

1925

KENYA

354

C. O.  
18441  
25 APR 25

FROM  
UGANDA CO. LTD.  
(MR D. F. BASDEN.)

DATE  
22nd April 1925.

FOR CIRCULATION:  
Mr.  
Mr.  
Mr.  
Asst. U.S. of S.  
*The Secretary*  
Vermt. U.S. of S.  
U.S. of S.  
Secretary of State.

UGANDA RAILWAY. CONGESTION AT BILINDINI AND KISUMU.

Encs extracts from letters written by Company's manager in Uganda. The complaints have reference to delayed imports as well as exports.

Previous Paper  
DAG 16608

MINUTES  
I saw from today's paper that we shall shortly have an attack from the Uga. Soda Company alleging shortage of lime for their purposes

1 Grad. (4%) } 29 APR 1925  
to 2.4 clm. (8%) }  
copy 4 copy x to Gen Secy (2) 8 May 25

As to the last para. of Mr Basden's letter, I have no idea whether the whole of the large orders I quoted on 48652/4 were renewals or not. As regards trucks, I should say largely not renewals, as regard locomotives, a good many are worn out and

Subsequent Paper  
*Gw*  
2/21/25

is due to cutting down staff, but 35

Proper has this out to some extent

He says that many experienced  
Indian

in station masters and chief

superintendents have been

replaced by choofers & inexperienced

men, and that they are

having to enter the previous

men to return to the service.

As to this:

? (1) I can reply to Mr. Gordon enclosing

a copy of Mr. Kelly's letter to Mr.

Cameron in 1868, saying that we

will no longer get a copy of it from

Mr. Cameron. See case. Say that

the whole question is under exam

but that I think that attention

will be directed to increasing the

carrying capacity of the system than

to following up Mr. Cameron's

statements on the work which the

Railway has carried on in

circumstances of great economy

(2) I should ask Mr. Elias, the

Officer in charge of the transportation

Continued Mr. Elias  
to explain the  
system and  
how it works  
and how it  
works.

Wed. 27.4.25

Dear Sir,

I am so indebted to Lawrence Kelly that I am reluctant to telegraph for a full report as proposed. Some things are important and not very immediate, & I fancy this is so.

W2 27/4/25

I agree with the action proposed by Mr. Boltanley. I should like a note made of any conversation with Mr. Elias - except that we should ask for the proposed report by despatch & not by telegraph.

at once  
Wed 28.4.25

Mr. Sturtevant

Pl. see the attached note of my conversation with Mr. Elias. I am inclined now not to ask the G.M. for a report on the part, but simply to send copy of the correspondence with Mr. Barden to the O.M.G., saying that the position has been fully discussed with Mr. Elias and that the S.M. Dept. consider any further report from

Mr. Elias called on April 30th.

There is no congestion at Kilindini. When Mr. Felling toured the interior, he found accumulations only at Kisumu, Jinja and Masindi Port. He sent Mr. Butler (Uganda Railway Marine) to Jinja and disposed of the accumulation. Masindi Port was improving daily when Mr. Elias left. Kisumu remains bad.

The congestion is due to the heavy import traffic at Kisumu. There is now an average of 2,000 tons a day upwards, and this is not railway material imported for the new line. There has been very little material sent up so far.

*Some women, the natives are buying very little*

*weigh?*

The trouble is due to the rush of imported goods for sale to the natives in anticipation of increased <sup>business</sup> ~~storing~~ capacity in Uganda. The coast is over-stocked and there are several impending bankruptcies in Uganda. <sup>P</sup> Therefore, when Mr. Felling claims credit for having handling upwards <sup>as much</sup> ~~as~~ import traffic this year as last, it is a just claim, as the traffic is almost entirely public traffic. <sup>P</sup> Mr. Elias' Transportation Department is only concerned with taking trucks up to Kisumu and has nothing to do with handling the traffic at the Port. It is intended that the Transportation Department will, in future, take charge of the piers which are connected with the Railway, but at present, the position is that owing to the sheds at Kisumu being over-full, full trucks stand idle at that Port when they are badly needed elsewhere.

The primary reason is the shortage of labour and that, we hope, will improve, but for the next two years, i.e. until the through Railway is open, we are certain

but the suggestion that these are retrenched men whom the Railway enticed back to the service when they found out their mistake in losing them is without any foundation whatever.

The Railway are certainly short of trucks not only for the Uganda up-traffic, but also for the Magadi existing traffic, the reason in each case being the accumulation of unloaded trucks at Kisumu. Magadi asked for 200 tons' space a day; they are getting about 150 tons'.

As regards maize, there was a rush early in the year, in order to secure high prices. There was a shortage of trucks for the same reason, as the accumulation of trucks at Kisumu, but the maize traffic has the advantage that trucks are not held up. The rush of maize is now over and it can be dealt with.

Maize has not interfered with the import traffic to Uganda which is already in excess of the capacity of Kisumu, and would not have been assisted by adding more unloaded trucks to those already there. It has not interfered with the downward traffic of Uganda cotton because the maize rush was over before the Uganda cotton began coming down in bulk. There was no accumulation of cotton when Mr. Elias left, but for the same reason of the <sup>accumulation of</sup> unloaded trucks at Kisumu, he feared that such an accumulation was bound to come.

Mr. Elias gave me the figure of 440 trucks ordered up to last year, and already at work. He said that there was no truth in Mr. Cameron's statement that these were merely replacements. They were additional to existing supplies. 250 new trucks had been ordered on the 6th March this year, and they were nearly all the big 25 ton trucks. These also were additional to existing stocks. When they were delivered

delivered, more trucks would be ordered, but it was useless to place orders faster than the workshops could erect the trucks.

