

1938

Kenya

No. 38402

SUBJECT.

General Correspondence between Governor
and Secretary of State

Previous

Subsequent

1939 file

6.3
Governor
Correspondence

Sec. of State
Mr. Paskin
Sir C. Parkinson

Mr. Paskin.

I attach a further letter to the Secretary of State from Sir Robert Brooke-Pooham, on which you will see that Mr. MacDonald has made a note. Perhaps this can come on again with a draft reply for the Secretary of State to send, and the Department will no doubt make extracts of any bits which they would like to have on permanent record?

J. Creay
4.7.38.

I have taken extracts from this letter for registration on the relevant papers on which I am minutating. I have also sent a copy of para. 2 to the Foreign Office.

As regards the Secretary of State's inquiry whether the talks with Italy on the subject of the Abyssinian refugees are making any progress, the position is that there are no talks at present in progress on this subject. The matter was mentioned to the Italian Government last April and the upshot was that the Governments of Kenya and British Somaliland were told to draw up lists of the Abyssinian refugees who were willing to return to their homes in Abyssinia. These lists were then to be sent to our Consul-General in Addis Ababa with a view to his taking up the matter with the local

Italian

Italian authorities. The sole result of these inquiries in Somaliland was that two women were prepared to go back to Abyssinia. We have heard nothing from Kenya on the matter, but the information in this letter is hardly such as to lead one to suppose that many of the refugees there will be willing to go back unarmed to settle in their old homes in Abyssinia.

Unless and until we can produce lists of refugees who wish to go back to Abyssinia there would clearly be nothing to be gained by further approaches to the Italian Government in the matter, even if the general situation vis-a-vis Italy were otherwise propitious.

J.P. Paskin
9.7.38.

As regards the question of a reply, it is suggested that as this letter has crossed a letter from the Secretary of State to the Governor in which he indicated that he would not always be able to find time to reply to the Governor's letters, it might be a good thing to take this opportunity of ^{establishing a precedent by} not sending an immediate reply.

J.P.P.
9/7

On the loan question the Governor's proposal is that the bulk of the money should be spent on unproductive works such as Government buildings. The view taken here hitherto is that it would be difficult on any ground of prudent finance to justify the assumption by Kenya of further loan liabilities of this sort. It is to be anticipated that the Treasury, whose concurrence will be necessary, will adopt a very critical attitude. But if the new C.D.F. proposals go through it may be that the solution of Kenya's difficulties will be to finance the proposed new schemes from that source.

I entirely agree with Mr. Paskin's remarks on the other points.

A.M.

11.7.38.

aecl
11.7.38

2 To Sir R. Brooke Popland & 10/8/38

CBP

C. O.

Mr. Surridge. 29.7.

Mr. Paskin. 29.7.

Mr. Dawe. 1.8

Sir H. Moore.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh

X Perms. U.S. of S. 2.8.28

Party U.S. of S.

X Secretary of State.

For the Secretary of State's signature.

Downing Street.

3 August, 1938.

SECRET.

DRAFT.

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL

SIR ROBERT BROOKE-POPHAM,
G.C.V.O., K.C.B., C.M.G.,
D.S.O., A.F.C.

I have been considering your letter of the 7th July in which you foreshadow an official despatch asking for the abolition of the duty on Empire coffee in this country.

I know how badly hit the coffee farmers in Kenya have been by the low prices: and if I could do anything effective to help them in their difficulties I would be very ready to do it. I am impressed by what you say in your letter about the local case for a remission of the duty: but it is no good my disguising the fact that at this end the difficulties of

remission

FURTHER ACTION.

Extracts to be placed on relevant files.

Extracts placed on relevant files 4/8.

remission are probably insurmountable.

I think you will see at once that it

would be politically most difficult

here to remove the duty on coffee,

the drink of the rich, and leave

unaltered the high duty on tea, the

drink of the poor. The tea duty, as

you know, was increased in the last

budget as part of the revenue proposals

to pay for rearmament, and it is essential

to maintain it.

A request for the remission of the

coffee duty has also been put forward by

the Indians in the course of the present

negotiations for the revision of the

Ottawa Agreement: and, for the above

reason, it is causing us a good deal of

difficulty. It is not yet possible to

say what the outcome will be. If the

decision were to go in favour of remission it

would, of course, cover the case of Kenya as

well

C. O.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Sir H. Moore.

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Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Permt.-U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

DRAFT.

