

EAST AFR. PROT.
 No. 13504

C.O.
 13504
 16 APR 08

No. 124

1908

18

previous Paper.

(Subject.)

Despatch to Mnamoni
 by C. H. Hobley, C.M.S.

Sends Report with maps also sends
 reports by D. Leadley

(Minutes.)

Mt. Antambou

I annex a small scale map
 on which the approximate position of
 the Mnamoni country is indicated by
 a blue pencil cross.

Perk. says that had never had
 read H. Hobley's report with
 interest - send the maps & original
 to the G. H. O. for perusal
 & return 3rd Pers. No. ?

A. J. R.

2/4

W.H. May 23
 at once

See orig for return to D. H. May 27/08

Subsequent Paper.

Governor's Office,

Nairobi,

March 18th 1906.

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

No. 127

(Incl. 2)

13504

My Lord,

I have the honour to submit an interesting report on the tribes and country round Mumeni by Mr. C. W. Hobley, C.M.S., who proceeded on a tour of investigation with a view to the opening up of a new district and fixing a site for a station. A sketch map accompanies the report. The country traversed is very little known, and this tour was only rendered possible by the subjugation of the Embe tribe in 1906.

2. As Your Lordship is aware we already have a permanent station on the Rapingazi River in Embe; the opening of new stations at Muesu to the North and Mumeni to the South-East of Embe will complete an important scheme of pacification and open up a wide area to trade and development.

3. But Dr. Lindsey's report on the health of the district is not encouraging and I do not propose to establish a permanent station until the experiment of a temporary one has been tried.

I have the honour to be,
With the highest respect,

My Lord

Your Lordship's most obedient,
humble servant,

H.M. PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET,

LONDON, S.W.

INCLOSURE

13504

In Dispatch No. 27 of May 18 1908

3 APR 08

Report of Journey to Mamon-

By

C. V. Ronley, Esq., G. M. C.

REPORT OF JOURNEY TO MUMONI.

I left Nairobi on February 5rd. and proceeded to Fort Hall which was reached on the 6th. I passed Punda Milia en-route and was much struck by the large area under cultivation at Messrs Swift and Rutherfords farm and the excellence of the crops, huge fields of mealies quite 9 ft. in height, ground nuts and more remarkable than either a 20 acre field of excellent wheat.

Upon reaching Fort Hall made arrangements to proceed with Mr. Lane and Dr. Lindsey on the following morning and sent the boat for the Tana crossing on ahead, We reached Embu Station in 2 days viz: on the 8th. and left there again on the 9th. with Lieut. Phillips and an escort of 1/2 Company of Srd. K. A. R. We proceeded through Embu country by rather a circuitous route first N. W. then N. and finally E. and camped in Kangani sub-district and on the 10th. left Embu and proceeded S. W. camping on the Ena River on the Northern confines of Emberre and East of Kiangombe Mountain, the Emberre people came in in numbers and brought food and held an Ngoma in camp, Mr. E. B. Horne appears to have considerable influence over these people. On the 11th. we camped on the Thishi River still in the

the Embere country but not near any villages, along the Ena and Guchhi Rivers there are fine groves of the Pandanus or screw pines a tree which is not usually found so far inland.

On the 12th. we reached the N. E. boundary of Embere which is the Mutonga River, crossed it and camped in the Tharaka country, the Mutonga is a fine stream about 50 yards wide at this point and about 3 feet 6 inches deep; our camp was in a large open space dotted with fine tamarind trees and surrounded by great ranges of granite hills barren looking but very picturesque.

The Wa Tharaka here under the chief Waibui seem to be very amenable, they brought in supplies of food and received us very cordially. I left the boat at the Mutonga crossing as it can conveniently be taken across the Tana River opposite the mouth of this tributary.

On the 13th. leaving Waibui's we marched along the flanks of the Tharaka hills over some very rough country and looking over the Tana valley, after a march of about 9 miles we crossed the River Tana by a ford quite 120 yds wide, the water was about 3' 6" deep, we camped about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the river on the

