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S. Abyssinian Frontiers

Sends copies to H.M. Consul at Adis Ababa & recommends his proposal that in exchange for Maj. Ferguson's line with the wells of Mengaddo H.M. Govt. should agree to return to Abyssinia all Borana and Jabbra at present living on both sides of the line.

M. Fiddel

See minute n. $\frac{m}{39622}$

H. J. R.

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI.

BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

November 29th 1910.

ST AFRICA
Confidential

Sir,

Thesiger to Sir
Grey, Oct. 28th.
Thesiger to
Governor, E.A.P.
Oct. 29th

... that I have ...
a letter from Mr. Thesiger, His Britannic Majesty's
Envoy at Addis Ababa, enclosing a copy of a despatch
which he has addressed to His Majesty's Principal
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs advocating
that in exchange for Major Gwynn's line with the
wells of Mugaddo and Gorai we should agree to return
to the Abyssinians all Borana and Gabbra at present
living on our side of the line.

2. Though a sentimental reluctance may perhaps
be felt to the handing over of these people I feel
bound to support Mr. Thesiger's proposal, as he

states

RIGHT HONOURABLE
LEWIS HARCOURT, P.C., M.P.,

Secretary of State for the Colonies,

DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.

states that it will lead to a final settlement of the whole boundary question and a removal of all the main causes of friction which exist at present.

3. Copies of the correspondence are enclosed for convenience of reference.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,

ACTING GOVERNOR

ENCLOSURE 3011
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BRITISH LEGATION,

Adis Ababa,

29th October 1910.

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Sir,

I have the honour to report that I had a very satisfactory interview yesterday with the Fitaurari regarding the wells on the frontier which we wish to obtain. I took with me Mr. Zaphiro, while he on his side called a Borana chieftain to discuss the matter. They were forced to acknowledge that what I had told them of the want of water on our side was true and also that they had on the highlands countless wells of permanent water, and the Fitaurari promised to name an early date to discuss the question before the council.

He again raised the question of the Borana tribes at Wajeira and other places on our side and put forward Abyssinia's consequent right to an extension of territory. I pointed out however that these tribes had invaded the country of our tribes and that the fact that they returned yearly to their birth place in the highlands for religious ceremonies proved that they laid no claim to Wujeira as Borana country.

On cross examining the Borana chief this was shown to be true and I expect no further difficulty on this point.

With regard to the tribes themselves however it is another matter. We cannot do otherwise than recognise

E. CHEY, BART,
& Co., & Co., & Co.,

recognise them as Abyssinian subjects and if I were authorised to return them with the Gabra, who are subject to the Borana, to Abyssinia I think the frontier question could soon be settled.

I have always claimed the northern line from Burroie to Lake Rudolph with the wells of Mogadde and Gurrail as necessary to the new line and have not met with any great opposition on this point, as in giving them copies of the frontier map I marked the whole of the line in blue pencil so that they should not see we had thought of any alternative frontier.

The importance of this part of the line has been so often pointed out by the Protectorate Government that there is no need to dwell upon it. If it were only a question of expediency I think the gain to us should outweigh any sentimental disinclination to give back the Wajjeira Borana to Abyssinia, but even as a point of justice the Ethiopian Government has a right to expect the return of these members of this tribe as by the first agreement we recognised all Borana as Abyssinian subjects and left the question of those who were then living in British territory for settlement when the final discussion should come on.

I would ask therefore that I may be informed telegraphically whether I may settle the question on these lines: the Abyssinians to give us Major Gwynn's line with the wells of Mogadde and Gorai; while we agree to return to them the Borana and Gabbra living on our side with all their flocks and herds, giving them to understand however that in

future

future we do not oblige ourselves to return refugees.

This I am honestly convinced is not alone the only possible settlement if we are to avoid constant friction, but the only just one by which we can keep faith with the Abyssinians.

I have &c., &c.,

Sd/- W. THESIGER

BRITISH LEGATION,
ADIS ABABA,
29th October 1910.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of my despatch No. 51 to Sir Edward Grey.

In it I have pointed out that the Abyssinians have a just claim to the Borana who were cut off from Abyssinia by Captain Maud's line and that they have a right to expect that we will send them back.

If we do so I feel sure that I can get Major Gwynn's line with the wells of Mugaddo and Gorai.

I do not think we should let any sentimental objections to this course stand in the way of a final settlement which will take away all the main causes of friction on the border between the two countries.

I trust you will support me in this view with the Home Government.

I have &c., &c.,

Sd/- W. THESSIGER

H.E. The Governor,

Nairobi.