*to refrain
from sending
at any rate for
the present*

well as of India: but there could be

no guarantee that the planters in

Kenya would get the full benefit, as that,

in the present state of the coffee

market, might easily go to the

consumers here.

In the circumstances I should
welcome it if you could see your way
~~prefer not to receive~~ the official

despatch foreshadowed in your letter,

particularly as the real difficulties

implicit in the proposal could hardly

be set out in my official reply. If

it is already public knowledge that you

are contemplating a despatch, perhaps

you could let it be known that you have

suspended action pending the outcome

of the Indian negotiations? The

fact that coffee is figuring in those

negotiations is already known to the

Coffee Board of Kenya.

Before

FURTHER ACTION.

Before concluding this I will
add something ^{in reply to} about your letter of the
18th June about the loan and the
Abyssinian refugees. On the loan,
I fully realize the importance of
trying to find some early means of
enabling you to make a start with
your building programme and to meet the
requirements of the Land Bank. You can
rely on me to make every effort to
expedite matters, though from the nature
of the case a good deal of consideration
will be required; and I am afraid that the
Treasury may be inclined to shy at some
of the fences on this rather difficult
course. I gather also that it is
difficult to deal with your suggestion that
~~the~~ ^{Kenya} should borrow from the Railway until
the question of the £5½ millions has been
settled.

I was sorry to learn of the trouble
with the Abyssinians at Isiolo and hope

that

C. O.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Sir H. Moore.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Permt. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

DRAFT.

FURTHER ACTION.

that the situation has now cleared up.
I passed on what you said on this topic
to the Foreign Office, who were interested
to hear that the Emperor of Ethiopia has
apparently been associated with the
propaganda which caused the trouble.
If one of the letters to which you
refer was really sent by the Emperor,
it seems to amount to a breach of the
undertaking given by him not to
indulge in politics or propaganda while
in this country. I wonder if it would
be possible for you to obtain the
original or a certified copy of the
letter alleged to have been sent by him.
If you could, the Foreign Office would
be very ^{much} interested to have it.

C. O.

Mr. Clason 22/7

Mr.

Mr.

Sir H. Moore.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Perm. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

X Secretary of State.

For S. of S.'s
-13-

See minutes revised
dft. AMB
1.8
Private & Confidential
Secret

July 1928

DRAFT.

Air Chief Marshal

Sir Robert Brooke-Popham
G. C. V. O., K. C. B.

I have your letter of the 7th of July foreshowing an ~~urgent~~ official despatch asking for the ~~abolition~~ abolition of the ~~coffee duty~~ duty on ~~British~~ coffee in this country. I very much hope that you will not send this despatch.

My reason is that there are very great difficulties arising from the proposal of a kind of a unilateral for official correspondence.

To remove the duty on coffee, the drink of the rich, while leaving the high (but for revenue reasons essential) duty on tea, would be politically impossible, if the proposal was designed simply to help along.

The same request has been put forward by the Indians in the course of the present negotiations for the revision of the Ottawa Agreement & in causing its acute political diffi-

the drink of the poor

FURTHER ACTION.

Extracts to be placed in relevant files.

...for exactly the same reason.
I do not know how the matter
will finally be decided; if we were
to suppose that the conclusion
of some acceptable agree-
ment with India based on this
concession a statement which
has recently been made by one of
the Indian negotiators) it is
possible that the Government
might be able to agree to a
workable financial and political
road.

If the decision was that way,
then Kenya would of course
get the benefit, though I cannot
of course guarantee that the
full benefit would go to the
benefit in Kenya. It might
partly go to the consumers here.
On the other hand, if the
decision was in the other di-
rection, then obviously it could
not be used for any other
purpose.

It is already known that
you are awaiting legal action on
these lines, I suggest that you
should be aware that
you have urgent action
pending, because of the Indian
negotiations. It is already known
to the Government of Kenya
to be a matter of urgency in the
Indian negotiations.

C. O.
Mr. Parnell 27/7
Mr.
Mr.
Sir H. Moore.
Sir G. Tomlinson.
Sir C. Bottomley.
Sir J. Shuckburgh.
Permt. U.S. of S.
Pasly. U.S. of S.
Secretary of State.

DRAFT.

FURTHER ACTION.

