

1924

E. AFRICA
W. AFRICA

C.O.
27146

Date

7 JUL 24

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

6TH JUNE 1924.

467

FOR CIRCULATION :-

Mr. Sturday

Mr. G. J. Hardy

Mr. ~~ECG~~

Asst. U.S. of S. *W. H. R. G. 13/11/24*

COMMISSION TO VISIT EAST AFRICA AND WEST AFRICA.

*14. Sir Walter de Frece.—To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether, in view of the lapse of time since the original announcement, he can now give the names of the commissions to visit East and West Africa, their terms of reference, and the date and plans for their visits.

Perm. U.S. of S.

Part. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State. ✓

Oral reply 16 June

Previous Paper:

4.10/24, v

MINUTES

As regards West Africa I know of no developments since 1920. As regards East Africa, we shall be making suggestions before the 30th. before Monday, but it will hardly be possible by then to make a definite statement, even if it were desired to do it in the form of a reply to a question.

I think therefore that we must find a variant question of the reply given on 22.12.23.

I f. h. beneath

Wed 12.6.24

Subsequent Paper

1.0 / 28778

put by

1210

I know nothing of the proposal to send a Commission to West Africa, beyond 24/07/24. The idea put forward by the Joint W Afr Cttee of the London, Liverpool, & Manchester Chambers of Commerce that a Commission on the future development of the W Afr Colonies should be sent out was definitely rejected by Mr Thomas as regards Nigeria on 10 March in reply to a question in the House, and by Lord Arnold for W Afr generally at the meeting of the Joint W Afr Cttee on 20th March - see copy of minutes of meeting annexed. For the reasons against such a Commission, see memo attached to 12/15/24.

W. Ormsby-Jones East

December, and, a year before that, Mr Wood, contemplated visiting W Africa with one or two members of the C.C. staff (and possibly a M.P.) to ~~not~~ have a look at the country & to talk over with local people on the spot any current problems (but 'historic' changes caused by these changes in the last 10 years).

12/15/24
Yes. I think that the answer should be recommended as to reject the idea of a Commission to visit W Africa. Probably the P.P. only mentioned W. Ormsby-Jones at the W Africa Dinner.

W. Ormsby-Jones

S. J. S. I think that I am right in saying that...

full Commission you have decided
to send a Comm: to W Africa.

You may, however, consider
it convenient to complete
the arrangements with regard
to the E. Afr. Comm: before
taking up the question of
the Comm: for W. Afr.

Mr. Mackay, Mr. Bottomley, &
I have been working at the
former & we hope to submit
Dft. Terms of Refere. on
for your review almost at
once.

to J.R.

13th 11/24

Executive Report 10th June

EAST AND WEST AFRICA
COMMISSIONS

1. Sir WALTER de FRECE asked the
Secretary to state for the Commission
whether, in view of the lapse of time since
the original announcement, it can now
give the names of the Commissioners to
visit East and West Africa, the terms of
reference, and the date of departure for the
visit.

Mr THOMAS: My consideration of this
matter has been considerably interrupted,
but if my hon. Friend would repeat his
question next week I should hope to be
able to make a statement.

July 1st 1876

Seen

Aug 1st 1876/24

Walter de Frece

full Commission you have decided
to send a Commission to W. Africa
You may however, consider
it convenient to complete
the arrangements with regard
to the E. Afr. Commission before
taking up the question of
the Commission for W. Africa.
Mr. Massey, Mr. Bottomley &
I have been working at the
matter & we hope to submit
Terms of Reference on
the African Commission almost at
once.

H. J. R.

13/11/24

Official Report 16^a June

EAST AND WEST AFRICA
(COMMISSIONS)

14. Sir WALTER DE BECE asked the
Secretary of State for the Colonies
whether, in view of the lapse of time since
the original announcement, he can now
give the names of the Commissions to
visit East and West Africa, their terms of
reference, and the date and plans for their
visits.

Mr. THOMAS. My consideration of this
matter has been unavoidably interrupted,
but if my hon. Friend would repeat his
question to-day week I should hope to be
able to make a statement.

