

DOMESTIC

E. AFRICA

22940

27 JUN 07

N^o. 22940

Date of Individual

(Subject)

Receipt

Conf.

1907

Points of Correspondence

Date

of previous Paper.

10/22810

- 1 Congo affairs
- 2 Arms traffic in Abyssinia
- 3 Fanzibar Concessions for Railways, Electric lighting and telephones

(Minder). (Glasgow & Edinburgh)

*Put by**above**H. J. R.**28/6**Put by*

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of subsequent Paper.

22940

27 JUN 07

Confidential.

*The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for
the Colonies
India and is directed by the Secretary of State for Foreign
Affairs to transmit the accompanying sections of printed confi-
dential correspondence.*

*Foreign Office.**June 24, 1907.*

CONGO.

[May 30.]

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 2.

[17530]

No. 1.

2940

Baptist Missionary Society to Foreign Office.--(Received May 30.)

JUN 07

Sir, 19, Furnival Street, London, May 28, 1907.
 IN the interview you were so good as to grant me to-day I had the honour to inform you that the Baptist Missionary Society have received by telegraph an application for the loan of their Mission steamer, the "Peace," on the Upper Congo River, to Vice-Consul Armstrong for his use for three months.

The Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society is prepared to give its favourable consideration to this proposal, understanding that the Vice-Consul desires to use the steamer for his personal travelling in carrying out the important duties intrusted to him as a Representative of the British Government in the Congo State.

Our Committee very highly appreciates the service rendered to the cause of Congo reform and the relief of the oppressed natives of the country by the reports and representations of British Consuls.

Our Committee feels it necessary to stipulate that, while lent for such a purpose, the Mission steamer should be in the hands of competent engineers, and, if possible, in charge of one of our own missionaries, and also, and still more important, that the steamer "Peace," being one of the best known vessels on the Upper Congo River, and associated for many years with missionary operations alone, it should be employed only in such a way as is in harmony with its missionary character in the eyes of the natives.

While our Committee does not feel at liberty to lend a Mission steamer on hire to the Government as a commercial transaction, yet they feel it is right to ask that the expenses involved, or the amount of any damage that might be sustained in the special journeys undertaken by the Vice-Consul while the steamer is put at his disposal, should be refunded to the Baptist Missionary Society.

I have no doubt, Sir, that you will regard these conditions as reasonable and just, and I shall be glad to be able to promptly inform my Committee that these terms have been submitted to you, and have met with your approval.

Permit me to thank you for the courtesy of your reception, and believe me, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES EDWARD WILSON,
General Secretary.

[2489 gg-2]

CONGO.

[June 21.]

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

[20560]

No. 1.

22940

Consul Nightingale to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 21.)

(Separate.)

London, June 19, 1907.

Sir,

IN compliance with your request to furnish you with my views on the present system of Government in the Congo Independent State, in so far as it affects British commercial enterprise, I have now the honour to transmit herewith a Memorandum, in which I have tried to point out in as few words as possible that under the existing régime the Congo State is almost a closed door to the ordinary trader.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

A. NIGHTINGALE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

Memorandum by Consul Nightingale respecting the existing Régime in the Congo Independent State, and its Interference with the Liberty of British Commercial enterprise.

IN approaching this question, the first point which calls for our attention is that of the native rights to the soil and the products thereof. Now, we have only to look back to the time of the founding of the Congo Independent State to see that most of the territory (especially as regards the Bas-Congo) was acquired by pacific occupation,* Commercial Treaties having been made between the International Association and the native Chiefs. That in signing those Treaties the natives did not give up their right to their lands and the products no one who has any knowledge of the facts will dispute. It is, therefore, incomprehensible to me how King Leopold can possibly adduce the argument that the native has a right to nothing, and to accept such an erroneous conception would be tantamount to admitting the reintroduction of slavery of a worse type than has ever been depicted in the history of the world. The slave of former times was well fed and cared for by his master; whereas under the régime in the Congo State the native is debarred from leaving his village except by permit ("feuille de route"), gets practically nothing for his labour, receives no relief in time of sickness (except at one of the very few, what I call, show places, like Boma, where there are hospitals), and gets no aid in time of famine.

