



C. O. Sports Club,

St. James' Square

37021

28th October, 1918.

Sir,

No. 13

With reference to my recent interview with Mr. E. J. Read, I have the honour to bring to you the question of transport in the Northern Frontier District of East Africa, more especially regard to the advisability of utilising modern mechanical vehicles, so far as possible, in the place of animals.

Several committees were held in Nairobi to discuss the transport problem in this District previous to my departure for England, the reports and recommendations of which have, I understand, been presented to the Colonial Office. The problem is one of great difficulty, and the whole efficiency of the administration and control of this large and arid territory depends upon the transport of adequate supplies and stores for the various posts, nothing being available locally except meat.

The recommendations as to the routes were briefly as follows:-

For the Northern Frontier District, Meru was to be taken as a base for the despatch of stores and supplies for the following posts:-

(1) Archer's Post, Meru.

(2) Lorian Swamp, Meru.

(3) Kulal, Meru.

All stores would be carried, by wheeled transport, from Meru to Archer's post on the Usso Nyiro, whence two routes diverge, one North to Merille (ox wagon), and thence North West to Kulal (camel); the other East, down the Usso Nyiro to Lorian Swamp (ox wagon), thence North to

Wahair and Moysis (camels); from Wahair another branch route would supply El Wak (camels).

A rough dirt road has been cut from Meru to Archer's Post suitable for ox-wagons, but only animals presumed to be immune to East Coast fever can be used upon it, and such animals would not be allowed to cross the river on account of the risk of contracting the disease on the North bank which has hitherto remained clean.

The section from Archer's Post to Merilla (14 days) has for some time past been worked by ox-wagons, Sam Oker being used, and also by a Marsabit, but owing to the ill and unreliable nature of the country, the use of boats to carry water and the long marches, it is necessary to make a detour to reach the animals in order to prevent grazing in the open where the condition is deplorable.

The section from Archer's Post to Males Galla (8 days) has also been traversed; and the use of ox-wagons is more easily obtained on this route, but tsetse-fly is very prevalent.

Both these sections, moreover, are used as stock routes for the rapidly developing stock trade from Abyssinia, Boran and Jubaland, which has now assumed important dimensions and is of great value to the stock farmers of the settled districts of the Protectorate.

During the past financial year some 9,000 head of cattle and 450 horses and mules were imported over these routes through Rasumpti Station alone, and the necessity of keeping them clean has been repeatedly pointed out by the Chief Veterinary Officer.

Most parts of the Northern Frontier District abound with tsetse fly, and a large majority of the camels have been shown to be suffering from chronic fly disease, the trypanosome of which is reported to be indistinguishable

from that of Surra, a disease which it is very important to avoid introducing into the settled areas; hence it is very desirable to keep the routes, even though the same stock travels, as clear as possible from constantly flying over and camels, which might be capable of infecting the fly.

At the present time there is a great scarcity of camels throughout the whole Northern Frontier District, and the supply is diminishing so rapidly that an "impasse" must soon be reached unless means are found for supplementing them by other forms of transport.

The most practicable substitute would appear to be mechanical vehicles over certain portions of the routes. The Ordnance Agents have for some time past been investigating (under a) several firms for suitable ones, and are now witnessing experiments which are being conducted by the War Office at Alexandria, some of which I am present.

There seems little doubt that motor lorries are obtainable capable of carrying some 2 tons load, which could be advantageously used on at least some sections; and there is every probability that their scope could shortly be much extended.

It would be necessary to roughly improve the track as the first trips were made over it, by taking gangs of natives and the necessary implements, forming camps at difficult places until the track was made passable, when it would probably be but a few weeks before the Archer's Post-Merilla and the Archer's Post-Melka-Gala sections could be regularly utilised, in which case it may be anticipated that the distance would be traversed in considerably less than half the time taken under present conditions. From the accounts of those who have traversed the route from the Lorian to Wajheir, that section is even

now practicable for wheeled transport, and it is therefore very probable that the mechanical vehicles could extend their sphere to that post, which would give an enormous increase in efficiency and capacity of supply for the Frontier.