Johny D. 17/6

Seen

A-1 14/18/24

Col. 18.6.24

HOPE - EA
27/46 WA

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My consideration of the

DRAFT.

Reply to

question has been

W. de Szece

unavoidably interrupted,

vol 16 June

MINUTE.

but I hope at an early

Mr. ~~Aspinwall~~

date to find an

Mr.

opportunity of making

Mr. Stuchey 13.

a statement.

~~Mr. A. Fitz...~~

~~Mr. G. Dixon~~

~~Mr. G. G. ...~~

Sir G. G. ...

+ Sir H. Read. 13/12/24

I would add that it is to

Sir J. Masterton Smith

to. Agree & not to it.

Lord Arnold.

Agree also that it is con-

+ Mr. Thomas

16/10

- completed towards &
consequence

47
485

414. Sir Walter de Freese.—To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether, in view of the lapse of time since the original announcement, he can now give the names of the commissions to visit East and West Africa, their terms of reference, and the date and plans for their visits.

Oral reply 16th June

My consideration of this matter has been unavoidably interrupted, but if my honourable friend would **repeat** his Question today week I should hope to be able to make a statement.

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL:

NOT FOR PUBLICATION.

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JOINT WEST AFRICAN COMMITTEE.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE ON THURSDAY THE
20TH MARCH 1924, at 11.0 a.m.

THE RIGHT HON LORD ARNOLD, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY
OF STATE.

There were also present representing the Colonial Office

Sir H. J. Read, K.C.M.G., C.B.
Mr. W. D. Ellis, C.M.G.
Mr. A. J. Harding, C.B.E.
Mr. T. I. K. Lloyd.

REPRESENTING THE JOINT WEST AFRICAN COMMITTEE:-

Mr. J. H. Batty (Chairman)
Sir Edgar Sanders
General W. H. Grey, C.B., C.M.G., } London.
Mr. Lewis A. Smart

Mr. Norman Melland, C.R.E. (Chairman) }
Mr. W. E. Lucas (Vice Chairman) } Manchester.
Mr. G. E. Pickering }
Mr. S. B. Urry }
Mr. A. J. Walters (Assist. Secy.) }

Mr. A. A. Cowan (Chairman) }
Mr. R. L. Holt (Vice Chairman) } Liverpool.
Mr. David Jones }
Mr. J. L. McCartney (Secretary) }

Mr. W. J. Eales, (Secretary to Committee).

Lord Arnold said it gave him real pleasure to meet this
Committee and to preside over its deliberations.

He had heard from the Permanent Officials of the Colonial
Office nothing but appreciation of its work, and of the ad-
vantages of the counsel given by the Committee.

With regard to the Takoradi Harbour Scheme he had arranged
for Mr. Palmer to be present at the meeting, so that any ques-
tions or suggestions could be put to him.

Mr. Melland thanked Lord Arnold for his kind remarks and
on behalf of the Committee congratulated him on his appointment
to the important office of Under Secretary of State for the
Colonies in which they hoped he would achieve distinction.

Any knowledge or information the three Chambers or their

members had of West African affairs would always be freely given at any time.

Proceeding to deal with the Agenda of subjects suggested, Mr. Melland said "the first subject - and we think the most important one we have to bring forward to-day, is the proposal that an expert Commission, on Inchcape lines, should investigate the administrative expenditure and methods of our West African Colonies, with a view to discovering possible economies that may have escaped the notice of the Government officials concerned."

"As you are no doubt aware we have been pressing for such an enquiry, at these periodical meetings, for at least 12 months past, and we believed your predecessor regarded our proposal sympathetically, but in view of his impending visit to West Africa, he asked us to possess ourselves in patience until he himself had had the opportunity of judging on the spot whether such an enquiry would be likely to prove of benefit to the Colonies concerned. But now that this visit has been cancelled, we do not hesitate in again drawing your attention to what we consider a very urgent and important matter."

