

DOMESTIC.

EAST AFR. PROT.

32872

N^o 32872REC'D
P. 4 8 SEP 08

Name or Individual

(Subject)

Subject of

1908

Sept

Previous Paper

6670

Trade on River Juba

Call attention to high Customs duties charged by E. A. P. & to necessity for his establishing a suitably protected store at Sereuli. Copy to be from the Queen on the prospects of trade.

(Minutes)

Mr. Antrobus I have seen Mr. Keblett & he tells me that all he wants at present is:

1. An assurance that the Customs duties in Juba land will be assimilated to those in force in the neighbouring Italian sphere. This assurance I think we can give, in view of the Gov's debt 24865/08 in hand.
2. Leave to establish a trading station at Sereuli opposite Bardera. This also I think we

2 Oct. 1908
 Mr. Keblett
 Mr. Antrobus

2 Oct. 1908
 Mr. Keblett
 Mr. Antrobus

be and indeed ought to be granted
in view (a) of the fact that
London - Mr. Nicholls's predecessors
in title were granted such a permission
no 16374/04; on which permission
I think that Mr. N. might have pro-
ceeded without further reference
(b) of the fact that similar
permission has been granted
to the Bona Trading Co. since bond
in 16201/08; & it has been laid
down that this permission in-
cludes no monopoly.

Mr. N. should be told that the Govt
cannot guarantee the result of
the action & that the case for
will be at his own risk.

1894
M. 23/9

M. Sept 26
at once

10, Fenchurch Avenue,
London. E.C.

7th. September 1908.

The Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office,
S.W.

32874

Sir,

I thank you for granting me an interview with
Mr. Road with whom I and my manager in the Juba, R.M. Irwin,
had a most interesting conversation last Thursday.

I now wish to recall to your notice my letter
of ^{10th} ~~10th~~ in which reference was made especially to
the high duties charged by the B.R.A. Government on all goods
and to the necessity of my establishing a trading station
at Sereuli. This place is opposite Bardera, the highest
point to which my steamer can run and, as I think I can
prove to you, it is essential that not only trading stores,
but a custom house must be established there if the trade
from the Moran - which is wholly on the British side of the
Juba is to be prevented from going almost entirely into
Italian hands.

Affairs have moved rapidly on the Juba within the
last twelve months. Much land has been taken up on both

Original signed by [unclear] 10-11

banks of the river for cotton growing and I cannot give you the news better than by enclosing a letter Mr. Irwin has written me to circulate among my friends.

My steamers are now carrying a quantity of wireless telegraphy apparatus for the Italian Government, agricultural machinery for cotton growers and by mail in yesterday I hear that they are taking up the Roma Company's caravan to Bardera. A great many Italians are going out this autumn and winter and no doubt my vessels will have plenty of work.

At the end of last May I was invited to Rome to meet some gentlemen interested in the Juba and made a very satisfactory arrangement with them for a share in the navigation of the river between Sobwen and Bardera. They spoke as if they had the instructions of the Italian Government and were of a class that rendered any suspicion of their good faith untenable. However, months went by and they did not come to London to ratify their agreement as promised, nor did they communicate with me in any way. On the 29th. of last month I received from my solicitor in Rome a cutting from an Italian newspaper stating that a company was being established there for the navigation of the Juba. The only reason I can see for their volte-face is that they have discovered what has been patent to me throughout, viz., that the owners of the steamers will command the trade from the Roma that has hitherto gone by caravan to the Benadir parts.

I must apologise for this long preface but it is necessary to give it you to explain the hardships we on the British side encounter compared to the Italians. As an example I give you an extract from a letter dated 10th. Aug. 1908 from W. J. Pendleton, my engineer and acting manager during Irwin's visit to London. He writes in respect of two new propellers I sent out to replace damaged ones -

"I went off to the 'Juba' s.s. and found they had one case labeled 'cast iron' goods, which I think must be the propellers and on getting back to the shore I filled up the declaration form as one case of machinery but it was no good. The local custom house superintendent and the Auditor who was in the office at the time said it was only agricultural machinery and machinery for construction of railways that was free of duty, all machinery for the steamers and paints for the same must pay duty. He said I could pay under protest, but if I wanted the goods I must pay him before he could let them come out of the Customs."

