

FOR.&.POLI.DEPTT. SECT.E. OCT.1920, Nos.169-185.contd.

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CONFIDENTIAL

ProNo.169.

Demi-Official No.P.5649, dated the 16th  
September, 1919.

From-The Political Secretary, Indian Office, Whitehall,  
London, S.W.1.

To-The Foreign Secretary to the Government of India.

In continuation of Mr.Shuckburgh's letter\* of August  
\*Dy.No.<sup>W</sup><sub>4489</sub> of 1919. 22nd, forwarding a copy of  
note by the Political Aide-  
de-Camp on the receipt of  
Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa al Khalifa of Bharein by His  
Majesty the King, I am desired to transmit a petition  
presented to Sir Arthur Hirtzel by the Shaikh.

This petition presumably expresses the hopes and  
desires to which reference was made in the letter addressed  
by Sir Isa bin Ali al Khalifa to His Majesty.

Shaikh Abdulla was received on September 1st by Sir  
Arthur Hirtzel, in the absence of the Secretary of State,  
and formulated the request which he has now committed to  
writing. I am to enclose copy of Sir Arthur Hirtzel's  
minute of the conversation and to suggest that the Gov-  
ernment of India send some answer to the Shaikh.

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Pro No. 169

To- His Honoured Excellency SIR ARTHUR HIPTZEL.

Greeting and honour.

With reference to my conversation with you on the 2nd of Zil Hijja 1337 (corresponding to september 1st, 1919) relative to my father's instructions to me to submit for the consideration of His Majesty's Government and your honour's kind permission to make any submission in writing, I have the honour to relate accordingly. But first I would manifest my exceeding pleasure and heartfelt gratitude for the assurance wherewith your honour assured me that His Majesty's Government have no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of my father's Government. This, noble Sir, is what we understood of the justice of His Majesty's Government and this is what we hope will be the practice of the Political Agents with us. But the particular points are set forth here under.

- (1) Equality with neighbouring Arab Rulers in the exercise of authority over all subjects who are in his country, in accordance with the practice in neighbouring States: and this without prejudice to the jurisdiction of the



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Political Agent in cases that concern subjects of Great Britain or the Great European Powers.

- (2) My father hopes he will be empowered to select the Bench of Magistrates- as are the rest of the Chiefs- in the same manner as he appoints the Sharo' Court and the Court of Ghos (ie., pearl-fishing affairs).
- (3) My father hopes His Majesty's Government will permit and assist him to open a port at Zubarah, which belonged to his ancestors' domains.
- (4) My father hopes he may correspond with the seat of Government in London, should necessity arise; however, I will convey to him what your honour said that he must correspond with the Government of India.

Usual compliments.

(sd.) ABDULLA BIN ISA,

The Successor.

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Pro No. 169.

Note by Sir Arthur Hirtzel, dated 1st September  
1919.

Political Department.

In the absence of the Secretary of State I received to-day Shaikh Abdullah, accompanied by his son, interpreter, and by ~~the~~ Captain Campbell, Acting Political Officer. The Shaikh stated that there were certain matters of business at his father's request he wished to put forward. These proved to be three in number:-

- (1) The ~~Sbaikh of Bahrein~~ wished to be placed on an equality with other neighbouring Shaikhs. Asked for an example of inequality, he referred to British jurisdiction over Arabs other than subjects of Bahrein, and to occasional intervention of the Political Agent to protect even Bahreinis.
- (2) He wished to be allowed to nominate the Bahreini members of the Mejlis without any interference on the part of the Political Agent. He allowed the foreign members to be nominated by the Political Agent, which was in itself

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a derogation from his rights, but he thought that he ought to be left alone in the choice of his own subjects.

(3) Bin Saud is going to develop the port of Ofair (where he levies customs duties at 8 per cent.), and Shaikh Esa wishes to develop the port of Zubarah on the Qatr peninsula, which he claims once belonged to Bahrein (Persian Gulf Gazettee, Volume II, page 1952 ).

Shaikh Abdulla was careful not to mention any Political Agents by name, but he represented that his neighbours compared the position of Bahrein in respect of independence and freedom from intervention in its internal affairs unfavourably with that of, say, Bin Saud and the Shaikh of Koweit. The Shaikh did not mind what people said and was confident of the good intentions of the British Government, but at the same time he would like these things altered. He was always willing to consult the Political Agent in important matters, but thought he might be left to himself in small ones.

I told him that the British Government was, for his purpose, the Government of India, to whom I would send privately a memorandum of what he had said, and who I was

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sure , would consider the Shaikh's wishes sympathetically, in view of the friendly relations subsisting between them. I hoped that the Shaikh would always speak quite frankly to the Political Agent and tell him all that was in his mind (he said he did, but was not always listened to), and I assured him that the British Government had no desire to interfere with his independence for the sake of interfering or for any other purpose than was provided for by the

\* Enclo.of Pro, No.98 in  
S. E. August 1917, Nos.  
87- 105.

treaties. \* I asked him  
to send in a memorandum

of his points which I would send to the Government of India & privately with my own. He undertook to do so and expressed himself satisfied.

It would seem desirable that the Government of India send somekind of answer to the Shaikh, for though Abdulla expressed himself with entire propriety, it was evident that he and his companions were much in earnest.

1st September 1919.

(Intld.) A. H.

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Pro No. 170

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Memorandum No.  $\frac{32762}{6-15}$ , dated Baghdad, the 31st

October 1919.

FORE. POLL. DEPTT. SECT. E. OCT. 1920. NOS 169- 185. Contd.

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From- The Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia,  
To- The Secretary to the Government of India in the  
Foreign and Political Department.

A copy of the undernoted correspondence is for -  
warded with compliments for information.

Copy of memorandum No.  $\frac{32761}{6-15}$  dated 31st October 1919,  
from the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to Deputy Political  
Resident, Bushire, with enclosures.

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PRO No. 170

Memorandum No.  $\frac{32761}{6-15}$  dated Baghdad, the 31st October  
1919.

From- LIEUTENANT. COLONEL. A.T. WILSON, Acting Civil  
Commissioner in Mesopotamia,  
To- The Deputy Political Resident, Bushire.

I forward in original, \* the enclosed correspondence \* regarding

pro. No 169  
Serial No. and enclosures:

the wishes expressed by  
Shaikh Abdulla of Bahrein

during his visit to London, and shall be glad of your view  
on the points raised therein and in particular in regard to  
the point raised re Zubarah. My recollection is that there

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was correspondence on the subject between 1903 and 1906.

† Letter No. P. 5649 ‡ dated 16th September 1919, from  
Pro No. 169. L. D. Wakely, Esq, Political  
Department, India Office, London, S. W. 1, to Civil  
Commissoner, Baghdad with enclosures.

Extract from Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Volume II,  
by J. G. Lorimer, dated 1908. Telegram No. 12988, of  
30th October 1919 from Political, Baghdad to Zinneremo,  
London.

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Copy to Political Agent, Bahrein, who will be good  
enough to furnish his view on the subject to Deputy  
Political Resident, Bushire, with copy to this Office.

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Pro No. 170

Extract from the Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Volume  
II, by J.G. Lorimer, dated 1908.

**ZUBARAH**

A ruined and deserted town on the west side of the



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Qatar promontory about 5 miles south of Khor Hassan. It stands at the foot of a deep bay of the same name, of which the western point is Ras 'Ashirid and which contains a small island, also called Zubarah. The town was formerly the stronghold of the Ali Khalifa, ruling family of Bahrein, its site is still frequented by the Na'im of Bahrein and Qatar. The town was walled and some 10 or 12 forts stood within a radius of 7 miles round it, among them Faraihah, Halwan, Lisa, 'Ain Muhammed al' at Murair, Rakaiyat, Umm-ash-Shuwall and Thaghab, which are mentioned in the article on Qatar. All of these are now ruinous and deserted, except Thaghab, which the people of Khor Hassan visit to draw water. Murair is said to have been connected with the sea by a creek which enabled sailing boats to discharge their cargoes at its gate, but the inlet is now silted up with sand.