"In support of our case we would point to the excellent results achieved by the Inchcape Commission in India. And although the West African Colonies are not to be compared in importance with that great Dependency, it is probable that the machinery of all our Colonial administrations would benefit from similar investigation, whether large or small Colonies. We think it probable that there is overlapping, antiquated method, leakage and waste, which such an enquiry would reveal and make possible economies, without any impairment of efficiency, that not only we, but the Colonial Office and the Governors would gladly welcome. We also believe that your Government is imbued with a strong desire and resolve to effect economy of administration, not only in this country, but in all parts of the Empire

under its control. We wish to point out that the railways of the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Nigeria have been investigated at the express request of the Governors thereof, with a view to discovering economies in working, with, we understand, very beneficial results in the case of the first two, owing to the adoption of the investigator's recommendations. The Public Works Dept. of the Gold Coast is undergoing similar investigation, and it seems to us somewhat surprising that the several Governors do not themselves ask for an enquiry into their administrative machinery as a whole."

"At our meeting in this office last May, although Sir Gordon Guggisberg announced that he would object to an enquiry, Sir Hugh Clifford on the other hand said he would welcome it. It is with great regret therefore that we notice from his Annual Address to his Legislative Council that he is receding from that position, and will in future oppose such an enquiry into his finances, which he is of opinion his new Nigerian Constitution is fully qualified to scrutinise and control. But we submit that the numerical increase in the unofficial members of his Council makes them no better qualified to give us an expert opinion as to whether his administration is being run in the most economical manner possible, than for instance, would be the unofficial gentlemen round this table. It is experts that are wanted, and of the standing and experience of those who did such good work in India. Sir Hugh has been good enough to send me a copy of his Address and to invite my criticisms upon it. I have taken the opportunity of pointing out that he has not quite grasped our idea, which is that every department of his administration shall be enquired into, with a view to laying bare uneconomical workings. That our proposal is in no way hostile to his administration, but intended to be helpful, and that we have pressed the matter on the Colonial Office from the first in a perfectly constitutional

manner through the medium of the Joint West African Committee, which represents the unanimous view of the Chambers of Commerce of London, Liverpool and Manchester."

"We give the West African Administrations all credit for the economies they have already effected, and for their endeavour to continue to effect them. But surely they would not object if shown other avenues of economy?"

"It is quite true that we have felt seriously alarmed at the enormous increase in the growth of the expenditure of the West African Colonies of recent years, and whilst fully aware of the big loss of revenue due to the prohibition of the import of "trade" spirits, that increase has been out of all proportion to the increase of trade in the same period. The result has been a heavy increase of taxation, which militates against the interests of trade, and incidently against those of the Colonies themselves, and which we believe would prove unnecessary after a rigorous overhauling and modernising of the machinery of Government."

"We very respectfully ask you to give our proposal your most serious and urgent attention."

Sir Herbert Read said that Mr. Ormsby Gore had rather altered his view so far as Nigeria was concerned at any rate. The last word was spoken by the Secretary of State on the 10th March, when, in reply to a question, he had stated in the House of Commons that "the Lagos Chamber of Commerce asked my predecessor in June last to appoint a Commission to inquire into "Nigerian expenditure. My predecessor did not consider that "any case had been made out for the appointment of such a body, "and I take the same view. I will cause a copy of Sir Hugh Clifford's recent address to the new Legislature, which bears "On this subject, to be placed in the Library."

Sir Hugh Clifford in his latest Address had dealt at

considerable length with the charges of extravagance which had been brought against his administration.

There was the further point that the Inchaape Commission was set up at the instance of the Indian Government. In this case it is suggested that it should be imposed from outside.

Mr. Melland said the Committee would be content if the Governors of the Colonies would ask for such a Commission.

Sir Herbert Read quoted the Governor's speech to the effect that he would strongly resist the appointment of any Commission. It would be a most inopportune, and a most illadvised step to take at the moment.

In the case of Sierra Leone the Governor had nursed the finances back to life again, whilst the Gambia was too small to require this treatment.

With reference to export duties the Governor of Sierra Leone had shewn himself most anxious to meet the merchants. If the proposed enquiry was to be thorough it would take months. He did not believe they would be able to get experts of sufficient standing to carry it out and it would, in any case, be very expensive.

