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Foreign

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of previous Paper  
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Arms Traffic in Abyssinia

Send copy to Adm. Secy to Embassy  
report by the papers on the traffic  
arms in Abyssinia and other

Mr. Fisher I will state (with  
Put by?

H. J. R.  
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See P. Hopwood

Put by  
J. G.

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Too busy for anything

C. G. I.

In any further communication on this subject, please quote

No. 47063 09

The Under Secretary of State,  
Foreign Office,  
London

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4 JAN 10

The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents  
his compliments to the Under Secretary of State for the  
Colonies and, by direction of the Secretary of State,  
transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office

January 4, 1910.

Reference to previous letter:

Description of Inclosure:

Name and Date:

Subject:

Lord H. Bessy

Adm. Abolition

No. 77

Dec 4

(Similar letter sent to)

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DEC 20 1909

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British Legation

Addis Ababa, December 1909.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you, enclosed, a copy of a dispatch from Mr. Seshiro, British Inspector on the Southern Abyssinian boundary, reporting on the traffic in arms in Arussilane and the Gordan.

From time to time regulations have been issued by the Emperor with the avowed purpose of checking the indiscriminate sale of arms. Last year an edict was promulgated forbidding all persons (except soldiers) who were not bona fide merchants, or traders, to own rifles; any trader who required a rifle for the protection of his person or property was required to have a special registration mark placed upon it, and when he was not travelling, the rifle was to be deposited with the Ethiope of the place he belonged to. This regulation was evaded

Yours truly,  
Another

Another edict, forbidding the use of cartridges in currency, was at first allowed to lapse, but it has been put into force again, and in the neighbourhood of the capital seems to be observed.

The root of the evil has not been touched. The unrestricted importation of arms through Japan, nor forming the subject of negotiations between the British and French Governments, provides a source of revenue for the Emperor and his supporters which their enemies will not allow them to forego.

The Emperor himself, not it is true his promises to the foreign Representatives, has been, at any rate in my time, the chief offender. He gives an order through some merchant for a large consignment of rifles, ostensibly for Government purposes; before even they arrive, the greater part of them is resold to the importer at a profit of one hundred per cent or more, and eventually they are found for sale at the houses of some of the merchants of any importance in Adis Ababa. I am informed that the same thing occurs at other places.

It is reasonable to suppose that the same thing

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has developed this system on his own account. He obtains  
the rifles at a cheap rate, collects a number of men, gives  
them a rifle and a belt of ammunition each, and sends them  
off to the Southern Frontier and Arundell to shoot  
elephants. If they succeed in obtaining a sufficient  
quantity of ivory, the rifles become their own property,  
and many of these rascals of course make an enormous  
profit, frequently to Somalia and others in our territory.

Mr. Carbine refers in his report to the sale of rifles  
on the western frontier, according to information from the  
Governor General of the Sudan, Gallabat seems to be a  
favourite place for the passing of arms across the frontier,  
and I have several times made representations to the  
Government on the subject. With regard to Mr. Duignault's  
proceedings, I have no doubt that Mr. Carbine's reports are  
accurate, as the former has been well known for many years  
as a reliable man in all his transactions in arms.  
Latest information has however led to the belief that  
he has recently established a very large stockpile of arms  
and ammunition at Wadi Tahir in the Sudan, and it is  
likely that he will continue to do so in the future.

I have recently been informed that the Government

ment propose to give the monopoly for the sale of arms and ammunition to one individual, and I have protested against this as a violation of the Emperor's promise that no more monopolies should be given. Such a monopoly in the hands of a single person, who could fix his own profit, would in my opinion tend to a still greater circulation of arms than before. I have proposed that they should give licenses to respectable persons for the sale of arms and ammunition, the licensees being obliged to furnish detailed returns of all sales, and to enter into strict guarantees to supply no arms or ammunition to unauthorized persons.

I have the honour to be, with the highest respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,

(S) Herbert Hervey

Copy.

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4 JAN 10

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British Legation,

Adis Ababa, December 1st 1909.

Sir,

I have the honour to bring to your notice certain facts concerning the sale of rifles by a French merchant to the natives of Ogaden and the natives south of Arussa.

Two and a half years ago the Emperor Menelik bought from France ten thousand Gourdille-Vassils Gras Rifles to be delivered at Jibuti at six dollars each. When these rifles reached Diredawa the Emperor sold the same to Mr Guignone at ten dollars each. Half the number of these rifles found their way to Ogaden and the other half were sent to Adis Ababa.

Those of the Ogaden were sent from Harrar in the following manner; Mr Guignone had at that time a representative south of the bar, and in Arussa land for buying ivory from the Abyssinian hunters, also he was trading in

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skins were waxed. He used to send a great number of soldiers with the goods to his representatives, and each soldier had to carry one new rifle and two belts of cartridges; on their arrival the rifles were taken from them and were sold to the hunters. Then their main object had killed what they wanted, sold them to the natives of the Ogaden. The Ogaden natives again exchanged these rifles for camels and cattle to the tribe of the Afsoh and the Marrihan who inhabit the countries west of Somali as British territory.

Several times these reports reached me and I decided to send three natives to find out if the above report was true. They came back reporting that the European Agents had gone away, but the reports which I had heard were all true.

Two years ago the Marrihan attacked the Somali and bought 30 rifles from the Ogaden; since then they have bought over one thousand of these rifles, and use them against the tribes who have no rifles for hunting and warfare. I have succeeded in confiscating the rifles from the Marrihan which I have taken to the British agents, and having given the rifles back the head of the Marrihan



is selling, I am in a position to prove to you that the rifles are the same which the Emperor sold him at Direkwa.

Lately it was reported to me by an Abyssinian in the service of Mr Guignard, that they employ the same method for sending rifles to the Western frontier, and a certain Frenchman named Servigni, his agent, is selling these rifles at the price of fifty dollars each, to the natives of Beal Changul and others.

Further I have to report that Mr Guignard did not pay the price of these rifles to the Emperor, and it seems that at present he is in Paris for the purpose of bringing another lot of rifles.

I hope that strong steps may be taken as soon as possible in the matter to prevent him from selling rifles to the natives or hunters, otherwise once the Isala population in British territory is armed, we shall have trouble, which will certainly entail a great amount of expenditure to His Majesty's Government.

(Signed) P. G. ...

Inspector