the night; the afternoon shade temperature was here very high being about 93° but the altitude above sea level was only 1890 feet. From this point Messrs. Lane and Harne returned to Mbu and Fort Hall and Lieut. Phillips commanding the escort Dr. Lindsey and myself went on through Tharaka country; after a very rough stony march of about 10 miles we reached a camp near the village of *the Chief* Waivui. The Tharaka on this side of the Tana although part of the tribe on the North seem to be of a somewhat different temperament, as we passed along there was no sign of hostility or demeanour, they did not run away but apparently displayed no interest in our passing. Upon reaching camp I sent for Waivui and told him that I had heard of him as the big chief through ^{the} District Commissioner, Kitui, and asked him to collect his people for a palaver, and to send in a supply of fowl for sale. He however made all kinds of futile excuses ~~and~~ all his people were in the shambas although at the time one could see numbers in the surrounding villages as for the elders he declined to make any effort to collect them, his attitude was altogether sullen and obstructive. I therefore sent him away and

and insisted that he should collect his people early the following morning. I sent to the surrounding villages in the evening to obtain a little milk but everywhere met with a refusal, it was reported by the messengers that groups of young men with spears and shields were sitting in the various paths leading to the camp. The night passed quietly but two armed men were caught by the sentries creeping into the camp, and they said they had lost their way. In the morning I sent for Waivui and he was found sitting in his village having done nothing to collect his people or food, we waited some hours and I then summoned him to the camp and told him that as he had so obstinately refused to meet us in a friendly spirit and to treat us properly I should take him with us to Kitui and we then struck camp and marched. This seemed to be the only course as one could not sit indefinitely in the Tharaka country without obtaining food and there was really not enough to go on to justify hostilities. We then marched towards the N. E. ^{corner} ~~course~~ of Mombasi district, the first part of the march being by a circuitous path through dense thorn bush and the latter part along the sandy bed of a dry river, we reached the

the first shambas of the A-Kamba of Mumoni at about 5.15 p.m. after a very exhausting day. Although late in the afternoon the A-Kamba at once came in and proceeded to collect some food for our caravan. Late that night the Native Officer of police with a party of police from Kitui came into camp with letters informing me that Mr. Pearson was unable to meet me owing to sickness. This was very unfortunate as his personal knowledge of this area would have been of great value and saved some time. On the 10th. we marched through a very highly cultivated and thickly populated area, there were good crops of maize everywhere nearly ripe, we camped that day by the Katze or Kasii River a great dry sandy watercourse running N. in which water can be obtained almost anywhere by digging about 18 inches. The following day we proceeded towards the mountains and a short march brought us to the River Ithia a small running stream which flows down a valley between Kakuyu Mountain and Maanda Mountain, we marched some distance into the hills up the Ithia valley and camped, the scenery here was very fine, magnificent granite hills surrounding the camp on three sides ^{while} ~~while~~ on the fourth one had a

had a peep over the Kapie stream country between Mumoni and Kitui. I had hoped to find a suitable tabular shaped hill somewhere in this valley upon which the Station could be placed and I spent the best part of a day climbing several of the prominent peaks in the range from which I could obtain a birdseye view of the surrounding area and I found that all the ridges were of the sharp hog's back type and once the floor of the valley was left a level area of an acre in extent was impossible to find at a reasonable altitude. I also found that the population on these hills was much less than when I visited the locality 16 years ago, in those days the people of the country clustered around steep hills on account of fear of the Masai, and as soon as they saw the Masai power wane they opened up fresh land in the plains. There are at present only about 50 small villages on and close to the Mumoni Mountains and the surplus food grown by these ~~present~~ villages would probably not prove sufficient to ~~find~~^{feed} the garrison and trading population likely to spring up around a Station. It is also I consider a good rule to be followed that administrative stations should be founded as near

near as possible to the centre of gravity of the
 population and in the present case the bulk of the
 Muzoni people live roughly in an area bounded on
 the West by the Katse or Kassei River, on the North
 by a line about 6 miles North of Mithaji Hill and
 Mansolla and on the East by a line following the
 meridian of Ngomeni Hill and thence by a line drawn
 S. W. from Ngomeni to Kanianga. This being so I
 decided on the following course which I beg to
 submit for His Excellency's approval. I chose a
 temporary site at the foot of the Mountains on a knoll
 about 600 yards S. of the Ithia River and near the
 Northern extension of Kikuyu Mountain, besides the
 small stream Ithia there is a ^{fresh} water spring on the
 mountain side, the Medical Officer who accompanied
 me has no objection to this site. I have directed
 that temporary "vibanda" be erected here for Mr.
 Hope's reception and from this as a base he is to
 thoroughly explore in detail the area described
 above and endeavour to find a reasonably good site
 for the permanent post, this done he is to move and
 erect temporary buildings there while a bungalow
 and artisans can erect something of a more
 permanent nature; after passing through to the

