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AFRICA. No. 1 (1897).

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INSTRUCTIONS TO MR. HARDINGE

RESPECTING THE

ABOLITION OF THE LEGAL STATUS OF  
SLAVERY

IN THE

ISLANDS OF ZANZIBAR AND  
PEMBA.

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*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.  
April 1897.*

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## Instructions to Mr. Hardinge respecting the Abolition of the Legal Status of Slavery in the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba.

No. 1.

*The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. A. Hardinge.*

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 10, 1897.*

THE frequent communications that have passed between Her Majesty's Government and yourself during your recent visit to this country have enabled the Government to arrive at a decision as to the main steps to be taken by them in fulfilment of the pledges which they have given in Parliament for the abolition of the legal status of slavery in the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba.

Preliminary instructions have already been conveyed to you as to the general outlines of the plan to be carried into execution. But there remain, on the one hand, a number of important points of principle upon which you will expect to receive a more detailed expression of the views entertained by Her Majesty's Government; on the other, there are also a number of topics upon which, after consultation with the Sultan and his Ministers, you will be able to supply further information and advice. It seems desirable therefore that I should place on record a full statement both of the general grounds of action adopted by Her Majesty's Government, and also of their views upon the particular subjects referred to.

In deciding that the time has arrived when the Sultan shall be recommended to abolish the legal status of slavery in the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, Her Majesty's Government have been influenced by the consideration that this is the logical sequel to the various steps which have been taken, under similar advice, by his predecessors during a period of more than twenty years.

In 1873 Sultan Barghash engaged by Treaty to suppress the sea-borne traffic of slaves, and to close all public markets for imported slaves.

In 1876 he prohibited by Proclamation the fitting out and dispatch of slave-caravans from the interior; and decreed that slaves so arriving at the coast should be confiscated; and that slaves should no longer be moved by land along the coast, any so found being confiscated, and their owners punished.

In 1889 Sultan Khalifa concluded an Agreement with the British Consul-General, to the effect that all slaves who should be brought into his dominions after the 1st November, 1889, and all children born in his dominions after the 1st January, 1890, should be free; and the former of these provisions was embodied in a Proclamation.

In 1890 Sultan Ali prohibited by Proclamation all exchange, sale, or purchase of slaves, and made provisions limiting the rights of inheritance and ownership.

These Decrees indicate a progressive advance in the direction of emancipation, as carried out by successive Sultans, under the advice of the British Government. The present Ruler, who, on his elevation to the Throne, accepted the Decrees of his predecessors, and bound himself especially to follow the advice of Her Majesty's Government in matters relating to slavery, will scarcely fail to recognize the expediency of signaling his reign by a continuance of the same humane and hitherto successful policy.

The best known case in which the abolition of the legal status of slavery has hitherto been enacted under the auspices of the British Government, and which has furnished an example for similar measures in other British Protectorates or Dominions, is the Indian Act of 1843. The first provision of that Act is inapplicable to the situation in Zanzibar. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th clauses run as follows:—

“2. And it is hereby declared and enacted that no rights arising out of an alleged property in the person and service of another as a slave shall be enforced by any Civil or Criminal Court or Magistrate within the territories of the East India Company.

“3. And it is hereby declared and enacted that no person who may have acquired property by his own industry, or by the exercise of any art, calling, or profession, or by inheritance, assignment, gift, or bequest, shall be dispossessed of such property, or

prevented from taking possession thereof, on the ground that such person, or that the person from whom the property may have been derived, was a slave.

“4. And it is hereby enacted that any Act, which would be a penal offence if done to a free man, shall be equally an offence if done to any person on the pretext of his being in a condition of slavery.”

It may not be necessary that the exact text of these provisions should be verbally reproduced at Zanzibar, so long as the desired object is clearly provided for by the terms of the proposed Decree, viz., that on and after the date at which it is to come into operation, no Court shall recognize any claim to the service of any person on the ground of the latter's alleged servile status. This must be the substance of the Decree, the issue of which at the earliest possible date you will recommend to the Sultan.

