

4. It is not aware of any grounds established for the statement in the letter from the Foreign Office behind that

the D.C. will be ready to accept a proportion of Dr. Spurrer's pension as a charge against the votes of the E. Africa & Uganda Ptes. but he trusts that after he will concur in his view of the case after examining the enclosed. I will have no hesitation in supporting the view which he has taken.

5. I am to add that the report of the Special Commission to the Secretary of State was conveyed in Sir F. Knolly's letter (30357/1200) to the Foreign Office of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February.

EAST AFR. PROT SOMALILAND  
13114

C O  
13114  
R. S. R.  
Regd. 18 APR 13

Foreign  
1913  
25 April  
Last previous Paper.

REPORT ON ABYSSINIA 1912

Tra

J. G. Fisher  
W. B. St. John

A very interesting report on Abyssinia much of it is concerned with the Sudan & other matters affecting the F.O.

The C.O. is specially interested in the parts dealing with the E. A. P. & Somaliland frontiers - see pp. 5 & 6 - where Mr. Meager emphasizes the importance of military strength in the H. F. D. (The question of the

the Armed Constabulary Force must be considered in this connection: even

Copy for Mr. Fisher  
Mr. St. John - 26 May

43998

Next subsequent Paper.

13555

man with an P. company. East  
garrison with us. intended to  
place more than 1/2 company at  
Koyale while the K.A. detach-  
ment at Kitalah will be relieved  
by A.C., if ever they are  
despatched (trained).

As to Somaliland, I think that  
W. Thomson is mostly pessimistic.  
~~changed~~ see p. 6.

It is satisfactory to see that Court  
's opinion is ~~really~~ tackling the  
difficult arms question honestly  
& firmly. This confirms W.  
Dodd's recent statement.

So as far as the above is to commences  
adaptation between Abyssinia & Harar.

? ask F.O. G. let us have  
6 more copies of the report -  
send 2 copies to Colo S' land  
for consp. - ask for any observations  
on the parts dealing with those

Ptes - is insisting to get  
call & special attention to the  
Remarks on p. 10. Ask the G.O.  
to ~~take~~ give the matter most  
careful consid. & to report as soon  
as possible what can be done  
to further trade between the  
East & Abyssinia. [It is very  
desirable, I think, to keep the East  
'stirred up' about the U. F. J.,  
where, so far as our inf. goes,  
they seem apt to drift] -  
& inf. F.O. what  
we are doing. All  
23/4/13

? to proceed.  
As regards the S. Abyss. Frontier, it  
is obviously impossible for us to have  
troops all along the frontier all the time.  
We must hope to discover ways by our  
men getting in touch with raiders occasionally  
and inflicting a lesson. Probably however  
the establishment of trade relations will  
have as much effect in the long run.

As regards the Somaliland frontier the  
position is likely to improve. The Habr Yees  
will soon get tired of raiding across the frontier  
when they find the Camel Corps <sup>always</sup> ready to  
administer punishment at short notice. ~~Report~~

W.D.  
23.4.13

A well written report. The remarks on  
the above account for a Per. Corridor (and  
C.P.) & on the class trade (pp 11-12) are  
interesting though they do not directly  
concern us.

W. 24. 4. 13

W. 24. 4. 13

I am curious to know what the E.A.P.  
will say abt trade bet Abyss &  
Nairobi. The Kisumu route  
seems more likely than Marsabit.

E 25. 4. 13.

~~W. 25. 4. 13~~

In any further communication on this subject, please quote No. 7267/13 and address The Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, London.

*R. N. G. / 13*  
C.O.  
13114  
REC-18 APR 13

*Confidential*

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and, by direction of the Secretary of State, transmits herewith cop. *y* of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office,

April 17 1913.

Reference to previous letter:

Description of Inclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject.
The British Minister (Addis Ababa) No. 6 January 20	Report on Abyssinia for 1912  (in <i>Parliament</i> )

Printed for the use of the Foreign Office. April 1913

CONFIDENTIAL

(10196.)

# ABYSSINIA.

## Annual Report, 1912.

Mr. Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 15.)

(No. 6.)

Adis Ababa, January 20, 1913.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to submit my report on the situation in Abyssinia during the year 1912.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

### Report on the Situation in Abyssinia for 1912.

The year 1912 has been marked less by any startling events or interesting incidents than by the gradual relaxation of all authority on the part of the Central Government, and an ever increasing tendency to let things slide, and to put off all decisions of any moment to an absolutely indefinite future.

The reason for this state of things is not difficult to understand, and the result was natural and inevitable. As I reported last year, the influence of the Emperor's name had gradually decayed, owing to the long continuance of his living death, and the passing away of the Regent, Ras Tessama, had deprived the council of its last member, who, by birth and hereditary power, had that hold on the popular imagination which only descent and Royal blood can give.

The prestige of the Council of Ministers consequently declined, and, having no leader whose authority would be unquestionably recognised, certain individual Ministers began to over-estimate their own importance, and to dispute the collective decision of the council as regarded the affairs of their own departments whenever it happened to conflict with their own personal interests.

Had there been any strong man among the Ministers this insubordination might have been speedily checked, but, passing unproved, it gradually infected the whole body, and any constructive work became a sheer impossibility, as the council soon became divided into two or three separate groups, the members of which, united by similar interests and ambitions, were unanimous in opposing anything that was put forward by their adversaries, whose characters they were equally ready to blacken by all the means which intrigue and corruption afforded.

