

EAST AFRICA

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Northern Frontier Administration

Extract from ^{letter} ~~the~~ ~~Revellin~~ ~~map~~ ~~for~~ ~~proposals~~
for employment of ~~Redd~~ detachments in
northern districts of ~~pro~~

Mr. Butler

I should be glad to read the original of this letter and
be suggested circulating
attach some notes which include all that is
known at present in Intelligence Department
about the Parkana.

With the small number of officers available
it is probably unavoidable sending out
one or two officers (though it is not quite
clear from the letter whether 5 or 6 or more
or not)

I quite realize that occasions may arise
when detachments have to be sent off
without previous notice, but this seems
to be a case where a definite line of
policy is being taken up in protection
by troops against Abyssinian raids
and for which detachments have already
been sent out to Boran (near Bardna) and

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It is very difficult to keep a grip of the military situation if the distribution of the troops and the general lines of policy to be pursued are not known beforehand.

27 Feb 24

~~Confidential~~

The documents referred to in Colonel Meade's message are part of the new policy of solidifying the Japanese frontier by some more effective means than the Japanese of the irregulars. This policy is still in its infancy. Whether it ever grows to maturity will depend mainly on the Treasury, whom we have just asked to approach it as essential and necessary to establish the necessary main stations on the frontier. When Treasury approval has been obtained we shall expect the Cypriote to tell us how he intends to distribute the necessary troops among the new stations and what their movements will be.

In the meantime, Sir P. Girouard

is dead? I am interested

To have a copy of these notes in Turkana (23). Col. Bessell's letter should not be communicated to him.

Part B

Feb 22

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22/II

6.8.24

By J. G. S. S.

Send to...

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Extract. Letter from Colonel Cheswold
to General Plummer
the Jan 24th 1910

Dear Colonel

We have just sent out another Detachment viz: one officer and 50 men to the Aerie Post on the edge of the Turkana country, this post is near a point marked in the Ordnance maps as Laterok Hill and is about 100 miles N.W. of Lake Baringa. Only a small portion of the Turkana country is administered yet and it is most probable that we shall have to despatch a small punitive force against a section of these people before long as they have been giving trouble. Spurr who is commanding the detachment has been told to report on the situation from the military point of view. Our new Governor is anxious to open up the northern territories of this Protectorate and to protect the inhabitants thereof from Abyssinian raids and with that object he proposes to send K.A.R. detachments into those parts. I understand that he has already sent home fresh proposals regarding the K.A.R and the Police as to their numbers etc., which no doubt have already come before you at the Colonial Office. I hope we shall not be put in the melting-pot again, we seem to be always on the verge of it.

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Extract from Chapter on "Native Tribes" Military Report on
British East Africa (under compilation).

The Turkana are a more numerous tribe than the Suk, to the North and East of whom they live. This tribe, owing no doubt to pressure from the Abyssinians, have recently been gradually moving South. Amongst other suggestions made with regard to their future administration is one that they should be concentrated along the Lower Turkwel and Lower Kerio.

For many years this tribe were considered treacherous and dangerous, but in 1907-8 they have come into the Government station, and asked to be allowed to bring their flocks and herds farther South, so as to be more closely in touch with the government officials. This applies more particularly to the southern portion of the tribe, and its sub-sections the Ngolio and Kolonya, whose country extends from Mount Nyiro across the valley to Kerio.

The northern section of the tribe, extending from Mount Nyiro to the East side of Lake Rudolf and along the lake, and also occupying the Turkwel Valley, has also made friendly overtures to government, so that it is hoped that practically the whole tribe will shortly come under effective administration. They have recently shown themselves amenable and peaceful in every way. They are excellent cultivators, possessing a few donkeys, camels, cattle and sheep in considerable numbers.

The tribe is divided into 15 sections, of which the Tuo and Nisir are the most important and form part of the northern division of the tribe. The former of these sections alone

is said to outnumber the whole Suk tribe.

They have no Laibon like the Masai; but consider the head of the Tud section, who lives on the Turkwel, their biggest chief.

The Turkana are warlike and men of tall, almost gigantic stature. In 1902 they sent to the government a deputation of 8 men, all over 6 feet 5 inches in height and broad in proportion.

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Extract from a Report on the Rudolf Province,
dated 1904.

The Turkana are a numerous tribe but much scattered and live in small groups.

Their country extends from near the junction of the Wei Wei and Turkwel rivers; along the latter to Lake Rudolf and from thence to Harle.

They are almost a pastoral and nomadic people and move constantly from place to place in search of grazing and water for their animals. They possess large numbers of cattle, camels, donkeys, and numerous flocks of sheep and goats.

Their kraals and huts, mere shelters of branches from the wind, are usually situated some miles from their water supply, the animal being driven to water every second day or so. The animals will find water for themselves, by scraping away the sand with their hoofs in likely places.