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Pro No. 170

Telegram R., No. 12988, dated 30th October 1919.

From- Political, Baghdad,

To- Zinneremo, London.

FORE. POLL. DEPT. SECT. E. OCT.1920. No. 169- 185. contd.

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(Repeated Foreign, Delhi.)

Pro. No. 169.                      Your despatch of 15th September,  
5649.

First point was conceded when Bahrein Order<sup>†</sup> in Council  
Pro. No 14 and enclosure 1 of pro.                      was brought into  
No.16, in S.G. October 1916, Nos.7-62.                      force vide my  
S. G. June 1919, No 1-19, Correspondence                      despatch\*\* of 5th  
pages 7-8.                      February, 4041.  
Cf. Pro No. 17 in S.G. June 1919, Nos.1-19.

That we could not concede it before was due primarily to  
political considerations which were disposed of by the war.

Second point has for all practical purpose also been  
concede, vide correspondence referred to above.

I am asking Bushire to enquire as to third point,  
It is very old claim and has been dormant for the past ten  
years to the best of my recollection. I do not think that  
it need be taken very seriously.

As regards fourth point correspondence through  
Political Agent on special occasions with His Majesty's  
Government might be allowed to replace correspondance  
with Government of India so soon as arrangements proposed

\*Pro.No.183 in S.W. June 1919, in your telegram\*of the  
Nos. 183.303.

29th March 1917 come into force.

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‡ Diary No.  $\frac{W}{4046}$  of 1919.

~~In~~ In this connection  
please see my telegram

‡ Pro. No. 204 in S.W., June 1919, of the 8th August, No. 8998,  
Nos. 183- 303.

† and Government of India  
despatch of the 25th May 1917, No. 44. ‡

Addressed India Office; repeated India by post.

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Pro No. 171.

Telegram no. 83-E.A, dated the 19th January 1920.

From-The Secretary to the Government of India in the  
Foreign and Political Department, Delhi,

To-The Political Officer, Baghdad.

Reference India Office letter of 16th September 1919, P-5649

Serial No 1.  
Serial No. 2.

to my address, and your  
memorandum of 31st October

1919, 32762. Please forward local officer's reports with  
your suggestions to enable Government of India to reply  
to Shaikh.

Addressed Baghdad; repeated Bushire.

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Pro No. 172.

No. 3560-6-14, dated Baghdad, the 30th January 1920.

From-BREVET LIEUTENANT-COLONEL. A. T. WILSON, C.S.I, C.M.G.  
C.I.E., D.S.O. Acting Civil Commissioner in  
Mesopotamia,

To-The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign  
and Political Department.

<p>I enclose herewith for the information of the Government of Demi- official letter, dated 27 May 1919, from Mr, Norman N.E. Brsy, on Board "Lawrence," to Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel A. T. Wilson, Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.</p> <p>Demi- official letter, dated 17th June 1919, from Mr. G.H. Bill, Deputy Political Resident, Bushire, to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel A.T. Wilson, Civil Commissioner Baghdad.</p> <p>Memorandum No.6-cof 5th January 1920, from Political Agent, Bahrein, to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad with onelosure.</p>	<p>India, copies of the marginally noted correspondence which has passed betw- een Political Agent, Bahrein, Deputy Political Resident, Bushire and this office in regard to the state of affairs at Bahrein.</p>
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If printed I shall be glad of ten copies.

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Endlo. 1 to Pro no 172.

Demi- official, dated Board "Lawrence," the 27th  
May 1919.

From- NORMAN N.E. BRAY, ESQ.

To- BREVET LIGUTENANT-COLONEL A.T. WILSON, C.S.I.  
C.M. G., C. I.E., D.S. O., Civil Commissioner,  
Baghdad.

FORE. POLL. DEPT. SECT. E. OCT. 1920. NOS. 169- 185. contd.

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I find the following matters at Bahrein very unsatisfactory and consider we should attempt to rectify them.

1. I find a considerable feeling of hostility to ourselves due to religious, economical, personal and war reasons, assisted in a negative way by the missionaries. Also there is a considerable party hostile to the Shaikh and consequently to ourselves. In contrast to this I find no British party and a general lack of touch especially with those hostile to ourselves.

Proposed remedy (1) Half-monthly majlis to explain any matter of importance, to act as a vent for public opinion, to hear grievances and to bring the Agent into clear touch with British subjects and Foreigners.

2. More entertaining especially of those hostile or supposedly so: up to the present these have been excluded from association with the Agency. This I hold to be wrong policy, as an odd word may give warning of trouble, or a sentence enable an action to be anticipated.

3. The definite formation of a British party by indirect methods, such as rewards, which you have kindly agreed to, by closer association, and by visits, by letters of appreciation from yourself or Mr. Bill, in really deserved instances, through schools, presents and literature. 365



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(b) The extraordinary backwardness of the place considering its long association with ourselves.

I proposed to improve the water supply. ( Capital already promised. )  
To get electrical plant. (

Start the municipality on sound lines; at present it is only a pretence.

Import fruit trees suitable to climate and soil and trees.

(c) The ignorance of even the highest classes. School immediately imperative and strongly supported offered, but must be under control of Political Agent.

(d) Local industries practically non-existent. I propose to enquire seriously into pearl button machinery, and, if practicable, to introduce. Also to start small industrial school.

As regards (b), (c) and (d) any amount of capital is available and at present lying idle.

(e) The American missionaries. I am not at all satisfied that the American Government is not behind their activities. I will give full details as far as I have gone in report.

I view with suspicion their activities at Hasa, especially this latest move for buying dates and starting a date factory there. I would like further enquiries

made to as to the visit of Tomlinson on 14th 1920



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He came to buy dates for Hill and Company. I have extremely reliable information that he brought comparatively small quantities, but visited important merchants at Najd and received orders for 3 lakhs of cotton cloths. Further the missionaries have entirely ceased to convert, are entertaining largely, are giving presents in great numbers, holding majlis, and are particularly friendly to all those whom I know to be hostile to ourselves. They at the best are neutral in opinions asked by Arabs of rumour in our disfavour.

Remedy, if they entertain, I propose to double it; if they hold a Majlis, I propose to do the same.

\* \* \* \* \*

I propose to place an Agent in Hasa for this and other reasons and possibly in Qatif. Once again the above is only very briefly put.

(f) Shaikh Abdulla's visit will, I hope, be the remedy to many evils in administration and result in peace and progress, and I hope to make his visit more one for educational purposes than pleasure, and I hope you will approve my considering this to be the main object of the visit, the education of course being made as pleasant as possible, but that I should constantly bear in mind local requirements rather than sight-seeing as such.

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(g) The Ikhwan movement - That through the above progressive proposals we should use Bahrein as the place from which we may hope to influence central Arabia and educate it. That the Agent should pay frequent visits to Hasa, Qatif, etc., and invite the Amirs and some of their officials to Bahrein. That Agriculture should be encouraged on the mainland in order to employ these fanatics more profitably. I understand that there are large areas capable of irrigation with the aid of machinery. If this could be accomplished large numbers of Ikhwan might be settled. Bin Saud has constantly broached the subject, and I might make it one of my duties to get estimates and see types of pumps, etc., at home. We could illustrate their utility and introduce them at Hasa.

I know how hard up you are for cars, but I would be grateful for a Ford if you can spare one at any time. I think that the Agent should know every village in the Island, every Shaikh and every Amir and constantly visit them. It is more likely that in the small villages people will talk and give me a fair idea of what is going on in there. In Manama a Ford could go anywhere on the Island and further could be taken to the mainland and possible motor routes explored as far as Hasa on toward Riyadh and Koweit.