It was over such a council that Lij Yasu, in the latter half of 1911, was summoned to preside. Brought up as he had hitherto been with no education or any training in political affairs, his position was rendered still more difficult by the fact that his authority might at any moment be called in question, either by the very council that had decided he was old enough to govern under their guidance or by the united voice of the chiefs of the Shoon party, should he at any time act contrary to the advice or interests of one or the other, since he alone of all his advisers could not, in the event of his authority being questioned, declare that the powers he exercised were conferred upon him by the still living Emperor Menelik.

Abyssinian law, which in these respects is largely a matter of precedent, has no provision in the event of the insanity or continued incapacity through illness of the

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ruling monarch, for the natural transference of the power to the Heir-Apparent and, indeed, public opinion would appear to regard this title rather as a proof that its owner cannot hold such power so long as the Emperor, to whom he is destined to succeed, still lives.

Lij Yasu's position was thus one of responsibility without power, and it soon became obvious that the Council of Ministers, while determined to keep as much of the real power as possible in their own hands, were endeavouring to place on his shoulders the odium of deciding all those questions which they themselves had not the courage to face.

It was not to be expected that an inexperienced boy of Lij Yasu's age would be able to meet these difficulties, or deal in any way with such questions as the demands of the soldiers for more pay or of their chiefs for fresh districts, more especially as his right to give or take away territories which had been granted by the Emperor was open to question, and could only be exercised when he had behind him the undoubted approval of the council or the principal officers. It was consequently not long before the adherents of the Prince began to raise the question of the possibility of his coronation; but the discussion which followed showed that the feeling of the Church and of the majority of the high officers was against such an innovation, and the matter was allowed to drop.

Lij Yasu, however, was evidently not disposed to accept any longer the unenviable position of a puppet in the hands of his Ministers, and early in the year he suddenly announced his intention of visiting his father, Ras Mikail, at Dessie. Every effort was made by the council to dissuade him from this step, but to all their remonstrances he replied by the unanswerable argument that if they had, as they declared, been entrusted with the Government by the Emperor Menelik, then it was for them to accept the responsibility with the power. In such a case his absence could be of no account; if, however, they wished him to rule, then let them give him the authority and the crown.

From this position nothing could move him, and even the threat of the abuse to which the blessing of the Church in the event of his persisting in his decision was disregarded, and early in March Lij Yasu left the capital for a nominal absence of six weeks, which, however, the close of the year was to see still unbroken.

This decision, while showing decided character on the part of the future ruler of Abyssinia, certainly had its origin in many mixed motives. Besides the intolerableness of his political position there was undoubtedly the longing of a boy for freedom—the desire to travel, and to prove his manhood in the Abyssinian fashion by the killing of an elephant, if not of a man in warfare—both of which desires were to be shortly realised—and very possibly the wish to obtain his father's advice as to his future line of conduct.

Lij Yasu's progress north was, however, slow, the intermediate time being spent riding the country and visiting his birthplace at . . . . . Rumours also began to circulate that all was not well between Ras Waldo Giorgis and Ras Mikail, and that the former might possibly lose his position as Viceroy of the North, being either recalled to Adis Ababa or even arrested and imprisoned. Such a step would not have been in accordance with Lij Yasu's evident wish to raise up for himself a party of younger men at the expense of the older officers who had received their positions from the Emperor, but it would have been a very dangerous one, as the general discontent occasioned by the misgovernment of the previous months had fallen to a large extent on his head, and any extreme action taken against a chief of Ras Waldo Giorgis's age, experience, and position would have exasperated the chiefs of the Shoan party and have intensified their nervousness as to their own security under the new régime, while at the same time furnishing them with a leader they would all have followed.

It was therefore with some anxiety that the populace looked forward to the meeting which was to be held at Borom-yda after Easter between Lij Yasu, Ras Mikail, and Ras Waldo Giorgis; and the relief was general when it became known that the latter had been received with special honours, and that after his differences with Ras Mikail had been adjusted he had returned to his own country with rather extended powers.

It was now expected that Lij Yasu would return almost immediately to Adis Ababa; but when, after some delay, he had arrived within two days' journey of the capital, the Prince suddenly left his encampment at night and with a few horsemen galloped off to Adis Alam, from whence he issued fresh orders with regard to his return and left for Gore. From this time onwards his movements and intentions seem to have been concealed even from the Council of Ministers, and it was only

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through chance sources that it was ascertained that he had taken a small army down to Gimirra to assist Dejaz Mulugeya against the Shankallas, who had risen and who held the Abyssinian garrisons practically confined to a few villages.

The fighting which follows appears to have been carried on in the usual Abyssinian way, by the destruction of the villages, the massacre of such of the men who resisted or were unable to escape, and by the carrying off of the women and children to be sold as slaves.

Of the details and severity of the fighting nothing is known, except that Lij Yasu is reported to have led his troops in person with considerable bravery and to have been slightly wounded, while the resistance was sufficient to induce him to summon Dejaz Kabada to the south, thus upsetting the arrangements which had been made between the legation and the Council of Ministers for concerted action between the Soudan and Abyssinian Governments with regard to the disarming of the Shuks in consequence of their raids into Soudan territory, which had culminated in the night at Odongo, where two British officers lost their lives.

Lij Yasu passed the rainy season visiting several of the western provinces, paying attention to the many and pressing messages sent him by the Council of Ministers, urging on him the necessity of his immediate return to Adis Ababa, and the end of the year found him still at some days' journey from the capital, with no assurance that he would come in one hour before it suited his own plans.

It is difficult to say to what extent this prolonged absence was due to the natural desire of a young man to travel and to experience to the full, while he was yet free, all the excitement of war and hunting, which in older days would have formed a definite part of his education, or how far it was prompted by political motives. It is, however, certain that he could have taken no steps better calculated to impress upon the country a sense of the insufficiency of the Council of Ministers as a governing body, and of increasing his own prestige at their expense.

