

1925

KENYA

730

C. O.
38429

DATE

27th July 1925.

22 AUG 25

A.G.'S DEP NORTHCOVE.
CONF 121

CIRCULATION :-

Mr. *Brookman* 18/4

Mr.

Mr.

Asst. U.S. of S.

Sig. Spence

Perm. U.S. of S.

Part U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

IMMIGRATION OF ABYSSINIAN TRIBESMEN INTO KENYA.

Fwd's further gorres. on the subject, together with copy of Major Miles' report. The reasons alleged for migration are maltreatment and maladministration in Abyssinia. Requests strong representations be made.

Previous Paper

MINUTES

70 36264

to Brookman

*Ans. J. L. Conson 18th Sept. 25.
Copy comes. F.O. - 12 OCT 1925 C.A.
43958/25*

It is necessary to go back to the Conference of July 1924 (70. 36088/24) at which it was agreed that I should try to bring pressure on the Abyssinian Govt - either direct or through the League of Nations - in order to endeavour to cure the root of the trouble - i.e. the maladministration in Abyssinia which leads to these migrations into Prot. Territory.

In the first instance I wanted full reports from the local authorities & we asked Kaura for these. We now have the last report from Kenya, a

Subsequent Paper

70 38478

Summary of atrocities going back for years.

The obvious course w^d. now appears to be to send a copy of his to Z. recapitulating the history of the matter as above & asking them what they propose to do about it.

It will be seen that in a tel. to Ad. Abeba ⁱⁿ 38478 ~~referred to~~ which deals with the immediate action to be taken in connection with one of these immigrations they say that "if asked for in Aug 1934 is no longer likely to be of much value"

I don't understand this remark & don't like it. The intermediate corresp. as to the situation created by individual immigrants sh^d. not be allowed to obscure the fact that permanent improvement sh^d. only be achieved by getting at the root of the trouble. The ^{proposed} policy as to his was laid down on 36085/34 & I don't know why it sh^d. have changed

Em 18/9/35

On this last point I think Z. had in mind the contemplated White Paper on Slave Raids, in which the Refugee matter is

wanting of an experience.

In any case, this despatch is official reason for raising the refugee question again, if not from the 1929 discussion. But I wish we had first had the despatch on the proposed repatriation of the British refugees: admittedly we cannot keep them here for refugees, and that is additional reason for demanding decent treatment; but it is illogical to send back refugees, to a government which were at the same moment holding out the door.

To do so would involve the face of our protest to Abyssinia, and in other quarters it would have a very hollow appearance

G. C. S. H. H. H.

18.9.35

Yes. & the remainder will reply

18.9.35

with

KENYA.

No 121.

CONFIDENTIAL.



38429

GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

23 AUG 1925
NAIROBI.

KENYA.

732

27th July, 1925.

721

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to my despatch No.21 (Confidential) of February 20th last and to your predecessor's Confidential despatch (6) of the 8th August, 1924, on the subject of the immigration of Abyssinian tribesmen into Kenya.

2. In continuation of this correspondence I attach extracts taken from various letters and reports which have been received on the subject from time to time and I also enclose a copy of Major Miles' report which was awaited when my despatch under reference was addressed to you.

3. As you will observe from this correspondence and the documents annexed the reasons alleged for the migration of Abyssinian tribesmen from their own country, to the Northern Frontier Province are:-

(1). The maltreatment and mutilations practised on them, and

(2). The methods of extortion and robbery resorted to by subordinate Abyssinian officials.

4. I trust that you will consider the above incidents sufficient evidence for the Abyssinian Government to be approached and strongly urged to appoint an efficient senior official to administer South Abyssinia.

5. I will address you shortly on the matter of the proposed repatriation of the Degodia to which allusion was made in Sir Robert Coryndon's Confidential despatch No.186

of July 25th 1924.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servant,

RIGHT HONOURABLE
LIEUTENANT COLONEL L.C.M.S. AMERY, P.C., M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
DOWNING STREET, LONDON S.W.

G. A. V. Northcote
GOVERNOR'S DEPUTY.

EXHIBIT A.

EXHIBIT B.

1925/74

ANNEXURE A.

