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EAST AFR. PROT

K. A. R.

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1918

15 Oct

as previous pages.

Conscription of Masai tribe

to East Africa with K.A.R.

L. S. Hamsted

This avoids a regrettable setback in our relations with the Masai tribe and in the possibilities of bringing them into a greater condition of general usefulness in the Protectorate. I have shown the papers to Mr. E. Northey.

The mischief seems to have been ^{due} primarily, to Mr. Hamsted, the Officer in Charge, forming his opinion of the attitude likely to be taken by the tribe entirely on the basis of his discussions with the Elders, ^{and that he was not} in touch with the feelings of the Masai themselves. It is probably difficult, if not impossible, to get in touch with the Muraa, who are notoriously not under control by the Elders.

In the second place, when Mr. Hamsted was on leave in South Africa, conscription arrangements were proceeded with, without (apparently) any further attempt to sound the disposition of the tribe, or even of the Elders themselves.

To Mr. Hamsted's conflict - Caro - 15 Jan 1918
He held the position of an Officer in Charge of the Masai tribe.
H.S.H.

See subsequent pages

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19

The unfortunate collision in which women were shot must be regarded as a pure accident, the shooting having been begun by the native soldiers without any order. It is fortunate at all events that the trouble was confined to the Purka section, though you will notice that the Loita were stampeded into G.E.A. from which they have been sent back.

It is a distinct confession of weakness on our part that we had to invite the good offices of Lord Delamere to put an end to this administrative difficulty.

Acknowledge receipt and express regret at the occurrence and say that it points to a greater degree of caution in dealing with the Masai, and the necessity for ensuring, if possible, a closer touch with the feeling of the tribe. [Say that as the necessity for any conscription for military service is now at an end the matter may be regarded as closed.]

[Handwritten notes in a cursive script, partially obscured by a diagonal line.]

[Handwritten notes, possibly a letter or memorandum, written in a cursive script.]

[Handwritten signature or name, possibly 'W. Young' or similar.]

[Handwritten date or reference, possibly 'H. J. R. 18/11/10'.]

[Handwritten date or reference, possibly '18/11/10' or similar.]

It will be best to a local line
between the Northern Reserve and
the Southern Reserve...
The line of route between the two reserves
will be a narrow strip of land...

Sir...
Major...
assured...
it...

100 Kinsangop

ritual purposes...
position seems to be a...
Kinsangop overlooks

When the... agreement... moved the Northern
Masai from the Rift Valley to Laikipia, provision was
made for a road to maintain communications between the
Northern and Southern Reserve, and also for...
to retain control of an area of land on Kinsangop for
ritual purposes. Kinsangop overlooks the Rift Valley
and would not be on the normal line of route between
the two reserves, and you will notice that the stipula-
tion does not provide for communications between the
line of route and the reserve area on Kinsangop. It
must, however, be presumed that this was intended, as
otherwise the reservation of the area would mean nothing.

By 1909 the road between the two reserves,
which was to have been 1/2 mile broad, had been so reduced
that

0/16 - "A"

Extract from letter from Masai A.C. ... dated 14 Sept 1948

MASAI

This is a matter of much interest at the moment, but by the time you get this it will all be over, presumably. The Masai have been specially privileged in some ways - keeping aloof and contributing nothing to the Government or to the war, save cattle for which they were paid. And yet they are a fighting race with their warrior caste of young men. Hemsted, who is probably the best D.C. they have had in the Masai Reserve, was very anxious to make them furnish a quota of recruits for the K.A.R. and Police - and recruiting is none too easy now - and after much discussion the fiat went forth. The pity of it is that Hemsted is away at this critical moment and a man named Weekes in charge of the Reserve; a poor spirited fellow rather and in marked contrast to a really strong and reliable man like Dick, who is D.C. at Ngong at the other end of the Reserve. Troops are up at Narok and other places, and "soldier Dickinson" (than whom no better in the K.A.R.) is in command. So far only the Purko have been defiant; the other sections are quiet, but one cannot prophesy. Colonel Swinton Home, the Acting A.A.C.M.G. is admirable in running it, and it means a deal of work, especially with all the difficulties of transport, abominable country like the Amulangu Forest and all the rest of it, not to mention Delamere and rancorous settlers who see a Masai with bared spear in every bush. The Purko were fools enough to attack the force near Narok; lost 4 killed for their pains as well as wounded and prisoners. To speculate on what lies at the bottom of it all is interesting, but one cannot say anything certainly. The recruiting order was, I suspect, like

the cup of tea in Queen Anne's reign - there must be more behind it than that. The whole position of the Masai is curious, as there are at least three chiefs: Segi in the Ngong district with comparatively little influence; Sendo the brother of old Lenana, who died not so long ago, a man of power; and Legalishu the Government nominee, if one may use that term.

