

EAST AFR. PROT.
 NYASALAND PROT.
 No. 1381 + 09

C O
 1384
 12 Dec 09

Division No.
 572

(Subject.)

1908

Labour Supply.

7 Dec

Last previous Paper

Legislation in lines suggested is being introduced & resolutions have been passed by various labour boards in favour of settling matters their own arrangements for obtaining labour. Consideration of introduction of Bill has to be deferred for as no opinion with respect to it is indicated before now there is preliminary arrangements are being forwarded with further news to be included.

(Minutes.)

Mr. [unclear]

The general view seems to be that the Nyasaland labour will not pay transport at the rates 1/4 for the periods suggested. However arrangements are being made which will allow it to be refunded if it is required.

In the meantime labourers are coming forward at Malindi in sufficient numbers. See extracts from the despatch to Mr. Hardy, & appended schedule.

Hardy

M 21/1

M

4/10/962

Subsequent Paper

1381
594

Governor's Office,

Natal

December 9th 1906.

THE HON. MR. STUART,

1906

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th of August last, in relation to the proposed amendment in the Bill proposed to be introduced in the lines indicated in the paragraphs of the letter of the 19th of August last, in which you have stated that several of the Unions in Natal have themselves passed resolutions in favour of the Bill, and in consequence of the arrangements to procure labour as against the Bill, the Government.

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For Legat
1906-8-20
and enclosure
N. Association
19-08.

H. M. Principal Secretary of State
for the Colonies,
Downing Street,
London, S.W.

is noted in this office in connection of the 5th District. 50

5. Finally, from the opinions I have received so far the scheme promises to prove profitable, especially if the period of payment is limited to one year, and the charges for ~~insurance~~ are included in the penses to be spread over a short period. It is to be noted that I have asked the press to inquire whether the details I have asked for, from the agents, are correct.

6. In the event of a successful communication under the above scheme in the future,

7. I am connected with the scheme of the tented labour and the payment of the wages, awarded for the introduction of the scheme, by the planters themselves. I am, therefore, not prepared, therefore, expect the scheme of the tented to be favourably received in the future. I have seen the necessity for tented labour cannot be denied.

8. It is instructive to note that the tented labour is being introduced from the pickling of the cotton crop, and I am, therefore, I undertake to see that the tented labour is not only to be not to be introduced when the pickling commenced it is to be introduced in a way, while on the spot, I have been informed that the tented labour has been introduced in the tented areas, attracted by the promise of a high wage there; and the evidence I have quoted above that the supply is increasing.

9. The operation of the tented labour has to be a question of the supply of the tented labour to the tented areas, and the evidence I have quoted above that the supply is increasing.

work will keep up with the increasing development on the plantations, and supply the demand. I have no doubt that it will meet the demand to a far larger extent than was thought possible eight months ago. In the meanwhile we shall proceed with the preliminary arrangements in connection with indentured labour from Nyasaland, so that when the necessity arises, and the planters are agreeable to the terms, we shall have this supply to fall back upon. 16. I am proceeding to Malindi this week and shall have the farther opportunity of looking into labour conditions there.

I have the honour to be,

With the highest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

humble servant,



(In the presence of H.E. the Governor)

ENCLOSURE No 1

In Despatch No. 271 of 11/9, 1908

1384

Mombasa,

September 20th 1908.

Dear Sir James,

Sir Ralph Moor has written me the broad facts of a suggestion from Sir Alfred Sharpe to the Colonial Office to effect that British East Africa planters labour requirements should be met by engagement of Nyasa-land boys on 18 months terms, 15 shillings per month pay and that Colonial Office is favourably considering it.

Sir Alfred's view is that this country could provide an outlet for his surplus agricultural population and enable later to earn money to pay their Hut tax.

I attach herewith my reply. It seems to me that British East Africa cannot afford to contribute to Nyasa-land revenue !

Yours etc.

Sd/- E.H. LEGGETT

Sir JAMES HAYES GARDNER, K.C.M.G., C.B.

M O M B A S A

London
September 20th 1904

Dear Sir,

Your letter has been written in the most

kind of a suggestion from Sir Alfred Duggan to the

Colonial Office to effect that British West African

labor requirements should be met by engagement of women

and that Colonial Office is favorably considering it.

My attitude's view is that this country could provide

an outlet for his surplus agricultural production and

could take to some extent to pay their tax.

I shall copy to my wife. It seems to me that

British West Africa cannot afford to continue to have

any more

Yours etc.

J. H. B. [Signature]

Sir James Hayes Esq., O.M.B., U.S.

London

footing the proposed 12 monthly engagement rate of Rs.11/25 for Nyassa natives is equivalent to Rs.15/- per month for long indenture considered as continuous labour for plantation and industrial purposes.

