

EAST AFR. PROT.
12563

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Transport in N. Frontier dist.

Send report for his report on recent journey through Abyssinia, which arrived at the ... Piggott let ...
of for ...

Send ... a copy of ...
ask whether he can
make many suggestions for ...
forwarding the receipt of the report
to in 12049.

has
April 25
at once.

subsequent I per

26, Windsor Street,
EDINBURGH.

April 23, 1912.

Recd: 24 APR 12

The Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office,
L o n d o n.

Sir,

4/25
840/5
In reply to your letter of the 16th inst., I have the honour to forward herewith an excerpt from the Report on my recent journey through Abyssinia, on which I am now engaged, dealing with the transport question in the Northern Frontier District and which I think answers most of the points raised in Mr Archer's communication.

Without some knowledge of the origin and cause of the camel disease now prevailing, it is difficult indeed to suggest measures to combat its ravages. If anything of its etiology has been discovered, it might place me in a position to recommend measures for its suppression, and I recommend that a cable be sent to Nairobi to inquire if the Veterinary Pathologist has arrived at any definite conclusion from the pathological slides and specimens sent him.

Might I suggest the following wording for the cable: "Has etiology of prevailing camel disease in Northern Frontier District been discovered. Have any measures been adopted for its suppression. Is Veterinary Officer touring district."

If the answer to this cable be communicated to me, I will endeavour to further advise you.

I have to apologise for the delay in answering your letter, due to my absence from home.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

W. J. ...
Chief Veterinary Officer.

Transport is by far the most pressing question at the present time in the Frontier District. Without an adequate transport system not only is administration well nigh impossible, but the very lives of the officers and men employed throughout this vast district are jeopardized, and great credit is due to the Frontier officers for the way in which they have endeavoured to carry out their duties under trying and difficult conditions.

The chief cause of the breakdown in transport has been the great mortality among the camels. During the early part of 1911, Occidiosis - a disease somewhat like anthrax pest - had run through the Rendile herds, causing great mortality; but according to reports received from Veterinary Officer Doherty, this disease had gradually died out.

On my arrival at the Frontier District at the end of August another disease, however, had made its appearance. This disease, which the natives say was new to them, resembled "mumps". Captain Neave had made a preliminary investigation with regard to it and had found that free opening of the swollen glands of the throat, or severe blistering of the affected parts, was attended with beneficial results.

Several cases of this disease came under notice during my visit to Marsabit, and on an animal which had died of the disease a post-mortem examination was held. The chief and practically only symptom of the disease is an acute and extensive swelling of the glands in the region of the throat. The onset of the disease is rapid, there is no temperature, and death appears to be due to asphyxia caused by mechanical obstruction.

The post-mortem examination showed an acute inflammation

of the fauces and larynx. The glands of the throat were enlarged and oedematous, and the tissues of the throat and upper part of the neck were infiltrated with a whitish gelatinous material. Blood and glass smears, together with the organs, were forwarded to the Veterinary Pathologist at Nairobi, whose report has not yet come to hand.

The disease suggested ankidra, but the symptoms are not those of this disease. That it may be an acute form of the disease is suggested by the course of the illness, which is generally to the present day.

We were of the opinion at the time that the disease was of a contagious nature. This information lately received from Mr Deck, the Veterinary Officer, has been confirmed, as it is stated that the disease has been introduced into the district through the hands of a trader.

The disease is contagious among live stock in the district is indeed a difficult problem. The disease has been found in large mobs, but the gathering of water, assembling of herds takes place at the watering places, with the result that any diseases of a contagious nature are contracted and spread far and wide throughout the district.

Since my visit to Marsabit, Captain Neave has returned to Nairobi taking with him carefully collected data and a number of pathological specimens. He should therefore be in a position to assist the Veterinary Pathologist in his investigations as to the etiology of this disease.

Trypanosomiasis (fly disease) is also prevalent among camels in the Northern Frontier District. A number of camels belonging to a Boran caravan arrived in Nairobi in

1911. Several of these were found to be suffering from fly disease. In blood preparations taken from them an organism, morphologically indistinguishable from the *T. evansi*, was demonstrated. This organism is the cause of the disease known in India under the name of "Surra". Surra is a chronic disease in camels, and camels and cattle may harbour this organism for considerable periods without apparently ill effects. Surra is, however, an acute disease among horses, and as it can be communicated from sick to healthy by biting flies other than tsetse, i.e. *Stomoxys*, it was found necessary to stop camel caravans coming South of Nyeri into the horse districts of the Protectorate.

Tsetse fly (*Glossina longipennis*) is found in many parts of the Frontier District, but the percentage of infective flies must be extremely small, for with all the large mobs of horses which have passed through this part of the Protectorate from Boran country and Southern Abyssinia, few of them have been found infected with trypanosomes.

The diseases affecting stock in the Northern Frontier District, many of which are probably new to science, call for immediate and careful investigation. Considerable data has already been collected, but it requires the undivided attention of a trained Pathologist to elaborate our present knowledge of them so as to enable us to institute measures for their suppression and eradication.

Although the mortality among camels has been the chief cause of the breakdown in the Transport Service, there are others to which attention may be directed. These are:-

- (1) Insufficient number of camels.
- (2) Immature animals.
- (3) Inadequate grazing.
- (4) Shortage of water, and
- (5) The condition of the roads.

(1) Insufficient number of Camels. So far as any camels gather, there never has been a sufficient number of camels for the Transport Service in the Northern Frontier District, with the result that all available animals have had severe strain put upon them. In any such connection it must be remembered that the local camels are not accustomed to hard work, but are only used by the natives for light transport at considerable intervals.