It is easy yet to suggest that this form of transport should be extended beyond Wajhair, but it is well within the bounds of possibility that such may eventually be the case, at any rate for carrying water for a certain distance on the route towards El Waj and Berak; this largely reducing the number of camels now required for that purpose.

The number of pack animals which could be transported with water, effecting a considerable reduction in the number, and certain small stationary motor-powered guard petrol, other fuel, and water tanks on the routes, would suffice to take their place.

The estimate, assuming to be carried per annum by wheeled transport is as follows:

Section (1). From Wajair to Archer's Post (47 miles) 15 tons. A loaded lorry carrying 15 tons could, on this journey during the dry season in a day and a half, the track being almost entirely down hill, and could return empty in the same time. Two lorries would therefore suffice to handle this section.

Section (2). From Archer's Post to Merille (60 miles) 24 tons. This journey could be accomplished in 2 days, and one lorry carrying 12 tons on each trip could handle the section.

Section (3). From Archer's Post to Melka Gala (about 120 miles) 104 tons. A loaded lorry could probably do this journey in 4 days and return in the same time, and 3 lorries would thus be necessary on this section.

Thus if the whole of the transport were carried on

the above section by motor vehicles, 6 of such vehicles would be required.

It is suggested, however, that 3 lorries might be tried in the first instance, provision being made for the remaining 3 awaiting the result of experience as regards the suitability or otherwise of the type supplied or the advisability of entering into a pattern.

In the meantime this transport would be supplied by 6 or 7 wagons of 2 tons capacity.

As the track improved, the country would be cleared in broader view and the distances on which the lorries could be now probably extended.

The Deputy Chief Inspector Engineer to the Army Agents has now furnished me with a copy of his report to the Colonial Office on the Motor Transport which he considers to be the most suitable for the country which he considers to be the most suitable.

The cost of 6 of these vehicles would be between £3,700 and £4,000, including parts but not including freight.

At least two competent mechanics capable of doing repairs would be required and these I am informed are obtainable at a rate of from £200 to £240 per annum each. In addition, 4 Indian mechanics and 6 trained natives would be necessary. 2 or 3 untrained natives would also be required to accompany each wagon.

The mileage to be run, each wagon when loaded carrying about 2 tons, would be

Meru to Archer's Post, 7 return trips =  $90 \times 7 = 630$  per month.

|                              |   |   |   |                         |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------|
| Archer's Post to Merille,    | 2 | " | " | = $120 \times 2 = 240$  |
| Archer's Post to Melka Gala, | 5 | " | " | = $240 \times 5 = 1200$ |

Total 2070

...the service use 1 gallon of petrol or kerosene fuel to each 7 miles, and allowing a margin for waste, some 350 gallons per month, or 4,200 gallons per annum, would be required.

Taking an estimate from the figures supplied by the Inspector General of 2.5 per gallon for the tax, this would amount to 1050 per annum.

It may, however, be suggested that the cost of fuel for these vehicles is the same as for those of the Uganda Transport, which is estimated at 2,500 per annum for 10 vehicles, or 250 per vehicle.

Have the honor to be  
Yours obedient servant  
A. J. Jones  
Capt  
R.F.D.

9. 3792/1913

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E.A.P.

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E.A.P.

N<sup>o</sup> 924

Mr. Belfield.

15 Nov 1913

Sir,

March 1912

With reference to my  
 despatch, no 910, of the  
 25 of Oct<sup>r</sup> I have  
 the honor to inform you that  
 transmit to you for your  
 conson, the accompanying  
 copy of a letter from  
 Captain [Name] on the  
 subject of the transport  
 [Name] in the Northern  
 Frontier District.

J

Nov 21 1913

Mr. Belfield 15/11/13

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A. 37921/413

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Draft

5 Nov. 1913

Capt. C.A. Reave.

Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28<sup>th</sup> October,

~~re: the~~  
on the <sup>points</sup> subject of the transport problem in the Northern Frontier District of East Africa and to inform you that a copy is being sent to the

General

J

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