6. The produce of British East Africa must compete in the world's markets with corresponding products of Ceylon, Malay States, &c. where wages are round about Rs.6/-. Some increase of wage over the rates ruling in those countries is workable, and is of course fair to the labourer coming long distances over the sea, but a wage rate 250% that of corresponding planting countries must put East Africa out of the running altogether, and permanently lower the value of this country as an Imperial asset.

7. African labour rates in German East Africa, and still more so in Portuguese East Africa, are very considerably lower than the rate suggested for the Nyassaland indenture, and yet planters in those countries have not to pay heavy transport expenses in obtaining their labour and repatriating it.

8. My concluding objection is that the proposed rate would permanently raise the local rates for local labour here. One African is the same as another to all intents and purposes, and the local man will certainly not work for less than his imported brother.

The local rate here is Rs.10/4 with rations of Rs.12/- without rations. This represents an increase on rates ruling two years ago. I am not one of those who believe in unchangeable rates, and I think the present rates are fair, but that an increase upon them is undesirable. As you know, the more you pay the African, generally speaking, the shorter time will he work, since his object is to make

a certain sum, and he does not as a rule care for money for its own sake sufficiently to want to go on making more. The result is an absence of continuity, which, combined with a certain unreliability, makes the African a poor employee as compared with the Oriental.

The rates mentioned above for local labour are those of the coast. I am not speaking of the uplands, where the local rates are lower.

I think I may say with certainty that the idea of Planters here is that about 50% of their labour force should be men under long indenture, and that this percentage should be men of intelligence and reliability. For the balance of the labour force planters &c., would rely upon local labour. If the imported indentured labour is to be African, there is danger of the whole system falling to the ground, since the 30% would be neither continuous nor reliable, and would further result in levelling up the wages of the 60% locally recruited.

The arguments set out above are the result of about 10 years watching of this question in South Africa, including Portuguese East Africa, and I trust I am not biased against the African. I like him as a man, and believe that a great deal can be done with him, but the 50% "backbone" of the labour force necessary to a plantation or an industry cannot I fear be found in Africa, at least not among the East coast tribes.

Sd/- R.H. LEGGITT,
General Manager.

COPY.

Colonists' Association, No. 11, Dec 9,

Colonists' Association, 601

Nairobi,

December 3rd 1908,

To

H.E. the Governor,
Nairobi.

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 20th ultimo informing the Committee of this Association that it is proposed by the Government to approach the Government of Nyasaland with a view to importing labourers from that Protectorate to meet the requirements of the Planting District.

2. At a full meeting of the Committee of this Association the subject was carefully discussed for several hours and the conclusions arrived at were as follows:-

That in the opinion of this Committee the principle of introducing foreign unskilled labour is a grave error, and considering the enormous native population of this country, every means should be exhausted to solve the question of inducing the natives to work before looking elsewhere.

If this were done (and this Committee wishes respectfully to register its opinion that it is convinced that all the means at the disposal of the Government have not yet been exhausted) it appears to them that ample labour should be forthcoming for all purposes whether at the coast or in the Highlands, both now and in the future.

At the same time this Committee ventures to point out that by importing labourers into a country to do the work which properly belongs to its own indigenous population, it is losing sight of the bounden duty of civilization to do all in its power to raise the status of those over whom it has control; and that the first step in advancement is to learn to labour.

Again in respect to the rate of wages proposed to be given

and

and also the quality of these Nyasaland natives themselves, the Committee has interviewed a gentleman of long residence in Nyasaland now staying in Nairobi, who explicitly states that the labour itself is very little if any better than our local raw labour nor any better fitted to withstand the variations of the climate.

As there would be no advantage in quality the rate of wages suggested is, he considers, unnecessarily generous and that ten shillings per month would not only be ample remuneration for that class of labour but also that amount would be a sufficient inducement to those natives to leave Nyasaland where employment is greatly sought for by the natives and the current rate of wage is only five shillings. Besides the importation of raw labour at a high wage would tend to increase the price of local labour, which settlers are not yet in a position to afford, not to mention the additional expenses of importation and repatriation yearly.

Whilst heartily agreeing with the suggested term of contract, this Committee would point out that if such a ~~form~~ were encouraged by the Government and ~~more~~ especially adopted by the various Departments requiring labour, it is considered that much would be done to help towards the solution of the question in that prolonged residence under white supervision tends to educate the natives and increase their wants, besides bringing about a better mutual understanding.

In conclusion my Committee wishes to tender its sincere thanks to Your Excellency for the time and trouble you have given to the subject, and trust that you will see your way to advise the Government to further careful consideration of the wants of our own natives before adopting such a drastic measure as that proposed.

I have, etc., etc.

S/- STONEY C. FICAL.

Secretary.