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Enclo.II to Pro. No.172.

Demi-official dated Bushire, the 17th June 1919.  
From-G.H.BILL, Deputy Political Resident, Bushire,  
To-LIEUTENANT COLONEL A.T. WILSON, C.I.E., D.S.O.,  
C.M.G., Officiating Political Resident, Persian  
Gulf, Baghdad.

Bray's demi-official of May 27th raises a large question of principle, which applies not only to Bahrein, or even to Nejd, but to the whole of the territories bordering on the Persian Gulf. It is a question to which I have given much thought, and the issue may be fairly stated as follows:-

Hitherto the historic role of the British Government in these waters has been that of keeper of the Maritime truce. Until very recent times our claims to predominance in the Persian Gulf, though well enough founded on our performances in the role mentioned above, were not really much supported by any exertions of ours in the direction of lighting and buying, although British statesmen were in the habit of assuming this for public consumption. That has, however, now been remedied; but the fact remains that Great Britain has been the maritime policeman of the Gulf, and very little more. Is it, or is it not, desirable that we should take a pronounced step further, and assume the responsibility for a gradual education

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of the Gulf populations on the lines of Western civilisation?

On the Persian Coast we are no doubt slightly handicapped by the claims of the Persian Government to a consideration which is given it by none of its own subjects, and indeed by practically no one but ourselves; but on the Arab side, with the disappearance of the Turks, we have an absolutely free hand, and the time has certainly come for a definite decision on policy.

There can be no doubt at all that if we can exclude any future political competitor (there is none in sight at present), and if we simply pursue our present policy of abstention, the coastal Arab of 2019 will be exactly the same as his forefather of to-day, except that he may spend his earnings from pearl-diving in a slightly different way; he will not move *suo motu*. It is a very arguable position, which is by no means without attraction to my mind, that he is, though an animal, a fairly happy animal, and that the heady wine of Western civilisation may turn him into a discontented decadent.

On the other hand, such a policy accords very ill with the present trend of policy in India, and in particular with the sentiments of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and would stand little chance of deliberate adoption, I should

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think, by the Powers that be, if they were brought face to face with it.

In ~~an~~ any case, it is desirable to do this; to bring them face to face with it, and make it clear that we can either let the Arab continue to dream out his low life, or we can set ourselves to create in him a diving discontent. In any case, let us know what we are doing. A sordid, but weighty detail, in favour of the former policy is that the latter is bound to cost a good deal of money, and there is not the remotest chance that anything in the nature of schools or hospitals will be self-supporting in these tracts. It is much more likely, except, I think, in Bahrein, that ~~any~~ such efforts will be met with a stolid, and solid, opposition, as tending to interfere with cherished institutions such as the sectarianism of the ~~Whabi~~ and ~~Omani~~, and the possession of diving slaves.

So much for the question of principle; if we are to let things alone, the enthusiastic local officer, like Bray, must be discouraged, and informed that if devout American citizens like to spend their dollars enlightening the Bahreini, it is no concern of ours, and in any case we are not going to enter into competition with them at a Government expense. In the same way we should leave Shaikh

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of the crucial coast, and their subjects, as much alone as we do at present.

Assuming, however, that the alternative policy is deliberately accepted with its necessary financial consequences, I asked. sketch below what I conceive might be the lines of development in each sphere.

I take Bahrein first, an actually and potentially the most important adopted. as the subject of Bray's letter. Setting aside for the moment his projects for an active competition with the American missionaries, his proposals for permanent institutions are--

(a) A Municipality run "on sound lines" i.e., in the present state of Bahrein, on lines approved by the Agency, the running of the machine being also carefully. if at the same time quietly and tactfully, supervised by the Political Agent.

(b) A school, obviously on the same lines.

From the standpoint now adopted, these proposals are obviously sound; I would go further and say they are indispensable, if the Bahrein is to be raised in the scale of Western civilisation.



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It is also true that though there will be more people in Bahreini who will welcome these developments than anywhere else, still there will be an actively hostile party, or, if Bray's estimate of the American activities is correct, even two hostile parties; that of Islamic conservatism, and that of American propograndism. To meet these, and create an atmosphere favourable to the new ventures, a good deal of propoganda work will unquestionably be required.

I do not at present regard the case against the American Mission as proved; that is, I do not consider it certain that their attitude, which was first noted and reported by Loch, is not due to local idiosyncracies rather than to the deliberate policy of their headquarters. Foreign's endorsement No. 543-W., dated 2nd June last, certainly goes to show that the State Department is not paying very close attention to the affairs of this region. You will notice that the whole of the Persian Gulf, including even Basrah, is included by them in "British India" and the American subject promises not to transgress the laws of British India while residing in Muscat, a State with which the American Government itself has a treaty. I should be inclined to attribute the extra activity shown by the missionaries at the moment to the personal energy of Dr. Harrison, and any anti-British bias to the strong Dutch sentiments of the Rev. Dykstra. I hazard a conjecture

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that if the latter were to take his departure, there would be little further ground for this complaint. In support of this is the attitude of the mission at Koweit, which I have always understood to be definitely friendly to British influence. However, the propagand work undertaken to win over the Islamic conservative could equally well serve to conciliate all classes.

One caution; the most conservative Arab on the whole island used to be Shaikh Isa himself; he certainly seems to have modified his attitude lately, but I am not sure that he would quite swallow the new municipality. In any case, his susceptibilities would have to be very carefully considered.

Shaikh Abdullá's visit to Europe should certainly yield very valuable result in this direction, if his mind is not too crowded with impressions, and if he can avoid exciting the jealousy of his brothers on his return.

It is little use saying anything about Nejd and Hasa under present circumstances. As far as I understand the situation, the fact is new well in the fire, and we can only wait for the results. However it would do no harm at all for Bray to go deeply into the question of machine pumps, and bring out lots of good literature

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on the subject. If the present crisis gives birth to any thing like a really stable government in Persia, I have plenty of projects of the kind.

As regards the steam tug I am writing to you separately.

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The above covers the ground as regards Bahrein, I think. The net result is that assuming the new policy, all that is necessary is money for propaganda work, with a view to the establishment, as soon as possible, of a good school and a strong municipality. Bray's other desiderata are points of detail.

Next to Bahrein, we have Qatar and the Trucial Coast. I should be inclined to deal with them together, as they are in the same stage of primitiveness and the Political Agency, as suggested by Sir Percy at intervals from 1911 to the out break of war. You doubtless remember the Zora correspondence; Zora was eventually abandoned, but every year on the approach of the cold weather Sir Percy asked whether the post and telegraph scheme for Debai could be proceeded with, and every year some reason was found which prevented action till the approach of the hot weather. Government never, as far as I can discover, agree to the establishment of an Agency, but in his despatch No. 1112 of 30th April 1911, Sir Percy said "once our

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telegraph station was installed the rest would gradually follow, automatically" ; and it is difficult to imagine anything as "the rest" except the establishment of a regular Agency. The idea at the time was that New might run over occasionally from Lingah; but I regard this as a very unsatisfactory compromise.

There would be no practical difficulty that I can see, if the nettle were grasped firmly enough; the Shaikhs in general, and the Shaikh of Debai in particular, would be reminded of the old correspondence about posts and telegraphs, and their obligations under the agreement, and notified that we were about to open up a post and telegraph office at Debai, as the most central spot. This communication would be conveyed by the Resident of Deputy in the "Lawrence", and the ships bringing the staff and turad would arrive the same day. There would be a temporary fuss, but I don't for a moment think things would go up to boiling point. Of course, the local situation would have to be studied beforehand more carefully than I have done this year.

Of course, the Trucial Coast and Qatar Agency would have to go slow in the matter of schools, etc., for some years, but if Bahrein is to be the model Arab Principality Agent, Trucial Coast, could work slowly up to the model.