Native rights to the land and its products.

In denying to the native his ancient rights to the lands and products you take from him his all, and under such conditions he can never be expected to rise above his present low standard of civilization.

I feel sure that if the Representatives of the Signatory Powers to the Berlin Treaty had had the remotest idea that King Leopold's administration was going to be what it has been, and what it still is, that Treaty would never have seen the light of day. A more cruel and oppressive form of government could not be found in history. That the native should be restrained from ruthlessly destroying the animals and economic plants of the forests no one would dispute for one moment, and this could easily be effected by a proper system of forest laws with a competent staff of officials to insure the due carrying out of same. Under the present "concessionnaire régime" the forests are rapidly becoming denuded of their natural riches owing to the oppressive methods used to force the natives to collect a fixed amount of rubber every fortnight, or month, according to the region.

On this point only, of native rights, I submit that the Congo State has ignored the most important condition laid down in the Berlin Treaty, and, in denying those rights to the natives, an enormous area of tropical Africa has been placed under a

* This is admitted by King Leopold himself in his letter to his Secretaries, dated June 3, 1906. See White Book, "Africa, No. 1 (1907)," p. 3.

Obstacles to the liberty of commerce so far as it affects British traders.

modern system of thralldom which threatens to become a serious menace to the peace of the whole of equatorial Africa.

The Berlin Treaty distinctly lays down that there shall be no monopoly of any kind in matters of commerce. But liberty of commerce cannot possibly exist if it is admitted that the native has neither the right to the land nor the liberty to collect and sell the products thereof to whomsoever he pleases. It may be argued that no important British commercial interests exist in the Congo, and that if we cannot bring forward any specific case against the present régime as affecting any particular British trading firm we would have a very weak case to work on if the question were to be submitted to arbitration. But my humble opinion is that we do not require to present any specific case; the non-compliance with the conditions laid down in the Berlin Treaty should suffice. I beg to submit that the question is not one for arbitration, but one that calls for another Conference of the Signatory Powers to the Treaty, in order that King Leopold's stewardship may be thoroughly examined into and the question of native rights properly defined by those Powers which have had a far larger experience of colonizing in Africa than King Leopold and his officials.

The recognition of King Leopold as "Roi-Souverain" of the Congo Independent State by the Signatory Powers was due to specific promises made by His Majesty to carry out certain obligations. Those promises have not been fulfilled, and the Berlin Treaty might just as well have never existed, for the Congo State to-day is a huge commercial monopoly, with its doors closed against all comers, except to such as are favoured by King Leopold.

One has only to look at the map to see that the whole of the Upper Congo is monopolized either by the State, under the names of the "Domaine Privé" and "Domaine de la Couronne," or the Concessionary Companies. Where, then, can the ordinary trader establish himself to buy the produce from the natives? Nowhere. The whole thing appears to me to be so ridiculous, that I am at a loss to understand why such a state of affairs has been allowed to exist so long. The Concessionary Companies are a distinct obstacle to liberty of commerce, because they are a bar to all healthy competition, and keep the natives in a state of abject slavery. The system is one that can never benefit the country or the people, and is the real cause of the present deplorable state of affairs in almost the whole of the Congo, and I venture to say that unless a radical change is made in the present régime the whole State will be absolutely impoverished within the next fifteen years.

Rubber.

The regulation dealing with the purchase of rubber from the natives in the Lower Congo is a most aggravating obstacle to the trader, in fact it makes it impossible for him to buy rubber. For every 100 kilog. of rubber purchased the trader has to plant a certain number of rubber-bearing trees or vines. But as he possesses no land, other than on which his stores are built, he has to apply to the State to indicate the place where the planting must be done, and as it has to be done on Crown lands the trees become the property of the Government. It is worthy of note that a special tax ("taxe domaniale") of 50 centimes per kilog. over and above the ordinary export duty is levied on all rubber bought in the Lower Congo. One would think that this tax should suffice to cover all expenses of planting by the State itself if a proper system of forestry regulations existed.

It is manifestly impossible for the ordinary trader to do business under such conditions. He pays his import and export duties, the "taxe domaniale," house taxes, a tax to recruit labourers, a tax for every labourer employed, a tax for every white employé, the fees for a trading licence, and, on the top of all this, he is expected to become a planter.