the mountains I heard of two wells of good fresh water in the country of the head chief Mutia and I have directed Mr. Hope to visit these. As it would have taken quite a fortnight longer to fully explore this region I decided to leave the matter as I have described and return to Kitui to get in touch with Mr. Hope, and on the 20th. marched E. along the E. face of Kakuyu Mountain and camped at the villages of a chief named Kazambi, there are springs on the hill side about $\frac{1}{2}$ way and others again at Kazambi's. Opposite Kazambi's about 3 miles E. there is a hill called Mduini and several other springs. Leaving Kazambi's as it was said that the waterholes were long distances apart I decided to take advantage of the moon and march at night so each night the camp was roused at 1.0 A.M. and we started at 2.0 A.M. and marched on till 10.30 A.M. and by this plan we covered the 35 miles between Kazambi's and Kitui Station in 7 days. As we marched South the bush became less dense and miles of very pleasant orchard like woods were passed and as the A-Kamba apparently have not a passion for starting grass fires like many of the native tribes the pasture was exceptionally thick and rich, there

there were no signs of tsetse anywhere in this stretch and it seemed a pity that it could not be utilised. It is a very curious country all round Mimoni, there are vast areas covered with thick leafless bush, and nearly every bush is laden with hooked thorns and the general aspect is very barren and forbidding and yet wherever the natives have cleared away this bush and made slashas the fertility of the soil appears to be remarkable, the Mimoni slashas were much finer than anything seen in Mitui and Ulu districts and were as good as many of those in Ibu, but of course not so extensive, as the population is not so dense. It is a great country for bees as the thorn bushes, mostly of the acacia family, bear very sweet smelling blossoms and thus prove a great attraction to the bees and the opening up of Mimoni cannot fail to greatly increase the output of beeswax. The Mimoni people do not possess a vast amount of cattle as they told me that about 2 years ago their herds were decimated by a disease unknown to them before, the principal symptoms being dysentery accompanied by haemorrhage; small herds of cattle are however seen at most of the villages.

The limited water supply appears to be somewhat of an obstacle to the progress of the district and this will I feel sure be gradually overcome as there is little doubt that there are considerable supplies of underground water as yet untapped, and if the time goes on their system of wells is improved and is supplemented by dams at suitable places, one will be convinced here but little of the lack of water. Another great need of both Kumoni and Mitui district is roads. I discussed this question at many places with the chiefs and they told me that for generations past it has been their custom to clear tracks through the bush but these were narrow and the construction of wide roads such as the European ideas desire require better tools than they possess, that if they got tools lent by the Administration they ~~was~~ ^{would be} enabled to do so. With a people taking up this attitude it seems a pity not to avail ourselves of it and I was elsewhere asking that a generous supply of tools for this work may be provided as soon as possible.

There is said to be a considerable amount of iron

still hidden away among the A-Tharaka people

and it is believed that a good deal of

deal of surreptitious elephant hunting is still carried on by the almost unadministered A-Kamba who live on the extreme N.W. of the country and whose locations about of the great area of high country which runs uninterruptedly to the north. There is little to be done but there is still a certain volume of illicit ivory trade carried on and the evidence scanty though it be points to German East Africa being the frontier of exit. There are no ivory caravans, but small consignments of a few tusks at a time mostly small ivory are smuggled across the border by by-paths and at night. There is said to be a colony of about on Kilimanjaro numbers of which not unreasonably for the transport of this contraband. These are believe the remnants of a band of professional elephant hunters which were in the regular employ of the great Kilimanjaro chief Mankara of Moschi many years ago. Given an enormous tract of somewhat sparsely populated country and a limited administrative staff and native police often very venial, it is of course very difficult to deal effect ally with an abuse of this nature but as our grip over the district increases the risks will

will become steadily greater and if a progressive policy carried out by energetic district officers is pursued this trade should in a year or two dwindle to insignificant proportions. Of course the Swahili and Indian traders are the instigators of the trade, particularly the latter, as they alone provide the capital with which the ivory is purchased and numbers of the non civilised A-Kamba are implicated as it is a profitable business and they can travel anywhere within their own tribal limits without passes. I am not however prepared to recommend the removal of the coast traders from the district as they carry on a big trade in beeswax, ghee and skins and they have a civilizing influence on a semi savage tribe, they teach them the value of money, their little shops here and there throughout the district tempt the natives to buy European commodities and thus increase the wants of the people, which looking at the matter broadly stimulates the progress of the tribe and generally spells for progress, and moreover to look at it from a mercenary point of view gives the people an opportunity of obtaining rupees wherewith to pay their taxes.

