

EAST AFR. PROT  
18877

C.O.  
18877  
REC'D  
23 MAY 14

Mr. Kelfield Conf. 7/4

Claim of E. Sol.

1914

29 Apr

Last previous Paper.  
#6  
13/28

Report unsuccessful result of inquiries made into the disappearance of the papers & again express regret at delay which has occurred. Police auths. have been requested to investigate the matter.

Dr. G. Forder

Very strange & unsatisfactory

ack: rec<sup>d</sup>?

H. J. R.

25/V/14

I w<sup>d</sup> send copy to F.O. with notice of the delay that has occurred

Pr. 25.5.14

at hand

26.5.14

see Conf. 29 May 14  
copy 30

Next subsequent Paper.

~~18877~~

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

CONFIDENTIAL No. 74.

18877  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
NAIROBI. REC.  
REGD 23 APR 14  
BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

29th April, 1914.

450

Sir,

*Nov 1913*  
I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 286 of the 24th of March on the subject of the claim of Mr Emil Post.

Specimen form.  
2. I have caused exhaustive enquiries to be made into the question of the disappearance of the file and into the reason for ignoring your telegrams on the matter and I deeply regret that I am unable to furnish you with a satisfactory explanation.

3. The procedure followed in the Secretariat with regard to the disposal of a Colonial Office telegram is as follows. On its receipt in the Office it is delivered unopened to one of the Assistant Secretaries who decodes it in the space provided for that purpose and affixes his signature at the bottom. The telegram is then sent out to be typed by one of the clerks. One copy is typed on a special form, a specimen of which I enclose, having the code words on one side and the translation on the other, so that when typed this copy is an exact facsimile of the telegram as received from the Post Office and decoded.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The

LEWIS HARCOURT, P.C., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.

The original telegram is then cancelled in pencil, as an indication that it has been typed, and placed on the file of Colonial Office telegrams. The typed copy is then either handed to the Records Clerk for insertion in the subject file or, if the question referred to is Confidential, it is sent in to Mr Jones, Junior Assistant Secretary, who has charge of the Confidential files. In this instance the file was Confidential, so that in the ordinary course all papers on the subject would be passed to Mr Jones. The telegram is then inserted in the file which is marked with an "Urgent" slip and put up to the Chief Secretary to be dealt with.

4. It sometimes happens that a subject file is not in Mr Jones' room when a paper is received by him for insertion. It may be in use by another officer of the Secretariat or, in rare instances, it may have been sent to another Department. In such cases, Mr Jones obtains the file, if it is in the office, inserts the papers and puts up the file again, or if the file is not in the office, he requests the Department concerned to return it. In the case of an urgent paper, such as a telegram, he does not wait for the return of the file, but puts up the telegram for such immediate action as may be considered necessary. The telegram, together with the orders passed upon it, is eventually sent back to him for insertion in the file on its return. This system has hitherto worked excellently and I do not feel that any blame can be attached to it.

5. In the present instance, the office

records

9.6/13720/13

records showed that the file was in the office, having been returned by the Attorney-General on the 17th of December, 1912. On the receipt of your telegram of the 1st of May, 1913, Mr Jones would have been informed of this fact and would have taken the action explained in the previous paragraph. When he was unable to obtain the file he would have made a thorough search for it and, failing to find it, would have reported the matter. Meanwhile the telegram, together with all the subsequent telegrams, would have remained with him for insertion in the file, so that on the receipt of your final telegram of the 12th of February, 1914, he should have had a collection of six telegrams, all reminders, on the same subject. The fact remains, however, that not only are four of these messages<sup>not</sup> to be found, but Mr Jones has no recollection of having seen them.

36. 5344

6. I will now recount the steps taken on receipt of your telegram of the 12th of February. It was decoded in the usual way by Mr Thomas who, by reason of its unusual nature, took it personally to the Office Superintendent to be typed and, on learning that the file was a confidential one, informed Mr Jones of the matter. A thorough search was immediately instituted; every file in the Office, whether "open" or "confidential", was examined separately; telegrams were sent to the Provincial Commissioner, Mombasa, and the Provincial Commissioner Tanaland, in case they might have been aware of the whereabouts of the file, while telephonic enquiries of a similar nature were made of every Department in Nairobi who might be considered to be even

remotely

remotely connected with the subject matter. At the same time every room in the Secretariat was thoroughly searched. The only result of these enquiries was the discovery of the original Colonial Office telegrams, duly decoded and cancelled in the usual manner, on the Colonial Office telegram file. From the initials on these telegrams it is known that those of May 1st and September 25th, 1913, were decoded by Mr Fuller Haitland, while the others were decoded by Mr Thomas. Both these officers state that, so far as they can remember, they have never seen the file after the receipt of the first of the series, nor have they seen the typed copy of any of the telegrams.

7. The result therefore of the enquiries has proved fruitless. I am now inclined to think that the inference alluded to in paragraph 5 of my despatch No. 159 of the 18th of February was incorrect. If the file was in the office during the months of May, June and September, 1913, and the telegrams inserted in it, it is inconceivable that no action should have been taken, while if the telegrams were sent to some Department which was then known to be in possession of the file for insertion there appears no reason why we should now be ignorant of its whereabouts. The most feasible explanation - and I may state that the officers of the Secretariat all agree - is that the typed copies of the telegrams were never sent in to Mr Jones. If they had been, the fact that a number had been received on the same subject would surely have impressed it <sup>self</sup> on his memory.

The

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73 15411/13

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The whole matter is so mysterious, and the disappearance of the telegrams so extraordinary, that I am almost led to believe that some mischievous individual belonging to the clerical or menial staff (in the outer office) suppressed the typed copies with some special object in view, and that the same individual is responsible for or aware of the disappearance of the file. This conclusion is of course purely conjectural, and I am only forced to it by reason of the practical impossibility of all alternative suggestions. The matter has been thoroughly discussed and the most careful enquiries made, with the result that I am unable to arrive at any satisfactory solution and I can only ask you once more to accept my sincere apologies for the delay which has taken place. The whole incident is so suspicious that I am requesting the police authorities to interest themselves in the disappearance of the file and the four subsequent telegrams.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,

*H. Kanwar Bajaj*

GOVERNOR.

Gov. 18844/1914  
E.A.P.

455

DRAFT.

Sr 29 May 1914

Sir

I have the honour to acknowledge  
the receipt of your despatch,  
Conf. No 74, of the 29<sup>th</sup> of April,  
~~and to inform you that~~  
relating to the loss  
of the papers respecting  
the claim of Sr  
Emil Test

(Signed) L. HARCOURT.

E.A.P.

Conf.

Sr 27/5/14

Bottomley 27/5/14

Bottomley 27/5/14

Drafts

Gov. 18877/1914  
Ear.

456

C.D.  
27 MAY  
25

Ev

29 May 1914

Sir,

DRAFT.

[<sup>20</sup>  
15/5/14]

With reference to the letter from  
this Office of the 27 of April  
and previous correspondence  
I am directed &c. to inform you

~~best~~  
The Elderly S.  
F.O.

that transmit to you  
for the info. of Secretary  
Sir Edward Grey, the  
accompanying copy of  
a despatch from the  
Governor of the East.

MINUTE.

Mr. Harper 27/5/14

Mr. Bottomley 27/5/14

Sir G. Fiddes.

Sir H. Just.

Sir J. Anderson.

Lord Emmott.

Mr. Harcourt.

referring to the delay  
which occurred in  
dealing with the claim

of Mr. Emil Tsch against  
Kipini.  
H.M.'s file.

(Signed) H. J. READ.

for the Under Secretary of State

74-29 April

drafts