

EAST AFR PROT
2017 7/15/16

for
Belfield P.20
1915
30 Nov
Last previous Paper
B
48894/15

Labour Supply in Coastal districts

Submits report on Mr. Cornfoot's complaint as to alleged shortage of labour for Magazine Synd at Malindi & generally.

in Head

Report from Mr. ... reasons - whatever they are ... which the plantation is unpopular, the trouble seems to be that the manager wants to have a permanent supply of labour available which he can only use & pay at high interests.

I give Mr. Nelson for the substance of Mr. Hobbs's report as recorded (it can of course be much cut down). We need hardly refer to the question of Swahili labour, and turned out para. 13 also.

Possibly Mr. Jones is willing to use the labour question as an excuse for the failure of the rubber

to be taken for
(copy a few to Mr. Belfield) 20 Nov 15

Next subsequent Paper
for
4112/15/16

Enterprise, but we need not lead
to their business.

Copy of our letter might go to
Sir J. Bethell - our despatch on
48894 could hardly have arrived
when this was sent, but it is
sufficiently answered.

The Sheet MacLeod Sec

WLB
14/11/6

Lt: Conson
at once
4 J R
17/11/6

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

November 30th 1915

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 687 of the 20th of September on the subject of the difficulty experienced by Ericorufoot in obtaining labour for his concession at Malindi, and to transmit for your information a copy of a report by the Provincial Commissioner, Seyidie, on the latter.

I entirely agree with Mr. Hobley's remarks.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,

Alfred Bayld

GOVERNOR.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

ANDREW LONAR LAW, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S. W.

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INCLOSURE

Is 820/16/16

Provincial Commissioner's Office,
Mombasa,

November 22nd 1915.

6/11/16
Labour supply for Agarini Syndicate.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter No. 13034/12 of 15/11/15 re labour supply and beg to report as follows:-

The question of the settlement of labour on the plantations in Malindi and other coastal districts has been receiving close attention during the last 12 months and the general idea has been that Government should induce a number of families to settle on the various estates as a nucleus of the labour supply and that the landholder should supplement these men by others locally engaged on monthly wage. A number were for instance settled on Mr. Bird's plantation at Malindi and he has succeeded in inducing them to stay and there appears to be no further trouble; I have had no complaints of shortage of labour from Powysland plantations at Kilifi or from the Sekoke Estates. At this end of the Province Nyali Sisal Estates has ample labour and the Wazi Estate sisal property near Wazi although two years ago that had a justly earned bad reputation it has under a new manager redeemed its name and there is as far as I know no labour trouble. Powysland estate at one time was in great labour difficulty but under Mr. Montgenierie and later Mr. Millington these have well nigh disappeared.

2. I mention these instances to show that with managers who treat their people on proper lines there is comparatively little trouble at present even in spite of the war.

3. Work at Agarini Syndicate estate is not popular

The Hon. Chief Secretary
Nairobi.

with natives and I would recommend the Directors to find out the reason and remove it; there is no permanent reason why work on that estate should be more distasteful than on any other coast plantation.

4. I enclose copies of certain correspondence with Mr. Jones the Manager and my replies by which it will be seen that efforts have been and ~~are~~ made to induce the Nyika squatters to settle on ~~the~~ estate. I shall continue these efforts but would ask that the management should employ them and try and establish personal relations with the people and make their settlement popular, others will then I am convinced come in.

5. In the past I believe this plantation depended nearly entirely on labour derived from up country and did not particularly endeavour to foster relations with the local people. The Manager it would appear is now trying to put the onus on the Government because the local people do not beg to work on his plantation and accuses us of scattering the people which is not correct.

6. During the past few months the Manager has been away from the estates for considerable periods and as far as I know no employment is offering on the estate at present, if therefore families are moved there for work there is no one to employ them and in one letter the Manager states that there is nothing to be done till January and then only if 200 men can be obtained.

7. Government cannot guarantee any definite labour supply and a precedent would be disastrous. I consider however that if the Manager would personally live on the estate instead of in Malindi and would make the conditions of service attractive he is now in a better condition to obtain labour from local sources than ever before. The attitude of the Giriama is more amenable than it has been in the past; they have supplied 1000 porters to the Military

3.

Transport Corps and many would probably prefer work on a plantation near by to running the risk of a further call by Government. There is now a settlement of 500 Wa Taifa from Kasigau on the W. boundary of this estate, some of these would probably be glad to work for wages.

