

EAST AFR. PROT
59186

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15 OCT

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STEEL CONCESSION ON THE TANA RIVER

Submits proposals.

The Powellizing process, in the particulars No. 52182, together with the initial forestry work at the top end of the bundle tend to show that Powellized sleepers are not affected by either white rot or dry rot if the work is properly done. There are cases of the wood splitting from holding the spikes etc. presumably due to the class of timber used. In any case, the Powellized sleepers appear to give several years' life.

The cost of Powellizing appears to have worked out at 7/6 a sleeper in Western Australia, so that even allowing for the charges on the capital expenditure (up to 22,000/- for a 1000 ft. line, but 40,000 sleepers a year) there should be a very material saving as against steel sleepers, which according to Mr. Hitchard are now 26/- each, and according to the Crown Agents (by telephone) in the neighbourhood of 18/-.

I enclose some old papers on the question of using wooden sleepers on the Basoga Railway, but there

P
3830

matter turned on creosoting and it was turned down on account of the prohibitive cost.

(2) As to Mr. Pritchard personally, you will remember that when he called he left some papers with me depending to show that he had not had fair treatment from the Commonwealth Govt. (The fact that if he had consulted Western Aust. he was not afraid of the result, and 36182 shows that I was right in this). I have read the papers and find that the allegations against the Commonwealth Govt. relate entirely to the process and not to Mr. Pritchard. We have nothing for or against him from the point of view of his being a desirable person to have close dealings with.

(3) His application for a concession. Reason why the Govt. should not grant the owner a factory and make profits on the products of a millition plant. Then we have the fact that the same factory as should no doubt be in competition with major Oregon, and would probably have the advantage of better timber, but the Govt. acquired the sole rights of the manufacturing process for British B.A., it would be easy to come to an arrangement with major Oregon.

On the particular points of Mr. Pritchard's letter.

(1) It seems doubtful whether ^{a Tana} the concession is worth while. The articles' report shows that there is a fringe of forest one-fifth of a mile wide by 200 miles long and Mr. Pritchard's suggestion of a piece extending 10 miles from the coast seems hopelessly inadequate for working purposes, considering that the proportion of good timber is probably low.

Mr. Hobley has spoken favourably of the forest area north of the Sabaki River in connection with his complaints of the wasteful methods of cultivation of the

Wanyika. This might offer a better field.

(ii) If the Tana is not chosen there is a little point in having Kipini as the address.

(iii) and (iv) are obvious.

(v) We cannot be sure of obtaining contracts for the supply of sleepers for the outside railways mentioned. The Govt. sleepers would have to compete on their merits.

(A), (B) and (C), the nature of these proposals are quite unknown to me. It might be worth while to consult the Govt. ~~at~~ on this point.

(3) Mr. Fritchard contemplates that these matters should be held over for discussion with Sir F. Northey when he arrives. But in many respects these are matters for expert advisers and I think that we should refer out both on the Process and other ^{at} questions, asking for views first as to the adoption of the Process and secondly, as to the establishment of the factory either as a Govt. undertaking or by way of a concession to Mr. Fritchard, and the papers should then come up on Sir F. Northey's arrival.

Mr. Fritchard's letter 59186 should be acknowledged and he should be informed that the Government is considering his proposals.

15 Oct 27 10-19

Stone
R. J. R.

25/10/19

*of this substance
of interest
to the public
to cover
()*

X

W. B. ...

You told Sir E. M. ... of these proposals today

... replied ... that it is desirable to develop the forestry resources of the ... but there are some difficulties because forest areas are not surveyed

He wishes the ... fast to ... that it is ... conceivable ... subject ...

... will ... that we will then

... to the ...

... to the ...

communicate with him
 again - [But that in any
 event, if scheme is regarded
 as practical, the Govt.
 is at his disposal to provide
 capital - [But the directors
 themselves do not seem to
 consider proposals (for discussion)
 for the company, after scheme
 by a company which would
 furnish the necessary
 capital if he is not
 otherwise in a position to
 find the capital.]