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Mascat.- I need hardly mention; there are enough schemes on foot for its development.

Persian Mekran is a source of continual anxiety to me. There can be no doubt that the whole province is in a thoroughly unsatisfactory state, and unless we assert ourselves in some forcible way, it will not be possible to carry out the annual repairs of the land line next cold weather. I only propose at the moment a repetition of Keyes' Mission, with a commission to report on the best political arrangements for the future. But something of the kind absolutely must be done, unless Government prefers the obvious alternative of abandoning the land line (we could not pull it up, without an armed party), and laying an additional cable. Here again I think we shall find ourselves obliged to spend rather more money, and have permanent political representation. This would be better justified, in that I am sure the solid and responsible elements among the Baluchis would welcome it, as a good excuse for dropping their wearisome and expensive feuds.

Finally, of course, if we are going in for a general civilising mission in these waters, the coastal



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tract from Lingah to Bushire offers an excellent, and absolutely virgin, field. But I think that above sketch provides enough for the time being; and the susceptibilities of the Tehran Government would doubtless be outraged by our attempting to do any good for their nominal subjects.

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Enclo. III to Pro No 172.

Memorandum No.6-2C, dated Bahrein, the  
5th January 1920. (Secret.)

From-MAJOR H.K.V.DICKSON, CII.E., Political  
Agent Bahrein,

To- The Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.  
(The Deputy Political Resident, Bushire.)

The attached note on the existing political situation in Bahrein is forwarded for information.

The note is compiled from close personal ~~study and~~ study and observation of the people of Bahrein during the last two months, also for valuable material left behind by my predecessor Captain N.N.E. Bray, M.C.

Sub.-encl. to Pro.No.172.

Note on the political situation in Bahrein as existing  
at the end of 1919, with suggestions and proposals 226



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1. I arrived in Bahrein on November 6th, 1919, and since my arrival I have taken pains to try and get at the bottom of the curious atmosphere of hostility which seems to exist everywhere in Bahrein for the foreigner and more especially towards the Agency. To accomplish my purpose I have spent much time interviewing persons, great and small, and have taken special care to get at the confidence of people by frequent visits and dinner parties at the houses of residents of all shades of opinion, both neutral, Sunni and Shiah. I have also been largely helped in my investigations by riding round among the many hamlets of the Island and chatting over a cup of coffee with the local headman surrounded by his villagers in the local guest chamber. The general conclusions that I have arrived at are enumerated below.

2. In my opinion -

- (a) The political atmosphere of Bahrein, while not in any way dangerous is wholly unsatisfactory.
- (b) There is a strong anti-British sentiment which is long standing and deep seated.
- (c) British prestige rests on entirely false standards, namely on fear and not on respect.

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I consider our task therefore both extremely difficult, yet imperative.

3. It would be quite useless were I to make the bold statements above, had not strong proofs to substantiate them and suggested remedies in different directions to rectify them. The character and methods of Shaikh 'Isa bin 'Ali al Khalifah, K.C.S.I., C.S.I. the Ruler of Bahrein, are so well known as hardly to bear repetition, yet I must perforce give a rough sketch of the man so as to convey the true atmosphere prevailing. Shaikh 'Isa is a timid ruler, at the same time I believe he is a very loyal friend to ourselves and means extremely well by us. Friendly letter that he writes to myself either personal or for transmission to His Majesty's Government give him almost childish pleasure, and he has been heard on several occasions to tell others of them and boast about the said friendliness. In opposition to this he is continually attempting to assert his supposed rights in an ill-advised way and to cause small embarrassments by puerile methods and easily discernable intentions.

The explanation of such country virtues and vices is a easy of explanation. His own personal feelings are undoubtedly of the friendliest nature

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to ourselves, those of his advisers by no means unanimous in this respect. Their reasons for their hostile attitude may be divided into two degrees:-

" A " An honest one, that we may ourselves appreciate:

" B " A dishonest one;

both call for special consideration and different methods of handling.

" A " The honest opposition is based partly on fear, partly on pride, partly on suspicion, inherent, in Arab minds and partly on ignorance appalling in its completeness.

( i ) The Fear of a great power who has them so completely in its control makes them anxious to grasp and hold on to what actual freedom and liberty of action remains to them, with the constant dread that their freedom may be still further curtailed.

(ii) Pride, which is equally part of the Arab character, encourages them to acts that will gain renown, however small, in the eyes of their compatriots, and makes them equally averse to surrender an action once committed, or an attitude once assumed. Pride of comparison bears a real part in their line of thought, that is to say, their own power compared to that exercised by other Arab rulers, and the fear of loss of

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prestige in any curtailment of their powers in the eyes of other rulers.

(iii) Suspicion, which as I said above, is an inherent vice or virtue, depending on the standpoint of regard in the constitution of Arab minds, and which always exists in the minds of a more or less primitive people, its degree depending on the extent of their backwardness, as a wild animal depends on suspicion, whilst a domesticated depends on its confidence, for its comfort and well being.

(iv) Ignorance of anything outside their own environment is so astonishing as to merit a special paragraph to itself, and I will treat this question further on in this note. But it is real and distressing factor with which we have to deal. All the above are what we might call honest drawbacks, which we may appreciate, sympathize with and gradually remove by personal intercourse, sympathy, example and tact. The pity of it is that these characteristics are taken advantage of by those ill-disposed towards and I attribute eighty per cent. of our difficulties in our relationship with the ruler, and the present low standard of prestige, as due to them.

B- Dishonest opposition.

This we may take for granted comes in no inconsiderable extent from those in opposition to Shaikh

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Isa himself; mainly from his cousins Ali Ibrahim Rashid the sons of Mahomed al Khalifah who was formerly deposed by us, and to a certain extent from the heir presumptive. Quite apart from the natural hostility of the former family to ourselves for ousting their caln(hamoula) from the succession and their natural rights, it may be easily understood how they would be only too ready to advise Shaikh 'Isa to take a line of action that will bring him in opposition to ourselves. For they aim at nothing less than the deposition of the Shaikh himself and clumsy diplomats as they are, they hope and never cease from attempting to accomplish this by trying to make us lose patience with the present ruler, through his apparent obstinacy and maladministration, both of which they encourage and excite. They may therefore be said to be playing a two-handed game, one in cited by their own hopes and ambitions and the other fostered by their real hostility to ourselves, for supposed wrongs committed and natural dislike of the white foreigner, the more so as he has behind him the mighty strength of a great nation.

Thus then may we sum up the character of Shaikh 'Isa bin' Ali al Khalifah with its resultant effects on his dealings with ourselves.



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"A very old ~~bad~~ weak man, imbued with sincere feelings of friendship and regard for His Majesty's Government, swayed and confused in his weakness by evil intentions to himself, to us and to both-helped in this weakness by virile and astute minds and delicate intriguers, dictated for the most part by evil intentions to himself, to us and to both- helped in this by the characteristics of Arab mentality mentioned above."

4. We must now turn our attention from the "Entourage" of the Ruler to the "Mass," and in this direction are causes of hostility and lack of prestige no less interesting and no less delicate. For here we have the "pawns" in the game and the material for the edifice of hostility.

We will divide them into two classes:-

A- The Government officials;

B- The notables of the Idlands.

A- Like all Government officials of an oriental State, we may expect to find abuse of authority and extortion, but unlike most oriental States in such close relationship to a European Power, we may be justly grived to find that these exceed all bonds of propriety and sense of justice, so much so as to cal forth the odium of the Arabs themselves. The



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Amirs or Governors of the towns of Muharraq and Manama are officials entirely unsuited for control, and the power they wield is oppressive and immoral.

The Amir of Manama encourages and receives an income from prostitutes and gamblers, impresses boat and donkey transport in a shameless manner and generally extorts money from householders, shopkeepers and the people as a whole.

