

HANDBOOKS PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE  
HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE.—No. 109

D 6  
.G7  
no. 109  
Copy 2

FRENCH  
SOMALILAND

LONDON :  
PUBLISHED BY H. M. STATIONERY OFFICE.

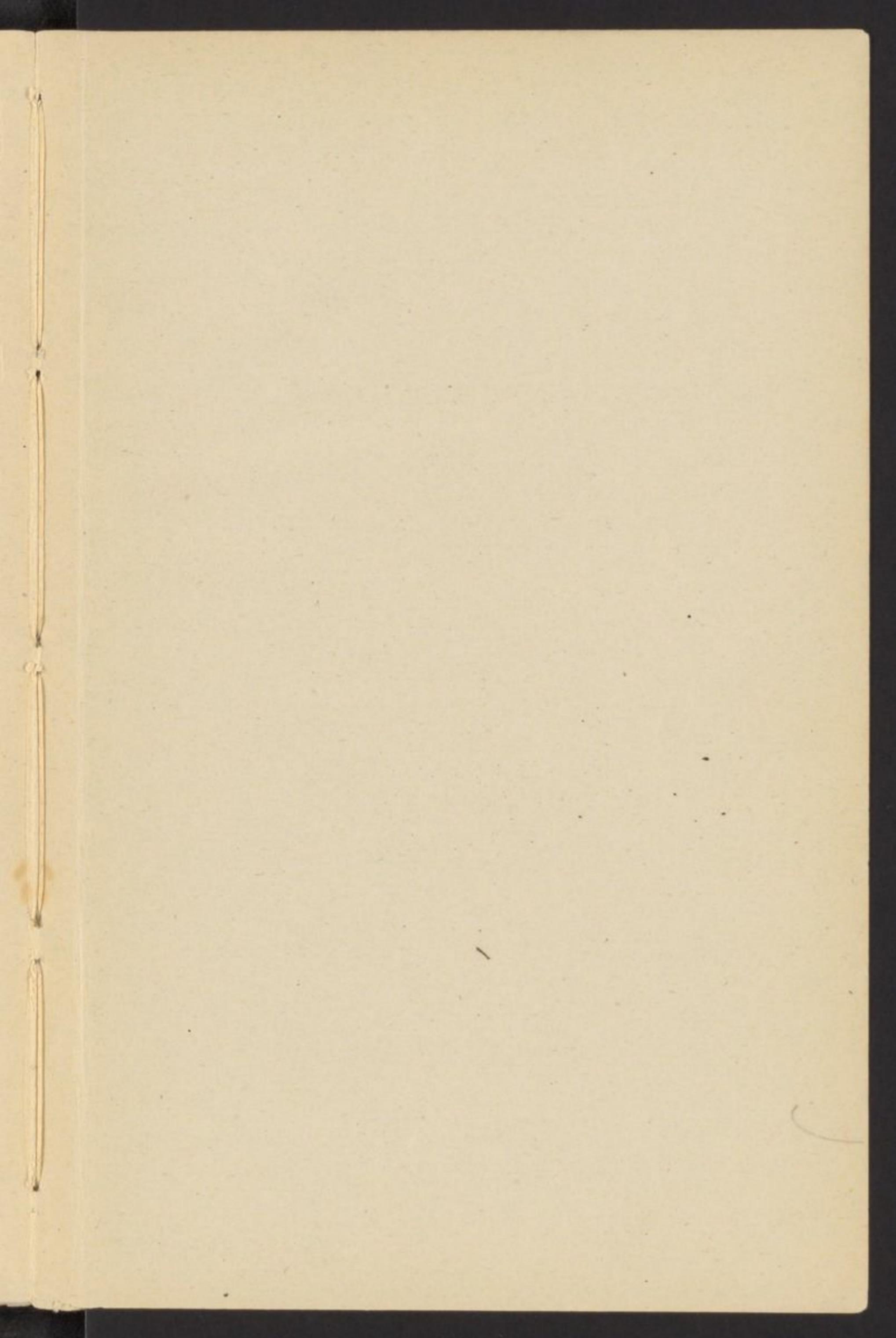
1920

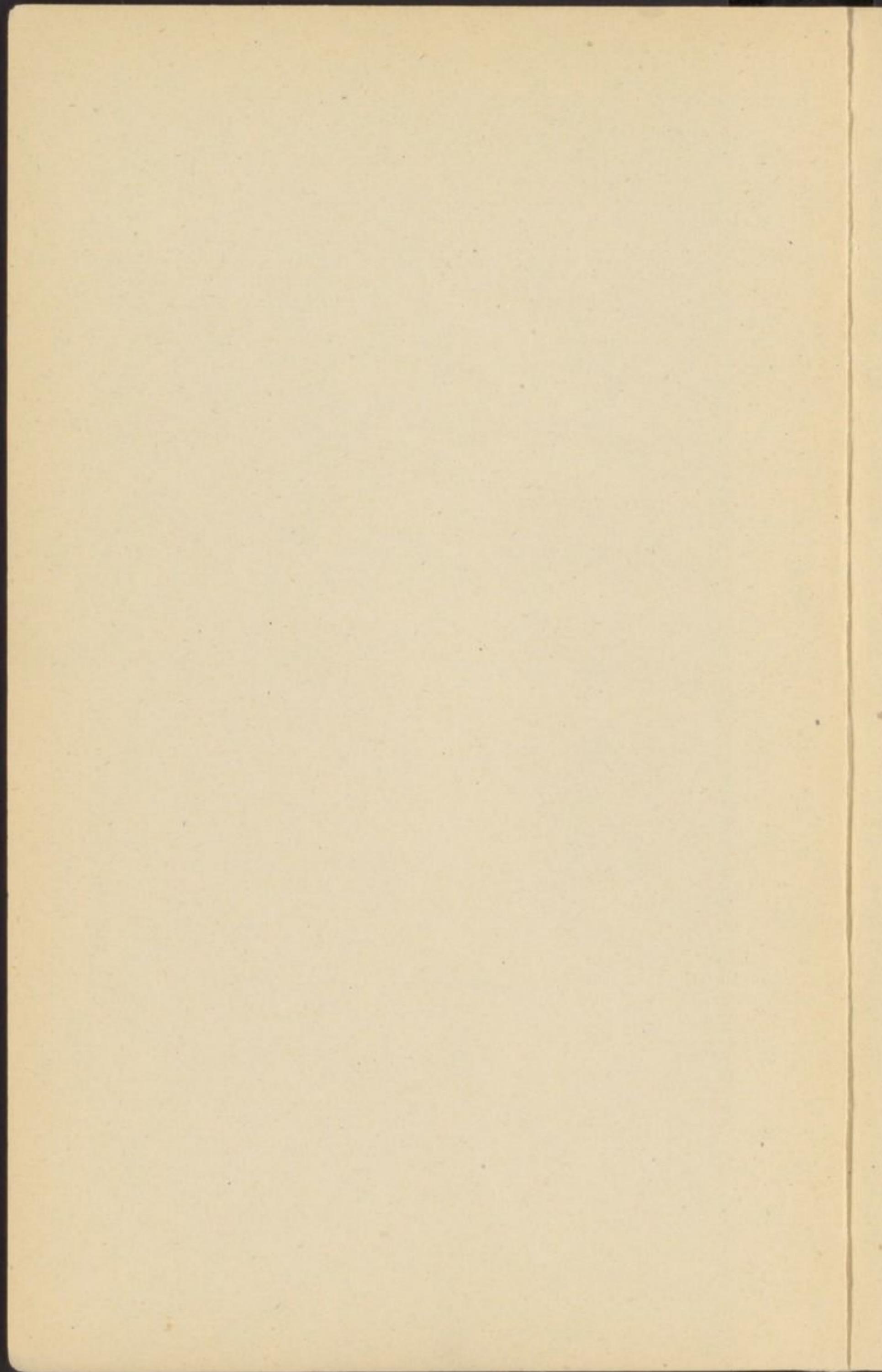


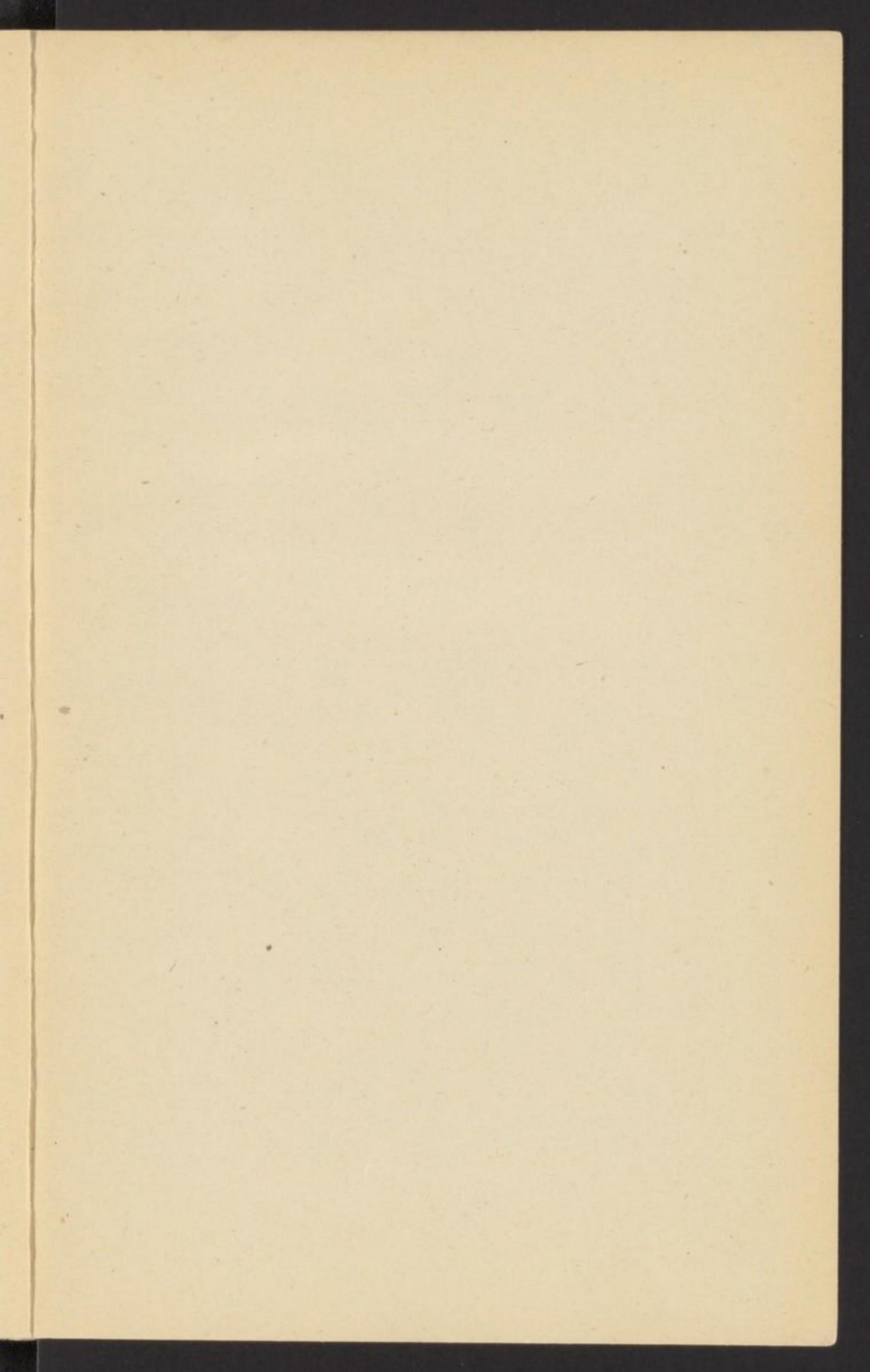


Class D6

Book .G7









*pt. Brit.*

207  
 1407

# FRENCH SOMALILAND

LONDON :

PUBLISHED BY H. M. STATIONERY OFFICE.

1920

*ad set*

D6  
.67  
Copy 2

n. of D.  
OCT 22 1920

maps 7 March, 1921

## EDITORIAL NOTE

IN the spring of 1917 the Foreign Office, in connexion with the preparation which they were making for the work of the Peace Conference, established a special section whose duty it should be to provide the British Delegates to the Peace Conference with information in the most convenient form—geographical, economic, historical, social, religious, and political—respecting the different countries, districts, islands, &c., with which they might have to deal. In addition, volumes were prepared on certain general subjects, mostly of an historical nature, concerning which it appeared that a special study would be useful.

The historical information was compiled by trained writers on historical subjects, who (in most cases) gave their services without any remuneration. For the geographical sections valuable assistance was given by the Intelligence Division (Naval Staff) of the Admiralty; and for the economic sections, by the War Trade Intelligence Department, which had been established by the Foreign Office. Of the maps accompanying the series, some were prepared by the above-mentioned department of the Admiralty, but the bulk of them were the work of the Geographical Section of the General Staff (Military Intelligence Division) of the War Office.

