

24
1923-24

KENYA

2149
14 JAN 24

FROM
Hodson, A.

DATE
29 October 1923

FOR CIRCULATION:-
Mr. *Bostwick*
Mr. *H. H. Read*
A. G. S. 72 of B.
U.S. of S.
C. of S.
No. of S.
No. of S.
No. of S.
No. of S.

SUBJECT
Letter to Sir H. Read regarding Lord Curzon's statement in the House of Lords on the absence of reports by Spawen from consuls in Abyssinia.

16 January 1924
3019
3
Arrival, (S.O.)
Further copies (S.O.)
To Hodson 4.9.24
To Fitzpatrick 4.9.24
F.O.

MINUTES

H. H. Read wished this report as Mr. Hodson expresses himself rather freely about Lord Curzon.
We seem to have no paper directly bearing upon the point, other point or issue but I annex copy of Hansard and of the *Quint.* paper referred to in the debate.

Dpt. for custom research.

2149
14 JAN 24

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

11th January, 1924.

(E 353/353/1)

My dear Read,

I return the letter from Consul Hodson in which he complains of Lord Curzon's alleged statement in the House of Lords that consuls "had not been reporting on the conditions in Abyssinia".

Lord Curzon's actual words will be found in column 1473 of Hansard for the 30th July last year. It will be seen that with reference to a suggestion made by Lord Beauchamp in the course of the same debate (column 1464 at foot) he said there were no reports from British consuls "dealing with slave owning and slave trading". The report of Messrs. Athill and Darley, which Lord Curzon refused to publish as being out of date and misleading in present circumstances, had been discussed earlier in the same debate. Athill and Darley were/

Mr H. Read, K.C.M.G., C.B.,

were not strictly speaking Consular Officers when their report was written, but it is mentioned to show that Lord Curzon was not evading the issue by a mere quibble. Apart from that report and a historical memorandum about slavery by Consul Walker, which was attached to it, and which Consul Walker himself regarded as a piece of private research, it is absolutely true that repeated and careful examination of our archives has failed to reveal any reports about slavery from consuls in Abyssinia from the beginning of 1913 to the day on which Lord Curzon spoke. There is a single partial exception to the above general statement. In June 1932 Consul Walker wrote a private letter to Major Dodds in the course of which he mentioned that a caravan of about one hundred supposed slaves had been sent into the interior and that he believed they were destined for the Empress and Ras Tafari.

This report, if it can be called a report, was deliberately excluded from the White Paper on Slavery

in/

in Abyssinia, Cmd. 1858 of 1923, because it was calculated to give offence to Taffari and the Empress. For the same reason no other mention has been made of publicly.

The same White Paper included the most recent despatches from Russell and Sir R. Coryndon, neither of whom mentioned the receipt of any reports about slavery from His Majesty's Consuls in Abyssinia.

Copies of this correspondence are being sent to Russell privately.

Yours ever,

Ernest A. Crowe

Memorandum

Dear Sir

Reference is made to the effect that

it has not been reported by the

Abbyssinians and the

by the

The

The

It is

and

and

and

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and

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and

and

parts of Bonds where
made the original
statement. It is strange
a man of his position
have made such a mistake.

am writing to you as I
should not like the C.C.
to think these representa-
tives here was so stupid.

I shall be grateful if you
would perhaps let Sir James
Masterman Smith know the
facts.

Sincerely
Hamilton

16 January, 1924.

I have shown privately to Sir J. Masterton-Smith and Sir Eyre Crowe your letter of the 29th of October about Lord Curzon's statement in the House of Lords on the 30th of July regarding Abyssinia.

Sir Eyre Crowe points out that Lord Curzon did not say that the Consuls "had not been reporting on the conditions in Abyssinia." What he said was that there were no reports from British Consuls "dealing with slave owning and slave trading." Apart from the Athill-Darley report, which had been discussed earlier in the debate, I am assured that repeated and careful examination of the Foreign Office archives has failed to reveal any reports about slavery from Consuls in Abyssinia from the beginning of 1913 to the day on which Lord Curzon spoke. There is a single partial exception to this general statement, in the shape of the mention in a private letter from Walker to Dodds of a caravan of about

408
16 January, 1924.

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Sir Byre Crowe points out that Lord Curzon did not say that the Consuls "had not been reporting on the conditions in Abyssinia." What he said was that there were no reports from British Consuls "dealing with slave owning and slave trading." Apart from the Athill-Darley report, which had been discussed earlier in the debate, I am assured that repeated and careful examination of the Foreign Office archives has failed to reveal any reports about slavery from Consuls in Abyssinia from the beginning of 1913 to the day on which Lord Curzon spoke. There is a single partial exception to this general statement, in the shape of the mention in a private letter from Walker to Dodds of a caravan of about

hundred supposed slaves believed to be destined for
the Empress and Ras Tafari. This has ~~been~~ not
been made public owing to the possibility of giving
aid to Tafari and the Empress.