We seem to have a full reply on all points except for the difficulty about the shortage of ships, which is due to the very reasonable policy of the General Manager in not buying expensive ships, which will be superfluous when the <sup>x</sup>through Railway is open. It is the weak place in our defence, and the weakness must, of course, become more and more apparent in proportion as the labour difficulties which have hitherto been the ruling abstacle are removed.

*\* Ships cannot be transferred for one side to  
another without cost.*

*Cost 15.25*

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*\* Ships cannot be transferred from one side to another. Lighters can.*

*Genl 1.5.25*

# The Uganda Company Limited.

Portland House,

73, Basinghall Street,

London E.C. 2

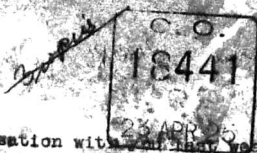
TELEPHONE:  
LONDON WALL 2876 (2 LINES)

TELEGRAMS:  
UGACOL LONDON

E.

22nd April 1925.

W.C. Hottomley Esq. C.M.G., O.B.E.  
Colonial Office,  
S.W. 1.



Dear Mr. Hottomley,

Referring to my conversation with you last week relative to the very serious block on the Uganda Railway and at the Kilindini and Kisumu ports, I now enclose the extracts from the letters written by our Uganda Manager which I promised to send you. I regret the delay but there has been an exceptional pressure here during the past week.

You will observe that I have added an extract from an earlier letter of March 22nd 1924, showing how serious the position was even a year ago, and it has been getting steadily worse.

My Company are heavy sufferers, in interest on Capital which should not be required and, as regards Imports, from loss of Profits through having a costly selling Staff without the opportunity of selling Goods which customers require, while as regards Exports, we lose the opportunity of effecting

W.C.B. 2. - 22nd Apl. 1925.

sales and deliveries of Cotton this side of August, when it would be clear from the competition of the coming American crop.

When I troubled you with this subject in October last, you replied on the 28rd of that month pointing out that some Rolling Stock had been sent out during the first six months of 1924, but in respect of which our Manager observed - "It was clearly understood that these were for replacements and not additions to Rolling Stock".

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

Chairman.

Extract from letter from Mr. Cameron, dated 23rd March 1924.

UGANDA RAILWAY CONGESTION:- The railway are not moving the cotton with anything like the rapidity that is necessary if very serious congestion is to be avoided. A strong protest has been made as the rumour prevalent was that Kenya Maize was being concentrated on, to the detriment of Uganda cotton. I have received intimation that the Governor and the General Manager of the Railway will be combined Committees of the Chamber of Commerce and the Ginners' Association some time on Monday, the 24th instant, to discuss the matter. It is a decided change to have the General Manager of the Railway getting down to these matters personally and coming to Uganda to see for himself when complaints are made, is no less an innovation for the Governor to similarly interest himself so that it is reasonable to expect that the cause of the trouble will be removed.

Extract from letter from Mr. Cameron, dated 14th Decr. 1924.

Import traffic is very congested at Kilindini, ships discharge into lighters and it is many days, sometimes a couple of weeks, before the lighters discharge on to the wharf, consignments are all mixed up and a considerable time is taken in sorting out and getting through the Customs, then there is congestion at the loading bank and still further considerable delay in getting booked on the Railway and after this perhaps three to four weeks before delivery at Kampala or Jinja, if for up-country it is still longer in transit, thus it can easily be two months after a steamer reaches Kilindini before we see the goods in Uganda. There is no early prospect of this state of affairs getting any better.

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Extract from letter from Mr. Cameron, dated 3rd March 1925.

UGANDA RAILWAY. - Up to a few months ago we were praising the present General Manager of the Uganda Railway for doing his best with the rolling stock at his command and made very full allowance for all difficulties--today it would look as if the job had beaten him for both at the coastal port and at the Lake Victoria Nyanza port at Kisumu the most utter confusion obtains. Consignments that arrived there months ago are buried underneath more recent arrivals, this state of affairs continues, rather getting worse than better. Last year if an abnormal delay occurred and a letter giving full details was sent to the General Manager the matter was promptly dealt with, the goods delivered and an explanation sent, today we get a post-card which looks as if it were signed by a native office boy on behalf of the General Manager and nothing further happens.

.. Today we have ginny spares of all kinds which we need very badly, in transit. These include twine, baling iron, baling studs, gin knives, gins, gin rollers, etc. etc. which will, unless delivered soon, compel us to close down our ginneries. We have Ford Trucks for all of which there are anxious buyers for which we have received all the parts except the rear wheels and the cases containing these are most likely buried under other merchandise at Kisumu. We

can do nothing, everybody is complaining bitterly but nothing happens. I have sent a strongly worded telegram to the Hon. the General Manager today which is being followed up by a letter, but hope for nothing as complaints have become part of the daily routine and no longer give cause for concern.

A railway official today informed me that the large majority of the railway trucks are being requisitioned for Kenya Maize and do not get as far as Lake Victoria, that is what we in Uganda complained of last year and explained how our cotton exports were allowed to accumulate while Maize was being rushed forward. Apparently that is what is being repeated. People like Lord Delamere and other members of the Kenya Legislative Council are big maize producers and are able to bring pressure to bear on the General Manager of the Uganda Railway and thus secure a preference.

=====

Extract from letter from Mr. Cameron dated 10th March 1925.