He had considerable sympathy with the view expressed by the Committee and thought a helpful line of advance was that which was already being carried out by the appointment of experts to enquire into various departments.

Lt. Col. Hammond was going back to the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone to see if the recommendations which he had made were being carried out. It would be much more economical to deal with the Departments one by one.

Mr. Melland said if the Secretary of State considered it would be better not to suggest a Commission for every Department but to send out experts to deal with separate Departments, the Joint West African Committee would be prepared to recommend that

course.

Sir H. Read said there were certain Departments in regard to which the Colonial Office already had expert advice from Committees appointed to advise the Secretary of State, e.g. The Tropical African Education Advisory Committee, the Colonial Survey Committee, and the Colonial Advisory Medical and Sanitary Committee the last of which met fortnightly. There was no doubt that an expert inquiry into certain Depts. e.g. the Education Dept. would result in recommendations involving additional expenditure.

In regard to Railways and other works Departments a beginning had already been made.

Lord Arnold said that the reply given by the Secretary of State represented the view of the Department and he felt it must rest there for the time being.

GOLD COAST COLONY - LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. Mr. Melland asked if the Committee could be supplied with particulars of the proposal for the reconstitution of the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast.

Mr. Ellis said that a confidential despatch on that subject had recently arrived.

Mr. Batty said the Governor had mentioned in his address that there would be an enlargement of the Legislative Council and the Committee was hoping that the Secretary of State would afford them an opportunity of expressing their views upon the actual proposals before the matter was definitely settled.

OIL PALM CULTIVATION IN WEST AFRICA. Mr. Melland stated that it was understood that the Report of the Special Committee appointed to deal with this matter had been recently signed and he expressed the hope that the Joint West African Committee might be supplied with a copy or copies of the Report, and also that the Secretary of State would direct that the Report should be published at the

earliest possible moment.

OUTBREAK OF PLAGUE AT SECCONDEE. Mr. Batty said a cable had been received from Secondee on the 14th March stating that an outbreak of Plague had occurred at that Port which it was believed originated at Tarquah.

Sir Herbert Read said the Colonial Office had heard that there were four cases of Bubonic Plague at Secondee. He mentioned that the Rockefeller Foundation had undertaken to send out two or three medical men to Secondee who would stay there for two years at least to study Yellow Fever, the cost being borne by the Foundation.

Mr. Batty said the Committee was informed that the sanitary condition of Secondee and Tarquah had fallen back to that which existed prior to the outbreak of Yellow Fever in 1923. They were not being kept up to the standard to safeguard the lives of the inhabitants.

Sir Herbert Read suggested that the subject be brought up at a future meeting of the Committee on this subject, and this was agreed to.

DRAFT CUSTOMS ORDINANCE - NIGERIA. Mr. Cowan said that there had been certain objections and difficulties in connection with this Ordinance, the Liverpool Chamber had received a cable from the Lagos Chamber on the 17th March, from which it appeared that the Government had accepted practically all of the recommendations relative to this Ordinance which had been submitted through the Association of West African Merchants.

UDI COALFIELDS: Mr. Melland referred to a draft scheme which had been submitted by the Joint West African Committee to the Colonial Office in November, 1923, and said the Committee would like to be informed as to the view of the Colonial Office upon the proposals therein contained.

Mr. Harding referred to the statement by Sir Hugh Clifford

in his Address on 11th February 1924, when he said "I am unable to support this proposal at the present time and in existing circumstances." The late Secretary of State agreed with that view.

Mr. Jones referred to Sir Hugh Clifford's remarks in his address on certain figures given by Lord Kysant comparing the cost of coal for export from Nigeria and coal for export from Natal. The figures given by Lord Kysant were accurate, but some confusion had arisen owing to the Governor of Nigeria quoting figures for railage on bunker coal whilst Lord Kysant was dealing solely with the railage rate on export coal.

