EAST AFR. PROT.

39441

3941

Re.
Rec'd 2 FEB 14

Corner Field 10

1914

[illegible]th January

Last previous Paper.
M 9/42294/13

"SCHOOLS IN KI-SWAHILI"
BY MR. H. W. BEECH

Requests sanction to the grant of £50 towards cost of publication. Encloses letters from Sir H. H. Johnston, Mr Hollis and Mr Hamilton as to the value of the work.

~~Mr Bottomley~~ ~~Mr Clark~~ Mr G. Fiddes

The Sec's recommendation makes a difficult decision. The grant of £50 for the publication of Mr Beech's book. On the other hand we refused the case of Capt. Stigand. And we have to find good grounds for differentiating between the two cases.

It is known that in the case of Capt. Stigand's book there was a question of abandonment of publication if Govt aid should not be granted (see M 9/1974/13 S. Africa). The Comb. Univ. Press were willing to undertake the work.

In the case of Mr Beech's book the £50 is required if the publication is to be undertaken (see M 9/42294/13 CAD) (and Mr Beech's letter of 5 Sept 1913 attached to that paper).

We might approve as a special case on the above grounds, pointing out that it is not our usual practice and that the S.G.S. ~~[illegible]~~ does not call a precedent for such grants to be established.

Sir H. Johnston's & Mr Hamilton's testimony does not relate to the particular book, we know that the former thinks very highly of Capt. Stigand's book, but Hollis's opinion which is based on the work itself, we had before

Last subsequent Paper.
M 9/5463

(100) Wt. 21,000—12. 43,000. 12/13. J. & S. W.

in cont. 29864 (& returned it)

I still think that the view formerly taken was the right one but in view of the Gov's strongly worded recommendation I [illegible] appears [illegible] ~~[illegible]~~ [illegible]

[illegible]

[I know a Malay who the other day asked the Govt. for I think £200 for the publication of a book on Mohammedan Law.]

CAS 5/2/14

As proposed? We ought to have sent copy of the previous corresp^ce to the Govr.

H J R

6 Feb/14

Yes NB [illegible]
the previous [illegible]

Circular of 1897

Send the corresp^ce (copies) on numerous applications of this kind for a Commission on the native languages of Africa and how usually been unable to sanction; and ask the Gov. to give further [illegible] in the light of the corresp^ce now brought to his notice

at once

[illegible] 9.2.14

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
BRITISH EAST AFRICA

...AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

January 6th 1914

No. 16

C.O.
12941
REC.
7 FEB 14

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that Mr. M.W. H. Beech, Assistant District Commissioner, has recently compiled a short work entitled "Studies in Ki-Swahili" intended for the use of those who desire to study the language.

Sir H.H. Johnston
Oct. 6th 1913

Mr. A.C. Hollis
Dec. 4th 1913

Mr. Hamilton
Dec. 9th 13

2. The manuscript was submitted to the Clarendon Press who replied that they were unable to bear the whole burden of publishing a work of this nature, but agreed to undertake the publication on receiving a subsidy of £50.

3. I enclose herewith copies of a letter from Sir H.H. Johnston and Memoranda by Mr. A.C. Hollis (late Secretary for Native Affairs) and the Chief Justice. The knowledge of Ki-Swahili possessed by the two last named gentlemen is probably unequalled among members of the Service, and I consider that their opinion merits serious consideration.

4. The ability to read and write letters in Arabic characters is one of the requirements demanded of those who present themselves for the Higher Swahili Examination and it is eminently desirable from an administrative point of view that

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LEWIS HARCOURT, P.C., M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.

that the study of this branch of the language should be encouraged as far as possible. Hitherto this question has not been treated by British authors and I am of opinion that Mr. Beech's work will, if published, prove of great value to the Administration.

5. I should be glad, therefore, to receive your sanction to the expenditure of £50 in aid of its publication.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,

H Conran Rey[illegible]

GOVERNOR.

COPY.

Poling,
Near Arundel,
Oct. 5/1913.

Dear Sir,

I must apologise for not answering your letter of September 20th earlier. When it arrived here I was abroad and since my return I have been very unwell.

I certainly thinkthere is room for a work of an advanced character on Ki-Swahili; especially the Swahili that is current in educated Arab and Swahili circles in Zanzibar, Mombasa and the Seyidie province, generally, of British East Africa. The use of Swahili, moreover is spreading yearly through Central Africa between the Zambezi on the South and the Bahr al Ghazal and Mountain Nile on the North, because it is the easiest and most polished of all the Bantu languages. Its association with Arabic renders it (unfortunately) necessary that those who intend to take up this language seriously should learn how to transcribe the Swahili in Arabic characters, and above all how to read the language in the Arabic character. Of course the Arabic script is as utterly unsuited to the phonetic and accurate transcription of Swahili as it is to the transcribing of Hausa or of any other negro language with an Italian vowel system and with nasal consonants and a clear discrimination between g and k, v and p etc. But there it is: you have to deal with things as they are. I well remember during six years struggle with the Arabs in Nyassaland the interception of much correspondence written in the Arabic

