

1911

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Receipt

Date

1911

To the

order of

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S. A. Thompson & Co. Frank

Handed for the bank on 13th Dec 1911 at 2 o'clock
with cheque for 100/- (one hundred pounds) and
amount was paid to the order of the bank and a
receipt was given for the same. The bank
has paid the amount to the order of the bank.

to the order of

one hundred pounds - 100/-
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FOREIGN OFFICE,

January 12, 1911.

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13 JAN 11

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Sir:-

With reference to your letter No. 30717 of the 2nd ultimo and to the letter from this Department of the 13th ultimo enclosing printed copies of memoranda compiled by Major Gwynn and Major Masd, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit, for the information of Mr. Secretary Harcourt, copies of two further despatches from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa relative to the negotiations with the Ethiopian Government in regard to the Southern Frontier of Abyssinia.

I am to point out that owing to the weakness of the Regent, Ras Tseama's position, his unwillingness to accept the responsibility of a decision involving a cession of territory and the corruption prevalent among the members of the Government, there would appear to be little or no hope of Mr. Theesiger being able to obtain the voluntary recognition by the Abyssinian Government of Major Gwynn's

line

Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office.



line as the true frontier.

While Sir E. Grey concurs in the view already expressed by the Earl of Crewe at an earlier stage of these negotiations that no proposal for granting compensation to Abyssinia by the cession of territory in British Somaliland can be entertained, he is of the opinion that there is some weight in the argument adduced by Ras Teassa ^{that} ~~that~~ the areas which it is proposed to give to Abyssinia under Major O'Connell's realignment of the frontier are an inadequate compensation for the territory, including the Muggad and Jora districts, which is assigned to Great Britain by that realignment. He would suggest therefore that the difficulty arising out of the Abyssinian claim for compensation for the loss of revenue which they have suffered not only by the stoppage of the tribute formerly paid by the Boran and Gobre tribes which were placed in British Territory by the 1907 Agreement, but also by the continued migration of tribes under their rule to our side of the frontier, might be overcome by the adoption of a compromise on the lines suggested in Major O'Connell's

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Memorandum of the 30th of December which is at present under consideration in the Colonial Office.

Briefly, Major Gwynn's suggestion is that the Boran families living in the strip of territory between the red line and his own delimitation and those tribes which have moved intentionally across to the British side of the frontier should be given the option of moving back into Abyssinian territory or of paying a certain number of years' tribute, which would be levied by the Protectorate Authorities and paid to the Abyssinian Government as compensation for the loss of revenue they have incurred through these tribal migrations and the extension of the northern frontier of the East Africa Protectorate. In return for their pecuniary indemnification the Abyssinian Government must agree to recognise Major Gwynn's line including this alternative frontier which gives us the wells in the Goral district.

Sir E. Grey desires me to point out that some such compromise appears to be the only alternative to the forcible occupation of Major Gwynn's line and except as

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an extreme measure he would be unwilling to recommend the adoption of the latter course which would antagonise the Abyssinians at a moment when we are hoping to profit by Ras Tseama's friendly disposition and open up the trade route from ~~his~~ Ababa through Gembela to the Sudan. Moreover the internal political condition of the country is precarious and Sir E. Grey considers that in view of the uncertainty of a peaceful succession in the event of the Emperor Menelik's death, which may occur at any moment, it would not be advisable to alienate the Shoan party or other influential ~~parties~~ in Southern Abyssinia by an aggressive frontier policy.

Sir E. Grey accordingly proposes, on learning that Mr. Barmant would be disposed to concur in a settlement on the lines suggested, to inform Mr. Theiger that for the present and pending further negotiations, His Majesty's Government will occupy the country up to the red line only as described in the Agreement of 1907, which places Fort Harrington within British territory, but that in the event of any

serious

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serious raids taking place across that frontier they will be obliged to occupy Major Gwynn's line, by force, if necessary, and without further warning to the Abyssinian Government. It is proposed at the same time to approve the language held by Mr. Theisiger to the Abyssinian Government in regard to our occupation and retention of Fort Harrington.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

W. R. Gwynn

Copy.

No. 59.

(47101)

BRITISH LEGATION

ADIS ABABA,

27th November, 1910.

