

The British Government, consequently, adhering to the Italian proposals, would welcome the support of Italy, provided that it can be accepted without prejudice to those paramount hydraulic interests of Egypt and the Sudan which the Italian Government themselves have recognised.

Your Excellency, therefore, on instructions from your Government, requests the support and assistance of the Italian Government with the Abyssinian Government in order to obtain from the latter a concession to construct a barrage on Lake Tsana, together with the right to construct and maintain a motor road for the passage of stores, personnel, etc., from the frontier of the Sudan to the barrage.

Your Excellency declares to me that His Britannic Majesty's Government will in return support the Italian Government in obtaining from the Abyssinian Government the concession to construct and operate a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland, it being understood that such railway, together with all the necessary works for its construction and operation, shall have free transit across the motor road mentioned above.

With this object, your Excellency adds, the necessary and identic instructions should be sent to the British and Italian representatives in Abyssinia to concert for common action with the Abyssinian Government, in order to obtain that the concessions desired by the British and Italian Governments regarding Lake Tsana and the construction of a railway to connect Eritrea with Italian Somaliland should be granted contemporaneously. It remains understood that, in the event of one of the two Governments securing the concession sought for while the other Government failed to do so, the Government which had obtained satisfaction would not relax their best endeavours to secure a corresponding satisfaction for the other Government concerned.

Your Excellency then states that, in the event of His Majesty's Government, with the effective support of the Italian Government, obtaining from the Abyssinian Government the concession asked for at Lake Tsana, the British Government will also recognise the exclusive character of Italian economic influence in the west of Abyssinia and in the whole of the territory crossed by the above-mentioned railway. The British Government will further support with the Ethiopian Government all Italian requests for economic concessions in the above-mentioned zone. Such recognition and undertaking are, however, subject to the proviso that the Italian Government, on their side, recognising the prior hydraulic rights of Egypt and the Sudan, will engage not to construct on the headwaters of the Blue Nile and the White Nile and their tributaries and affluents any work which might sensibly modify their flow into the main river.

Your Excellency finally states that it remains understood that the above proviso would not preclude a reasonable use of the waters in question by the inhabitants of the region, even to the extent of constructing dams for hydro-electric power or small reservoirs in minor affluents for storing water for domestic purposes, as well as for the cultivation of the food products necessary for their own subsistence.