8. I shall continue to urge the D.C. Nyika and D.C. Malindi to obtain people willing to settle on the Estate but only on the condition that they are employed, it is then up to the management to make the conditions of service such that the people will stay for if they are dissatisfied or ill treated they will undoubtedly move back to their reserve.

9. Owing to the calls for Military transport the Coast districts have been swept clear of practically all the unemployed ^{is Swahili} men who are medically fit for service, no men who are in the bona fide employ of any commercial concern or on any plantation have been called upon and in Mombasa particular regard has been had to the work of the Port.

10. This demand for labour for military purposes is likely to continue for some time and therefore any additional supply of Swahili labour for plantations will not be available.

11. I do not desire to make any further very stringent Government call for labour upon the Gixiana at present in order to give them an opportunity of settling down in their locations, I however have no objection to the Manager of Magarini Syndicate sending his headman to recruit labour for his plantation and I will inform the District Commissioner accordingly and request the D.C. Malindi to inform Mr. Jones.

12. I regret that Mr. Cornfort has seen fit to state

that difficulties have in the past been placed in the way of procuring labour and do not believe that this is the case; the whole of my staff is I am convinced quite alive to the importance of assisting planters and others as far as they legitimately may.

13. A part from the question of the labour supply I attribute the commercial failure of the Nagarini Estates to the fact that the Company expended a considerable amount of capital on the planting of Ceara rubber, when the great slump in price occurred it no longer paid to tap. As far as I know no Ceara Estate in this Protectorate has ever proved to be commercial success. If the same capital had been invested in coconuts it would have been quite a different story today. Whether the Ceara plantations can ever be made to pay is I consider most doubtful, in fact I was of opinion that the Company had realised this and proposed to direct their energies to cotton planting.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. W. Hobley
 Provincial Commissioner.

M A L I N D I,

August 5th 1915.

The Provincial Commissioner,
Mombasa.

Re: Local Labour.

Sir,

You will remember that we had some correspondence months ago through the medium of the D.C. Malindi on the subject of Giriyama labour. As it affected me personally (under the term "Giriyama" I include the Giriyama proper and their kindred tribes, Wanyika &c.) I wished at the time to have permission to settle a number of these people on our Magarini Rubber Estate N. of ^{the} River Sabaki. My request was referred by you on two grounds viz:-

(a) that these people had not at that date been put into locations, and (b) that they had not completed the payment of their fine.

2. As far as I can gather, these two conditions remain as yet unfulfilled and the first one, at any rate, is likely to be considerably delayed. In the meanwhile, the people are getting scattered more and more every day. It is common knowledge that numbers went up towards the Tana, others went S. of the Railway, while scattered groups are found in many places N. of the Sabaki. The main result is the ~~smart~~ inevitable loss to the District of a large potential labour force. It is still possible to rectify the mistake in past but at the time I wrote you previously and met with a refusal, scores of families were ready to come to me. In fact I settled one group on the N. of the river but had to move them south afterwards.

Previous to August of last year, the people were really beginning to come in and work. We had a gang of 25 to 30 regularly for 1913 and half of 1914. At the present time

I knew

I know that several wish to come and settle under me. There is land in abundance and a water supply.

3. On our area South of the Sabaki there are numerous "Strangers" Can I not have your authority to move them up to Magarini when they have finished harvesting their present crops, and to advise their escape numbers others who have settled here and there in villages behind Mamburui and particularly at or near Punwani?

Such a location- I would take 300 families- would surely be a help to the administration in that it would lessen the difficulty of controlling the wanderings of these people. Unless a strong cordon of police is continually kept along the sabaki river, Government will never prevent these people from going back North of it. By not, therefore, obviate this difficulty, -in part at any rate- by granting me a settlement of labour at Magarini, where the place could be under the eye of our local D.C. ? There is a chance now of doing this, soon it will be too late.

4. Under present conditions, the District stands every chance of being ruined. Its prosperity depends on two things:-

- (1) Grain raised for export by Giryama, and
- (2) Money spent by planters.

The upheaval of the Giryama has already, and will in future, very seriously affect the production of grain, and as for the planter, they will soon have to shut down unless labour is forthcoming. Most of us have in the last few years come to an unanimous decision on the subject of coast plantations, and this is, that the place is not suitable for the small man, it is essentially land for the capitalist in a large scale. This means a large gang of labour are a sine qua non. Is such labour available? Potentially it was twelve months ago, today the situation is very different.

Twelve months ago there were enough for a few large plantations, i.e. the manhood was there if it could be brought out; but today there is in this district at any rate, not enough for one large concern.

