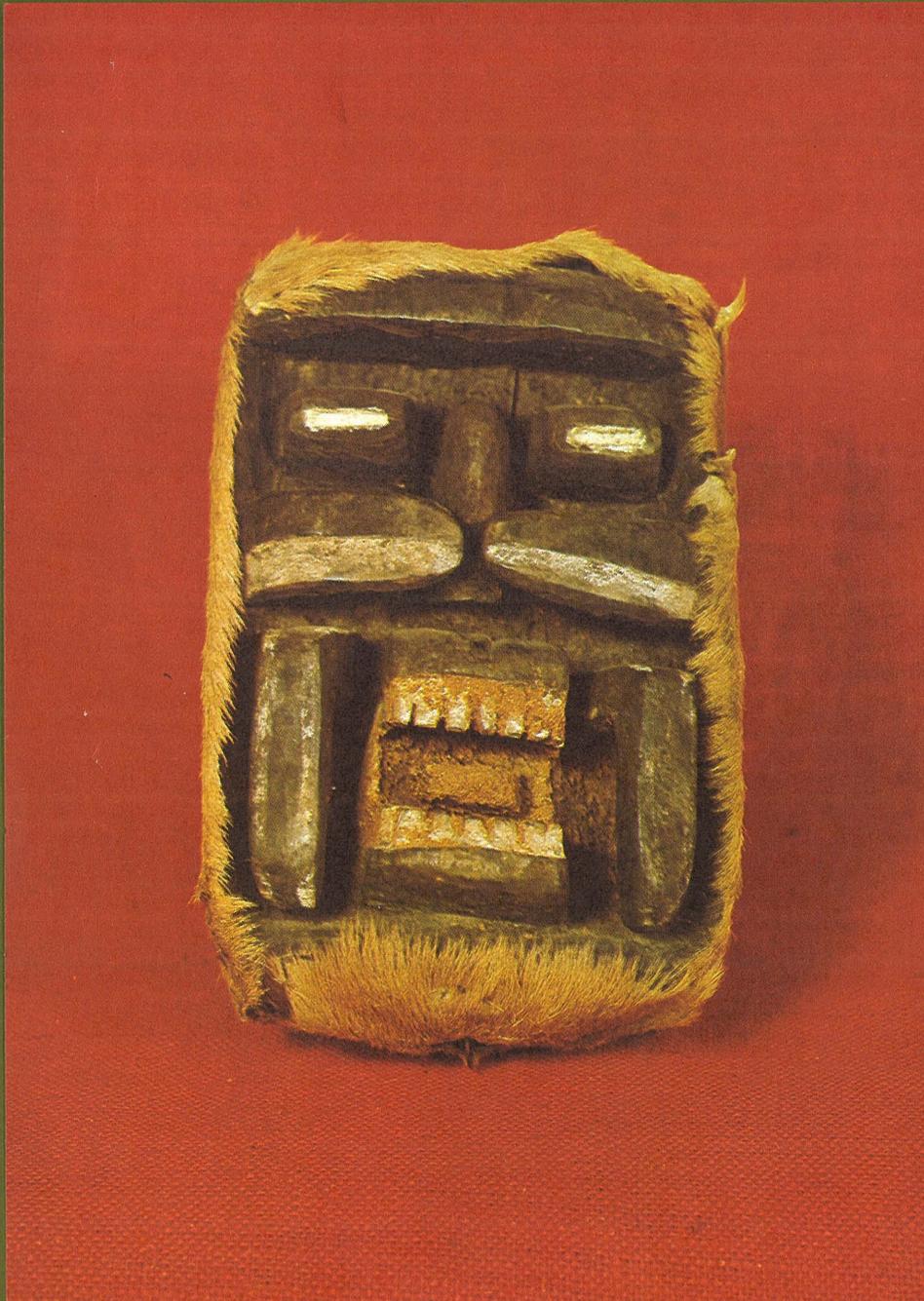


October 1972

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SELECTED FIRST DRAFT DESPATCHES OF
SIR FRANCIS FLEMING, Governor of Sierra Leone 1892-1894

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MUNGER AFRICANA LIBRARY NOTES

Three Dollars

Issue #15

October, 1972

SELECTED FIRST DRAFT DESPATCHES OF
SIR FRANCIS FLEMING
GOVERNOR OF SIERRA LEONE 1892-1894

Comment by
Kenneth Mills

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FRONT COVER: Dan-N'Guere mask. Wood, fur. N'Zerekore,
Guinea.

Sir Francis Fleming
K. C. M. G.



SELECTED FIRST DRAFT DESPATCHES OF
SIR FRANCIS FLEMING
GOVERNOR OF SIERRA LEONE 1892-1894

The last decade and a half of the nineteenth century marked in West Africa what Michael Crowder has called the "Period of Conquest and Occupation," a chronological ordering which is especially valid in the case of British West Africa. Faced with French colonial ambitions, as well as German and Portuguese competition, the British government in the years 1885-1900 initiated and carried out a large scale program of territorial expansion in the area. Nowhere was this more in evidence than in Sierra Leone. Prior to 1885, the colony had been limited in territory,¹ and while its influence may have extended into the hinterland, only a direct threat of French occupation, such as at Sherbro Island in 1861, could prompt London to allow the annexation of further territories. Even in such cases, British influence was frequently impotent; on Sherbro, the early British presence was maintained by "a police sergeant and the flag."²

The circumstance of Sierra Leone in early 1893 was both complicated and unstable. Although the British and French had in August of 1889 reached tentative agreement on the colony's boundaries, discord continued, marked by occasional³ actions such as the February, 1893, French incursion at Heremakono. Prompted by the 1889 agreement, as well as the need for the support of the tribes now officially in the British Sphere, the Colonial Government in 1890 deputed two traveling commissioners, T. J. Alldridge and G. H. Garrett, to seek

¹This time division is somewhat arbitrary. The northern borders of Sierra Leone were tentatively settled in the Anglo French Treaty of 1882, but the Treaty was not ratified by the French, and it remained for the 1889 Boundary Commission to make any lasting divisions. The Liberian frontier was settled by convention in 1884, ratified in 1886. The choice of 1885 devolves from the Berlin Conference of that year, and was made both due to the effects of this meeting on British policy and for the purpose of maintaining continuity with Crowder's West African chronology.

²M. Crowder, p. 152.

³For information on this and most other historical matters, the reader is referred to Fyfe, from which much of such material has been drawn.

out the hinterland chiefs¹ and sign with them treaties of friendship. Concurrently, in response to the need for more permanent representation of colonial interests in this area, the Sierra Leone Frontier Police was formed. Consisting of European officers and native troopers, the Frontiers had as their official function the performance of liaison between the chiefs and the government in Freetown. As territorial pressures increased, London became more convinced that a protectorate was necessary to secure the economic future of Sierra Leone, a now essential colony due to the unique West African qualifications of Freetown harbour as a port for British naval steamers. Thus did the question of domestic slavery become of prime importance, for the chiefs were firmly opposed to termination of this institution, an action which would be required in the new protectorate. Given also increased financial burdens due to London's desire to cut colonial expenses, the impending incorporation of Freetown, and the normal problems involved in the administration of a colony, it may be seen that the Sierra Leone Government had a great deal to occupy it.

It is to these problems, especially that of the treatment of the chiefs, that Sir Francis Fleming, K. C. M. G., addressed himself. A colonial servant since 1869, Sir Francis served as governor of Sierra Leone from May 1892 to early 1894, having previously served in both administrative and legal capacities in Mauritius, Jamaica, the Barbados, the Cape Colony, British Guiana, Ceylon, and Hong Kong. Not a physically vigorous man, Sir Francis, due both to ill health and the fascinations of a new wife, did not (with one exception) travel upcountry. Yet his oratorical abilities and social sophistication gained him the loyalties both of Freetown society and the chiefs. Fyfe has described Sir Francis and Lady Fleming as the "gracious pacific pair," a particularly apt characterization which may be extended to Fleming's governorship, for Sir Francis' disdain of methods of force and his belief in reconciliation were the cornerstones of his tenure.

Fleming was aware of the problem of French imperialism and fully advocated expansion of British influence to counteract this. "If we wish this colony and our other possessions on the West Coast to prosper," wrote the Governor in despatch 45,² "...we should, I venture to think, take such steps we must do all in our power to obtain

¹Fyfe (personal correspondence) prefers the appellation "king," which is a more correct term. This writer uses the more loosely defined "chief," to maintain continuity with the despatches.

²See page 8 for technical information concerning the despatches.

such an extent of jurisdiction over the countries around as will prevent other European powers from obtaining hereafter what it is comparatively easy for us to possess today." Where Sir Francis differed with the Colonial Office was as to the means for establishing the planned protectorate. London's plan was for a protectorate based on British law, established by treaty, and enforced by the Frontier Police. Fleming's plan, developed by J. C. Parkes on a suggestion from the Governor, consisted of enlarging the British Sphere through treaties, but with British interests represented by "political agents," Creole officials who would serve to gradually sway the chiefs to British law and custom.

Fleming had little faith in the Frontier Police; he felt they lacked the tact and erudition to both maintain the chiefs' friendship and adequately perform their responsibilities. Sir Francis outlined the duties of the Frontiers thus²: "It is the duty of the Police, while refraining from any unnecessary interference with the native institutions of the people or the Government of the Country in which they are located, to prevent dissensions within it, to give the best advice they are able when appealed to for it, and when any question of importance arises to submit it as soon as possible, to the nearest senior officer in order that it may be referred, if necessary, for the Governor to decide. They are to act with civility towards the Chiefs and natives and do all in their power... to gain the respect and confidence of those among whom they reside." Yet Fleming believed the Frontiers incapable of precisely these functions. He thus wanted to phase out the Frontiers, a mere three years after their formation, an idea London looked upon with little favor. When the Colonial Office learned that the political agents were to be Creoles, it turned down the Fleming-Parkes plan.

Fleming's largest problem was the handling of the chiefs and their cultural institutions. The position of Britain in Sierra Leone was still tenuous in 1893, and, for the purposes of both internal peace and external security, the chiefs' cooperation was imperative. Fleming respected the chiefs and their implicit power; he wrote in despatch 105 that "many among the native Chiefs in this country, though uncivilized they may be according to our ideas of civilization, are yet men of intelligence and common sense." While Fleming did not support the custom of domestic slavery, neither did he wish to

¹The reader is referred to despatch 47.