He has, I think, clearly shown that he will not be content to be a passive instrument in the hands of his advisers, and for good or ill is prepared to take a line of his own. What his real nature may be remains yet to be seen, but there is no doubt that his character has developed very much during the past year; and the fact that he has killed his man in battle and shot his elephant, both necessary proofs of manhood in Abyssinian eyes, will have given him assurance and self-confidence, and it may be taken for granted that the boy who left Adis Ababa in the early part of the year will return a man who will henceforth have to be reckoned with.

As regards the capital itself, there are no events of any interest to record for the past twelve months, the year having been one of stagnation as regards trade, of prostration and of futile misgovernment as concerns every branch of the public service.

The chief centre of interest for the legation has been the western provinces, with their various problems of trade, gun-running, and raids into Soudan territory. The latter reached serious proportions early in the year owing to the incursions of the well-armed Anuak tribes into the Pibor districts. The first news of the fight at Odongo was received here on the 5th April, and at once arranged with the council to send down Dejaz Kabada, the titular chief of the Anuak country, with orders to sail in all the chiefs and to order them to surrender the rides held by their various sections, and, in the event of their refusing, to take such steps as were necessary to disarm them by force. It was, from the first, only too obvious that the hope of disarming these people peacefully was a vain one, and also that Kabada was not the man for the work; but the absence of Lij Yasu made it impossible to obtain better conditions from the council, and, consequently, it was arranged that in the event of force being necessary, Dejaz Kabada and Dejaz Mulugeya should drive the country from Melille in a north-westerly direction, strict orders being given to them to keep their troops from crossing the three boundary rivers—the Akobo, Pibor, and Baro—so as to avoid all possibility of their coming into collision with British troops or of aiding Soudan tribes.

It was hoped that these operations could be carried out before the rainy season began, and that the hope of loot would encourage the Abyssinians to descend into the low country despite their habitual fear of fever.

The Soudan Government, in the meantime sent Captain Kelly to Gambela to arrange, so far as possible for concerted action between the two Governments, but the late rise of the river delayed his arrival at Gambela, and in the meantime Lij Yasu, who was in Gimirra, without informing the Central Government, ordered Dejaz Kabada, with his army, to proceed south and assist him against the Shankallas. The result was the

complete disarrangement of all plans, and the commencement of the rains made all reconnaissance impossible.

Meanwhile, the Soudan Government had asked permission from the Abyssinians to send two gun-boats up the Gelo River for the purpose of a reconnaissance and of assisting Dejaz Kabada's operations, as the sudd made it impossible for steamers to ascend the Akobor and all the troops south of that river had been withdrawn to the post at the junction of the Akoba and Plhor Rivers. In spite of the offer to allow six Abyssinian officers to accompany this expedition, the suspicions of the Central Government, as to the ultimate intentions of the Soudan, which had been excited by the circulation of the most improbable reports of impending invasion, led them to refuse absolutely to grant the necessary permission. Their objections were, however, finally overcome, and the gun-boats proceeded up the Gelo to a distance of 150 miles from its mouth, obtaining much useful information. The counter orders issued by Lij Yasu, which withdrew Dejaz Kabada from Gore, and the fact that no officer was left there to replace him, made Captain Kelly's mission purposeless so far as it concerned cooperation between the two countries, and the breaking out of the rainy season destroyed the last hope of any effective action on the part of the Abyssinians.

Early in June another raid took place north of the Baro River, when a mixed force of Abyssinians and Gallas, under the orders of Ato Zarafu, Governor of Gidami, penetrated into the Soudan as far as Khor Machar, seizing some 160 women and children who were sent back to Gidami. The Nauers, however, collected their forces and made a successful night attack on the Abyssinian camp. Some 260 Abyssinians were killed and a machine gun captured, while the Nauer losses were about 100 killed.

The location at once brought this affair to the notice of Negadras Haile Giorgis, both as Minister for Foreign Affairs and as chief of the district, in question. Orders were at once telephoned down to Ato Zarafu to keep the prisoners in question together, and not to allow them to be sold as slaves until it was proved whether they were, as we maintained, Soudan subjects or, as Ato Zarafu declared, Abouigars from Abyssinian territory.

Both Mr. Walker and Captain Kelly had by this time left Gambela, and there was no one who could go up on behalf of the Soudan Government and investigate this question. I therefore took the fullest assurances from the Negadras that the prisoners should be kept together until Mr. Walker's return, and refrained from bringing the matter before the council, a section of which was at that time endeavouring to over-throw the Minister for Foreign Affairs, perhaps the only capable man in the Ministry, and would have utilised this opportunity to do so without much caring what became of the captive Nauers. Here again matters were complicated by Lij Yasu's presence in the west, as by the time the news of this raid arrived here and investigations had been made, Ato Zarafu was in attendance on Lij Yasu, and Negadras Haile Giorgis's authority was consequently superseded for the time, and it was thus impossible for him to be sent for to the capital.

Mr. Walker, however, reported towards the close of the year that a certain number of the prisoners had been returned, and that he himself was going to Gidami to investigate the whole question.

It will be impossible to bring these matters forward again with any hope of success before Lij Yasu's return, owing to the incapacity of the council to enforce their decisions in the distant provinces.

