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Previous Paper

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TANA RIVER VALLEY

Reports on journey made from the mouth of the river at Kipini to Kinakombe. States as to application of Demerara Company for a grant of land for sugar growing. Arrangements have been made for an annual meeting of the chiefs of all the Somali clans of the Ogaden tribes and of the Merehan at Wismayu to discuss grievances. Thinks this will lead to more effective government.

Sir G. Fiddes

Most of the places mentioned are marked on the accompanying map. The photos^x in Mr. Ross's report at the bottom of the bundle give a very good idea of the country.

Ack: say that Mr. Harcourt has read with interest + trust that it will be found feasible to develop the important dist^{in the near} future? ~~stagnant~~

x want looking at.

H. J. R.

Mr. 20

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They are very beautiful.

H. J. R.

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as proposed

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Subsequent Paper

C O
8077GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
BRITISH EAST AFRICAEAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

February 19th 1912.

CONFIDENTIAL (16)

Sir,

I have the honour to report that I recently had an opportunity of inspecting the Tana River Valley from its mouth at Kipini to Kinakombe, a distance of about 160 miles.

2. Proceeding from Mombasa on the 16th of January by the kindness of Commander Evans, R.N., in H.M.S. "Pandora", I reached Kipini the next morning. There is no harbour at the mouth of the river, which is obstructed by a bar, over which there is a narrow channel having only about 3 feet of water on it at low tide. Small launches and steamers, drawing from 7 to 8 feet of water, can go inside the bar at high tide and find safe anchorage in fairly deep water. The port, such as it is, cannot be used at all when the South West monsoon is blowing.

3. From Kipini the main Tana River is reached by means of the River Ozi and the Belazoni Canal, a narrow winding stream somewhat obstructed by snags and sand banks. As far as Kau the river runs through mangrove swamps. The effect of the tide is felt as far as this point. On the island formed between the old bed of the Tana River

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

which

LEWIS HARCOURT, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.

which is now merely a tidal back-water - and the River Ozi is situated the large grant of 10,000 acres to the East Africa Cotton Company, a London Corporation whose local Manager is Mr. T.A. Rule. I remained a night on the estate and had an opportunity of inspecting its condition.

4. Formerly when the River Tana was in flood, which may happen twice annually, the whole of this land became for the period a swamp covered in places with some 2 or 3 feet of water. Prior to any development it became necessary for the Company to control the flood waters by means of embankments. Many miles of such work have been executed, and over 2 or 3 thousand acres can now be thoroughly controlled. Substantial bungalows have been erected, and four Europeans are employed on the estate. This season about 1,000 acres are under cultivation, of which 4 to 5 hundred acres are under rubber, varying in age from 4 years to 6 months. The rubber appears to be doing very well, the largest tree on the plantation having a girth of over 30 inches. The remainder of the cultivated area is under cotton of various kinds. Though a powerful pump has been installed for irrigation purposes, the Company have so far attempted to rely upon the rainfall annually for growing cotton. This season's crop has not been entirely successful owing to lack of rain. There is little doubt that with irrigation cotton can be successfully grown. The varieties which appear to have succeeded best are Nyasaland and Upland American

American; the Egyptian cottons have not done well. I walked over the estate for many miles and consider it to be the most advanced of any of the Coast properties I have seen to date. Its existing condition is highly creditable to the present management.

5. The only other European plantation on the Tana River is a small rubber plot of 70 acres adjoining the East Africa Cotton estate. It is being developed by Mr. Watcham and is fully planted up with rubber. The land has been acquired from Arabs, and I should say that the title might prove to be a doubtful one. The Coast Land Settlement Ordinance has not been applied to this district as yet.

6. An application has been recently made on behalf of the Demerara Company for a grant of land on the Tana River for the purpose of growing sugar. There is undoubtedly a large area of land suitable for this purpose now practically lying fallow owing to the freshets on the Tana converting it into swamp from time to time. This land lies mainly North of the Belazoni Canal opposite the property of the East Africa Cotton Company. I understand that the Demerara Company intends to send a qualified man to inspect the Tana, and it would in my opinion be of advantage to the country if this important and wealthy Sugar Company could be induced to take up the cultivation of sugar on the Tana River.

