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DESPATCH

EAST AFR. PROF.

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29 JUN 08



(Subject)

Number 274

1908

June

previous paper.

21003

Indian Indentured Labour

Submits that Indian labour is now necessary for the development of the Coast area. Outlines conditions & asks that principle be admitted & necessary action taken.

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(Minutes)

See minute in $\frac{In}{21093}$

H. J. R.

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The Governor of the East African Protectorate

Governor's Office,

Mombasa,

June 4th 1908.

REC'D FOR PERMANENT
C.O. 5194 JUNE 1910



23267
REC
29 JUN 08

AFRICA PROTECTORATE

No. 274

(Colonial)

My Lord,

I have the honour to invite Your Lordship's attention to the discussion on the question of indentured labour at the Malindi and Mombasa labour meetings which accompanied my despatch No. 244 of the 19th ultimo, and to paragraphs 24-26 of that despatch.

2. When the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies was at Mombasa last October he was approached on the subject of obtaining indentured labour from India for the development of the Coast area and it was then urged that the development of the Coast tracts would be dependent on labour supplied from India. Mr. Winston Churchill replied to the effect that if it came to the necessity of indenting on India for labour no objections would probably be raised, but the Government would first wish to see that the native labour supply failed to meet requirements.

3. The speakers at the meetings above referred to have made out a strong case. They point out that after this year the planting industries can no longer depend on the native supply of labour, that even if the quantity of labour required were to be available,

which

Principal Secretary of State

for the Colonies,

~~Downing Street,~~

~~LONDON, S.W.~~

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which it will not be certainly in the Coast area, this quality of labour is too uncertain and unreliable for their purposes, that labour from India is absolutely essential for the promotion of industries in which a large amount of capital is being embarked, and that without this labour the development which it is the object of these concerns to promote will not be possible.

4. In all this I am bound to concur. In the intermediate country between Makindu and the Coast large tracts have been given out in Fibre Concessions, new machinery is being imported and tramway lines laid down, involving considerable outlay, and plantations of rubber on a large scale have been and are being laid out. In the Coast area most of the land available has been rapidly taken up or applied for within the last two years, a good deal of capital has been expended, and more is ready as development proceeds, and I consider that the time has now come to meet the planters with the assistance they look for to make their plantations profit paying concerns.

5. I would therefore ask Your Lordship to consider favourably the question of indenting on India for labour, to admit the principle, and to address the India Office with a view to ascertaining the terms on which labourers would be allowed to be recruited for East Africa.

6. The planters have generally agreed that the terms of the Mauritius Ordinance would be the best suited for this Protectorate, and the class of Indians that would be preferred would be Tamil agriculturists.

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agriculturists from Southern India. We have in Mr. Waller a gentleman well acquainted with India whose services would be at once available as Protector of Indentured Labour. The climatic conditions of East Africa are well adapted to Indians, and as is generally known we already have a large Indian Community, numbers of whom are trading in all parts of the Protectorate.

7. It is impossible to say exactly how many labourers will be required next year, so far I gather from 2000 to 3000 or 4000 will be wanted by Voi and Malindi about the commencement of the next financial year, in April next, before which time we shall have definite information, and of course definite applications will be submitted by the planters interested.

8. At Voi the Afro American Fibre and Rubber Company will require about 600 Indians, and I understand they are prepared to double their capital and machinery once they are sure of obtaining Indian labour. At Malindi, the British East African Corporation, the Sabaki Cotton Syndicate, the Malindi Plantation Syndicate, Mambrui Rubber estates, and other concerns will all be dependent on Indian labour, and if the land applied for by the British East African Corporation on the Tana, at present earmarked for the Fawcus Syndicate, is made available

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available for the Corporation Major Leggett tells me his Corporation will expend £15,000 on this farm and will require 500 Indians. Then there is the Geidmann Thomas Concession which will require a large supply of Indian labour, which I have not taken into account in the above computation, and a number of smaller concessions which will partly employ Indian labour as soon as it is available.

9. I am strongly of opinion that Indian labourers should be induced to bring with them their wives and families, and that inducements should be offered to them to settle in the country after the period of their indenture is over, first of all in the Coast area and the intermediate country between that area and Makindu, and also in parts of Kavirondo. The Malindi planters are quite prepared to give their labourers pieces of land to cultivate, and they recognise the advantages of having the wives and families of the men living with them, who will be available for work during the picking season and at other times when they are wanted.

10. All the tracts above noted are outside the European settlement area, which is held to extend from Kiu to Fort Ternan along the Uganda Railway. Here I would not allow indentured labour to settle on any terms; the upland settlers have been told that this area will be reserved for European settlement and this should be strictly maintained as such.

11. If settlers in the European settlement areas wish to employ any Indians there should be no objection to their doing so, but their residence in the uplands should then be confined to the period of their indenture.

12. Outside the European settlement area I think the

Protectorate

Protectorate has everything to gain from Indian settlements, not only in the actual development it will itself bring about, but in the stimulating effect it will have on production by the natives, on whom and the Indians East Africa must, whatever be the conditions on the uplands, mainly depend for the production and development of its economic resources.

13. Attached is a note by Mr. Waller.

14. I trust Your Lordship will approve of the principles I have set forth in this despatch, and the Government of India will be willing to facilitate the supply of the labour which is so necessary for our planters.

15. Mr. Marsden, lately Chief of Customs here and now Emigration Agent at Calcutta, is intimately acquainted with the conditions of East Africa and how they would be suited to Indian life. I venture to suggest that the arrangements for indentured labour be left in his hands, and I think it would be well if he were to interview personally the Department of Government of India concerned in Calcutta and explain the conditions as they exist in East Africa.

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

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,
 humble servant,

[Handwritten signature]

Mombasa, 28 JUN 1908
5th June 1908.

Sir,
Referring to your request for information in connection with the importation of indentured labour from India, I have the honour to give you the following particulars.

The conditions obtaining in other Colonies that import indentured labour, are given in the inclosed forms.

I should suggest five years as the maximum term of indenture, but it would be possible to arrange for shorter periods if required.

At present the British India, and German Line of Steamers are charging Rs. 85/- per head as passage money, with food, from Bombay or Karachi, but if regular importation is established, it is possible that lower rates may be obtained.

The "Horse" Line of Steamers quote £ 4/- per head for an Adult brought from Calcutta, but they fix the minimum of eight hundred as a ship's complement.

For the Coast lands I should recommend people from the South of India as most suitable, and they would prove more economical, than those from the North.

I am not in a position to give an accurate estimate of cost per individual landed in this Protectorate, but I calculate roughly that £ 5/- would be the outside figure.

In all instances, there should be a percentage of families, among indentured labourers.

In my opinion it would be advisable to let the imported labourers patron themselves, this would be easier and more

H. The Lieut. Governor.

Nairobi.

factory, and as matters are at present, quite practi-
 The various Colonies importing indentured labour, have
 established recruiting agencies at Calcutta, and in the
 Presidency, and I would suggest that with the con-
 of the Colonial Office, these be exploited, as the
 of a separate Agency will be very expensive.
 It would be possible to obtain the services of private
 agents, and in some instances, the cost of these would
 be less than that of the Government Agency, but this
 is a matter of arrangement.
 It would be necessary to see if a recruiting establish-
 ment were set up, before labour begins to come into the country, and
 matters should receive early attention.

I have the honour to be,

Your most obedient servant

D. W. Walker

Protector of Emigrants.