

EAST AFR. PROT

103

C.O
10731

23 MAR 14

10431 (~~10431~~)

Foreign Office

1914

20. March.

Next previous Paper.

10615
13.

Abyssinia

Submits question of division of Italian & British spheres of influence in Abyssinia in the event of eventual breakup of the country. Mr. Agard at Cairo is being consulted as to boundary for Sudan Hinterland. Requests Co views as to northward extension of E.A.P. boundary.

Dr. G. Fuller

The partition of Abyssinia seems to depress the Italians, but, altho' the Abyssinians may fight among themselves, everything seems to point to their combining against foreign intruders & they will be a very hard nut to crack for a long time to come.

We scarcely want the incidence our commitments in the desert country in the north of the E.A.P., altho' we wd. like some small adjustments of the frontier so as to make it easier to patrol. End copy of the lst sent to the f^o for his advice - & if the

Recd copy 31 March 14
Pls send to Mr. P.A.P. conon secret 31 March 14

Next subsequent Paper.

7071874/114
secret

the 20 that we are consulting the firm
the firm will probably have had an
opportunity of talking matters over
with Mr. Thompson before he receives
our reply.

H. J. R.
26/3/14

(This letter
better be
kept secret
for the present)
H. J. R.

and I wd at once give to
you a lead that he can compare his
own idea of a question of the best frontier
for the purpose mentioned by Mr. Reed.
We don't want anything more.

Pr. 26.3.14

I agree.

27.3.14

So do I entirely

27.3.14

The good points were:

we have no wind hunger - but we
forget all about the 20 brother
of a person in contains a wonderful
country in which you can grow
crops of everything every year.

H. 27.3.14

Including
regis'ter
H. J. R.

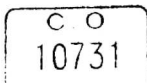
If any further communication
in the subject please quote

No. 10046/14.

and address
The Under Secretary of State
Foreign Office,
London.

FOREIGN OFFICE

March 20th, 1914.

Confidential.
Sir:-

23 MAR 14

I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to inform you that a discussion has for some time been proceeding with the Italian Government as to the interpretation of the Tripartite Agreement of 1906 with regard to Abyssinia, in the event of the eventual breakup of that country. The discussion has hitherto been confined to the question of the future ownership of the Lake Tsana district and the control of the Abyssinian affluents of the Nile, but it will be seen from the despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome, copy of which is enclosed herewith, that the Italian Colonial Minister has suggested that the division of the Italian and British spheres in the south of Abyssinia should also be discussed.

Sir E. Grey is consulting His Majesty's Agent at Cairo with regard to the most advantageous boundary for the Sudan Hinterland, and he would be glad to receive

Mr.

Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office.

(10046/14)

195

Mr. Secretary Harcourt's observations as to the possibility of a northward extension of the boundary of the British East Africa Protectorate, should the partition of Abyssinia eventually become unavoidable.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble Servant,

Eyre A. Lowe

77.
0046).

C. O. R. O M E.
10731

106

2nd March, 1914.

Sir:-

23 MAR 14

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 36 of the 4th ultimo enclosing two memoranda dealing with the question of Lake Tsana. I had, pending the receipt of a reply to my despatch No. 11 Africa of the 22nd of December last, abstained from seeing Signor Agnesa again. But I had at our first meeting suggested that he should let me see the reports from Signor Fansa of conversations with Lord Lansdowne to which he had referred, in support of the contention that a claim on our part to the eventual territorial possession of Lake Tsana, in the event of a break-up of the Abyssinian Empire, had surprised the Italian Government. To-day I reminded him that he had not yet shown me any such documents and asked him if he had prepared any papers for me. Signor Agnesa is now at the Ministry of the Colonies. He said that these documents were at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and he had to obtain the Minister's authorization.

Honourable
 Grey Bart., K.G., M.P.
 &c., &c., &c.

authorisation. He would do so, and he quite agreed that it would best serve our purpose to show one another without reserve all the evidence on which our respective standpoints were based. In the meantime we did not carry the discussion further, but Signor Agnosa observed that he thought, when we were dealing with this particular matter, it might be of advantage to examine the whole question of an eventual definition of spheres not only in the neighbourhood of Lake Tsana but to the south of Abyssinia also.

