

EAST AFR. PROT.
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4 JAN 12

Foreign
Date.
1912
3 Jan
previous Paper.

Abyssinian mission to Nairobi.

Sends, for obs., copy from Adis Ababa enclosing one addressed to Gov. of East. submitting proposals for visit of Abyssinian mission accompanied by Mr. Douglas-Scott, for purpose of opening up of trade, trade more particularly in cattle.

Sir G. Fiddes,

In the course of a long talk about the Abyssinian frontier which I had with Mr. Thesiger some weeks ago, (just before he left to return to Adis Ababa), he showed great keenness for the institution of a regular trade between Abyssinia and the East Africa Protectorate. It is clear that the establishment of Customs Stations and a regular and peaceful flow of traders across the Northern boundary would conduce greatly to the settlement of that district and would render much easier the difficult task which our Administrative and Military Officers at present have there. At the same time it is easy to see that any elaborate system of frontier Customs Stations with their corresponding obligations might involve considerable ^{trouble and} expense. We must not let Sir P. Girouard say that he was pushed into such expense by us.

The visit of a party of Abyssinian traders is a different and a smaller matter, which might be a useful preliminary

Copy to Govt. 3 Feb 1912

subsequent Paper
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preliminary whether any further ^{developments} party follow immediately or not. It is clear that we can offer no useful observations until we know what Sir P. Girouard thinks of the whole matter.

I would, therefore, telegraph to the Governor as in the draft ^{herewith.} It will be seen that Major Doughty-Wylie's proposal is that the party should start early in February, and that he should accompany it on his way home on leave.

draft not
desks

HAB.

Jan. 9.

See now $\frac{7.0}{845}$.

HAB.

Jan. 10.

In any further communication on this subject, please quote

No. 52070
and address—1911.

The Under-Secretary of State,
Foreign Office,
London.

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REC'D
4 JAN 12

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*20 this
H. H. H. H. H.*

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

Foreign Office,

January 3, 1912.

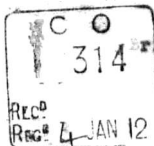
Reference to previous letter:

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Description of Inclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject.
Major Douglas Wylie, No. 90. December 1, 1911	Proposed visit to Nairobi with Abyssinian Mission.

(Similar letter sent 19)



British Legation, DEC 1911

Adis Ababa,

1 December 1911.

Sir :-

I have the honour to enclose two copies of my despatch of the 29 November to Sir Percy Girouard, subject the opening of trans border trade, more particularly in cattle.

The present lack of plough cattle was most strongly brought out by Sir Percy's officer, Mr Sturdy Chief Veterinary Officer of the Protectorate, who was sent here on a mission, and by Lord Cranworth who accompanied him, and who is qualified to represent the settlers.

In the opinion of these delegates and in my own, the best and perhaps the only way to facilitate border trade and good relations, is to persuade the Abyssinians to go to Nairobi. Their suspicions of us are very hard to combat, the more so because they ^{are} carefully concealed from us.

I have proposed this mission to Sir Percy Girouard, but have no reply as yet. Should he approve, and should I be able to persuade them to go, I have the honour to suggest that I be directed to accompany this mission.

It will be very difficult to get them to start, and by themselves I doubt if they would do it. They will be afraid of fever and of hostile natives, and if I am not there, they will wish to take some force, which would be at once unwelcome and expensive. I do not say that I can get them to go, but if I go myself there is certainly more chance of it, and they would have to send some fairly respectable envoy.

The want of the settlers for plough bullocks is said to be urgent. Therefore if we are to do any good, we ought to start as soon as possible. Things move extremely slowly in Abyssinia.

I have already asked permission to travel home by the Blue Nile for reasons connected with Italian politics, but the call for cattle

for cattle in East Africa appears to me the more urgent errand of the two. I might if permitted, take another opportunity of visiting Gondar.

Mr Sturdy and Lord Cranworth are leaving Aden for London on the 20 December, in case you should wish to see them. They will no doubt visit the Colonial Office.

I am aware that the whole idea entirely depends on Sir Percy Girouard's approval, and I regret making this request, without having his reply. But as to escape the worst of the rainy season it would be necessary to start from here not later than early in February, it appears to me better to catch this post. Sanction or the reverse could be accorded by telegram.

