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previous Paper

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Arms Traffic in Abyssinia

Tele. copy to Addis Ababa embassy
report by a Japanese on the traffic
arms in Amuriland and southern

W. Fiddes - Some date (aff.)
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In any further communication on this subject, please quote

No. 47063-09

and address—
The Under-Secretary of State,
Foreign Office,
London.

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The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents
his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for the
Colonies and, by direction of the Secretary of State,
transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office

January 14, 1910.

Reference to previous letter.

Description of Inclosure.

Name and Date.

Subject.

Lord H. Henley

Adm. Admiralty Office

No. 77.

Rec'd 4

(Similar letter sent to)

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British Location

Addis Ababa, December 1900.

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you, enclosed, a copy of a Despatch from Mr. Farquhar, British Inspector up to the Southern Abyssinian boundary, reporting on the traffic in arms in Amussilane and the Oromo.

From time to time regulations have been issued by the Emperor with the known purpose of checking the indiscriminate sale of arms. Last year an edict was promulgated forbidding all persons (except soldiers) who were not home find merchants, or traders, to own rifles; any trader who required a rifle for the protection of his person or property was required to have a special registration mark placed upon it, and when he was not travelling, the rifle was to be deposited with the house of the place he belonged to. This regulation will be carried into effect during your proposed visit.

Another

Another edict, forbidding the use of cartridges in currency,
was at first allowed to lapse, but it has been put into
force again, and in the neighbourhood of the capital seems
to be observed.

The root of the evil has not been touched. The
unrestricted importation of arms through Tchouti, nor the
being the subject of negotiations between the British and
French Governments, provides a source of revenue for the
Emperor and his supporters which their inability will not
allow them to forgo.

The Emperor himself, notwithstanding his promises to
the foreign Representatives, has been, at any rate, in my
time, the chief offender. He gives an order through some
merchant for a large consignment of rifles, ostensibly for
Government purposes; before even they arrive, the greater
part of them is resold to the importer at a profit of one
hundred per cent or more, and eventually they are found
for sale at the houses of men of no account of any
importance in Adis Ababa. They informed me that
the collection of arms was
to be responsible for

Each developing this system on his own account. He obtains the rifles at a cheap rate, collects a number of men, gives them a rifle and a belt of ammunition each, and sends them off to the Southern frontier and truculent to shoot elephants. If they succeed in obtaining a sufficient quantity of ivory, the rifles become their own property, and many of them dispose of these along at no remuneration profit, frequently to Somalis and others in our territory.

Mr. Carniero refers in his report to the sale of rifles on the western frontier; notwithstanding information from the Governor General of the Sudan, Ballahat seems to be a favourite place for the passing of arms across the frontier, and I have several times made representations to the Government on the subject. With regard to Mr. Carniero's proceedings, I have no doubt that Mr. Carniero's reports are accurate as the former has been well known for many years past to be most unreliable. The latest information being however in my opinion that he is now entirely discredited by his conduct, would be of interest if you desire to make any further enquiry in this regard.

In your monthly news item regarding the

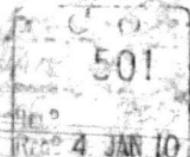
ment propose to give the monopoly for the sale of arms and ammunition to one individual, and I have protested against this as a violation of the Emperor's promise that no more monopolies should be given. Such a monopoly in the hands of a single person, who could fix his own profit, would in my opinion tend to a still greater circulation of arms than before. I have proposed that there should be given licenses to respectable persons for the sale of arms and ammunition, the licensees being obliged to furnish detailed returns of all sales, and to enter into strict guarantees to supply no arms or ammunition to unauthorized persons.

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

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,

(S) Herbert Hovey

Copy.

Addis Ababa, December 1st 1909.

I have the honour to bring to your notice certain facts concerning the sale of rifles by a French merchant to the natives of Ogaden and the natives south of Arussi.

Two and a half years ago the Emperor Menelik bought from France two thousand Gourdin-Musili carbine Rifles to be delivered at Jibuti at six dollars each. When those rifles reached Biredaaw the Emperor sold the same to Mr Guizzone at ten dollars each. Half the number of those rifles found their way to Ogaden and the other half were sent to Adis Ababa.

Those of the Ogaden were sent from Harrar in the following manner: Mr Giagnone had at that time a representative in the south of Harrar, and in Arussiland for buying live cattle. Ogadenian horses, also horses trading in

King Fou Max de. He used to send a great number of soldiers with the goods to his representatives, and each soldier had to carry one new rifle and two belts of cartridges; on their arrival the rifles were taken from them and were sold to the hunters. Then when some soldiers had killed what they wanted, sold ~~them~~ ^{them} to the natives of the Ogaden. The Ogaden natives again sold ~~them~~ ^{them} to the Afar and the Harrhan who inhabit the countries west of British territory.

Several times these reports reached me and I decided to find out if the above report was true. They came back reporting that the European Agents had gone away, but the reports which I had heard were also true.

Two years ago the Harrhan attacked the people who brought so many rifles from the Ogaden tribes. They had bought over one thousand of these rifles, and used them against the tribes who have no rifles for hunting animals. It was succeeded in confiscating the rifles from the Harrhan which didn't take place in our imagination, not having seen the rifles which the King of Ogaden

is willing, I am in a position to prove to you that the rifles are the same which the Emperor sold him at Dire Dawa.

Lastly it was reported to me by an Abyssinian in the service of Mr Guignane, that they employ the same method for sending rifles to the Western frontier, and a certain Frenchman named Servigni, his agent, is selling these rifles at the price of fifty dollars each to the citizens of East Shangul and others.

Further I have to report that Mr Guignane did not pay the price of those rifles to the Emperor, and it seems that at present he is in Paris for the purpose of bringing another lot of rifles.

I hope that strong steps may be taken as soon as possible in the matter to prevent him from selling rifles to the natives or hunters, otherwise once the Islamic population in British territory is armed, we shall be in trouble, which will certainly entail a great amount of expenditure to His Majesty's Government.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) W. G. Evans

Comptroller