Now that the Conference has nearly completed its task, the Foreign Office, in response to numerous inquiries and requests, has decided to issue the books for public use, believing that they will be useful to students of history, politics, economics, and foreign affairs, to publicists generally and to business men and travellers. It is hardly necessary to say that some of the subjects dealt with in the series have not in fact come under discussion at the Peace Conference; but, as the books treating of them contain valuable information, it has been thought advisable to include them.

It must be understood that, although the series of volumes was prepared under the authority, and is now issued with the sanction, of the Foreign Office, that Office is not to be regarded as guaranteeing the accuracy of every statement which they contain or as identifying itself with all the opinions expressed in the several volumes ; the books were not prepared in the Foreign Office itself, but are in the nature of information provided for the Foreign Office and the British Delegation.

The books are now published, with a few exceptions, substantially as they were issued for the use of the Delegates. No attempt has been made to bring them up to date, for, in the first place, such a process would have entailed a great loss of time and a prohibitive expense ; and, in the second, the political and other conditions of a great part of Europe and of the Nearer and Middle East are still unsettled and in such a state of flux that any attempt to describe them would have been incorrect or misleading. The books are therefore to be taken as describing, in general, *ante-bellum* conditions, though in a few cases, where it seemed specially desirable, the account has been brought down to a later date.