UGANDA RAILWAY:- The collapse of the Uganda Railway seems complete, chaos reigns everywhere, at Kilindini, at Kisumu and at the Uganda Ports. Last week I sent two telegrams to the Hon. The General Manager to which there has been no reply. I have sent numerous letters and enclose specimens of the cards received in reply, no other communication follows. I have had a list got out of packages still in transit at time of writing so far as relates to the General Office & Motor Departments, Kampala and Lalli Port and am enclosing copies. These lists do not include the Stores or Jirra Depts. The G.O. list comprises up till the 18th February and dating back to December 10th some 403 packages comprised in 50 consignments. Lalli Port list dates back to December 10th and covers a period up to February 5th representing 15 consignments totalling 355 packages. The lists referred to have been sent ~~me~~ with a covering letter to the Hon. the General Manager and so far remain unacknowledged. My own view is that the organisation has got out of hand, things are so bad that only closing down the line for two or three weeks while accumulations are dealt with will ensure normal working within the next six months. The situation is largely the result of the drastic cutting down of staff by the G.M.

soon after he arrived to show what economies he could effect when traffics were small, now Kenya has become a factor in the World's maize production (at present every available truck is being devoted to rushing maize down to the coast), and at the same time Uganda's cotton production has increased and with that, her imports also.

The Railway had plenty of warning, it could not hope to deal with 1925 traffic with 1922-3 facilities and staff. The G.M. states that he looked forward and that he placed his requisitions in plenty of time with the Crown Agents, but owing to restrictions in the List of eligible Contractors limiting the market, he cannot get his requirements supplied anything like so quickly as the South African Railways who are given a freer hand and whose orders are even given quicker delivery by Contractors on the Crown Agents' List than is accorded to Crown Colonies. It is time an agitation was set on foot at home or the facts brought to the notice of the Colonial Office.

- Mr. Whiteaker 28.6.
- Mr. Boardman 28
- Mr.
- Mr. Strachey
- Sir J. Shackburgh
- Sir G. Davis
- Sir G. Grenle
- Sir J. Masterton Smith
- Mr. Ormsby-Gore
- Mr. Amery



*John*  
*John*

*10 Nov 1925*

DRAFT.

29 April 1925

2. Baden Cove

Dear Mr. Baden

copy to Mr. King (2) 8/5/25

I thank you for your letter of  
 the 22nd April and the enclosed  
 letters about railway question  
 which you promised to  
 send me in East Africa.

I now enclose a copy of a letter  
 which the General Manager  
 sent to Mr. Cameron on the  
 subject of the delays about  
 which complaint was made  
 You will doubtless get a copy  
 of this letter from Mr. Cameron  
 and it is in due course.

The whole question is under  
 consideration but I must say I  
 think <sup>that</sup> attention will be

Mr. King's letter to Mr. Cameron 12 March  
 sent to dep. on 16.6.25

2/5

no. 1  
1044 1/2

367

Mr. Whiteley 28.6

Mr. Bostanley 28 f

Mr.

Mr. Strachey

Sir J. Shuckburgh

Sir O. Davis

Sir G. Grenville

Sir J. Masteron Smith

Mr. Drinsby-Care

Mr. Amery



July

Done

10/10/25

DRAFT.

29 April 1925

2. Baden Sops

Dear Mr. Baden

copy to Gen King (2) 29/5/25

I thank you for your letter of  
the 22nd April and the enclosed  
letters about railway operation  
concessions which you promised to  
in East Africa.

I now enclose a copy of a letter  
which the General Manager  
sent to Mr. Cameron on the  
subject of the delays about  
which complaint was made  
You will doubtless get a copy  
of this & course from Mr. Cameron  
kindly in due course.

The whole question is under  
consideration but I must say I  
think <sup>that</sup> attention will be

Refer to Mr. Cameron's letter  
sent to dep on 16/6/25

75

M.I. 1866/65

Mr. Whiteaker c.c.  
Mr. Bottomley 28/4

Mr.  
Mr. Strachey  
Sir J. Shuckburgh  
Sir C. Davis

Sir G. Grindle  
Sir J. Masteron Smith  
Mr. Ormsby-Gore  
Mr. Amery

*J.M.*

*J.M.*

DRAFT.

29 April 1926

Mr. Elias Esq

Dear Mr. Elias

Scotchman Hotel York  
Exmouth Burners St  
Hants

The Uganda Company have been very persistent in nagging us about the congestion on the Uganda Railway. I expect the Magadi people to join the attack at any moment.

We appreciate very fully ~~your~~ ~~part~~ ~~aware~~ of the difficulties which the Railway has to cope with but I think a talk with you would be helpful to understand the position better ~~perhaps~~. Could you spare time to come up (if possible some time this week) and discuss the whole question with me?  
Yours sincerely

2 D/G.

... have some more by tel. ... a talk to ... at ... 30. 4.26

(Signed) W. G. BOTTOMLEY.

1844/25

Kenya

303

C. B.  
7 MAY

8 May 1925

DRAFT.

For 16608/25

With ref. to your despatch 341

of the 20th of March, I have to

transmit to you copies of correspondence

with the Chairman of the Uganda

Company, Limited, regarding

their complaint of congestion

of traffic on the Uganda Railway &

at the Kisumu & Kisumu

ports & to inform you that

the position has been fully

discussed with Mr. Elias,

Sup<sup>r</sup> of the line, & that

Confidential (2)

Val

MINUTE.

Mr. Brier May 6

Mr. Allen 7/5

Mr. Bottomley 7.5.25

Sir J. Shackleton  
Mr. Trachey  
Sir C. Davis.

Sir G. Gringie  
Mr. Lambert  
Sir L. M. ...  
Mr. ...  
Mr. ...

sent to ...  
has been ...  
from Mr. Barden

To ...  
1844/41

I do not consider that any  
further report from the Gen.  
Manager is necessary.