Sir:-

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I have the honour to report that Fitasrari Hapta
Georgis asked me to meet the Council yesterday on the
frontier question. On arriving there I briefly stated
our case showing the absolute necessity to us of the altera-
tion of the line and pointing out that I only asked for the
cessation of the wells on our side so as to make it
possible for us to patrol the frontier and showed that they
had hundreds of permanent wells on their side.

They acknowledged this but always returned to the old
arguments that Major Gwyn did not wait for their Commission
and therefore his survey was invalid; that had he waited
it would have been easy for them to show that the line
should have been altered in their favour and so forth.

As there was nothing to be gained by proceeding on
these lines I changed to the subject of Fort Harrington and
asked how it was they had broken our agreement (to leave
matters in statu quo until a decision had been arrived at
here)

H. Grey, Bart., M.P.,

Ac., Ac., Ac.

here) by ordering their frontier officer to ask for the evacuation of Fort Harrington. To their reply that the Emperor had consented to our holding Fort Harrington on the condition that no more buildings were put up, and that this last stipulation had not been observed, I insisted that the 1907 agreement clearly stated that the red line ran from G. Rora to the summit of Churru Moyale and from there to Burrole, that as they well knew Churru Moyale was about quarter of a mile north of Fort Harrington and consequently the latter was within British territory. At this point I could admit no discussion.

They then said they wished this matter to stand over until the actual frontier line was settled and on my asking for their decision with regard to the wells they replied that as we wanted land north of the line and they to the south the only solution would be to keep the red line as the permanent frontier and that the Council declined to discuss any other alternative.

I answered that I could not accept such a decision and that the question must remain open. In the mean time, until I could communicate with my Government I would consent

to observe the red line, but that I absolutely refused to hear anything more of evacuating Fort Harrington.

As I left the room the Fitawrari expressed his regret for this termination of the discussion.

It is impossible to discuss any question with the present Government each member of which is intensely afraid of accepting any responsibility, and dares not give any opinion lest he should be accused of betraying the interests of the country.

Fitawrari Saipa George alone has discussed the matter in a reasonable spirit at private meetings but there has been a renewal of the old friction between him and Ras Tseama, and he dare not now assist us openly against the general opinion of the Council, many of the members of which have become accustomed to refuse their consent to all measures proposed to them unless heavily bribed.

I would suggest that the first step to be taken should be to instruct Mr. Hope to claim and occupy the red line as described in the agreement signed on the 6th December, 1907, by the Emperor Menelik which passes through the summits of

G. Rora,

G. Roka, Churre Moyale north of Fort Harrington, and from thence to the top of G. Burrele.

This gives us a large triangular piece of the debate-able land and would stop all discussion as to Fort Harrington being north of the line.

The position of Churre Moyale cannot be disputed and the written agreement which mentions Churre Moyale as one of the frontier points must outweigh the error in Captain Maud's map which mistakes G. Topasa for Churre Moyale.

I would then recommend that every effort should be made to capture and punish all such small bands of raiders as we have force enough to deal with and that any numbers found in our territory, and refusing to surrender, should be fired on.

Raids on a larger scale than we can deal with should be reported to Adia Ababa and the Abyssinian Government informed that, if they cannot hold their own people in check, His Majesty's Government must occupy Major Gwynn's line which we shall in future consider as the frontier.

I believe that only an energetic policy on the frontier will cause the Abyssinian Government to the fact that we

really

really intend an effective occupation and until they are convinced of it they will not take the matter seriously. Once a real control is established the immigration of Boran south of the line will increase, and should force the Abyssinians to reconsider their present attitude.

I see no other way in which pressure can be brought to bear unless by a hint of being the hinterlands of Zaila to the French. This is their only sensitive point and they must be given to understand that, although we are prepared to continue for a time to hold it in the interests of Abyssinia, a continuation in their present policy of asking for everything and giving nothing in exchange might easily lead to our making other arrangements.

If my suggestions to repatriate all the Boran south of the red line would be entertained (vide my despatch No. 49 of the 17th October), it would be easy to reopen the discussion as I hear that after I left the Council the possibility of an exchange on these lines was debated; this in conjunction with stronger measures against raiders on the frontier should produce a different attitude here.

Our

Our present weakness consists in the fact that the lands we offer in exchange for the required wells have no value in Abyssinian eyes.