²Speech given by Sir Francis at Bandasumah, March 1893, the first draft of which was enclosed with the despatches and is presented in this paper.

forcefully end it by the imposition of British law. This was perhaps the major reason behind the Fleming-Parkes modified protectorate plan, for by using such a system, slavery could be eliminated without the outbreak of hostility. Concerning this, Fleming wrote in despatch 105, "the great thing to preserve peace among the native tribes, in so far as we are concerned, is to inspire them with confidence, to give them such advice as we are able, and to teach them, gradually and discreetly, what will eventually prove for their benefit as well as our own." Fleming's pacific nature was mirrored in his colonial policy, where he opposed all actions, by police and administrator alike, which would lead to strife and the use of force.

Another problem Fleming grappled with was that of the colony's finances. The Colonial Office, faced with increased pressures as a result of the Treasury's policy of colonial self-payment, sought to have Sierra Leone shoulder a larger part of the expense of running the colony. In line with this, the colony in 1893 assumed the payment of the Governor's salary (2500 pounds, including allowances), a situation which found Sir Francis split between two loyalties, that to the government which appointed him and that to the colony which paid his salary. On financial matters, Fleming generally supported Sierra Leone's position. Concerning the Colonial Office's suggestion that the colony assume the costs of the colonial steamer, which was used for trips to Liberia (where Fleming was British consul), Sir Francis wrote in despatch 120, "I am of opinion that the Imperial Government should not burden this colony with expenses which provide for these expenses which are totally unconnected with this colony and I can only say, that when the cost of the Governor's salary and Colonial Steamer are both paid by the colony I should feel very reluctant, however much I might consider a visit to Liberia desirable, to undertake it knowing while feeling that I was drawing money taking so much money from this colony unprovided for in the estimates." In despatch 84, concerning the 1893 Customs Estimates, the Governor explained his reticence at the colony's assuming a larger financial burden: "I trust the Collector's hopes that the Customs Revenues for the present year will amount to that estimated may be realized... but it is as yet too soon to form any definite opinion... events have happened, and may happen still, and although there may be nothing at the present moment to cause anxiety... it is impossible to say from day to day what circumstances may not arise to affect it." It is interesting that despite Fleming's position as a member of the Colonial Service, he nevertheless developed a loyalty towards the colony he governed to the extent that he was willing where such matters were concerned to lobby in the colony's favor, against the interests of the Colonial Service.

Sir Francis' major failing was his cautious nature, which in many

cases prevented him from taking publicly a firm stand on the issues facing him. The despatches contain many examples of this, both in changes to softer wordings and deletions of statements of opinion. In addition, the Governor frequently referred important decisions to the Colonial Office, not because he lacked opinions on the issues involved, but because he was wary of being caught between London and the colony. Perhaps the best example of this concerns an application of the Governor's confidential secretary for extra remuneration, on which Fleming wrote in despatch 116, "Your Lordship observes that I did not... offer a direct expression of my opinion on the matter which Your Lordship states was distinctly asked for... as the question... depended so much upon the circumstances connected with his attendance to Sir William Quayle-Jones... I should have felt very reluctant to express an opinion, contrary to that of Sir William who was personally acquainted with all the facts connected with the application made. I might have added, it is true, that I saw no reason to dissent from Sir William's conclusions but this did not strike me as necessary and I have to express my regret at not having complied with Your Lordship's request by the addition of these words." Thus, even on such a relatively mundane issue as this, would Sir Francis only at the behest of London express any opinion. This caution, limiting as it did his influence at the Colonial Office and in the colony, is the primary reason that Sir Francis' policies were never fully implemented in Sierra Leone.

The question naturally arises as to the efficacy of Governor Fleming's policies. Soon after assuming office, Sir Francis was faced with a general strike and possible riot over the reduction of barracks workers' wages. His actions, deputizing two hundred Creole citizens as special constables and later hiring the strike leaders into the Frontier Police, both ended the incident and showed a rare faith in the Freetown community which was heartily appreciated. Fleming's trip upcountry to Bendasumah in March, to address the largest gathering of native chiefs assembled up to that time for a West African Governor, gained the loyalty and respect of those he met simply because no punitive words were spoken, and the Governor conveyed to the chiefs his interest in their troubles. When in November an expedition against the Sofa empire, a hinterland nation fighting the French and raiding British territory, was mounted despite Parkes' and Fleming's opposition, it resulted in the European forces accidentally attacking each other at Waima, with a loss of sixteen lives. If we look beyond Sir Francis' term to that of his successor, Sir Frederic Cardew, we find that Cardew proclaimed in 1896, without the chiefs' consent, a protectorate based along the Colonial Office's lines and

including as a source of revenue a Hut Tax, a levy Sir Francis was skeptical of due to its inflammatory nature.¹ In attempting to collect the tax, the Frontier Police (having been expanded by Cardew) raided villages, confiscated property, and acted in a highly indiscreet and lawless manner.² These actions resulted in the Hut Tax War of 1898. While one cannot predict the course of action had Sir Francis' plans been followed, it is safe to say that Governor Fleming showed considerable insight both in handling problems facing him and in prognosticating ones that would arise.

If one were to sum up all these diverse elements, and those which will be further developed in the despatches, into a picture of Sir Francis Fleming, it would be a picture of a pacific, liberal, and compassionate man, one who believed in a diplomacy based on tact rather than force. It would be a picture of a man who held respect for his associates--European, Creole, and Native; one who believed more in the spirit than the letter of the law, and who was loyal both to the government he served and the colony he led. Foresighted in dealing with the problems of the colony, critically weakened by a caution which prevented a firm stand on these issues, Fleming represented the transition point between the old imperialism of

¹Despatch 104, concerning the Freetown Municipality Ordinance. Fleming wrote he was "personally more disposed towards an equitable system of rating than a tax on licenses, professions, and trades," but that he was "willing to submit to the opinions of those who have better opportunities... of knowing what the feelings of the people really are." Fleming refers to the views of Sir Samuel Lewis, a noted Creole barrister, who strongly opposed the tax. Sir Francis favored a Hut Tax on principle, but accepted its bad effects and wrote that he was "disposed to give the present Ordinance at all events a trial." It should be noted that the Ordinance dealt only with Freetown and not the entire protectorate; there is, however, no reason to suspect that Sir Francis' position would have changed radically had the tax applied to the whole colony.

²Crooks, Fleming's colonial secretary and a one-time member of Cardew's government, wrote in his treatise (p. 332) that "the lawless outrages and severities of the Frontier Police ... in collecting the Hut Tax materially contributed to bring about that angry discontent which... at last broke out in massacre and plunder."

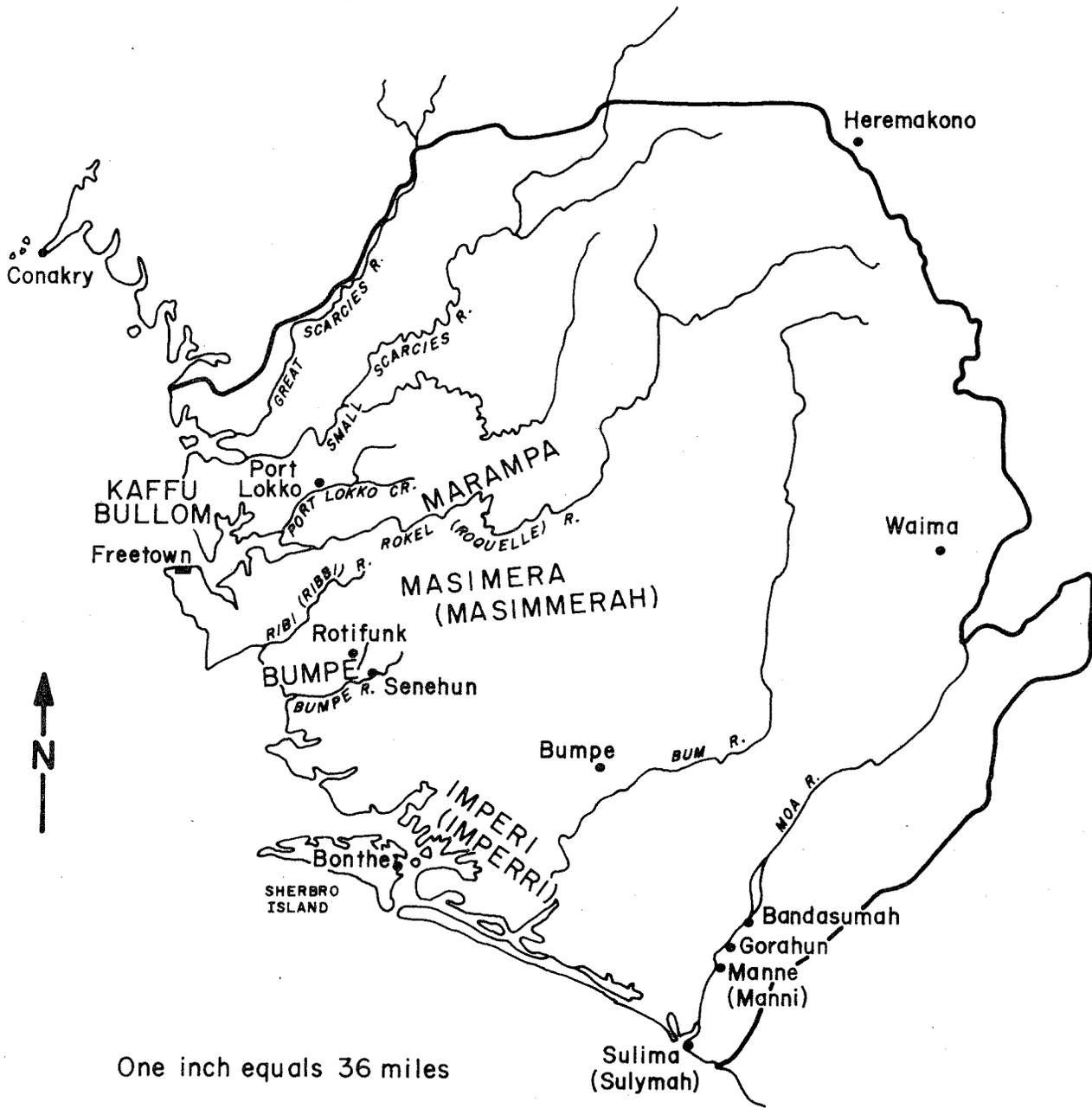
Gladstone and the new imperialism of Chamberlain,¹ with a personality and philosophy which made him unique to the annals of British West Africa.