Extract from the Officer in Charge Bta King's African
Rifles' letter of the 27th May, 1924.

I informed Wobur Abdi that we heard the reason for the whole of his tribe coming over to us from the Abyssinian was on account of the cruelty and mal-treatment they had received at the hands of the latter, and asked him to let me have a true and accurate account as to what had actually happened.

This is his story. "For the last 20 years I have had to bear the treatment of the Habash. I have never objected to pay tribute, but latterly anyone and everyone used to come and demand tribute, which if not handed over, was taken by force usually resulting in the death of one or more Degodia. As well as this, large bands of Habash used to "billet" themselves on us with the usual demands for food etc. Apart from this, Degodia men have been deprived of their private parts; women have been raped and in many cases are now pregnant; men and even women have been shot; one woman was burnt; my own daughter was taken away, and not been seen or heard of since. In view of all this we decided to come over to a country where there was law and order and have access to the R.F.C. - food, stock and barrel. I do not know how many people and stock came over, but do know that none of our tribe are left in Abyssinia.

At present we are in the area EIL WAK - BUNA - KUFOLI - TAKABA. I do not want to rob anyone else of their water or grazing and will go wherever the British tell me to go. But we will never go back to Abyssinia. We are quite willing to obey the "Bwana", and even pay a small tribute if asked to do so."

I pointed out to Wobur Abdi that he was making very serious accusations against the Abyssinians, and asked him to be very careful as to his facts. He replied that what he had said was perfectly true. (Major White is forwarding a separate report giving full details as to why at present a section has taken refuge with us in the area mentioned).

(The report is a copy of the report of the Kenya Dispatch (No. 100/24 of the 10th June, 1924).

(2)

Extract from the Officer in Charge W.A. King's African Rifles' letter of the 10th June, 1924.

1. Abdi Adiker, Jibreel, Sec. Mohammed Jibreel, aged 20 years states that about 3 years ago he was grazing stock when a party of Abyssinian came and shot him and took 300 head of cattle which he was grazing. He was left lying on the ground. The shot went through his right arm and fractured both bones. I have examined his arm and it is practically useless.

2. Hassan Ahamed, Massarch, Sec. Abdi Yusuf, aged

700

23 years; states that about 6 years ago he was living in his village near Odo, when a party of Abyssinian soldiers raided them. They killed 7 men of his manyatta, took away all the young women, and castrated him. I have verified his statement with regard to himself.

3. Haroun Heffu, Midamal, aged 8 years was brought before me for inspection. He had been castrated. I was informed that this had been done about 4 years ago by a party of Abyssinians who raided two villages, killed 17 men and 3 women and took all the stock.

4. Anamed Monamed, Jibreal, Sec: Mohamed Jibreal, aged 54 states that about 3 years ago a party of Abyssinian soldiers arrived at his village and asked for the headman. He went out to them and was tied to a tree by his hands. The soldiers then went into the village where they killed 24 people both men and women, and took all the stock. They then returned to him and cut off his left hand and hung it round his neck and broke his right wrist. I have verified the nature of the injuries.

5. Salad Ibrahim, Arbrusseh, aged 20 years, states that he was with the above when the Abyssinian soldiers raided his village. They cut off his left thumb and severely injured his left leg and back. I have verified the nature of the injuries.

6. Heffo Aden, Jibreal, Sec: Mohamed Jibreal, aged 31 states that he was with the above village and was shot through shoulder by the same party of soldiers. He states that he was not attempting to resist them. I have seen the bullet mark through his shoulder.

7. Danir Aden, brother of the above states that on the same occasion he had his arm cut open with a sword; I have seen the wound on his arm.

All Ehim, Jibreal, Sec: Mohamed Jibreal, aged 20 years, states that about 4 years ago a party of Abyssinian askaris came along when he was grazing cattle and took him and blew his right arm off with a rifle, and took all the cattle. His right arm is missing.

It will be noted that none of the above atrocities are of recent date. Mohamed Abul states that there have been fewer atrocities recently, but an even greater extortion of stock. Of the latter he has failed at present to produce proof.

(3).

Extract from H.M. Consul Southern Abyssinia's letter No. 33/1/24 of 15th August, 1924.