G. W. PROTHERO,

*General Editor and formerly  
Director of the Historical Section.*

*January 1920.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>I. GEOGRAPHY PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL</b>	
(1) Position and Frontiers . . . . .	1
(2) Surface, Coast, and River System	
Surface . . . . .	2
Coast . . . . .	3
River System . . . . .	5
(3) Climate . . . . .	5
(4) Sanitary Conditions . . . . .	7
(5) Race and Language . . . . .	8
(6) Population	
Distribution . . . . .	9
Movement . . . . .	9
<b>II. POLITICAL HISTORY</b>	
Chronological Summary . . . . .	10
(1) ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY FRANCE . . . . .	10
Treaties with Local Rulers . . . . .	10
(2) FRANCE AND ETHIOPIA . . . . .	12
French Seat of Administration at Jibuti . . . . .	12
Railway Agreement . . . . .	12
Frontier Convention . . . . .	12
Progress of Railway . . . . .	13
(3) ANGLO-FRANCO-ITALIAN AGREEMENT OF DE- CEMBER 13, 1906 . . . . .	13
Completion of Railway to Addis Abbaba . . . . .	13
<b>III. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS</b>	
(1) Religious . . . . .	16
(2) Political . . . . .	16
(3) Educational . . . . .	17
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS . . . . .	17

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

[No. 109

	PAGE
IV. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	
(A) MEANS OF COMMUNICATION	
(1) Internal	
Railway . . . . .	18
(2) External	
(a) Ports . . . . .	18
(b) Shipping . . . . .	19
(c) Telegraph and Telephone . . . . .	20
(B) INDUSTRY	
(1) Agriculture . . . . .	20
(2) Fisheries . . . . .	20
(3) Minerals . . . . .	20
(C) COMMERCE . . . . .	21
(D) FINANCE	
(1) Public Finance . . . . .	22
(2) Banking . . . . .	23
(E) GENERAL REMARKS . . . . .	23
APPENDIX	
I. Anglo-French Agreement of February 2-9, 1888 . . . . .	24
II. Franco-Abyssinian Convention of March 20, 1897 . . . . .	25
III. Franco-Italian Protocol of July 10, 1901 . . . . .	26
AUTHORITIES . . . . .	28
MAP . . . . .	28

## I. GEOGRAPHY PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL

### (1) POSITION AND FRONTIERS

FRENCH SOMALILAND, on the eastern coast of Africa, lies round the Gulf of Tajura, at the head of the Gulf of Aden, just outside the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb, between  $10^{\circ} 55'$  and  $12^{\circ} 45'$  north latitude and  $41^{\circ} 45'$  and  $43^{\circ} 25'$  east longitude. It marches on the north with Eritrea, on the west and south with Abyssinia, and on the south-east with British Somaliland, and has an area of about 5,800 square miles.

Starting from the point of Ras Dumeira at the northern entrance to the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb the boundary of the colony runs in a south-westerly direction to Bisidira on the Weima water-course, which it follows as far as Daddato, the extreme point of the delimitation of 1901. The boundary appears to run roughly south-west for about 40 miles and then some 10 miles north-west before touching the Abyssinian frontier. The boundary between French territory and Abyssinian starts in a south-westerly direction running to Deimuli and Lake Ali, thence more directly south to Mergada and Lake Abde Bad (Abbe, Abhe), and finally by way of Airoli, Gobad, and Rahale to Jallelo, the last section running almost due east. At Jallelo the boundary reaches British territory, and proceeds in a north-north-easterly direction to the coast at Loyi Ada.

Lake Asal, which lies within French territory, is recognized as a 'heritage of the Empire of Ethiopia'.

The Abyssinian frontier line has never been demarcated, and it is uncertain whether Lakes Ali and Abde Bad, in whole or in part, are included in French Somali-

land. The boundaries of the colony are almost entirely artificial and have no connexion with the ethnographical divisions of the territories through which they pass.

By its position at the entrance of the Red Sea, French Somaliland commands all trade routes passing through the Suez Canal.

## (2) SURFACE, COAST, AND RIVER SYSTEM

### *Surface*

The coastal region is fairly well known, as is the interior in the south-eastern part of the colony, towards the Jibuti-Addis Abbaba railway, and in the neighbourhood of Lake Asal; but the rest of the colony, never having been explored, has been described only from native reports and from such facts as could be observed by travellers in the coastal region.

The Gulf of Tajura and its inlet, the Ghubbet el-Kharab, traverse half the centre of the country in an east-west direction. North of the Gulf of Tajura, and west of the Ghubbet el-Kharab, the interior rises from the coastal region towards the west to unite with the high mountains of the Shoan plateau (altitude about 8,000 ft.) of Abyssinia.

It appears that the hinterland does not contain any considerable water-courses, plateaux, or other marked natural features, but is simply a broken mountainous country, which rises in the south to an altitude of some thousands of feet, and is traversed by a few unimportant water-courses, whose general direction is from south to north. The lower or northern parts of this hilly country, for a distance which may extend to 40 miles or thereabouts from the coast, are almost bare of vegetation and contain little else but sparse, stunted acacias and some patches of coarse grass. It is said that on the higher spurs there is abundant vegetation with good

grazing grounds, and that there is plenty of perennial water in the streams descending from them: this is uncertain, but the statement is to some extent borne out by the fact that the upper slopes of Mount Guda (altitude 5,495 ft.) can be seen from the coast to be clothed with trees and bush. Near Lake Asal and the western end of the Ghubbet el-Kharab there are bare, precipitous, low hills of volcanic formation, which appear to extend southwards to the Abyssinian frontier and to Lake Abde Bad, in which the great River Hawash, flowing from Abyssinia, loses itself. To the east of these volcanic hills and south of the Gulf of Tajura, as far as the British and Abyssinian frontiers, the interior country, which lies some hundreds of feet above sea-level, is a stony, undulating plain, intersected by water-courses and broken in places by low hills and ridges; most of it is almost bare of vegetation, but along the British frontier there is a good deal of low thorn-bush.

At the foot of the interior hilly country, and stretching along almost the whole length of the coast, is a desert of coralline sand, whose surface is broken here and there by low isolated hills. This tract varies in width from a few hundred yards to about twenty miles; in some places it slopes gently down to the sea, in others it terminates in steep cliffs of hard sand.

#### *Coast*

The coast-line is about 180 miles in length; it runs from Ras Dumeira 67 miles to the headland of Ras el-Bir and then opens out into the Gulf of Tajura, a great inlet penetrating about 50 miles to the west, with a coast-line of 103 miles. From the town of Jibuti, at the southern headland of the gulf, it is about 30 miles across to Ras el-Bir, and about 12 miles along the coast to Loyi Ada on the British frontier.

Most of the coast outside the Gulf has a low sandy shore, covered with mangroves and bush in some places, but bare as a rule; part of it consists of sand cliffs from 100 to 400 or 500 ft. in height. There are no bays of any importance, and the only headlands that require notice are those of Ras Dumeira, Ras Siyan, nearly 21 miles south-east of it, and Ras el-Bir; there is no good anchorage at any of these places, although there is a small harbour at the first, and two small coves at the second, where there is landing. Most of the coast is lined with reefs. There is also an island off Ras Dumeira, with anchorage in southerly winds, and a group of seven islands (known as 'The Seven Brothers') off Ras Siyan, where also there is anchorage.

In the Gulf of Tajura, about 4 miles west of Ras el-Bir, is the town of Obok, and some 30 miles farther to the west Tajura. At the head of the gulf, and joined to it by two narrow channels, lies the Ghubbet el-Kharab, an inlet about 5 miles long and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide. From the Ghubbet el-Kharab the coast runs east to the Bay and port of Jibuti. The coast of the gulf is precipitous; in places along the north shore the mountains of the interior approach the sea and the cliffs are from 100 to 400 ft. in height. There are various headlands and bays in the gulf of no particular importance except in so far as they furnish anchorages, as at Obok, Ras Duan, Dallai, Mersa Duan, and elsewhere, though most of these can only be used in certain winds. The best of all these anchorages is Étoile, one of several in the Ghubbet el-Kharab; here large vessels are sheltered from all winds. The Bay of Jibuti is protected from the west and north, and affords excellent anchorage, with a railway pier and a jetty, at the former of which there is, or soon will be, accommodation for large vessels. Throughout the gulf there is deep water close to the shore, and few reefs.