It will doubtless be remembered that when Mr. Lane recently visited Nairobi, the question of including the whole of the Tharaka tribe in the Meru District¹ was discussed and this was one of the points that Mr. Lane and I were to mutually discuss. The facts are these, the Tharaka on the N. side of the Tana are situated about 50 miles from Tabu Station and will be about a similar distance from the proposed station in Mweru. On the other hand from the site of Murchi Station it will be only about 25 miles with the Tana River in between, I have however placed a small boat on the Tana so that communications with the N. bank can be maintained at all seasons. The Tharaka are not A-Kamba, on both banks of the river I found they possessed legends of their having worked their way ^{up} of the Tana valley in past times and some said they were related to the Pokomo and others that they came from the country N. W. of Malindi, they said that the Suku or Shava tribe on the S. E. of Kenya were a branch of the same invasion but that they had pushed on N. W. and settled on Konia. Thus we have a little group of aliens who have no special affinity with the A-Kikuyu and at such a distance from the stations

stations of Mweru and Embu that to adequately

administer them a new Station is really necessary.

As however an administrative centre is being

founded in Mumoni 35 miles away it seems to be the

easiest solution that the A-Tharaka should be

placed under Mumoni. I have no lead, however on

behalf of Uhamba Province and if a separate

station is founded in Tharaka would quite readily

agree to hand over the Tharaka on the S. side to

the jurisdiction of such a station, -the tribe is

one- the people on both banks intermarry and are

in communication at all seasons, at low water they

ford the Tana and in periods of flood they swim

across with the aid of an empty buoyant beehive of

light wood- this being the political condition it

would seem logical to attach the Tharaka to Mumoni

district and if later on it is considered necessary

to establish a special station in their midst the

arrangement can be revised. I believe that Mr.

Gene will not raise any serious objection on

behalf of Konia Province to the adoption of this

scheme.

With regard to the Southern limits of Mumoni
district, the matter was discussed with the

District Commissioner, Kitui, and he agreed that a line drawn N. and S. a little South of Mbatanga Mountain would be suitable as a tentative definition. A map accompanies this report which will make clear the above definition.

Before leaving Kitui I made arrangements with the various officers that as soon as a supply of tools could be obtained a cart road should be opened up from Mbatanga southwards through Kitui Station and on to Naitha in the southern part of the district, over the whole of this stretch a distance of not less than 100 miles, it is proposed to run bullock carts; the Indian traders having promised to put on carts directly the road is passable. The object of this scheme is to open up a better route of communication with the Railway at Kibwezi. Below Naitha the road is unsuitable for cattle on account of tsetse fly; I am however requesting the District Commissioner, Machakos, to clear a wire track from Kibwezi to the Athi ford and if the Administration could expend a small sum in placing a wire rope across the river with a punt running on it, a great development of legitimate trade will

will quickly ensue and such a development will it is believed prove detrimental to the illicit ivory traffic. In comparison with other districts we have done very little for Kitui so far, it has been to some extent unpopular with the executive officials because it was felt that the Headquarters interest in the district was not so keen as that displayed with regard to the Nyanza. It is true that it contains no white settlers, the number of these is however not a measure of the volume of trade and we shall for a long time to come have to look to the natives for revenue and a great proportion of our exports. I would therefore venture to urge that His Excellency may see his way to support the industrial development of this district the possibilities of which are I am convinced are considerable.

Before closing this report I would like to be allowed to express my thanks to O. C. Troops for the escort of the K. A. R. and also to express my appreciation of the work of Lieut. Phillips who commanded it, his readiness to assist in every way and his never failing courtesy rendered the portion of the journey in which he accompanied me very pleasant.

W. H. H. H. H.

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Before closing this report I would like to be allowed to express my thanks to C. C. Troops for the escort of Ser. K. A. R. and also to express my appreciation of the work of Lieut. Phillips who commanded it, his readiness to assist in every way and his never failing courtesy rendered the portion of the journey in which he accompanied me very pleasant.

W. H. H. H. H.

In Despatch No. 27 of Dec. 18, 1907.

P.M.O's Office.

Nairobi,

16th March 1908.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward a copy of Dr. Lindsey's report on the choice of a suitable site for a new station at Mumeni.