This suggestion of his prompts me to invite your attention once more to Lord Kitchener's despatch No. 12 Africa of May 29th, 1913, copy of which was forwarded to me in your despatch No. 22 Africa of December 5th last, for my guidance. A glance at the map which accompanied Lord Kitchener's despatch shows that in addition to the large area of what is now Abyssinia towards the west and the Nile basin, which he has marked out as the Hinterland of the Anglo-Egyptian Soudan, a still larger area is earmarked as the Hinterland of British East Africa, and, while a narrow strip is described as the "Italian right of way", all idea of

territorial

territorial connection between Erythrea and Italian Somaliland is dismissed, the Italian Hinterland in the south being restricted to the upper reaches of the Weble Shobeli and the country of the Ogaden Somalis.

I do not know how far the views here put forward by Lord Kitchener regarding a practical partition of Abyssinia, should such a process become necessary, would be endorsed by your Department and the Colonial Office, but the fact that I have been instructed to bear his views in mind might point in that direction. I do not feel at present that it would be very opportune for me to let it be suspected here that such a large portion of Abyssinia was regarded as being in our reverentary sphere. There is at present a chauvinist tendency in this country which leads public opinion to look upon nearly the whole of Abyssinia as an area of Italian irredentism, and the subject must evidently be approached with caution. In any case, were it for a moment supposed that we contemplated converting into a mere privilege of right of way across eventual British territory, our engagement, for such it is held to be, to co-operate in the realisation of the Italian

aim of territorial continuity between Erythrea and Italian Somaliland, I have no doubt whatever that a storm of the first magnitude would immediately be raised.

I may mention in conclusion that I have a note of Sir John Harrington's to the effect that, in his opinion, the territory most essential to secure, from the point of view of the Anglo-Egyptian Soudan, was that to the west of the Didesa River which joins the Blue Nile above Fazokel, and of a line from its head-waters to those of the River Orno or Gibr following the course of the latter to Lake Rudolph. This is of course only a small portion of the area which Lord Kitchener has marked as Hinterland of the Soudan. There would I am sure be no difficulty with the Italians as regards this particular area.

I have &c.

(Signed) Rennell Rodd.

10731/1914.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Downing Street,

1914.

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Harcourt to acknowledge the receipt of your letter (No. 10046/14) of the 20th of March, 1914, with its enclosure on the subject of the division of the Italian and British spheres in the south of Abyssinia, in the event of the disruption of that country.

2. I am to request you to inform Secretary Sir Edward Grey that a copy of the Foreign Office letter with its enclosure has been sent to the Governor of the East Africa Protectorate who has been asked to furnish his views on the question.

3. A further communication will be sent when his reply is received.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

F.O. / 10731 / E.A.P.

C.D.
R. 31 MAR.
D. 51

113 11 Mad 1914

SR

(13855 / 10)

Ans. G.M. 18 Feb 14

DRAFT.

Q.P. Secret.

Gen. Sir H.C. Balfour & Co.

MINUTE.

- Mr. Downes 30.3.14
- Mr. Bottomley 30.2.14
- Mr. Read 30
- Sir G. Fildes
- Sir H. Just.
- Sir J. Anderson.
- Lord Emmott.
- Mr. Harcourt.

for conser

From F.O. 20 March 14
10731

11? SEP here in
view of the S. of S.
minutes
24/10
G.M.

Sr.

With ref to my recent despatch of the 22nd of May 1914 I have the pleasure to inform you for your conser the accompy copy of a letter with its inclosures received from the F.O. on the subject of possible modifications of the Northern Frontier of the E.A.P. in the event of the disruption of Abyssinia.

I should be glad to receive any objections which you may have to ~~make~~ ^{offer} ~~with~~ ^{offer} re on this subject. ~~If~~ ^{but} I would suggest that the interests of the E.A.P. would be satisfied by certain small adjustments of the frontier which would make the boundary easier to patrol.

F.O. 1074/1944

52

Confidential

21 March 1944

Sir,

I am etc to ackn. the a/ct. of your letter N^o 10046/14 of the 20th of March 1944, with its enclosure on the subject of the division of the Italian and British spheres of influence in the south of Abyssinia, in the event of the disruption of that country.

I am to request you to inform Sec. Sir P. Gray, that a copy of the F.O. letter with its enclosure has been sent to the Secy of the I.A.P. who has been asked to furnish his views on the question.

A further commⁿ will be sent, when his reply is received.

draft

to US of S

F.O.

Downie 30.3.44

Robtson by

M. 30/3
JG

24/6