Yours sincerely,

N. J. R.

hundred supposed slaves believed to be destined for
the Empress and Ras Tafari. This has ~~been~~ ^{been} ~~made~~ ^{been} public owing to the possibility of giving
offense to Tafari and the Empress.

Yours sincerely,

N. J. R. *Handwritten signature*

Majr.
S. M. Abyssinia

BRITISH LEGATION,
ADIS ABABA

13. 7. 24.

Private.

My dear Sir Herbert,

Many thanks for your letter
of 13th January which has only just
reached me.

You state in that "Sir Eyre
Crawe points out that Lord Curzon
did not say that the Consuls" had
not been reporting on the conditions
in Abyssinia." what he said was
that there were no reports from
British Consuls "dealing with slave
trading and slave trading" but in
the

Sir Herbert Read. K.C.M.G.
etc. etc. etc.

Yours sincerely,

Donald Nelson

weakening of the central authority, and I dare say a revival of some of the worst abuses of slavery to which reference has been made.

The second point which was made was with regard to the testimony of M. Montandon. It is quite true that I was unaware of that Report and that I had not seen it, but I gather from what the noble Earl has said that it has only just been published; but here again, allow me to insinuate a word of doubt. M. Montandon has never been to Abyssinia since 1811: how can he produce modern evidence? The noble Earl deprecated evidence four years old; but M. Montandon's evidence is ten years, twelve years, and thirteen years old. Of course I shall be only too happy to study the Report when I see it, but unless M. Montandon has correspondents in Abyssinia who give him information up to date, it appears to me that he is merely relying upon information that is now quite out of date.

The third point was as to the Reports of our consuls, and here the most rev. Primate appeared to be somewhat astonished that our consular officials have not reported to us upon a matter of such evident public concern. I think I ought explain that our consuls there are not consuls in the ordinary sense of the term at all. They are persons who are engaged for one or other reason, very likely in business or trading, or something of the sort in those remote regions, and their duties are in the main the duties of fostering trade and of promoting British interests. I do not imagine that it ever occurs to them that it is any part of their duty to send a report upon Slavery to us, because they do not send any report at all. There is no report at all, and when I enquired from the Foreign Office whether I could find any reports and extract from them any references to Slavery such as the noble Earl desired, I was informed that there were no such reports because they do not send them. I have given instructions that these gentlemen are to be written to and informed that we should like a report upon this particular question. There is, of course, no hope that their replies will arrive in time to be placed before the League this year, and I doubt very much whether the information in the possession of the League will enable it to

The Marquess Curzon of Kedleston.

take any very active steps this year. But it is clear that the League or anybody can only act when the information is fairly adequate and complete, and we will hope to make our contribution to that sum total of knowledge as soon as it is possible.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

DENTISTS BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order) Bill reported without amendment.

UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE BILL. [C.L.],

Order of the Day read for the consideration of Commons Amendments.

Moved, That the Commons Amendments be now considered.—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

COMMONS AMENDMENTS.

[*The references are to Bill No. 44.*]

Clause 2, page 2, line 18, at end insert ("Emily Penrose, O.B.E., Master of Arts, Principal of Somerville College")

line 23, at end insert ("Charles Robert Mowbray Fraser Cruttwell, Master of Arts, Dean, Tutor and Lecturer of Hertford College")

Clause 3, page 2, line 42, at end insert ("William Spens, C.B.E., Master of Arts, Fellow of Corpus Christi College; Bertha Surtees Phillpots, O.B.E., Doctor of Letters, Mistress of Girton College")

Clause 6, page 3, line 35, after ("modifications") insert ("not being modifications directly dealing with the curriculum or course of study in the University")

line 36, at end insert the following new subsection

("(2) In making any statutes or regulations under this Act, the Commissioners shall have regard to the need of facilitating the admission of poorer students to the Universities and colleges.")

Clause 8, page 4, line 38, leave out ("fifty") and insert ("sixty")

page 5, line 5, at end insert the following new clause:—

Exemption from mortmain.

("The exemption from the obligation to obtain a licence in mortmain which is given by section sixty of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1877, in respect

EARL BEAUCHAMP: I quoted several things which are to be found in this Report, dated 1922, and no doubt, if I searched it, I could find a great deal more of recent date. I might remind the noble Marquess of one or two quotations which referred to the Maji Report.