Space considerations have compelled the deletion of many important despatches, especially those concerning the Freetown municipality ordinance, colonial expenses, and the prison problems faced by the colony. In addition, no mention has been made of the more mundane despatches, those concerning pensions, medals, and applications for remuneration, which formed a large part of the despatches. The interpretation put forth here is the result of extensive study of the entire corpus of despatches; for any lack of clarity this writer apologizes with the excuse that the task of editing is not an easy one.

The author wishes to thank Christopher Fyfe, of the University of Edinburgh, who is probably the leading scholar on Sierra Leone history, for reading this manuscript and offering many valuable suggestions concerning it. All errors of interpretation or fact, however, are the responsibility of the author.

¹ Consideration of Fleming in light of Haydon's Dissertation proves interesting. Haydon contends that British governors in the consolidation period, that era following the annexations of the late 19th century, were inexperienced, ignorant of the needs of their colony, submissive to the Colonial Office, and career-conscious. Fleming, who fell just before this period, at least partly exhibited, through his cautious nature, the last two characteristics mentioned. Thus, Sir Francis may have represented the transition point between types of governors as well.

SIERRA LEONE,
ca. 1893



One inch equals 36 miles

The heavy black line represents
the final boundary of the protectorate, 1896.

Names in parentheses correspond to
Governor Fleming's spellings

The following despatches are addressed to George Frederick Samuel Robinson, Marquis of Ripon and Secretary of State from 1892 to 1895. They are by all indications first drafts (see facsimiles) in Governor Fleming's hand, and are written on paper having the Colonial Seal. The despatches are collected in a binding and are written in several colors of ink, as well as pencil. Where possible, sentences in which the final text and crossings-out are interrelated have been transcribed here so that the original line of thought is presented first. For example, a sentence reading initially "he is wrong" and changed to "he is right" would appear here as "he is wrong right" (the gray overlay signifying a crossed-out word). Some editing has been done, and those changes of word adjudged unimportant by this writer have been omitted.

In all, 144 despatches were included in the collection, or some 30% of the Governor's total output. This writer feels justified in presenting conclusions on the basis of this selection due to the nature of the crossed-out passages, which can only be assumed to have been deleted from any final copies of the despatches.

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SL#6

G. H.
7 January 1893

My Lord Marquis:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 251 of the 2nd of December transmitting to me a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Aborigines Society purporting to be signed by the Kings of Kaffu Bullom and others in which they complain of the arrest of a Chief named Kroobalie and others for an alleged assault and requesting to be furnished with a report of the case and the nature and extent of jurisdiction hitherto exercised by the Colonial Government within the district in question.

2- The circumstances of the case are these. In August last Kroobalie, also called Faday Kroo, one of the Chiefs of Kaffu Bullom, was arrested on a warrant issued from the Freetown Police Court on the complaint of one of his own subjects. Shortly after the arrest petitions were addressed to me, Mr. Parkes, the Superintendent of Native Affairs, Mr. Parkes, and to me complaining of the

arrest and I immediately requested Mr. Parkes to enquire into the matter and report. This he did and expressed a strong opinion

It appears that Kroobalie alias Faday was indebted to a Mr. B. Williams of Freetown who applied to the Chiefs to collect the debt. The Chiefs tried to do so by levying on Kroobalie's property. Kroobalie resisted and attempted to stab one of the parties concerned. In this a complaint was entered against him and he was subsequently arrested.

- 3- The real point at issue is whether the Chief was properly arrested or not and this depends upon what jurisdiction we possess over that portion of the Kaffu Bullom County where the arrest was made.

This again seems to apparently depends upon what interpretation is to be placed on the wording of the Treaty entered into on the 29th of November 1847 between the then Governor of this Colony Sir Norman Macdonald and the Chiefs of the Kaffu Bullom County.

- 4- The contestation of Mr. Parkes, whom I requested to enquire into this case, is that the 1/4 of a mile territory ceded by article 15 of such Treaty was ceded solely for fiscal purposes and that it is noteworthy that ever since the execution of the Treaty the Chiefs have exercised certain rights within the 1/4 of a mile without any question being raised. Mr. Parkes further states that to his knowledge applications for the surrender of Native Criminals or witnesses residing within the 1/4 of a mile have always been made to the Chiefs and this fact contention is corroborated by the manner in which the case which caused the arrest in question arose demand of Mr. Williams for the payment of his debt by Kroobalie was made.

- 5- Mr. Walker, who was acting as Queen's Advocate when the complaint of the petitions was first received by me is of opinion, on the other hand, that the 1/4 of a mile of the Kaffu Bullom County was by the Treaty of 1847 ceded without any reservation and that this unconditional cession was confirmed by the Treaty of 26th August 1852.

By an order of the Governor in Executive Council of the 10th May 1889 the portion of territory in question was included in the Freetown Police District. Mr. Walker therefore considered that if the alleged offence was committed within the ceded portion of the Kaffu Bullom the Chief who committed it was amenable to the law of this Colony and that the offence was cognizable by the Police Magistrate of Freetown.

In these circumstances I did not feel justified in directly

interfering with what had been done by the Court, but inasmuch as I feared that the prosecution, if carried on, might give rise to serious difficulties complications and might considerably lessen the influence of Chiefs who had at all times rendered loyal support to this Government, I did all in my power to prevent the complainant from further proceeding with his case. This I succeeded in doing and when the case was to have been heard no complainant appeared and the accused was at once discharged.

I then desired Mr. Parkes to see the Chiefs and explain to them as best he could the circumstances which had given rise to their complaint. He did so and Mr. Parkes informs me that all the Chiefs appeared quite satisfied with the explanations he gave and that there has been no subsequent friction.

6- I have now related all the important to your Lordship the material facts connected with this matter.

The first question to consider and decide is whether in such portions of native territory as are ceded to us by treaties similar to that of 1847 we should interfere with the Native tribes more than is actually necessary for fiscal purposes or to ensure the stipulations of the treaty being carried out.

On this question I am much disposed to agree with Mr. Parkes. The treaty of 29th November 1847, although it may be said to contain no express conditions, was evidently made for fiscal purposes and it appears to me that the special stipulations mentioned in it which The King is either to do or not to do negative rather negative the presumption that we are to have total control over the territory so as to render its subjects in all matters to our jurisdiction.

7- Should Your Lordship take a similar view I would suggest the cancellation of the Order of the Governor in Executive Council making the territory in question part of the Police District of Freetown.

8- From what I have seen of the Native Chiefs, and I have had occasion to see a good many of them lately, I have every reason to believe that generally speaking they are kindly well disposed towards us. But the policy, which I venture to think, we should carry out in their regard is to interfere with them as little as possible and when we make them promises or undertakings in their regard to be careful to carry them out.

9- There is one important point connected with our jurisdiction over territory such as that mentioned in this despatch which I venture

to mention to Your Lordship--viz whether we should interfere in the question of slavery further than to ensure the observance by the Kaffu Bullom Chiefs of the provisions of Treaties similar to the Treaty of 29th November 1847? If by that treaty the 1/4 of a mile territory is to be considered for all purposes as under British jurisdiction I presume that no slavery can be recognized there, but if it is to be regarded as under our jurisdiction for fiscal purposes merely then I take it we have no right to interfere with the domestic slavery which exists and which the Chiefs strongly oppose any interference from us there exists and which is recognized by the laws and customs of the Native Kings and Chiefs.

9 10- I beg to return the letter enclosed in Your Lordship's despatch, a similar one to which was addressed to me [sic] when the arrest of the Chief was first effected.

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The 1/4 of a mile strip was a strip of shore or river-front land generally ceded to the British by treaty chiefs, for the purposes of collecting customs and preventing the landing of slavers. This area usually became a no-man's land, where neither the chiefs nor the British had any real power.

We see here many of the points mentioned in the introduction. Fleming's belief in the spirit rather than the letter of the law is shown by his positions on the 1/4 mile strip and the trial of Kroobalie. Also shown is his concern for the support of the chiefs, his thoughts on British Jurisdiction and Domestic Slavery, and his caution, as exemplified by Section 9 (which seems to hint that Fleming wants the Colonial Office's support on the issue). It should be noted that Section 9 was added after the rest of the despatch had been written.

S. L. #14

G. H.
12 Jany 1893

My Lord Marquis

A somewhat important question has lately arisen here which may result in complications respecting in connection with the rescue of slaves by us which is not unlikely to affect our relations with Native Chiefs and in regard to which I should therefore be glad to receive Your Lordship's instructions advice.

The question is what should be our action respecting slaves who take refuge in British Posts outside of British jurisdiction?

2- There is no doubt what our policy should be as to the overland traffic in slaves and in November last, when it was reported to me that this traffic was being carried on to a considerable extent in the vicinity of this Colony and the French possessions in the Rivieres du Sud and the Gambia, I caused the Superintendent of Native Affairs to address letters to several of the Paramount Chiefs of the Great and Small Skarcies, Marampah, Masimmerah, Kinaia Ribbi, Bompeh, Rotifunk, and Serahu calling their attention to their Treaty Stipulations. I also caused a Public Notice to be issued, copy enclosed, bearing upon this matter.

I have also endeavoured in the interviews I have lately had with several of the Chiefs to impress upon them that this overland traffic is what Her Majesty's Government will at all times feel necessary can never sanction while it is generally against the interest of the Kings and Chiefs themselves to sell their slaves to others and thus diminish the number of hands to cultivate or work upon their own territories.

3- But this overland traffic in slaves is I admit a Very [sic] different matter to the domestic slavery which is carried on and is recognized in those countries which although not under our immediate jurisdiction are yet under the Sphere of British Influence.

Many complaints have been made to me by different Chiefs with reference to what they consider undue interference with their domestic slavery by the Frontier Police.

I was therefore desirous of obtaining the views of the Superintendent of Native Affairs as well as of the Inspector General of Police on this somewhat important subject.

I beg to enclose copy of the opinion furnished me by Captain Lendy as to what he considers the duties of the Police in regard to the rescue of slaves.

This opinion I forwarded to Mr. Parkes for any observations he might desire to offer and I enclose a copy of his remarks.