*River System*

There are no perennial rivers in the colony, and the water-courses appear to contain running water throughout their lengths only on the rare occasions when they are in flood. North of the spur coming from the Shoan plateau to Mount Guda the drainage of the country seems to go north to the Weima water-course, or to several other water-courses which flow into the Gulf of Aden and whose existence is more or less problematical; on the other hand, it has been said that as a rule the water-courses in the interior have no outlet to the sea, and this appears to be the case with the drainage area of Lake Halol. A similar phenomenon seems to exist in the case of the drainage area of the southern part of the colony, whose water-courses fall towards Galamo or Lake Asal. In this connexion it may be noted that there is reason to suppose that the River Hawash, which now loses itself in Lake Abde Bad, originally emptied itself into the Ghubbet el-Kharab *via* Lake Asal; it has been suggested that it no longer does so because the levels of the country between Lake Abde Bad and the sea have been changed by volcanic convulsions.

## (3) CLIMATE

Little is known about the climate of the colony. Certain observations were recorded at Jibuti from 1900 to 1914, of which some are available, and there is some casual information about Obok; but nothing definite is known about the interior.

At Jibuti there are two seasons: the summer from May to September inclusive, when the south-west monsoon blows, and the winter, the remaining seven months of the year, which is the period of the north-east monsoon. There is a good deal of irregularity

about the arrival and departure of these monsoons, and the south-west monsoon has been known to fail entirely.

In the summer the south-west monsoon usually blows during the morning, attaining its full strength at noon; it is replaced in the afternoon by the *khamsein*, a very hot, dry wind, which comes across the desert from the north-west. As a rule the *khamsein* dies away at night, but it may continue for three or four days without interruption; it is most noticeable during July and August. In the winter the north-east monsoon brings a fairly steady, cool wind, which rises about 10 a.m. and continues until nightfall; at this season, especially towards the latter part of it, there is sometimes a cool land breeze at night and in the early morning.

The mean shade temperature for 8 years was 86° F. (30° C.), and during a period of 3 years the summer and winter means were 91° F. (32.5° C.) and 81° F. (27° C.) respectively. In the summer, over a period of 5 years, the mean daily maximum and minimum shade temperatures were 94° F. (34.5° C.) and 86° F. (30° C.) respectively, while for 12 years the mean monthly maximum and minimum temperatures were 100° F. (38° C.) and 82° F. (28° C.). In the winter, during 5 years, the mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures were 83° F. (28.5° C.) and 77 F. (25° C.), and for 3 years the mean monthly maximum and minimum temperatures were 88° F. (31° C.) and 79° F. (26° C.).

The average annual rainfall at Jibuti during a period of 12 years was 4.6 inches (117 mm.), and in 5 of these years, with an average fall of 4.3 inches (109 mm.), 1.6 inches (41 mm.) fell in the summer and 2.7 inches (68 mm.) in the winter. In 8 years there were, on an average, 18 days a year on which an appreciable amount of rain fell. From the record of

5 consecutive years it appears that February, March, April, and October are the most rainy months ; but it is stated by more than one authority that the rains are very irregular in their character, sometimes occurring in very violent bursts. Thus, in 1910, 7.9 inches (200 mm.) are recorded as having fallen during 3 consecutive days in March, the total rainfall of the year having been 9.4 inches (239 mm.).

At Obok, and inland along the north coast of the Gulf of Tajura, the climate appears to be very similar to that of Jibuti, but it is said to be drier and hotter ; and this seems probable, at all events during the summer, since at Jibuti the *khamzin* is tempered by its passage across the gulf. When the *khamzin* is blowing the shade temperature at Obok is said to vary between 100° F. (38° C.) and 115° F. (46° C.), but 122° F. (50° C.) has been recorded there. The rain is said to fall almost entirely during the winter, and it is said that there are short, severe storms rather than regular rains. Another authority writing of these storms says that in the interior they occur usually during August and September.

#### (4) SANITARY CONDITIONS

The climate is not unhealthy for Europeans, sun-stroke being the only serious danger to which they are exposed ; it is said, however, that they become anaemic after more than two years' residence in the country. As regards the diseases to which natives living in the interior are exposed little is known, although malaria and syphilis are said to be common. On the coast pulmonary affections are fairly common, and syphilis is said to be increasing ; other maladies are ophthalmia, diphtheria, affections of the liver, a mild type of malaria, tuberculosis, small-pox, dysentery, and conjunctivitis,

none of which <sup>is</sup> are endemic nor, except the last, have any been known to occur in epidemic form. There has been no cholera since 1902, and sleeping-sickness is not mentioned by any authority.

#### (5) RACE AND LANGUAGE

There are two distinct native races inhabiting the colony, the Danakil and the Issa Somalis, of whom the latter occupy the country lying south of the Gulf of Tajura and of a line running in a south-westerly direction from the Ghubbet el-Kharab to the Abyssinian frontier, while the former occupy the rest of the territory. It has been said that some Galla tribes extend from the Shoan plateau into French Somaliland, but this is probably incorrect.

The Danakil, known to the Somalis as Afar and to the Gallas as Adal, inhabit a territory which extends far north into Eritrea and south and west into Abyssinia. They are divided into two sections, the Adoimara and the Asaimara, of whom the former are descended from the original Arab invaders of the country and the latter from Abyssinians who partly conquered the descendants of the Arabs and then amalgamated with them, becoming the patricians of the country. The Danakil, however, appear to be mostly Adoimara, except perhaps in the neighbourhood of the west-central and north-west frontiers. The Issa Somalis belong to the Hawiya section of the Somali race and are Hamites.

The language of both the Danakil and the Issa Somalis is derived from Galla, but both peoples, especially the latter, have borrowed largely from Arabic, although Arabic is not now understood by them. Neither language is written.

## (6) POPULATION

*Distribution*

The nomad population has been estimated at 200,000 or about 33 to the square mile, a figure which probably is far too high. In 1913 there were nearly 17,000 inhabitants in Jibuti, of whom 585 were Europeans, while the rest consisted of about 1,500 Danakil, 3,500 Issa Somalis (all French subjects), nearly 6,000 Somalis and Abyssinians (foreign subjects), over 5,000 Arabs, and 150 Indians. Obok, formerly the capital of the colony, now has a population of about 300 Danakil; Tajura has 500 or 600 Danakil; and Gobad has 700 or 800 Somalis. There are no other towns in the country and, so far as is known, hardly any villages.

*Movement*

Nothing is known as to any alteration which may be occurring in the numbers of the natives; probably, as in British Somaliland, the life they lead is so hard that only the fittest survive, and, even in the absence of epidemic diseases and with intertribal fighting reduced by French control, it is unlikely that they increase much. Moreover an authority states that they have very small families.

Migrations are unknown in the colony except in so far as the inhabitants, being nomad shepherds, move frequently from one part of the country to another. Some Abyssinians and Gallas come to the coast every year to trade, but they do not remain for more than a few weeks. Of the Arabs who live in Jibuti and its vicinity over 2,000 are men who have come there for work in connexion with the railway and the port, or as market-gardeners at Ambuli; most of them have brought their families with them, but probably do not intend to settle in the country.

