

1924

KENYA  
SOMALILAND

C.O.  
44174  
18 SEP 24

Date

17th September 1924

FOREIGN OFFICE.

CIRCULATION

106

ABYSSINIAN RAIDS INTO BRITISH TERRITORY.

Fwd's copy of despatch from Addis Ababa relative to raid west of Lake Rudolf. States as to representations made to Ras Taffari during his visit to London. Suggests that if Sudan - Abyssinia boundary be delimited opportunity shd be taken to delimit Kenya-Abyssinia boundary in neighbourhood of Lake Rudolf.

Previous Paper

MINUTES

Vs. G. B. 133099

See on 44342

1924 33490

6/10/24

*Handwritten notes:*  
Recd - 8 OCT 1924 - F of 44342 24  
Copy copy memo to Gen Kya Conf (c) 29 OCT 1924  
Copy to Treas. 20/1/28 on 3803a/18 dmd.

Subsequent Paper

76  
44342

89.  
80/3.3/1

FOREIGN OFFICE, S. O. 14  
15th September, 1914.

Sir,

With reference to your despatch No. 67 of August 19th, relative to a raid by Abyssinians into British territory west of Lake Rudolf, you will observe from my despatch No. 146 of July 25th, that the question of delimiting the frontier between Abyssinia and the South-Eastern Sudan is engaging the attention of His Majesty's Government.

2. The suggestion is now being made to the Colonial Office that, in the event of a boundary commission being set up for the above purpose, its scope should be extended to include the delimitation of the Abyssinia-Kenya frontier, in the neighbourhood of Lake Rudolf.

3. I approve the terms of the note addressed by you to the Express on August 13th and enclosed in your despatch under reference.

I am, with great truth,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

*John Thomas Murray Rice*

Sullock Esq.,

cc. cc. cc.

14/24  
In any further communication  
on this subject, please quote  
No. 7680/363/1.  
address  
not to any person by name.  
to  
The Under-Secretary of State,  
Foreign Office,  
London, S.W.1.

C. O.  
44174  
18 SEP 24

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FOREIGN OFFICE  
S.W.1.

17th September, 1924.



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Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Ramsay MacDonald to transmit to you, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Thomas, the accompanying copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa, relative to a raid into British territory west of Lake Rudolf by a armed party of Abyssinians.

2. In the course of an interview with Ras Tafari on July 11th, the Secretary of State took the opportunity of raising with him the whole question of Abyssinian raids into British territory, giving details of recent raids into the Sudan, Kenya and Somaliland. The discussion on that occasion turned mainly upon the raids into the Sudan, which had been more frequent than those into other territories, and Ras Tafari, while protesting that such incursions by local chieftains were always punished by the Central Government, explained that he could not punish important governors under whom the minor chiefs lived unless complicity of the governor would be proved. Ras Tafari complained that it was difficult to ascertain whether violations of the frontier really occurred, because it had not been properly delimited (presumably His Highness was referring to the frontier of South Western Abyssinia). He suggested that the delimitation of this frontier should be undertaken as soon as possible by a

boundary...

Under Secretary of State,  
Colonial Office.

Handwritten: 75/1999. 10.2/29. (2002) M+S

boundary commission.

3. At a further interview with the Secretary of State on July 16th Ras Tafari stated that according to the treaty with the British Government the frontier was shown on the map by a red line but the treaty provided that it should be delimited on the ground by a joint Anglo-Abyssinian Commission and clearly marked by beacons. This had not yet been done along the whole frontier. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, in reply, agreed that delimitation was desirable, and promised to make no difficulty about it. He expressed the hope, however, that when the British members of the commission arrived at the frontier the Abyssinian members would be there to meet them, and would not fail to turn up as had happened on previous occasions. He also hoped that the Abyssinian commissioners would have authority to settle questions relative to the boundary on the spot.

4. A despatch was accordingly addressed to His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo on July 22nd, requesting him to ascertain whether the Sudan would be ready to undertake the task of demarcating the frontier, where this had not already been done, and if so, which portion of the frontier, should, in their opinion, be the first to be delimited.

