

13842

Commissioner

Embassy

April 4th 1904

Sir,

With reference to Foreign Office despatch No. 68 of February 15th relating to a report on the circumstances attending the death of Mr. W. G. ... I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a copy of a report ... Collector of ... in January last.

From this report you will perceive that three Europeans, Messrs. ... and Thomas Mac ... had been ... the Tana ... this report reached me, I could ... made into the matter, but all ... that the three men in question ... were travelling in one of the most ... of the Protectorate; they were almost, if not quite, devoid

Secretary of State
for the Colonies,
Downing Street,
London.

13842
Recd 26 APR

Commissioner's Office,

248

Mombasa,

April 4th 1905.

Sir,

With reference to Foreign Office despatch No. 82 of February 18th calling for a report on the circumstances attending the death of Mr. W.G. Gray, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a report addressed by the Collector of Kitui to the Sub-Commissioner of the Ukamba Province in January last.

This report you will perceive that it was ascertained that three Europeans, Messrs. Thomas, Jacques, William Gunn Gray, and Thomas Mac Gregor (whose real name was Mc Lellan) had been poisoned by natives near the Tana River. When this rumour reached me, I caused a searching enquiry to be made into the matter; but all that has transpired tends to show that the three men in question died of fever. They were travelling in one of the most unhealthy districts of the Protectorate, they were almost, if not quite, devoid

Secretary's Principal Secretary of State
for the Colonies,
Downing Street,
London.

of the necessities of life; they ate food which their black followers refused to touch, and they slept on the ground without any protection against the inclemency of the weather. As they appeared to be on friendly terms with the natives, and as their property was not looted after their deaths, it is highly improbable that they were poisoned, especially as Mac Gregor (or Mc Leish) died some five or six days' journey from the place where his companions contracted their fatal illness.

With regard to the property of the three deceased, I have the honour to transmit herewith a memorandum by the Administration General from which it will be seen that the total value of their estate was less than one hundred pounds.

A copy of Mr. Skene's report is being sent to Mr. William Jacques of 33, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin, the brother of the late Thomas Jacques; and Mr. William Mc Leish, of Nairobi Jail, has been informed of the death of his brother, Mr. Thomas Mac Gregor Mc Leish (alias Mac Gregor).

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

J. Stewart

SHIP D. STEWART

No. 200

Reference to O. 1801 Act No. 11
of 1901, 1511.

Inchamps

Received

1904

Bank of New York

and Wells

Branch in London

at London

£

KITUI,
30th January 1906.

250

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following report concerning the alleged poisoning of Messrs. Grey and Jacques.

During the first week of November a Swahili and several Wakamba porters arrived at this station and stated that they had been in the employ of Messrs. Grey and Jacques and had just died in the Mbea country, on the Kenya side of the Tana river. The Swahili said he had been a West European and that they had been taken ill on the plain five days march further north towards the Mbea country. I asked that the deceased had proceeded across the Tana in a westerly direction to collect and trade in ivory for the purpose of buying ivory.

They had exchanged some of their cattle, were on friendly terms with the natives, and were on the whole doing fairly well on this trading trip. After some time however their provisions gave out, their misfortunes began. They had sheep and goats with them but would not slaughter any and lived on game, honey, mushrooms and herbs, which the cook said they themselves gathered in the bush. They had no tents or beds, but slept on the ground rolled in their blankets in the open. Then one of them was taken ill with fever and vomiting and a few days afterwards another developed the same symptoms. They were so ill that they were unable to walk and decided to return to the Tana carrying in their blankets

slung

...the cook that they thought the
 ...the money they had bought
 ...that in his opinion he
 ...as they were on
 good terms with the natives. He said he thought their
 illness was due to the queer food they ate which he said
 even he himself would not have eaten. He and the porters
 received their rations of beans which the white men would
 not eat. The sick men then became delirious with moments
 of lucidity, and were carried by their porters to the
 Tana. They arrived in the Weso country where Mr. Jacques died
 on the day of their arrival, about the middle of October.
 When Mr. Grey became aware of the death of his companion
 he managed to scribble a note in pencil to Mr. MacGregor, who
 he had the job, as to his way from Nairobi to join
 ...and that he should pass through Wasoni. He instructed
 the cook to send all Mr. Jacques and his own effects to
 Mr. MacGregor, should he be able to find him. On the day follow-
 ing that of which the death of Mr. Jacques took place,
 Mr. Grey, his head swimming with blood, the cool turned both
 sides of the lake and heaped stones on the graves. He
 and the porters then crossed the Tana and proceeded to
 Wasoni where he met Mr. MacGregor to whom he handed the ivory,
 cattle, trade goods and other possessions. The above is
 the story of the cook and the Wakamba porters.

