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KENYA

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22 FEB 24

HOUSE OF COMMONS

DATE
21ST FEBRUARY 1924

U.S.S. 22/2/24
U.S.S. of State for the Colonies, whether his
attention has been drawn to the resolution adopted by the Convention of Associations
at Nairobi on 12th December 1923 regarding the appointment of a commission of
inquiry into the question of the construction of the Uasin Gishu railway with
the widest possible reference; on what grounds this demand was rejected by the
Governor of the Colony; and whether, in view of this demand by the European
settlers, he has taken steps to ensure a full and independent inquiry into this
question. [Monday 25th February.]

UASIN GISHU RAILWAY

Previous Paper

MINUTES

Oral reply

The Resolution referred to is in page 1273 of the Press cuttings in Gov /49938/23. You will find it in the second column of the lower part of the cuttings. We have nothing from the Governor about the Resolution and although it was no doubt communicated to the Governor we do not know even that for certain.

You will see that the principal emphasis in the Press Cutting is laid on the terms of the contract, but that there are references to rumours, etc. which may very well mean that the question is another stage in the attack on Colonel Robertson.

As regards the terms of the contract, it is unnecessary to go into these after two and a half years. It is extremely unlikely that the experiments will ever be repeated of a big contract based on actual cost with percentage profit to the contractor and bonus or penalties for

Subsequent Paper

MINUTES.

NOTES NOT TO BE WRITTEN
ON THIS SIDE.

for savings or excesses. ^{At the time} ^{about} when prices were at their peak, it was, I think, the best form of contract which could have been devised. If any contractor had been found willing to put forward a lump sum tender he would have had to safeguard himself against high prices by quoting a very high figure, and the Government would have derived no benefit from the fall in the price of materials which followed. No doubt there have been instances of extravagance which will be taken to heart in the construction (as we hope by the Government itself) of the new lines now in contemplation. One example quoted to me without much authority was that earth work priced in the original estimate at 2/- per unit was let out to sub-contractors at 1/- per unit and carried out by them at 3d. The difference between the 2/- and the 1/- is, of course, a saving from which the Government derives benefit and on which I presume the principal contractor stands to receive bonus as being an economy effected by his good management. As regards the second profit, it cannot be assumed that after allowing for cost of supervising staff the Government or the principal contractor could have done the work for much less than 1/-.

But it is, I think, unnecessary to give more than a general answer to

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this question. It is obvious that, whatever our troubles in the interval may be, the principal attack will be made when the Colonial Office Vote comes up in the summer and I think that our best plan is to see that we are prepared then.

I may add that last autumn it was anticipated that the savings on the Uasin Gishu Railway would amount to something like ~~£700,000~~ ^{£600,000 or} £700,000 on the gross figure of £2,300,000. Of this, something would of course go to the contractor as bonus, but the Government would derive the main advantage of the saving. We are waiting for revised figures of this saving, which will not be as high as was originally contemplated.

I submit draft reply, and in sending copy of question and answer to the Governor I think we should ask for his observations on the Resolution and the speeches made in the Convention of Associations, and on the statement in the question that the Colonial Government refused enquiry. The Governor should be asked to give whatever information he can as to the nature of the criticisms made at the Meeting — apart from the main question, and of the form of the contract, and to furnish his reply so that it will reach here before the middle of June.

Yes - the contract was very skillfully drawn by the Com. Agents. S. J. R.

*Yes
S. J. R.*

*H. J. R. 22/2/24
Wed. 22.2.24*

Official Report
26 February 1924

UASIN GISHU RAILWAY.

Mr. SIMPSON asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to a resolution adopted by the Convention of Associations at Nairobi on 12th September, 1923, demanding the appointment of a commission of inquiry into the whole matter of the construction of the Uasin Gishu railway with the widest terms of reference; on what grounds this demand was rejected by the Governor of Kenya Colony; and whether, in view of this demand by the European settlers, he will take steps to ensure a full and independent inquiry into this question.