Mr. Harding said the Nigerian Government was not prepared to produce and carry coal at a loss in order to build up an export trade. The Duke of Devonshire had told Sir Hugh Clifford that he saw no reason to reconsider his view that the coalfields should not, under existing circumstances, be thrown open to private enterprise. It had, however, been suggested to Sir Hugh Clifford that the Nigerian Government should prepare for the future by now giving consideration to the regulations and the conditions under which it might, at some later date, be possible to lease areas containing carboniferous minerals outside the area required for Government purposes.

This suggestion was being considered by the Nigerian Government.

Mr. Melland said from this it would appear that the Joint West African Committee's proposal had not been completely negatived but only postponed.

Mr. Smart enquired whether there was any authority for the statement that the Nigerian Government hoped to supply coal at Bukuru at 40s. per ton.

Mr. Harding said the Department had no knowledge of any such proposal and there was certainly no intention of the

Government taxing the general trade of the Colony to provide coal at less than the economic cost.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE EASTERN RAILWAY IN NIGERIA. The Committee enquired the position in regard to the construction of this Railway, what route it would follow and also the estimated cost.

In reply to these enquiries Mr. A. J. Harding quoted from the memorandum which is here reproduced.

The Nigerian Eastern Railway was designed -

- (1) To provide transport facilities for the coal discovered in 1906 at Udi, 150 miles from the coast.
- (2) To open up railway communication with new areas.
- (3) To facilitate administration of the Central and parts of the S.E. Provinces of Nigeria and
- (4) To provide an alternative route from the Northern Provinces to the coast.

This railway was to run from Port Harcourt on the coast via the coalfields to a junction with the Western Railway near Kaduna.

On account of the war construction was stopped when the line had been completed to the coalfields (i.e. the Port Harcourt-Enugu section of 151 miles). It was resumed in 1920 and the post-war programme falls into two parts:-

- (a) The continuation of the Port Harcourt-Enugu line to Kakuri (a distance of 426 miles) where it will join the Western Railway.
- (b) A branch line from Kagoro (on the Enugu-Kakuri line) to Bukuru in the tinfields. The length of this line is put at 43 miles but it has not yet been finally surveyed.

Estimate of cost. The most recent estimate of the cost of the post-war programme (i.e. (a) and (b) above) is £6,383,000.

The route to be followed by the Enugu-Kakuri line is first nearly due north to the Benue River (141 miles from Enugu) which will be negotiated by means of a train ferry, a bridge being too expensive. Thence the line courses Nassarawa Province via Lafia (200 miles from Enugu) and follows the Mada Valley. At 290 miles from Enugu it reaches the Rogun Kloof where further survey with a view to reducing the cost is necessary. It then traverses the province of Zaria in a North westerly direction until it

joins the Western Railway at Kakuri, a few miles South of Kaduna junction.

Position in regard to construction. Sir Hugh Clifford in his recent address to the Nigerian Legislative Council reported that railhead reached the Benue River in March 1923, that earthwork construction from the Enugu end had been completed for 240 miles at the end of November last, that bridge and Culvert construction at the end of December last was completed for 248 miles, except for the big bridge over the Mada River (229 miles from Enugu) and that it was anticipated that by the end of this month track laying would reach the Mada River. Also by the end of November last earthwork construction from the Kakuri end (i.e. Southwards from the Junction (with the Western Railway) had been completed for 52 miles, bridge and culvert construction for 27 miles and track laying for 6 miles.

TAKORADI HARBOUR SCHEME AND CENTRAL PROVINCE RAILWAY - GOLD COAST

Mr. Melland said that the Committee upon the previous evening had a very interesting conversation with Mr. Palmer who was, it was hoped, now fully acquainted with the views of the Merchants, and would be able to study the question also from their point of view.

Mr. Palmer was present during the discussion on this item of the Agenda and answered several questions raised.

Mr. Batty submitted for consideration the point whether in view of the uncertainty in regard to Takoradi, it was advisable to press on too rapidly with the construction of the Central Province Railway. If the Harbour was not ready the completion of the Railway would cause great congestion at Seccondoo.

PUBLIC WORK DEPARTMENT - GOLD COAST COLONY. The Committee was informed that copies of Sir S. Crookshanks' Report upon this