The day following on which the cook arrived at Kitui,
 ...at this station and accused the
 ...and silver watch
 ...and
 ...admitted that the evidence showed that
 ...at Nairobi, while the
 ...that the latter had
 neither

without result, and with a view to the same, I therefore released
 the book after having searched it without result.

Mr. McGregor further stated that he was in partner-
 ship with both the deceased and supported this statement
 by the production of account books containing accounts in
 their joint names. He stated that he was proceeding to
 Nairobi with the property and effects of the deceased, and
 was going to claim his share of the partnership as soon as
 it could be wound up. I therefore allowed Mr. McGregor
 to take the effects of the deceased to Nairobi, without
 seeing taking any direct action in the matter, as both
 deaths had taken place in the Kenya Province, outside my
 jurisdiction.

The next I heard of Mr. McGregor was that he had returned
 to Masobi, in Uja district, and had died there on December
 21st. Mr. Riley, Assistant Collector, happened at the time to
 be near his camp and proceeded there the next day and
 buried the body. He took an inventory of all the property
 of the deceased and despatched it to this Station where it has
 since been held, with a view to the instructions of
 the Administrator General, a part being sold locally and
 the remainder despatched to Mombasa. I questioned his
 servants as to the cause of his death and they said he
 suffered from fever and severe vomiting and that he had
 eaten nothing for several days. Among his effects I
 found a letter written by him, evidently a few days before
 his death, stating that he had been poisoned by the
 natives. I therefore required of his servants that

they should inform me of the names of the natives. I was informed that
 the natives who had not been near his camp. He used to send his Masaki servant
 to do the trading with the natives. Amongst his effects

... and ... except a ... of tea, ...
 ... in a

I have quoted the circumstances which attended the
 death of Mr. MacGregor, who was also said to have been poisoned
 by the natives. In order to show how readily the natives
 are accused are in all probability only
 the result of the carelessness of those who fell victims
 to their own imprudent habits of life. If the natives had

 they would have

Have

By - E. Jones,

... ..

13042

MEMORANDUM.

254

At present I have recovered no property belonging to Mr. Gray, separately, which is said to have been in partnership with Messrs. Jacques and McGregor. In the names of these latter I have recovered property of a total value of about £100/- I do not see any likelihood of more being recovered, and if there was in fact a partnership between the three, Mr. Gray's estate would only be entitled to a share in this £100/- though what his proportion would be I have no information to enable me to

d. J. P. Hamilton.

Enclo No. 1.

In Sir D. Stewart's Despatch

No. 200.

of April 4th, 1905.

Comms 5. 1. 19

12 May 1905

DRAFT.

Robert Gray
Camp College
Gatundu
Beit, (Anglican)

MINUTE.

- Mr. Brown, 8/5
- Mr. Read *ML/ep*
- Mr. Astor
- Mr. Cox
- Mr. Lucas
- Mr. Graham
- Sir H. Osmannay
- The Duke of Marlborough
- Mr. Lyfollon

Sir, I enclose
with reference to the
letter which was returned
by Mr. De Boppe to
the Hon. Thomas Lubbock,
2nd, Viscount
the Hon. Secretary of
State, Home Office, on
the 7th of February last,
I am directed by Mr.
De Boppe to forward to
you the
accompanying copy
of a report by the
Collector of the Customs
District of the East
Africa Protectorate
on the subject of the
death of the late Mr.

Review Report
sent (to 13842)
Jan. (via memo)
2 (57 13842)

William Gunn

Gray Gray

2. In forwarding this report, the Commissioner of the Protectorate informed W. G. Weston that he had caused a searching enquiry to be made with a view to the removal of the rumour that Mr. Gray and his companions had been poisoned, but that all that had been ascertained tended to show that they had died of fever. They were travelling in one of the most unhealthy districts of the Protectorate; they were

alone, if not quite devoid of the necessaries of life; they ate food ²⁵⁶ which their black followers refused to touch, and they slept on the ground without any protection from the inclemency of the weather. As they appeared to be so friendly to the natives and their property was not looted either after their death, or Donald Stewart thought it highly improbable that they were poisoned, especially as Mr. G. Gray (whose real name was W. Heath) had some five or six

day's journey from
the place where his
companion contracted
their fatal illness.

3. I am also to receive
a copy of a memorandum
by the Administrator
General of the Protectorate
relative to the effects of
the decease.

In

W. A.