Allp
 9.12.19

Sir H. Plead.

I would not [] at this stage, because
 Sir E. Watling said that his view as to
 putting up capital might be altered if the
 105 shares are found to be feasible

But I think the
 local experts will examine the proposals on
 their merits; we have boasted of our forty year
 12 years but have done better with them except
 during the first.

Oct 9.12.19

at once
 * 10/24/19

R. 107

14th. October, 1919

2c

Sir Herbert Read,
Colonial Office,
Whitehall Street,
S. W. 1.

C O
59186
15 OCT 1919

Dear Sir,

When you were good enough to see me last Friday, you asked me to reduce my proposals to writing. I think the simplest way of stating them is to begin by saying what I would do if I had

- (i) The right to cut, convert and sell timber for 10 miles inwards on the banks of the Tana River, together with similar rights over any mangrove trees on the coast, and up the various creeks, which have already been barked and which are now threatening to spread disease. Their removal would naturally improve the land.
- (ii) A Wood-distillation plant at, say, Kipini.
- (iii) A Powellizing-plant attached to number (ii).
- (iv) A Sawing-plant for use with (ii) and (iii).
- v) Contracts to supply Powellized sleepers to the Sudanese, Egyptian, South African and Indian Railways and, naturally when required, to the British East African Railways.
- vi) Sufficient capital to cover the cost of installing ii-iii and iv, paying wages, buying materials etc. until revenue accrued.

The combination of ii-iii-iv. would ensure the use of the whole of each tree, no part thereof being wasted.

By means of the Wood-distillation plant, I should produce:-

- (A) Charcoal of high quality.
- (B) An aqueous liquor, more or less crude in character, containing:
 - (a) Wood Spirit, also called Wood Naphtha, methyl alcohol.
 - (b) Acetone, which is mixed with the Wood Spirit.
 - (c) Crude Acetic acid (pyroligneous Acid).
 - (d) Wood Tar and oils.
- (C) Certain noncondensable gases, which might be used for combustion in the plant, thus reducing expenses.

The many uses to which (A) and (B) can be applied hardly call for enumeration.

I take it that it is within the power of the Government of British East Africa to grant me the rights referred to (p. 1.)

The Wood-distillation plant (1.14) can be bought in this Country. Some rights, etc. were restricted during the war and are now offered for sale.

The Powellizing rights, etc. are preferable, and have already been offered to the Colonial Office.

A Sawing-plant of sufficient capacity (1.15) can be bought for about £2,000.

Contracts and Capital (1.v.vi.) I submit that if, and when, the Colonial Office is satisfied that the Powell Process does ensure immunity from the ravages of white ants, and can therefore be relied upon to produce satisfactory sleepers of timber, it is much easier, with the Administration of the Protectorate and the Colonial Office at the back of the undertaking, to procure any, or all, of the contracts referred to in (1.v.) than it would be for a private individual, like myself, or even for a private Company. For that reason, the Protectorate should have a very large share of the profits.

Again, the timber in British East Africa is the property of the Administration - another reason why the bulk of the profits accruing to any business such as I have outlined should go to the Administration.

The making, Powellizing and sale of Karri railway-sleepers is to-day a State business in Western Australia and may, presumably, be similarly undertaken by the Protectorate. The sale of charcoal, acetone, acetates etc. may possibly be regarded as trespassing upon commercial interests, in which case the Governor might prefer that the whole industry should be a private concern. If that should be so, I beg that I may be given an opportunity of carrying out my own proposals. That naturally brings me to the question of Capital.

It is manifestly impossible, as I cannot say what the Wood-distillation plant would cost, re-erected on the Tana River, to give precise figures, but I think I am well within the mark when I say that a sum of £50,000 would prove ample.

If the Colonial Office saw fit to finance the undertaking, the Administration taking the greater part of the profits, the capital would be returned out of those profits in the course of a few years, thus justifying the initial outlay.