THE MARQUESS CURZON OF KEDLESTON: But that is four years old.

EARL BEAUCHAMP: Yes, but I think the noble Marquess reproached me because he thought I was referring to something in the Montandon Report in 1911 or 1912. What I spoke of, however, was much more recent than that. I venture to press the noble Marquess upon this point. Here was the Maji Commission Report, revealing the most serious state of things, and acknowledging the existence of all this slavery. It was presented to the Foreign Office. Did the Foreign Office do nothing? Was it content with this Report, and did it not ask for any more Reports or information? Did it ask its officials whether this slavery, which was attested by the Maji Commission Report, had ceased, or were they content with the Report as it stood?

The noble Marquess must really forgive me if I venture to say that I am not satisfied in this matter, and I cannot help feeling that a great deal more might have been done to secure information upon the subject. This is not the first time that the question has been raised, not here but in another place, and over and over again the representatives of the Foreign Office have been urged that these Reports should be presented and that information should be given. But the answer never before was that the information was not up to date and, therefore, could not be given. This is the first time that we have heard it. But now, if I understand it, the noble Marquess is good enough to say that he will get up-to-date information and that when he gets that up-to-date information it will be presented to the League. If that is the intention of the noble Marquess, I thank him very heartily for the assurance he has given. I shall look forward to those Reports being presented, not, I am afraid, in time for the next meeting of the League but at any rate before the end of this year, and on the

understanding that this up-to-date information is going to be asked for by the noble Marquess from the responsible officials in Africa, I should be ready to withdraw my Resolution. Had it not been that I had a promise of that kind from the noble Marquess I certainly should have asked your Lordships' House to proceed to a Division.

Before I sit down, may I refer once more to the Report or the Memorandum which the noble Marquess tells us was attached to the Report of the Maji Commission. I do not know whether it would be possible for the noble Marquess to present that or to lay it upon the Table of the House. It would be a very valuable piece of information, dealing, as I think he said, rather with the juridical aspect of the matter than the actual state of affairs as it exists. I do not know whether he has any objection to the presentation of that Report. I think it would be a very valuable document if it could be presented. May I venture to repeat that it is on the understanding that this up-to-date information is to be asked for, that I withdraw my Motion and do not press it to a Division.

THE MARQUESS CURZON OF KEDLESTON: My Lords, there are one or two slight misunderstandings which I should like to remove. The first is with regard to the reference that was made to the pronouncement by the present Regent of Abyssinia, Ras Tafari, that he was warmly in sympathy with this desire of the League of Nations to inquire into the matter and would co-operate with them in every way. Our representative at Addis Ababa, seeing this report, enquired of Ras Tafari whether it was true, and he denied it altogether. I think, therefore, the noble Earl must be a little bit cautious in accepting the belief that we shall meet with that warm co-operation from the present Regent which we all desire. His predecessor, Menelik, who died I think in 1913, did take a relatively strong attitude corresponding greatly with our feelings and desires about slavery. But, as the House knows, when Menelik died chaos and anarchy prevailed in the country and every man was a law unto himself. The Provincial Governors assumed the right to control the regions under their influence. No doubt, there has been during that period a considerable

Ph. Jeffries, Mr. Butterley

Pl see the 2. letters attached, and Sir G. Grou...

file in the envelope.

1. a.c.k. both. Thank for the photos. o ex. we
interest. Say they will be shown to Mr
Oliphant.

For - last with
the envelope
(2/2)

? send ~~(copy)~~ the photograph letters & 1
photos. to Mr Oliphant. F.O. for her w
return, explaining that they have
been received from Mr Hodson & are
forwarded in Sir H Read's absence

The other letters should be
attached to 2149/24.

for
2.9.24

W.L.S. ? you will be prepared to
sign the letters.

(Lord Curzon was not
well briefed as to the names
of air carriers in Abyssinia!)

for 2.9.24

W.L.S. 2.9.24

BRITISH CONSULATE,

MAJI,

S. W. ABYSSINIA,

VIA ADIS ABABA.

412

15. 7. 1926

My dear Sir Herbert,

I send you a few photographs
 which may interest you. The first
 is of the Boma Plateau taken
 from the low land lying to the
 west. It shows the three principal
 peaks which is Sab's Factory. The
 others are of Boma Natives.
 Notice the circular cutting knife
 on the arm, the strange way of
 doing the hair, long spears
 etc. etc.

Please give my kindest regards
 to Mrs. Reed & Sheila.