The whole question of raids into Soudan territory is a most serious one, and it is very difficult to find a remedy. As regards what may be called official raids, that is, expeditions conducted or sent out by an officer of some standing, it must be remembered that all Abyssinian frontier officers are in practical ignorance of the treaties concluded by their Government, and have but the vaguest conception of the true position of the frontier, consequently, in all that concerns the extent of their country or jurisdiction they endeavour to cling to old traditions, and refuse to understand why they should be debarred from raiding and plundering districts which were regularly plundered by their predecessors, more especially when these districts are not administered or policed by any other country. The acquisition of ivory is the main reason for these raids; the wholesale slaughter of elephants in Abyssinia has made it increasingly difficult for the border chiefs to obtain ivory, one of their main sources of revenue, and their bands of hunters have to go further afield every year. The leaders of these bands, which are always well supplied with rifles and ammunition, both for their own use and for purposes of barter, are under no control, and live by robbing the natives of the

districts they pass through, knowing well that no questions will be asked if they return with ivory.

It is in most of the smaller cases difficult to fix the responsibility, either by identifying the raiders and finding out to what chief they belong, as every official is interested in the ivory and arms traffic, and uses every effort to protect the raiders and conceal the evidence, knowing perfectly well that he can rely upon the Central Government to support him in this course of action.

In the major cases, like Dejaz Beru's raids on Didosi, one can have the chief in question sent for and detained here, but one is certain that, in spite of all apologies and promises to the contrary, his officers will be encouraged to continue the same policy, and that no real efforts will be made to cut off the supply of arms and ammunition, without which this system of raiding could not be carried on.

It is therefore apparent that no assistance can be looked for from the Abyssinian side, and that but little amelioration in the existing state of affairs can be hoped for until the Soudan Administration is pushed southward along the whole extent of the frontier and police patrols instituted for the purpose of checking the importation of arms and the illicit sale of ivory.

With regard to this point, I am convinced that Captain Kelly is right in insisting that an essential feature of the future administration in these hitherto unadministered districts is the establishment of traders with permission to buy ivory under certain restrictions and under proper supervision. So long as Abyssinia is the only market our tribes have in which to dispose of their ivory, we cannot expect them to refrain from dealing with these raiders or to refuse to accept the arms and ammunition, which are the only currency offered them. So soon, however, as we can guarantee to our tribes immunity from border raids, and make them understand that the possession of a rifle is a punishable offence, it will be to their interest to send their ivory westwards in exchange for cloth or cattle, and the Abyssinian chiefs will be deprived of their principal inducement to send expeditions into our territory, which would thus automatically cease to be for them a source of supply for ivory or a market for rifles.

It is evident that the carrying out of this policy must be a question of several years, and that the expense will be great, but at the same time it will enable us to a very large extent to control the traffic in arms, and there will be a certain financial benefit gained for the Soudan Government by diverting the ivory trade into its proper channel instead of allowing it to be improperly drained out for the benefit of Abyssinia, and every prospect of tapping fresh trade sources in the districts of Magi and Gimirra if only a caravan route can be opened between the Boma plateau and the Nile.

With regard to the southern frontier, matters appear to have been on the whole satisfactory. There have been several hunting raids on a small scale, but on two occasions, the raiders were fired upon by our patrols, and in each case driven north with some loss. This is the only way in which these bands can be dealt with. They know the frontier line perfectly well, and trespass deliberately in the hopes of obtaining ivory or of looting stock and sheep, trusting to the difficulty of identification to avoid all trouble if complaints are addressed to their own border chiefs.

More serious were the two incursions made by Abyssinian bands in alliance with the Garreh to raid the Yaben in June. On the first occasion the raiders were driven off with a loss of some thirty men killed, but seven days later they returned in force, and after killing between twenty and thirty Yaben with a loss to themselves of some few Garreh, returned after having looted the entire stock of some Yaben villages near Tagabu. A joint force of Abyssinians and Garreh also raided the Merihan and took much stock.

The Garreh chiefs deny having called in the Abyssinians, but declare that the only choice they have is to loot or to be looted.

There appears, it is true, to be some truth in what they say, and it is a further confirmation of the necessity of increasing our strength on the border. For years we have promised protection to these tribes, but have never given our frontier officers a sufficient force with which to make our nominal protection really effective, the result being that either they smuggle in arms and ammunition from the north to defend themselves, or accept the offers of the Abyssinians to assist them in raiding some weaker tribes.

On receiving information with regard to these events, I at once saw the Pitgurari Hapta Giorgis, who is the chief of the Borana districts, and received from him a

special order to Pissurari Waldi, his representative there, to proceed at once to Moyne and investigate this affair jointly with Mr. Aylmer or with any officer named by him. At the same time I put in a claim for 12,000 dollars compensation for the camels, stock, and ivory which fell to the Abyssinians as their share of the loot. Sufficient time has not elapsed, however, for a messenger to have come back with news as to the effect of these orders, although the Garreh are reported as being inclined to settle down and to restore the stolen cattle.

Gaddaduma appears to be the centre of disorder, and although in September Ganiazmatch Gashi cleared the district of the hunters and soldiers who had taken up their quarters there, they appear to have returned there shortly after. These men live by hunting, selling looted stock to our tribes, and by gun-running.

Captain Barrett, in a despatch dated October, reported that a considerable trade in rifles was being carried on between Gaddaduma and Jubaland, via Wujera, and that, hearing recently of a caravan having started, he sent off a patrol in order to intercept them, but they met with only partial success, capturing two men, three rifles, and 300 rounds of ammunition. At the time of writing, the departure of a second caravan was reported, and a mounted patrol had been sent in pursuit.

Here again the shortage of men for patrolling the line is only too apparent. Captain Barrett reports that he is handicapped in this respect, having, at the moment, only eighteen men of the King's African Rifles in the station, a force only sufficient for a guard, and a few transport askaris, who, in the intervals of their proper work, are employed for patrol purposes, his patrol consisting usually of himself and three or four men.