As to cost, I presume the Protectorate would pay for the Abyssinians, and that my expenses would be chargeable to the Legation. These need not I think be great, as in any case the Jibuti journey is to be deducted, and if we escaped the horse sickness there should be a big profit on the sale of government mules in Nairobi

I have the honour to be, Sir,
with the highest respect,

Your most obedient,

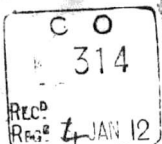
humble servant,

Chas. S. J. Wylie

Sir Edward Grey.

Bart. M.P.

etc, etc, etc.



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52070
British Legation,
Adis Ababa
29 DEC 1911
29 November 1911.

Sir:-

I have the honour to report that Lord Cranworth and Mr Stordy arrived here on the 20 November and are leaving today for Jibuti.

Mr Stordy has informed me that the embargo on cattle from the Boran to East Africa for rinderpest has been now removed that there ^s for the time being a real want of plough ^{station} cattle for the Protectorate, and that a quarantine could be easily established at Moyale. Further that at Moyale there was a veterinary officer under his orders, who could if the Abyssinians so wished, be moved along the frontier to cope with outbreaks of rinderpest and plague.

Further that in his opinion the Boran cattle were probably immune from east coast fever, that the natives appeared and were reported to him by Mr Deck as willing to trade, and that certain road improvements desirable between Moyale and Marsabit could be effected, as will be indicated to you in his report.

He was able to give me much other valuable information about the state of the frontier and the intermediate country.

I venture ^{to ask} for copies of all his reports which would be of much interest to us here and which ought to be on record ^C in this Legation. In this I would include the results of his careful investigations into flies and ticks as bearers of disease.

Lord Cranworth and Mr Stordy informed me that recognised trade scarcely existed on the border, and that the cattle trade which is not openly prohibited is in fact rendered locally impossible. They showed me how undesirable is the illicit trade now carried on by Somalis, firstly because the animals so imported are of the worst type and useless

for stock, and secondly because these Somalis are gunrunners and smugglers. Further that the Somalis persistently decried the white men to the Boran and to the Abyssinians, a certain Ahmet Wafa having actually told all the Somalis in the Boran with whom he had influence, to spread the rumour that Mr Sturdy's errand was to poison the cattle in the country.

I took occasion to tell this story to Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis who agreed as to the danger and uselessness of the Somali trade.

I made a succession of visits with Mr Sturdy and Lord Cranworth to Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis chief of the Boran and the most powerful Minister in Adis Ababa, to Megadras Haili Giorgis Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Commerce, and to the formal Council of Ministers.

The status, authority and objects of your envoys were explained and the following points were brought out.

Trade between the two countries was now ^{now} existent to the great and useless loss of both. If trade were started not only should we become better friends, but there would be a direct benefit to Abyssinia from country which now gives none.

Cattle of which there were many thousands perhaps half a million in the Boran were at this time wanted for ploughing in East Africa. We could of course find them in South Africa, Australia, India etc, but we offered first to deal with our neighbours. It was to this end that Your Excellency had on your side removed the embargo on cattle and opened the trade. The Abyssinian Government would do well to establish with you border customs houses, such as were in working order in the Sudan. I mentioned a possible three, at Dolo, Banissa and at Moyale.

Such custom houses could be used for the regular trade, the duties on which would be shared on the Sudan plan.

Also they would be used for the cattle and animal trade.

On every head of cattle and on every mule and horse exported

a tax could be levied by our officers which we would pay to Abyssinia. The amount of the tax would be a matter for discussion.

In parenthesis I might say here that Lord Cranworth gave me as a rough figure for a guide in these negotiations if they ever materialise, £20 as the price to the settler including purchase and the taxes above which it would not be advisable to go. In conversation with him and with Mr Sturdy we spoke of a tax, but decided to mention no amount to the Abyssinians. My own idea, which is of course entirely subject to your views and to those of the frontier officers, would be not more than 1½ a head of cattle and perhaps 2½ per horse or mule. It may be that the Abyssinians will have a bigger idea of the tax to be imposed, and much would turn on the buying price at Moyale.