Her Majesty's Government are fully prepared to recognize the fact that in tendering such advice to the Sultan they are bound, as the Protecting Power, to regard the legitimate interests of his subjects; and that, while resolutely pursuing the object which they have in view, they should take such steps as experience and foresight may suggest to secure the peaceful execution of the Decree, the protection of lawful rights, and the avoidance of social or economic disturbance among the inhabitants of the islands. They have given very careful attention to the considerations that have been laid before them, by yourself and other officers in their service, as well as by independent authorities, and by important Associations who have greatly interested themselves in slavery problems, and the following are the conclusions to which they have been led by an examination of all the circumstances of the case.

The conditions of slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba differ materially from those which have prevailed in any other of the States or Protectorates in which the legal status has, either by the direct action or by the influence of the British Government, hitherto been terminated. The conclusions, therefore, which may be, and frequently have been, deduced from these cases, must not be too hurriedly accepted as furnishing us with guidance in the present instance, resting, as they do, for the most part, upon a supposed analogy which closer examination will show not to exist.

In the first place, the numbers affected in ratio to the whole population are, in the case of Zanzibar and Pemba, far greater than in any previous experiment; the total of slaves in the islands being estimated by the best qualified judges as two-thirds of an entire population of 210,000. No proportion comparable to this was affected in British India in 1843, where it must be remembered that the Act did not apply to any one of the Protected States, but only to the territories under the direct government of the Company. On the Gold Coast, and in the Malay States, which have frequently been cited as parallel instances, the total number of slaves affected was in each case only a few thousands, and those of an entirely different class; while in the case of Cyprus, which is also frequently quoted, the abolition was merely formal, and was intended to give legal validity to the termination of a system already dead, since it appeared that slavery neither existed, nor had existed, in the island within the memory of the oldest living inhabitant.

Secondly, there is an even wider difference in the nature and character of the system of slavery itself. Slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba is not in the main, as it was in India and on the Gold Coast, domestic slavery, nor as it was in some parts of India and in the Malay States, bond or debt slavery. It is, on the contrary, for the most part prædial or agricultural slavery, the great majority of the slaves being engaged not merely in agriculture, but in a particular form of agriculture, viz., the cultivation of cloves.

Thirdly—and this also is a condition not elsewhere existent—upon this industry depend not merely the subsistence of the slaves and the livelihood of their employers, but the solvency of the State. It cannot be too carefully borne in mind that just as the clove crop in Zanzibar has hitherto depended upon slave labour, so also the revenues of Zanzibar depend in the main upon the clove crop, and that a blow struck at the one may react with disastrous consequences upon the other.

It may also be remarked as a fourth, and not less material point of difference, that whereas in previous cases of abolition this country has provided, or has had exclusive control of, the executive and judicial machinery required to insure, without possibility of interference, the execution of the change, we are dealing, in the case of Zanzibar, with a State in which the Mahomedan law is the municipal and secular as well as the religious law of the country, and in which the judiciary, to whom the application of the Decree will be confided, is supplied not by the Protecting Power, but from the ranks of the native Administration.

For these reasons it appears to Her Majesty's Government that too much reliance

should not be placed upon plausible but erroneous analogies, and that the case of Zanzibar and Pemba must be decided with reference to conditions peculiar to itself, and upon its own merits.

Her Majesty's Government have been struck by the conflicting views which have been placed before them as to the probable or possible consequences of abolition. On the one hand, it has been strongly urged that should abolition be decreed suddenly and without accompanying precautions, the majority of the slaves, naturally improvident and averse to labour, would desert the plantations, and would either drift into the towns, there to pick up a precarious subsistence until they lapsed into beggary, or would migrate with their employers to Arabia or to parts of the African mainland where, under another flag, the servile relationship could be resumed; that, in consequence of this movement, there might even be disturbance of public order, and outbreaks of violence or excess; that the plantation owners, already heavily burdened by debts to Indian money-lenders, would be reduced to bankruptcy; that trade would be paralysed; and that industrial and economic ruin would threaten the State. It has also been pointed out that if the proposed abolition were to extend to the women of the harem and to the connubial system upon which the Arab family is founded, an opposition would be aroused that would enlist upon its side the stubbornest and most cherished convictions of the Arab nature.

Conversely, it is alleged that many, at any rate, of these dangers have been greatly exaggerated, that when abolition has elsewhere been decreed (though under admittedly different conditions) no such results occurred, and that we must hope for the best.

Upon one point Her Majesty's Government entertain no doubt whatever, viz., as to the inexpediency and injustice of interfering with the family relations of the people.