On the other hand the Colonial Office might prefer to guarantee

the interest on the capital sum required at, say, 5% for a period of five or seven years. In that event, I could procure all the capital required, still giving the Protectorate the bulk of the profits.

The only other alternative that occurs to me, is to procure the capital by floating a company; but that course would have the inevitable disadvantage of reducing the profits of the Administration of a company would direct its efforts to procuring the largest possible returns for itself and the Protectorate would only get the agreed price for its timber, which is not likely to be very high.

May I beg that a decision be arrived at as soon as possible. For one thing, the Wood-distillation plants may be sold any day now, and I venture to suggest that one, or more, be earmarked for sale to the Colonial Office to prevent such a disaster.

I fully understand that you are unable to allow the execution of my proposals in what was German East Africa. I have, therefore, asked for the timber on the Tana River, which, I take it, can be felled as soon as the necessary arrangements have been made.

As the arrival of the Governor of British East Africa is expected shortly, it is naturally best to wait until he can discuss these matters with you; by that time all the inquiries you are now making will, I hope, have been satisfactorily answered.

It must be obvious that sleepers, cut from local timbers, can be delivered to the British East African Railways at less than 10/- each. The steel sleepers now in use cost quite 20/- each, delivered at Mombassa, and make a road that causes great wear and tear to all rolling-stock, necessitating considerable expenditure every year upon repairs. Further, everything points to the probability of a considerable increase in the cost of steel sleepers, whereas the cost of producing them, on the spot, from local timber is not likely to increase to any great extent.

I venture to repeat the appeal I made on Friday that the final decision as to the use of Powellized Sleepers should not be left to the Engineers of the British East African Railways. It is our experience that Engineers will not take any such responsibility, contenting themselves with putting a few experimental sleepers in the track and waiting, over a period of years, to see how they answer. I do not think they can be blamed for being cautious when dealing with an unknown Process. You have, however, in Mr. Flood's possession, the Report of the Indian Forest Economist (Mr. Pearson) which shows that the Powell Process has been successfully used (chiefly with timbers that would never have been thought of for conversion into sleepers) for some 10 or 12 years and these experimental sleepers are still in use, only a negligible number having been removed.

Powellized Karri sleepers have been used in Western Australia for some 12 years and have proved, as in India and Burmah, that the Process seasons the timber and renders the sleepers immune from the attacks of termites.

With all that experience under worse climatic conditions I urge that the Governor can confidently adopt the Powell Process in British East Africa without calling upon his engineers to decide the question. Even if there were any risks regarding processed sleepers, the profits on charcoal, acetone, acetates etc. would, in a very few years, repay the capital expended.

If, eventually, the undertaking is entrusted to me, I would ask that an Accountant be appointed by the Governor in order that His Excellency may be assured that the work is being carried out economically and in the best interests of the Protectorate. A Powellizing-plant capable of treating 400,000 sleepers per annum can be purchased for some £12,000. Supposing it cost as much as £18,000, erected on the coast, a profit of a 1/- per sleeper - which cannot be regarded as excessive - would bring in £20,000 in one year. Only about 227 miles of line could be furnished with sleepers every year by such a plant, so there should be no difficulty in finding a market for 400,000 sleepers annually, and this first Plant may well be the forerunner of many others.

As I have pointed out, there are at least four railways to which the sleepers can be sold, if the Administration recommended them, and all are within easy reach. By using the heart wood and sawing it correctly only the very best timber would be employed and the sleepers are bound to be of very high quality.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

C. H. Fitchard

P/S 9186/19 cont.

DRAFT.

Mr. Pritchard Esq

London
October 1919

MINUTE.

- M. Mansel Esq
- Mr. Parkin
- Mr. Grant
- Mr. H. L. Esq
- Mr. H. Esq
- Mr. G. Esq
- Mr. Esq
- Mr. Esq

29/10

Dear Sir

Your letter of the 14th inst. has been received and the matter is being considered. It is proposed to introduce the proposals into the Bill.

