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ADDITIONAL PAPERS

RELATING TO THE

OCCUPATION OF LAGOS.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
1862.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

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Additional Papers relating to the Occupation of Lagos.

No. 1.

Orders addressed to Rear-Admiral Sir B. Walker.

By the Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, &c.

HER Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs having, in a letter dated the 22nd instant, transmitted to us the copy of a despatch to Mr. Foote, Her Majesty's Consul at Lagos, in which are stated the reasons which have determined the British Government to take possession of the Island of Lagos, and having signified to us the Queen's commands that the senior naval officer on the West Coast of Africa should be instructed to co-operate with Mr. Foote in carrying into effect the views of Her Majesty's Government, we send you, for your information and guidance, copy of the above-mentioned letter* and of its inclosure, and also copy of a further letter* of the 24th instant from the Foreign Office, with extract of its inclosure, from which you will perceive that if the occupation of Lagos cannot be effected or maintained without resorting to force, it is not to be undertaken until further instructions from home, and that any permanent force to be employed on shore at Lagos must be of black troops, and not be furnished from any portion of the crews of Her Majesty's ships.

Given under our hands this 28th day of June, 1861.

(Signed)

CHARLES EDEN.
CHARLES FREDERICK.

To Sir Baldwin Walker, Bart, K.C.B.,
Rear-Admiral of the Blue; or

Senior Officer of Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels, Sierra Leone.

By command of their Lordships,

(Signed) C. PAGET.

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

Lord J. Russell to Consul Foote, June 22, 1861.

[See "Papers relating to the Occupation of Lagos," presented to Parliament, May 12, 1862, No. 4.]

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Lord J. Russell to Consul Foote.

(Extract.)

Foreign Office, June 24, 1861.

IF you should be of opinion that it would be necessary, in order to secure respect for the British flag, to have a permanent force stationed on shore, you will defer taking possession of the island until a detachment of black troops, which the War Department have been requested to furnish, can be sent to support your authority, as it would be inconvenient that any portion of the men on board Her Majesty's ships should be employed on shore for any length of time for this purpose.

No. 2.

Commodore Edmonstone to Rear-Admiral Sir B. Walker.

Sir,

"Arrogant," off Cabenda, September 22, 1861.

I HAVE the honour to report, for your information (what, however, no doubt ere this has been communicated to Her Majesty's Government), that Lagos was formally and peaceably taken possession of, and transferred to us as a British dependency, on the 6th ultimo, in accordance with the Queen's commands as conveyed in their Lordships' instructions of the 28th June last.

* Merely a transmitting letter.

For the immediate details bearing upon this important transaction, I beg leave to refer you to an extract from Commander Bedingfeld's Report, a copy of which is annexed, where it will be seen how very materially this happy result has been obtained, not only from the coolness and good arrangements of Acting Governor Mc Coskry, but also from the energy and great ability shown by Commander Bedingfeld on the occasion, who, from his knowledge of African character, and being on the spot, was able to render such valuable assistance at the proper moment.

It is impossible, for obvious reasons, to estimate too highly the advantages gained to us nationally by the fact that Lagos was duly ceded, without force or violence, and I trust that the merits of the officer (Commander Bedingfeld), in aiding to settle this matter so satisfactorily, will not be overlooked by yourself and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

The "Prometheus," I am rejoiced to say, has apparently received no great damage in crossing the bar, and I hope she may get out without much sickness or difficulty. By the last accounts the crew were very healthy. In the meantime, until a sufficient force of black troops arrives to support the Government, she must remain within the bar, Commander Bedingfeld's presence being very much required at this moment.

I have only to state, in reference to such force, that I consider a substantial police indispensable under any circumstances.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. EDMONSTONE.

Inclosure in No. 2.

Extract from a Report by Commander Bedingfeld.

July 26. 1·45, anchored off Lagos, received our mails and a requisition from the Consul for my co-operation on shore, he having received most important despatches; also a letter from the Governor of the Gold Coast requesting a man-of-war might call occasionally; made signal to "Brune" to bring out pilot in the morning. 6·18, "Ranger" anchored and got her mails.

July 27. 7·30, "Brune" came out, bringing the pilot; they reported a good bar for going in, having had nothing less than fifteen feet at dead low water, as they crossed the bar coming out. 8·30, weighed under steam to go into the river. 8·45, grounded on the eastern spit, as mentioned in separate letter. 9·30, anchored off the Consulate at Lagos, "Brune" in company, and communicated with Her Majesty's Consul: "Ranger" left to cruize off Popoe, and watch "African."

July 29. Cleared holds to examine ship fore and aft, but could discover very little damage; making about nine inches of water in twenty-four hours. Went with Consul to have an interview with King Docemo, informed him that important despatches had arrived from England, and arranged a palaver on board the "Prometheus" on the 30th, at noon.

July 30. Palaver was held at 12·30, the Consul, Interpreter, and the King and Chiefs being present; explained to Docemo and his Chiefs that Her Majesty's Government had decided upon the permanent occupation of Lagos, allowing him a proper pension; requested Docemo to sign a Deed of Cession, giving him until Thursday to consider and talk it over with his Chiefs.

July 31. Docemo had a large meeting of his Chiefs during the day; inspected Her Majesty's ship "Brune;" directed Lieutenant-Commander Forrest to station and drill his men at the guns, which has never yet been done.