A case came to my knowledge, shortly before leaving Boma, of a Portuguese trader at Thysville, who had bought some rubber, and who was told that he must plant his trees on Crown lands at Leopoldville, 160 kilom. away. What would be the fate of our West African Colonies if such a system existed? Why, it would mean ruin, for no trader would remain in the country under such conditions. I would not object to any fair taxation in order to obtain the necessary funds for meeting the expenses that a proper supervision of the forests and the replanting of economic trees would entail, but to put the burden on the trader is distinctly unfair.

Ivory.

The Ivory Ordinance, promulgated by his Excellency Governor-General Baron Wahis, and dated the 30th September, 1905, is also unfair and gives the Congo State an undue advantage over the trader. This Ordinance relates to the "chasse à l'éléphant," and stipulates that the tusks of every elephant killed must be taken to the nearest State post. One tusk is retained by the State, whilst the other has to be branded with a special Government mark before being returned to the native. All ivory declared for export

and which does not bear the Government mark is liable to confiscation. He sees the glaring disadvantage under which the ordinary trader labours. His most formidable rival is the State itself, which always has the first offer, so to speak, and once the ivory is taken to be branded the chances of its being returned to the native are extremely remote, as the State Agents leave no stone unturned in their endeavours to get possession of all the ivory that comes their way. I would not object to the retention of the State the one tusk as a tax, but I do object to the State taking advantage of its position as an "Etat marchand" to the detriment of the trader.

This Ivory Ordinance seems to me to have a much more far-reaching effect than was intended, as although it relates to the "chasse à l'éléphant," and presumably only to the ivory taken from animals killed since the law came into force, the Customs authorities seize all the ivory that comes along which does not bear the Government mark. Therefore, all the dead ivory which is in the hands of the natives (and I should think there must still be very large quantities buried) must be handed over to the State, even though it may have been taken from elephants killed half a century ago. It is, therefore, practically impossible for the ordinary trader to do any barter trade with the native, as all the products of the country fall either into the hands of the State or the Concessionary Companies, in all of which the State has large interests. The fact is the trader is not wanted in the Congo, his room is preferred to his company, and next to the missionaries he is the "bête noire" of the Congo State officials.

No fair and impartial treatment can ever be expected so long as the State is engaged in acquiring the products, and closes enormous areas of the country to a few Concessionary Companies. There is no real trading in the Congo State to-day, as a wicked system of extortion, and nothing else. Directly any suggestions are made by the trader, which in any way touch upon the existing system, he is told that he is meddling in the politics of the State. The enclosed copies of correspondence, exchanged between the Boma Chamber of Commerce (an institution which dates its inception from the early part of October 1906), and Vice-Governor-General Lantanois will give an idea how the traders' suggestions were taken by his Excellency.

In the fourth paragraph of his letter his Excellency says that it is necessary to serve an apprenticeship in the country before giving an opinion on the policy that should be followed. As some of the members of the Boma Chamber of Commerce have had over twenty years' residence there, whereas the Vice-Governor-General's first experience of Congo affairs only dates from the middle of 1905, it seems to me that that remark applies more to his Excellency himself than to the traders.

The refusal to grant land to the Baptist Missionary Society is another flagrant breach of the Berlin Treaty, and it is the more difficult to understand why such refusals are made when one sees that there are no State schools (except the "Colonies" at Boma and Nouvelle Anvers, which are State-aided Catholic schools, where young natives are sent to be trained for soldiers) in the whole of the Congo, and that the only means of bringing enlightenment to the natives is through the various Protestant and Catholic Missionary Societies, which look for their support from money collected in Europe. It is astonishing that King Leopold, with all his vaunted sympathy for the native and for his moral and material regeneration, should have so far forgotten his self-imposed philanthropic rôle as to omit to establish State schools.