To return to our conversation with the Abyssinians, it was pointed out that these customs houses would help to prevent smuggling and arms trading, and go far to render easy the sharp discussions we had occasionally held on the frontier question.

An invitation was given to any Abyssinian trader to go through to Nairobi on a pass which could be given him by the officer at Moyale. Further than this, I advised them to return the visits of your officers by sending a mission themselves to Nairobi, when I felt certain that they would better see the advantages of a friendly trade.

It was pointed out by your envoys in reply to a question that just as their cattle were suitable to East Africa owing to acclimatisation, so were our pedigree horses sheep and stock suitable to Abyssinia. More particularly as regards sheep, careful cross breeding for wool had met with success, and wool was now sold for a dollar a kilo. There was no reason why in

Abyssinia so similar a country as to climate and conditions a similar profit should not be made. Your Excellency, if they sent a mission could give them a few rams to start the breeding, and they could purchase others.

The general trade in coffee (if permitted) wax hides etc against mardouf abugedid and other cotton goods would be a big one and profitable to both countries.

Mr Sturdy made his offer of the services of a veterinary officer, which Pitaurari Hapta Giorgis received with obvious pleasure, saying that some of their chiefs sank in a day from riches to beggary by the cattle plague.

The final reply on the whole subject, in so far as it was possible to give one in the short time that your representatives were here, was given in the Council of Ministers by Pitaurari Hapta Giorgis. It was to the effect that the Abyssinian Government recognised that the opening of trade would be to their advantage, and that to send a mission to Nairobi would be a very good idea. But that to open the cattle trade would take time, as it would be necessary first to call in to Adis Ababa the chiefs of the Boran, and explain the matter to them. Without a full explanation they would never sell their cattle, and written orders would be no good. They never even now killed cattle without a council of the chiefs. They should be called in to listen to the whole matter.

As to the other points raised, they should be considered and an answer given.

Mr Sturdy, as regards the cattle trade, said that while on the frontier he heard that the Boran were willing and even anxious to sell their cattle, and were only waiting for the authorisation of Adis Ababa.

The Pitaurari (himself a Galla) replied that the Gallas would tell Mr Sturdy one thing and himself another.

Mr Sturdy on the general question then suggested that he should be empowered to wire to you that the ideas propounded had been favourably received. But the Abyssinians considered that this would be too binding on them.

I am afraid that this result was in general disappointing to your representatives. But personally being now more or less accustomed to Abyssinian caution and suspicion, I did not think that the reply for a first one was bad, nor am I astonished at its non committal nature. They must have time to talk over. If they are pressed too quickly, their nature is to become at once suspicious of some snare. I will continue the matter, and do not despair of some useful result, though I think they will be unlikely at first to give us all we ask.

I telegraphed to Your Excellency to ask if you would approve of an Abyssinian mission to Nairobi by Moyale and Marsabit. In my opinion and I think I may say in that of Lord Cranworth and Mr Sturdy as well, this would be a useful step to removing the inherent suspicions which the Abyssinians have of a danger to them from the south. If the Foreign Office allows me, I would propose to accompany this mission myself on my way home. If at all possible, we might try to make this an opportunity to drive the first mob of cattle, and start the trade.

Your mission was also introduced to Hij Yasu and something of their objects explained to him.

2. With regard to the cattle trade, Count Colli the Italian Minister made a suggestion which I submit to you.

He said that in the Benadir they had immense quantities of cattle, that a trade might be to mutual advantage, and that he would write to the Governor of the Benadir on this subject.

Whether the cattle and the price would be suitable, is a matter for Your Excellency.

Mr Sturdy would no doubt report to you on this subject, which is altogether outside my knowledge.

3. As to expenses of an Abyssinian mission to Nairobi, they would certainly expect to be treated as guests. But I do not think their entertainment need cost very much, and the bulk of followers and subordinates could return by Moyale again after the rainy season. The chiefs might go back by sea, and the journey would give them some useful lessons.

If it can be done, it would be well to start as early in February as possible to arrive in Nairobi in May.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble servant,

Col. Langley Wylie

Copies of this despatch are being sent to Sir Edward Grey, the Officer-in-Charge at Moyale, and to Mr R.J. Sturdy, Chief Veterinary Officer of the Protectorate.

L.E.
The Governor of British East Africa.