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter which I have sent to Ras Tseama on this question, copies of which have been sent to the Government of the Protectorate, and to Mr. Hope for their information.

I have, &c.

(Signed) Wilfred G. Theagar

BRITISH LEGATION,
ADIS ABABA,

28th November, 1910.

Your Excellency:-

I regret that the Council of Ministers informed me on Saturday that they could not agree to the proposed alterations on the frontier and must consider the red line as the permanent frontier.

To this I cannot agree as the events of the past four years have shown that the Abyssinian Government cannot prevent their hunters, soldiers, and tribes from raiding our territory and it is therefore absolutely essential that the line should be so altered as to give us certain wells which will enable us to patrol the whole frontier and, in conjunction with the Abyssinian frontier police, to stop these raids which must otherwise lead to disputes between the two countries, which we should both regret.

I am communicating with my own Government and the question of the frontier in the near time must be considered

W. G. Theagar.

13 JAN 11

BRITISH LEGATION,

ADIS ABABA,

9th December 1910.

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is unsettled.

I must also protest against the demand made by Balis-baras Waldi Gabriel that Mr. Hope should give up Fort Harrington. In the agreement signed by the Emperor Menelik it is clearly stated that the red line is to run from the summit

of G. Roka to Churre Woyale and from there to a distance of a mile north of Fort Harrington which is therefore British territory and I cannot admit of any encroachment at this point.

I hope Your Excellency will be satisfied.

W. Fred. ...

Sir:-

With reference to my despatch No. 59 of the 27th November I have the honour to report that Ras Tessema has just sent me a private message regarding the frontier. After expressing his regret for the, to us, unsatisfactory conclusion of the discussion he went on to explain his own position. He understood, he said, that the wells we required had no importance to Abyssinia but at the same time he dared not make further concessions to us in this respect; before the 1907 agreement the Abyssinians had for years been taxing the tribes as far south as Wujeira, and we had neither raised objections nor attempted to administer that part of the country ourselves, which they consequently had come to look upon as their own. Captain Maud's line took all this district away from them and there had been much

ill-feeling

Grey, Bart., M.P.

ill-feeling created here by the Emperor's acceptance of this fact, and now we required still further concessions. He was not Menelik and if as Regent he consented to give us what we required, his position, which, as I must know, was at the present moment not of the strongest, would be much weakened and he would certainly be accused of having sold his country.

In the first instance Abyssinia had received no compensation for the territory she had lost and in this instance the exchange offered had no value in the eyes of the people who said that England always wanted land from Abyssinia and gave nothing in exchange. He expressed his anxiety for friendship with His Majesty's Government and hoped that they would not press this matter as it was impossible for him to satisfy their demands.

There is a great deal of truth in this exposition of the Abyssinian point of view both as regards Ras Tseuda's own position and the question of the value of the land given by the new line to Abyssinia which even Major Gwynn recognized as being practically useless.

It is very difficult to see however what further territorial

territorial concessions we could make without invalidating the whole purpose of the new line, unless we gave up the east coast of Lake Rudolf by taking a line from G. Shabel north of Hurri to the point where the third parallel cuts the east coast of the lake. The land thus ceded is desert country with practically no exchange value, unless as a sop to Abyssinian pride, but it would obviate the necessity of asking for the wells of Mugaddo and Gorai and would leave us, I believe, a patrolable frontier by Turbi Koroli and Kala, northwest of which would lie a desert track offering small inducements to Abyssinian raiders.

I scarcely think that this offer alone would induce the Government to consent to giving us the more valuable land and wells we require under the Gwynn line but if approved of it would be in conjunction with the scheme of returning the Abyssinian Boran to the highlands giving us something to bargain with.

That the Ethiopian Government however are really desirous of, is to get Jalla and although I have never encouraged their hopes in this direction they have never ceased to refer back to the subject.

If His Majesty's Government were ever inclined to reconsider the possibility of this cession we could, I believe, make sure not only of the frontier but of any concession we might require on the Sudan side.

For the moment I do not intend to reopen the frontier question having informed Ras Tseama that I consider it still unsettled, and can admit of no discussion as to Fort Harrington.

I have &c.,

His Britannic Majesty's Minister.