The proposals are to be introduced into the Bill of Mr. P. Esq. and it is proposed to introduce the proposals into the Bill.

20/10
3/11

Signed

CO 533 / 22

P.
59186/19. hat.

And 12/11/20

And the scheme for
establishing a factory in the
name of the Government
and the department
aim to develop
frontiers of the
country

DRAFT.

S. V. S. Nay
12/11/20

Mr. Nay,
Secy
No 115

MINUTE.

I have the honour to be

informed by copy of a proposal on
the subject of the proposed
process of the Powell.

- Mr. Parley, 2801.
- Mr. Parham, 29.10.20
- Mr. Pittendrigh
- Mr. Grindle

(2) Powell see for the publication
of reports concerning the process
that the process appears to
have met with considerable

- Sir H. Lambert
- Sir H. Reid
- Sir G. Fiddes
- Col. Amery
- Lord Mountbatten
- Pitchard
- 14

success in India & Australia
& to offer good expectation
favourable results in the

(3) I shall be glad if you will
consider the matter in
consultation with your
technical advisers & forward

copy monthly
(3936)
(31735)
(38184)
Vol VI Part IV The Indian
(alt to 39325)
20/11/20

Reference
C.O.533
228

we with your views as to the possible
adoption of the former, especially as
to the establishment of a factory for the
purpose of ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~production~~ ^{production}
of ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~articles~~ ^{articles} ~~mentioned~~ ^{mentioned}
in ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~report~~ ^{report} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Committee~~ ^{Committee}
of ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Government~~ ^{Government} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Province~~ ^{Province}
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(6) ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~amount~~ ^{amount} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~expenditure~~ ^{expenditure} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Project~~ ^{Project} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Government~~ ^{Government} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Province~~ ^{Province}
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and ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~by~~ ^{by} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Government~~ ^{Government} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Province~~ ^{Province}
of ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Province~~ ^{Province} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Province~~ ^{Province} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Province~~ ^{Province}

39.86/19 has



RAFT

Richardson

December 20

MINUTE.

- Mr. Pendergast 12 Dec.
- Mr. Parkin 12/11
- Mr. ...
- Mr. Grindle
- Sir H. Lambert
- Sir H. Road
- Sir G. Fiddes
- Ed. Amery
- Lord Milner

with reference to the letter from
 it has been decided after
 discussion with the various
 (see reply to the ... and to ...)
 amount ...
 Mr. ...
 Part ... as to obtain the views
 of the local on my
 of the ...
 proposals for the introduction
 of the Powell ...
 into the ... & the ...

factory
 for the manufacture
 of heavy sleepers
 with insulation
 of wood

(2) On ... of the ...
 a further
 communication on the
 subject will be ...

J. Fair View Road,
Bath, Oxon
23rd December, 1919.

~~Dear Mr. ...~~
Thank you for your letter of yesterday.
I was very glad of you to approach Mr
Richard Read in my behalf. Will you please
tell him that I gratefully accept his offer
an interview at 3 p.m. on the 30th inst.

Yours very truly,
A. Hutchins.

~~Dear Mr. ...~~

30/12/19

574. 1912

R.H. Post

RECORD OF RUMBLE

As sample for exam purpose
See H. 1912 regarding Rumble
in dispatch from ...
to the ...

April 19 1912

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

1	2	3	4	5	6
				2	

Reference —

C.O.533 / 228

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171

I liked called records
 Re: you again personally
 after Rules.
 I was to come from
 Hampshire, a report
 interview was arranged.
 I think you may be in a
 C.A.
 He says that there
 was no time to explain,
 which the local authorities
 should know.
 All you find a time a day?
 I have 3 Fairview Rd
 Barbours.

all

21.12.49

I have written to him
 all 21.12.49

Dawkins
 the 30th
 Tuesday
 at 3 p.m. 17.2.50
 22/24

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference: —					
CO533			228		
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