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Foreign Office

1913

31 Dec

Last previous Paper
4/1897/13

Copy ends for copy of Jan 14 9/1

3/14

Subsequent Paper

70/1/13/14

S. Abyssinian Frontier

Sends copy from Ades Ababa regarding result of negotiations with Abyssinians for re-occupation of the S. Frontier, & copy of repl. requesting if no objection that further attempt be made to induce the local gov't to agree to proposal of the gov't.

L. J. Anderson

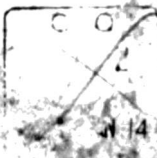
We must await Mr. Thompson's reply to the F.O. despatch of the 31st of Dec/13 but in the meantime, a copy of the report for copy to the gov't of the S.A.F. for an inf.
L.J.A.

You will remember that Mr. Thompson is coming home via Navarre early this year, so that he will be able to discuss matters personally with the gov't.

L.J.A. 1/1/14
J.R. 1/1/14
E.S. 1/1/14



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The Under Secretary of State
Foreign Office
London

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~~
correspondence with

Foreign Office
December 31, 1918

70
62226

Reference to previous letter
Foreign office Sept 18

Description of Enclosure

Name and Date	Subject
Mr Theiger repeating the (Adis Abeba) dated Nov 29 To Mr Theiger Dec 31	Rectification of the Southern Frontier

(Similar letter sent to

1-20-1
E.A.P.

78.
74961.

BRITISH LEGATION,
ADIS ABABA.

29th November, 1913.



Sir:-

I have the honour to report that the first meeting with the Council of Ministers under the presidency of Lij Yasu to discuss the question of the Southern frontier took place this morning. It was marked by an atmosphere of seriousness and attention on the part of the members of the Council which is unusual on these occasions, but their final answer was to the effect that the red line had been recognised by the Emperor Menelik and could not be altered during his life-time without his consent.

All the old arguments regarding Major Gwynn having carried out the delimitation previous to Lieutenant Schubert's arrival, and the Abyssinian claim to the country as far South as Wujeira were brought forward and had to be disposed of before we could come to the discussion of their real proposals, which were nothing

more

The Right Honourable
Sir Edward Grey, Bart., K.G., M.P.
&c., &c., &c.,

MOITAGEL HPI IERI

ABABA BIA

20th November 1913

Sir:-

I have the honor to refer to the letter which you received from the Council of Ministers under the presidency of His Excellency the Governor of the Sudan, dated the 11th inst., in which you are requested to attend the meeting of the Council of Ministers on the 15th inst. at Khartoum, in connection with the discussion of the Sudanese question. I have the honor to inform you that the meeting of the Council of Ministers will be held at Khartoum on the 15th inst. at 10 o'clock in the morning. It was arranged by me that you should be present at the meeting and that you should be seated at the table with the members of the Council who are invited to attend. I have the honor to inform you that the meeting will be held in the afternoon at 2 o'clock. I have the honor to inform you that the meeting will be held in the afternoon at 2 o'clock. I have the honor to inform you that the meeting will be held in the afternoon at 2 o'clock.

were than a capitulation of the same promises of reform on the border in the shape of better officers, fresh posts and stricter laws which were given me three and a half years ago, when the suspension of further discussion of this question was made, conditional on the restoration of order on, and the cessation of raiding from, the Abyssinian side.

To this I replied that the fact that matters had gone from bad to worse during the past three years proved that either the Abyssinian Government were incapable of restoring or maintaining order, in which case it was useless to accept their promises, and we could only insist on the rectification of the line and the scheme of co-operation which it implied; or they were capable of doing so and had failed to keep their promises out of sheer negligence, in which event they were directly responsible for all the lives lost in the past three years, and should pay heavy compensation for all the damage the raiders had done during this time.

I said that the first solution was in my opinion so obviously true that I could not accept any further promises but insist on the rectification, and,

the Right Honourable
 Sir Edward Grey, Bart., K.G., M.P.
 &c., &c., &c.

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 tion for all the damage the nations had done during
 this time.

I said that the first solution was in my opinion
 so obviously true that I could not accept any further
 promises but must insist on the rectification, and

if they granted it, I would myself go down with any
 high officer they might appoint to assist them in
 restoring order and making arrangements for the future.

After a lengthy discussion they gave their final
 answer, which I have reported above, promising at the
 same time to do their best to catch and deal with the
 parties guilty of the various acts of killing which I
 had reported to them.