Your Lordship will see that the point upon which these two opinions differ is whether the Police should only interfere when the slaves are being transported or whether they should also do so when the slaves are to be transported.

However much we might desire interference in both cases there is I think much force in Mr. Parkes's observations. The Police are often Some of the Members of the Police Force are men whose discretion cannot be too much relied upon and I think that if it is for them to determine who are to be or not to be transported as slaves we are very likely to involve ourselves in serious difficulties with the Native tribes.

4- The subject is doubtless of importance. My own impression is that domestic slavery, however much we may do to discourage C

There is also the question as to what should be done with slaves who desert their employers and take refuge in British posts without our jurisdiction although within our Sphere of Influence.

I have alluded incidentally to this subject in paragraph 9 of my despatch No. 6 of 7 instant but inasmuch as I have since received much of the information above referred to had occasion to further consider it I thought it desirable to address Your Lordship separately upon it.

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We see here in full perspective the problem of Domestic Slavery.

James Christopher Ernest Parkes, the Superintendent of Native Affairs, was a brilliant Creole appointed in 1891 to succeed T. G. Lawson, a government interpreter and de facto liaison man. Despite the hostility generally felt between Creoles and the chiefs, Parkes established excellent relations with the indigenous tribes. Captain Edward Augustus William Lendy, Second W.I.R., was Inspector General of the Frontier Police from 1892 until his death at Waima in late 1893. He was strongly committed to the letter of the law and his force, and wanted to seize any domestic slaves suspected of being for sale. Parkes, as Fleming, viewed this type of action as a source of trouble.

Section 4, judging from the content of the despatch and Fleming's way of wording things, indicates that Fleming felt domestic slavery would prove too great a problem if actively interfered with. Section 2 gives an indication of the considerable extent to which overland slave traffic still existed in 1893 (see map), which may have been one of the factors leading Fleming to his view that Domestic Slavery was not an issue worth raising hostilities over.

Fyfe (p. 516) makes note of this despatch. It seems that A. W. L. Hemming, the principal clerk in the Colonial Office assigned to Sierra Leone, was enraged by Fleming's having mentioned in a public despatch the existence of slavery in a British colony. Hemming finally decided the issue stated in the despatch in Parkes' favor.

SL#29

GHSL
28/1/93

My Lord Marquis

I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that Bey Inga Chief of the Small Scarcies addressed a letter copy enclosed to the

Superintendent of Native Affairs a short time ago expressing a wish to see me and I replied that I should be prepared to receive him at any time that was convenient.

He accordingly came to Government House on the 10th Ultimo accompanied by several others and then informed me that he desired to cede to me as representing the Queen his territories which extend from the source of the Small Scarcies River to Alligator Creek on the South Side to Contre Creek on the North Side including the Banks on both sides as well as the Islands &c within the River.

2- I informed Bey Inga that I was glad to see such a proof of confidence in the Queen's Government as was evinced by his offer and that I would take the earliest opportunity of communicating with Your Lordship on the subject.

I then asked if he wished to cede the territories unreservedly or whether he desired any restrictions to be attached to the cession if accepted. He then mentioned certain conditions which he said he would like to be attached. I told him he had better see Mr. Parkes, put the conditions in writing and that I would then transmit them to Your Lordship and inform him of Your Lordship's decision.

This he accordingly did and I herewith enclose copy of the offer together with the conditions attached to which Bey Inga agreed to in presence of Mr. Parkes.

3- The first and second conditions that domestic slavery should continue be recognized could not be acceded to if the territory in question were placed under our active jurisdiction, but I understand from Mr. Parkes that what Bey Inga desires is the establishment of a protectorate over his country, the cession being made as within the British Sphere of Influence. As regards the increase of stipend asked for I may inform Your Lordship that Bey Inga now receives £25 a year. If his territory be ceded as proposed I would suggest his stipend be raised to £50 a year which I think would be sufficient as we would not gain very much out of the territory offered and that the right he refers to of the inhabitants having the free use of their land and possessions be admitted.

The establishment of a preventive customs station in the vicinity of the territory in question has already engaged the attention of this Government. It has been proposed to place one at the mouth of the Small Scarcies at a place called Probo in preference to the particular locality mentioned in the fourth condition.

The Commissioner for the New District the formation of which was in principle authorized in Your Lordship's despatch No. 209 of 8 October last, will no doubt be able to assist in settling disputes &c as suggested in the fifth condition.

With reference to the Services of Mr. Moses Davis I would suggest that the consideration of this subject be postponed for the present. When the question of the cession is finally settled Mr. Davies [sic], who is the Chief Adviser and Secretary to Bey Inga, will probably put in some claim for his services which can then be dealt with.

I would recommend to Your Lordship the acceptance of Bey Inga's offer. To accept it would, I think, prove advantageous to this colony while no responsibility of any importance would thereby be incurred.

.

The "protectorate" mentioned here seems to be of a much less encompassing type than that mentioned in the introduction; most likely, Fleming's use of the term "protectorate" refers to a state in which the territory involved was in the British Sphere only.

It is interesting to compare the process of British accession presented here with the perhaps stereotypical view of British imperialism. We can see the reticence mentioned in the introduction over the acquisition of new territory, a situation in marked contrast to the view of British colonial interests as solely those of economic exploitation.¹ Also enlightening is the Governor's willingness to negotiate with Bey Inga concerning the cession; in many respects, the situation seems to have been treated much as would a business deal between two competent and respectable parties.

Bey Inga and Major Crooks, acting Colonial Administrator, concluded a treaty ceding that chief's lands on 26 December 1893.

SL#45

GH
11.2.93

My Lord Marquis

Referring to my telegram of the 6th Instant and to Your Lordship's reply of the 8th I beg to offer the following explanations in connection with the request suggestion made by me.

2- In Your Lordship's despatch No. 209 of the 8th of October Your

¹This is not to say that the view is necessarily widely held in academic circles or prevalent in the general populous. This author's experience with those who discussed these despatches with him, however, indicated a certain surprise on their part that such a situation should occur in a British Colony.

Lordship concurred in principle in the proposal to make a new district for the country lying between the Roquelle and the Great Skarcies rivers and Your Lordship stated that you understood the extension of British influence to mean the exercise of direct authority and the jurisdiction of the Courts to Kambia.

3- Your Lordship then went on to state that the Chiefs should be consulted and if they had no objection and that such an arrangement did not involve fresh responsibilities on the part of the Government I should consider whether Legislation was necessary or whether the extension could be effected by Proclamation.

4- I therefore thought the first step to take was to consult the Chiefs and see whether they had any objections to offer.

I accordingly requested Mr. Parkes to inform me how the Chiefs who signed the Treaty No. 87 of 10th June 1876 could best be conferred with and he suggested that they should be invited to come to Freetown where I could have a conference with them. To this proposal they readily acceded and on the afternoon of the 18th of December all those who signed the above mentioned Treaty, (with the exception of Bey Farimah who was ill and unable to come) assembled in the grounds of Government House. I then addressed them explaining to them that by the Treaty of 1876 they had offered to cede to Her Majesty that portion of their territories mentioned in Article 2 of such Treaty and that Her Majesty was now prepared to accept their offer unless they had, but that any objections they desired to submit against such acceptance I was willing to listen to. They replied that they wished for time to consider the matter which I told them they were quite at liberty to have and that when they had come to any conclusion I should be happy to meet them again and hear it. Some days afterwards they saw Mr. Parkes and mentioned to him that although they were prepared to adhere to the Treaty they desired to bring to my notice certain facts connected with it. Mr. Parkes told them that whatever they wished to communicate they had better put into writing and then submit it. They then sent the letter, copy of which I enclose dated the 27th of December and on the 29th I again conferred with them, the letter they had written having been read to me.

I gathered from what they said that they did not intend to cede their territory further than to allow it to be within the British sphere of influence and I replied to them on this assumption. They refer in this letter to several causes of complaint most being directed against the Police.

This limited cession would seem somewhat contrary to the terms expressed in article 1 of the Treaty alluded to although not so much so according to article 2, but it would, I think, be a great thing for this

Colony to obtain even under its sphere of influence the territories mentioned. In regard to the complaint made by the Chiefs that their domestic servants were unnecessarily interfered with I told them, that when any arrangement was really come to I would instruct the Police not to interfere with them without good cause, but that they must clearly understand that England this government will never sanction any overland slave traffic which cannot but prove injurious even to themselves inasmuch as they thereby send away from their country those who should remain in it and help to cultivate its soil.

4- Subsequently to the meeting above described I referred the papers to the Queen's Advocate in order that he might favour me with his opinion on the point mentioned in the last paragraph of Your Lordship's despatch of the 8th of October. Mr. M'Carthy then pointed out in his reply (copy enclosed) that it would be desirable in order to carry out what was proposed suggested that the cession of Port Lokkoh should be formally ratified. I then asked Mr. Parkes how this had best be done and as he said it was a matter of importance and of some delicacy I thought it better for me to go personally and meet the Alikarlie at Port Lokkoh. I concurred, however, with Mr. Parkes that I should not take this step without obtaining Your Lordship's sanction, and I therefore sent my telegram of the 6th Instant.

5- My reasons for desiring to go to Port Lokkoh without any unnecessary delay were as follows. In the first place it would be Very [sic] advisable to be there during the fine weather and secondly the Alikarlie is a very old man and may not live much longer.

6- On receipt of Your Lordship's telegram of the 8th I referred it to Mr. Parkes in order that he might clearly point out the reasons why he considers it desirable to confirm the Convention of 12th December 1885 and why he thought that this should be done without delay. I also requested him, if he could do so, to mention any extra responsibility and expense that this Government might entail by taking such a step as that proposed contemplated.

I enclose copy of Mr. Parkes's observations from which Your Lordship will see that he is strongly of opinion that the Convention of 1825 should be ratified and that this should be done before the death of the present Alikarli [sic].

7- It is of course impossible, as mentioned by Mr. Parkes, to extend our jurisdiction or even our sphere of influence without incurring some responsibility, but I doubt whether there ever was a time when it is more essential that British influence should be

extended over this part of West Africa than the present.

If we wish this Colony and our other possessions on the West Coast to prosper, if we desire wish desire our trade and commerce to increase we must do all in our power to obtain such an extent of jurisdiction over the countries around should I venture to think, take such steps as will prevent other European powers from obtaining hereafter what it is comparatively easy for us to possess today.

