

1923

KENYA

C O
17040

REC'D
REU: 5 APR 23

FROM

~~Secret~~

DATE

Curtis, Ph L.

19 March

FOR CIRCULATION:—

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Asst. U.S. of S.

Perm^t U.S. of S.

Part^r U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

SUBJECT

Indian Question

Letter from Mr Handley D Hooper
upon the intentions of white settlers
in the event of their demands
not being met

Previous Paper

16068

MINUTES

Requested for record by correspondence with
Mr Campbell in H. Reed's room.
Party, with whole to
Bring up 23rd April

608.
154-23
at once

Shown to Sir R. (myself on 15th 23)
(the first opportunity)

Party
608
11.5.23

Subsequent Paper

MINUTES.

MINUTES NOT TO BE WRITTEN
ON THIS SIDE.

Secret.

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Kahuhia,
Fort Hall,

February 14th 1923

Dear MacLennan,

You will have received my cable today probably, and I am relying upon your acumen to discover its meaning. This letter will reach you after the events which called for the cable have occurred.

Until last week I did not anticipate any serious consequences of the threat of the Convention of Associations (more commonly the Settlers' Parliament) to take action if home decisions on the Indian question were forced upon this country. I have been shown sufficient during the last week to change my opinion. Through the local planting associations the white population is pledged to armed resistance if the minimum demands for immigration restrictions are not met, and all compromise on electoral and segregational questions are subordinated to the immigration clause. The white opposition to Indian claims consists of better class Europeans (the majority of whom have held commissions in army or navy) who have been organized during the past year and who seriously contemplate taking over the government of the country "in the name of the King in contradistinction to the authority of those officers of the Crown who are betraying the Empire and deserting their compatriots under the insistent pressure of India." They intend a coup d'etat, and wish to effect a bloodless revolution, counting on the sympathies of their friends, the white officers of Police and King's African Rifles, to paralyse the effectiveness of the existing government.

Apparently they do not wish to disturb anyone who is willing to carry on as best he can under a de facto government: only certain marked men who are known to be irrevocably bound to the maintenance of the existing order are to be quietly removed, and their places filled: missionaries and administrative officers will be asked to carry on without having to submit to any form of

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oath of allegiance. This spectacular coup is intended to bring home to the Imperial Government the moral resolution and lack of flippancy in the protests of our local Fascisti. Should the Imperial Government fail to sit down under it, and send imperial troops to effect what local troops have failed to do, it's a moot question how far imperial troops - if of European blood - would stand the test, when the situation was put to them in the light of local opinion i.e. that they were here to dispossess and shoot down their own countrymen to make way for shoals of disloyal Indian immigrants.

It's hard to believe: one's tempted to talk of comic opera until Ireland occurs to one's mind.

The whole proposal bristles with terrific risks, and the majority of Europeans under the pledge is alive to them, and is desperately afraid of the chaos which one hot-headed young fool may precipitate: but they are serious enough concerned with the prospect of Indian domination, to be prepared to face risks: the spirit is by no means the comic opera spirit, but a feeling of real dread of the consequences of their action, and yet of moral obligation to the vow which most of them have taken. The intention of most is only to put up a really good bluff, but a bluff I should not care to call. I think the plan stands a good chance of success, so far as police and K.A.R. go: I don't think the officers would lead their men against Englishmen; the dangers crop up when it comes to policing the country, setting the native an example of force which he may not be slow to follow, and maintaining peace and security in the Indian bazaars and locations. If it's brought off I pity the home government. What may happen is that the Governor, who realises the gravity of the situation and is busy making time, may retire. The Chief Secretary, on being asked to take over, will also retire, and so the business will be held up for a month or two, during which the home gov. will look round for dependable troops to accompany a new governor out here. This will ~~gain~~ delay any ostensible move on the part of the "provisional government" crowd.

Personally I think that crowded suburbs of low-class Indians artisans, even if lands are denied them, will operate very disadvantageously against the native. I should like to see a very stringent immigration law of equal application to Europeans and Indian enforced so that the native might have a chance of coming to his own. We've enough foreigners to last us a long time. I think that the administrative officers in native districts will stick to their guns, simply to protect

the natives against acts of aggression and to maintain peace - whatever happens and it may happen within a week or ten days. My cable went to you, because the previous general cable from mission sources did not include a repetition to your office, and the primary object seems to pull every string possible until the home government is fully prepared to call a bluff which may end in serious resistance and a guerilla warfare by men who know this big country and its natives from end to end. What will happen in the native areas if it comes to that, heaven only knows, probably the murder of most of the Indians and the looting of their stores first, afterwards general chaos.

Yours sincerely,

Handley D. Hooper.