Unfortunately Legalishu is not of the Royal family - and this means just as much to the Masai as our Royal Family to us - though he has wealth; Sendo, if I mistake not, is Lenana's brother and so a Laibon (or Royal) - and Segi too, who was a son of Lenana. When Lenana died, so far as I can tell, they would have had a right from every point of view to accept Sendo's brother as the paramount chief. He -

can give the rights - and at the time of the Masai - one recognised - with whom to talk and -

It is a curious story - and is absolutely true - about Lenana and Sendo. The father was dying (his name I forget) and knew that the end was near. He sent for Sendo the elder and told him to come the next morning when he would hand over to him the iron rod of the Kings and tell him the medicines of the Laibon. But Lenana was crafty and Sendo was lazy; and in the very early morning Lenana went to the dying Chief whose sight was failing and to him were given the iron rod and the medicines; Sendo came later, but that which was done could not be undone.

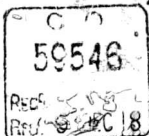
The story is told by Sendo himself and was given to me by the Chaplain, long a friend and resident among the Masai, to whom Sendo told it. I doubt if you will find

elsewhere

elsewhere... closer parallel to the story of
Jacob, ... and in 1908 the movement ...
... to another kind of ... since
... cases under ... if you can trace ...
... agreed ... to be circumscribed ground ...
... I believe I am right when ...
... the move from ...
... the promise of the strip of land to
... traditional circumscribed ground was
... Has not all the intervening
ground been alienated? I think this is so; and when
the war is over, if the Masai keep their word, they
will ask about this: and a difficult question will
be to answer.

And so they have perhaps a ground for
resentment behind it all; but at the same time they
have not taken their share in the war (they alone
East African tribes) they are to a large extent the
spoiled children of the Providence in that they have
been allowed to go entirely their own way, and frankly
it would be good for the African section to have a
lesson. In any event, we could not draw back now
as "prestige" is a word that really means something
among the black races.

15 October, 1918.



Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following report on the circumstances attending the conscription of certain members of the Masai tribe for military service with the King's African Rifles.

2. In former times there was a Masai Company in the IIIrd Battalion of the King's African Rifles which was disbanded in 1907, the presumption being that it was not entirely satisfactory though I am unaware of the exact reason for the decision. However, not a single member of that Battalion had come forward to re-enlist by May 1915 when the Officer-in-Charge of the tribe made a tentative suggestion that it might be worth while to endeavour to obtain a certain number of recruits for military service. The late Colonel Graham was not enthusiastic on the point, partly because he had at the time as many recruits from other sources as he could deal with, and the proposal was not proceeded with.

3. Later, in 1916, an officer of the King's African Rifles was sent to the Reserve to see what could

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WALTER LONG, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET,

LONDON, S.W.

could be done but no volunteers presented themselves and the matter was left until April of this year when Mr. Hemsted again addressed the Government on the subject. I enclose a copy of his letter from which you will observe that the Council of Elders recognized the wisdom of the scheme and that the "muran" or young men were not regarded as being opposed to it. The authorities of the King's African Rifles expressed themselves as willing to accept these men as recruits and discussed the various points of detail with Mr. Hemsted in 1906 when he was passing through Nairobi en route to South Africa. I also took advantage of this opportunity to hear his views and he was of the opinion that the scheme was feasible. His successor, Mr. R. Weeks, also agreed that the effort should be made in view of the inestimable advantage which would accrue to the tribe as a whole by the inculcation of discipline in the minds of some of the younger generation. It was therefore arranged that 250 recruits should be asked for, that they should be located at a training camp at Bukoba on Lake Victoria Nyanza, and that Mr. H. E. Welby, Assistant District Commissioner, who has for the past 34 years been stationed in the Reserve and is well known to the tribe, should be seconded to the King's African Rifles for six months to assist in recruiting and to help the men through the initial stages of their period of training. In short every precaution was taken to avoid creating uneasiness in the minds of the natives and every care to make their career with the King's African Rifles

as congenial as possible.

