

EAST AFR. PROT

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Numbering for Govt 57

1915

25th January

Last previous Paper.

M. 9 / 46367 / 14

COASTAL STEAMER SERVICE

States as to existing means of communication between local ports. Notwithstanding extreme desirability of improved and regular service thinks present an inopportune time for taking up question. Encloses correspondence with Scandinavian East Africa Line on subject.

Li-G. Fiddes.

I m.s. 46367 / 14 it was stated that the U.C. Co. had taken up the scheme. Since that I have written the Co. has withdrawn from the agreement for a regular service with the E. Afr. ports. It is to be noted that much interest now in the main scheme. It is to be hoped that a satisfactory arrangement may be arrived at with the Scandinavian line. I do not think that we need say anything to the E. Afr. Co.

Copy to ... Put by ... 15 July 1915

Part by

subsequent Paper

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE

No. 57

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

January 25th 1915.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No.1041 of December 2nd, 1914, enclosing for my perusal and observations copy of a communication addressed to you by the British East Africa Corporation on the subject of a local steamer service on the Coast of this Protectorate.

2. It is unquestionably the case that, since the termination of the service which was formerly carried on by the steamship "Juba", communication between our local ports has been most unsatisfactory. Such as it is, it has been carried on by small vessels owned by Indian firms. These ships have but little accommodation for cargo, livestock, and native passengers, and are quite unsuitable for use by European travellers. They run infrequently and irregularly in accordance with the requirements of the firms who own them and with an entire disregard of

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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LEWIS HARCOURT, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET,

LONDON, S.W.

of public needs. Calls at intermediate ports can never be depended on, as their visits are regulated only by the quantity of cargo available. The demands for a regular and improved service are urgent and well justified, and the necessity is patent to anybody who visits our Coast stations.

3. But, notwithstanding the extreme desirability of inaugurating an improved and regular service, I cannot but think that the present is an inopportune time to take up the question. The traffic between our local ports is not now in a normal state, and it is possible that conditions may be so altered on the termination of the war that any arrangements now concluded would need considerable modification later on. Should the ports of German East Africa fall into our hands, and the contemplated improvement in the administration of Jubaland and the Northern Frontier District be effected, the inducements which will offer for a service from Dar-es-salaam to Tanga, Zanzibar, Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu to Mayu, and vice versa, should be sufficient to induce one of the shipping companies to inaugurate an adequate service without the offer by Government of any substantial assistance.

4. Provided that a service is established which runs with adequate frequency and regularity, and provides suitable accommodation for passengers, cargo, and livestock at reasonable fares and rates, the Governments of the Protectorates concerned might reasonably

reasonably undertake that all Government mails, passengers, and cargo shall be carried by such services between ports other than those which are served by ocean-going steamers. Neither this Government nor that of Zanzibar is however in a position to offer anything in the nature of a subsidy at the present time, and I am of opinion that that question should remain in abeyance until it can be shown that a service under such altered conditions as I have forecasted cannot earn a reasonable profit without financial help.

5. I may mention that the British East Africa Corporation is not the only Company which has approached the Government upon this subject. The enclosed copies of recent correspondence, to the last letter of which no reply has yet been received, will serve to show that the Scandinavian East Africa Line has in contemplation the establishment of a coastal service notwithstanding the fact that its representative has been informed that no subsidy can be granted.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,

[Signature]
GOVERNOR

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REC
Nairobi 22nd 1914

To

The Chief Secretary

of

The British East-Africa Government,

N a i r o b i .

Sir,

Referring to our conversation of the 28th inst. I herewith have the honour to confirm the suggestions re: the inauguration of a coastal service which I then put before you as follows :

Mr. Thor Thoresen Jr., Christiania, the owner of the Scandinavian East-Africa Line, has been approached by several prominent planters of British East-Africa who have pointed out the desirability of a more efficient coastal service for the B.E.A. Protectorate and the neighbourhood and have expressed their wish that Mr. Thoresen should go thoroughly into the matter and take the necessary steps for inaugurating a service that would fulfil their requirements.