I enclose a document, which is in the form of a Circular, issued by Vice-Governor-General Lantanois in August 1906. It was published in the monthly "Bulletin," which is only issued to the officials of the State, and is not supposed to be shown to outsiders. Paragraph 4 of this Circular makes a direct attack against the traders, as it distinctly implies that the officials will not be allowed to draw any of their deferred pay in order to meet their just debts. Such conditions would only be accepted by the "class of men engaged by the State. The result of the Circular is that the traders have to be very chary in giving credit, for fear of being put to the expense of having to instruct a lawyer in Brussels to place an embargo on the deferred pay of an official who may run up an account and then declare his inability to pay on the plea that the local Treasurer refuses to make him an advance of money due to him. The result of all these difficulties is a gradual reduction in the number of trading firms in Boma, and those which still exist keep on, because they find it so difficult to liquidate, except at an enormous loss, and can find no purchasers for the land and houses they possess. The remarks that apply to Boma also apply to Matadi, Thysville, and Leopoldville, and in

Difficulties placed in the way of the Baptist Missionary Society in regard to obtaining facilities for Missionary Stations.

Difficulties placed in the way of the traders in obtaining payment of their accounts from State officials.

* In the case of the Portuguese trader Amaro, at Leopoldville, reported by me some time last year, the Director of Finance offered to return half of the ivory seized—an offer which was refused—but I cannot say whether the ivory was dead ivory (that is, ivory that has been buried for some time) or ivory taken from elephants killed since the law came into force.

4
naming these four towns I give the sum total of what I call the free trade area, and even in these towns the traders are limited to carrying on a small cash trade, and have no chance of participating in the produce (barter) trade.

Obstacles
to the
navigation
of the Upper
Congo.

The main obstacle to the navigation by steamers of the Upper Congo is the difficulty in obtaining wood fuel.* The wood posts belong either to the State or the Concessionary Companies. At the State posts the Government steamers of course take precedence before all others, but at some of the Concessionary Companies' posts notice boards are placed forbidding the cutting of wood; and although I believe that these notices have in many instances been ignored, it shows what difficulties are placed in the way of private enterprise on an international waterway of thousands of miles in extent, and, this notwithstanding the heavy annual tax demanded by the State, not only for the steamers, but for every one of the crew employed thereon. A small British gunboat, which could serve, when required, for taking the Consul about the Upper river and its affluents, would, I think, very much alter the present state of affairs; and the Congo, being an international waterway, I do not see how any objection could be raised to His Majesty's Government adopting such a measure, and it would most assuredly have a very beneficial effect in many other ways, and insure better treatment of the British missionaries. I say British missionaries, because there are no British traders established on the upper river.

So much has been written and said about the régime in the Congo State that it would be really going over old ground to describe the many disquieting violations of Treaty rights. But the real situation can be summed up in a few words—

The violation of the Berlin Treaty, by denying to the native his rights to the land and the products thereof, and the enormous monopolies held by the State itself and the Concessionary Companies.

The whole question hinges on this violation of Treaty rights, and I beg to submit that His Majesty's Government have a clear and good motive for calling for a Conference of the Signatory Powers to the Berlin Treaty, and to demand that a radical change be made in the present régime, whether it be under Congo Free State or Belgian rule. I am not a sentimentalist in regard to the native, and I quite agree that he should be induced to work; but I claim that the present system is wrong, and so long as it is allowed to continue, we need look for no improvement in the moral status of the people, nor hope for any expansion of British commercial enterprise in a country which owes its very existence to England based on the specific promises to uphold liberty of commerce and to grant no monopolies of any kind whatsoever.

London, June 19, 1907.

(Signed) A. NIGHTINGALE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Boma Chamber of Commerce to M. Lantenois.

M. le Gouverneur-Général.

Boma, le 15 Octobre, 1906.

NOUS avons l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance que des commerçants établis à Lukula et dans les environs se sont plaints à nous de ce que le camp militaire de Lukula N'Bayu était la cause de la rapide décroissance du chiffre de leurs affaires, et voici les raisons qu'ils nous ont données.

Le camp militaire de Lukula N'Bayu, et la même chose peut être dite pour le camp militaire de Luki, exige énormément de vivres frais pour l'alimentation du personnel. Ces vivres frais sont fournis sous forme de prestations en nature ou réquisitions des commandants de camp.

