

E. AFRICA
22601

in Capt. B. S. C.

Date
1912

July
previous Paper.

1942
A. Gold

Steamer Service to East Africa

Reports on Complaints made by East & Highland
resp. defects in the Service. eg ventilation inadequate
accommodation irregularly & unsatisfactorily, all
of which are being remedied. Calls attention to
delay caused by unsatisfactory pier & wharfage
arrangements at Kilindini.

W. Buller

Asst. Secy. Gen. to the Govt.
I had to have this paper
sent to you to remedy the defects
of which complaints have been made,
and say that the Govt. is well aware
of the importance of putting in
hand as soon as possible the
work of reconstructing the pier
at Kilindini and other work.

subsequent Paper

2416

adapting his feet to modern equipment
And had up of him. t
Rus. Ryaraland.

W.H.

23. VII.

~~Robert~~ Dr. G. Fildes

He turns the tables on us rather
successfully in the matter of Kibindoni
Proved as proposed?

W.H.

July 23

H. J. R.

23/VII

at once

Ch. 247

The Union-Castle Mail Steamship Company, Limited.

Telegrams: Union-Castle
 LONDON
 Telephone:
 2413 (8 Lines)

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE
 ADDRESSED TO THE COMPANY

In reply
 please quote

G.

British Consular Street

London 17th July

1912.

The Right Honourable Lewis Harcourt, P.C., M.P.,
 Secretary of State for the Colonies,
 DOWNING STREET. S.W.

Sir,

Just before leaving South Africa for England - the correspondence having been forwarded to me - I had the honour to receive your letter enclosing (1) copy of a communication from His Excellency, the Governor of the East Africa Protectorate, (Sir Percy Girouard) dated Nairobi 13th February last, also (2) copy of a communication from His Excellency, the Governor of Nyassaland, dated 17th February 1912 with its enclosures.

You are aware of course that it was only in the latter part of April last that I took over the control of the Union-Castle Line, and, seeing that I left England for South Africa on the 4th May in order to acquaint myself at first hand with questions affecting shipping interests there, and have just returned, I have not had much time to look into matters, but you will allow me to assure you that I am thoroughly alive to providing the most up to date facilities for

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the increasing demands of the East African passenger trade, and just before I sailed for the Cape I ordered a large new steamer - 10,000/11,000 tons - to be followed by others of a similar type, in the plans of which vessels the hot weather and other conditions pertaining to the East African voyage will be very carefully studied and provided for.

In the meantime, so long as the steamers which we require for the present to employ in this service are not steamers specially adapted to the trade, there will be, I am afraid, some occasion for dissatisfaction in respect of ventilation and otherwise, but, while I am informed that the complaints by the Nyassaland Officials are ~~very much~~ exaggerated, I am assured that the utmost is being done to minimize any inconvenience and to make the berthing arrangements as comfortable as can possibly be done, including the suitable berthing of invalid passengers, which latter point is particularly referred to in the despatch from the Governor of the East Africa Protectorate.

I pass on to the strong complaints made by the Nyassaland Officials in respect of the unpunctuality

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of the steamers at Chinde. I find that there have been communications on the subject between our Agencies. As indicated in the correspondence which you enclosed to me, the difficulties complained of seem to have been owing to the unreliability of the telegraph service from Chinde, but this I believe has been remedied by an arrangement whereby our Natal Office, which is always well acquainted with the movements of the steamers, telegraphs from Natal direct. I trust therefore that there have been no recent instances of passengers from Nyassaland being without more accurate knowledge of the date upon which the steamers may be expected at Chinde.

I should like to add a few words in respect of the complaints connected with the irregularity of the service. In the first place I would remark that the agreement for the East African service requires us to maintain a service of steamers similar in tonnage, speed and accommodation to the present intermediate steamers used in the South African service. This condition has been amply fulfilled. In return the Crown Agents, on behalf of the Protectorates of East Africa, Uganda, Nyassaland and Zanzibar, undertook to do all in their power to support our service. It is an expensive service and all the Government passengers were promised us, as well as all the Protectorates'

c i s

freight, so that, I trust there will be a disposition on the part of the Protectorates to consider that for the purpose of keeping up a British East African steamship service it is necessary that we should receive their full support, though for the time being there may be some defects in the service. I am anxious that the timetable should be as reliable as possible, but at the best an absolute adherence to dates is almost impracticable, considering the varying conditions of weather connected with the prevalence of the monsoons and otherwise. Moreover, there is a difficulty in the matter of the quantities of cargo to be dealt with. Some steamers have more cargo and some less. It is most essential that the best arrangements possible should be made at the ports to afford the steamers expeditious discharge. I see that the Nyassaland complaints referred to the "Gascon" in January last. This steamer had some 3500 tons cargo, material etc, to discharge at Mombasa and was detained eight days there, while in other cases the steamer may perhaps only have about 1500 tons for Mombasa which must make a material difference as regards the steamer being up to time, or early, or late. I am very much concerned about the despatch of the steamers at Mombasa. The same steamer, the "Gascon", was kept eleven days there at the end of April to discharge some 4000 tons material, etc, and it will be readily

• 5 •

understood how irksome this must be to passengers for farther ports who are detained at Mombasa for this length of time. There are apparently many obstacles to the prompt discharge of steamers. The lighters may take the cargo out of the steamers but they cannot get discharge at the wharf. The Railway Department declines to work on the wharf at night for want, I understand, of proper lighting arrangements. The shed and Railway arrangements at Kilindini are alleged to be ill-designed and they are certainly inadequate. We hear too of great confusion in the sheds which are blocked from end to end, so that consignees have the utmost difficulty in getting their goods. Such representations as we have thought fit to make to the Uganda Railway will I hope receive due attention, and it is needless to state that I learned with the greatest satisfaction that the Government had arranged the loan of £500,000 for developments in Uganda and British East Africa, including the improvement of the port of Kilindini. The deep water pier, for which funds were voted over a year ago, is an urgent necessity, and I sincerely trust, in the interests of the prosperity of British East Africa, and in the interests also of the successful carrying out of our steamship service, including the regularity and promptitude of the service, that measures will not be for a moment unnecessarily delayed in respect of

• 6 •

adapting the port of Kilindini to its important and
increasing trade,

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Oliver Phillips

Chairman

MS

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Ea

~~MS~~ 29 July 1912

Sir,
I am to thank the
recd of yours of the
17th of July & to inform you
that he is glad to learn
that steps are being taken to
remedy the defects in the
L.A. Service of the WC Mail
Satisfactory arrangements
have been made.

2. Mr Harcourt is fully
well aware of
value to the importance of
putting in hand at the earliest
possible date the work of
reconstructing

The Chairman,
The Union-Castle Mail
55 Collyer

MINUTE.

Mr. Kerridge 26/7

Mr. Butler 26/7

Sir G. Fiddes.

Sir H. Just.

Sir J. Anderson.

Lord Emmott.

Mr. Harcourt.

Copy for
Ea 457/29/12
207/29/12
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L 214

Conducting the day

notes per at Kilindini &

others adapting ~~the~~

to ~~modern~~ ^{modern} requirements

Jany
H