5. Mr. Thomas will observe that uncertainty regarding the exact frontier line is now being used as an excuse by the local Abyssinian authorities for rials in the neighbourhood of Lake Rudolf, and I am to suggest, for his consideration, that in the event of a boundary commission being appointed to demarcate the portion of frontier referred

to....

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to in paragraph 3 above, the opportunity might be taken of delimiting at the same time the frontier between Kenya and Abyssinia in the neighbourhood of Lake Rudolf. I am therefore to ask that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald may be furnished with such observations on this matter as Mr. Thomas may desire to offer.

I am, etc.,

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Your obedient servant

THOMAS SPRING RICE

Thomas Spring Rice

Enclosure in No.

111



Addis Ababa.

19th August 1924.

363/1)

Sir,

I have the honour to state that on August 6th I received despatches from His Majesty's Consul at Haji stating that a serious raid had been made by Abyssinians from his district in British territory west of Lake Rudolf, and also that the local authorities were considerably exercised about alleged activities of British officers well within British territory.

The following is an extract from a report by the Officer Commanding Troops, Kenya, Nakuru, Tatkana, May 6th 1924, forwarded to me by Mr. Consul Holson.

As far as I can gather, it appears that, as soon as Mr. Holson went on safari into the Sudan, presumably en route for Pitum, Kanyazmatch Walde Yeasa, Berazmatch Aena Gerie and Kanyazmatch Hali proceeded with a force of about 150 riflemen, mostly their own people with a few men of Kanyazmatch Gurre Mariam, to Tetedomei just north of Lorienatum. Here the force split up into small parties varying from 15 to 40 rifles which were despatched in different directions and raided the following areas independently:- Lokwanamur, Metapara, Meyen, Malin, Esur, Akemangan and Northern Morueris. All the cattle in these areas together with the sheep and goats and donkeys were taken, but only a few camels. These were driven across Sanderson's Gull at Lombol and into the Harile or Gellaba country.

Right Honourable  
Messrs Ramsay MacDonald, M.P.,  
etc., etc., etc.

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(I gather from my investigations that the Gallaba were assisting the Abyssinians and that their share of the spoils were the smaller animals unfit to be sent to Meji)

It appears that the spoils of this raid were many thousands of head of stock and the whole of the natives inhabiting the British Frontier zone have lost very considerably".

A few days previously I had received a note from the Abyssinian Government saying that in 1920 Major Gonda had promised Ras Tafari that British officials would neither make any buildings or levy taxes on Abyssinians in the neighbourhood of the present frontier west of Lake Rudolf, in view of its possible alteration in the near future. The note then stated that British activities in this area had been reported, and requested that instructions should be given for them to cease.

On looking up Major Gonda's report of his interview with Ras Tafari at the end of November 1920, I found that the above request had been made, but had been very definitely refused. I accordingly pointed this out to the Abyssinian Government.

On August 13th, I sent a note to the Express, of which copy is enclosed, complaining of the raid referred to above, and of a large caravan of ivory poachers from British territory. I also pointed out that at the interview of 1920, Dejazmatch Gesta had been strictly cautioned to observe the present frontier and had been provided a map of it. I finally urged on the Express the necessity of taking strong repressive measures as the only means of preventing similar occurrences in the future. I have not yet received a reply to either of these notes.

From what Mr. Gonda reports, the opinion appears to be prevalent in his district that we have bound ourselves not to increase our activities near the frontier west of

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Lake Rudolf, and there is probably also an assumption that we are contemplating the cession of a considerable area on that frontier. It is not improbable that the first assumption is a result of the second. For although I hardly think Ras Tafari can have privately revoked his order to evacuate Bessa, he may have told him that negotiations were proceeding regarding a readjustment of the frontier, and that the British were not likely to take much interest in an area which they were thinking of ceding to Abyssinia.