Mr. THOMAS: I have seen the resolution to which the hon. Member refers in an account of the meeting of the Convention of Associations published in a local newspaper, but no report with regard to the resolution has been received from the Governor of Kenya. I am in communication with the Governor as a result of the hon. Member's question, but pending the receipt of his views, I am not prepared to form any opinion as to the necessity for an enquiry into the construction of the Uasin Gishu railway.

This was with the papers
sent by the S. H. in the

£3,500,000 U.S. estimate
June 26th 1924

I ft. herewith - I have
shown it to Sir [unclear]

W.C.S.
26.3.24
am

Mr. Hope Simpson. — To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether his attention has been drawn to a resolution adopted by the Convention of Associations at Nairobi on 12th September 1923 demanding the appointment of a commission of inquiry into the whole matter of the construction of the Uasin Gishu railway with the widest terms of reference; on what grounds this demand was rejected by the governor of Kenya Colony; and whether, in view of this demand by the European settlers, he will take steps to ensure a full and independent inquiry into this question.

had reply 25-2 Feb 24

I have seen the Resolution to which the Honourable Member refers in an account of the Meeting of the Convention of Associations published in a local newspaper, but no report with regard to the Resolution has been received from the Governor of Kenya. I am in communication with the Governor as a result of the Honourable Member's question, but, pending the receipt of his views, I am not prepared to form any opinion as to the necessity for an enquiry into the construction of the Uasin Gishu Railway.

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DRAFT REPLY.

Mr. ...

*to be sent for
the 25th*

I have seen the Resolution to which the Honourable Member refers in an account of the Meeting of the Convention of Associations

MINUTE.

published in a local newspaper, but

no ... regard to the

Resolution ... from

the ...

... the ...

... Hon ... members

... and ...

... I am not prepared to

form any opinion as to the necessity

Monday ...

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Mr. H. Sec 1. 22/11

Mr. J. Masterton Smith.

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4/2/24
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H.C.

W. J. P. 8592 / 14 K

C. D.
27 MAR
D 27

28 March 1924

recd. by Mr. [unclear] in Dep. [unclear]

Amos 28162 / 24

Sir,

I have the honour to

DRAFT.

Carroll

R. Corydon
MINUTE.

Mr. [unclear] 26.3.24
Mr.
Mr.

- Sir C. Davis
- Sir G. Grindle.
- Sir H. Read.
- Sir J. Masterton Smith.
- Mr. Ormsby-Gore.
- Duke of Devonshire.

ack the receipt of
transmit to you the
accompanying copy of a
Digest and Article in the
House of Commons regarding
the report of the Commission
of Associations for an enquiry
into the contributions of the
Main Gidea railway. In
the course of the debate on
the Supplementary Estimate
of £3,500,000 for the
amended Railway Loan it
was suggested that the
chain of route was (is or
between the [unclear] and

A.
by [unclear]

V.M. [unclear]

Mass. (M. H. H. H.)
was decided in relation to
the interests of large land owners,
and it has been suggested from
another source that the object
was to increase the selling
value of the 100,000 acres of
land granted to Lord DeLauney
in 1704.

2. This suggestion is probably
sufficiently answered by the
fact that the Mass. release
itself
included the construction of
a branch line of 20 miles
from Wakefield, but I
shall be glad if you will
bear it in mind in answering
this dispute. The points
on which I shall hope for some
observations are, principally,
the ~~main~~ objects which
actuated the Convention in
the ~~and~~ ^{and} the

reasons for which you
considered that such an
enquiry was undesirable.
I do not desire to influence
you in this matter, but
I can well understand that,
when the allegation of a scandal
has been ~~if~~ ^{freely} made in the House
of Commons, it may prove
a better best to raise no
obstacle to a full local
enquiry.

DRAFT.

MINUTE.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr. C. Davis.

Mr. G. Grindle.

Mr. H. Read.

Mr. J. Masterton Smith.

Mr. Ormsby-Gore.

Viscount of Devonshire.

(SIGNED) J. H. THOMAS.