Fitaurari Ayella has written to Fitaurari Hapt Georgis, the Minister for War asking that a good Abyssinian be sent down to administer this tribe permanently, but he pointed out to me that young relations of the Minister for War have been appointed in the past, who come down here with the only idea of feathering their nests and do not attempt to consider or administer their tribes in any way, and pay not the slightest notice to any order that Fit Ayella, in his capacity of Governor of the Boran Province, may

734

may give. I have therefore written to H.M. Charge d/Affaires Addis Ababa informing him of this, and have ventured to suggest that the minister for War be asked to see that a good man be sent down.

(4)

Extract from the Officer in Charge Northern Frontier Province's No. 2/A/80/25 of the 13th March, 1925.

For many years there has been a quiet filtration of refugees from Abyssinia into British territory, almost entirely confined to the Boran into the area south and west of Moyale, and the Gabra, east of Lake Rudolf. This was due, not so much to ill-treatment received at the hands of the Abyssinians, but because the latter made such heavy demands on their stock. It has been pointed out that slavery also was responsible for sending them across the border, but I think, that though undoubtedly the Boran were taken as slaves, in some cases voluntarily, that this cannot be considered to be the real cause of their immigration.

Early in 1924, a totally different aspect was put on the question.

Instead of individuals crossing the border and joining their own people on our side, a complete tribe, namely the Degodia, came across with all their stock, some 3000 men, women and children, and about 30,000 head of mixed stock. The head Degodia chief, Wober Abdi, has been interviewed by several officers in the Northern Frontier Province, including Major A.T. Miles, D.S.O., M.C. H.M. British Consul for Southern Abyssinia, and it is perfectly clear that the only reason for their taking such a drastic step was due to the cruelty and aggression they received at the hands of the Abyssinians. This the Degodia had put up with for many years until matters became unbearable. Officers have testified to seeing the actual individuals who have received mal-treatment at the hands of the Abyssinians.

Perhaps it would not be amiss to mention here that the Degodia are unanimous in ascribing their ill-treatment to one man, one Lej Beli, the Governor of that portion of Abyssinia, i.e. the Daua River. This individual was recalled, and it is understood was ordered to Addis Ababa to answer for his sins. Be that as it may, he is now back in his old haunts, and has even been reported on our side of the Border, carrying on his famous "reign of terror".

(5).

Extract from H.M. Consul Southern Abyssinia's letter No. 7/5/25 of the 19th March, 1925.

I have nothing to add, except to endorse Col. Muirhead's statement, that it would be quite impossible to repatriate the Degodia at present, as without any senior Abyssinian official in the Liban Province,

Province, they would be persecuted by every scallywag Abyssinian and would immediately return to British territory again.

I beg to refer you Sir, to my 35/5/24 of 15th August, 1924, in which I asked, that the Minister for War might be approached in order that an Abyssinian of some rank and standing could be sent down to look after the Degodia. I do not know if it is the intention of The Minister for War to do this, to send down Fitaurari Ayella again or if a new Governor of both Borana and Liban is to be appointed, but I can not express too strongly the want of a Governor over both these provinces.

(6)

Extract from Kenya Colony Intelligence Report for the month ending 30th April, 1925.

If an enlightened Governor could be found for Borana, who would dispense justice with fairness etc., I am certain that not a single inhabitant would leave the high country of Dirre to go and fight for existence in the hot and dry desert of Gelbo and Horr. This could never be accomplished unless a big enough man is made Governor of the whole of Borana together with Liban and Arero. Under the present regime Arero and Liban are not under the authority of the Governor of Borana and the officials in charge of these places refuse to acknowledge his authority. Borana and Liban seem to be a family concern of the Minister for War and almost all the officials of these two places are relations of his.

I understand that Lej Belai has left for Addis Ababa. I hope that on his arrival he will be imprisoned for his treatment of the Degodia. I do not know if all the Degodia have now been concentrated preparatory to their repatriation. The Officer i/c N.F.P. is expected shortly at Moyale and I will discuss the matter with him but I cannot recommend their repatriation to Abyssinia until a good officer is sent down to take charge of them.