I will of course take no further action in this matter until I hear from Your Lordship.

I shall be leaving Freetown for Bandasumah, towards the end of this month, but shall be back sometime in March and if Your Lordship is of opinion that the Convention of 1825 should be confirmed as proposed I could proceed to Port Lokkoh on my return.

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This despatch provides a second example of British handling of territorial cessions. Once again, compromises are reached with the chiefs, even though in this instance the territories involved are legally the possession of the Government. It is instructive of the British position in Sierra Leone, as well as Fleming's policies, that the limited cession is recommended by the Governor.

The Roquelle river referred to is that entity most writers refer to as the "Rokel" or "Rokelle", and this territory involves a large portion of the hinterland (see map). This despatch represents the second one in which the agricultural reasons for stopping overland slavery are mentioned. It is a matter for some thought as to the importance of this line of reasoning with the British, beyond that of being a rationale to present to the chiefs.

On July 10, 1893, Major John Joseph Crooks, acting Colonial Administrator during Fleming's absence, proceeded to Port Lokkoh with 100 men of the West India Regiment and at a gathering "said to be one of the largest and most orderly that ever took place within the district of Porto Lokkoh" (Crooks, p. 312) assumed British sovereignty over the area.

GH
13. 2. 93

SL#47

My Lord Marquis

I have the honour to address Your Lordship on a subject of some importance, and one which has for some time past engaged my attention.

2- In my despatches reporting the departure of Captain Cockburn and Captain Johns, late Inspector of Police for the Colony, I suggested to Your Lordship not to fill up the vacant posts until I was in a position to submit to Your Lordship a scheme which might render new appointments in the Frontier Police Force unnecessary.

3 2- In the month of November last a petition was addressed to me by a Mr. Davis, copy enclosed, calling my attention to the state of affairs in the Vicinity of the small Scarcies river owing to certain disputes among the Native Chiefs.

In such petition a suggestion was made that Political Agents should be appointed in certain localities for the furtherance of peace and for settling disputes which may from time to time arise among the aboriginal tribes.

The idea appeared to me a good one and I mentioned it to Mr. Parkes, the Superintendent for Native Affairs, who informed me that he had already conferred with Mr. Mitford on the question when the latter was acting as Colonial Secretary.

I could however find nothing on record in connection with the subject and I therefore referred the petition above mentioned to Mr. Parkes with a request that he would be good enough to give me his ideas on the subject.

Mr. Parkes accordingly forwarded me a memorandum, copy of which I enclose, from which Your Lordship will see that he entirely agrees with the proposal that Political agents should be appointed.

3- Upon receiving Mr. Parkes's report I brought the matter before the Executive Council where it was decided that Mr. Parkes should draw up a plan or map showing in what localities the political agents should be placed. This was accordingly done and I enclose the plan in question as also copy of Mr. Parkes's observations when transmitting it.

I then submitted the plan for the consideration of the Executive Council and the members unanimously agreed that the appointment of the Officers as suggested would prove a benefit to this colony.

4- Your Lordship will see that the cost of the proposed Establishment, if I may so term it, would according to Mr. Parkes amount to about £2000 a year, but against this must be placed the reduction in the Frontier Police Force which, if Mr. Parkes's proposals be carried out, would about eventually more than balance the extra expense.

5- Something may no doubt be said against decreasing the number of a force so recently established as that of the Frontier Police. I am

quite prepared to admit that the Frontier Police have done and are still doing good work, but it would be unreasonable to expect that Sub-Officers of such a force are the best fitted individuals to place in positions of trust and importance inasmuch as they neither possess the education nor tact to act diplomatically in [the] manner which is so essential when dealing with in disputes which constantly arise between the Native Chiefs and tribes and which require the greatest care to deal with.

5[sic]- Your Lordship will see that what Mr. Parkes really intends by the establishment of such officials as he mentions is to establish desires to establish is a species of Protectorate by placing political agents in such portions of adjacent territories as are under what is called the British sphere of influence. I am aware of the conclusion which was arrived at by the special Committee of the House of Commons in 1865, but as Mr. Parkes justly remarks circumstances have changed since then. If we are to maintain the hold we now possess in West Africa I do not hesitate to say that we must do all we can to increase our influence and preserve our power. The native Chiefs and those under them are, I venture to assert say, more disposed to bend to towards British rule than to that of any other European nation and this feeling on their part we should not altogether disregard.

To appoint Officials of tact and experience to watch over the native tribes, to check their barbarous customs and to do all in their power to abolish slavery are ends to be aimed at and accomplished if possible what we can to gradually and discreetly point out the evils of slavery could not be otherwise than desirable.

6- Occasional Visits to Chiefs from Governors themselves have no doubt a beneficial effect, but I am by no means so sure that for Governors to take long expeditions which necessitate their remaining away from their seats of Government where business and sometimes that of say an important nature has to be transacted, is a perhaps for several months at a time, is a wise policy to encourage.

The suggestions contained in the 4th paragraph of Mr. Parkes's Minute of the 18th of November last would to a certain extent do away with these expeditions long absences, at least in so far as this colony is concerned.

7- I have not failed to give careful consideration to the subject upon which I am now addressing Your Lordship and I am, on the whole, disposed to submit the scheme for Your Lordship's favourable consideration.

Should such officers be appointed as are contemplated, I would

suggest that they be termed Government agents rather than political agents, inasmuch as the meaning of the latter term might possibly be mis-construed [sic].

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This despatch places Fleming's regard of the Frontier Police, and the Fleming-Parkes plan, in full perspective.

This is the first despatch in which the Governor in detail takes to task the Frontiers, although the previous despatches have some words on this matter. It can be seen that Fleming, desirous of maintaining the loyalties of the chiefs, saw Political Agents as the best solution to the problem. His mention of the chiefs' predisposition for British rule is one of many in the despatches; being more conscientious than their French counterparts in maintaining responsibilities, the British had much better relations with the native tribes.

Section 6 provides a clear example of Sir Francis' dislike for travel.

SL#99

20.3.93

My Lord Marquis

I have the honour to state that I referred Your Lordship's despatch No. 203 of the 6th of October last to the Queen's Advocate in order that he might be acquainted with Your Lordship's views of inflicting corporal punishment in this Colony and have an opportunity of offering any suggestions he considered desirable.

2- I beg to enclose a copy of the report with which Mr. M'Carthy has furnished me on the subject. Your Lordship will see that Mr. M'Carthy concurs in the suggestion contained in the 5th paragraph of Your Lordship's despatch that if corporal punishment is to be administered had recourse to for ordinary offences it would be preferable to provide for it by a special law of the Colony than to inflict it under the provisions of an antiquated English Statute.

3- In Regard to the more important question as to whether it is necessary to have recourse to Corporal punishment for ordinary offences in this Country Mr. M'Carthy is of opinion that it is and he states his reasons for arriving at this conclusion.

M'Carthy, as Your Lordship is aware, is a native of this Colony and as such has doubtless many opportunities of judging how the different tribes he alludes to should be treated and what are the

most effective means to prevent them from committing crimes.

I cannot, therefore, attempt to controvert the reasons submitted by one whose local knowledge and experience are so much greater than my own, but in so far as the statistics to which I am about to draw Your Lordship's notice are concerned I Venture to say they do not prove that flogging as recently carried on has served to have any material effect in diminishing crime or prison offences.

4- The severe sentences of whipping passed by the Supreme Court as well as those inflicted for breaches of Prison discipline came prominently to my notice shortly after my arrival in the Colony. Certain facts connected with them induced me to address Your Lordship in my despatch No. 266 of the 25th of July last, while in such cases as I considered the prerogative of mercy might be extended I did exercise it to the extent of remitting several floggings I exercised it in remitting some of the floggings that had been adjudged.

5- In order to ascertain more exactly in how many instances prisoners underwent had been ordered to undergo Corporal punishment either by order of the Supreme Court or by that of the Visiting Justices of the Gaol I requested to be informed of the number of prisoners who were ordered to be flogged by the Supreme Court in 1891? How many were ordered to be flogged during the first six months of 1892--how many during the last six months.

The replies I received to the above questions were the following. In 1891 fourteen prisoners received were ordered to receive Corporal punishment. Of these eight were adjudged to be thrice flogged and to receive 36 lashes each time. One to be thrice flogged--to receive 24 lashes. Four to be thrice flogged--to receive 12 lashes and one to be thrice flogged--to receive six lashes. Of these one was declared unfit to receive his second flogging, two to receive their third, while one was declared insane before the time for his second flogging arrived. Five of the floggings so ordered were remitted by me during the course of last year.

During the first six months of 1892 eight prisoners were sentenced to be whipped. One to receive three floggings of 36 lashes each. One three floggings of 12 lashes each. Two two floggings of 18 lashes each. One two floggings of 24 lashes each. One two floggings of 20 lashes each and one to be once flogged and to receive 24 lashes. Of the above two were declared unfit to receive the punishment.

During the second six months of 1892 one prisoner was ordered to receive a flogging of 24 lashes but was declared unfit to undergo it.

The above shows the difference between the number of whippings adjudged by the Supreme Court during the periods mentioned. Until the statistics of crime for the year 1892 are compared with those of former years it is impossible to say what comparison they will bear, but I very much question doubt whether the diminution in the number of floggings administered will result in any material increase of crime.

6- As regards Prison offences, for which in certain cases, floggings can be ordered by the Visiting Justices, I requested to be informed--How many prisoners were flogged in 1891? --How many during the first six months of 1892? How many during the last six months? I also enquired what number of offences had been committed against prison discipline during the above periods? The following are the answers I received--In 1891, thirteen prisoners were flogged, the punishments adjudged varying from 24 lashes to 3. During the first six months of 1892 fifteen were flogged thirty floggings were ordered, the punishments varying as above. During the last six months only ten were flogged.

The number of prison offences committed during 1891 was one hundred and fortyone; during the first half of 1892 one hundred and twenty two, during the second half one hundred and twenty eight.

Your Lordship will therefore see that notwithstanding the number of floggings during the first six months of 1892 was thirty while during the last six months only ten were inflicted, the number of prison offences was practically the same--only six more having been committed during the latter half of the year than in the previous half.