The Amirs of Muharraq is a little better, and would be equally as bad, were he not more or less under the supervision of the Shaikh who resides there for the greater part of the year.

The Amirs being men of this stamp, it is not surprising that the "Fidawis" (police) and officials under them follow their lead.

This being so, it is obvious that any measure of reform is at once opposed by these gentlemen, and intrigues set on foot to prevent them being carried out.

B- The Notables of the Island.- Of these 25 per cent. are friendly to a greater or less degree, while 75 per cent are definitely hostile.

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I will attempt to describe the more important of them further on in this note, but for the present I will confine myself to anticipating the causes of our unpopularity in a general way before coming to details:-

These causes we may study under three headings:-

(i) War, (ii) Normal, (iii) Individual .

(i) War.

(a) Economical.- The necessary restrictions due to the war have hit the Island hard as in most other places. The prohibition of the export of silver and restrictions as to the export of rice from India during 1919 especially have been taken advantage caused acute hardship and discontent, but except where these have been advantage of by ill-disposed person they should be speedily corrected or eradicated by the return of normal conditions when present prohibition prices will fall and normal trade be resumed. Our efforts then must be directed to the removal as soon as possible of trade restrictions made necessary by the war.

(b) Propaganda.- This has left its scars and is still existent. The present uncertainty of future

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... a status, active pro-Turk feeling and Khilafat propagand from India, are exercising men's minds and providing material for hostile endeavour. This can be eradicated or partly reduced by measures proposed (see Paragraph).

Normal.

- (a) Fanatical hostility, due to ultra-religious feeling among the Arabs; this is to be expected in a place like Bahrein which has always taken its cue from Najd, but it can be reduced by intercourse and closer touch. (The "Akhwan" movement of the mainland has undoubtedly increased this feeling of hostility.)
- (b) Persians, due in the first place to a rather unfriendly and fanatical <sup>in</sup>Shah Persian community, but also due to recent political events in Persia, and the natural leaning of the Persian towards intrigue.
- (c) Ignorance- It is difficult to credit the hopeless ignorance that exists in Bahrein, even among the best families. Those who have travelled and seen something of the world are a class

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apart. But the Shaikh (ruling house and people generally are the most ignorant people I have even met. No story, however, impossible is too extravagant for their credulity. Idolated to a deplorable extent, they are callous and indifferent to outside matters of any kind. I refer not to the humble and poor, but to the rich and influential. Very few can write. Geographical knowledge is appalling, politics of most amazing conception, they cannot understand the simplest measure of administration or reform, incapable of clear statement and sound reasoning intellectually dull and naturally stupid. It is for this reason that I specially advocate "athomes" weekly durbars, evening visits and a newspaper to help broaden their minds and help their judgment.

(iii) Individual.

I attach a black and white list of important Bahrein individuals with a short description against each. The list is by no means complete, but is interesting as an index to the various causes and effects it is necessary to study. I also attach a list of important individuals who do not pay visits to the Political Agent.

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**WHITE LIST**

Arabs.

1. Salman bin Matar A wealthy pearl merchant, very friendly.
2. Yusuf bin Ahmed Kanoo, M.B.E. Influential merchant; has incurred hatred of Shaikh' Isa and his anti-English advisers for his friendliness to us. Undoubtedly would get into serious trouble if British ever withdrew from Bahrain.
3. Abdulla bin Mahmud Pearl dealer.
4. Haji Ahmad bin Yatim. General merchant, member of the Majlis al Urfi.
5. Salman Megoo General merchant, very friendly tous.
6. Abdul Aziz al Qusaibi. Bin Saud's agent in Bahrain. One of the best type of Nejdis, a fervent supporter of the Imam, an "Akhwan" in his tenets. Very friendly to the British.
7. Abd-el Rahman al Qusaibi. Brother to (6) and equally friendly, spends six months each year in Bombay making purchases for Bin Saud and people of Nejd generally.



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8. Mahomed Ali al Zaiyani. General merchant, regularly visits India.
9. Sayed Mahomed Jamal al Lail. Head man of the Yemen community; anti-Turk and anti-ruler of Bahrein; would like to see British in absolute control here.
10. Mahomed bin Hamad al Qazi. A well read Nejdî merchant from Anâizeh.
11. Sulaiman bin Hamad al Bassam. Nejdî merchant from Bassam family established Basra, Mecca, Baghdad, Damascus, etc.
12. Seyed Ahmed bin Seyed Alawwi. Bahrein pearl merchant and broker. The leading Shaiah inhabitant. Very British, often goes to India. Afraid of showing his liking for us, for fear of persecution from the Ruler of Bahrein. Has secretly applied to become a British subject, was once imprisoned and fined Rs.5,000 by Shaikh 'Isa, became bankrupt owing



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failure in perals, now gradu-  
- ally looking up again. A man  
with greatest influence among  
Baharna villagers of the Island.

13. Shaikh Abdul Latif al Dosari. Of Buddaiya, cousin of  
Shaikh Abdulla al Dosari,  
Pro-British probably  
on account of Shaikh  
Abdulla, being chief  
friend and adviser of  
Sheikh Abdulla bin Isa  
al Khalifa, C.I.E.,  
Shaikh'Isa a youngest  
son. A frequent visitor  
to Agency and good  
provider of local news.

Persians.

14. Khan Sahib Muhammad Shrif A wealthy general merchant head  
Kutbuddin. head man of the Persian  
community, pro-British and  
friendly to the Agency.
15. Muhammas Farook Akil A wealthy and influential general  
merchant with firms in Bombay,  
Lingah, Babai, Henjam.

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16. Yousuf Lutfali Khunji. English educated general merchant with Pro British. Keeps up English style, subscribes London Times, Graphic and the Near East. He is very friendly with the Agency. He is gone to Bombay where he intends establishing a good business and will stay there five months in a year during winter.
17. Abdul Nabi Bushiri  
Ali Kazim Bushiri. Wealthy partners in general business. Once suspected of smuggling tea, but now friendly towards the Agency. Follow Khan Sahib Muhammad Shari's advice. They hold no political views.  
Ditto ditto ditto.
18. Abul Kassan.

BLACK LIST,

Arabs.

1. Haji Yusuf bin Abdul Rahman Formerly noted are smuggler Fakhru.

from Muscat and Bahrein. 392

Suspected strongly of being

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chief smuggler of contraband goods into Persia now. Too clever to be caught out; anti English chiefly because of his crooked trade dealings.

2. Haji Jassim Jodar . . . Violently pro-Turk resulting, in extreme hostility to every thing British, onenly boasts his political view.
3. Shaikh Rashid bin Muhammad- First cousins of Shaikh Isa. Al Khalifah. Intriguers- father deposed by his Majesty's Government who appointed Shaikh Isa as Shaikh of Bahrein instead.
4. Shaikh Ali bin Muhammad Al Khalifah. Hostile and revengeful in consequence.
5. Shaikh Ibrahim bin Muhammad Al Khalifah. Always arresting British subjects apparently from sheer desire to cause trouble between Shaikh Isa and His Majesty's Government. A dangerous man.
6. Fahad bin Abdul Rahman, Amir Musharaq. A man of loose character and crooked dealings. Has great influence with Shaikh Hamid bin Isa. Violently pro-Turk.
7. Ali bin Husain Ghomri Amir of Manamah.

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8. Ali bin Musa . . . Partner to (1) above and as equally a notorious arms smuggler. Well known at Muscat.
9. Shaikh Abdullah bin Hasap See No. 13 White List. Easily led Dosari. by others. Stupid rather than dangerous.
10. Haji Abdul Rahman Al Pearl merchant. Partner to Shaikh Zayani Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifah in business. Knows Bombay well. Pro-Turk, but moderate in his views.
11. Ahmad bin Salman Ghigh. Pro-Turk, former member of Majlis ul- Urfi.
12. Shaikh Jassim Bin Mehza. Chief Sunni Qazi in Manama. Has very high reputation locally for charity and good works, pretends to like English. A mischief maker of worst type.
13. Shaikh Ahmad bin Mehza. Brother of (12). Narrowly escaped deportation 1905-06. Dangerous intriguer. Confidential adviser to Shaikh Isa on land question.
14. Ali bin Abdullah. Financial Agent of Shaikh Isa III disposed, jealous of English interference. Reputed had in

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glove with Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifah, C.I.E. in Swindling Shaikh Isa out of half the receipt from the Customs. Hated by all for his miserly methods.