-----oooOooo-----

British Consulate,
Southern Abyssinia,
Mega.

April 27th, 1925.

0.27/1/25.
Sir,

I have the honour to forward my report on the annual migration of the Boran from the Abyssinia to the Northern Frontier Province and the cause thereof.

The Boran Province belongs to the Minister for War Fitaurari Hapt Georgis, and is administered for him by a local Governor, who is responsible to him direct.

The Boran tribe are divided into two main sections Sabbu and Gona. The chief of the Sabbu is Geydu, of the Gona Guyu, and the Abyssinian Governor of the whole province is Fitaurari Ayella, who is at present at Addis Ababa. Although Fitaurari Ayella is Governor of the whole of the Boran Province, he is only responsible for the taxing of the Gona Section, Fitaurari Walde Gabriel, who resides at Arero, is responsible for the taxing of the Sabbu section. There are two general taxes,

- (a) An annual tax of dollars 16 a year per Karra, or its equivalent in stock.

A Karra is a hundred head of stock, cattle, camels or horses.

- (b) A tax levied by the Minister for War on both sections of the Boran in equal proportions, this has only been levied twice, one after the Whollo war in 1916, when 600 head were taken, and in 1923 when 1000 bullock were levied.

The general tax is paid in the following manner, so many karra are allotted by the Minister for War to Fitaurari Ayella and Fitaurari Walde Gabriel. I think both these officials are allotted 100 kara each. From these they take the annual tax of dollars 16 per annum, with which they pay themselves and their own private soldiery. The minor officials are allotted so many karra according to their rank, they also have to pay themselves and their private soldiery from this annual tax. The Government soldiery are also allotted karra, some as much as 10 and the least 3 karra each.

This tax of dollars 16 per karra is the only tax ordered by the Government, and is not in any way exorbitant for the enormous amount of stock the Boran own, but you can realize that the system of farming out of natives for taxation is in itself an extremely bad institution and asks for corrupt practice.

The Boran do not object to this tax of dollars 16 annually, if it was the only tax they had to pay.

The tax is collected in following manner.

The Abyssinian tax collector of the karra orders

297

the Boran owner to pay his tax on a certain date, if he cannot pay in dollars he produces stock instead, the stock is supposed to be valued by the Boran elders of the manyatta, but in many cases the stock is valued by the Abyssinians themselves at a much lower price than it is worth, the stock is then handed back to the Boran owner of the karra to hold until the Abyssinian tax collector requires it, in the meanwhile robbers may appear and seize the stock paid as tax, whereupon the Boran has to pay his tax over again. Apart from this, the Boran have to feed all Abyssinian soldiery billeted on them for tax collecting, or stationed at their manyattas for the purpose of protecting them against robbers, most of these soldiers take a large quantity of milk apart from stock which they make into ghee and sell for themselves. Any official passing through Borana has to be fed by the Boran on meat and milk, this they do of bitterly, as to feed the large retinue which accompany an Abyssinian official is a big drain on their milk and meat supply, especially in dry season. The Abyssinian soldiery do not hesitate when passing through Borana, to rob manyattas of stock for themselves.

At the three great Abyssinian festivals, Easter, Muscal and Christmas, the Boran have to provide bullocks for the Abyssinian officials to kill for their men. They also have to provide transport for the movement of officials and ~~mark~~ at times are ordered to work at the different Abyssinian villages, all of this without pay of any sort.

On top of this at times they are persecuted by robbers, "shiftas", who send and demand from different manyattas sums as high as dollars 300 per manyatta, if this is not forthcoming immediately, the chiefs of the manyatta concerned are captured and held to ransom until the sum demanded is paid. To give an instance, some days north of here at Surupa, a band of 60 armed shiftas is operating, this band is composed entirely of government soldiers who are dissatisfied with their pay, this band have demanded from several Boran manyattas at Wachiili and her sums of 200 dollars per manyatta and so many bullocks according to the size of the manyatta, with threats that if the manyattas do not pay the sums demanded, they will suffer.

The Boran do not complain of the higher officials, but complain bitterly of the acts of the minor officials and soldiery.

These different forms of oppression and indirect taxation added to the fact that at times they are persecuted by shiftas, are the main causes of their migration to British territory.