So far from these being attended by any hardship, or being made the cause of complaint, it appears that they are acceptable to every class of the population, the concubines who bear children enjoying a position scarcely inferior to that of a wife, and the children of such unions being regarded as legitimate.

You should therefore assure the Sultan, and invite him to repeat the assurance to his subjects, that no interference is contemplated with the family rights, to which so much value is attached by them.

Upon the other matters to which reference has been made Her Majesty's Government do not feel called upon to pronounce what could only be a speculative and conjectural judgment. They cannot fail, however, to be impressed by the fact that the less sanguine forecast is that which proceeds, with but few dissentient voices, from those authorities, whether officials, missionaries, or merchants, whose local experience entitles their opinion to the greatest weight, and that in the few cases where, either upon the islands or on the mainland, slaves have suddenly been emancipated in any numbers, or an attempt has been made to substitute free for slave labour, the results have not been altogether encouraging. When a large number of slaves were freed by the British East Africa Company at Magareni, they are reported to have looted the *shambas* and committed many excesses. It is as yet too early to pronounce definitely on the permanent success of the attempts to obtain free labour for work on the Uganda Railway; but it is known that when Sir Lloyd Mathews endeavoured both in Zanzibar and in Pemba to work plantations upon the free-labour system, the bulk of the freed slaves to whom he offered a wage and land, after a short experience, deserted and declined to work. Moreover, in the last resort, Her Majesty's Government cannot divest themselves of the responsibility for the execution, free so far as possible from injustice or danger either to the individual or to the State, of a change which they recognize as being imposed upon the Zanzibar Government by the force of public opinion in this country, and by the direct counsels of the British Government.

These being the probabilities of the case, Her Majesty's Government have felt it their duty carefully to examine the various suggestions that have been placed before them for obviating the evils which it is thought in some quarters may arise. Undoubtedly the principal of these evils, and the fountain-head of any subsequent mischief, would be the disorganization of the labour market in Zanzibar or Pemba, arising from any wide-spread abandonment of work upon the plantations by the freed slaves. Such a movement would not improbably be attended by consequences injurious to the public credit, as well as to the social welfare of the Sultan's dominions. It would seem, therefore, to be a principle of general acceptance that some machinery should be devised by which a too abrupt revolution should be avoided, and by which the continuance of an adequate supply of labour under the new conditions should as far as possible be guaranteed.

With this object in view, it has been suggested in some quarters that a system of State control over the labour of the freed slaves should be enacted, and that for a short term of years the latter should be compelled to work under contract and in receipt of wages, either for their former masters or for the State. Precedents for the successful application of this system have been pointed to in the case of foreign countries, as well as in Zanzibar itself, where the slaves of British Indians were tentatively freed in 1860 by the British Consul, but were compelled to work under specified conditions for their former owners. Her Majesty's Government have closely scrutinized these proposals, and have arrived at the decision that they cannot in this case recommend them to the Sultan of Zanzibar. The experience of the so-called apprentice system in the West Indian Colonies of Great Britain between the years 1834 and 1838—though the two cases cannot be claimed as parallel either in principle or in application—was not such as to prepossess public opinion in this country in favour of any such intermediate stage between slavery and freedom; while the existence of a semi-servile class might be thought to impede the creation of that system of free labour which it is universally hoped may ultimately replace the prædial servitude at present prevailing upon the islands. A Government monopoly of the labour supply would appear also to be a condition not devoid of economic danger; while in the last resort there would be an element of contradiction inseparable from a situation in which the Zanzibar Government, while abolishing the legal status of slavery, should itself become, though for a limited time only and under materially different conditions, the official slave-owner of the islands. For these reasons it has been decided not to submit any such proposal to the Sultan.

There are, however, a number of precautionary measures, which, either in whole or in part, may, with probable advantage, be recommended to the Zanzibar Government, and upon the choice of which you should consult the Sultan and his experienced advisers. To check the sudden and uncontrolled desertion of large numbers of slaves from the plantations, and to anticipate any danger to public order, it may be thought advisable to increase the native police force at the disposal of the Government. To secure the continuance of labour upon the estates, and to prevent the ruin of the Arab owners, it may be found desirable to adopt measures by which runaways shall be prohibited from leaving the islands or from abandoning their families and occupations. A hut tax and the payment of a small rent for the plot of land occupied by the freed slave are suggestions that have also been authoritatively recommended. It may even be found that during the gathering of the clove crop special arrangements may have to be devised to prevent the disorganisation of that which is the main source of wealth and revenue to the islands. These are matters upon which Her Majesty's Government cannot claim to pronounce a definitive judgment, and which they would prefer to leave to the greatly superior knowledge of the Sultan's advisers upon the spot. Speaking generally, it is their opinion that it would be desirable, so far as possible, to refrain from experimental legislation, and to wait until the experience has been acquired, upon which such legislation, in order to be effective, should properly be based.