La Commission d'Enquête s'est fort justement élevée contre cette méthode, et nous lui donnons pleinement raison, car elle laisse la porte ouverte à toutes les mesures plus ou moins arbitraires que peuvent prendre des chefs territoriaux, et, second et inéductable conséquence, elle appauvrit la région d'une manière rapide et certaine.

L'idéal, à notre point de vue, et nous en avons la conviction au point de vue de l'intérêt de l'Etat également, serait:—

1. Que dans le plus bref délai on mit à exécution, tout au moins dans le Bas-Congo, le Décret du Roi-Souverain concernant le paiement des impôts en espèces.

* Mr. Vice-Consul Armstrong deals with this question of wood fuel in his despatch of October 8, 1906. See No. 15 of White Book, "Africa, No. 1 (1907)," p. 36.

2. Qu'en attendant l'on ne fasse plus rien fournir par les indigènes sous forme de prestations en nature, mais que dans des palabres périodiques et entourés de la solennité voulue il soit porté à la connaissance des indigènes qu'ils doivent contribuer aux dépenses de l'Etat, et que ce qui ne leur est plus demandé en bananes, en chikwanges, en caoutchouc, &c., ils devront le remettre en espèces avant peu en acquittant les arriérés.

3. D'une manière définitive empêcher les soldats non accompagnés d'un Européen de se rendre dans un village indigène pour appeler un Chef: l'indigène de "Mankanga" ("handeuff").

4. Que les camps militaires ne se ravitaillent plus par réquisitions de vivres chez les indigènes, mais que l'on crée plutôt de vastes marchés publiques à Lukula et à Luki, où librement et sans passer par l'intermédiaire d'un chef de station, ou d'un Agent du Gouvernement quelconque, l'indigène propriétaire vendra ses vivres à tout venant, l'Agent du Gouvernement chargé du ravitaillement de la troupe étant considéré comme un acheteur quelconque; en un mot, la question de l'offre et de la demande réglant uniquement les tarifs.

5. Que, sans aucune restriction, les produits végétaux du sol récoltés en dehors des propriétés privées appartiennent aux indigènes; qu'ils en aient la libre jouissance et puissent les vendre ou bon leur semble, que ses produits soient ceux de leurs cultures propres ou ceux de la brousse, tels que caoutchouc, noix de palme, huile, miel, copal, &c.

Reprenant les divers desiderata exprimés, nous nous permettons d'ajouter au 1^{er} que rien ne sera plus facile que de faire ramettre les suppositions ou bases par l'indigène. L'argent à largement cours dans le Bas-Congo, et la population n'est pas si dense qu'un recensement approximatif ne puisse être rapidement fait.

Quand nous parlons de grandes palabres toutes les périodes déterminées, nous voulons surtout éviter que ces assemblées de tous les Chefs ne soient dirigées par le chef de zone, qui aurait un intérêt trop direct à n'y présenter que ses doctrines.

Ces palabres devraient être présidés par un chef fonctionnaire du Gouvernement Local, assisté d'autres fonctionnaires dont la présence serait jugée utile, et à ces réunions où les intérêts généraux de la région seraient soulevés et discutés l'on devrait inviter l'élément commercial à assister également.

Dans ces palabres seraient portées à la connaissance des indigènes leurs droits et aussi leurs devoirs. On attirerait l'attention des Chefs sur telle coutume ou usage et propre à aider à marcher vers les progrès de la civilisation, sur telle ou telle coutume susceptible d'augmenter la richesse de la population.

En ce qui concerne le 3^e nous voudrions voir que les commandants de camp soient relevés de toutes fonctions de police dans la région; ces fonctions devraient être remplies par un fonctionnaire qui n'habiterait même pas dans le camp, car la réunion d'un grand nombre de soldats en impose singulièrement aux populations et est de nature, si le chef de ces soldats est en même temps le chef territorial et le chef de police locale, à fausser par conception de leurs devoirs et de la justice. Celle-ci chez eux devient alors synonyme de la force.

Ils chefs militaires du Bas-Congo devraient commander uniquement à leurs soldats. L'administration civile devrait être chargée de tout le reste.

