

Gondar, May 30th '69

Dear John,

Mesfin and I came into Gondar for a day. Received with thanks your letter and boundary description. The description is fine, and, as you said, it gives the Warden quite a lot of leeway. I had not, by the way, noticed that you were at all idle - you were doing all the paper work, and anyway, it is surely the Senior Warden's privilege to get his Irish Stew opened for him.

Don't curse me for not getting the radio working or the patrol reports and monthly report finished yet. I have been pounding out all kinds of bums for the Dept. (you will get some of it) and we are besieged by problems. Game Guard problems, accomodation problems, coolie problems, mason problems and Nadu problems.

I will be preparing a report on the activities of our friend Nadu, but unfortunately, the man is very clever and does not let anyone get concrete evidence against him. He has NOT returned any of the equipment, and rumours have it that Maj. G. gave him 'permission' to keep the stuff. He has sent his minions to Geech to warn the guards who testified against him that if he (Nadu) does not get into Parliament, they (guards) had better 'dig their graves'. The 'Ass. advocate' who came to Debarek on Nadu's case did NOT charge him. Again, we have been told that he (Ass. advocate) was called to see the District Gov. who said "Why do you charge Nadu? It is over a year now (sic) and you have dismissed him from his job. If Nadu does not get into Parliament he can kill all of you and destroy the animals." The guards, having heard this, are scared. It is significant, that IF this is true, this 'Ass. advocate' did not tell either myself or Mesfin about this implied threat.

Nadu's big brother, the vigilante chief, has written a letter to the guards who charged Nadu. This letter asks why they should charge 'their brother from the same land.' The letter said that they should 'forgive' Nadu, and that if he had wronged them, then he would 'compensate' them. Three of them have told us this, but the man who has the letter says that the letter is 'lost'. I am quite sure he is scared, but again, how can I prove it.

The various ties between Nadu and all the local guards are, in the normal Ethiopian way, very close. There are either blood ties, or the guards were servants in Nadu's father's house, and consequently either childhood friends or subservient to Nadu since their youth.

What the fucking hell can I do? I think that the whole situation is hopeless. The govt. is either corrupt or doesn't give a damn. The whole local situation is so tied up with local intrigue that Mesfin and I can do very little.

Of course, I will keep trying, but if that shit Nadu gets into Parliament, I can see no reason for my staying here. It will demonstrate to the locals that the govt. is NOT backing the feranji against anybody, and will make our position quite hopeless. And as it seems that the British army will not be able to start building the road until just at the end of my contract, then it seems to me that I will have been able to achieve practically nothing towards establishing the National Park.

We had a letter last week from the local Gov's secretary, a copy of an order for the police chief to come up to the Park to talk to me about our difficulties. He did not, of course, come.

The big rumour all around now is that the Govt. has sold the land to a foreigner. The old pattern. In this same District, this type of rumour caused a shooting on a Swedish building site. (Luckily, nobody was hit, but the intention was there. The same District Gov. Coincidence?

If the govt. wants to establish the park in Simien, pieces of paper will not do it. The highest Ethiopian officials will have to come to Simien and lay down the law, and the District Gov. will either have to be forced into full, active support for the park, or will have to be replaced. If not, as soon as I have saved enough cash, I am going to quit. I am not going to be away from my family for a year and a half to be an ineffective pawn in Ethiop prestige politics and local political intrigue.

Yours, Nic.