Dangerous.

15. Jassim Chirawi..

Shaikh Isa's Private secretary. Great friend of Shaikh's son<sup>e</sup> Abdullah. The cleverest rogne<sup>u</sup> in Bahrein. Outwardly extremely polite and polished, but always endeavouring undermine British influence with Shaikh. Close friend of Shaikh Isa's wife (the Queen). A man to be watched very closely. Engaged in dedly feud with Yosnf Kanoo, M.B.E., whom he is trying to ruin. Adopts humble attitude and pretends always he has no mfluence with Shaikh Isa.

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16. Ahmad bin Mardur III - natured bigot.

Persian

1. Haji Abdul Nabi Kazeruni Formerly used to style himself Persian consul, Bahrein. Used to take money and issue passport till stopped by Agency. Violently Anti-English. Undoubtedly engaged in smuggling contraband to Persia.
2. Abdul Nabi Germani. Lately Head Clerk to the German firm of R. Wonckhaus and Company pro-German and so pro-Turk.
3. Abdullah Germani Agent at Muharaq for the late German firm of R. Wonckhaus and Company. Poor and mischievous.
4. Mullah Shaikh Abdul Rahim Petty merchant. Was warned for giving out false war news. Pro-Turk. 396



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Indian

1. Mr. Muhammad Roshan Akhtar. Punjabi Musalman, formerly employed as vernacular clerk in the Agency. A well educated Indian. Holds strong political views, has visited Egypt and travelled generally. Openly talks about recent Punjab riots. Reads Indian papers to Arab public, who gather to hear anti-English news in his house. Being clever with easy and assumed manner, his influence is distinctly not for good. A staunch member of the Khālafat M.B.E., who is afraid of him, but dare not get rid of him lest he join hands with Jassim Chirawis party. A

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dangerous individual.

List of Notables who do not call on the Political  
Agent, Bahrain.

1. Shaikh Abdul Latif bin Sa'ad, Imam of the great mosque, Manamah.
2. Shaikh Ali (brother) Pro-Turk. Influential Aalim, smaller Imam of a mosque.
3. Shaikh Hussian Musharraf, pro-Turk.
4. Mubarak al Fadhil.
5. His son Khamis.
6. Shaikh Ahmad bin Mehza. Was going to be deported 1904-05.
7. Shaikh Khalid bin Ali al Khalifah, brother of Shaikh's Isa Lives in Rafa'a . Old.
8. Shaikh Hamud bin Sabah al Khalifah, Lives in Rafa'a, wellread pro-Turk.
9. Shaikh Rashid bin Muhammad al Khalifah, cousin of Shaikh Isa.
10. Shaikh Hamad bin Muhammad al Khalifah. On bad terms with Shaikh.
11. Ali bin abdullah, Shaikh 'Isa financial agent,

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influential (came once), ill-disposed.

12. Shaikh Abdul Wahhab bin Hajji Zaiyani, pro-Turk  
(came once).

13. Shaikh 'Isa bin Rashid, bigoted Aalim, Imam of  
Jumrah, Muharrag.

14. Shaikh Ahmad bin Muhammad Qazi of al Hidd.

5. Action proposed to improve on the situation.

(a). To meet and defeat these various difficulties, an energetic and open handed policy is immediately imperative. For in my opinion with so much cheap sentimentality at large in the world to-day, sure to catch phrases used for political purposes both during the world war and throughout the period of the Armistice, men's minds, especially those of orientals, are apt to fasten on unredities rather than on the facts of the outcome of the world conflagration. These ephemeral ideas are greedily fastened on to by the astute Arab mind and especially by those unfriendly to us, and if British prestige is not to suffer, I submit a change of manner in dealing with these people is essential. And the primary duty of a political Officer in these serious times is to break away from the fetters of the past and enter a wider and freer sphere of political thought

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lest British domination or control appear weak-kneed and sentimental. Added to this the general upset due to the war, the doubts and uncertainties, propoganda and dislocation of trade with its necessary hardship necessitates infusing energy and wideness of vision into our work in order to lead minds unbalanced by recent events into sane channels.

(b). A closer touch with individuals, who have the least influence in educating public opinion, with the closest possible study of their individuality and especially, if hostile, their reasons for hostility. The Political Officer must be the doctor of his charge and know accurately the medicine required for each of his patients. It is impossible for the senior political officer to have leisure to do this except in the case of men of real importance, but so well should they be assured by their junior lieutenants that the exact tune and mentality of any particular place can be clearly and accurately sounded. I must be pardoned if I appear to generalize, I am writing a note on Bahrain and the mainland under it, (in a junior sense) and I purposely write at length so that one's superior officers may themselves feel the atmosphere as I feel it, and as I am about to ask for support, to give my fullest reasoning. I have started, therefore, a list of every

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important personage in the place. I intend to meet them frequently to study them individually. A short visit of a few hours may easily change an enemy into a friend. I need not emphasise this aspect of political dealing that grained an Empire a hundred years ago, but has greatly fallen into disuse to our disadvantage, mainly through pressure of office work. To the above end I have set apart four days in each week for calling purposes. The hours selected are from 5-30 p.M. to 7 P. M. between sunset prayer and the Arab's dinner hour.

(c). Entertainment and open handedness is an essential, and I intend to hold at home to the gentry of the place where rumours may be corrected, and minds enlarged by social intercourse. The Political Officer must be the school-master of public opinion and thought. Our opponents in the past have robbed us of many things by these means, in future we must deny this to them. The King's birthday, New Year's day, etc., etc., must be celebrated in good style and made an occasion of entertainment on a suitable scale.

(d) The public. The small shopkeeper, the man earning a small livelihood, must be equally studied and considered, especially our own subjects and protected

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persons, he must feel his position not only in lawsuits and public matters, but also in his private life, and small hurts and pleasures, so that his citizenship becomes something to him. I have, therefore, instituted a weekly (Monday) Darbar or Majlis at which all, or any of the above, are free to come and will be served with light refreshment to take away shyness and reserve. They will be encouraged to speak their minds, and if immediate action can be taken, it will be taken before them. Through this channel I hope firstly to gain confidence and information, and secondly to set an example to the Ruler and his people.

(e) Education.- The Political Officer cannot hope to educate it in literal sense, yet education on sound lines is essential if the present ignorance is to be rectified. I hope to carry through my predecessor's proposal to have a school for British subject and protected persons. But it must be under the supervision of the Political Officer.

(h) Health.- The political importance of this subject cannot be overestimated, or its means for progress denied. Much prejudice will have to be ridden down, the Ruler in particular will have to be gradually weaned to the idea that a clean tidy city is in every way preferable to a dirty one. This duty I have taken upon myself if and



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(g) Reward, for services rendered either to ourselves or to the community should receive frequent and recognition and I can not emphasize too strongly the enormous influence these have on the Arab mind, while not cheapening the higher decorations and distinctions, we may by a generous distribution of the less imposing ones again many friends and encourage honest endeavour. Often have I heard the Arab cry that he has served faithfully 10 or 20 years, but has received nothing, while his less deserving but intriguing brother has been rewarded in some incomprehensible manner.

(h) Presents have their great value and are fully appreciated by Arabs and are a sine qua non among themselves. I do not deny that we have and do give presents, but a judicious increase in this respect will held us gratly. Foreign firms were very generous in this respect, with excellent results to themselves, and we as a Government should be no less generous.