## II. POLITICAL HISTORY

### CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

1862. Cession of Obok by Danakil chiefs.
- 1884-5. Treaties of protection with Sultans of Tajura and Gobad and chiefs of the Issa Somalis ; formation of Colony and Protectorate.
1888. Boundary arrangement with Great Britain.
1889. Italian protectorate claimed over Abyssinia.
1892. Transfer of head-quarters to Jibuti, and growing cordiality of relations between Menelik and France.
1894. Concession for railway to Harrar granted to Alfred Ilg.
1896. French Government approves construction of railway. Defeat of Italians at Adowa. Italian protectorate abandoned.
1897. Boundary treaty between Menelik and France.
- 1900-1. Boundary treaty between France and Italy.
1902. France undertakes to subsidize the railway company, and obtains control of it.
- 1904-5. French, British, and Italian rivalry over question of railway construction.
1906. Anglo-Franco-Italian treaty regulates relations with Ethiopia.
1915. Railway reaches Addis Abbaba.

#### (1) ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY FRANCE

FRENCH activity on the Somali coast dates from 1856, when M. Lambert, then consular agent at Aden, was instructed to make inquiries as to the possibility of securing territory for a French station in the vicinity of Aden. He suggested the acquisition of Obok ; and, by a treaty of March 11, 1862, the Danakil chiefs ceded to France, for a payment of 50,500 francs, the harbour of Obok, with the adjacent plain. In 1864 a survey of the harbour was made ; but France was too much pre-

occupied with other interests to devote any attention to the coast.<sup>1</sup> The revival of French activity, which occurred in 1883, was apparently due to two causes: the occupation by Italy of Assab rendered it possible that the trade of Ethiopia, the main object of interest, might be diverted permanently into Italian hands, while in the war with Tonkin France found a coaling station desirable, as facilities at Aden were denied on grounds of neutrality. On April 9, 1884, a treaty was made with the Sultan of Gobad, which placed his foreign relations under French control. On September 21 M. Lagarde obtained from the Sultan of Tajura the cession of his territory from Ras Ali, the southern limit mentioned in the Treaty of 1862, to the Ghubbet-el-Kharab, the French undertaking not to interfere with the laws of the country.

A treaty of August 19, 1840, between the Sultan and the East India Company had bound Tajura not to make treaties with any foreign Power without consulting the Government of Aden; but no protest was made by the British Government against the treaty with Tajura, which was notified to them on February 11, 1885. The treaty was fortified by two acts of surrender, one of October 18, 1884, by the Sultan of Tajura, and one of December 14 by that chief and by the Sultan of Gobad. On January 2, 1885, the Sultan of Gobad accepted a protectorate, and this course was also followed by the chiefs of the Issa Somalis on March 26. These gains were consolidated by the enactment of a French law of August 12, 1885, for the erection of a Colony of Obok, and a Protectorate over Tajura and the adjacent territories. It now became necessary to fix a limit between the British<sup>2</sup> and French spheres, and

<sup>1</sup> A notification of December 25, 1880, expressly stated that no sovereignty had ever been exercised, and that no concessions could be granted.

<sup>2</sup> See *British Somaliland and Sokotra*, No. 97 of this series.

this was done by the exchange of Notes of February 29, 1888, which fixed the boundary at a line from Hadou *via* Abassouen, Bia-Kabouba, and Zeyla, to Harrar, which neither Power was to annex.

## (2) FRANCE AND ETHIOPIA

Fortunately for France, Menelik, Emperor of Ethiopia, was at this time extremely anxious to rid himself of the restriction on his freedom of action which was imposed by the quasi-protectorate claimed by Italy under the Treaty of May 2, 1889, and he soon displayed readiness to make use of French support against any possibility of further encroachments by Italy. In 1892 the decisive step was taken of transferring the head-quarters of the French administration from Obok to Jibuti, Menelik offering to construct a series of wells along the trade route which he desired to see established to that port. From 1893 relations became more cordial, as the Emperor's dislike for Italy increased. Russia showed her support of France by sending, in 1895, an expedition of exploration to Obok with instructions to proceed to Abyssinia, with which country Italy was then at war. The war ended in the following year in Baratieri's defeat at Adowa (March 1), and in the renunciation by Italy, under the Treaty of October 29, 1896, of the claim to exercise a protectorate. Concessions of March 9, 1894, and November 5, 1896, permitted Alfred Ilg, a Swiss engineer, and L. Chefneux, a French explorer, to construct a railway connecting Ethiopia with Jibuti; and the French Colonial Minister's decisions of April 27, 1896, and September 16, 1897, authorized the construction of that portion of the line which traversed the French Protectorate. The frontier was also settled by a Convention of March 20, 1897, as running from Jallelo on the Franco-British boundary to Dumeira on the north (the limit fixed by the

Treaty of 1862), an extension of no more than 60 kilometres inland being thus permitted.

With Italy a boundary settlement was made in Protocols of January 24, 1900, and July 10, 1901, which fixed the boundary as from Dumeira to Bisidiro on the Weima, and then up the stream to Daddato. In the meantime the railway company formed in 1896 had been making progress, but, in the course of 1901, came to the end of the 18 millions of francs of capital which it had raised. To prevent the enterprise falling into foreign hands, the French Government guaranteed it a subvention of 500,000 francs for a period of 50 years, and by December 1902, the line to Dire-Dawa was completed (310 kilometres).<sup>1</sup>

### (3) THE ANGLO-FRANCO-ITALIAN AGREEMENT OF DECEMBER 13, 1906

It was obvious that the completion of the railway from Dire-Dawa to Addis Abbaba, and thence to the White Nile, which was contemplated in the concession of 1894, though that concession actually applied only to the first section of the line to Harrar, would affect in a serious measure interests other than those of France. By the Treaty of May 15, 1902, Great Britain had obtained from Menelik the right to construct a railway to connect Uganda and the Sudan through Abyssinian territory, and on August 28, 1904, she obtained a further concession for the construction of a line from Somaliland to the Sudan. On the other hand, the Emperor, in accordance with the spirit of the concession of 1894, informed the French representative on August 4, 1904, that the company might proceed with the line to Addis Abbaba, leaving the terms to be settled later. Meanwhile, Italy was as anxious as ever to

<sup>1</sup> The history of the Jibuti railway is more fully dealt with in *Abyssinia*, No. 129 of this series.

secure railway connexion between Eritrea and her share of Somaliland, and Menelik, importuned by representatives of the three Powers, declared that, failing agreement among them, he would himself undertake the completion of the line.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, a compromise was arrived at in the agreement of December 13, 1906, which asserted the intention of the three Powers to preserve the *status quo* in Abyssinia, and, if it were disturbed, to co-operate in order to safeguard (a) the interests of Great Britain and Egypt in the Nile basin,<sup>2</sup> more especially as regards the regulation of the waters of that river and its tributaries (due consideration being paid to local interests), without prejudice to Italian interests mentioned in paragraph (b); (b) the interests of Italy in Ethiopia as regards Eritrea and Somaliland (including the Benadir), more especially with reference to the hinterland of her possessions, and to the territorial connexion between them to the west of Addis Abbaba; and (c) the interests of France in Ethiopia as regards the French Protectorate on the Somali coast, the hinterland of this Protectorate, and the zone necessary for the construction and working of the railway from Jibuti to Addis Abbaba. It was agreed that the line to Addis Abbaba should be continued by the French company; that the French Government was to secure the appointment of British, Italian, and Abyssinian representatives on the board of directors; that all nations should receive identical treatment as regards trade and transit on the railway and at Jibuti; and that no transit duties should be charged. A branch

<sup>1</sup> See *La Dépêche coloniale*, May 18, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> By Article III of the Treaty of May 15, 1902, Menelik undertook not to construct or allow to be constructed any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana, or the Sobat which would arrest the flow of the waters into the Nile, except in agreement with the British and Sudanese Governments.

line to Harrar was also sanctioned. The British right to undertake any construction west of Addis Abbaba, for which foreign aid might be needed, was conceded, as well as the right to use the concession for a line from British Somaliland to the Sudan, after arrangement with France and Italy ; and the Italian right to join Benadir and Eritrea was admitted, subject to similar conditions as to the constitution of the directorate and equality of treatment. The agreement was followed by the steady construction of the line, which has now reached the capital.