7- In the face of the above statistics I do not hesitate to say that in my opinion flogging in this Colony has been carried to an excess and if it is to be had recourse to at all I should... for what may be termed ordinary offences, I should be disposed to specify the crimes for which it is to be inflicted and at most sanction but two floggings taking place, more than this appears to me not merely punishment but cruelty, the actual infliction of pain being followed by the fear of its repetition, for any one offence.

8- When a new Prison is constructed it will probably be easier to render prison life a greater deterrent to crime than it is at present, but I would not postpone legislation on the question subject question of corporal punishment until a New Prison is established which cannot be for some few years to come.

9- Your Lordship, in the last paragraph of Your despatch under reply, is good enough to ask me my opinion on the subject of whipping

based, to some extent on my experience in another Colony where whipping public or private was formerly prevalent, but where in recent years has practically been done away with.

I presume the Colony to which Your Lordship refers is Mauritius and in so far as I remember nothing has shown that crime or prison offences have there increased since the infliction of corporal punishment was reserved and that was against the feelings of many in the community, for certain grave offences against prison discipline.

It is to my mind difficult to understand why the peoples of this colony require a different treatment to those of other countries, but as I have stated above I am willing to submit bow, to some extent at all events, to the opinion of those whose local experience is so much more extensive than mine.

10- I beg to enclose copies of certain returns in connection with the statistics referred to in paragraphs 5 and 6 of my despatch.

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One of the problems facing Fleming was that of prison reform. In addition to this despatch, there are others concerning expansion of Freetown Gaol, Beri-Beri afflictions among the inmates, and sleeping conditions which found five men to a cell.

James Abram M'Carthy, a prosperous Creole barrister, served as Queen's Advocate from 1890 to 1894. Fleming's reference to M'Carthy's views is indicative of his regard for local opinion; the Governor, in the despatches, frequently refers to his consultation with Creole officials and citizens. It may be noted that Creoles, under Fleming, reached their peak of power. In 1892, 18 out of 40 senior government posts were held by Creoles, while by 1912 this had dropped to 15 out of 90.

The reader will notice the severity of the sentences adjudged, which seems to imply that, at least in Sierra Leone, corporal punishment was an accepted method of discipline. It is thus of interest that Sir Francis opposed floggings, an opinion consistent with his nature and indicative of some enlightenment.

Section 6 contains statistics which have obviously been padded. The Governor has used the number of floggings ordered in the first six months to compare with the number of floggings inflicted in the second six months. While his argument is valid with the correct statistics as he first presented it, this must nevertheless lessen the credibility of Fleming's arguments in this despatch.

My Lord Marquis

Confidential I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordships **confidential** Despatch No. 12 of the 27th of January requesting me to consider the question of strengthening and to some extent re-organizing the armed Police of Sierra Leone upon the lines of the Hausa Constabulary and to consult such persons as I might think best fitted to furnish me with useful information on the subject.

2- I did not think that I could have recourse to any one who could give me better advice than the members of the Executive Council. Both Colonel Ellis and Sir William Quayle Jones have had much experience on the West Coast of Africa, while Major Crooks, Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Bennett and Dr. Ross have all had a considerable experience of this particular colony. I therefore laid Your Lordship's despatch before the Executive Council and I requested each member to state in writing what his views were on the desirability or otherwise of reorganizing the armed Police in the direction suggested by Your Lordship.

3- I beg to enclose copies of the written opinions with which the different members have furnished me. Your Lordship will see therefrom that the members are unanimous in concluding that it would not be desirable, even if it were possible, which they much doubt, to form such a constabulary force in this Colony as is proposed. Sir W. Quayle Jones and Colonel Ellis have pointed out that this Colony is in an entirely different position to the Colonies of Lagos and the Gold Coast and that there is absolutely no parallel between them. As my experience on the West Coast is limited to Sierra Leone I cannot attempt to controvert what is said on this point.

4- There are, however, some points to which the different members allude on which I feel justified in expressing my own opinions. Colonel Ellis has referred to the increased expenditure which to maintain a constabulary force, of say 800 men, would be entailed upon the colony and I do not hesitate to say that the financial condition of Sierra Leone is not as yet such as to afford it. Your Lordship is aware that the estimated Revenue for this year only exceeds the estimated expenditure by L 250, and if next

year the cost of maintaining the Colonial Steamer and that of constructing in part a New Prison is added to our expenditure I much fear that there will be little left for any serious augmentation of the Police Force.

5- The object, in so far as I gather from Your Lordship's despatch, of keeping up an armed Constabulary force in Sierra Leone is that it might be of service in carrying on any punitive expeditions against the Native tribes, but as Colonel Ellis remarks, punitive expeditions are not required every year and it seems a useless would be a great expense for the Colony to keep up a little quasi standing army whose fighting qualifications might not be put to the test except on some stray rare occasion.

6- I entirely concur with Sir William Quayle Jones where he states that he has the very strongest objection to the constant shewing [sic] of the strong arm and I sincerely trust with him that it will be a long time before any further punitive expeditions are rendered necessary. From my short experience of the natives here and from what I have been able to judge by the interviews I have had with several of the Native Chiefs, it is not fear which is so likely to prevent punitive expeditions as a feeling among them that we are endeavouring to treat them peacefully and straightforwardly and that they can rely upon us instead of distrusting us. This is the policy which it has been my endeavour to inculcate and which I am strongly of opinion should be pursued. Many among the Native Chiefs in this country, though uncivilized they may be according to our ideas of civilization, are yet men of intelligence and common sense and if punitive expeditions against them have been found necessary I venture to say that in many instances more instances than one such have arisen from a want of tact, or from some indiscretion or blundering on our part. The great thing to preserve peace among the native tribes, in so far as we are concerned, is to inspire them with confidence, to give them such advice as we are able and to teach them gradually and cautiously discreetly what will eventually prove for their benefit as well as for our own.

7- It is to effect these ends that the Frontier Police Force was, as I understand, instituted by Sir James Hay. If the Police Force is to be reformed or reorganized at all, I would do it, not by turning the present Frontier Police into an exclusively fighting force, in which case the temptation to have punitive expeditions would be very great, but by having a larger number of better educated men in the force who could be relied upon to act with tact and prudence, who

could give good advice when had recourse to for it by the Native Chiefs or people, and who could from outlying stations communicate to the Government correct information as to what is taking place around the country in which they may be located.

8- I have in my despatch No. 47 of 13 February last suggested to Your Lordship the appointment of political or Government Agents for the above purposes and if these were appointed there would probably be no necessity for reorganizing the Frontier Police in the particular way I have mentioned, although it might be necessary, if large detachments are to be placed about the Country, to somewhat increase their numbers.

9- Your Lordship will remark the difficulties pointed out by Colonel Ellis, Sir W. Quayle Jones and Mr. McCarthy in respect to the raising of men for such a Constabulary force as is contemplated by Your Lordship. I agree with Mr. McCarthy that it would be inexpedient to recruit outside the British Sphere of influence and, as he remarks, the best tribes from which we could obtain good fighting men are now within the sphere of influence of the French.

.

We see here examples of several points aforementioned, including Sir Francis' seeking of local advice, handling of the Colony's finances, and changes of wording. Most enlightening is Fleming's regard for punitive expeditions, which he considers to be caused by British failures, a view consistent with the picture of Sir Francis previously developed. We also see, once again, Fleming's policy concerning treatment of the chiefs.

Present at the meeting of the Chiefs presided by His Excellency the Governor in Chief at Bandasumah 15th March 1893. 3 p.m.

Males	1900	including Chiefs &
Females	<u>998</u>	
	2898	

Signed [Illegible]
Sergeant C/B

Chiefs, Sub-chiefs and all good friends here present

I am very glad to see such a large number of Chiefs, Sub-chiefs and followers assembled here today. Some, I am aware, have travelled over long distances to see me. This I take as a further proof of that friendly feeling which the Chiefs and their people entertain towards the Queen's Government and towards those who, in their different capacities, represent it.

- 2- It is true that where we are assembled is not under the direct authority of Her Majesty, but most, if not all, the Chiefs whom I have the pleasure of seeing have entered into important treaties in which they have promised to maintain peace, to encourage trade and commerce and to keep open and in good repair those roads without which it would be impossible to pass through their countries. While on the question of roads I desire to express my sincere thanks to those Chiefs and Sub-chiefs who did so much in the way of clearing of roads and in the construction of bridges between this and Sulymah thus facilitating my journey to Bandasumah.
- 3- It has given me much satisfaction to learn of the peaceful condition of the Country immediately around us and I feel confident that the longer peace is maintained, the more the Chiefs and the people will understand its worth and the more anxious will they be to preserve it, thereby feeling the blessings of the security of life and of property.
- 4- I do not wish to detain the Chiefs and others longer than is necessary and I will therefore at once allude to some few subjects on which I may naturally be expected to comment.
- 5- I desire, in the first instance, to assure all who are here congregated that I am come on a purely friendly visit to them. That they need have no suspicion nor fear that I am going to interfere with them in any way. Connected as the Treaty Chiefs are with the Queen's Government, I am come to assure them of the interest the Queen takes in their welfare and in the peace of their country and of the pleasure satisfaction I experience at seeing gathered around me the largest number of Chiefs that has probably ever assembled to do honour to a Governor in this part of West Africa.
- 6- I wish to impress upon the Treaty Chiefs that they and they alone are responsible for their treaty obligations and that so long as they perform their duties in this respect, so long will the Queen's Government perform its part towards them. It is to these Chiefs that the Government looks for the good behaviour of their Sub-chiefs

and people and for the keeping in order the roads and bridges throughout their respective districts.

7- I would draw the serious attention of the Treaty Chiefs to the necessity of not permitting their Sub-chiefs to leave their towns in charge of headmen. It is very essential for the security of these towns that the Sub-chiefs should remain in them and not quit them for the sake of joining in wars or other purposes.

8- As some uncertainty exists regarding the position of the Chief Nyagwah and as to the powers with which he is invested as regards other Chiefs I desire to state that he like the others, who are present today, is a Treaty Chief for his own country only, having entered into a Treaty similar to those entered into by other Chiefs. That as such Treaty Chief he possesses no great powers, in so far as The Queen's Government is concerned, than the others do, that he is only recognized as the Chief of the district to which he belongs and that in matters relating to treaties the other Chiefs should not receive instructions or orders from him.

9- It has come to my knowledge that some of the Chiefs have been taken by surprise because some of their slaves have been captured by the Police. in consequence of directions given by the Government.