In one respect, however, immediate action should be taken. Whether free labour, in the place of slave labour, will, as is generally contended, be a plant of slow and reluctant growth, or whether, as is to be hoped, it may at an early date take root in the islands, and be simultaneously assisted by a voluntary supply from the mainland, it would seem to be desirable to foster any agencies by which the risks of the intervening period may be anticipated or abridged. Hitherto the Indian Government have not been enabled, by the terms of the existing Emigration Acts, to sanction the recruitment of Indian coolie labour for the plantations of Zanzibar. You should at once resume your correspondence with them, and should inquire whether, upon the personal guarantee of Her Majesty's Representative at Zanzibar, that the labourers shall receive fair treatment and wages, or upon conditions as to employment and supervision to be mutually agreed upon, it may be possible for them, as soon as the prevailing epidemic of plague in India has passed away, to sanction the emigration of coolies from Bombay to Zanzibar, where their presence may help to avert an economic crisis, and may successfully inaugurate the voluntary system.

It is the desire of Her Majesty's Government, in fulfilment of their Parliamentary pledges, that the Decree which the Sultan is to be invited to issue should not be delayed; and the termination of the fast of Ramadan, when public business is recommenced, would appear to them to offer a suitable moment for its promulgation. As a short interval will probably be required for the effective initiation of the preliminary measures which have been sketched, the Decree should only become operative after the lapse of a brief period from the date of its enactment. It is thought that, for this purpose, three

months will be sufficient, and, accordingly, it is recommended that the Decree should be put into final execution at the end of that time.

There remains a further question to which Her Majesty's Government have given anxious thought, and upon which they have not arrived at a conclusion without attaching due weight to the arguments that have been advanced on either side. In pursuance of a principle which I have already laid down, viz., that the lawful rights of the owners of slaves shall be protected, if they suffer owing to the application to them of regulations imposed by the action of the British Government, and injuriously affecting their lawful property, Her Majesty's Government have decided, in concurrence with what is understood to be the strong opinion of the Zanzibar Government, that slave-owners who can prove to the satisfaction of the Courts legal tenure of any slaves under the terms of Seyyid Ali's Decree of August 1890, and damage resulting from abolition, shall be entitled to receive compensation for such slaves. The terms of the 2nd clause of that Decree (by which all previous Decrees against slavery and the slave trade were confirmed, and which went on to prohibit the sale or exchange of slaves, and all inheritance of slaves except by the children of the deceased owner) were as follows:—

“We declare that, subject to the conditions stated below, all slaves lawfully possessed on this date by our subjects shall remain with their owners as at present. Their status shall be unchanged.”

This Decree was issued under the advice of Sir C. Euan-Smith, then Her Majesty's Representative at Zanzibar, on the 1st August, 1890, subsequent to the acquisition by Great Britain of the Protectorate of Zanzibar on the 14th June, but prior to the formal notification of the Protectorate on the 4th November of the same year.

It seems to Her Majesty's Government undeniable that under this clause a guarantee was given to the owners of certain slaves of the uninterrupted possession of their lawful property. It seems to them impossible to apply to the detriment or loss of the slave-owner, as has repeatedly been done, the remaining provisions of the Decree, and yet to deny to him the protection of this clause, which was introduced in order to secure his voluntary acquiescence in the remainder. It seems to them impossible, with any show of reason, to argue that while the disabling clauses of the Decree are to remain in perpetual operation, the enabling clause was only intended to remain effective until rescinded by a later Decree. No later Decree can cancel the rights which were publicly guaranteed by the Sovereign of the State, under the authority and sanction of the British Government; and no change or growth of public opinion in Great Britain can justify the repudiation of a pledge which was given with the knowledge and at the instance of the British Representative.