Many camels have been obtained from the local tribes for camels, but at the time of my visit they were becoming reluctant to do so, and many feared that they themselves had had to contribute to the Government with further supplies.

The system of obtaining the bulk of camels in lieu of hut tax is not a good one, for the natives do not, as a rule, send their good camels but often poor conditioned, immature animals, which are unable to perform the work and very frequently break down under the strain put upon them. Dislocation of transport not only follows, but grave dissatisfaction among the natives is likely to be caused.

It is well known that the Bedouite and other camel owners are very averse to parting with their animals, but if the Government is ever to have a properly equipped transport service, judicious pressure must be brought to bear on the natives to assist the Government in this matter and a competent person selected to obtain the necessary animals so as to avoid the purchase of immature and weakly camels.

The Transport Service of the Northern Frontier District demands a large number of animals to keep a regular service running, to prevent over-working the animals, to assist in transporting grain and hay for the animals while on the march, and to provide for each convoy an average of twenty per cent spare animals.

(3) Inadequate Grazing. During many months of the year the grazing around the Guaso Nyero is poor indeed, and from the Guaso Nyero to Merille grass is scanty and poor. Between Merille and Marsabit there is little grazing until Ret, on the slopes of the mountain, is reached. In fact the feed for animals between the Guaso Nyero and Marsabit is so inadequate as to render continuous animal transport along this section impracticable.

In June, owing to transport breakdown, Mr Archer had engaged Botman, a Dutchman, who with considerable enterprise had brought his oxen and waggons to the Guaso Nyero, to run transport between Guaso Nyero and Merille. By August, however, owing to the shortage of grazing, the Dutchman had been compelled to rest his oxen for a month, and on my arrival at the end of August I found his animals, even after their month's rest, in by no means a sleek condition and the Dutchman informed me that he very much doubted if he would be able to carry on much longer.

On the Marsabit-Moyale section, after leaving Delamere Vater, little grazing is available, and from Lufille Camp to Turbi, a stretch of nearly fifty miles across the lava-strewn plain Dido Gulgulla, there is absolutely none. On both these sections, i.e. Merille to Marsabit and Marsabit to Moyale, the camels, after carrying fairly heavy loads on an average from six to eight hours per day, require to wander many miles after reaching camp in search of food. As the camel is a slow feeder at all times, he is herded back to camp at sunset practically unfed, to start trekking the next morning on an empty stomach. It is small wonder, therefore, that with an inadequate number of underfed camels, some of them immature and unable to perform a hard day's work across particularly difficult country, considerable mortality takes place.

(4) Shortage of Water. Another great drawback to animal transport on the Guaso Nyero - Merille section is the shortage of water. At Kauro and Langala water holes it takes many hours before sufficient water is collected with which to water the spans of oxen. Apart from the great delay occasioned, the animals are really never sufficiently watered to render them fit for their hard work of hauling heavily laden waggon across hills and country under an extremely hot sun.

(5) Condition of the Roads. The road between the Guaso Nyero and Merille is quite good for wheeled transport, but, as already stated, lack of grazing and water render ox transport on this section impracticable.

Beyond Merille the road is impossible for wheeled transport, and in fact considerable work is required on some of the lava terraces, more especially near Rat Camp, to make it even serviceable for camel transport.

The road through the forest after leaving Marsabit requires considerable work to clear it of lava boulders.

About three or four hours North of Delamere Water there is an extremely bad piece of lava rock to be negotiated, and something should be done to improve the road at this point. It would be possible to keep a gang of men at work at this place, as food could be supplied from Marsabit and water from Delamere Well.

Prior to leaving Nairobi, it was suggested to me that something might be done to clear the pathway across the Dido Gulgulla, but I fear nothing could be done except at tremendous cost. To keep a gang of men working over this barren, waterless track would in itself be very expensive, and it is doubtful if their work would result in an improvement of the road, for no sooner would the boulders which now strew the

of mails to Marsabit would be more regular than under present arrangements.

The transport between Marsabit and Moyale is quite a different question for on this section there is 120 miles of waterless country to be traversed and the shoe of the desert must be employed.

The transport service over this area demands a large number of camels to keep a regular service running, to prevent over-work and to carry supplies of hay and grain for the animals while on the march.

The Jumm Jumtu, a tribe in Southern Abyssinia, have an excellent type of camel, strong, well built and heavily boned, and I strongly recommend the Government to use every endeavour to acquire a number of these animals.

Apart from the reasons already urged for obtaining an adequate supply of camels, I might point out that once the Government got together their full complement of camels, measures could be instituted by the Officers at the various Stations to prevent as far as possible contamination of their transport animals from the herds in their districts. At the present time nothing can be done to keep the Government animals free from contagious disease, for new additions, drawn from herds from all over the district, are constantly being made, with the result that renewed manifestations of disease are continually occurring.

No animal transport can be carried on unless the animals are well fed and cared for, therefore the food supply for the camels demands immediate and careful consideration.

On the slopes of Marsabit and in the vicinity of Ret large quantities of hay could be made and grain could be obtained from Meru. The natives might be induced to make hay at Remat and vicinity. The hands and

do the work around Marsabit. The Officer Commanding the
Northern Frontier District should then insist that all caravans
and carry sufficient supplies for the journey. With
the loading to be done at the various transport depots
it is certain that the number of pack animals would be increased
and the number of pack animals increased. The
effort of the pack animals regarding the other routes.
Although the present price of pack animals is high
provided they were taken from the depots would also
be required.

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