Au 4^e les ravitaillements des camps, tels qu'ils sont faits à l'heure actuelle, sont éminemment préjudiciables au commerce et partant au bien-être et au développement en richesse de la population. Ils sont mal compris en ce sens que la fourniture des vivres pour les soldats et les Européens de ces camps ne se fait pas librement, mais bien par suite de réquisitions ou de taxations d'impositions en nature.

Nous sommes convaincus qu'un autre système étant introduit avant un an l'on verrait apporter sur les marchés plus de vivres qu'il n'en faudrait. Le seul inconvénient est que l'agent de ravitaillement acheteur aurait à les payer plus cher, ce qui ne serait que justice, le prix donné actuellement en paiement n'étant nullement en rapport avec celui de la valeur du produit.

Nous savons bien que le produit est remis comme imposition, mais nous sommes de ceux qui, quoique la Commission d'Enquête l'ait estimé équitable, trouvons que l'imposition de quarante heures de travail par mois est exagérée; sur tout le Bas-Congo l'on peut assez difficilement dire que l'indigène est systématiquement paresseux, puisque les particuliers ont à leur service des milliers d'ouvriers de la région.

Le système de ravitaillement des postes militaires et la récolte du caoutchouc tels qu'ils fonctionnent actuellement sont, en outre préjudiciables aux grandes exploitations agricoles, car ils occupent trop activement la population des villages et empêchent

les hommes d'aller s'engager pour un taux rémunérateur, les Chefs empêchent leurs hommes de quitter les villages de peur de ne pouvoir faire droit à toutes ces réquisitions, qu'ils satisfont contre leur gré.

Au 5^e nous aurions que nous sommes convaincus de la justice de notre demande et qu'elle sera de nature à créer dans un bref délai une plus grande richesse de la région, et que l'Etat y retrouvera certainement une compensation à la perte qu'il pourrait avoir en exploitant plus directement les produits de son Domaine.

La concurrence étant, les tributs sont beaucoup plus cher tous les produits du sol. L'indigène mieux payé récoltera les produits avec plus de goût et en plus grande quantité. Les fruits de sortie prélevés sur ces produits grossiront les recettes de l'Etat. Une plus grande richesse de la population lui donnera plus de besoins, partant les produits manufacturés entreront en plus grande quantité et en plus grande valeur, et ces droits d'entrée y relatifs feront encore grossir les recettes de l'Etat. Un plus grand trafic incitera à la création de comptoirs nouveaux, qui paieront d'autres impositions. Les Compagnies de transport et les commerçants y trouveront largement leur profit.

Ces considérations de notre lettre ne sont pas uniquement dictées dans un esprit de lucre, elles visent aussi à obtenir le grandeur et la prospérité de la région, qui ne s'est bien placée pour devenir un des plus beaux joyaux de l'Etat.

Vous y avez espoir, M. le Gouverneur Général, que vous recevrez nos vœux avec bienveillance et que vous voudrez bien transmettre au Gouvernement Central ceux d'entre eux auxquels vous ne pourriez faire droit.

Dans cet espoir nous signons, M. le Gouverneur Général, en vous assurant de nos sentiments les plus respectueux et les plus dévoués.

Le Président.

Le Secrétaire.

Inclosure 3 in No. 1.

M. Lantonnois to Boma Chamber of Commerce.

Messieurs,

Boma, le 22 Novembre, 1906.

J'ai l'honneur de vous accuser réception de votre lettre du 15 Octobre par laquelle vous me présentez certains vœux au sujet de la situation politique et économique dans le Mayumbe. Conformément au désir que vous avez exprimé, vos desiderata seront portés à la connaissance du Gouvernement Central.

Ainsi que j'ai eu l'occasion de la déclarer, je suis avec un vif intérêt la marche des travaux de la Chambre de Commerce de Boma et je suis disposé à soumettre à un examen bienveillant les vœux qu'elle formule. Mais, en raison de cet intérêt même, permettez-moi de vous mettre en garde contre un écueil dont il semble à en juger par la lettre que vous m'avez adressée, vous ne vous rendez pas suffisamment compte.

Les considérations que vous avez émises ont trait aux objets les plus divers et les plus délicats : base de l'impôt, perception de l'impôt, exploitation du Domaine de l'Etat, administration de la justice.