So long as the frontier force is kept at its present small proportions, I see no hope of any real amelioration in the situation. The Abyssinians cannot understand that the question of the expense for the maintenance of another one or two hundred men can enter into the consideration of a power like Great Britain, and they attribute our inability to have a proper police force at the disposal of the frontier officers solely to indifference, and consequently believe that the question of frontier raids and peace on the border is not one in which we are seriously interested.

The measure of what they will do to check disorder is, and will always be, in exact proportion to what we are doing to enforce order and protect our own tribes.

As I have always maintained the only way in which we can ensure respect for our orders on the border is by being strong enough to arrest these raiders when found, to shoot without hesitation those who, on being summoned to do so, do not surrender and to send all prisoners to Nairobi for trial and punishment.

This course has been followed successfully on several occasions in the past three years and the effect here has always been excellent, but at the same time it must not be forgotten that we are thereby increasing the danger for small patrols and sooner or later an insufficient force for this purpose must lead to disaster, while in the meantime being insufficient.

With regard to the Somaliland frontier there is not much to report. Early in the year Dejaz Taffari reported that since October 1910 some 35,000 camels had been looted by the Itala Yumas from the Ogaden tribes, some 125 men killed, and various lesser amounts of sheep and rifles taken, asking at the same time what steps the British Government were taking to ensure reparation and the prevention of some raids in the future.

The remaining months of 1912 witnessed a further succession of these raids, mostly from our side, and the number of looted camels restored to the Abyssinian tribes has always been quite inadequate to cover the balance due, owing to the impossibility of the Somaliland Government enforcing its orders on the tribes in the interior of an evacuated country.

The position of this legation and of the vice-consulate at Harrar in regard to this question was therefore a very unpleasant one and it has always been a surprise to me that the Abyssinian Government have not in reply to complaints of raids on the western and southern frontiers, resorted by asking for a settlement of their Somaliland claims.

As a matter of fact, however, our rival claims in this respect are not quite on the same footing, as the disorders in Somaliland are largely, if not entirely, due to the criminal laxity of the Local and Central Governments in allowing a practically unrestricted trade in arms to be carried on through Harrar and Dere Dawa, and I instructed Mr. Dodd always to reply in this sense.

The position, however, at best is most unsatisfactory and it is to be hoped that the first success of the new Camel Corps, reported in the early days of January 1913

will be repeated and that this raiding will be effectually stopped and the safety of the caravan routes ensured for the future.

As concerns the political situation in Adis Ababa with reference to the legations, the past year has been marked by the fact that the Tripartite agreement became for the first time something more than a mere name. The credit for this is entirely due to Count d'Apchier, the French chargé d'affaires, who from the date of his arrival entered without reserve into the spirit of the agreement and gave every assistance in his power in the one question in which the co-operation of the three legations is absolutely essential, and it was owing to his support that a definite step forward was made with regard to the arms traffic by the temporary closure of Jibuti to all arms and ammunition destined for Abyssinia early in the year.

The trade in rifles, owing to the lack of any central authority, and to the fact that the Ministers themselves had entered into partnership with the agents, had reached an extravagant point and fresh demands for concessions were being handed in every day. Even at Jibuti the counter-seal of the French Legation was no longer looked upon as essential for the passage of the various orders, and a Government permit presented and countersigned by Ato Joseph, the Abyssinian consul at Jibuti, was regarded as sufficient authority on which to grant permission for rifles to pass up country. Thanks, however, to Count d'Apchier's support this last practice was finally put a stop to. In February the three legations met together to discuss the question and it was decided to have a meeting with the council and at all events to urge upon them the necessity of the adoption of the Colli scheme at least.

This meeting was held and a formal protest made against the abuse of the privileges secured to Abyssinia by the Brussels Act. The Abyssinian Government, as usual, expressed their willingness to consider the matter and to adopt measures for regulating the traffic in future, but beyond vague promises nothing further could be extorted from them; one result of the protest was, however, the consent of the French Government to the temporary closure of Jibuti. At first this measure, although stopping the import of arms by the legitimate route, had little effect on the contraband trade, but by degrees even this traffic was checked and the seizure and condemnation of the smugglers of the last cargo of arms reported in 1912 to two years imprisonment each, and a collective fine of 22,000 fr. will, it is to be hoped, act as a sufficient deterrent in future.

These measures, however, failed to touch the question of the enormous mass of arms already imported into the country, the seriousness of which is proved by the fact that even after Jibuti had been closed for nine months the supply of rifles and cartridges for the general market had not apparently been diminished in any way, neither had the price gone up.

It was for this reason that this legation put forward a scheme for the rearmament of the Abyssinian army with one type of rifle, an idea which was then being discussed by the Abyssinians, with the proviso that the Government should ask for tenders in Europe through the three legations to whose charge the new rifles should be assigned, only to be delivered on receipt of four old rifles for each new one. It was estimated that the Government would require some 500,000 new rifles and that, therefore, if this scheme could be put through, 2,000,000 old rifles would be handed in.

In order to induce the Ethiopian Government to accept this proposal it was further provided that the three Powers interested should assist them with a subsidy of 10,000,000 l. a year for five years, which would have been tantamount to buying up the 2,000,000 old rifles at 5d. a piece.

The question of expense and other considerations, however, led to this scheme failing to meet the approval of the Colonial Office, and it was definitely dropped.

The state of chaos into which the Government had fallen by the close of the year would, however, in itself have prevented any steps being taken to this end.