7. Leaving the Belazoni Canal, the main Tana River is entered, and from that point as far as Golbanti there are large areas of land similar in character to those previously described on either side of the river. This place was formerly the site of a Methodist Mission, which has now been abandoned for some years.

8. The only other Mission body carrying on work on the Tana River is the Neukirchen German Pokomo Mission, which has its principal European Station at Ngao, another at Kulasa, and a third at Makere. The latter has been abandoned for the moment as it is said to be very unhealthy. The Pokomo people, amongst whom this mission is working, are a river^{bank} tribe, scattered in very small villages from Golbanti to the first rapids on the river which occur at Hameye. Their villages are mainly situated on the west bank for reasons of safety as they were subject to raids on the part of the Somalis in the past. They are a quiet peaceful race, numbering only a few thousands, and occupy very little of the total area of land available in the valley. Most of their cultivation is to be found quite close to the river bank and depends more and more, as one goes further up the river, upon the annual flood as the rainfall is quite insufficient for cultivation.

9. The valley lands of the Tana, i.e. those which might be suitable for cultivation, vary in width from 1 to 5 miles over the area I inspected. Many hundreds of thousands of acres of land suited

to irrigation are lying fallow. The Pokomo possess very little stock, and the presence of the tsetse fly probably accounts for this.

10. Behind the Pokomo, and outside the valley lands, are to be found the Galla tribes, a pastoral people formerly numerous but now reduced to comparatively unimportant numbers. Their present condition is attributed largely to former Somali raids, and a large portion of the country now occupied by the Somalis between the Tana and Juba Rivers is said to have once been in possession of this people. They are of a peaceful disposition and cause no difficulties in administration.

11. To return to the work of the German Mission, it would not appear that they have been able to effect very much in the 15 years they have been in the district. They have suffered very greatly from diseases, mainly fever, and lost a considerable number of missionaries, both male and female.

12. The country between Mvina and Kinakombe - the farthest point which I reached - appears to be more fertile than the area from Ngao to the former place. In this locality one comes in contact with the bush-hunting tribe, the Boni, who are also to be found on the Juba River. Their habits and characteristics are very similar to those of the Dorobo of the Highlands. They live entirely by hunting, and are, I think, largely responsible for the killing of elephants which are still however fairly numerous in the Tana valley. My visit

coincided

coincided with the migration of these animals into the river valley; and on all occasions where fresh tracks were noted the Boni were in evidence with freshly poisoned arrows; a few are probably in possession of firearms. In order to protect the elephant it may be necessary to confine these hunters to a particular district and not allow them to wander throughout the valley. Their numbers cannot be more than a few hundred.

13. I could not spare the time to reach the Government station established on the Tana at Sankuri (Gunyat on the provisional map of the East Africa Protectorate). This station was established some two years ago partly to control the riverian tribes, but more particularly the Somalis, in their annual visits to the valley, which take place when there is drought in the interior. The position chosen for this station is not entirely suitable one, and it is about to be removed to Bura. The Somali tribes who visit the river are the Abdulla, Rer Mahomed and the Abd Wak (The wet season area which these people occupy is situated mainly in Biskaya to the north-west of Port Durnford). The principal men of the two latter clans came in to see me at Kinakombe; Hassan Othman, the chief of the Abdulla, evidently avoided an interview. The permission granted to these Somali clans to come on the Tana is restricted to the area between a point near Bura and Sankuri. This country was unoccupied and its use by the Somalis is conditional on their good behaviour. Their periodical visits to this
part

part of the country form a useful factor in the administration of the Southern Somalis and they are quite aware of it, as any refusal to obey orders on their part could be readily suppressed with a few troops. In this connection Hassan Osman has been informed that unless he explains his absence it may lead to a refusal on the part of Government to allow of his coming on the river next December. He has now however, I understand, come in and apologized to the Provincial Commissioner at Lamau.