Pour chacun de ces graves problèmes vous apportez une solution qui, dans votre esprit, résout toutes les difficultés de la question. Malheureusement, cette activité qui s'emploie à des objets d'ordre si multiple ne va pas sans une certaine précipitation, qui empêche de mûrir les questions débattues. Il faut faire un apprentissage avant de pouvoir se prononcer, en toute connaissance de cause, sur la politique qui doit être suivie dans une région; et, faute d'examen sérieux et approfondi, on risque de perdre de vue des aspects de la question qui seraient de nature à modifier totalement une opinion première.

C'est ainsi que vous critiquez le système suivant lequel les vivres pour le ravitaillement des camps militaires du Mayumbe ne sont pas fournis librement et ne sont pas rémunérés à un taux en rapport avec la valeur du produit. Vous ne tenez pas compte de ce que ces vivres sont fournis à titre d'impôt, et qu'il est du principe de l'impôt d'être obligatoire. Si, conformément au Décret du 3 Juin, 1906, l'indigène s'abstient de déclarer à l'avenir qu'il désire acquitter l'impôt en numéraire, les impositions en vivres que vous critiquez devront être maintenues, et il ne pourra être question d'accorder aux indigènes une rémunération égale à la valeur des produits fournis. Cette rémunération est en effet accordée à titre gracieux, et le paiement intégral de la valeur du produit, tel que vous le préconisez, aboutirait à la suppression de l'impôt.

Vous dites, d'autre part, que les vivres sont requis pour les soldats et les Européens; or, aucun des camps militaires ne peut exiger de vivres frais pour blancs à titre d'impôts, les agents qui y sont attachés jouissant de l'indemnité de nourriture.

Je relève, en outre, que vous préconisez l'institution de palabres hebdomadaires et périodiques, auxquelles assisterait l'élément commerçant, et dont le but serait de porter à la connaissance des indigènes qu'ils doivent contribuer aux dépenses de l'Etat.

Cette proposition va à l'encontre de la politique consacrée dans le Décret du 3 Juin, 1906, en suite des vœux formés par la Commission d'Enquête, à laquelle vous en tenez compte, politique suivant laquelle toute intervention des particuliers dans les impositions est désormais exclue.

Je constate encore que votre désidératum relatif aux produits du Domaine qui devraient, selon vous, être attribués aux indigènes, ne tient pas compte de ce que l'Etat permet à ces derniers de récolter dans la région qui fait l'objet de votre sollicitude, tous les fruits de la forêt indistinctement.

Enfin, je dois vous faire remarquer que certaines de vos critiques ont un caractère d'accusation contre des Agents de l'Etat. Vous parlez en effet à propos d'impositions en vivres de mesures plus ou moins arbitraires que peuvent prendre des chefs territoriaux, et plus loin de populations indigènes dont la conception des devoirs et de la justice est faussée par suite de l'action des commandants de camp, officiers de police judiciaire. Je vous serais très obligé si vous vouliez me signaler les faits qui vous autorisent à émettre des appréciations semblables.

Veillez, &c.
Le Vice-Gouverneur-Général,
(Signé) A. LANTONNOIS.

Inclosure 4 in No. 1.

Circular issued by M. Lantonnois.

J'ai l'honneur de porter à la connaissance du personnel de l'Etat que dorénavant il ne sera accordé d'avance en espèces aux Agents rentrant en Europe que dans des circonstances exceptionnelles.

Il doit être entendu, au surplus, que le montant de ces avances ne pourra jamais excéder ce qui revient aux Agents à titre de traitement, depuis la date à laquelle celui-ci aura été liquidé au Congo jusqu'à celle de leur rentrée en Europe.

Il ne sera fait exception à cette règle qu'en faveur des Agents rentrant pour cause de maladie, auxquels des avances, proportionnées à l'importance de leur réserve à Bruxelles, pourront être autorisées.

Il y a lieu de remarquer, d'ailleurs, que les fortes avances ont, dans la majorité des cas, eu pour conséquence de mettre aux Agents de payer leurs dettes chez les commerçants. Le Gouvernement a toujours insisté pour que le personnel ne dépasse pas, dans ses dépenses en Afrique, la somme qui y est tenue à sa disposition. Il entend persévérer dans cette voie et il ne peut favoriser des dépenses exagérées en accordant des avances élevées.