### III. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

#### (1) RELIGIOUS

THE Somalis under French control, being mainly of the coastal region, belong to the stricter class of Mohammedans ; but there are also temporarily resident in the territory a considerable number of Abyssinians, who profess a singularly corrupt form of Christianity. The limited extent of the French territory, and the existence of the railway, minimize the probability of serious difficulties with fanatical Mohammedans, such as have been a great source of trouble in the British, and, in a less degree, in the Italian sphere.

#### (2) POLITICAL

By the decree of May 20, 1896, the French Colony of Obok and its dependencies and the Protectorate over Tajura were given the collective title of *Côte française des Somalis*. The administration is on the model of that in West Africa, by a Governor assisted by a Council of Administration, which must be consulted in financial matters, and may be consulted on other questions. The finance of the territory is, as usual, under the minute control of a Treasury staff, which is largely independent of the Governor, in accordance with the normal French colonial regime, under the Presidential decree of December 30, 1912. Legislative power rests with the French Legislature or with the President ; but the Governor has a wide power of issuing *arrêtés*, which serve many of the purposes of laws. The administration of the Protectorate is in the

nature of political surveillance, and the tribes are allowed to settle their internal affairs largely in accordance with their own legal system.

### (3) EDUCATIONAL

Education is regulated by an *arrêté* of the Governor of April 12, 1913, which provides (a) for primary education, consisting as usual of instruction in the French language, elementary natural science in its practical application, history, and geography; and (b) for professional education to prepare youths for minor posts in the Governmental service, and for various forms of manual labour. Education is free and unsectarian.

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The general attitude of the population of the Protectorate towards French rule appears to be one of acquiescence, due to the avoidance by the French authorities of any energetic interference with the habits of the tribes and to the toleration of their religion, and promoted in the past by the good relations existing between Menelik and France, which gave no encouragement to discontent in the zone of French influence.

## IV. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### (A) MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

#### (1) INTERNAL

##### *Railway*

APART from the Abyssinia Railway, the internal communications of the colony are of small importance. A company was formed in 1896 to undertake the construction of the railway from Jibuti; its capital, partly subscribed in Britain, now amounts to 22,000,000 francs. The line reached the Abyssinian capital, Addis Abbaba, on May 21, 1915.

The length of the line constructed and now working is 492 miles, of which only 56 miles are in French territory. The total cost represents a capital outlay of about £4,000,000. During the year 1915, when only 382 miles were open for traffic, the profits exceeded the expenses by no less than 1,700,000 francs. The gauge of the railway is one metre.

#### (2) EXTERNAL

##### *(a) Ports*

For external communications the colony depends entirely on the port of Jibuti. Obok, the former capital, has a fairly good, though somewhat restricted natural harbour, which is now practically deserted.

The port of Jibuti, which is really an open roadstead, lacks the facilities necessary for dealing with the increasing Abyssinian traffic. The French Chamber, however, at the beginning of 1916 voted a sum of 5,000,000 francs for the construction of a breakwater, quay, and dock. The anchorage space is now about a square mile in extent. Some twelve lighters, of 40-100 tons capacity, are available for loading and

discharging cargo. The stock of coal stored at the port amounts usually to about 15,000 tons, owned partly by the Compagnie de l'Afrique but mainly by the Messageries Maritimes.

Apart from its importance as an outlet for the commerce of the Abyssinian regions, Jibuti is becoming increasingly prominent as a port of call for vessels passing to and from the Mediterranean.

### (b) Shipping

In 1913, 407 vessels with a tonnage of 945,156 entered and cleared at Jibuti. Of these 226 were French and 81 English, the remainder being German, Russian, Austrian, Italian, and Dutch. The number fell to 359 in 1914, 255 in 1915, and 249 in 1916. The tonnages discharged and cleared in the years 1913-16 are recorded as follows in the *Bulletins de l'Office Coloniale* :

	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.
Tonnage discharged . . . . .	98,254	88,963	55,280	81,799
Tonnage cleared . . . . .	62,384	61,551	51,743	—

Before the war, ships of the Messageries Maritimes touched regularly at Jibuti; other lines whose vessels called were the Compagnie Havraise Péninsulaire, the Chargeurs Réunis, the Bucknall Steamship Line, the Strick Line, the West Hartlepool Steam Navigation Company, the Hamburg-America Line, the Austrian Lloyd, the Russian Steam Navigation & Trading Company, the Russian Volunteer Fleet, and the Rotterdamsche Lloyd. The Compagnie de l'Afrique Orientale and Messrs. Cowasji, Dinshaw Bros. had services between Jibuti and Aden.

From the outbreak of war the German and Austrian, and one, if not both, of the Russian services, were suspended. The Marittima Italiana instituted a regular

service about the end of 1915, and a Japanese company, the Mitsui Bussan Kaisha, appears on the list for 1916.

(c) *Telegraph and Telephone*

Jibuti is connected by telephone and telegraph with Harrar and Addis Abbaba, and by cable with Obok and Perim.

(B) INDUSTRY

(1) *Agriculture*

French official reports recognize explicitly that there are no great developments possible for local agriculture or other industries. An attempt to introduce the date-palm in the neighbourhood of Jibuti has been fairly successful. Cotton-growing was a complete failure, and has been abandoned. The water-supply is sufficient to enable fruit and vegetables to be grown in plenty for local requirements, but in the absence of perennial rivers and the uncertainty as to the volume of the underground supply, irrigation on any considerable scale seems to be scarcely possible. The flocks and herds of the natives furnish them with means of subsistence, and supply Jibuti with abundance of meat and milk.

(2) *Fisheries*

Along the coast considerable activity is shown in fishing both for sea-fish and for mother-of-pearl.

(3) *Minerals*

At Lake Asal the colony possesses an apparently inexhaustible reservoir of salt, which has been worked by Europeans since 1912. In 1914 nearly 5,000 tons of salt were obtained, and in 1916 the output exceeded 8,000 metric tons. Most of this was exported to

Abyssinia, which offers a good market and has a treaty right to purchase such quantities as it requires for its own needs.

## (C) COMMERCE

The trade of the colony shows a steady increase, temporarily arrested in the first two years of war.

	IMPORTS			
	<i>From France.</i>	<i>From French colonies.</i>	<i>From other countries.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
	<i>Francs.</i>	<i>Francs.</i>	<i>Francs.</i>	<i>Francs.</i>
1900	2,332,334	19,719	4,762,204	7,114,257
1910	5,240,979	29,524	15,754,209	21,024,712
1913	7,832,024	122,724	25,962,095	33,916,843
1914	3,967,281	270,119	24,454,745	28,692,145
1915	1,400,849	44,231	22,661,150	24,106,230
1916	3,055,974	293,697	35,889,185	39,238,856

	EXPORTS			
	<i>To France.</i>	<i>To French colonies.</i>	<i>To other countries.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
	<i>Francs.</i>	<i>Francs.</i>	<i>Francs.</i>	<i>Francs.</i>
1900	432,163	20,273	3,015,570	3,468,006
1910	3,339,660	479,184	29,748,043	33,566,887
1913	3,560,960	626,217	43,516,971	47,704,148
1914	3,447,067	446,078	39,750,070	43,643,215
1915	5,004,213	381,503	35,610,323	40,996,039
1916	9,617,116	530,488	41,477,551	51,625,155

The chief imports are cotton stuffs, railway material and rolling stock, coal, and food-stuffs. During the war the import of railway material was greatly diminished, whereas a remarkable increase was recorded in imports of coal. The share of Britain and British colonies in the import trade was about one-half in pre-war years, but rose to three-fourths of the total for the three years 1914-16. About two-thirds of the imports were in transit to Abyssinia, and about one-fifth, chiefly coal sold to passing ships, was re-exported by sea.