I desire <sup>to write you</sup> however ~~to~~

to refer to <sup>the</sup> report of a recent  
meeting of the Magadioda Co.,  
limited, published in "The Times"  
of 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> April, at which the

Chairman referred to the <sup>hostile of</sup>  
<sup>Magadi</sup>  
the <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~the~~ Magadi

to the coast. <sup>It</sup> There is also  
that this <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>also</sup>  
undoubtedly to be inevitable to

The delay in releasing trucks at  
Lusaka, & <sup>with</sup> the increased  
output of Magadi etc. is to be expected,

The general <sup>problem</sup> ~~difficulties~~ of <sup>seasonal</sup> ~~seasonable~~  
transportation will <sup>continue to exist</sup> not be lessened until the  
through line to Lusaka is opened <sup>therefore</sup> I ~~express~~  
the hope that the Gen. Manager will not hesitate to make  
any arrangements for improving the handling <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~  
trucks <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ the near future. <sup>etc</sup>

L. G. AMERY



From Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas.

18441/25 370

Navsari Chambers,

Outram Road,

Fort,

Bombay.

27th March, 1925.

Dear Mr. Lindsay,

Sometime back you wrote to tell me that you were the representative for India on the Empire Cotton Growing Association. I enclose herewith copies of letters from Kampala (Uganda) to my firm which should prove interesting to you. This season, cotton in transit on the Kenya and Uganda Railway takes six to eight weeks against the average 2-3 weeks in previous seasons. I need hardly say how detrimental this extraordinary delay in transit for a commodity like cotton is likely to prove to the interest of the merchants of Uganda and ultimately to the cotton consumer. Owing to this delay extraordinarily high premia had to be paid by Lancashire for near deliveries. As a friend very pithily remarked to me, it is no use extending cultivation of cotton, if the only transport in the country, is to be allowed to deteriorate, as it has this year.

One of the main explanations of this is the employment of untrained and raw natives of East Africa, and others from South Africa, in the anxiety of the East African Government to oust the Asiatics from the Railway staff. I would be the last to object to the native being employed in his own country even at a slight sacrifice of efficiency, but in the case under reference, the loss in efficiency is enormous, the loss to the cultivator is beyond measure, and the upsetting of trade cannot be overlooked. I therefore suggest that necessary steps should be taken by the Empire Cotton Growing Association to

remedy

3  
remedy this overzealous experiment by the Governments of  
Uganda and Kenya - an experiment which besides injuring  
the interest of the grower is bound to increase the price  
to the buyer of African cotton.

With kind regards

Yours etc.,

(Sgd) Purshotandas Thakurdas.

To H.A.F. Lindsay, Esq., C.B.E., I.C.S.,

Trade Commissioner for India,

Grosvenor Gardens, London.

Copies of Extracts from our Kampala Office letters.

From Letter D/3.2.25.

"As regards Uganda Railway's re-organisation, it seems, things are going from bad to worse and there has never been such dis-organisation as it exists at present. Articles which were booked to Mjanji and/or Bugondo have been received at Kampala and those booked for Kampala have gone to Namasagali or Atura or Masindi. Imported articles at the coast, take thirty to sixty days for booking only and goods booked from Kilindini or Mombasa in November had not reached, till middle January and in some instances have not been received even till now. These instances were brought to the notice of the General Manager when he was here, but he attributed everything to labour scarcity. The General Manager is in favour of compulsory and forced labour, and we are inclined to believe that in order to bring the Government to his views, he appears to create the confusion to a certain extent, intentionally. In the re-organisation that he has made, services of the many of the old and experienced Indian staff have been dispensed with, and this dis-organisation (re-organisation in the eyes of the Manager) can very well be attributed to this change. This was also brought to his notice at the time of interview and nothing but an evasive reply was received. Last year the Chamber was informed that in order to relieve congestion 400 trucks have been ordered, but only 40 have arrived at the coast so far and they are being assembled. How many months will they take for assembling - nobody knows - there again the question of short labour creeps in".

From Letter D316.2.25.

Malima:- The Ginnery building is ready long since, but the spares ordered from London as early as July last

last have not yet arrived here, nor <sup>are</sup> any of these available locally. We expect everything to be ready before 15th March".

"Steel Godowns:- We have had considerable trouble with these godowns. Owing to unprecedented congestion on the Railway, all the three godowns have been hopelessly jumbled up, with the result that some parts of the one have been over-carried to the other and vice versa. Till now we have been unable to put up a single godown, although we are trying our best to erect Malima and Namasumbi at earliest date possible. The troubles have been common to all. Some have their imported parts of Presses etc been over-carried without any trace at all".

From Letter D/3.3.25.

"We have from the beginning warned you against congestion delay in railway. We cannot positively say how many bales will shipped in the next boat, but we are telegraphing to Railway and also to Messrs. Smith Mackenzie & Co., Kisumu, to see consignments of cotton bales may not be delayed at Kisumu, sometimes consignments remain uncared for, for weeks together your information we may say that the General Manager has to take any notice of telegrams sent to expedite despatch in transit, as such telegrams serve no useful purpose and possible care and attention is al<sup>l</sup> bestowed on everything sent on Railway. He thinks such telegrams are a slur on ment, which he thinks is always done efficiently and with greatest attention. It is always understood that all consignments are urgent and are required with the least delay at the coast and no consignments should receive special attention and preference. We enclose for your information copies of telegrams despatched with regard to same".

RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

M.O /18441/25 Kenya.

Bottomley 30/5/25

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Quarto for Mr. Bottomley's signature

- Mr. Shockey
- Mr. Shuckburgh
- Mr. ...
- Grindle
- Masteron Smith
- Mr. ...
- Mr. ...