With this object in view and before taking any further steps, the writer on behalf of Mr. Thoresen would be glad to know if this proposal meets with the approval of the Government and what inducement and support the Government would be prepared to give.

It is understood that modern steamers suitable for the regular conveyance of cargo and passengers would be utilized for the service.

The writer would like to add that during his brief stay in the protectorate he has interviewed several prominent

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prominent businessmen who are unanimously of the opinion that such an undertaking is highly desirable for the progress of the protectorate and that the present service of antiquated steamers is in no way adequate for the needs of the country.

Awaiting the honour of your reply addressed to the undersigned c/o Messrs O'Swaid & Co, Mombasa.

I have etc.,

(Snd) Henrik Natvig.

Representing Mr. Thor Thorsen Jr.,

Nairobi.

10th July 1914.

H. Natvig Esq.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd. instant. regarding the inauguration of a coastal service.

His Excellency would be glad to know in what direction you would expect to receive inducement and support from this Government and would also be grateful for details of the proposed service. He is not at present prepared to consider the grant of a subsidy.

I have etc.,

Sd/- E. P. Evans

for Acting Chief Secretary.

Dares Salaam June 24th 1914.

To

The Chief Secretary,

The Secretariat.

Nairobi.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. addressed to Mombasa in answer to my respects regarding the inauguration of a coastal service.

When in my previous letter I asked what inducement and support might be expected from the Government I chiefly thought of the transport of cargo and passengers for the account of the Government from Mombasa to the northern ports of the B.E.A. Protectorate and also the transport effected by the Government stations at Lamu, Kismayu, etc. I ventured to presume that in case our Company offered to undertake regular sailings with to start with - two suitable steamers calling at all ports of significance on the entire B.E.A. coast that an arrangement might be made to the effect that the Government would agree to give us the preference with regard to the transport of the goods and passengers as referred to above.

Through the favour of Mr. Giles, Mombasa, I have received particulars with regard to the quantities and number of passengers shipped to northern ports from Mombasa through the Government Transport Office and also approximately the amount of cargo shipped from the Government Offices in the northern ports, and knowing that the shipments to the troops are likely to increase in comparison with the quantities shipped in the year ending March 31st 1914, I feel

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feel sure that if the Government would give the new coastal service a preference as referred to above, it would be inducement enough for my owner to inaugurate the new coastal service.

It would in that case also be of interest to learn the opinion of the Government with regard to the carrying of mail and whether the Government might have any special proposal with regard to ports of call, etc., etc., which will be carefully considered and the utmost done in order to meet with the wishes of the Government.

I understand from the letter referred to above that His Excellency is not at present prepared to consider the grant of a subsidy.

It has been considered to put in two boats of about 500 tons, light drafted, in every way modern, fitted with good passenger accommodation, electric light, electric fans in cabins and saloon, wooden decks, permanent awning deck, good ventilation throughout the ship and in every way suitable for tropic trade.

I shall be very glad to be honoured with a reply c/o Messrs Wm. O'Swald & Co., Bombay where I shall return within about 2 weeks.

I have etc.,

(Snd) Henrik Natvig

Representing Mr. Thor Thorsen Jr.

Nairobi.

8th. July 1914.

H. Natvig Esq.

C/o Messrs O'Swald & Co.

Mombasa .

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th ultimo respecting the establishment of a coast steamer service and to inform you in reply that the consideration by this Government of the question of preference in regard to the carriage of government passengers goods and mails must be dependent on the proposals put forward by your company with reference to (1) accommodation (2) Periodicity of trips between Mombasa, and Kisumu, and vice versa and (3) Rates and charges.

The ports of call required by Government would be Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu and Kisumu, both on the Northward and Southward trips of the steamers.

I have etc.

(Sd) W. J. Hanson.

Acting Chief Secretary.