Nearly all the exports come in transit from Abyssinia. The principal articles of export are hides, skins, and coffee; of less importance are ivory, beeswax, rubber, and civet.

*Trading Firms.*—The monopoly of the trade in sponges, coral, and mother-of-pearl has been granted to the firm of Marill, Allègre et Cie.

At Jibuti there are some twenty trading houses.

## (D) FINANCE

### (1) *Public Finance*

The position of the public finances of the colony before the war was eminently satisfactory. Every year since 1903 revenue had exceeded expenditure, and at the close of 1913 not only was there no public debt, but the accumulated balance, invested mainly in French Government and Colonial stock, stood at 2,913,990 francs. The annual grant in aid, made by the French Government, was gradually reduced from 200,000 francs in 1904 to nil in 1912. A sum of 500,000 francs, however, is still paid annually by the French Government on its guarantee of the loan raised by the old *Compagnie Impériale des Chemins de Fer Éthiopiens*.

The great bulk of the revenue is supplied by import and export duties, other indirect taxes, and harbour charges. The direct contributions, represented by licences and by hut and property taxes, produce the insignificant total of about 40,000 francs per annum. On the side of expenditure the chief items are the annual disbursement, as interest on the railway loan, of the Government subvention of 500,000 francs; the large but varying amounts voted for the construction of new public works; and the expenses of administration, of the public departments, and of the recently constituted *Garde Indigène*.

*(2) Banking*

A branch of the Banque de l'Indo-Chine is established at Jibuti.

**(E) GENERAL REMARKS**

The commercial value of the Somaliland coast is due almost entirely to the fact that Jibuti is the terminus of the railway to Addis Abbaba in Abyssinia, while it is also a convenient coaling station and port of call for vessels trading with the East, particularly with the French Asiatic possessions, and with Eastern Africa and Madagascar. Practically all the trade of the country passes through French hands. The Convention of 1906 secures equality of treatment for all nations at the port of Jibuti.

## APPENDIX

## I

## AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE GULF OF TAJURA AND THE SOMALI COAST, FEBRUARY 2-9, 1888

*The Marquis of Salisbury to M. Waddington*

*Foreign Office, February 9, 1888.*

M. l' Ambassadeur,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's note of the 2nd instant, reciting the arrangement upon which we have agreed with regard to the respective rights of Great Britain and France in the Gulf of Tadjourra and on the Somali coast.

The provisions of this arrangement are as follows :

1. The Protectorates exercised, or to be exercised, by Great Britain and France shall be separated by a straight line starting from a point on the coast opposite to the wells of Hadou and passing through the said wells to Abassouen ; from Abassouen the line shall follow the caravan road as far as Bia-Kabouba, and from this latter point it shall follow the caravan road from Zeyla to Harrar, passing through Gildessa. It is expressly agreed that the use of the wells of Hadou shall be common to both parties.

2. Her Britannic Majesty's Government recognise the Protectorate of France over the coasts of the Gulf of Tadjourra, including the Group of the Mushah Islands and the Islet of Bab, situated in the gulf, as well as over the inhabitants, tribes, and fractions of tribes situated to the west of the line above mentioned.

The Government of the French Republic recognises the Protectorate of Great Britain over the coast to the east of the above line as far as Bender Ziadeh, as well as over the inhabitants, tribes, and fractions of tribes situated to the east of the same line.

3. The two Governments pledge themselves to abstain from taking any action or exercising any intervention, the Govern-

ment of the Republic to the east of the above line, Her Britannic Majesty's Government to the west of the same line.

4. The two Governments engage not to endeavour to annex Harrar, nor to place it under their Protectorate. In taking this engagement the two Governments do not renounce the right of opposing attempts by any other Power to acquire or assert any rights over Harrar.

5. It is expressly agreed that the caravan road from Zeyla to Harrar, by way of Gildessa, shall remain open in its entire extent to the commerce of the two nations, as well as to that of the natives.

6. The two Governments engage to take all necessary measures to prevent the slave-trade and the importation of gunpowder and arms in the territories subject to their authority.

7. The Government of Her Britannic Majesty engages to treat with consideration ('bienveillance') those persons, whether chiefs or members of the tribes placed under their Protectorate, who had previously adopted the French Protectorate. The Government of the Republic, on their part, take the same engagement with regard to the persons and tribes henceforth placed under their Protectorate.

I have the honour to state that the arrangement recited in your Excellency's note, of which the above is a textual translation, is accepted by Her Majesty's Government, and will be considered by them as binding upon the two countries from the present date.

In doing so, I will add, for the sake of record, that I understand the third clause of the Agreement to preclude the granting by either party of protection to natives within the Protectorate of the other party; and that I gathered in conversation that your Excellency concurred with me in that opinion.

I have, &c.,

SALISBURY.

## II

### CONVENTION BETWEEN FRANCE AND ABYSSINIA RELATIVE TO THE FRONTIER OF THE FRENCH COASTAL ZONE, MARCH 20, 1897

Entre Sa Majesté Ménélik II, Roi de Rois d'Éthiopie, et Monsieur Lagarde, Ministre Plénipotentiaire, Représentant du Gouvernement de la République Française, Officier de la

Légion d'Honneur, Grand-Croix de l'Ordre Impérial d'Éthiopie, il a été convenu ce qui suit :

La frontière de la zone côtière conservée par la France comme possession ou protectorat direct sera indiquée par une ligne partant de la frontière Franco-Anglaise à Djalelo, passant à Rahalé, Gobad, Airoli, le bord du lac Abbé, Mergada, le bord du lac Alli, et, de là, remontant par Daimuli et Adghéno Marci, puis gagnant Doumeirah par Etaga en côtoyant Raheitah.

(Voir Carte de Chaurand, 1894.)

Il reste bien entendu qu'aucune Puissance étrangère ne pourra se prévaloir de cet arrangement pour s'immiscer sous quelque forme et quelque prétexte que ce soit dans les régions situées au delà de la zone côtière française.

Le lac Assal étant l'héritage de l'Empire d'Éthiopie, il est convenu qu'on ne défendra jamais de prendre dans ce Lac le sel destiné à l'Éthiopie et que l'arrangement qui a été fait avec une Compagnie au sujet du Lac Assal reste intact.

Écrit à Addis Abeba le 12 Mégabit, 1889 (20 mars, 1897).

LAGARDE.  
MENELIK.

### III

#### PROTOCOL FOR THE DELIMITATION OF THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN POSSESSIONS IN THE COASTAL REGION OF THE RED SEA AND THE GULF OF ADEN, JULY 10, 1901.