In 1901 there was a large settlement of Turkana at Ngabeto

and some miles of cultivation along the river bank, in addition to this, there were very small fields of matama at a few places, principally on the alluvial soil deposited by rivers at flood at their entrance into Lake Rudolf.

There was a Government Station at Ngaboto in 1898, but at that time a few natives were in the district but no food could be obtained from them. However in 1901 there was a large settlement of Turkana there and several miles of cultivation along the bank of the Turkwel river.

The men are very fine specimens of humanity and are much like their neighbouring tribe the Karamojo. They are however very treacherous and should never be trusted. The natives follow the track of a caravan to murder the stragglers and cut up small parties, and will attack at night and attempt to rush camp, if they find it undefended or in a bad military position. They lay ambushes and will attack large caravans on the march. The effect of their ambushes is rather lost, as they appear to consider it the proper thing to inform their enemy of the place they intend to lie in wait for him.

One of their favourite tactics is to persuade a caravan to camp some distance from the water holes, where in the evening they wait for the porters and spear them while going to fetch water.

The Turkana are very fond of tobacco, which they chew, and also snuff. A handful or two of the native tobacco, that could formerly be obtained at Kikuyu, would buy a sheep or goat. They will also take iron or brass wire, the former being used to make spears and as ornaments. As they have not much food to sell, it is difficult to say what beads could be used in bartering for it. Punda Melia, Sem Sem and Neusi (small black pound beads) would probably be the most

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useful. Large beads such as Kikiti, Ukuta, etc. and cloth are much appreciated as presents.

On approaching a stranger, they carry generally a branch or a bunch of grass as a sign of friendship, and when close pick up a handful of sand, which they lustily expectorate on and throw into the unfortunate stranger's face. As the acquaintance ripens, they grin and make the suggestive sign of drawing a finger across their throats and pointing in the direction the caravan is travelling, presumably intimating that the further into the country the stranger goes, the more likelihood there is of having his throat cut.

These natives raid in large bodies and for considerable distances. The Suk being frequently patronised in this way almost as far as the Baringo Station.

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Extract from a Report on a Journey from Baringo to Lake Rudolf and back, June and July 1907, by John Leveson

Gover. Eng.

The Turkema Question.

In my opinion this is a question on which the administration should have a settled policy of some kind, and a steady line of action. This numerous tribe are constantly pressing down from the lower Kerio and Turkwel region in an easterly and south-easterly direction. I do not think that this is in any sense a new movement, but until quite recently it has been kept in check by the Maasi. This check has now of course entirely ceased to operate.

It may perhaps be of interest to try and trace this movement. All the native stories tend to show that until at any rate

well into the 19th century all the country South and West of Lake Rudolf was occupied by the Hamdile tribe. Successive Turkana invasions from the North-West drove them further and further South and East, till they were finally driven out of this country altogether.

In the year 1888 Teleki found their southern boundaries to be the South-West end of Lake Rudolf, and a line running practically West to the Turkwel river. The movement since then is very marked. During the interval, they have, I believe, made their way South to Ngaboto, at the junction of the Turkwel and Dei-Wai rivers, where there was only a Turkana Dorobo settlement in 1888, as well as occupying the Segota valley and the Barra plains, the latter in the heart of Samburr.

In 1905 they sent an embassy to the Baringo station asking to be allowed to move to the vicinity of the lake. This was finally granted, and a large colony migrated from the lower Kerio to the Ngingyang plains North-West of Lake Baringo. There are also offshoots of this colony at Naitai between Loroga and Salsie, and near the sources of the Segota.

Since the month of June a large party has been on a visit to the sea at Kisima, without leave. They are now spread over an enormous area, and their various colonies are so far apart that it would be practically an impossible task to control them all. The Turkana are a tribe of a very low type and development, and under existing conditions are absolutely useless in any way. They will not carry loads or do any work, and so long as they are rich in cattle and other live-stock as they are at present, they will not attempt to cultivate.

The one thing they do is to destroy all the game, as they will eat anything they can kill, even crocodiles, and they are experts at driving and trapping animals. It is a fact well known to the natives of these parts that where there are Turkana there will be no game. They have now permanently occupied the Baragoi waterholes, and rendered the whole of the Barots plains practically unfit for game, and this a most important part of the Northern game reserve.

In my opinion the Turkana country would never pay for close administration, but where they all once more concentrated on the lower Turkwel and Kerio, they could be easily controlled from a distance.

The topographical results of my journey are being sent to Major Smith, the Director of Surveys, and also the collection of geological specimens, and samples of water, etc. The former are a continuous series, specimens having been systematically collected each day, and from representative strata.

The photographs, of which I took over 100, have been sent to England for development, and I do not as yet know whether they are a success or not. This climate is a very bad one for films and there is always the risk that they have all become damaged.

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