I have not received a report on the conference at Mtwara between Mr. Hodson and frontier officers of Kenya, Uganda and the Sudan, but I understand that the question of the Abyssinian frontier was discussed, and Mr. Hodson enquires whether its readjustment has been definitely abandoned, and if so whether the present frontier will be definitely ratified.

I think it eminently desirable that if the question of readjustment is to be dropped, the fact should be made quite clear to the Abyssinian Government.

I am afraid that the suggestion of ratification of the frontier would induce the Abyssinians to think that the matter was not definitely settled, and that they would endeavour on the contrary to make readjustments of one sort or another, and that this would tend to increase frontier trouble at least until the matter is finally settled.

I am sending copies of this despatch to His Excellency, The Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Nairobi, and to Mr. Consul Hodson, Maji.

*etc.*  
I have, the honour, etc.

(Signed) G.H. Bullock.

Chargé d'Affaires.

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Lake Rudolf, and there is probably also an assumption that we are contemplating the cession of a considerable area on that frontier. It is not improbable that the first assumption is a result of the second. For although I hardly think Ras Tafari can have privately revoked his order to Amatchesta, he may have told him that negotiations were proceeding regarding a readjustment of the frontier, and that the British were not likely to take much interest in an area which they were thinking of ceding to Abyssinia.

I have not received a report on the conference at Moga between Mr. Hodson and frontier officers of Kenya, Uganda and the Sudan, but I understand that the question of the Abyssinian frontier was discussed, and Mr. Hodson enquires whether its readjustment has been definitely mentioned, and if so whether the present frontier will be definitely retained.

I think it eminently desirable that if the question of readjustment is to be dropped, the fact should be made quite clear to the Abyssinian Government.

I am afraid that the suggestion of ratification of the frontier will induce the Abyssinians to think that the matter was not definitely settled, and that they would endeavour on the contrary to make readjustments of one sort or another, and that this would tend to increase frontier trouble at least until the matter is finally settled.

I am sending copies of this despatch to His Excellency The Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Nairobi, and to Mr. Consul Hodson, Wajiji.

I have, the honour, etc.  
(signed), G.H. Bullock.  
Chargé d'Affaires.

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To: Her Majesty Zauditu, Empress of Ethiopia,  
Daughter of Emperor Menelik II.

From: Mr. Bullock,

His Britannic Majesty's Charge d'Affaires.

After Greetings.

Your Majesty,

I have the honour to inform Your Majesty that during the early part of this year officers of Fitaurari Meshesha with about 150 rifles made a raid in British territory to the West of Lake Rudolf and carried off many thousand heads of cattle. The principal officers concerned were Kenyazmatch Woldeyes, Gerazmatch Anderge, Lij Rada, Ato Demaka and Gabra-Giorgis. Kenyazmatch made died during the raid.

About the beginning of June a large caravan of ivory poachers with 169 porters arrived at Haji from Tibitt (Togosa) which is British territory.

These proceedings by Abyssinians from the Haji district, render it more desirable than before that the British officers should increase their activities in that area. I am also informed by the British Consul at Haji that the Abyssinians at Haji pretend not to know where the frontier is. But as mentioned in my last letter to Your Majesty, His Highness Ras Tafari informed Dejazen Desta in the presence of Major Dodds that he would be given a map of the frontier and that he was to observe it strictly.

I am aware that Your Majesty wishes to preserve the friendly relations which at present exist between Abyssinia and the British Empire. I consequently hope that Your Majesty will cause the most vigorous measures to be taken to prevent and punish outrages of this description.

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I should like to be able to persuade Your Majesty that 115  
if these acts of officials in the provinces are not punished  
in an exemplary way, they are bound to occur again, either  
under the same officers and Governors or under their  
successors. And Your Majesty I am sure realises that two  
neighbouring nations cannot remain for ever on friendly  
terms, when the subjects of one nation are allowed to make  
raids on the other without receiving adequate punishment.

signed: G.H. Bullock.

Addis Ababa,

13th August 1924.

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