It must, I am afraid, be definitely taken for granted that no assistance can be hoped for from the Abyssinian Government as regards the suppression of this traffic. The reports from the frontier show rather an increase than a diminution of the contraband trade, and only the continued closure of Jibuti for at least another year can bring about any scarcity in the supply; until this stage is reached no pressure can be brought to bear on the Ethiopian Government.

Another matter of serious importance which arose during the past year was the question of consular jurisdiction, already disputed in 1911, when the then Foreign Minister denied that the French treaty made any mention of the necessity of handing over any Frenchman arrested for crime to his consul. This was, however, proved to be inexact, and in July, when the case arose of an Italian workman having killed an



Abyssinian, the Italian Legation claimed that the custody of the prisoner should be conceded to their consul at Harrar. The local authorities refused, however, and were supported by the Central Government, who maintained that the treaty only provided for the handing over of an accused person in cases between French subjects, and not in mixed cases, where an Abyssinian was concerned. Careful examination of the original version witnessed to the fact that, as regards the Ambaric version, this was true, as it was there made conditional that this action should only take place in cases where "French-born or protected subjects quarrelled among themselves." While, by a slight insertion of words, the French translation made the handing over applicable to any and all crimes committed by one of their subjects.

At a full meeting of the Foreign Ministers, held at the Italian Legation, it was agreed that while a general insistence on our claim to hold the persons of all Europeans accused of crime was possible, yet in the event of the local government insisting on the letter of the treaty and refusing to give way, the legations would be in a very difficult position; moreover, it was recognised that, even if successful in enforcing our views of the treaty as intended by the French Government, the question of popular feeling must be taken into account, and that there was a very real danger in mixed cases of murder or homicide that the populace, sooner than see the culprit taken to his legation, would take the law into their own hands.

It was therefore decided that this question should be allowed to remain in abeyance, conditional on the Government agreeing to place all European or protected persons accused of crime in a fitting house of detention, where he could be visited by his consul, and never in the ordinary Abyssinian prison.

For the time, therefore, the difficulty was solved in this manner. This question, however, brings into sharp relief the present irregular position of the British Legation, which, while refusing to recognise Abyssinian or other jurisdiction over British subjects, has yet no authority to try or condemn them for the smallest offence.

It is thus placed in an impossible position towards both the Abyssinian Government and the foreign legations. For instance, if a French or German subject brings an accusation against a British subject, the case, according to custom, must be heard in the British Legation, but, supposing that the sentence having been given against the defendant, the latter absolutely refuses to accept the decision, the legation would then be placed in the position of either submitting to be defied or of using illegal measures to enforce a sentence which it is very doubtful whether it had any right to pronounce.

If, however, the legation has no rights of jurisdiction, then we must recognise that British subjects are amenable to Abyssinian law, subject to such protection as the consul could afford them, in all disputes between themselves and Abyssinians, and to various foreign codes in the event of their being at issue with the subjects of either the French, German, Italian, or Russian Legations, who do not recognise Abyssinian rights in this respect. To do otherwise would be to claim for British subjects the right to be above all law.

Matters cannot go on for much longer as they are at present, for it is certain that neither the Ethiopian Government nor the foreign legations will continue to allow our claim to hear mixed cases if once they see that the sentence of the legation, when unfavourable to a British subject, can be defied with impunity and they will then claim the right to take action in their own courts.

As regards the Abyssinians the recognition of such a claim would be impossible without negating all our former policy; while as regards the foreign legations it is unthinkable that British subjects should be liable to arrest at the order of a foreign consul and judged by a foreign code in a country belonging to a third Power.

The French, Italian, and German Legations are recognised courts of first instance, with definite courts of appeal in their own countries and it is absolutely essential that the Powers of the British Legation in this respect should be clearly defined, while the growing importance of European interests in Abyssinia make an early settlement of this question of vital necessity.

With reference to the French railway there is not much to report, the construction of the line as far as the Hawash River has been somewhat accelerated and it is hoped that this section may be opened to traffic by August 1913. Efforts were made by M. Charreau, who holds a contract for the completion of the earthworks on one section of the line, to utilise Egyptian fellaheen labour, but the experiment was not successful and they were soon repatriated.

As regards the construction of the line from the Hawash River to Adis Ababa,

no definite arrangement has yet been come to between the Government and the French company. The former are apparently still decided that the line shall be built with Abyssinian money and Abyssinian labour although they are seemingly prepared to hand over the completed line to the company's management. The question of the construction is a fertile source of intrigue on the part of such adventurers as have the ear of various Ministers and who look to making fortunes out of the concessions and contracts which will of necessity have to be given. The latest of these schemes is the formation of a society for public works, the directors of which are men such as MM. Souvis, Baldassare, and Chefneux with little reputation and still less capital, but possessed of much astuteness. They have apparently induced certain of the chiefs and Ministers to invest money in their undertaking and now propose to make an offer for the construction of the line also. The fact, however, that the promoters of this scheme have no capital behind them and that the state of the Ethiopian Government finances is incapable of bearing the strain which this plan would place upon them, even if assisted by forced contributions from the chiefs, foredooms this idea to failure. It will, however, be in all probability put forward by the Government as a serious undertaking in order to bring pressure to bear on the French company for the securing of more favourable terms.

The time necessary for the full completion of the line depends entirely upon what arrangements can be made by the Government during 1913, but it may be taken for granted that unless they place themselves very largely in the hands of the company the termination of this work will be interminably delayed.

Trade interests for the past year have been centred chiefly in Gambela where, in spite of the unfavourable condition of the river, which rose late and fell early, thus preventing the last boats from reaching their destination, the statistics again showed a satisfactory increase.

