposal for boring new wells in the Province generally, and, indeed, it is obvious that the opening up of new wells on the frontier would postpone the time at which the frontier would be fully occupied. Also, it is not stated whether the additional population of the frontier region would be drawn from the south, or from Abyssinian refugees. But the fact that in 1924 the reception of Abyssinian refugees up to the limit of available water was contemplated locally, and the further fact

fact that the acting Governor has now pointed out that, if the Degodia are unwilling to return to Abyssinia their retention would be a first stage towards the filling up of the frontier region, ~~seem~~ to point to his looking to the additional population being drawn from Abyssinia rather than from any northward movement of the British tribes.

In the same despatch, the Acting Governor observed that, if the Degodia remain, doubts exist as to the possibility of their remaining on friendly terms with the Gurre, and any conflict (which would almost certainly originate at the watering places) would be the first stage of the resistance of local tribes to new arrivals from Abyssinia, which the Acting Governor suggests as the sequel to his policy of filling up the frontier.

It is clear that the attitude of the Degodia to repatriation, whatever it may be, is likely to have a material bearing on future policy, but, apart from that, it seems desirable that the Government of Kenya should be asked to define more closely the policy which they have in mind, and the steps which they contemplate for carrying it into effect.

As regards Abyssinia, it has been stated above that the climate of the Boran, Arero and Liban is distasteful to most Abyssinians. To get over this suitable candidates must be assured of receiving adequate remuneration. At present the antiquated system of collecting taxes for the payment of civil and military administration

administration leads to abuses. This could be 281
remedied by the payment of salaries from the Central
Government and by the regular collection of taxes to be
paid into the Central Exchequer through the provincial
Governor. Officials in the Liban and Arero have
hitherto refused to acknowledge the authority of the
Governor of Boran: in future they should be placed
under his orders. To perfect the scheme serious
punitive measures must be taken against the robber bands
infesting the provinces and scoundrelly officials must
be punished, not pardoned, and never sent back to
revenge themselves on the districts where their previous
abuses of power have lost them their appointments. All
this could be pointed out by His Majesty's Minister to
the Abyssinian Government without exposing His Majesty's
Government to a charge of unwarrantable interference
in matters of purely domestic concern.

(signed) N. RONALD.

FOREIGN OFFICE,

November 17th 1925.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

24th November, 1928.

1121/1)

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 269 of the 4th instant, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a memorandum prepared in this department, after consultation with the Colonial Office, on the subject of the migrations from Abyssinia into Kenya. At the end of this memorandum you will see that suggestions are put forward as to the policy to be adopted with a view to preventing further undesirable tribal movements.

While I shall be glad to receive any observations you may wish to make on the points raised in the memorandum, I leave it to your discretion whether to take any immediate action complementary to that which you were instructed to take in my despatch

under.....

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

under reference, but you should bear in mind the desirability of conveying to the Abyssinian Government when suitable occasion occurs the suggestions contained in the last paragraph. It would be unreasonable on their part to resent such a communication on the ground that it constituted an interference in matters of purely domestic concern. His Majesty's Government have no desire to meddle in the domestic affairs of Abyssinia, but they are forced to watch closely lest the mal-administration of the frontier provinces should again react unfavourably on the neighbouring territories under British control.

3. The Colonial Office, to which department copies of the memorandum have been sent, will no doubt obtain the views of the interested Colonial governments.

I am, with great truth and regard,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(for the Secretary of State)

(Sd.) JOHN MURRAY.

Cliff 2 xii. 25.
M. Schlegel 2/17/25
S. H. Stanley 2/17
Harding.

End

Read at mtg
2/22/25

Read
7/24/25

9 December 1925.

DRAFT. Conf. (3)

Governor Grigg

Sir

With reference to ^{my} ~~the~~

Northcott's Conf. Despatch

No. 160 of the ^{3/31} 9th of
October
~~September~~ and

to previous correspondence
regarding the immigration
of Abyssinian tubercular
into Kenya, I have cc to
transmit 2 copies of a

25
2
5. The British 24 xii. 25

53196

2 printed copies
of memo with
rel. with 70.
5445 to be
added
Enc 8/2

3 of 5

Memorandum prepared in the
office of the Foreign

Subject from the Foreign

office. I should be glad
to receive any observations
you may wish to make,
especially upon that section
near the end of the

Memorandum which deals
with the policy of the
Kenya Government.

A copy of this
matter is being
forwarded to the Es, and in
case you wish to discuss
the matter with him when he
reaches Nairobi.

Copies of the 70 letter forwarding the memo
of a day to the Minister
at Addis Ababa are also enclosed.

which summarizes the
history of his work
the present times and
discusses the general
policy in his area

(Signed) L. S. AM

P.O. 52196/25
12/14/25
London

Cable 2.11.25
Washington 2.11.25

2.11.25
1.11.25
London

Adm.
S. S. S.

Amst
1866 Neger
26



9 December 1925.

RAFT. Conf.

Sir

Governor Goude

I have pleasure to transmit
for your information
copies of a Memorandum
sent from the Foreign
Office with regard to
the administration of
the southern frontier of
Algeria.

5.11.25
12.11.25
5.11.25
I provided copies of
memo with ref.
to the 70 letter to the
- add
- add

Copy of 70 letter & of a
day to the Minister at
Addis Ababa
3 Bpts

P.O.

you to furnish some
any other you may
wish to make in the
matter

The memo relates primarily
to the situation in the
Province East of Lake Rudolf
into which the part of Uganda
has no direct concern, but
I am with to make any observations
on the contents of the memo
which befall to receive them

22
Z
(Signed) L. S. AMERY

Number 4/51
Amery

26
53196
-25
Kyo
Liza
288

REC
R 4 AUG
D 5 1926

Ind
44
Wed
1926
/6

6 Aug 1926

Receiving
No.
burgh
He.
m.
Goro.
London.

Sir,

With ref. to your copy.

AFT.

(X 226)
to despatch no. 31 of the 30th of

for
(2)
Gugg
January, I have etc. to
enquire whether you are
now in a position to
submit your observations on
the memo, of which
copies were enclosed with
my

my copy (3) dec. of the

9th of December, regarding

the immigration of

Abyssinian Gulelemer

into Kenya.

I have etc.

(Signed) L. S. AMERY

Mr. Macleod

Mr.

Mr.

Mr. Strachey

Mr. J. Shackleton

Mr. G. Grindle

Mr. C. Davis

Mr. Wilson

Ormsby-Gore

of Clarendon

Amery

DRAFT

Hamilton

Aug 20

P.S. K&P

(SR3 will know

in which mail-bag

to put his letter)

una

Handwritten notes and scribbles at the bottom of the page, including "1946" and "1945".

Dear Colonel,

The Foreign Office have prepared a memorandum

regarding the position at the Abyssinian frontier East

of Lake Rudolf. This not

only summarizes the history of the matter but also discusses the

question of policy in this area in the future.

I am sending you a copy of it herewith as

We think that you may
find it a useful document
to refer to. A copy goes
to the Gov. of Kenya by
his mail with a request
for any observations; and
it seems possible that he
will in due course consult
you in the matter.

Yours sincerely

(Sd.) E. F. Brackley.