4. The order was then given and was met by a flat refusal. There had been no sign that the demand would meet with compliance, no indication of any attitude but that of passive acquiescence. Mr. Weeks came to Nairobi to discuss the position and at a meeting held on the 26th of August, when the Acting Chief Secretary, the Assistant Commandant, and Mr. Weeks were present, I issued instructions for a company of King's African Rifles to be despatched to Narok in order that the civil authorities might if necessary be supported in carrying out the procedure for recruitment of natives. The recruitment of natives for military service to be prescribed by Rules made under the Compulsory Service Ordinance 1917. These Rules were dated the 28th of August 1918, and published in Part 729 of the Official Gazette. It was clear to all of us that this attitude of defiance on the part of the tribe could not be tolerated and that any withdrawal or modification of the order would render civil administration impossible.

5. The troops left Nairobi on the 27th of August and it soon became clear that any trouble which might arise would be in connection with the Purko Section numbering about 3000 spearmen. The other sections adopted an attitude of waiting upon events but in no case did it appear that they would show themselves actively hostile. To reassure the European settlers on the farms in the

the vicinity of the boundary of the Reserve, a patrol was sent out by the King's African Rifles and such apprehension as existed was speedily allayed.

6. On the arrival of the King's African Rifles contingent the Purko Section took refuge in the thick Chapalungu forest from whence none but active measures could evict them. As the presence of troops in their midst had not brought the tribe to their senses the Commandant enquired whether he could take active measures, pointing out that delay would only increase the difficulty of the situation and stating that the force in the Reserve was adequate. I had at this time left for Mombasa and when the matter was referred to me I directed that the Officer-in-Charge should be given a free hand both as regards the clearing of the forest and any subsequent action. I considered it imperative that the prestige of the Government should be upheld.

7. On the 11th of September a band of Masai, some 300 in number, attacked the military camp at dawn. The attack lasted only a few minutes, the assailants being driven off with a loss of fourteen killed and, judging from the number of shields left behind, several wounded. The killed were all men who had been the chief instigators of the trouble. No casualties were inflicted on our troops, who returned later in the day to Narok station with a view to the reopening of negotiations.

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6. On the arrival of the King's African Rifles contingent the Purko Section took refuge in the thick Chepalungu Forest from whence none but active measures could extract them. As the presence of troops in their midst had not brought the tribe to their senses the Commandant enquired whether he could take active measures, pointing out that delay would only increase the difficulty of the situation and stating that the force in the Reserve was adequate. I had at this time left for Mombasa and when the matter was referred to me I directed that the Officer-in-Charge should be given a free hand both as regards the clearing of the forest and any subsequent action. I considered it imperative that the prestige of the Government should be upheld.

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8. Two days before, information had been received that a number of "huran" were proposing to sleep that night in their village instead of in the forest and the Officer-in-Charge decided to make an attempt to arrest them. The King's African Rifles proceeded to the spot and after being instructed not to fire unless attacked were posted round the village. The Rifles entered and finding only a few cattle returned to camp. Suddenly a fire was opened and continued for a few minutes. It was a most terrible scene. Two women were killed and some ten or twelve others either killed or maimed. This tragedy which only occurred through a misunderstanding of instructions on the part of the Rifles, was a most regrettable one and it is probably the cause of the attack on the 12th day later. I enclose a copy of two reports from the field dealing with these events.

9. At the same time Lord Delamere has an intimate knowledge of the situation and is valued and trusted by the Government as a mediator, and after fully discussing the matter with the Acting Chief Secretary he proceeded to the Reserve where he is now engaged in negotiating with the rebellious section and in endeavouring to persuade them to adopt a submissive attitude. I have much pleasure in expressing to you my appreciation of Lord Delamere's

Delamere's assistance. No incident of note has occurred since the attack on the camp: the European farms on the border have been left unmolested and, except for the looting of a few shops in the Reserve when the excitement was at its height, no acts of pillage have come to my notice. The trouble has been confined to the Fingo section, pending a settlement between the Government and themselves no action is being taken to conscript individuals from other sections. Several parties of the Fingo Section have crossed into German East Africa, whence they are being returned by the officers of that administration.