Je rappelle, à ce sujet, les prescriptions de la Circulaire du 2 Juillet, 1906, (R.M., p. 91), car je suis décidé à punir sévèrement ceux qui ne s'y conformeraient pas.

Quant à la somme qui est nécessaire aux Agents pour la traversée de Boma à Anvers, il leur sera toujours possible de se la procurer, soit en prenant les dispositions en temps utile, soit en se conformant aux deux derniers paragraphes de la Circulaire en date du 23 Mars, 1906.

Le Vice-Gouverneur-Général,
(Signé) A. LANTONNOIS.

Etat Indépendant du Congo, Boma,
le 14 Août, 1906.

ARMS TRAFFIC.

[June 12.]

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION I.

[19401]

No. 1.

2940

The Marquis di San Giuliano to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 12.)

Your Excellency,

Italian Embassy, London, June 10, 1907.

IN answer to the note which your Excellency was good enough to address to Count Bosdari on the 1st May last, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that my Government adhere in the fullest way to the views expressed therein, respecting the representations to be made to Menelik in the sense of Article 3 of the Agreement of the 13th December, 1906, with regard to the traffic in arms. The Italian Legation at Addis Abeba have therefore been instructed to co-operate with the British Legation there in obtaining from the Negus the most rigorous regulations possible, apart from the measures sanctioned by the Brussels Act, to stop the traffic in arms and ammunition in Abyssinia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. DI SAN GIULIANO.

[2534 m-1]

EAST AFRICA.

[May 27.]

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

2840

[16284]

No. 1.

Foreign Office to American Coal and Shipping Company.

27 JUN 07

Gentlemen,

Foreign Office, May 27, 1907.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th instant respecting a Concession for building a railway in Zanzibar, which you state has recently been given to a British Syndicate.

I am, in the first place, to correct the misapprehension under which you appear to labour in this respect. No such Concession has yet been granted, although the advisability of giving one is under consideration.

I am, in the next, to observe that a careful perusal of the copy of your own Railway Concession, under which you have constructed the existing line to Bububu, falls altogether, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, to bear out the contention which you advance, viz. that "any advantages offered to other parties to build railways in the island of Zanzibar should first be offered" to Messrs. Arnold Cheney. Nor can Edward Grey perceive anything in the document in question which entitles you to a monopoly of constructing railways in the island.

Indeed, in regard to this latter point the Concession expressly provides that nothing in it "shall be construed as creating any monopoly or exclusive privilege the creation of which is contrary to any of the Treaties entered into at different times by the Sultan of Zanzibar and the Powers having Treaties with Zanzibar," and in face of this very explicit provision it appears difficult to understand how it can be maintained that the Concession which embodies it can be regarded as conferring anything in the nature of a monopoly in regard to railways.

Sir Edward Grey is therefore quite unable to admit that the Zanzibar Government are bound to offer you a Concession for any railway line they may wish to construct in the island, or to wait before coming to a decision in the matter until you have made any proposals which you may wish to put forward on such a subject.

On the other hand, section 2 of your Concession binds you to "lay down, build, construct and open for traffic a tramway line on the roads and paths" in Zanzibar "when reasonably necessary," and I am accordingly to inquire whether you are prepared to comply with this condition, not only in the case of a line between Zanzibar and Chwaka, and from a spot about midway on this line not less than 15 miles in a northerly direction, but in such other places as it may appear to the Government of Zanzibar that the construction of a tramway line is reasonably necessary in the interests of the island.

I am to add that Sir Edward Grey would be glad of an early reply to this inquiry, as the matter is one of a somewhat pressing nature.

Mr. Clarke, the Head of the African Department, will be in Paris during this week, and should you desire to see him in connection with this matter he will be happy to receive you if you will apply to him at the British Embassy for an appointment.

I am further to observe that the Secretary of State accepts your obliging offer to furnish him with a copy of your Concession for the electric lighting of the town of Zanzibar and telephone system, which he would be glad to receive as soon as possible.

I am, &c.
(Signed) ERIC BARRINGTON.

[2482 dd-1]