DOWNING STREET,

19 June

May 1925

DRAFT

F. LINDSAY, Esq., ~~SIR~~

Dear Mr. Lindsay,

Since you showed me the letter from Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas of the 27th of March, I have looked up our papers regarding the congestion of Uganda traffic.

I enclose a note, with a

spare copy which you may send to Sir

Purshotamdas Thakurdas if you care to.

I return ~~the~~ letter, with the enclosure.

Yours sincerely,

See memo herewith. (check)

(keep copy)

June, 1925.

Dear Mr. Lindsay,

Since you showed me the letter from Sir Purshotandas Thakurdas of the 27th of March, I have looked up our papers regarding the congestion of Uganda traffic.

~~I enclose a note~~  
I enclose a note, with a spare copy which you may send to Sir Purshotandas Thakurdas if you care to. I return his letter, with the enclosure.

Draft Memorandum.

CONGESTION ON UGANDA RAILWAY.

-----000-----

18  
29 5 extra

The complaints with regard to the congestion of Uganda traffic were discussed at the end of April with Mr. Elias, the Superintendent of the Line, who has left East Africa early in March.


Mr. Elias stated that the congestion was primarily due to the heavy upwards traffic to Uganda, chiefly trade goods imported in anticipation of the increased purchasing power on the part of the natives when the new heavy cotton crop had been sold. For some reason this expectation has been disappointed, and the natives have shown little inclination to purchase in large quantities.

In the first two months of 1925 the Railway <sup>shipped from Kisumu</sup> ~~got through to Uganda~~ twice as much in the corresponding period of last year, but so much more remained to be handled that godowns at Kisumu were filled, and trucks stood there without having been unloaded. The consequence was, in the first place, very great difficulty in handling any kind of traffic at Kisumu, and secondly, the creation of an artificial scarcity of trucks in the whole system. This accounts for the delay mentioned in the enclosures to the letter from Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, in getting spare ginnery parts, to Uganda, and also for the

the congestion in the downwards traffic. With reference to the 440 new trucks, Mr. Elias was confident that the last of them had by the time of his visit <sup>still</sup> been delivered from the Nairobi shops. 250 more have been ordered, and further orders will follow, but the rate of ordering must depend on the rate at which the trucks can be assembled in the shops.

As a result of the bottle-neck at Kisumu, cotton is inevitably held up at Uganda stations and ports. There is no information as to the present position, and Mr. Elias had left before the bulk of the cotton had begun to come down. ~~The~~ <sup>But</sup> some congestion is certain this year, and it cannot now be remedied except by lapse of time.

In addition to the heavy upwards traffic congestion has been accentuated by the difficulty in obtaining <sup>any</sup> skilled labour for port purposes at Kisumu, and at ~~the~~ ports. It is believed that the Railway and Marine Departments have now all the labour that they require, but much of it is necessarily inexperienced. But it is possible to assure Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas that there is no ground for <sup>the report</sup> supposing that the congestion is due in any way to the retrenchment of experienced staff. There has been no retrenchment of running staff, stationmasters, or those engaged in handling traffic, and such retrenchments as have been made have been at the Headquarters' Offices. What has given rise to this report is the fact that many experienced



men retired for the sake of the gratuity payable under the Provident Fund. Many of them, having obtained the gratuity, then asked leave to come back to the Service, and have been taken on again.

Next year, we hope that the system will be better equipped to meet the seasonable pressure and also that there will not be a repetition of excessive importations into Uganda. But there will undoubtedly again be difficulty in that year. The following year it is expected that the new extension of the Railway into Uganda will be working, and then there will not only be two alternative routes available, but the bulk of the traffic will pass from end to end without transshipment. The Railway should then be able to face with equanimity an extension of cotton traffic which everyone hopes to see.

*Colonial Office*

*May 1925*

Telegram from the Officer administering the  
Government of Tanganyika to the Secretary of State  
for the Colonies.

379

Dated 29th June, 1926.

(Received Colonial Office 1.6.26., 30th June, 1926.)

288. 29th June. Your telegram of 23rd June.  
Intercolonial Railway Council satisfied that the  
railway administration has endeavoured to make every  
effort to provide for the needs of the service.  
General Manager states that to secure expeditious  
work over heavy section 30 miles from Tororo he has  
authorized payment of time bonus which may not  
exceed 25000 and he is most strongly of opinion with  
which I agree that this action is in every way sound.  
As it is possible that the position is not understood  
General Manager wishes me to explain that the full  
programme was for the line to be commenced in January.  
last and commencing (a) to Tororo January 1926 (b)  
to Mbulambi January 1927. The object in attempting  
to reach Tororo January 1926 was to cut out traffic  
now coming via Mwanjipert thereby substantially  
relieving the position on the Lake(s). The delay of  
Norton Griffiths completing contract meant delay in  
commencing the line. Every effort should not be con-  
centrated on endeavouring to cut out proportion of  
Mwanji traffic next season but even if this effort  
fails payment of comparatively small extra sum to secure

Telegraph from the Officer administering the  
Government of Kenya to the Secretary of State  
for the Colonies.

379

Dated 29th June, 1926.

Received Colonial Office 1.5 a.m., 30th June, 1926.