Such is the history of this affair. It is of course a most regrettable one but I am convinced that no other course has been possible. Had the tribe shown any indication during the preliminary discussions that they would refuse to obey it would have been easy to postpone all consideration; on the contrary they led both Mr. Harcourt and Mr. Weeks to believe that recruits would be forthcoming and it was only after the ultimatum had actually been given that they showed their real attitude. It was then too late to draw back as we were committed, and to enforce the order was essential. I am inclined to think that the tribe has not been sufficiently sternly dealt with in the past; they have led a peaceful pastoral life in their Reserve and they were perhaps inclined to think that they were immune

from interference on the part of the Government. Thus when the question was first broached to them they professed acquiescence in the belief that we should not pursue it and it was only when they found us to be in earnest that they were forced to reveal their real feelings. As a result it may be said they have had a sharp lesson which they will not readily forget and I trust that it may be the means of quickening them into a mode of life more useful to themselves and the country at large. I hope that very shortly they will accept the position when the action to be taken in respect of their disobedience and resistance to authority will receive my most careful consideration.


11. On other grounds, moreover, it is desirable that the Masai take their share in the duties which the war has imposed upon all citizens of the Empire. They have, it is true, contributed in kind and large numbers of their stock have been purchased for rations for the troops, but their flocks and herds are so enormous that these purchases have made no appreciable difference and the receipts accruing therefrom have been available for the purchase of other animals or of articles required for their daily needs. In short, while the great majority of tribes have suffered severely through the prolongation of hostilities the Masai have suffered not at all, and there are

are grounds for the allegation that they have been treated too kindly. I do not say that such an allegation has been made or that the Government would be influenced thereby, but I can well believe that there is much curiosity in the minds of other tribes as to the reason for what is practically the exclusion of the Masai from a participation in the war and it is necessary that all should learn that the protection of the British Government imposes certain obligations which must be met by all alike.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,



IN THE ABSENCE OF THE
ACTING GOVERNOR.

INCLOSURES

N. Report No. 62 of 15.10.18

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

93

No. 442.

Nairobi, 28th April, 1918.

To The Hon. The Ag. Chief Secretary,

Nairobi.

Re: Enrolment of Masai Muran in the K.K.C. or Police.

C O
59546
REC
in the K.K.C. or

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to my letter dated the 19th April 1915, in which I put forward a proposal for applying a form of compulsory enrolment in the King's African Rifles or Police to the Masai Muran.

At that time I did not consider the proposal, and the Officer in Charge Commanding the Masai Muran also apparently disfavoured it.

During the past few years, however, conditions have changed, and the Masai Muran but upon the question of compulsory enrolment generally, that possible proposals should be considered the proposition is now recognized almost as a fact, and at our disposal a large number of rifles which may be in every way suitable as compared with the King's African Rifles, it would be desirable to have some use of them.

It is suggested that the Masai Muran should be considered as a separate unit, and that the proposal should be considered the possibility of dealing with the problem of the Masai Muran.

At present the Muran, with few exceptions, are useless, unnecessary, and consume on a large scale without either directly or indirectly being producers.

3. I do not know if an Act legalising Compulsory Service would be inconsistent with the terms of the Treaty. At the recent meeting of the Masai Council, it was unanimously agreed to the proposition of the Masai to go on an expedition to the north. At the same time it was tacitly admitted that nothing could be done without compulsory service.

The attitude of the Masai towards the question is somewhat on a parallel with that of more civilized Nations, or in other words, they are merely waiting to be fetched.

4. The Masai Company which was disbanded about 1907 did not, I understand prove entirely satisfactory, but I would point out that the men were not selected from the Tribe, but consisted mainly of half-bred Kikuyu under the guise of Masai, and who are more generally known as Kaputisi Masai. It is not difficult to imagine that a large admixture of Kikuyu blood with even the best fighting tribes would produce a race deficient in soldierly qualities, and it cannot be a matter of surprise that the so-called Masai Company failed to come up to expectations.

5. I rather gather, but am open to correction, that the class of recruits now forthcoming for the King's African Rifles leaves a good deal to be desired, and if this is so, it would be an additional argument in favour of conscription for the Masai Muran.

6. Should His Excellency consider the proposal favourably, I would suggest that the Officer now commanding the King's African Rifles and the Commissioner of Police be approached on the subject. In view of the above

remarks

remarks and the changed conditions since the matter was first broached, it is possible that the opinions formerly held in regard to the suitability of the Masai as soldiers may now be qualified, or the needs of the military may perhaps have become greater. If however, the former objections still apply it is, of course, unnecessary to proceed further with the matter.

