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KENYA

Italo-Ethiopian Dispute

Suggested refuge camp in Kenya

Previous

Subsequent

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Mr. R. C. Hawkin, who is well known to this

Office and the D.O., called upon me on the 25th of

April. He said that he had seen the Ethiopian Minister, Dr. Martin, and that in view of the Italian advance the idea of forming a city of refuge for Ethiopian women and children was coming to the front. Dr. Martin had the idea of their taking refuge in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan but Mr. Hawkin immediately, according to his own account, pointed out that that might make difficulties with the Egyptian Government and apparently exaggerated the amount of Egypt's influence in the working of the Sudan. Accordingly, having had a good look at the map, Mr. Hawkin suggested that a suitable city of refuge to take several thousand (at least fifty thousand) refugees could be formed in Kenya and the spot selected for this was Moyale. He asked me what I thought about it.

Having recovered from my first shock, I proceeded to explain to him that the northern frontier of Kenya was one of the most unlikely places on earth for refugees or the establishment of refugee camps. In the first place, it would be very hard for them to get there from the Abyssinian side; then, if they did get into Kenya, there was no food, no water, no building material, no anything. Mr. Hawkin thought that food could be arranged if there was enough transport and I said that in my opinion if he had a camp near Moyale it was, in any case, too near to the frontier; he would have to bring everything from Nairobi or thereabouts; while, I said, the country was so desert that it could not provide water for a large body of people. (I have since had it confirmed that water has to be rationed at Moyale as it is in the dry weather). Mr. Hawkin suggested that this might

be overcome by pumping the waters of Lake Rudolf and enquired whether that Lake was drinkable. I said it was just about drinkable and no more and it was liable to cause severe internal trouble in the case of people who are not accustomed to it, while the distance rendered the idea of pumping it to anywhere out of the question.

He then seemed to think that a city of refuge anywhere in the northern part of Kenya was out of the picture, and said that this would appear to indicate that the Sudan idea was better and he indicated the Ilembé triangle on the map, saying that this had been suggested by Dr. Martin as the most likely place. I said that, as it was in the Sudan, I couldn't be expected to know anything about it, but that I did know that the Sudan Government find it very difficult to administer owing to its vastness, with the result that it had become a convenient base for brigands and thugs. He said the idea that it would be easy to float supplies and stores up the river Nile and its tributaries to that neighbourhood, but I said I didn't think it was.

I was afraid he will think that I am absolutely discouraging, which I am, because for one thing I don't want to have any Abyssinian refugees in Kenya. I have had quite enough of refugees in the last five years and still more than that. I can't see any possible place where they could be located, and to encourage people to take refuge in the waterless and inhospitable

H. END

R 207 R
PL.

nearby
Chh

Sir C. Bottomley
A. Flood

Sir C. Bottomley

Sir J. Haffey

You should see in present circ^s. There is nothing to do unless we get a request from F.O. or elsewhere but the idea is about

J.S.W.7.

It may well now be necessary if material sent promptly.

I entirely concur in the line which Sir Flood took.

Yes. We have no copies. The next business plan is to get up to let the steam engine be used.

Wed 4-5-26
J.S.W.