La Commission spéciale visée par l'Art. II du Protocole signé à Rome, le 24 Janvier, 1900, entre la France et l'Italie, au sujet de la frontière délimitant leurs possessions respectives dans la région côtière de la Mer Rouge et du Golfe d'Aden, ayant achevé, sur les lieux, le travail dont elle avait été chargée, et le dit Protocole devant maintenant être complété d'après les résultats de ce travail, les Soussignés, dûment autorisés à cet effet, ont stipulé ce qui suit :—

La ligne de frontière stipulée par l'Art. I du Protocole du 24 Janvier, 1900, a son point de départ à la pointe extrême du Ras Doumeirah ; elle s'identifie ensuite avec la ligne de partage des eaux du promontoire de ce nom : après quoi, à savoir après le parcours de 1½ kilom., elle se dirige en ligne droite au point, sur le Weima, marqué Bisidiro dans la carte ci-annexée.

A partir de Bisidiro, la ligne se confond avec le thalweg du

Weima, en le remontant jusqu'à la localité que la carte ci-annexée dénomme Daddato, cette localité marquant ainsi le point extrême de la délimitation Franco-Italienne établie par le susdit Protocole du 24 Janvier, 1900.

En foi de quoi le présent Protocole a été dressé et signé en double exemplaire.

Fait à Rome, le 10 Juillet, 1901.

CAMILLE BARRÈRE, Ambassadeur de France.

PRINETTI, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de  
Sa Majesté le Roi d'Italie.

## AUTHORITIES

## HISTORICAL

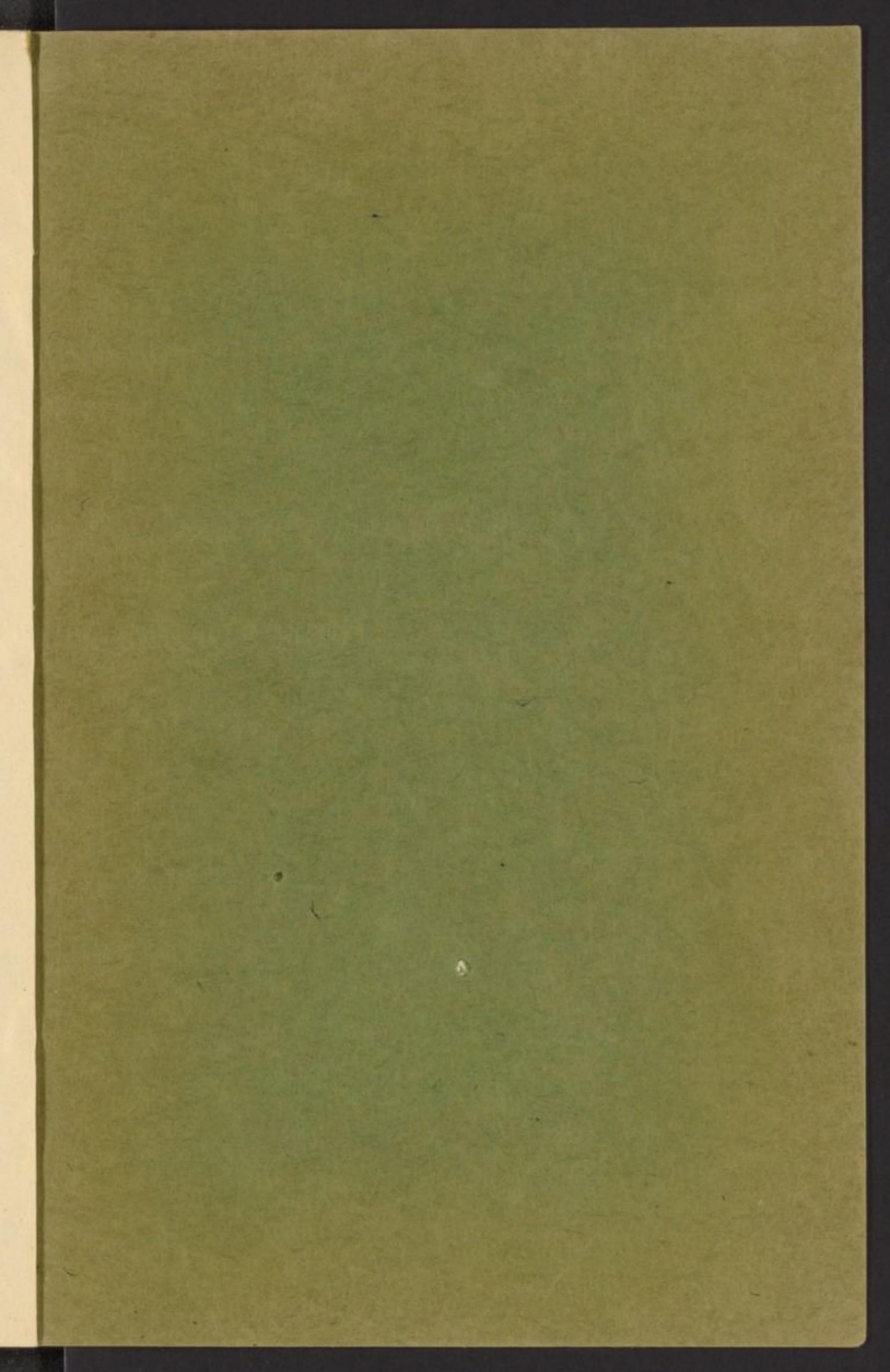
- CUFINO, L. *Nell' Oceano Indiano*. Naples, 1916.
- GOLTDAMMER, F. *Notice sur Obock (Golfe d'Aden), colonie française*. Paris, 1877.
- HERTSLET, Sir E. *Map of Africa by Treaty*. 3rd edition, London, 1909.
- HEUDEBERT, L. *Au Pays des Somalis et des Comoriens*. Paris, 1901.
- Report of the Congrès de l'Afrique orientale (Madagascar et Dépendances, Côte française des Somalis)*, held in Paris, October 9-14, 1911. Paris, 1912.

## ECONOMIC

- Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions*, vol. ii, 1916. London.
- Bulletin de la Société de Géographie commerciale*, 1911. Paris.
- Côte française des Somalis: Ministère des Colonies, Rapports annuels, 1910-16*. (Published also in the *Journal officiel de la République française* and in the *Bulletin de l'Office coloniale*.)
- Deutsches Kolonialblatt*. XXIV. Jahrgang, 1913. Berlin.
- Geographical Journal*. January, 1916. London.
- Globus*. Vol. 84. 1903. Berlin.
- Jahrbücher für nationale Ökonomie und Statistik*. November, 1917. Berlin.
- L'Agricoltura coloniale*. Anno XI, Sem. 1. 30. No. 3, 1917. Florence.
- Revue coloniale*. No. 2, 1914. Paris.
- Revue économique internationale*, 1909, 1911. Brussels.
- Statesman's Year Book*, 1910-18. London.
- Statistical Abstract for Foreign Countries*, 1901-12. London.
- United Empire: The Royal Colonial Institute Journal*. February, 1917. London.

## MAP

French Somaliland is covered by the War Office Map G.S.G.S. 2394, scale 1 : 1,000,000, 1909.



LONDON :

PUBLISHED BY H. M. STATIONERY OFFICE.

To be purchased through any Bookseller, or directly from  
H. M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses :—

IMPERIAL HOUSE, KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C. 2, and

28 ABINGDON STREET, LONDON, S.W. 1 ;

37 PETER STREET, MANCHESTER ;

1 ST. ANDREW'S CRESCENT, CARDIFF ;

23 FORTH STREET, EDINBURGH ;

or from E. PONSONBY, LTD., 116 GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN.

---

1920.

*Price 1/- net.*