Such is the view of the case that commended itself to the late, as it also does to the present, Government. In a despatch addressed to you on the 5th May, 1894,\* by the Earl of Kimberley, occurred the following words:—

“It will be your duty to recommend any further measures which may seem to you feasible for facilitating the total abolition of slavery without injustice to the Mahomedan owners.”

In repeating to you this instruction, Her Majesty's Government signify their acceptance of it as a pledge of the attitude in abolishing the legal status of slavery, which the British Government have continuously been prepared to adopt.

It is not proposed that the rights created by the Decree of 1890 should be extended to a single person by whom they cannot be proved to be legally enjoyed. For no slave illegally held with the knowledge of his owner should compensation be given. The application of the principle will require to be jealously watched and carefully guarded against abuse. No owner will have a good claim to compensation unless he can show before the Tribunals, in the first place, that the loss of the slave and subsequent damage to himself, are due to the abolition of the legal status; and, secondly, that the slave so claimed for, was legally held at the date of such abolition under the various Decrees and Proclamations issued by successive Sultans. The principle of compensation is not directly affected by the controversy as to the number of slaves legally held, or the number of owners thereby affected. Computations as to the former vary between 7,000 and 70,000. Nor are there any data in existence upon which to arrive at a decision between the two extremes. There is no dispute, however, as to the fact that some thousands of slaves—although from the necessities of the case the number must be annually diminishing—are the lawful property of their owners, who, in holding them have committed no offence against their laws or their religion, and whose claims it is impossible, with proper regard to justice, to ignore.

\* “Africa No. 6 (1894),” No. 11.



You should, therefore, advise the Sultan in issuing his Decree to announce that he intends to adhere to the promise of his predecessors, and not to deprive any man of the slave to whom, under the Decree of 1890, he has a legal right, without due compensation. It would probably be sufficient for the purposes of the Decree if such a statement were couched in general terms. The amount given in compensation, which would probably vary in each case, and which should be determined by the extent of the damage inflicted upon the owner by the loss of his slave, is a matter upon which the local knowledge of the native Tribunals will enable them, but upon which Her Majesty's Government cannot undertake to pronounce. The system must be seen in operation before its efficacy or the reverse can be satisfactorily judged. It may be that the native Courts will prove inadequate to the task devolved upon them, and that steps may require to be taken to supplement or to reinforce their action. It would seem desirable in any case to lend to the Zanzibar Government the temporary services of one or more British officials of special knowledge and experience, who should attend the Courts and watch the conduct of cases; and you are authorized to make this offer to the Sultan, and to report to me your opinion as to the selection and employment of such persons.

For the reasons above-named, it is also impossible to predict the amount of money that may be required for compensation purposes, or the financial obligation that may in consequence be entailed upon the Zanzibar Government. Here, again, recourse must be had to experience for guidance. Her Majesty's Government are hopeful that the precautions which have been suggested may result in such a peaceful readjustment of the labour market, the emancipated slaves continuing in the majority of cases to work as free labourers, that recourse may not be at all widely had to the Law Courts, and that the claims for compensation may not be numerous, and may not amount to any considerable sum. Litigation should, as far as possible, be avoided, and means may be found in the majority of cases for a friendly composition. The Courts will probably find in the dictates of common sense, with a due regard to the equities of each individual case, superior guidance to any that might be derived from principles of fixed or universal application. Upon all these points Her Majesty's Government are not justified, without further information, in expressing any confident opinion. But they recognize that, should the Zanzibar Government find its revenues seriously imperilled by the strain that is placed upon them in consequence of steps which have been taken in deference to the initiative of the Protecting Power, legitimate grounds may exist, as was stated by the Earl of Kimberley in his despatch of the 27th November, 1894,\* for an appeal to Her Majesty's Government for financial aid. In such a case, however, Her Majesty's Government would require to be fully convinced that every possible means had been taken to verify the claims of those to whom compensation is awarded, and to obviate any possible collusion between owners and their slaves or the tribunal by which it is assessed, and to discourage a wholesale rush of slaves to escape from their present position in the mere expectation of living a life of idleness at the expense of the State.

In order to prevent the seizure of compensation money by the Indian money-lenders to whom the estates of the slave-owners are in the majority of cases so deeply mortgaged, it would appear to be advisable to enact that any sums paid over in compensation for legally held slaves, shall be, like the person of the slave under the existing law, unseizable for past debt.

