

C 40583

E-1451-1

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AFRICA.

[January 24.]

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

[A 561/561/60]

No. 1.

Mr. C. Russell to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston.—(Received January 24, 1922.)

(No. 164.)

My Lord,

Adis Ababa, December 31, 1921.

I HAVE the honour to state that the agent referred to in my despatch No. 137 of the 1st October has returned here, and reports as follows :—

Mohammed-bin-Abdullah Hassan, accompanied by his wives, brothers, and about 100 Somalis armed with rifles, arrived at Goanneh, near Imi, on the Webi Shebeli, early in October 1920. A fort was built by them with a wall 6 feet high and 4 feet thick, with two entrances. They made it as strong as possible, and cleared a space in front of the fort. As soon as news of the Mullah's presence reached Fitaaurari Seyoum, who was in command of the Abyssinian garrison at Ginir, he sent one of his officers, Garazmatch Ayale, to find out who the invader was, and why he had entered Abyssinian territory. The Mullah received this messenger well. He said that he had been beaten in battle by the English, and had come to Abyssinia in search of protection. After two days Ayale returned to Ginir. He took with him as presents from the Mullah two rifles and a revolver for himself and two Lee-Netford rifles for the Fitaaurari. Before leaving he undertook to send provisions to the Mullah. Fitaaurari Seyoum reported the matter by telephone to Ras Taffari, who gave orders not to attack the Mullah, but to keep him under observation, and prevent his escape. The promised provisions were not given, and the Mullah sent one of his brothers and a follower, Abdi Sheikh, to ask the Fitaaurari for food. The latter, acting on the orders of the Central Government, threw these envoys into chains. Sickness and famine fell on the Mullah's camp. In December he died; his death was caused by bleeding and vomiting blood. He was buried in a hut at Goanneh. In accordance with Moslem custom, a small oval mound was erected over his grave. The spot is not regarded as holy, nor is it a place of pilgrimage.

Many of his followers died at the same time of sickness and hunger. Among the survivors were Abdi Sheikh, Ussuf Sheikh, Sultan and Jama. Subsequently they were raided by men of the Karanle tribe, who looted what little property remained to them. A hundred and seventy-six rifles were found in the fort. These were appropriated by Fitaaurari Seyoum. There are still a few of the Mullah's kin and followers in the district. They eke out a precarious livelihood by begging.

(Copy sent to Berbera.)

I have, &c.

CLAUD RUSSELL.

[7761 aa—1]

W.L. Mackenzie King Papers
Memoranda & Notes

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