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Slave trade between the Sudan and Arabia

Colonel Sir Lee Stack

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APPENDIX

SLAVE TRADE BETWEEN THE SUDAN AND ARABIA

THE Governor of the Sudan, Colonel Sir Lee Stack, in a letter dated "The Palace, Khartoum, April 9, 1921," has drawn attention to a passage (p. 119) in Mr. Philby's article in Vol. VII., Part IV., of the Central Asian Society's *Journal* for 1920, which touches upon the question of slave-kidnapping in the Sudan. Under cover of that letter Sir Lee Stack forwards a "Note" which states very clearly the careful measures adopted to check the slave traffic. The Chairman of the Council has directed that Sir Lee Stack's "Note" should be inserted in the next number of the *Journal*. It is accordingly here published.

NOTE.

1. All pilgrims from the Sudan embark for Arabia at Suakin by steamer or dhow. Each pilgrim has to have a passport made out giving thereon his description, etc., and in the case of a family a description of each member of the family, wives, children, servants, etc., is entered on the passport.

No one is allowed to embark without such a passport, and the procedure is checked by the British Inspector at Suakin, assisted by his officials and the Province and the Customs Police.

On the return of a pilgrim he is checked with the passport record, and in the case of his having left with a family and returned with less than the number he embarked with, he is subjected to a close cross-examination as to the reason of the deficiency. The invariable reason is given as death, and other pilgrims are examined as to whether they can corroborate the statement of the pilgrim concerned. Suspicious cases are retained for further investigation.

At Port Sudan, Suakin, and Tokar, there are trustworthy and responsible Fellata Sheikhs who are paid Government servants, and who quickly report any suspicious case.

The Suakin Sheikh is present when the passports are issued, and he is constantly moving among the West African pilgrims waiting to embark. These Fellata form the great majority of pilgrims from the Sudan.

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In cases where an Arab pilgrim has any black servants or small children with him, careful inquiries are made from all the latter before a passport is issued.

It is extraordinarily difficult for an Arab to take a native man or child away against his will. Each person embarking is seen by competent officials. It would be exceedingly difficult for a slave to be hidden in Suakin and smuggled on board a dhow or steamer; also the unwilling slave would, even if only a small child, inform the official who examines him if anything was wrong.

2. As regards Arabs smuggling natives across to Arabia for sale as slaves.

The check against this is a system of Mounted Camel Police patrols along the coast, which is patrolled from the Egyptian to the Eritrean frontier; in addition there are permanent Mounted Police posts on the main wells.

It is not possible to state that these patrols absolutely prevent anyone being smuggled on board a dhow lying off the coast, but they make it very difficult; the places on the coast where dhows can come close in are known and watched. A dhow, owing to the flat nature of the coast, can be seen from a long distance by the Police patrols, and any anchored dhow is carefully watched. There are also secret agents who work in connection with the police.

In the opinion of the Governor of the Red Sea Province, there is, as a result of these measures, very little slave-trading indeed, either by pilgrims or otherwise.

N.B.—This "Note" was received so late that it could only be inserted as an Appendix.—A. C. Y.