I am sorry for this inasmuch as it is far from not my desire that those who have entered into treaties with us should be in anyway taken by surprise nor treated otherwise than in a straight-forward manner. I promise that when I So soon as I return to Freetown--where I shall be in a few days--to see Mr. Parkes on this subject so that he may inform the Chiefs of the exact nature of what has been decided in this manner, when they will be afforded an opportunity of offering any explanations they desire I will enquire into the matter so that the Chiefs may be fully informed of what is to be done in connection with it.

10- I am informed that some of the Chiefs are anxious desirous of knowing what are the duties of the Police who are stationed in their towns.

It is the duty of the Police, while refraining from any unnecessary interference with the Native institutions of the people or the Government of the country in which they are located, to prevent in so far as they can dissensions within it, to give the best advice they are able when appealed to for it, and should when any question of importance arises to submit it, as soon as possible, to

the nearest senior officer in order that it may be referred, if necessary, for the Governor to decide. They are to act with civility towards the Chiefs and natives and to do all in their power without the expectation of any present or reward which it is wrong to tempt them with, to gain the respect and confidence of those among whom they reside.

11- There is one more point which I desire to mention. I have been informed that in the vicinity of this neighborhood an objectionable custom prevails of seizing people for debts contracted by others and stocking them.

I feel sure that the Chiefs must see the unfairness of this practice and that they will use every effort to put a stop to it. If an individual is indebted to another he can no doubt be proceeded against according to native laws or customs but it is evidently unjust I am sure the Chiefs will understand, to punish one man for the fault of another.

12- I particularly desire to thank the Chiefs MoMo Babahu and Kabba Seh for having come so long a distance to this meeting, I am told over 100 miles, as also the Chief Sembe Fawundo who resides at even a greater distance away. I am further glad to see the Chief Sanessi Gunya who is deservedly respected by his people in the Tunkia District, as well as Amara Samawa of the Lower Tunkia and Batte Kaka the roads in whose countries are, I am told, in a highly satisfactory condition.

13- I regret that through illness the Chief Kilundu of Luawa is unable to be here but I pleased [sic] to see the Chief Bannah as representing him and beg to express my thanks to Kilundu for the offering he has sent me.

14- I must not omit to particularly thank the Chief Amara and other Chiefs for all they have done for my reception and comfort in Bandasumah while I beg to tender my public acknowledgments to the Travelling Commissioner--Mr. Allridge [sic]--for the great trouble he has taken in collecting so many important Chiefs and Sub-chiefs together. His instructions, and those of the Bandasumah Chiefs, in connection with the preparations made in this town have been carefully and effectively carried out by the Police Officer in charge, Corporal J. C. Nicol, whose services I cannot leave unrecognized.

In conclusion I trust that peace and prosperity may reign in this district and in the Country around, that all disturbances

between the Golas and the Mendi people may speedily come to an end, that a feeling of security may exist among all, that the Chiefs will continue to do their utmost to keep the roads open and in good condition and that they will encourage trade and commerce. By these means the many riches with which nature has endowed this land will become more and more appreciated by its inhabitants while they will become more largely made known and utilized by others.

Once more I thank the Chiefs, Sub-chiefs and others for having come here to see me and I wish them all every happiness, prosperity and peace.

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This is the first draft of the speech delivered by Fleming at Bandasumah. The tally of the meeting was included on a separate sheet bearing the colonial seal.

The listing given here of the chiefs' major treaty responsibilities is indicative of the situation in Sierra Leone. Prior to 1890, and the efforts of Governor Hay and the traveling commissioners, the hinterland was plagued by interpecine warfare between chiefs and by a paucity of passable roads.¹ The Colonial Government had neither the power nor funds to alter this, and the chiefs were given these problems as their primary responsibilities. It can thus be seen why domestic slavery had to take a back seat, and why the British representatives in the hinterland needed considerable tact.

Alldrige (p. 262) makes note of this meeting and relates an interesting anecdote concerning Sir Francis:

"Notwithstanding that the Governor had only just come in after a tedious and trying journey, he asked me whether if he held a levee of the principal Chiefs at 5 o'clock, that would tend to allay their fears, and put them at their ease... as the plan was a most politic and excellent one I went round to the twelve principle Chiefs and communicated to them the information... his excellency addressed the Chiefs, and in a very few minutes gained their entire confidence, and from the joyous expressions upon their faces it was evident that whatever misgivings they had entertained when coming to the levee, the tactful kindness of the Governor had entirely dispelled."

¹This is from the viewpoint of the British and Creoles in Freetown, not from that of the chiefs. Obviously, the chiefs had a different set of priorities than did the Colonial Government.

Alldrige goes on to state, "On our way back to town I asked one of the big Chiefs how they all liked the Governor? He replied that they liked him very well..."

The long, crossed-out phrase in Section 9 is a reconstruction of the sentence as best can be done (see facsimile), considering the extent of the deletions.

SL#113

GH
28.3.93

My Lord Marquis

In continuation of my despatch No. 93 of the 6th March, I have the honour to state that I left Freetown for Bandasumah on the evening of the 6th Instant in the Colonial Steamer "The Countess of Derby."

2- I arrived at Sherbro the following day and was glad to hear from Mr. Garrett, the District Commissioner, good accounts of the country around and that the repairs and improvements to several of the public buildings in Sherbro, which I was anxious should be proceeded with during the dry season, were progressing favourably.

3- Early on the morning of the 8th I proceeded from Bonthe, by river, to Sulymah about fifty miles distant from Sherbro. I was accompanied by my Private Secretary, Mr. E. J. Vavasour, Captain Tompkins, who was in charge of a Police Escort of about thirty men, and Dr. Jarrett, who came with us as medical attendant.

We had to break the journey first of all at a place called Koronko where we passed the night making a second break at another place called Savanah.

The latter place we left at about 8 a.m. on the 10th, proceeding in hammocks to Sulymah where we arrived at about 6:30 on the evening of that day. Here two addresses were presented to me, one from the Children of Gallinas Church Mission School and the other from the Promoters of the Gallinas Church Mission.

4- Leaving Sulymah early on the morning of the 11th we proceeded along the direct road to Bandasumah which is about forty miles inland. We had scarcely started before I began to notice the careful way in which the roads had been cleared and the bridges erected or repaired to facilitate my journey to the interior by the Native Chiefs and their people.

We first halted at a native town called Manni where we passed the night, proceeding on our journey the next day. We then made another stop at a village named Gorahun. There we spent the night starting for Bandasumah the following morning.

5- On Monday the 13th we arrived at Bandasumah, an important native town, where we were received by Mr. Allridge, the Travelling Commissioner and the many hundreds of people who had assembled there to greet us.

6- During the same afternoon I was introduced by Mr. Allridge to the principal Native Chiefs as I wished at the outset to assure them that I had come on a purely friendly mission and as the representative of Her Majesty who took a deep interest in the welfare of those who like most of the Chiefs assembled were connected with Her Government as Treaty Chiefs while many of them inhabited places within the British sphere of influence. Mr. Allridge was anxious that I should give them these assurances inasmuch as he said that when the Native Chiefs and people are asked to meet the Governor they look upon such an invitation with suspicion fearing that the Governor is going to take some step against them. After I had mentioned what the purport of my visit really was they seemed quite contented and said they would be pleased to assemble at the large meeting which it was arranged should take place on Wednesday the 15th.

7- Tuesday the 14th was passed in paying the stipends to the different Chiefs who were entitled to receive them and in my consulting with Mr. Allridge as to the subjects I should allude to when addressing the Chiefs generally.

8- The appointed meeting was held the following day at 3 p. m. A fine shed or Barri had been erected by the people of the town assisted by the Police under the superintendence of Corporal Nicoll [sic] for the people to assemble in and when I arrived on the spot no less than 2,898 Chiefs and people had collected together, the largest assembly, Mr. Allridge says that he ever remembers to have seen within the neighborhood of this Colony to do honour to a British Governor.

After a few words from Mr. Allridge introducing me to the Chiefs I addressed them, assuring them how gratified I was to see so large a gathering, how much I desired to impress upon them the advantages of preserving peace, of keeping to their treaty obligations, and of doing all in their power to keep the roads open and to encourage trade and commerce.

I enclose herewith copy of the address I delivered to them. A few among them complained that some of their slaves had been arrested by the Police. I did not wish to discuss this question more than was necessary inasmuch as none of the Chiefs who were before me had entered into any stipulations regarding the slave traffic. I told them, however, that I would enquire about the cases to which they alluded on my return to Freetown and informed them that it was not my desire to take them by surprise in this matter, more than in any other, and that any conclusions which were come to by the Government in connection with the capture of slaves should, in so far as they might affect them, be communicated to them. What is more likely to put down slavery than anything else is to take as much of the country as we possibly can under our active jurisdiction and so soon as a separate District for Sulymah is established and a commissioner appointed who has time to really consider what part of the country might be so taken over I would suggest that as much as possible be so acquired.

9- The following day I presented presents to the different Chiefs as a token of friendship and good will of the Government towards them and I then bade them farewell expressing a hope that on some future occasion I might be able to meet them again.

10- Leaving Bandasumah on the morning of Saturday the 18th we reached Sulymah on the following afternoon where we embarked on board the Colonial Steamer arriving in Freetown at daybreak on the morning of the 20th.

The entire journey of about [blank] miles was thus performed in less than a fortnight and this while affording me plenty of time to say all I had to state to the Chiefs and people.

11- It is scarcely for me to say what good my journey may have done or what beneficial results may be expected from it, but I herewith enclose copy of a letter lately received from Mr. Allridge from which Your Lordship will see what his impressions are on the effect of the expedition. I also enclose a list of the Chiefs who were present, the number considerably exceeding that expected by Mr. Allridge. Some of these had travelled over a hundred miles to meet me. I took advantage of their presence to thank several of them, more especially the Chief Batta Kakka of Gaura, for the manner in which they had performed their Treaty obligations and for the way in which they had opened up and kept in good repair the roads in their respective countries.

12- I endeavoured in visiting Bandasumah to carry out Your Lordship's desire as expressed in Your despatch No. 205 of 7 October last and I trust that my action and what I said on the occasion will meet with Your Lordship's approval.

13- I cannot conclude without mentioning to Your Lordship the services rendered in my regard by Mr. Vavasour my private secretary, Captain Tomkins [sic], the Inspector in charge of the Police Escort, Dr. Jarrett our Medical attendant and particularly Mr. Allridge the Travelling Commissioner. All these were most useful in their different capacities and did all they could to facilitate a somewhat rough and tedious journey.