I am strongly of opinion that every effort should be made to retain these natives in the District, and I trust you will understand that I am speaking not entirely for myself but for the whole district. The training of such unskilled labour to the various details of plantation work would take time and patience, a beginning should be made at once.

5. In my own case- with a large plantation of rubber, and in the future, ~~Cotton-Settlement~~ on the estate, particularly on cotton areas, are absolutely necessary. Rubber tapping requires a certain amount of skill, and it would be impossible to have fresh gangs monthly or bimonthly, and expect results satisfactory to the tapper and to his employer. In the matter of cotton, one day's delay in picking the ripe crop may mean a heavy loss, and I calculate of employing women and children as well as well as men for this work. As you are aware, there are plenty of Wanyika ~~so~~, located on our cotton area. The principle of settlement is therefore admitted; the question is simply one of the extension of this principle and its application to our estate North of the Sabaki, an area where no ~~European~~ or Wanyika has been allowed to settle without permission since 1907.

6. In view of the seriousness of the position, I would ask you to reconsider your former decision in regard to settlement North of Sabaki; Unless conditions are changed, I must advise my Board at once to close down. This will set the District back very much and give the coast generally a bad reputation we have already lost one season; we certainly cannot afford to lose a second. It is easier to find the capital to develop a new district or country than to re open a place which for some reason or other, has once failed, and Malindi is on the verge of expiry. Several plantations for

various reasons have shut down of late years and the closing of cuts would be the last strand.

7. You may justifiably ask me why do we all not import our labour from the Highland;

The answer is simple. In the past every one did so, Kikuyu for a few years came down voluntarily in large gangs and their labour was of quite a good quality. Practically the whole of our Ugaringi plantation was made by Kikuyu labour. But the last three years, they have deteriorated in their work and have developed a frequent habit of absconding without rhyme or reason. A recruited force would be brought down at great expense, it would work a couple of months or so, and then walk away. They became utterly unreliable and too costly. The police are hopelessly useless in tracing runaways, and Government has no terrors for the Kikuyu. He simply laughs at Government and at his employer.

8. We are therefore dependant on a scanty supply of coast labour and on the Giriama, and if the efforts of Government in the latter direction are a failure, - a result highly probable unless the question is handled with common sense and despatch - the position of the planters is impossible and their labour doomed to a miserable failure.

I remain,

Yours Faithfully,

Sd/- J. E. Jones.

Manager.

Provincial Commissioner's Office,

Mombasa,

August 10th 1915.

No. 4/21/4/15.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 5th inst. and note your remarks re labour supply.

Generally speaking I am of opinion that the concentration of the Giryama will eventually be productive of an improvement in their attitude towards labour and I would venture to suggest that while matters are in a transition stage it is easy to be pessimistic as to their result.

Now with regard to your needs I would state that I am desirous of helping you and have ^{referred} District Commissioner Nyika and District Commissioner Malindi that if any of the Nyika settlers on the Madunguni land or thereabouts are willing to settle at Magarini under agreement to work for you they are to encourage them to do so.

With regard to Giryama I have informed D.C. Nyika that he can now allow natives of that tribe from areas which have completed payment of the fine to settle on your Magarini Estate if they agree to work.

The general terms should I consider be as follows:

- 1) No rent to be charged by your Co.
- 2) Wages should be paid by the Co. to those who work
- 3) A register of the squatters should be kept by D.C. Malindi and a record of the terms upon which they are allowed to squat
- 4) It would be convenient if you collected the Hut and Poll tax due from the squatters
- 5) I consider that you should agree that if at any time

time

time your Company does not employ any or part of the people settled on the land that the unemployed persons may be removed by the District Commissioner.

6) I consider that you should undertake not to sublet or otherwise dispose of any of the Estate held from Government to any native squatter.

7) Any person who settles on private land and refuses to work to be given three months' notice to quit.

I do not think that any of the above conditions will be detrimental to your interests and I am desirous that any natives squatting on private estates should only do so if they mean to work as otherwise the private lands in the district will gradually absorb a number of idle natives who will be under no authority and will be able to frustrate the efforts of the District authorities to make them work by sheltering themselves behind the land holder.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Sd/- G.W.Hobley.

Provincial Commissioner.

Provincial Commissioner's Office,

Mombasa,

August 10th 1915.

0.6/21/5/15.

Sir,

I beg to transmit for your information some correspondence from Mr. Jones of Magarini Syndicate re labour and make the following comments for your information and guidance:-

I will deal first with certain arguments in Mr. Jones' letter of 8th instant.