288. 29th June. Your telegram of 23rd June.  
Intercolonial Railway Council satisfied that the  
railway administration has endeavoured to make every  
effort to provide for the needs of the service.  
General Manager states that to secure expeditious  
work over heavy section 30 miles from Tororo has been  
authorized payment of time bonus which may not  
exceed £5000 and he is most strongly of opinion with  
which I agree that this action is in every way sound.  
As it is possible that the position is not understood  
General Manager wishes me to explain that the full  
programme was for the line to be commenced in January  
last and completing (a) to Tororo June 1926 (b)  
to Mbulamiti January 1927. The object in attempting  
to reach Tororo January 1926 was to cut out traffic  
now coming via Mwanjipert thereby substantially  
relieving the position on the Lake(s). The delay of  
Norton Griffiths completing contract meant delay in  
commencing the line. Every effort should not be con-  
centrated on endeavouring to cut out proportion of  
Mwanji traffic next season but even if this effort  
fails payment of comparatively small extra sum to secure

severe expedition work on heavy section whilst a plentiful supply of voluntary labour is available, is in every way desirable to make up delay in starting and get the line through to Mbuluzi early in 1927. There has been no forced labour on the line and there is no present indication of shortage of labour for the work or of the need to ask for forced labour. Any impression that the Lake services are suffering by concentration on the new line is totally incorrect. Meanwhile every possible action is also being taken to increase facilities on the present route. The programme authorized since 1923 of addition(s) to the Lake pier(s), also housing accommodation, and craft for Lake etc., involves the expenditure of £275,200. The limiting factor is craft on Lake Victoria and the General Manager and the Railway Council agreed at the last that it is impossible to do more than is being done in that respect before next season. Between now and next season an additional tug and eight lighters will be erected at Sioma and the Marine Engineer considers and the General Manager and Chief Engineer agree that more than this cannot be done and additional orders could not therefore be justified at present. Uganda Government contemplates prohibiting export of cotton seed next season until the end of May. If this is carried into effect with additional craft on lake General Manager confidently expects the next season to be

be easier than this even without the use of the line but if the line could be (got somewhere near) Tabor it would be (YOF) material assistance. General Manager wishes me to impress upon you that he is not relying entirely on the prospects of the new line getting through quickly but he is simultaneously doing all possible on the lake. Everything possible should be done to expedite supply of stores and staff requisitioned and especially Marine Officers outstanding as this class of staff now seriously overworked.



Confidential

Sir Henry Lambert 18/6

Mr Stradley 22/6. not in list of ES.

Mr Boltanley sure, delay  
 To see in return. <sup>6/5 2/4</sup>

This is a private letter  
 of Fellings to Sir  
 Sidney Bevan who sent  
 him a memo on Port  
 Control in East Africa  
 prepared by Sir Trevelyan Wynne  
 (one of Richards's men I believe)  
 It is a most interesting letter.

with 18.6.28

UGANDA RAILWAY

General Manager's Office,  
NAIROBI.  
Kenya Colony.

20th May, 1925

PERSONAL.

Dear Sir Sydney Henn,

I was pleased to receive your letter of the 15th ultimo and much interested to read the memorandum.

Perhaps it will help you if I take the paragraphs in your memorandum seriatim and comment on them :-

(1) There has been much exaggeration about congestion at Kilindini. It is quite correct that we want space badly and that the delay in completing the deep water berths has thrown a very severe strain on both Kilindini and Mbaraki, but conditions have never been chaotic. The Wharfage Companies and the Railway have, in fact, handled an astonishing amount of traffic remarkably successfully. The estimate for this month is 70,000 tons. Quite recently the Shipping Companies got concerned, and I rushed down to the Coast to help them. I agreed to emergency measures, but it has not been necessary to fall back on them, and when I was at the Coast two days ago I was more than pleased to see how well we are doing.

The Shipping Companies cannot quote Kilindini as a port where ships are unduly delayed. Despatch from Kilindini is on the whole quick in comparison with other African ports and this is admitted by the local representatives of the Shipping Companies. The fear of delay sometimes upsets people in a country where most people seem to get "nervy" but real delay rarely occurs.

(3) It is quite correct that we should have much more shedding and warehouse accommodation, and, of course, we shall have a lot more when the new berths are finished; but if I have anything to do with the control of the port in the future, I shall insist upon cutting out free storage as far as possible. It is not generally known that, under the present system, we allow 21 days' free storage for exports. The consequence is that exporters use our transit sheds as warehouses, and it is more than a little annoying, after getting Cotton to the Coast 30% faster than last year, to find thousands of tons in our sheds at the Coast, while ships are allowed to leave with space unbooked. Similarly with imports; it is most difficult to persuade people to clear until the free storage period has expired. This morning we have four hundred wagons with exports under load at the Coast. With the sheds kept full, off-loading is difficult.

(4) Similar Commissions to enquire into Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam might serve a very useful purpose, but

(5) I fear that it is hopeless to expect that one policy will be acceptable at all the ports you mention. The local difficulties are such that they must be dealt with separately.

(6) It seems to me that the question of Port Control at Kilindini has been unnecessarily mixed up with the question of the Ocean service to and from East African ports. I am not aware

that

that in any other port in the world Steamship Companies are allowed to have so strong a voice in control, except insofar as docks, wharves, etc. owned by themselves are concerned. In most countries Port Authorities aim at the rapid despatch of steamers, but they do not accept it as that, to secure the rapid despatch of steamers, the Steamship Companies must have control, which is the line of argument taken by the Steamship Companies in regard to Kilindini.

(7) There must be a local authority for each port. Periodical meetings between the local authorities would do good.

(8) The lighterage services are, on the whole, worked efficiently, although it will be obvious that, so long as lighter control is separate from shore control, any deficiency in regard to lighters will always be covered up and the blame thrown on to an alleged shortage of railway wagons, especially if the Railway happens to be a Government Railway. Lighterage tariffs should certainly be controlled. The manner in which the Wharfage Companies fleece the Railway to-day on the large import of construction material is disgraceful.