14. The chiefs who came to see me were, as is usual with Somalis, of a fairly high degree of intelligence and apparently desired to keep up the good relations existing between themselves and the Government. The Abdulla have had a blood feud with another large section of the Somalis, the Mahomed Zubeir, for over two years, and complain of that clan. I later saw the head of the Mahomed Zubeir in Kipini, who in his turn placed all blame upon the Abdulla: in fact in all Somali questions the clans usually complain of one another, and as these complaints come in at one time of the year to officers in Jubaland and at another time in Tanaland, it is extremely difficult to ascertain the real truth in any of them. The chiefs I saw said that their main difficulty was the lawlessness of the younger men of their clans. I suggested that the only way by which Government could become cognizant of difficulties and meet any desire

on their part for arbitration would be the establishment of an annual meeting, to take place at a definite point, where the chiefs of all the Somali clans of the Ogaden tribes would assemble. These clans are, in the Juba valley, the Aulihan, Herti, and Mahomed Zubeir, in the Tana valley - the Abdulla, Rer Mahomed, Abd Wak, and Magabul. (The Merehan, to whom I have frequently referred in former despatches are not connected with these people). At this annual meeting both the Provincial Commissioner, Tanaland, and the Provincial Commissioner, Jubaland, would be present, thus preventing any playing off of one officer against another, and if necessary the officer about to be stationed in the Merehan country could also attend in order to hear of any difficulties between that people and the Aulihan, who are their neighbours to the South. All the chiefs welcomed the suggestion, and I believe there was a certain amount of sincerity in their action as they all suggested Kismayu as their meeting place. Had they wished to be obstructive I think some would have suggested Lamu as being a nearer centre and removed from the country of their enemies, the Abdulla and Mahomed Zubeir. I afterwards put the same question to the chiefs of the Mahomed Zubeir and of the Abdulla when I met them at Kipini and have had an opportunity of discussing the matter with Captain Salkeld who is about to resume control of the Jubaland Province. All agree that such annual meetings

meetings might lead to the establishment of more effective Government amongst the Ogaden Somalis, to which section all the clans mentioned, excepting the Merehan, belong.

15. The position today with regard to the Ogaden Somalis is fairly satisfactory, and officers could, I think, without any escort, visit any portion of the country they occupy, excepting on the Northern boundary which roughly runs from Serenli through Wajheir to the Lorian swamp and the Tana River. Here, where they are in contact with the Merehan, Garre, and Boran, the position is not so clear; but it will undoubtedly improve with the further administration of the Northern Frontier.

16. I was glad to note that the principal chiefs, to whom staves of office had been issued by Government, invariably carried them.

17. The River Tana is navigable as far as Hameye for a considerable period of the year. It is a larger river, and appears to carry a much greater volume of water, than the Juba. On that river the native canoes in use were not very numerous, nor of any great size, whereas on the Ozi and Tana many thousands of fairly large native canoes are in use. The course of the river is very tortuous throughout and much obstructed by snags, many of which however could be easily removed. The habit of the natives of dropping trees into the river when clearing ground for cultivation has largely contributed to these impediments

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impediments in navigation. Steps are being taken to prevent the formation of this form of obstruction.

18. As a whole the Tana River impresses me almost as favourably as the Juba. That it is unhealthy is undoubted, and the swarms of mosquitoes which appear from sun-down to sunrise are a very uncomfortable feature of existence, which will only be mitigated when the annual flooding of the valley is restricted. The rain fall in the Tana River valley is considerably heavier than on the Juba. For instance at Kismayu, at the mouth of the Juba, the rainfall is from 18 to 20 inches; at Lamu it is probably 50 inches. At Makere, over 100 miles up the Tana River and the only point at which meteorological observations have been taken, a fall of 15 to 20 inches has been recorded.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,


GOVERNOR.

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MINUTE

- Mr. Bennett $\frac{27}{3}$
- Mr. Read 27
- Sir G. Fiddes
- Sir H. Just.
- Sir J. Anderson.
- Lord Emmott.
- Mr. Harcourt.

Sir,

I have to ask the receipt of Mr. P. Gouraud's cable dated No. 16 of the 19th in which he gives a ~~report~~ ^{report} of your journey, an account of his visit to the Tana River Valley.

I have read the ~~report~~ ^{report} with much interest & trust that it will be possible to develop this important district in the near future.

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