(i) Letter of appreciation or thanks are treasured and have their weight, and occasional letter from the Senior Political Officer go a way long way to cementing a friendship. An instance of this I saw only last week when in public Darbar Sheikh Abdul Latif al Dosari of Budaiyeh pulled out a black edged letter written him by

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late King Edward's death, He paraded this letter with a great show and obviously placed a very high value on it. He insisted on reading it over twice to his audience.

(f) Intelligence.- Even in a time of peace is of the utmost importance both as a means of forestalling troubles and difficulties and gauge the trend of events. The information thus gained might be centralized in Baghdad and would yield important results. I propose in future supplying the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, and to the Deputy Political Resident, Bushire, with a short weekly report that will, I hope, give information that gradually may be of use, under the headings Military trade, localities, individuals, public opinion.

For secret service work I require Rs. 2,000 per annum. As my allotment here is fixed and I have no funds to meet such a charge, I trust Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, will grant me this sum from funds at his disposal for 1920.

Summary of matters to be taken in hand for improving general tone.

(a) Electric light

Capital promised, Baghdad asked to supply engine but later failed.

Enquires being made India for estimates. 404

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- (b) School . . . . . Subscriptions promised,  
Teachers asked for from  
Baghdad, general arrang-  
ments well forward.
- (c) Water supply This will have to await until  
India or Baghdad can  
supply pipes. It is most  
urgent measure.
- (d) Pearl Button Plant Enquires being made.
- (e) Bank Greatly desired by local  
merchants awaiting sanction  
by Government of India to  
allow export of silver.  
Eastern Bank willing open  
branch.
- (f) Darbar Arranged weekly on Monday.
- (g) Visit to gentry Started- car wanted.
- (h) Information Funds being asked for from  
Civil Commissioner.
- (i) Honours and Rewards For consideration of Civil  
Commissioner.
- (j) Letters of thanks For consideration of Civil  
Commissioner.

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(k) Newspaper

All ready to start on conclusion  
of peace.

Note.- Reference(g). Shaikh Isa has imported a car  
and also Shaikh Abdullah, his son, roads  
are being improved in consequence, and  
with a car at one's disposal one will  
now be able to go over the whole island.

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Pro. No. 173

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No.  $\frac{3650}{6-15}$ , dated Baghdad, the 31st January 1920.

From - BREVEL LIEUTENANT COLONEL A.T. WILSON, C.S.I.

C.M.G. C.I.L.E., D.S.O., Acting Civil

Commissioner in Mesopotamia,

To - The Secretary to the Government of India in the  
Foreign and Political Department.

With reference to your telegram No. 83-E.A,\* dated the

\*Serial No. 3.

19th

Note on claim of Shaikh of Bahrein to Zubara, Political Agent, Bahrein's memorandum 176 of 6th December 1919. January

Deputy Political Resident, Bushire's memorandum 246.S of 28th December 1919.

Political Agent, Bahrein's memorandum 9-c of 17th January 1920 with three enclosures.

Telegram Code from Political Agent, Bahrein, to Deputy Political Resident, Bushire, of 23rd January 1920.

I have the honour to enclose, for the information of the Government of India, copies of the correspondence noted in the margin.

2. I concur with the views expressed by Lieutenant Colonel Trevor, who, as a former Political Agent at Bahrein, has practical experience of conditions at the place.

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If this letter and enclosures (which are submitted in original to save time) are printed, I would ask to be favoured with 5 copies.

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Encl. 1 to Pro No. 173.

**Note on History of Zurara and Claims of Shaikh  
of Bahrein to Zubara.**

From the old Residency Files I have extracted and precised the following:-

In 1766 Al Khalifa Section of the tribe of Utab emigrants from Nejd migrated from Koweit and settled in Zubara. By 1782 the Al Khalifa had succeeded in establishing their supremacy over the whole of the Qatar peninsula and in this year attacked the Persian Governor of Bahrein and captured the island.

From this year to 1842 there was continued fighting and confusion.

In 1842 Shaikh Abdullah of Bahrein quarrelled with his grand nephew, one Mohammad bin Khalifa, and drove him out of Bahrein.

Mohammed bin Khalifa went to Qatar and rebuilt



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the town of Zubara which had been deserted since 1811.

In 1847 Shaikh Abdullah, at the invitation of Shaikh 'Isa bin Tarif of the Al bin Ali, made an abortive attempt to reduce Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa and died the following year.

Apparently one Shaikh Mohamed bin Thani succeeded Shaikh 'Isa bin Tarif as head of the Al bin Ali tribe during the next decade, and rose to power in the Qatar peninsula.

In 1867 and 1868 a series of raids and counter-raids between Bahrein and El Qatar ensued in which the Resident interfered and deposed the Shaikh of Bahrein Shaikh Mohamed and fined others heavily and Shaikh Ali, his brother, who had commanded the force of the Shaikh of Bahrein, was installed. Shaikh Mohamed bin Thani in 1869 signed an agreement with the Resident promising to pay Shaikh of Bahrein 9,000 Krans "Zakat" a year, to refer all disputes to the Resident and to maintain with Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa the same relations which had existed between himself and the former Shaikh of Bahrein.

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This money was paid for the next ~~two~~ or three years and then discontinued when the Turks established themselves in El Bida. Colonel Pelly decided on the occasion of this settlement that while the Bahrein Chief was acknowledged to possess certain rights of pasturage, etc., on the Qatar coast, he should not be empowered to put to sea to coerce any Qatar port.

In 1869 Shaikh Ali was killed and after a short interregnum Shaikh 'Isa his eldest son, was made chief of Bahrein by the British Government.

From this date on, the Turks attempted to extend their influence in this part of the Arab Coast.

In 1872 Shaikh 'Isa expressed a wish to re-establish a garrison in Zubara and check the intrigues of his relative Nasir-bin-Mubarak. Colonel Ross reported to Government that in his opinion the Chief had not the power to protect the tribes residing in Qatar and had advised him to remain neutral.

In 1875 the Government of India definitely warned the Shaikh of Bahrein that the consequences would be upon himself if he became involved in the mainland. To this the Shaikh replied that he submitted to the orders of Government, but did not consider his rights

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to Qatar invalid or extinct in consequence.

In 1879 Shaikh Mohamed bin Thani died and Shaikh Jasim bin Thani succeeded.

In 1890 Shaikh Jasim intrigued to get a Turkish garrison in Zubara and El Qatar and from then onward for several years negotiations passed between His Majesty's Government and the Porte to evacuate these Turkish ports.

In 1895 a division of the Al bin Ali under Shaikh Sultan bin Salama fled from Shaikh 'Isa to Zubara where they were encouraged to settle by Shaikh Jasim under the Turkish flag. A naval expedition went to Zubara and a portion of the Al bin Ali were persuaded to return to Bahrein, the others went to Bida.

In 1905 Shaikh Ahmad Bin Thani, who had succeeded Shaikh Jasim, wished to come under the protection of the British Government, but owing to pressure from the Foreign Office and the Ambassador at the Porte, the project of making the arrangement fell through.

BUSHIRE :

D.M. FRASER,

The 2nd December 1919.

1st Assistant Resident.

FORE. POLL. DEPTT. SECT.E. OCT. 1920. Nos 165- 185. Contd.

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Enclo II to Pro No 173 .

Memorandum No. 176, dated Bahrein, the 6th December  
1919, (confidential.)

From-MAJOR H.R.P.DICKSON, C.I.E., Political Agent,  
Bahrein.

To- The Deputy Political Resident, Bushire.

Reference the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad's No.  
<sup>332761</sup>  
6-15, dated 31st October 1919, copy to me.