While adopting and recommending to the Sultan these conclusions as to compensation, Her Majesty's Government have not failed to examine the considerations that are commonly advanced upon the opposite side. The majority of these appear to them to rest upon a misconception identical with that which has already been exposed. It is, for instance, commonly alleged that the legal status of slavery was abolished without compensation in the cases before mentioned, viz., in British India, in the Malay States, on the Gold Coast, and in Cyprus; and it is argued that there can therefore be no necessity for the grant of compensation in the case of Zanzibar. This argument will not bear examination, for on the one hand it cannot be shown that in any of these cases had a formal pledge been given to the slave-owner, with reference to legally held slaves, by the Sovereign of his country, with the consent of the Protecting Power—a circumstance which in itself differentiates the case of Zanzibar from all others, whether it be regarded in relation to other precedents or as a precedent in itself; whilst, independently of that fact, it can easily be demonstrated that, on the very ground selected by those who employ this argument, the alleged analogy does not in reality exist. In no case does it appear that the status of slavery has been abolished in a Mahomedan

\* "Africa, No. 6 (1895)," No. 12.

State where it is a part both of the civil and religious law) under a British Protectorate without compensation.

In India, as has already been pointed out, slavery in the Protected States never has been abolished. In Cyprus there were no slaves to be compensated for, because there were none to be freed. On the Gold Coast the form of slavery abolished was domestic servitude, as it had long prevailed, with no sanction but custom, among barbarous and heathen tribes, and as it continues to this day to exist over large parts of the African continent. In the Malay States, notably in Perak, where debt slavery was the prevalent form of servitude, compensation, instead of being refused, was offered to the slave-owner by the Government when the legal status was abolished in 1884, and the freed slaves, under a system of apprentice labour, worked out a portion of this debt. So far, therefore, from any precedent against compensation being derivable from the cases here quoted, it would appear that the argument from analogy leads to entirely different conclusions; and that Her Majesty's Government in deciding to authorize compensation in the case of Zanzibar, although that decision has been reached and is defended by them on independent grounds, have also been acting in accordance with the practice of their predecessors in bygone years.

These, then, are the points, briefly recapitulated, which should form the basis of the advice tendered by you to the Sultan.

1. A Decree should be issued at once, abolishing the legal status of slavery in the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba.
2. An assurance should be given in this Decree that no interference is contemplated with family life.
3. Her Majesty's Government do not recommend any form of apprentice labour.
4. Compensation should be awarded by the Zanzibar Government to such owners of slaves as can prove legal tenure of any of their slaves under clause 2 of the Decree of 1890, and damage resulting from abolition.
5. Compensation money should not be seizable for past debt.
6. Her Majesty's Government will lend the services of British officers to watch the cases and to prevent injustice.
7. A renewed attempt will be made to procure coolie labour from India.
8. The Zanzibar Government should immediately adopt, in consultation with you, such measures of a police or precautionary character as may prevent social or financial disorder, and secure the successful operation of the Decree.
9. Her Majesty's Government are hopeful that the change may be effected without risk and at no considerable cost. In the event, however, of a serious strain being placed upon the resources of the Zanzibar Government, they will be prepared to consider the question of financial aid.

It only remains for me to add that in indicating these measures for the consideration of the Sultan, of whose general assent you have already assured me, Her Majesty's Government have no wish to dictate the precise course which should be followed in each particular. Deference must of necessity be paid to the experience and opinions of His Highness and his advisers, whose great local knowledge will enable them to suggest methods of execution which it would be inopportune for Her Majesty's Government, who do not possess that advantage, to devise. That the legal status of slavery in the islands should cease henceforward to exist, and that the change should be effected without injustice to individuals, and at the same time without detriment to the public welfare, is the object which Her Majesty's Government have in view. They will await with interest your report of the steps which the Sultan and his Ministers may decide to take for carrying out these intentions.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 2.

*Mr. A. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 29.)*

(Telegraphic.)

*Zanzibar, March 29, 1897.*

SULTAN accepts the proposed Decrees. They will be issued in about a week. His Highness' idea is to send for the leading Arabs from the interior of the island and from Pemba, who can all be here in five days' time, and to explain the measures to them himself. I am inclined to think, after discussing the question with the Sultan and Sir L. Mathews, that almost immediate operations would be preferable to even a two or three months' delay.

INSTRUCTIONS to Mr. Hardinge respecting the  
Abolition of the Legal Status of Slavery in  
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*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Com-  
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