As regards the proposals for
a loan, which you mentioned in your
letter of the 18th June, ~~on official lines~~
~~through normal channels~~ ~~to reply~~
They will require a good deal of
consideration and discussion with the
Treasury, not only from the general
point of view of the effects of adding
to Kenya's already heavy burden of debt,
but also because, as you recognized in
your official despatch, it is difficult
to deal with your suggestion that you
should borrow from the Railway until
the question of the £5½ million has been
disposed of. However, I can assure
you that I fully appreciate the
importance of trying to find some means
of enabling you to make a start with
your programme of badly needed buildings,
and to meet the requirements of the Land
Bank.

I was sorry to learn that you

have been having trouble with the
Abyssinian refugees at Isiolo, and
I hope that the steps which were so
promptly taken have been effective
in stilling any further disaffection.
I passed on what you had said on this
subject to the Foreign Office, who
were particularly interested to see
that the Emperor of Ethiopia has
apparently been associated with the
propaganda which has caused this
trouble. If, as it appears, one of
the letters was sent by the Emperor, it
would seem to amount to a breach of the
undertaking given by him not to indulge
in politics or propaganda whilst in this
country. The Foreign Office would
therefore be glad if you could obtain
the original or a certified copy of the
letter alleged to have been sent by the
Emperor.

No. 22 on

46597/113/38.

1. Dept. please consider this
2. Let F.O. know what the Government says about the Abyssinian refugees. Are the talks with Italy on this point making any progress?
3. Put up reply.

NAIROBI,
W.V.M. KENYA.

18th June, 1938.

Dear MacDonald,

There are two things to worry you about.

1. First, the proposed loan of £750,000 for Kenya. There has been some previous correspondence about this and an official letter from here went off by the Thursday's airmail. That letter sets out pretty clearly the need for most of the money, but one of the items has been left vague - the £150,000 for agricultural development. Most of my people here were anxious to put in some details as to how this £150,000 was to be spent, but I would not do this because we haven't thrashed the problem out properly yet. I can think of several things on which we could perfectly well spend £150,000 in connection with agriculture - for instance, such things as elimination of rinderpest, development of water supply, assistance to farmers in turning over from unproductive crops, e.g., coffee, in areas that are not able to produce it economically, and so forth. But until we have gone more thoroughly into the matter I am not prepared to say which of these is the most urgent. Actually, there is a meeting of Executive Council this morning, when we are starting to go into the matter in detail. It might have been better to have left out this £150,000 until we were quite clear how we were going to spend it, but I didn't want to make two bites of a cherry and ask for £500,000 now and the £150,000 later, so I put the whole £750,000 in.

Obvious.....

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
KENYA.

obvious criticism is why fix it at £150,000. The answer to that really is that I was satisfied that under present conditions we ought not to go for more than 750,000, although I should have liked to make it a million. There are certain essential buildings which we must get on with, and also improvements to roads by cutting these down pretty drastically to a minimum. I decided that apart from roads we could spend £150,000 on development which would be mainly agricultural. As a sort of general policy I was aiming at having half this loan for development and half for non-productive items such as hospitals, but we couldn't do it. However, I do want to stress the point that we didn't say "Let's have a loan", and then, "What are we going to do with this other £150,000?". It was thought out, as I have indicated above.

2. We are having a bit of trouble with the Abyssinian refugees at Isiolo. This seems to be entirely due to anti-British propaganda that has started as a result of the recent decisions in regard to the acknowledgment of Italian sovereignty in Abyssinia. The propaganda has been done partly by a paper called the "Times of Ethiopia" and partly by letters including, apparently, one from the late Emperor. One of the aspects of the trouble was a reputation as a man that men in the camp should be given arms and allowed to march back into Abyssinia. They have been told that there is

nothing.....

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
KENYA.

nothing to stop them going to Abyssinia if they wished, but they can't be given any arms. We are introducing censorship, and have transferred six of the ring-leaders to the deserters' camp, which is some few miles off. The people in charge also do one or two very sensible things, such as marching a company of the King's African Rifles round the camp, headed by a band. But I mention this once again just to stress the necessity of getting some solution for the refugee problem. Amongst other things, the strict legal position is not too satisfactory.

3. We had our first blackout of Nairobi two nights ago. It was most successful and everybody, including Asians and Africans, played up very well.

Yours sincerely,

R Brooke-Polham

THE RT. HON. MICHAEL MACDONALD, P.C., M.P.,
COLONIAL OFFICE,
DOWLING STREET,
LONDON, S. W. 1.