I have etc.,

SD/- H. W. Howsted,
Officer-in-Charge,
Masai Reserve.

Masai Reserve,

18th August, 1918.

9 Sept

Secretary,
Nairobi.

Sir,

I have the honour to report herewith on the progress of our connection with the "Muran" (tribe) since I left Nairobi with Major Dickinson and the King's African Rifles on August 11th.

We arrived Kijabe in the evening of August 27th and left Nairobi for Narok reaching that Station on the 31st. On my arrival I sent the Elders and head Muran men here to interview the "Muran" sections at Melele. On September 3rd they returned and reported that all their efforts had been in vain. On the 4th therefore I left Narok with Major Dickinson and the greater part of the Detachment and proceeded to Melele where we arrived on the 5th. At that place we finally succeeded in getting seven Muran men into camp and discussing matters.

In spite of the show of force they were refused to agree to the recruitment of Muran for the King's African Rifles or for any work which would take them from their own Reserve or its immediate vicinity. They were given up to being in more of their companions. They refused to listen to any arguments and said they had left their villages, dismissed their Elders and head men, and had decided to live in the forest, where they would die rather than be taken for the King's African Rifles. They were then allowed to go.

An attempt to arrest some men on September 9th in a village near by was unsuccessful. I have reported in a separate letter the regrettable results of this attempt.

on the 10th we were in camp at a trading centre known as Ol Aluga, 18 miles N.W. of Narok. Next morning at dawn the camp was suddenly attacked by a considerable force of Muras. They were beaten off in a few minutes and retired leaving 14 dead behind them. All our wounded, with one exception were taken away. There must have been a considerable number of horses as some of our men were left behind.

Amongst the dead were several of the men who had been chiefly responsible for the present trouble. The attitude of the Muras may change for this reason.

After the fight the Muras dispersed and did not return to the camp.

This may be a good sign and consequently we returned to Narok on the 12th and I am now re-opening negotiations.

Another reason for coming back to Narok was to make arrangements for the security of the Station and the road from it to Kiambu. The Kalia-nyukye clan occupy the country on each side of this road and their attitude at present is uncertain. It was thought advisable to take Narok and the Kiambu road safe before undertaking further operations to the west.

I much regret that it should have come to blows in this way, but I am afraid it was inevitable. Every chance was given to the Muras to come to a peace but they have made up their minds. I am satisfied they were set up to it all by certain members of the Laiban family, and I trust will in due course have to pay the penalty.

I have etc.,
 Lt. - H. Cooke,
 Officer - in - Charge,
 Mauai Reserve.

Ind

S

11

ing Street,

January, 1919.

DRAFT

My dear Bowring,

In connection with the recent difficulty in the conscription of the Masai, we have had a suggestion that we are not on safe ground with the tribe ^{near the reservation} near the reservation of land on Kinangop. ^{As the Government will be well aware the 1904 Agreement provided for}

a road between the two reserves, and also for setting apart land on Kinangop, ^{but before}

Before the new move took effect it appears that the road had been so encroached on by alienated land that it was practically useless for cattle, while it appears that the Southern Masai could not take part in the 1910 ceremonies on Kinangop because they could not be allowed to take their cattle with them.

With the disappearance of the Northern Reserve the road question disappeared but the new Agreement with the Masai retains a promise for the reservation of land on Kinangop, and is certainly so as if any ^{of access to it.}

It is suggested to us that sooner or

BOWRING, ESQ.

EMG

MINUTE

Mr. Bottonley, 10/1/19

Mr.

Mr.

Mr. Brindle.

Mr. Lambert.

Sir H. Road.

Sir G. Fisher.

Mr. Rowan.

Mr. Long.

After the Masai will be about done and will
I hope that you have broken faith with them in the
future, but I shall be glad to have your views on
the probability of this and how their complaint could be
suggested. As I read the back papers, Lena's himself
is anxious to entering the tribe for ceremonial purposes
of Ngong, but I suppose that representatives of the
old Northern Masai, such as Legalism, would always
be for the retention of Kinangop.

I take it that the 1904 provision of a road
between the two Reserves did not in itself give access to
Kinangop and should lie well off the route, but it is
difficult to ensure that means of access to the hill
was not contemplated both in 1904 and 1911.

Yours sincerely,