It is alleged that the Giriama are getting more and more scattered, this is as far as I know not according to facts.

I believe that a number wandered off into Malindi district about June last on account of shortage of food, these are I believe being collected and returned. I have no information of any having settled S. of the Railway. Some are in the Tana valley but steps are being taken to return them. Certain settlements N. of the Sabaki are being removed to the reserve.

Mr. Jones states that the result is the inevitable loss to the district of a large potential labour force.

I here venture to disagree with him and looking back on the attitude of the Giriama before hostilities with regard to labour I consider that they are now likely to be more amenable than formerly.

I am strongly in favour of pressure being put on the Giriama to work for Government and for planters and do not desire to force planters into being

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER,

NYIKA.

being obliged to import labour and I resent any suggestion that the general policy has not the improvement of the labour supply as one of its objects.

The real reason of the decline of the Malindi plantations has been the great reduction in the price of rubber and the indifferent success of that product. If some 7 or 8 years ago the planters had confined their attention to economic matters would be very different today.

As the fine is now practically completed and also the labour call of 1000 men for Government, I am quite willing that you should endeavour to assist the Magarini Syndicate in co-operation with the District Commissioner, Malindi.

The lines laid down in my No. 12/209/ of 10/2/15 to the District Commissioner, Malindi, can be followed with the exception that unless you have cogent reasons to the contrary you need not delay the issue of permits until the Giriama are resettled in the various locations.

The Nyika squatters on the Madunguni land be first dealt with and if any are prepared to migrate to Magarini Plantations on the N. of the Sabaki, to work and reside, well and good I should however like to be assured that the Magarini Syndicate intends to recommence active operations on that area under proper supervision.

My general point of view is that if natives are allowed to migrate to private estates and then do not work they are lost to the general labour supply of the district upon which both Government & planters can draw.

No rent should be charged by the landowner, wages should be paid and it is advisable that the landowner collects or pays the Government taxes due from such people.

A record of the terms upon which the squatters are settled

settled should be attested by the landowner or landholder and filed in the District Office concerned.

The landowner or landholder should I consider agree that if at any time there should be persons who are not employed that they should be removed by the District Commissioner and settled elsewhere. Further if any refuse to work they should be given say three months notice to quit and the Dist. Commr. notified.

After the Walyika are settled, if there is still a demand for labour I would recommend that the Manager be allowed to obtain Girama who are willing to settle there under working conditions obtaining them from next sections who have completed fine and labour supply.

You and the District Commissioner Malindi should cooperate on the matter and the agreement with the landholder should be made by the District Commissioner Malindi in whose district the land is situated. If you consider it necessary to consult this office please do so.

I am sending a copy of my reply to Mr. Jones and a copy of this letter is being sent to the District Commissioner, Malindi.

I have &c.,

Sd/- C.W. Hebley.

Provincial Commissioner.

Malindi.

17th August 1915.

The Provincial Commissioner,
Mombasa.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, (No. 6/21/4/15) and to thank you for acceding to my request in regard to the settlement of Nyika on our estate at Magarini.

No one will be more glad than myself if my pessimistic views on the present situation prove unfounded.

1. I thoroughly agree with the general principles enunciated in the last paragraph of your letter on the question of natives squatting on private lands or estates with the mere idea of "squatting" and doing no labour. I do not propose to allow such on any part of my Company's Estate at any time.
2. In regard with the general terms laid down in your letters. To Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 I unhesitatingly agree. No. 4 I dislike, not from any disinclination to help the Local Administration, but because it is impossible to dis-
 abuse the native of the idea that his employer ^{is not acting in collusion with Govt. & getting some preferential} ~~from the~~ latter collects the tax. At one period, planters used to collect the hut tax from their men, but in the end it was found preferable to give notice of wages ^{pay} to the D.C. who then sent out a clerk to collect the tax on the spot. This may well be done in future. No. 7 I should suggest shorter notice to quit on refusal to work one month or two at the outside. No planter will want drones on his estate

I have
Sd/- J. E. Jones,
Manager.

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District Commissioner's Office,

Malindi,

14th October 1916.

145/32/16.

Labour Supply, Magarini Syndicate.

Sir,

In reply to your No. 6/21/9/16 of October 8th I have the honour to inform you that the District Commissioner, Nyika, arranged with Mr. Jones to supply the estate with some 40-50 squatters taken from the North of the Sabaki, but has so far been prevented from being able to pay the locality the proposed visit. Consequently there are only the few squatters on the land whom I induced to go some while back.