characters

characters, and now I had to force myself most unwillingly to master the system on which their writing was based so as to decypher them myself and not have to rely on possibly treacherous Swahili interpreters or Arab scribes. At any day there may arise disagreeable conditions in East or Central Africa in which it will be important for at any rate a few of the British officials to be able to read Swahili writing for themselves. I think therefore there is room for a treatise on Swahili such as you propose publishing. As to whether I should ask you to send down your M.S. and examine it for the purpose of giving an expert opinion, I do not feel able to do that without some fee for the time and labour it would cost me to do it, in short, save on the terms on which I report to publishers on the merits of books they are considering. For some time past I have been in uncertain health, and yet have a good deal of work which I regard as important and the putting on one side of which is a cost to me in time and money. I have no energy to spare, alas! I can only speak in this letter in general terms as to the need there is for a work on the Swahili language from the Arab aspect so to speak. I am aware that some sides of this question have been very ably treated by Germans in the Mitteilungen of the Berlin institute for the study of African and Oriental languages. But I do not know of any one book in which such studies have been gathered together in a convenient form: and know of no complete and 'advanced' study of Swahili existing

in

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in

in either English or French. I am dealing with some aspects of the language myself in a work which is to be published eventually by the Clarendon Press, but not on the lines you indicate.

I sincerely trust you may find some way out of your difficulties.

Have you tried the African Society ?

Could you by the bye send me any leaflet you may possess setting forth what works you have already written on African languages. You mention two or three have been already published by Oxford.

My wife and I desire to be most warmly remembered to Mrs. Beach whom we knew (as you say) prior to her marriage. Lady Mary Parry who is a neighbour of ours often refers to her and the visits she used to pay to Ruslington.

Yours very truly,

(Sd.) H. H. Johnston.

COPY.

Sierra Leone.

I have much pleasure in giving an opinion on Mr. M.S.H. Beech's Studies in Ki-Swahili.

The compilation, if published, will be a great help to students of the language, especially those who wish to enter for the Higher Standard Examination.

Contrary to what is frequently believed to be the case a knowledge of Arabic characters is essential for coastal administration in East Africa; and, so far as I am aware, the only book on the subject is German (Buttners Swahili Schriftstucke). The letters contained in Study I are typical of the documents met with every day in Mombasa.

Study II contains much that is new, useful and interesting.

Study III consists of aphorisms and enigmas. A few of the former have already been published in Taylor's African Aphorism, whilst some of the latter are to be found in various German works (e.g. Mitheilungen des Orientalischen Seminars zu Berlin and Desturi za Kiswahili. But a good proportion of both are new.

Not only is Study IV an example of high Class Swahili but it is interesting as very little is known regarding Magic in Pemba, except what was recorded by Sir R. Burton (Zanzibar City, Land and Coast) Mr. Beech's account will bear comparison with Dr. Vohsen's notes on magic on the mainland opposite (Desturi za Kiswahili).

I recommend that the book be published.

Sd/- A.C.Hollis.

4-8-13.

INCLOSURE No 3

In Despatch No 15 of 6 / 1910

Ra.

The Honourable The Chief Secretary.

With reference to the enclosed letter to you from Mr. Beech dated 2/13/13 with copies of memoranda by Sir H.H.Johnston and Mr. Hollis I should like to add a word as to the usefulness of a knowledge of Arabic-Swahili script from the practical point of view.

A knowledge of this is essential for an administrative officer not only at the coast but wherever Arabs and Swahilis trade from the Sea to Mount Elgon.

In the trial of cases up country letters and accounts in this script are frequently produced in evidence, and for general purposes it is and is likely to be of great use for many years to come.

Having personally experienced the difficulty of learning to read and write it any work such as that of Mr. Beech which would assist the student would in my opinion deserve the small assistance asked of the Government for its production. I have not myself seen the manuscript but Mr. Hollis' opinion of it sufficiently describes its scope and quality.

Sd/ R.W.Hamilton
CHIEF JUSTICE.

9.12.13.

Gov/ 3941/ East Afr. Pat.

317

12 FEB 1914

13 Feb 1914

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 15 of the 6th of January requesting sanction to the grant of £50 towards the cost of the publication of a work which has been compiled by Mr. Dr. W.H. Beck, ~~and~~ entitled "Studies in ~~Kiswa~~ Ki-Swahili" and to transmit to you for your consideration the accompanying copies of correspondence relating to ~~a similar~~ previous applications ~~made~~ made in connection with this work, and an application for ~~aid~~ the publication of a Swahili Grammar by Capt. C.H. Stigand. ~~of Khartoum~~.

2. I would point out that numerous applications of this kind are received in connection

DRAFT.

P. No. (27)

Sir H. C. Belfield K.C.M.G.

MINUTE.

Mr. Dobbs 4.2.14

Mr. Bottomley 4/2/14

Mr. Fiddes 12

Sir H. Just.

Mr J. Anderson.

Lord Emmott.

Mr. Harcourt.

Prem Comb. 2 June 1913

18974 11 June 1913

" 18974 23 Aug 1913

from Dr Beck 29869 3 Sept 1913

To Dr Beck 29869 8 Dec

from R Arch Inst. 42294

To R Arch Inst. 16 Dec 42294

[illegible] the [illegible] language of
[illegible], and I have [illegible]
been unable to sanction a
grant.

I [illegible] that [illegible]
[illegible] further [illegible]
[illegible] the question of a grant to [illegible]
[illegible] Jos. [illegible] [illegible]
the light of the Crown [illegible]
is now brought to your notice.

I have

(Signed) L. HARCOURT.