The figures show that the efforts which have been made during the past four years to increase this trade have not been thrown away. The value of the total imports and exports by this route since 1909 are as follows:—

	£
1909 .. .. .	25,902
1910 .. .. .	43,874
1911 .. .. .	66,263
1912 (rough estimate) .. .. .	73,000

If the state of the river during the shipping season had been normal the figures for 1912 would have been at least £ E. 83,000, but the failure of the last two boats to reach Gambela prevented a large stock of coffee, wax, and other goods from reaching Khartoum.

The efforts which we have made to construct bridges and open trade routes have been very much hampered by Abyssinian misgovernment. In spite of the continued orders sent down, labourers were not always forthcoming for the bridges, and the close of the year saw only the Baro Kella bridge completed, while work on the Bonga bridge, which is necessary to link up Bure with Gambela by the road on the southern bank, was at a standstill for want of porters and labourers. Throughout the whole of the trade district matters were in the same disordered state. The presence of Lij Yasu in the province prevented porters from coming in from fear of being caught as slaves or forced to labour for his Abyssinian followers for no pay, while Dejaz Kabada's exactions and general misgovernment were also largely responsible for the disinclination of the natives to approach the trade centres.

Dejaz Kabada will, I trust, shortly be removed from his province, and I have caused his agent at Gambela, who has been in many ways a disturbing influence, to be arrested and sent to Adis Ababa.

I propose when Lij Yasu returns to try and interest him personally in the trade, and to suggest that the districts of Kaffa, Bure, and Sain should become Crown lands. In this way the necessity for dealing with a number of small chiefs, each of whom is trying to exact the last penny he can from the merchants as they pass through his territory, would disappear and there would be some possibility of cutting down the number of toll gates and in general of improving communications.

What has been done with Gambela must now be attempted with the Gallabat and Roseires routes. The appointment of Mr. Armbruster, of the Soudan service, as consul for the Gondar and Gojjam districts should secure an equal increase of trade by the more northern roads. Major Doughty Wylie's investigations appear to show

that as regards the Gallabat route Abyssinian traders have certain minor grounds for complaint, which perhaps small in themselves, get talked over and exaggerated, and so serve to excite prejudice in the native mind and militate against the prosperity of this trade. All these matters, however, will be corrected by Mr. Arnbruster's presence, and I believe once the native trader is aware that there is a British consul in the country to whom he can appeal their lost confidence will be quickly restored, and if facilities in the way of wells, rest-houses, and possibly free medical aid at Gallabat itself can be arranged for, I believe the future commercial prosperity of Gallabat will be assured.

I am also strongly in favour of extending this plan of appointing consuls, on the same system as Mr. Walker and Mr. Arnbruster, to the southern frontier where the trade is as yet in its infancy. The proposal to send an Abyssinian mission down to Nairobi, which was raised in 1911, fell through owing to the difficulty in making arrangements before the rainy season had approached too near, and I would not urge the renewal of this scheme. I believe more good can be done by giving every encouragement to the export of cattle to Nairobi, which has made a good start during the past twelve months, and by some arrangement with the East African Protectorate Government to take over the cattle, which the Ethiopian Government collect as tribute from the Borana tribes, at a fixed price delivered on the frontier.

Once the cattle trade is well established I believe the export of cotton goods from Nairobi to Abyssinia will follow as a matter of course, and fresh needs will be created among the frontier tribes for the products of civilisation. I believe there must be other products of Abyssinia which could be exported by kismayo to not to Nairobi, and I am of the opinion that much could be learnt by a careful study of Italian methods, and of their trade via Lugh, which appears to be steadily increasing, although the districts, which can be tapped from this centre, are certainly less rich than those lying to the north and north-west of Moyale.

It is on these grounds that I have urged the nomination of one of the frontier officers as consul for southern Abyssinia. Such an officer should be, of necessity something of a polymath, as a thorough examination of this question would need some years study. As consul he could travel freely in Abyssinia and get into closer relations with local chiefs than is possible at present, when the presence of a frontier inspector on Abyssinian territory must naturally give rise to suspicion.

On the Somali-land frontier no change in the existing arrangements is necessary as Mr. Dodds can do all that is necessary from Harrar. Here also I consider the trade from the Ogden can with care be considerably increased, as, in spite of the facilities offered by the railway, it must always remain cheaper for the Somali tribes to transport their goods by camel to Berbera and Zeila. Mr. Dodds is endeavouring to get certain improvements made on the Feryambiro route which would facilitate the passage of camel caravans to and from Harrar, and by friendly advice to the local Government as regards customs-house regulations, I am in hopes a good deal can be done in this direction once the new Camel Corps can ensure the safety of the trade routes.

The trade of Adis Ababa itself has during the past year suffered much from the continued absence of Lij Yasu from the capital, which has prevented the provincial chiefs from coming in as usual with their enormous followings. The demand for cotton goods, which form the staple import into Abyssinia, was consequently very greatly diminished, and the decrease in this respect reacted unfavourably on the general trade. The year has, therefore, not been an advantageous one for the Bank of Abyssinia, the position of which has been a subject of extensive communication between this legation and Cairo, although I am informed that their financial position will, in spite of the losses, I sadly regret under which they have laboured for the past twelve months, yet compare favourably with that of 1911.