The country appears to be altogether impossible for European habitation, and the suggestion, that an experimental site be chosen and occupied for a year at least before a permanent one is decided on, is sensible and should, I think, be acted on.

The difficulty in reaching the district during the rains owing to unfordable rivers could probably be overcome by erecting rope bridges as is done in so many parts of West Africa.

I believe the district, except in the hills, is very unhealthy and has on this account been abandoned by the German Mission.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,


Principal Medical Officer.

The Secretary,
to the Administration.

Nairobi.

Port Hall

11.3.08

ENCLOSURE No 3

In Despatch No. 127 of 11/11/1908.

The Honourable

The Principal Medical Officer,

Nairobi.

Sir,

I have the honour to report as follows on the result of Mr. Hobley's recent Safari to Mumoni (I myself having accompanied him), for the purpose of choosing a site for a new station, from a medical point of view.

No site was seen during the whole journey through the country which could be at all recommended as a possible healthy site for a new station.

The Mumoni Hills. These are a range of very rocky hills overlooking the Tana River and valley. The highest peaks are perhaps some 5000 - 6000 ft. There is little shade, probably little or no water except at the feet, where in the dry season it trickles down a pass (and forms pools here and there) which is situated towards the Southern extremity of the hills. It is a sample of this water which has been handed over to the Transport at Nairobi. At one of the pools formed by this stream lower down than where the sample was collected from on 18. 2. 08 the water appeared to be quite good, being clear, cold and pleasant to the taste. However, a site in this district would seem impossible to procure owing to the following amongst other reasons viz:- Absence of level surface; the

the rocky nature of the ground; the scarcity of native food, probable distance and difficulty of reaching water; probability of it being found impossible to grow vegetables for European consumption and the very exposed position of many other sites.

Country at and near foot of these hills as far as Katze River. This is very hot and low lying. Although few mosquitoes were actually met with it seems probable that during ~~some~~ --- and after the rains these would become very numerous, ample opportunity being afforded by the flatness of the country for stagnation of water. I understand that it is near the Katze river that the abandoned German Mission Station is situated, the site having proved to be so very unhealthy. This piece of country therefore also cannot be recommended as suitable for a station.

Crossing the River Katze one ascends on to slightly higher ground and though possibly in some places at least it may be slightly less unhealthy one would be rash indeed to recommend it as suitable for a permanent Station until ample experience has proved it so. I understand that it is somewhere in this district that Mr. Hapa has been instructed to carefully look out for sites. I consider that no site in this country (Mumoni) should be definitely selected as permanent until European experience of its climate has lasted at least a year or 18 months.

The Mumoni Country between the hills and Kitui is hot, dry, rocky and covered with thick, thorny bush. The water in the country away from the hills has in the dry season to be dug out of dry, sandy riverbeds.

It is

It is salt to the taste, not clear and very possibly continual drinking of it would give rise in Europeans to digestive and intestinal disturbances. It even in some places smells brackish as if one were walking on the seashore.

There is one more great difficulty in connection with the medical aspect of the question and that is the difficulty and perhaps impossibility of a sick man in this country being able to obtain any medical attendance during several months of the year. I should say that this state of affairs would last during quite 5 months if not the year. The Medical Officer who is stationed at Fort Hall could not travel via Embo on account of the two big rivers intervening. He could not get direct to Kitui on account of the rivers would cut off all help from Kitui during this season of the year.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

ad/ Eric C. Lindsey

Medical Officer



MAP of MUMONI DISTRICT

accompanying Mr. Hobley's base of 102/10

Scale 1 inch = 1 mile

Jan
13504/05
E.A.P.

C.O.
26

220

DRAFT

May

P. N. 251

27 May '08

Sir,

I have the honour to
ack the receipt of your
debt N^o 127 of the 15th of
March, & to state that I have
read with interest M^r
Hobley's report on the tribes
& the country round Humon.

MINUTE. 22/5

Noall 25/5

Ellis.

M. 25/5/0

Jus.

Atrobus.

W.

Lucas.

Hopwood.

Churchill.

Earl of Elgin.

Gen
13504/00.

E.A.P.

m.c.

27. Hayos

Noall 25/5

Ellis. ~~1111~~ 25/5/0

The U.S of S for the Colonies
presents his compliments to
the Director of Military Operations
& begs to transmit for his
perusal & return, ~~the~~ a
despatch from the Gen of
the E.A.P. enclosing a report
by M^r C. W. Hobley, ~~encl~~, on
the tracks & the country around
Humoni.