I fear I am not in a very good position to offer criticisms on the three points raised by Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa al Khalifah, as I have only recently taken over charge of political affairs at Bahrein. What views I do, therefore, put forward must of necessity be those of one lacking experience in the affairs of the Islands and I trust due allowance will be made for discrepancies, and possibly false conclusions.

Before making any remarks on the three points raised, I should like to make some general observations on the attitude in general of Shaikh Sir Isa bin Ali al Khalifah and his sons as they have struck me newly arrived as I have in Bahrein.

FORE. POLL. DEPTT. SECT.E. OCT.1920.NOS 165-185.Contd.

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~~4/6~~ From conversations I have had with both Shaikh 'Isa and his sons on different occasions, I gather that they rather unnecessarily filled with ideas of their own importance.

The recent world talk of the "Rights of small nations" and President Wilson's utterances regarding the policy of self-determination, etc., would seem to have had its effect on the mentality of the ruling house in Bahrein. I have since my arrival been frequently reminded by Shaikh Isa that "Great Britain never interferes in our affairs"- such pointed phrases as the "Hakumat al Bahrein -the "Malika of Bahrein" (the Shaikh's wife) "Kul Dowlah fi huriatiha," etc., have become rather common of late. There would appear to be an idea abroad that the hand of His Majesty's Government in future is going to be much more lightly felt, and that a much larger measure of independence than hitherto is to be granted to the Ruler of Bahrein and other Arab Rulers. This feeling has been fostered than otherwise I think by the recent amendments to the Order-in-Council regarding the Shaikh's control over subjects of neighbouring Arab States.



FOPE. POLL. DEPTT. SECT.E.OCT.1920. Nos.165- 185. Contd.

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The above being the state of mind of the ~~Sh~~ Shaikh of Bahrein and his advisers, I do not think one may be surprised at the three requests made by Shaikh Abdullah in London.

To turn to the three points in question.

Point 1.- The Civil Commissioner states in his No. 12988, dated 30th October 1919, to "Zinnereme", London, that the matter was for all practical purpose settled when the Order-in-Council was brought into force. There are still points, however, over which a ruling is required. As I understand it, the term "neighbouring Arab Rulers" refers to the inhabitants of Qatar, Penindula and Nejd. Is it intended to refer to the inhabitants of Oman, Kuwait, Zanzibar, Hadramant, Yemen, etc. the inhabitants of all which places are to be found here trading at all times? In other words are local resident subjects of the Rulers of Oman, Kuwait, Zanzibar, Hejaz and inhabitants of Hadramant and Yemen to be considered under the jurisdiction of the Shaikh of Bahrein or under that of the Political Agent? A ruling is required on this points as Shaikh 'Isa certainly thinks he should control them.



FORE. POLL. DEPTT. SECT.E.OCT.1920.NOS. 165-185.Contd.

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Points 2.-- I have nothing to say except that up to the day of his departure, my predecessor was carrying on a correspondence with the Shaikh of Bahrein over this very subject. The Shaikh had dismissed a member of the "Majlis- al.Urfi" and had appointed another member without the knowledge or approval of the Political Agent. The circumstances suggested an attempt to make a test case to see how far the Political Agent would be supported.

The Political Agent contended that under the Order-in- Council he had every right to be consulted in the matter and refused to recognise "Majlis-al-urfi" until Shaikh 'Isa withdraw his nomination. My predecessor went away at this stage of the crisis and it has been left for me to settle the tangle. I certainly consider the Order-in Council is clear on the subject and should be insisted on. In the meantime the Majlis-al -urfi's sittings have been suspended pending settlement of this vexed question.

point 3. The question of Zubara,-- I have been through a great many files on the subject and have consulted confidentially various local people of prominence, I have arrived at the conclusion that it would be distinctly unwise to allow Shikh Isa to occupy Zubara.

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FORE. POLL. DEPTT. SECT. E. OCT. 1920. NOS. 165-185. Contd.

....

On the following grounds: -

- (a) Shaikh Abdullah bin Jassim of Qatar would strongly resent the Shaikh of Bahrein again getting a footing on the Qatar peninsula. He is a weaker man and Zubara in the hands of Shaikh Isa would be a pistol at his head always.
- (b) Shaikh Abdullah bin Jassim would certainly object to the development of a new port on the peninsula of Qatar since it would at once drive all trade from Doha (Bida) to Zubara and he would not only lose a large amount of revenue at present accruing from the Customs House at Dohah, but would stand every chance of seeing Dohah entirely disappear as the seaport of Qatar.
- (c) Ibn Saud similarly would take offence at a revival of the port of Zubara under Shaikh Isa's jurisdiction for like reasons to (b) above, as such a port would mean the killing of his new trade centre of O'Jair. It should be noted that the harbour of Zubara is naturally much better than that of either Dohah or O'Jair, and with the Shaikh of Bahrein actually compelling

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all Bahrein trade to go to the mainland through his port of Zubara, the end of both Abdullah bin Jassim's and Ibn Saud's ports would be certain and quick. As matter stand a good deal of coolness already exists between Ibn Saud and Shaikh Isa owing to the latter having recently instituted a 5 per cent. tax on goods never passing through Bahrain for O&Jair even though such goods never leave the Bahrein Customs House. Ibn Saud contends that Shaikh Isa should only take demurrage charges (or Arthiyeh).

In my opinion the suggestion of Shaikh Isa's that he be allowed to revive a ten-year-old controversy should be nipped in the bud. The new move is obviously an attempt to extend his power territorially and financially at the expense of Ibn Saud and Abdullah bin Jassim and will only end in trouble. Further I consider it is the thin edge of the wedge to Shaikh Isa laying afresh his claim to be rulers of the whole peninsula of Qatar, which claim was definitely I gather quashed some fifteen years ago.

FORE. POLL. DEPTT. SECT.E.OCT. 1920.NOs 165- 185, Contd.

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I attach a small sketch map to illustrate my remarks regarding Zubara.

Regarding point 4. I have no remarks to make.

Copy to the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, with reference to his No  $\frac{32761}{5-15}$  of 31st October 1919, to the Deputy Political Resident, Bushire.

FORE.POLL. DEPTT. SECT.E. OCT. 1920. NOS. 165- 185. Contd.

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Encl. III to Pro. No. 173.  
Memorandum No. 246- S, dated Persian Gulf, the 28 th  
December 1919.

From- The Deputy Political Resident,

To- The Acting Civil Commissioner and Offg. Political  
Resident, Persian Gulf, Baghdad.

Reference your memorandum No. 32761-6-15. dated 31st  
October 1919.

My views regarding the three points raised by the  
Shaikh through Shaikh Abdullah are as follows.

(1) In asking for equal rights with other Arab  
rulers the Shaikh for gets the following points.-

(a) that both he and his father were made Shiakhs  
by the British Government, and I think it  
more than doubtful whether they would have  
retained their positions but for the support  
of the British Government. It results that  
the British Government is responsible for the  
good government of Bahrein to a greater extent  
than in the case of other Arab Rulers.

FORE. POLL. DEPTT. SECT. 2. OCT. 1920. Nos. 165-185. Contd.

.....

- (b) That before the war the Persian and Turkish Governments both claimed the island as part of their respective empires. But for British support doubtless one or other would have taken the island.
- (c) That the immediate cause of the British assuming charge of foreign subjects in Bahrain was the tyrannical behaviour of the Shaikh and his relatives to Persian subjects culminating in an attack on them in 1904: this was followed almost immediately by an assault on the German representative of Wockhaus and Company. But for our intervention the Shaikh would have been involved with Persia and Germany.
- (d) That his Government is singularly inefficient and weak and is not nearly as good as most of the other Shaikhdoms; its tendency is to exploit the island and their inhabitants for the benefit of the Al-Khalifa and one or two leading Arab families. It shows little sign of improvement.

In the circumstances, it is hardly to be expected that the Shaikh of Bahrain should be on exactly the same footing as other Arab chiefs.