Mr. Jones is looking after the estate. He writes "No work is necessary until January, when, if labour is available, I propose beginning to clean the estate again, with the view of tapping next season, again if labour is available."

I have Ac.,

D/- Merwyn Beach.

District Commissioner.

The Hon'ble

The Provincial Commissioner,

Mombasa.

District Commissioner's Office,

Malindi,

25th October 1915.

184/87/15.

The Hon'ble

The Provincial Commissioner,

MOMBASA.

Labour Supply Magarini Syndicate.

Reference your L/21/11/15 of 19/10/15.

These few families (about 10) have settled on the Kikombe Tele branch of the Magarini syndicate. I could not induce them to go to Magarini proper as it is a considerable distance from the Sabaki river and has no water. However they are sufficiently near that area to be employed upon it when required.

They are not at present being employed as Mr. Jones considers it useless to start work with less than 200 men; also he says that no work is necessary until next January.

I have registered these few squatters but have delayed drawing up any agreement until the other Wanyika are sent by the District Commissioner, Jilora.

Sd/- Mervyn Beach.

District Commissioner.

in which Mr. Hobley states that the question of labor settlement on Coast estate plantations has received close attention, the policy being that the Govt should induce a number of families to settle on an estate as a ^{nucleus} ~~center~~ of a labor unit, and that the landowners should supplement them by engaging labor locally. The arrangement appears to have worked satisfactorily, in a large number of cases, and the serious short-fall of labor has been generally lessened. Great labor difficulties now have no occasion for complaint. He concludes that where the managers deal with the question on proper lines there is comparatively little trouble even in spite of the war. Work at the

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Thegerine Estate seems to be unpopular and Mr. Hobley suggests that the Directors would ought to call to for aquire into the reason and remedy.
3. Mr. Hobley points out that the main question of the Estate is often a forest for long periods, and that except at particular times there is no work to be obtained there. If families are moved on to the plantation for work, there is no one to employ them and in one letter the Manager stated that no work was to be done until January and that only of 200 men could be obtained.
4. ~~Some~~ Efforts have been made and will be made to induce Wa Niyika Squatters to settle on the land, and if the

management will employ
them and try to establish
personal relations with them
and make their settlement
popular, Mr. Hobley is
convinced that others will
follow. The Syndicate, in his
opinion, are in a better position
to obtain labour locally than
ever before. The Gvians are
more amenable than they
have ever been in the past and
there are numbers of Wura Fante
now on the western boundary
of the estate some of whom
would probably be glad to
work for wages.

5. There is no ground for the
assumption that the Govt. is
blaming difficulties in the way. The
Syndicate has raised nothing
in the past or labour derived
from up-country and it
appears, in Mr. Hobley's
view, to seek to place the
responsibility on the Govt. because
the local people, whom the Syndicate
has not encouraged, do not
show ability for work. Although
cannot guarantee any definite

labour supply, ~~was~~ 204

Mr. Hobley will continue
to urge the subject

Commissioners concerned to

obtain people willing

to settle on the estate, but

only on condition ^{that} they

are employed. It will

then rest with the management

to make the

conditions of service such

that they will remain

and not go back to their

respects. In addition,

while he was not anxious

to make any further stringent

call for Govt work on the

Giriana, who should be

given the opportunity of

settling down in their kindred

~~country~~ Mr. Hobley was

willing that the Syndicate's

manager should send his

DRAFT

headman to recruit
labour among them and
was taking steps for Mr.
Jones to be appointed
accordingly.

6. The report, in which
the Gov. concurs, shows
in his Board laws
opinion that the local
authorities are fully
able to the importance
of assisting, so far as
they possibly can, in
procuring labour for their
estates.

Gov. E. A. P.
2097 ¹⁴/₁₆

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Stc

25 January 1916

Sir,

With reference to

(+8894) the letter from this Dept.

of the 29th of October, I

understand by Mr. Secy.

Barwick to transmit

to you for you info the

accompanying copy of

a letter which has been

addressed to Mr. Wilson

Fox on the subject of

the representations of the

Mexican Syndicate

with regard to the supply

of labor for their

plantations in the E. A. P.

DRAFT

Mr. Bethell M.P.

MINUTE

Mr. Protheroe 18/1/16

Mr. Read 19

Mr.

Mr.

Mr. H. L. 19

Mr. H. L.

Mr. I. Anderson 20

Mr. Steel Moulbank 20

Mr. Thomas Latt 21

16326

To Mr. Wilson For Jan 7
(see herewith)

(Signed) H. A. READ,
Secretary of State