One cannot, however, regard their future with perfect confidence, as they are now struggling to carry on their business with an insufficient capital, and are at the same time faced with the imperative necessity of extending their work in order to satisfy the trade requirements which they have themselves largely created. If the Bank of Abyssinia were a private concern nothing would be easier than to restrict their business to their means until such time as their accumulated profits justified extension, but, being as they are a State bank with a monopoly of the banking business in Abyssinia, it is in my opinion obligatory on them to put themselves in a position to meet all legitimate calls made upon them by the State, and the commercial community, unless they wish to have their claim to continue to hold their monopoly called in question.

The Board at Cairo, however, cannot see their way to make a fresh call on the shareholders before the bank has paid a dividend, rightly considering that such a course would be very injudicious, more especially as all the shares are drawn to bearer, neither can they apparently determine to raise capital in any other way.

The position is thus somewhat complicated, but at the same time there is no doubt that the bank is in a flourishing condition, and if they were to close down and liquidate to-morrow it is certain that there would be no lack of offers from foreign groups to take over and restart the business with a largely increased capital. Such an offer has indeed been made to them indirectly by a French group whose names were not disclosed.

I am therefore inclined to believe that the coming year will be a critical one for them, but as their new branches are doing well and business is almost bound to improve, it is to be hoped they will tide over a difficult period with credit.

The question of founding a Crdit foncier, which was started in 1912 by a certain group of French financiers, has not so far developed but is still under discussion. Their ideas have been considerably limited since the scheme was first mooted, and it is quite possible that a satisfactory arrangement may be made between the group and the directors of the bank which will prevent improper competition, and possibly enable the two concerns to be of mutual assistance.

This practically brings the report for 1912 to a close; there is, however, one matter which promises in the future to be of very serious importance, that is the increasing development of the slave trade.

As I reported in August 1912, reliable European witnesses had met many of these slave caravans when travelling in the west, and it is certain that the caravans they met by chance formed but a very small proportion of the trade.

Major Doughty-Wylie in his report on his journey north gives further details of the expansion of this iniquitous traffic.

Leaving aside the moral point of view and the obligations of Abyssinia under the Brussels Act, there is another side to this question, which is of importance to us, and that is the effect this slave-raiding is having on the commercial prosperity of the western districts.

The population of the west is composed of various negroid races who, although in a very low state of civilisation at present, at all events cultivate the soil and have a great potential value for the future. These tribes are now being steadily raided, and men, women and children transported to the various slave markets in the centre and north of Abyssinia. This means that the western provinces, which are the richest in Abyssinia, are being steadily denuded of their inhabitants, and are ceasing to be productive; the commerce from Kafa, for instance, is reported to have ceased to exist solely on account of the slave raids made by Ras Waldo Giorgis on his departure, and by his successors ever since.

The Abyssinian chiefs to whom I have spoken unofficially on this subject, declare that the purchase of slaves is strictly forbidden, and that any breach of this law is severely punished; while they attempt to persuade me that only a modified form of domestic slavery is tolerated. This is absolutely and entirely untrue. Slave raiding and slave selling is now the principal source of revenue for all the western chiefs, and the heir to the Throne, the principal Rases and Ministers are all equally implicated. The raiding is carried on with the brutalities always associated with this traffic, and the caravans of slaves are treated with the callous neglect which distinguished the Arab traders in old days in Central Africa, and are often destroyed wholesale by want of proper food and water, and by sickness.

The destination of the majority of these caravans is usually the north; Dangua, as Major Doughty-Wylie reports, being one of the chief markets where caravans arrive about twice a week, men selling at 50 dollars and children at 30 dollars. A certain proportion are sent to the coast, where they are shipped off by the Arabs in small batches.

The increase in this trade of late is certain, and commerce in slaves is, I consider, taking the place of the contraband trade in ivory, which was formerly the main source of the revenue of provincial chiefs owing to the ever-increasing difficulty of obtaining the latter commodity.

This matter has hitherto been practically unsuspected, and although occasional letters have appeared in French and Italian papers, they have attracted but little attention, possibly owing to their facts having been, in the main, incorrect. The true details must, however, before long become thoroughly known in Europe, and draw on this country the full attention of the anti-slavery societies of Europe.

The system is so thoroughly engrained in the Abyssinian nature that no protests by the legations will be of any avail beyond causing them to renew those precautions of secrecy which during the past year have been practically thrown aside.

If I might venture on prophecy, I would say that the questions of the slave traffic and the contraband trade in rifles would at no very distant date force upon the Powers the question of the subjugation and partition of the Ethiopian empire.

JO 13/14/1913

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23 May 1913

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Lammer Report

For 20/5/1913  
In Bottomley 20.5.13  
W.R. 22

Answer to 20/5/1913  
Ear

Sir,

I have the honour  
to transmit to you  
the accompanying  
copies of the Annual  
Report, 1912, to the  
British Minister at  
Addis Ababa, and  
to request that you  
will furnish me with  
your observations on  
those parts of the report  
which deal with the  
Protectorate under your

in report (2 copies)

Administration

[To Secy only] I would  
write your  
Special attention is  
invited to the remarks  
on page 10 of the report  
and I <sup>shall be glad if</sup> have to request  
that you will give the  
matter your most careful  
consideration and report  
as soon as possible that  
can be done to further  
trade between the C.A.P.  
and Abyssinia

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Secy. 23/5/13  
to Mr. Stanley 23.5.13

FO 13/14/1913

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26 May 1913

Sir,

I am directed by  
Mr Secretary Harcourt to  
acknowledge the receipt of your  
letter of the 17<sup>th</sup> of April (No 7267/13)  
~~and to inform you that~~ request  
you to inform Secy. Sir  
Edward Grey that copies of  
the Annual Report 1912  
by the British Ministe at  
Addis Ababa have been  
forwarded to the Gov. of  
the C.A.P. and the former.