There always has been a great deal of intercourse between the British and Abyssinian Boran, in fact many of the Dirre Boran keep their sheep in British territory, as far south as Garba Tula and the Uase, and have done so for many years.

Moyale is now the centre for all trade in Borana, and many natives from Abyssinia come there, to sell their stock, to be doctored etc., and whilst there they see the benefits of being under the British rule, they see they can sell their stock without having to pay a market tax of a dollar per head, they hear from the British Boran, that they live at peace and only pay their annual tribute and are protected from marauding bands of shiftas, in fact it is as if Wiltshire living under the feudal system saw Gloucestershire progressing under the methods of 1925.

It is quite impossible to stop these migrations from the British side of the border, owing to the fact of the extremely long frontier, and the amount of troops it would take to patrol the frontier successfully and to the fact that the British Boran are only too ready to receive their relations from over the border, and to hide them from the knowledge of their officer in charge. The remedy lies entirely with the Abyssinian government, if in the first place a big enough Governor could be appointed to Borana who would be in sole command of the Province together with Liban and the Degodia and would not be frightened if he attempted any improvement of being accused of being pro-British and of trying to sell his country to foreigners and could be made personally responsible for the welfare and taxation of the tribes under him, by this I mean, that if the present form of farming out of natives for taxation could be abolished, and the taxes could be collected by paid Government collectors and brought into the Governor of Borana who then his minor officials and soldiery direct, and if the of the country could receive justice without first of all having to give bribes to get their cases heard, and the present general thieving of soldiers from the inhabitants be stopped. I am convinced that not a single native would leave the highlands of Dirre to go and live in the desert of Golbe and Horr. This perhaps is too much to expect, but unless these reforms take place, migrations will occur yearly, lately 5 or 4 Refugee manyattas have had to return to Abyssinia owing to the drought and lack of grazing, the Abyssinians on hearing of the return of these manyattas immediately sent and seized half their stock to compensate themselves for the tribute they have lost for the past few years by these manyattas fleeing to British territory.

I have pointed out to the Abyssinian officials the stupidity of this action, as if they are desirous of refugees returning to Abyssinia, this is the one way to drive them from Abyssinia altogether. I have just heard that the Minister for War has ordered that returning refugees are not to be taxed. Again many officials in Borana, in the past, were shiftas, and were known by the Borana for the stock they stole from them and their chiefs they put up to ransom, these during the past 5 years have been pardoned by the Minister for War, and appointed minor officials in the Boran country, it is difficult to believe that these have now changed their habits.

As regards the Degodia, I refer you to my report No. 14/3/14 of 1914, and to the oppression of this tribe.

They are very little liked in the Boran, who are law abiding and peaceful people, although the Degodia have suffered greatly from the hands of the Abyssinians, they are at the best of times a warlike and turbulent tribe, and like all Somalis are always trying to move to some other grazing ground, but the remedy for the migration of these people again lies entirely with the Abyssinians, and the remarks I have made about the administration of Borana, apply in exactly the same manner to the Degodia.

I should like to add that Sitaurari Ageria, the present Governor of Borana has genuinely tried to administer the Boran, and has almost exterminated the marauding bands of shiftas, but like all Abyssinians he finds he is entirely dependent on what he makes out of the country, and is very frightened of being accused of trying to sell his country to the British.

I have etc.
 Ed. A. T. Miles,
 H.M. Consul, S. Abyssinia.

M. Minister, Addis Ababa.

For
No 38424 Kenya 729 713

Code to
DRAFT.

43444/25
Coded account
5 55 P.M.
18/9/25
AGH

SEP

Junior
Kandis

18th Sept.

Your despatch of 27 July

Confidential 121. before

5-4. MINUTE.

making representations to

- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]

5.45 pm F.A. should be

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Sir C. Davis.

Sir G. [unclear]

Mr. J. Wilson
Secretary [unclear]

Lord Arnold.

Mr. [unclear]

Salisbury
[unclear]

It is [unclear] of [unclear]

by which cannot [unclear] be

postponed until there is

proper administration

To repatriate now would

greatly weaken force of
any protest to Abominable
government.