Had these goods been for the Italian side there would have been no duty to pay in ~~Kismayu~~ at all.

Another example is the trade I do in maize.

This is mostly grown on the English side of the river but a large proportion of it is taken across by the Arab traders to the Italian side - where it goes in free. My people have perhaps an order from the military for maize. A steamer is

sent up the Gocha shore but finds all maize sold to the
Italians. They cross over and ^{cut} ~~bring~~ the grain but have to
pay the Italians 2 rupees ^{per} and 360 lbs. export duty and
on arrival at Sobwen 10% import duty. This grain grown
in British territory.

Should the Italians succeed in their project to
place steamers on the Juba they would not only have the
advantage at the lower end of the Juba but, unless a Custom
House was placed at Sireni there is nothing to prevent
them taking goods up river and sending them into British
territory, obtaining in exchange all the produce, as their
traders would be 10% - 15% better off than ourselves.

Of course I am not yet certain that the Italians
will attempt the navigation but I should say they will.
I am not in the least afraid of them if I have the reasonable
support of the B.E.A. Government. At present all the trade
comes from our own territory and that side of the river
would be quite enough but I cannot compete under existing
conditions.

Requesting your early attention to these two points -
Custom House duties and the right to establish a trading
store suitably protected at Sireni.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

W. G. ...

1 Enclosure.

10, Fenchurch Avenue,

London. E.C.

27th. August 1908.

Gentlemen,

It is difficult to place on paper, in convincing language facts and figures regarding an entirely new country, but after 16 years experience in the new parts of Africa, not to mention experience gained during 20 years in Australia, India and Africa, I can truly say that in no other country have I seen such a chance as at present afforded for the employment of capital.

In 1906 I was sent out by Mr. George Herbitt of A. & W. Herbitt, 10 Fenchurch Avenue, E.C., with two well appointed river steamers and six barges; the idea being, to not only to do the whole of the river "Juba" traffic (on which there were no competitors) but also, to divert and bring down to its natural outlet (the port of "Kiamayu") the whole of the Sudan trade, that heretofore has kept up the Italian coast-port towns of Mogadiscio, Merca and Brava (on the Somali coast, which trade is entirely derived from British territory in the Sudan country.

On my arrival I found considerable difficulty to get permission from Government to go up river but in June 1906 I started carrying what freight was offered on the river and

endeavored to secure more. When I first began to run the steamers on the river, it was some time before I could gain the confidence of the natives as they were very suspicious of the objects of the Company having hitherto only met military expeditions, but I succeeded in my object and they now trade freely and avail themselves of the opportunity of travelling by the steamer.

In November 1907, I was able to send Mr. Nesbitt a cable stating I required no more finance from home, as we were self supporting.

Since then trade has gone on increasing in the carrying line. In this year (1907) a Mr. Carpenetti, an Italian gentleman planted 20 acres in cotton and on account of the phenomenal crop he obtained returned to Italy and formed a Company with £20,000 capital to extend cotton growing operations. On his representation other Italian gentlemen and noblemen became interested and in December of '07 the Marquis Afan de Rivera and Dr. Pennelli arrived to inspect the country, the result being that both of these gentlemen have taken up land and are going out in the end of August this year to grow cotton. Not only that but two other Italian Companies have been formed to take up land and cultivate cotton. In the aggregate 300,000 acres have been applied for on the Italian side of the Juba river and a great portion of this area will be cultivated this year and next.

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2.

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what facilities we had for carrying his produce outwards and his cargo and supplies inwards, I assured him that we were fully capable and also that we would act as his agents. From what he told me I cabled London for permission to come home and lay the position of affairs before my Owner (Mr. Geo. Nesbitt) which permission was granted. I started at once and on my arrival at Kumbasa I met three gentlemen who were on their way to Kiemeys to take up land for cotton growing on the English side. Since I left Kumbasa other gentlemen have gone up, the consequence being that 70,000 acres have been applied for up to June of this year and over 2000 acres planted, all on the English side.