August 1. 1·30, proceeded with the Acting Consul and Interpreter to the King's house to receive his answer to the propositions made to him on the 30th. Docemo declined to sign any paper giving up his country, and barely treated Her Majesty's Consul and myself with respect; he expressed a doubt that we were empowered to make any such proposals, and wished to see a paper signed by all the head men in England. We advised Docemo to reconsider the matter before the arrival of the mail, and as there seemed to be considerable excitement in the town, I warned Docemo and his Chiefs I should hold them responsible if any disturbance took place.

August 2.—Sent Mr. Piper and leadsmen in Mr. McCoskry's steamer, as she was going over the bar, in order that they might sound in and out. At 12, held a meeting of all the Europeans and some native merchants at the Consulate, and informed them of the determination of Her Majesty's Government. The announcement was received with apparent satisfaction by all the Europeans, but it was not so evident with the Sierra Leone

people, many of whom have run themselves considerably in debt, and English law will no doubt be unpleasant to them.

August 3.—Steamer "Advance" returned with Mr. Piper; they had 15 feet coming over the bar. Docemo sent to the Consul that he wished to see him and the European merchants at a palaver without me. This the Acting Consul refused, and informed the King that we were acting in concert. The merchants all refused to go unless I was present.

August 4.—News arrived that the road to Abbeokuta was open for a short time. Docemo sent to ask all the merchants to assemble at his house to hear the Deed of Cession explained by the Acting Consul and myself before he signed.

August 5.—Erected a flag-staff at a convenient place outside the Consulate. 8:30, two of the merchants came off to inform me that great excitement prevailed about the King's quarter, and they heard it was intended to create a disturbance, when the lives of those present would not be safe. Some of the Chiefs were much opposed to the Treaty, as it would take out of their hands the bribes that it was customary for them to get before they would allow any natives to approach the King. They also had to be bribed before they would administer justice to natives complained of by the white merchants. All this would of course be stopped under English law, and, therefore, they would try their utmost to thwart the cession.

Under these circumstances, I sent a messenger to the King, to inform him that I should bring a guard of Marines to keep order, and that I had made arrangements to act promptly if any disturbance took place. At 12 sent the Marines in the paddle-box boat round to the King's house, sending the Interpreter with them to inform the people that they were there to keep order. I then went in the first cutter, with some of the merchants and the Acting Consul.

On arriving at the King's house the Marines were landed (the boats anchoring off the beach), and drawn up outside the house, so that they could not in any way interfere with the palaver, but were near enough, if wanted. I informed the King why I had brought them. He said that none of his Chiefs would dare to molest us, but agreed with me that I was justified in taking proper precautions.

There was an immense concourse of people, and the palaver-house quite full. The Treaty was read over, and explained in Portuguese and in the country language. The King wished for two additional clauses, which were agreed to. He then promised to sign at the Consulate on the morrow, and that he would be present with his Chiefs at the ceremony of hoisting the flag, and taking formal possession. All passed off in an orderly, quiet way, the King attending us to the beach on leaving.

Early on the 6th sent circulars to the European and some of the native merchants, to invite them to the ceremony of taking possession. A messenger arrived in the morning, to say the King had altered his mind, and would not sign; but an hour later he was persuaded to do so, and arrived with all his Chiefs at 2 P.M. He was met at the gate of the Consulate by Mr. McCoskry and myself and a guard of honour, an immense number of people having collected. After signing he was escorted by us to the flag-staff, all his Chiefs and attendants being present. The Proclamation having been read, the Union was hoisted under a salute from the "Prometheus" of twenty-one guns, marines presenting arms; the National Anthem was sung by about 300 native children, headed by the Rev. Messrs. Maser, Macauley, and Sharp.

We then returned to the Consulate, where the King partook of refreshment, but declined being present at the dinner on board the "Prometheus," as he could not sit so long. Simultaneously with the flag being hoisted at the town another was hoisted at the beach. About forty-four merchants sat down to dinner on the quarter-deck of the "Prometheus." After the usual loyal toasts, numerous speeches were made by the foreign merchants, and other expressions of their satisfaction at the measures of Her Majesty's Government. I have the honour to annex copies of the Treaty and Proclamation. On the following day all was quiet.

In concluding this letter of proceedings, I regret to have to inform you that the Slave Trade is reviving again, with new vigour, in the Bights. I annex a letter from the Commandant at Accra, addressed to Lieutenant-Commander Bennett. The shipment mentioned is no doubt that of the "*African*," and the two vessels the other two Americans that were spoken by the barque "*Nova Elizé*." It is impossible to do anything to check this as long as there is no American man-of-war here, and I trust they will soon send one off the Volta.

The "*Ranger*" is at present off Jackin, where I heard of slaves collecting, but as soon as she arrives (about the 20th) I will send her at once to Ascension. The "*Bloodhound*" must go with the mails, &c., to Fernando Po, as she has only two days' coal left.

I shall not be able to leave this until troops arrive, so that we shall be badly off for cruizers. However, the occupation of Lagos, with a proper force on the Lagoon, will do more to suppress the Slave Trade than all the ships we could muster along the coast. The news has already spread up the country, and most exaggerated accounts as to the size of this ship, and the number of her men and guns. There is every reason to believe, however, that had we not acted promptly on this occasion, we should have had a formidable opposition from the Chiefs. Now the thing is accomplished they are more inclined to take it quietly, but will want watching closely.

Several of the natives left the place, and took their property with them, owing to the Chiefs' threats that they would fight sooner than give in; but all are now returning, and, with the exception of an occasional fire in the town (supposed by some of the residents to be the work of an incendiary, with the hope of the fire spreading to the houses of the whites, in which supposition I do not quite agree), all is quiet.

LAGOS.

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