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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

DATE
1st July 1925.

UGANDA RAILWAY. INADEQUACY OF ROLLING STOCK.

U.S. of S.
W. Stanley

*10. Mr. Forrest, — To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he is aware of the complaints of British traders as to the inadequacy of rolling-stock in Uganda and East Africa; will he state why orders for such rolling-stock are not placed and executed more promptly in this Country, especially with a view to the relief of unemployment; whether the policy of the Crown agents is to indent for such rolling-stock well in advance to meet the certain requirements of subsequent years; and whether the whole system of Crown agents' control of railways can be overhauled. [Monday 6th July.]

Previous Paper

MINUTES

ORAL REPLY

The General Manager has made no special complaint about the time taken to order trucks, and in any case the Crown Agents' reply on the general question of railway indents was considered satisfactory. The Uganda Railway got something like 400 trucks last year, and a further order for 250 is now just about at completion. Further orders will be sent home according to the capacity of the ^{shops} sheds at Nairobi to erect them, and It might be argued that we ought to increase the capacity of

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Subsequent Paper

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UGANDA AND EAST AFRICA
(ROLLING STOCK)

21. Mr. FORREST asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware of the complaints of British traders as to the inadequacy of rolling stock in Uganda and East Africa; will he state why orders for such rolling stock are not placed and executed more promptly in this country, especially with a view to the relief of unemployment; whether the policy of the Crown Agents is to indent for such rolling stock well in advance to meet the certain requirements of subsequent years; and whether the whole system of Crown Agents' control of railways can be overhauled?

22. Sir W. de FRECE asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Crown Agents have, for the railways under their control, to anticipate the needs of commercial development in the near future by placing in advance orders for rolling stock; whether this policy has been followed with regard to the Uganda Railway; and, if so, what is the reason for the suggested shortage of trucks?

Mr. AMERY: The complaints seem to have arisen from the temporary lack of trucks owing to the unprecedented rush of imports into Uganda at the end of 1924, which were in excess of the handling facilities of the Lake stevedores. The position will be eased in future, not only by the construction of the through line to Uganda, which is being expedited, but also by the continual provision of additional trucks and of additional facilities on the Lake. About 200 trucks were supplied in 1924, and further orders are being sent home and executed as rapidly as possible up to the capacity of the erecting sheds at Nairobi, but I must repeat that the present difficulty has been due to special and temporary causes. The latter part of the question of the hon. Member for Bailey and Morley (Mr. Forrest) seems to be due to a misunderstanding. The Crown Agents control no railway, and their orders for rolling stock depend on the indents which they receive from Colonial Governments.

Sir ROBERT HAMILTON: Is it not the fact that there have been considerable complaints of the delay in executing indents sent home to the Crown Agents?

Mr. AMERY: I am not aware of any complaints on that score, but there have been great complaints owing to want of accommodation in the actual railway settlements.

Sir GERALD STRICKLAND: Would not these operations be considerably facilitated if the policy of the Crown Colonies were expanded in accordance with modern requirements, rather than under Regulations?

Mr. AMERY: I am not aware that the Regulations have put any obstacle in the way of the speedy carrying out of the indents.

Bottomley 3/7

Strachey 7/7

Stuckey

Davis

A. G. Hinde

A. M. L. Smith

Densby Gore

Amery

SM 5/7

S. M. Roberts 4/7

DOWNING STREET,

July 1925.

DRAFT REPLY.

House of Commons

Question.

*Re Answer
see 6/7*

*Para 43(c)
of the Report*

~~SECRET~~

The complaints seem to have arisen from the temporary locking up of trucks owing to the unprecedented rush of exports into Uganda at the end of 1924, which were in excess of the handling facilities of the Lake terminus. The position will be eased in future not only by the construction, now in progress, of the through line to Uganda, which is being expedited, but also by the continual provision of additional trucks and of additional facilities on the Lake.

400
Large quantities of trucks were supplied in 1924, and further orders are being

sent

sent home and executed as rapidly as possible up to the capacity of the erecting sheds at Nairobi, but I must repeat that the present difficulty has been due to special and temporary causes. (While the Railway must expect and provide for heavy seasonal traffic, it cannot be expected to provide for the emergency traffic in excess of what can reasonably be foreseen.)

~~I am not aware of any avoidable delay in executing orders for rolling stock, and the~~ latter part of the question seems to be due to a misunderstanding. The Crown Agents control no railway, and their orders for rolling stock depend on the indents which they receive from Colonial Governments. (I understand that no arrangements for standing annual indents for rolling stock exist, and it would indeed be undesirable, as the relative quantities required of the various types and makes are subject to change from year to year.)