Now as to the land and the possibilities of growing cotton on the "Juba" I can only quote the opinions of two gentlemen who have taken up 10,000 acres of land on the English side and who have planted by hand 70 acres of cotton. Their experience has been gained in Egypt on the Nile Cotton lands and they say "We have on the land lying along the Juba River a Nile Silt with a young Nile 'setting' it and our cotton showing eight inches out of the ground is equal to the best Egyptian plants of the same age."

Now Mr. Carnonatti when he formed his Company, brought out with him some 10 or 15 white employees and two large traction engines, besides other heavy cargo, which had to be transported from the port of Kiemeys, 11 miles up the coast and across the bar at the mouth of the river, 1 1/2 and up

the river six miles. Seeing the importance of this I risked one of our river steamers and brought her round over the bar by sea to Kismayu and came back towing in one of our barges the necessary plant. But it was too dangerous and knowing that the trade was bound to increase and heavy loads had to be carried it was a question of either building a railway or a steamer capable of steaming at sea and also of such light draught that she could cross the bar, so I recommended the latter and that is the reason we are building the new steamer to cope with the trade connecting the ocean with the river steamers and also to do what coasting trade is necessary which is an important item. The Government steamer "Juba" is the only means of coming to or getting from Kismayu and she only runs to Kismayu once per month; she leaves Mombasa on the 1st and arrives at Kismayu on the 4th. she lays there four days and sails on the eighth. But she makes an intermediate trip, to the coast from Mombasa to a town called Lamu in addition. Now Lamu, which is the present terminus of the telegraph line, lies 165 miles down the coast from Kismayu so that if we run our steamer to connect with the steamer Juba, we should have mail and cargo twice monthly instead of once only. Again the Jubaland Province is developing so fast that we shall have even with this steamer all we can do to cope with the traffic in cargo carrying alone, apart from the fact that she will be constantly under charter to both the Italian and British Governments as well as to private parties.

This special steamer has been built so as to easily handle heavy and large lifts such as traction engines and team ploughs and for that reason has an extraordinary large hatch-way and derrick worked by a powerful winch capable of taking in and lifting 7 1/2 tons.

It must however not be supposed for an instant that the Juba carrying traffic, combined with coast trade, is the only object in view, far from this for of the greatest importance is the Soran country trade.

This large country lies on the southern slopes of the Abyssinian mountains, extending far into the plains. The people are pastoral and agricultural. The country is extremely rich and fertile, the main products being hides, skins, ivory, cotton fibre, rubber, coffee, ground nuts and other oil seeds, grain of different kinds, wax, frankincense, myrrh, and gum copal etc. etc.. The valuable part of this produce goes at present by caravans to the Italian seaboard, but this means of transport is too costly for hides, skins, grain etc. From Bardera the caravans take 6 to 8 weeks to reach the Benadir coast ports, whereas by steamer down the Juba river the journey can be done from Bardera in ten days and has been done in five days.

The facilities for obtaining fuel for the steamers are very good. As far as health goes, I consider the climate the most healthy of any place I have been stationed in Africa.

In conclusion I can state that after a very long
experience abroad, I have never come across a sounder money-
making chance and I thoroughly believe anyone taking advan-
tage of this unique opportunity will reap a good harvest.

Yours faithfully,

Wm. H. P. Irwin



N. 32872 S.A.P.

C	D
R	17
D	36

Handwritten notes: 305-11-08

Handwritten: Mr. ...

Mr. ...
 I am so to ask the rect. of your
 letter of the 7th Sept. on the subject
 of the trade on the Juba River, and to
 inform you that he ~~has~~ *has* ~~been~~ *been*
 the ~~very~~ *very* ~~main~~ *main* ~~reason~~ *reason* the
 custom duties in Jubaland to those in ~~the~~ *the*
 Jubaland Specialized.

Handwritten: May 1/11

F. P. 28

Mr. ...

Copy to ...
 B.F. ref.
 1885

As to ad: that the Govt. has no
 objection to your establishing a trading
 station at Sereni; but ~~it~~ *it* ~~is~~ *is* ~~to~~ *to* ~~be~~ *be* ~~under-~~ *under-*
 stood that the Govt. can not guarantee
 the safety of the station, and that the
 enterprise will be at your own risk.

Handwritten: 4/1 493 2 Oct

Handwritten signature: Lamson

(Signed) H. W. JUST.

Handwritten: X-12 32872