

EAST AFR. PROT.

No. 12209

12209

REC'D
APR 08

Office of Individual.

(Subject.)

Hatchings &

Forestry.

1908

11 Mch.

Sends summary of Report re: supply of
timber from the Mbarira forest for the Jinja-Kakope
Railway - Submits observations generally on forest
administration in the East

Last previous Paper.

(Minutes.)

Mr. Ellis

As to the Report, see 13529, and
to the grant of 1,500 acres on the low
flat, see 5594.

I take it this may be put by?

END 20 May

Yes 20/5
at once

Full copy

Office of Individual.

Last previous Paper.

13529
Mch

and clearing
the forest
I am
Dear Mr. Winston Churchill
Very truly yours
E. H. Thomas

475
12209
RE: 6 APR 08

Forest Office
Nairobi, Kenya
March 11th. 1908.

Dear Mr. Winston Churchill,

I found your kind note on getting back to Nairobi from Uganda. What I meant to ask you was, not to send me away for a long time to Uganda. The examination of the forests in connection with the Nile Railway was, of course, but a small matter, and entailed no notable interruption of my work here. I have finished my Report, with the exception of some data which are not yet to hand, from the Mabira forest. I shall keep the Report to dispatch by next mail, so that it may be complete, but in the meantime enclose for your information a copy of its Summary. The Mabira forest is a splendid one, and will furnish ^{more than} all the timber required for the Jinja-Kakoge Railway for an indefinite period; provided, of course, it be not destroyed; and this is the seamy side of a pleasant picture. This magnificent Mabira forest, with its wealth of splendid timber, and its area about equal to the New Forest in England, has been given to a Rubber Company. Of course, I could not, in an official report, criticise past administrative acts. All that remains now is for the Uganda Government to work very carefully with the Mabira Company, making it to their interest to use and improve the forest instead of destroying it. It is pleasant to reflect that the construction of the Railway may lead to the timber being more valuable than the rubber, and this incidentally to the preservation of the forest.

There is another matter I should like to mention to you. You very kindly said I might write to you if any serious difficulty arose. British East Africa is not tak-

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taking its Forestry in earnest. My predecessor, Elliott, wrote to me that they will not do so without express instructions and continual watchfulness from the Colonial Office, and I am beginning to think that he may be right. We cannot eat our cake and have it, and we cannot go on repairing mistakes made in the Land Office by alienating forest areas. I do hope the Colonial Office will call for all papers in connection with that sad cession of 1,500 acres of forest (on a grazing lease too) to the Uplands of East Africa (pig factory) Syndicate. Here, someone blundered; and the Colonial Office were informed that there were 2,000 acres of open land available on the Lari Flat. Really, there was not an acre available; and then, to square matters with the Syndicate, 1,500 acres of forest, valued at £30,000 (situated as it is, close to the Railway) is being given away at $\frac{1}{4}$ d. an acre for the nominal sum of £3. 2. 6 per annum, or, on a twenty years' purchase, of £62. 6. 0. This is not business to give away £30,000^{worth} of forest for £62. 6. 0. I want to see the forests managed on business principles. Germany gets £21,000,000 a year forest revenue! The Colonies of Victoria has frittered away its fine forests as British East Africa has been doing and gets no forest revenue!!

5594/08.
R.P.L.

The Lari Swamp ground has been already refused to several settlers. I trust the Colonial Office will call for the papers, and let me have the assurance that there were "Reasons of State" for this forest alienation. What I would ask you to represent to Lord Elgin is, that no forest area should be alienated without the express authority of the Colonial Office. In Cape Colony, not even the Government of the day can alienate forest. It can only be done by a resolution of both Houses of Parliament "first had and obtained". Of course I refer to good timber^{forest} that has been demarcated and definitely set aside as the future State forests of the country, or forest required as such. This Lari area was in the centre of such a forest estate. The Forest Department has been working there for six years, thinning, replanting etc. and has spent some £1,500 on this forest. I will not go over a page with my forest troubles!

Sleepers and timber for the proposed Jinja Railway.

12209

RECEIVED 16 APR 08

Summary of report by D. E. Hutchins.

To resume:- Timber for every Railway purpose, sleepers, bridges, buildings and rolling-stock can be procured in excellent quality and of any transportable length from the Mabira Forest. This is now leased to the Mabira Rubber Company. Endeavours should first be made to arrange with the Mabira Rubber Company for the supply of all the timber and fuel required for the Railway, including facilities for the construction of a forest tramway from the Mabira forest to Jinja. Failing satisfactory terms with the Mabira Rubber Company, sleepers and fuel can be obtained from the scrub and inferior forest on the right bank of the Nile and adjoining the route of the projected railway. A certain amount of short, bridge and building, timber, could be obtained also from the same source.

Sleepers, bridge and building timber, could also be obtained at reasonable cost from any of the three following sources:-

- 1st. The open country and scattered forest on the North of lake ~~Victoria~~.
- 2nd. The lake-shore forest South of Entebbe.
- 3rd. The forests of British East Africa near Lumbwa and the Nandi Escarpment. There is first-rate timber here, but it has to bear a general railway rate of 1d. per ton mile.

The use of Half-round sleepers as on the Continent of Europe should be encouraged. They are economical and often contain the soundest timber.

Engineers should be allowed sufficient time for the erection of economical, permanent and healthy buildings of local material instead of corrugated iron.

Wherever obtained, no timber of any sort should be used out of doors till it has been ^{either} injected or treated by hot absorption with a powerful antiseptic (Corrosive Sublim-

mate

Sublimate, Creosote, or Zinc) as deeply and as thoroughly as may be. It should afterwards be coated and kept coated with Carbolesum or the tar-paraffine mixture. Timber injected under pressure (in a closed retort, or from one end) should be injected soon after felling; all other timber should be seasoned in a dry place, sheltered from sun and wind, and treated with antiseptics as soon as dry, in the manner now practised at the Italian Mission timber mill in the Aberdare forest of British East Africa.

Hutch