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This despatch contains an extensive account of Fleming's trip to Bandasumah, and is thus included here for its correlation with the Governor's speech.

It is interesting to compare the tones used in this despatch, and in the speech, concerning the Frontiers, which gives an indication of Fleming's playoff of issues between the chiefs and the Colonial Office. When addressing the chiefs, Sir Francis' wording was in general more immediate than when communicating with the Colonial Office, a not unexpected situation.

Sierra Leone
Telegraphic

Government House
30th March 1893

My Lord Marquis,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt on this day of your Telegraphic Despatch in the following words:-

Expounded states arms prostyle hutton Liverpool to Sanley Sierra Leone for interior via Sherbro dogflies.

.

The following decoding was written above the message:

French ambassador states arms have been sent by hutton Liverpool to Sanley Sierra Leone for interior via Sherbro enquire and state by telegraph.

Searching has failed to turn up any reference to a Sanley,

while one Hutton has been found with ties to Africa--John Hutton, of J. F. Hutton & Co., a Manchester firm. There seems to be two possible interpretations of this message: (1) a Hutton is illicitly sending arms to the interior, or (2) the British Government is secretly shipping arms there. The most likely recipient would be Samori, King of the Sofas, who had been fighting the French in the hinterland since 1890, and who until 1892 had purchased his arms in Freetown. Judging from the content of despatch 144, it seems that the former interpretation, that of gun-running, is most likely.

The telegraphic was inserted chronologically into the despatches, the decoding having been written in red ink while the message was in black ink.

The reader is referred to despatch #144.

GH

10 April 1893

SL#125

My Lord Marquis,

Referring to paragraph 4 of my despatch No. 36 of the 2nd February in which I stated that the Chiefs of the Imperi District had asked me to appoint someone to be present at the Coronation of a principal Chief whom they were shortly to elect I have the honour to state that Mr. Garrett, the District Commissioner for Sherbro, has informed me that one Humpah Karwonjoe, son of the former Chief, has been elected and that the Chiefs have asked him to be present at the coronation of Humpah Karwonjoe and that I have requested him to be present accordingly.

2- Mr. Garrett has suggested to me that he should promise the Chief an annual stipend of £15 if he succeeds in suppressing Cannibalism and will keep the roads open and the Country peaceful.

It would, no doubt, be worth £15 to ensure these ends but, as the Superintendent of Native Affairs has pointed out to me, such a promise depends upon what we consider to be the proper form of Government for the Imperi District and such other parts of the Country around this Colony as are under our active jurisdiction. Are we to make the Native Chiefs responsible for the good order of territory which actually belongs to us, or are we to do this ourselves?

3- I may state that although the Imperi District was taken under our active jurisdiction by Sir James Hay in 1891, it is really within British jurisdiction in name only.

It is true that those who commit offences therein are amenable

to our laws, but the Chiefs manage their own affairs and things go on much the same as they did before the District was taken over by the Government.

It appears to me that something should be settled in regard to some material difference should exist between territories which are under our direct jurisdiction and those which are merely under the British sphere of influence.

4- The territories over which Her Majesty's Government have control [sic] in this colony may be divided into three two classes--
1stly Those which are under the active jurisdiction of Government

2ndly Those which are under the British sphere of influence and the Chiefs of which have entered into treaties with us containing certain stipulations against overland slavery.

3rdly Those in which we pretend to exercise jurisdiction by the placing of Frontier Police, &c, but in regard to which in other respects we have no authority.

5- As regards the first I take it that they should be looked upon as forming part and parcel of British territory, that such customs as slavery, cannibalism, &c, cannot be tolerated in them and that although any unnecessary interference with the customs of the Natives is to be deprecated, still that they cannot be allowed to indulge in practices which are contrary to our ideas of humanity, while offences committed in such districts should be enquired into and disposed of before our own tribunals. If this presumption is correct, the Imperi District for example, should be governed by us not by the Native Chiefs, they should not be made responsible to the condition of the roads &c more than they are in Freetown and slavery, whether domestic or otherwise should not be sanctioned tolerated.

6- I presume the object of bringing certain districts within our sphere of influence is in the first place to secure the territories they comprise against foreign powers and secondly to ensure, as far as possible, a freedom of trade by requiring the Chiefs to stipulate that they will do their best to prevent petty warfare and will keep the roads in their respective countries open and in good condition. In return for these promises provided of course that they are observed we pay the Chiefs certain stipends which we have power to stop if they do not keep their agreements.

7- I further presume that our actual power is limited in requiring

a prosperous future for
~~the future of~~ Sierra Leone is
 something more than this. An
 extension of ^{active} ~~actual~~ jurisdiction,
 although it may cause some
 increase of responsibility, would, I
 venture to say be attended ~~with~~
 with success. Any little expense or responsibility
~~which might be attached to it~~
 would be well repaid by the
 good ~~it would do~~ ^{which would result} to others,
 by the benefits ^{which} would ~~accrue~~
~~to~~ ourselves and by the
 feeling of security ^{which the} ~~to~~ ^{we should be}

by feeling assured that the Chiefs and people
 would experience that the territories ~~which they inhabit~~
~~that they themselves, although~~
~~would belong to that power in which they~~
~~they may have, would not be~~
 have ~~with~~ ^{had} ~~had~~
~~without their consent~~
 be handed over to ~~France~~
 the greatest confidence and to which
 process as was the case by
 I venture to say, they would far
 the ~~French Convention in 1782~~
 sooner be subject than to that of
 any other nation.

the Chiefs to observe the conditions of their treaties, however much we may endeavour to exercise moral influence in respect to other matters. For example we can compel such Chiefs as have promised to dis-countenance the overland traffic in slaves to do so, but save in very exceptional cases, we have no right to interfere with their domestic slavery, nor have we any right to interfere with any species of slavery domestic or otherwise regarding those Treaty Chiefs who have made no promises about it. We have also no right to interfere with their domestic customs or with the Government of their people. Although our moral influence with these people may do something I Venture to say that it will be a very long time before it will do much. The only real way in which we can hope to make any real impression upon them and do away with such practices as are opposed to our notions of advancement & progress is by taking as much of their country as we can, not only under our sphere of influence, but under our direct authority. This is a policy I have ventured to advocate in previous communications to Your Lordship and my late visit to the interior has further convinced me that it is a right one. But there is not much use in taking over territory under our direct authority, as has been done in the Imperi, unless we practically govern the country. It may be sufficient for a Travelling or District Commissioner to visit from time to time, places which are merely within our sphere of influence. He can doubtless do something by moral suasion; he can see that the Frontier Police are exercising their moral power (for this is really all they there possess) with discretion and in the right direction, but he can give no absolute orders, nor has he any direct authority over the Chiefs and Natives. What is wanted to ensure the thorough progress of the country around us and a prosperous future for Sierra Leone is something more than this. An extension of active jurisdiction, although it may cause some increase of responsibility, would, I Venture to say, be attended with success. Any little expense or responsibility which might be attached to it would be well repaid by the good which would result to others, by the benefits which would accrue to ourselves and by the feeling of security it would afford to the Chiefs and people that their territories, although they may have entered into treaties with us, would not be handed over to Foreign powers as was the case by the French Convention in 1882 which the Native Chiefs and people would experience by feeling that the territories which they inhabit belonged to that power in which they have hitherto had the greatest confidence and to which, I Venture to say, they would far sooner be subject than to that of any other nation.

8- If Your Lordship approves of Mr. Garrett's suggestion to promise the principal Chief in the Imperi a stipend of £15 per annum on the conditions referred to in paragraph 2 of this despatch he can be

authorized to inform the Chief accordingly. Mr. Parkes, the Superintendent of Native Affairs, does not think the amount unreasonable on the presumption that the Chief is to be held responsible for the general welfare of the District, but I did not like to sanction the proposal without submitting to Your Lordship the above observations which indirectly bear upon it.

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The Imperi district was annexed by Sir James Hay, under the provisions of an early treaty, in response to the actions of the "Tongo Players" in that area in 1890. The Tongo Players, a native society, were called into murder cases when more conventional methods of justice failed; they determined who were human leopards-- or murderers--by ritual and "solved" the crimes by burning the guilty parties to ashes. Fleming mentioned the Tongo and cannibalism in despatch 36, where he wrote "I again impressed upon the Chiefs the absolute necessity of putting an end to all such customs as cannibalism and the like which I stated were abhorrent to Her Majesty's Government and could never be sanctioned in territory which belonged to the Queen which the Imperi District now did...there was one Chief present who I was informed had taken a prominent part in encouraging cannibalism. I was glad that he had the opportunity of hearing what I mentioned...The Tongo play, I am happy to state, is no longer carried on in the Imperi District and Mr. Garrett informed me that he thought there would be no return to cannibalism..."

While the annexation solved the above problem, it seems to have caused larger ones, for it can be seen that Fleming is having problems deciding how to administer Imperi now that it is in the Colony. In all probability, the third category Sir Francis initially put in was designed for the Imperi District. Using this District as his prime example, Fleming here once again is putting forth his plea for political agents and expansion of the colony along non-slavery oriented lines, by showing that, in the case of Imperi, a declaration of annexation and the presence of the Frontier Police is ineffectual in enforcing British interests.

Crooks summed this up in writing (p. 300) concerning Imperi that "notwithstanding such cession, jurisdiction was not exercised over it."

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My Lord Marquis

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordship's despatch no. 63 of 24 Ultimo, transmitting a copy of a letter from the Foreign Office respecting an alleged importation of arms into Sierra Leone for the purpose of being sent into the interior and requesting that I would make immediate inquiry into the matter. I furnish Your Lordship with a report as to the correctness of the statement.

In reply I beg to state that although every possible enquiry has been made I am unable to hear of any information relative to the arms and ammunition said to have been shipped from Liverpool to the West Coast of Africa for Sierra Leone Via Sherbro. A strict watch, however, is still being kept on all vessels from England and the Continent.

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The reader will note that the referred to despatch from the Colonial Office is dated 6 days before the telegraphic, indicating that the telegraph was sent due to an increased immediacy of the issue.

This despatch was written only a very few days before Fleming left for London, thus indicating that his enquiry had continued up until this time, stopped only by his departure.

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