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REC'D
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Origin Office

1914

May

Last previous Paper.
1914

Southern Abyssinian Frontier.

This copy of further despatches from
H.H. Alaba as to rectification of

Br. G. Fisher.

Copy to the file of the E.A.P.
for info. & conf. D.F. ?

H. J. R.

22/5/14

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Copy for file of 11/5/14

Subsequent Paper.

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In any further communication on this subject, please quote

No. 14537/14

The Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, London.

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The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents 23

his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and, by direction of the Secretary of State, transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned paper

Foreign Office,

May 21, 1914.

Reference to previous letter:

Description of Inclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject.
<p>H. M. Representative at Addis Ababa No. 24 March 25/14 and to</p>	<p>Affairs of Abyssinia</p>
<p>H. M. Representative at Addis Ababa No. 37 May 5/1914</p>	

ABYSSINIA.

[April 22.]

CONFIDENTIAL

SECTION 3.

[17597]

No. 1.

253

Mr. Dodds to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 22.)

(No. 27.)

Adis Ababa, March 25, 1914.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a translation of a letter received from the Abyssinian Government which purports to be an answer to my letter of the 27th January, forwarded to you under cover with my despatch No. 10 of the 30th January, in which I demanded compensation for the death of Captain Aylmer, and the wounding of Lieutenant Jones.

I was in audience with Lij Yasu on the 21st instant, when I took the opportunity to inform him, and the Nagadras Haili Giorgis who was present, that the Government had evaded the question, and had not given a satisfactory answer to the demand for compensation.

At that I left the matter and was prepared to take my departure, when Lij Yasu and the Nagadras commenced to ask me questions regarding the extent of country the British Government required on the southern frontier, and the condition of the country it was proposed to give in exchange. The Nagadras followed these enquiries with questions regarding the country on the frontier of British Somaliland parallel with Jij Jigga and the Ogaden, informing me at the same time that Sir John Harrington had offered a portion of that country, which Menelik had refused, when some question of exchange of territories had been discussed. I replied that I knew nothing of the matter to which he referred, and that I would prefer to illustrate my answers to their questions respecting the southern frontier with the aid of maps and compasses. The Nagadras, thereupon, asked if he might call upon me for this purpose, and said that in the meantime he would ascertain from the Government papers exactly which country in Somaliland he had made reference to.

The Nagadras called here this morning, and with the map of the southern frontier before us I gave him the information he required, which information Mr. Thesiger on more than one occasion has given him, as well as the other members of the Council of Ministers.

He then spoke about the British Somaliland frontier, and hinted that his Government would be prepared to accept the territory offered by Sir John Harrington to Menelik in exchange for the territory we required on the south. He could not, however, give me any more definite information, as he had failed to discover among the Government archives any reference to the discussion between Sir John and Menelik, and as there is nothing in this connection among the archives of this legation, I was unable to enlighten him.

I told the Nagadras that no question of such an exchange as he now referred to had ever been brought up before in connection with the rectification of the southern frontier, and that as I felt convinced such a suggestion would not be favourably received by my Government at this juncture, the Abyssinian Government would be well advised in restricting any proposals they wished to make to the limits of the southern frontier.

I further threw cold water on his project by suggesting that his Government might find it difficult to convince any but the inhabitants of the Harar district that Abyssinia had received anything in exchange for the conceded territory on the south, if such an exchange was accomplished. This impressed him, but before leaving he said he would make a further search in the Government offices for documents referring to the conversation between Sir John and Menelik, and that he would again refer the question of the southern frontier before Lij Yasu and the Ministers, and if they had any further matter to discuss, he would ask me to attend a meeting of the Council of Ministers.

To this last suggestion I do not feel inclined to respond, as I feel that it would not be wise to lay oneself open again to endless argument over well-beaten ground with a Council of so-called Ministers, who have for the majority, little sense and

For our own part we have stated our demand which is final, and if the Government have any proposal to make they can do so through the persons of Lij Yasu and the Nagadras, who are, with the exception of Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, the only members of the Council with any authority. Such a course will, I think, convince the Government that we have done with talking and await their acquiescence to our demands.

I trust that my action in discouraging any discussion of an exchange of territory in British Somaliland will meet with your approval. I venture to say that I think our acceptance of such a proposal would be a great mistake for two reasons. In the first place we cannot afford to lose more prestige than we have already lost in Somaliland, and a concession of territory in that protectorate to Abyssinia would give a very bad impression throughout Somaliland. And secondly, in view of the very definite attitude we have taken with the Abyssinian Government and the reasons therefore, I cannot think that it would be advisable at this time to shift our ground, and thus give the Abyssinians a chance of saying that they had forced us from the position we had taken up.

The Government appear at the present moment to be more inclined to discuss the southern frontier question, and I attribute this change of attitude partly to the good offices of Dejazmatch Kassa. During the last three months I have seen much of this chief, and have conversed with him on the subject of the frontier. He has been very open in his expressions of dissatisfaction with the attitude of his Government in dealing with the question. About two months ago he told me that he would without fail or delay speak privately with Lij Yasu about the matter. I saw him again soon after he had spoken to the Prince, when he told me that he had been able to persuade Lij Yasu to look at the matter from a different point of view than that which he had hitherto adopted. As a result of this interview Dejazmatch Kassa expressed his hopes that the Government would soon come to me in a more amenable attitude.

I have not felt justified, in view of Major Doughty-Wylie's return, to press the southern frontier question further than I have done, and I have for the same reason reserved the argument of Menelik's death for his use. Although the Emperor's death has not yet been officially announced, it is generally admitted and no longer denied by the authorities, and I think that the argument can now be used in our negotiations with the Abyssinian Government.

I am addressing copies of this despatch to Lord Kitchener, Sir Reginald Wingate and Mr. Byatt.

I have, &c.
J. H. DODDS.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Abyssinian Government to Mr. Dodds.

(Translation.)

I HAVE received the letter that you have written to me on the 28th January concerning Captain Aylmer. The reason of the delay in sending a reply is that we are, as you know, making enquiries into the matter, and we have been waiting the return of the men sent to see what information they bring.

The result of our investigations has not reached us; now when they return we will without delay discuss and conclude the matter.

(Seal and signature of Nagadras Haili Giorgis.)

Meyabit the 10th, 1906 year of grace (March 10, 1914).

REC'D
MAY 22 1914

[May 5,

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ABYSSINIA.

CONFIDENTIAL.

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No. 1.

No. 37.)

Sir Edward Grey to Major Doughty-Wylie.

Foreign Office, May 5, 1914.

I HAVE received Mr. Dodds's despatch No. 27 of the 25th March last respecting the question of the modification of the southern frontier, and I approve the attitude assumed by Mr. Dodds in regard to the suggestion made by Nagadras Haili Giorgis to the possibility of a cession of territory in Somaliland to Abyssinia.

I would in this connection refer to my despatch No. 78 of the 26th July, 1910, in which it will be seen that the Secretary of State for the Colonies does not consider it possible to consider any such suggestion.

I am, &c.
E. GREY.

[2145 c-1]