(9) I challenge the Steamship Companies to prove their statements in regard to South Africa. I say emphatically that the working of the South African ports has improved enormously since the Railway was forced to take over control because of the unsatisfactory conditions that existed there previously. I challenge the Steamship Companies to repeat their statements in South Africa. My information is that statements such as have been made in London recently have never been made by the South African Managers of the Steamship Companies, who work most amicably with the Railways.

But why do those concerned in Kilindini constantly refer to South Africa? I am not wedded to the South African system. What about other ports? Is it not the case that in the great majority of ports the authority managing the port does the landing and wharfage work? Is it not the case that where Port Control Boards are in existence they generally do the wharfage work, while where the Railway is in control the Railway does the wharfage work? The Singapore system has been quoted. I have no objection to the Singapore system, but let it be the Singapore system and not a hybrid system such as has been suggested here. The Singapore system is that of a Port Control Board with Government representatives in a commanding position, with the powers of a corporate body, with obligations to make revenue cover expenditure - including interest on capital - and with the right to do all the work at the port itself. Does not the Singapore Board do the wharfage work, except at the P & O. & B.I. owned wharf?

(10) The Shipping representatives at Kilindini - who happen to be my personal friends, so don't think I am getting at them personally - look at the matter from one point of view only. They want to retain the wharfage work, because it is extremely profitable work, and their suggestions for Port Control &c. have all been advanced as a means to the end for which they are striving, viz: the retention of the wharfage work. Much has been said about the break in the chain of responsibility between the ship and final delivery on shore; but what about the break in the responsibility on shore resulting from dual control inside the harbour area? Surely there should be one control on shore? Is it not the experience all over the world

world that duality of control makes for inefficiency? I am quite sure that if you could be at Kilindini when our sheds and stacking grounds are full you would see how ridiculous it is for the Railway authorities, Wharfage Company authorities etc. etc. to be all working under separate control in the same area and falling over each other accordingly.

(11) If the Steamship Companies did not desire deep water berths, why did their representatives on the Port Advisory Board vote therefor? Now that we have started with deep water berths we should continue - indeed, I think we shall be forced to continue; and we must have a coal pier. We are already landing 60,000 tons of coal per annum, and this must increase rapidly. There are far too many people, both in London and in this Colony, advancing conflicting views about our port. The best thing any Port Authority at Kilindini could do would be to obtain a comprehensive scheme for development from the Consulting Engineers and then proceed with that development without regard to the thousand-and-one amateur Port authorities with views.

(12) The financial position is precisely what all the theorists have so far dodged facing. I believe the sound system to be for the Railway to control the port. The Railway is, in fact, doing a great deal, if not the bulk, of the work at the port to-day. In development, if it had not been for the Railway, the port would have been in a very sad position, because the Railway, at its own expense and on my initiative, has incurred considerable expenditure in improvising additional facilities for which the Railway gets no return.

If, however, it is decided to have a separate Port Authority, let us have it, but let us have it quickly, because to-day we are drifting, and the new piers may be completed before the organization to work them, which it seems no-one's business to provide, is there. By all means put a fence around the whole area and let all the work inside that area be controlled by a Port Trust or a Port Board or by whatever body it is decided to create, and the Railway will, with pleasure, and with much relief, deliver train loads of goods to the Port Authority and take them away; but let that Authority stand on its own legs, collect its own revenue, meet all its own expenditure (including interest charges) and pay its own way. That would be a straightforward arrangement which could stand or fall in the course of years on its merits; but the suggestion that has been made, that Port Board should control and that the Railway should pay the interest, make good the loss, etc., while Wharfage Companies collect the wharfage charges, is monstrous.

Where is the Port Authority to get its revenue from? The Shipping Companies suggest that they should retain the wharfage work, which means that they will take such profits as they can squeeze out of the charges against the public; but is it sound that such profits as can be made on the work should not be set off against interest on capital and working expenditure?

(13) It is quite true that I am at present carrying against the Railway the interest charges on the deep water berths which are not yet completed, and that I am receiving in revenue nothing per contra; but is it fair that this position should continue? Why should the Railway financial position be messed up by my being forced to pay the interest on harbour expenditure

while

while the Wharfrage Companies take the profits on handling, and how can I recommend further development at the port if this system is to be perpetuated? Surely, also, it must be clear that if railway rates are called upon to meet deficits at the harbour, the inland community is paying more than it should and the Coast community and coastal trade and re-exports to the extent to which they should and could contribute is escaping legitimate charges.

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To sum up in regard to the foregoing, my view is that the principle of one control of the railway and port is sound, but in view of the opposition and of the manner in which I know my hands would be tied, I would welcome any other authority established quickly, so as to get the urgently necessary move on. If, however, there is to be a separate control at the port, that separate controlling authority must pay its way by doing all the work at the port and collecting at the port sufficient revenue to cover expenditure, including interest charges. If such a control body were appointed, I would have no objection to serving on it by way of assisting.

(I feel, however, that the commercial community of Mombasa is so weak and so much influenced by the Shipping Companies that the Government would have to have a majority representation on the Port Control Authority, and that the Governor - or High Commissioner for Transport, when the post is established - would have to have the right of veto).

Unfortunately, the Port Facilities Commission has not yet started work. This is due partly to the Shipping Manager of the South African Railways, who is to be a member of the Commission, having had to postpone his departure from South Africa, but also to differences of opinion in regard to the constitution of the Commission.

The Inter-Colonial Railway Council consider that the Colonial Office should be represented. In fact, that the Chairman should be an official of the Colonial Office, while Uganda is also asking for representation.