Yours very sincerely

Ronald Hedderley

Thanks you will show
 me dip. sent at
 to the
 my own

Downing Street,

7 September, 1924.

Dear Mr. Oliphant,

The enclosed photographs and letter have been sent by Mr. A. W. Hodson, Consul at Maji, Abyssinia, to Sir Herbert Read, in whose absence I send them over in accordance with Hodson's request. Perhaps you will let me have them back at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

W. C. Bateman

L. OLIPHANT, ESQ.

F.O.

4/sep/92

Dear Mr. Bateman,
 many thanks for letting
 me see the enclosed.
 Yours sincerely
 Laurence Oliphant

H. 2149/

H. Kemba. Sec.

Downing Street,

4. September, 1936.

Dear Hodson,

In Sir Herbert Read's absence from the Office, your letter of the 12th of July, in reply to his of the 16th of January about reports from Abyssinia, has come to me.

I have also received your letter of the 15th of July enclosing some photographs taken locally. The photographs are of remarkable interest, and I will show them to Sir H. Read if there is an opportunity before he leaves for Mauritius. In the meantime I am sending them over to Cliphart at the Foreign Office, as you request.

Yours sincerely,

W. C. B. Stanley

SRCA

to bidet

A. W. HODSON, HQ., C.M.S.

Downing Street,

4 September, 1924.

Dear Mr. Cliphant,

The enclosed photographs and letter have been sent by Mr. A. W. Nelson, Consul at Najd, Abyssinia, to Sir Herbert Scott, in whose absence I send them over in accordance with Nelson's request. Perhaps you will not mind my doing this at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

W. R. Robinson

L. CLIPHANT, Esq.

Enclosures of



W
A/Hodson - Eng

MINUTE.

Mr. Seale 3/9/24

Mr. Jeffries 3/9

Mr. Bottomley 4/5/25

Mr G. Davis.

Mr G. Grindle.

Mr H. Road.

Mr J. Moxton Smith.

Mr Arnold.

Mr Thomas.

January

Alphonia, has come to

I have also received

Your letter of the 15th of July
enclosing some photographs
taken locally. The
photographs are of

Recd on 5/11/24
re: return
of Mr [unclear]
officially
(H)

C. D.
1897
10

11. Feb. 1897

W. C. Bostonley
DRAFT

to the
out.

L. B. Blythe, Esq.

received from
the Consul at

The
included photographs and
letter have been sent
to Mr. Hodson Head by
Mr. A. W. Hodson, Consul at
Cay's, Abyssinia; and
have been shown to
Herbert Read, in
absence
I send them over in
accordance with Hodson's

- Mr. H. Read.
- Mr. J. Macdonald.
- Lord Arnold.
- Mr. Thomas.

15.7.97
Photographs

Send show stamps

remarkable interest, of Sir H.
if there is any opportunity before he
Read will I am sure, be
less for Mauritius.
I should like to see them. In the

I am
mean time I have ~~sent~~ ^{and am} sending
them over to Blythe, at the
as you request.

Yours sincerely
W. C. Bostonley

request; perhaps you
will let me have them
back at your convenience

Yours sincerely
C. B. Howell

H. 2149/24 Kenya (Secret)

G. D.
16 JAN
1904

Quarto for Sir

2nd

16th Jan. 1904

H. Read's signature.

Sir J. Masterton - (Smith)
Privately to Sir Eyre Crowe
I have shown your letter

DRAFT.

of the 29th of Oct. about ~~the~~ ^{the H. of C.} ~~and~~ ^{and} Curzon's statement on the 30th of July ^{regarding} ~~from~~ Abyssinia - ~~privately to~~

W. Hodson Esq. C.M.G.

~~Sir Eyre Crowe~~

MINUTE.

Sir Eyre Crowe points out that Lord Curzon did not say that the Combes "had not been reporting on the conditions in Abyssinia." what he said was that there were no reports from British Combes "dealing with beer owning and slave trading." Apart from the Athill-Darley report, which had been discussed earlier in the debate, I am assured that repeated and careful

- Mr. Jeffries 14/1
- Mr. Boddensley 14.1.24
- Mr.
- Sir C. Davis
- Sir G. Grindle
- Sir H. Read
- Sir J. Masterton Smith (away)
- Mr. Ormsby Gore
- Duke of Devonshire
- for conon

15
H. J. 92

Examination of the Foreign
Office archives has failed
to reveal any reports about
slavery from sources in
Abyssinia from the beginning
of 1913 to the day on which
Lord Curzon spoke. There
is a single notable exception
to this general statement,
in the shape of the mention
in a private letter from
Walker to Dods of a
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negro slaves believed to
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to Tafari and the Emperor.

Yours sincerely
H. G. P. C.