In my opening speech I had explained carefully
 all our demands, recapitulating briefly the events of
 the last four years, which had culminated in the death
 of Captain Aylmer and the wounding of Mr. Jones, and
 pointing out that the rectification I asked for did
 not augment or diminish the territory of either country
 but was a mere exchange based on military necessities,
 and not, as report had it, a cession of territory de-
 manded as compensation for Captain Aylmer's death.
 This question, I reminded them, His Majesty's Govern-
 ment had so far held, and were still holding, in
 abeyance.

In conclusion I reminded them that His Majesty's
 Government had used no threats in the event of our
 demands not being complied with, but at the same time

I warned them most seriously that although a refusal on their part to comply with our moderate and just demands would not imply war, they would thereby destroy all our confidence in the justice of the existing Government, break down the friendship which had existed for so long between the two countries, and very greatly weaken that desire on our part to assist them in maintaining a strong and independent kingdom, which had hitherto been the basis of our policy in Abyssinia.

There is no doubt that these words produced a marked effect, but, as I expected, their fear of individual responsibility within the Council and of public opinion outside it, was too strong for them.

After I left the Council room all the precincts were cleared and a long discussion was held with closed doors, and it now remains to be seen whether they will make any further advances.

In the event of their not doing so I can only see one policy open to us and only one means of bringing pressure to bear on the Southern frontier.

It is only too obvious that neither assistance nor co-operation can be expected from this Government, and

although

... I would have been well served if they had been more...
 ... high officer they might have been...
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 ... demands not being complied with, but at the same time

although I think I can promise that for the next six months the state of things on the frontier will be greatly improved we must realise that it is only a question of time before they revert to the old condition of lawlessness.

This respite must in my opinion be used to strengthen the garrison on the frontier sufficiently to enable us to protect our own tribes and deal with any parties of raiders.

Once we are strong enough to do this the Borana will emigrate in large numbers with their cattle to our side, and we can then prevent any pursuit of them or any repetition of the Kalatcha massacre.

This will mean a severe loss in revenue to the Abyssinians who will then be obliged to approach us on the subject of the conditions on the border, and we can then make our own terms, and reject with confidence any proposals from the Abyssinian Government which do not suit us.

In this way we shall alter the whole complexion of affairs here and escape from the somewhat undignified position we hold at present.

leader a... I... on their part to comply with the... demands would not imply war, they would... our confidence in the justice of the... Government, break down the... had existed for so long between the two... very greatly weaken the... them... independent kingdom... been the basis of our policy... Abyssinia.

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I am aware that the expense necessary to carry out this policy effectively will be considerable, but since it is now clearly proved that the safety of our tribes and the peace of the border must depend entirely on our own exertions, I do not see how we can any longer evade our responsibilities in this respect. Further, as I have said before, once we give our tribes effective protection, I cannot see any reason why a system of general taxation should be further postponed by which the protected tribes would contribute to the expenses of the frontier force.

I am addressing a copy of this despatch to Lord Kitchener.

I have &c.,

~~(Signature)~~ Wilfred G. Theaiger.

Foreign Office,
December 1st, 1913.



Sir:-

I have received your despatch No. 78 of the 29th ultimo, respecting the negotiations with the Abyssinian Government in connexion with the proposed rectification of the Southern frontier of Abyssinia.

I observe that the final answer returned by the Council was to the effect that a line which had been recognized by Menelik could not be modified during the Emperor's life-time without his consent. This protest is removed by the recent death of the Emperor, and I have accordingly to request that you will, unless you are of opinion that there are objections to doing so, make a further attempt in the altered circumstances to induce the Abyssinian Government to agree to the proposals of His Majesty's Government on this matter.

I am, with great truth and regard,
Your most obedient,
Herbert Asquith,
(for the Secretary of State)

The Honourable H. H. Asquith, D. S. O.

I am aware that the expense necessary to carry out this policy effectively will be considerable, but since it is now clearly proved that the safety of our tribes and the peace of the border must depend entirely on our own exertions, I do not think we can any longer evade our responsibilities in this respect. Further, as I have said before, once we give our tribes effective protection, I cannot see any reason why a system of general taxation should be further postponed by which the protected tribes would contribute to the expenses of the frontier force.

Kitchener.

I have &c.

(Signed) - William G. Theobald