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In regard to the working of the Railway generally, I am aware that there is much criticism. Every man in the country seems to consider himself an authority on the working of the working of the Railways, and I have no doubt that loud and long complaints have been made to the Colonial Office and that the general impression is that the Railway position here is thoroughly bad. The Railway position here is not bad. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, I think it is quite good.

We have, of course, had the most extraordinary difficulties owing to delays in the arrival of material and equipment generally, and the difficulties in connection with staff are such as to drive one to despair at times; but there has been no breakdown and no mess-up such as some people are so quick to allege.

There seems to be an impression in London that we have been slow in getting the Cotton out of the country. The

actual

actual fact is that we have sent to the Coast this year 30% more Cotton than up to this date last year.

In regard to imports, we have carried a very large percentage (the last figure I saw was 46%, but public imports have slackened down now) in excess of last year.

The only real trouble that occurred was on a little pier at Port Bell and at the end of the seven miles of line to Kampala. There, for a fortnight, we had a bad time. This little bit of congestion was the outcome of previous serious delays at Kisumu, owing to the shortage of labour, and a certain amount of damage occurred owing to our being compelled at one time to use convict labour. I must also admit that some of my officers did not quite rise to the occasion and that some of the gentlemen sent to my mercantile marine service on the Lakes (after experience in the Royal Navy) proved that they knew very little about cargo working under emergency conditions; but, as against this, other officials rushed to the rescue and worked in a manner which, in my opinion, was beyond all praise. That the nervy, erratic people one finds in this part of the world do not appreciate this is obvious from the manner in which we are being attacked in Kampala. It is a matter of surprise to me at times that, notwithstanding these attacks, I can still find officials who are prepared to live in tents on piers in swampy country and work from day-break to midnight to help such an ungrateful crowd of people.

The little trouble on the Port Bell-Kampala line lasted but a short period, and there was never any breakdown; but it was apparently sufficient to make the local Chamber of Commerce lose its head entirely, and the Government of Uganda unfortunately followed suit. The new Governor may have something to say about the manner in which the Uganda officials acted, and the manner in which the railway worked on seven miles of line has been used to give rise to a bitter Colonial feeling.

It seems almost unnecessary, but in the case, that the management of the Railway is accused, in consequence of this little temporary congestion, of being unfair to Uganda in the matter of Renewals and Betterment expenditure; that the existence of the Inter-Colonial Railway Council is ignored; and that criticism readily takes the form of charges of bad faith. Strange people! At times I feel like folding my tents but, after all, I am serving the Empire, and a few narrow-minded people.

I am referring in my report to a mild way to the need for warehousing Cotton in Uganda. The present system is for the Ginners to gin as hard as they can go and then throw the Cotton at the Railway or the piers in order to get consignment notes quickly - if in no other way, then by bribing the Asiatic Clerks - so that these consignment notes may be negotiated at the banks. It is a bad system. The Railway sheds and piers are transit sheds and piers. Warehousing should be arranged by co-operation or otherwise, but it must be accepted that it is quite impossible for the Railway to keep sufficient steamers and trucks waiting about always to take any quantity of Cotton which the Ginners may care to deliver at any moment. This matter has been represented to the Uganda Cotton Board, and I hope that better arrangements will be made

in due course.

So far as the craft on the Lake is concerned, as I have stated above, we have managed to carry 30% more Cotton than last year. We shall be erecting additional lighters and a tug, and by the end of the year the capacity should be further increased, but I doubt whether the position will be really satisfactory until the line is through to Mbulemati. I have authorised the Chief Engineer to pay bonuses and do everything else possible to try and catch by next season the traffic which now goes to Mjanji. Whether we shall succeed I do not know. The trouble, of course, is that the Usain Gishu Line is not finished yet, and we cannot yet get material through. This unfortunate contract has been the cause of endless trouble, and I often chuckle when I think of what happened in London last year. (I have just had the revised estimate for the Solai line. This departmentally constructed branch development line will cost only £3,000 per mile).

In regard to the Inter-Colonial control proposals, I must say that I deeply regret the delay. The existence of a strong and thoroughly representative Inter-Colonial Council would be of tremendous help in avoiding Inter-Colonial difficulties which continue to crop up, while the vesting of the authority in a High Commissioner instead of in the Governor of one of the two Colonies concerned is a fundamental need at the present stage.

The question of local powers in steel and other matters. The idea of full powers must be vested in the local authorities. The Inter-Colonial Office tradition is against this, but continuation of the present conditions is a reasonable efficiency quite impossible.

One of the biggest shocks I have ever had was the death of my son, but it yet. I believe it was the greatest shock I have ever sustained.

I am in London next February or March. My idea is to take leave from the commencement of December or January and, after spending a short period with my children in South Africa and attending to my somewhat neglected private affairs, to come over with my wife and little girl for a holiday, which I hope to spend mainly in Italy. When passing through London I will make a point of seeing you, and perhaps a meeting with the East African Board could be arranged.

I would, however, like to have as little as possible to do with business during my leave, because I have had a really bad time here and do not know yet whether I shall last until December. Through all these troubles here I had a very bad attack of malaria, and, while I kept at work, got run down to such an extent that the doctor wanted to order me out of the country for a time. I gave him no encouragement, but there is no doubt that all these troubles, plus overwork, have given me a nasty knock. In particular, I felt keenly the three Railway accidents - all due to the human element in working.

Meanwhile, with very best regards from my wife and myself,

Believe me,

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) C. L. FELLING.

Sir Sydney Henn, M.P.

244 Winchester House,  
Old Broad Street,

LONDON, E.C.2.