CAIRO FOOD MARKET.

THE RISE IN PRICES.

CHEAP PETROLEUM.

Since the interruption of railway communications about the middle of March, the Cairo Food market has been constantly fluctuating. Meat, for example, which attained P.T.35 per oke, mutton at P.T.30 and P.T.28 the veal and beef against P.T.21, P.T.19 and P.T.16 respectively early in March, has this week gone down in price considerably and by the time these lines are published it is expected that the early March prices will be resumed.

It is noteworthy to observe that since the beginning of the present movement it has not been possible to import Sudan cattle and sheep which, since the beginning of the war have constituted the main meat supply of this country, and Egypt has been practically living on its own meat resources for the last few weeks and until the recent arrival of the Syrian consignments.

SUGAR.

Sugar has become very rare in the market. Tablet and loaf sugar has disappeared and the only quality which can now be found after a long and difficult search is the unrefined granulated sugar for which retailers are charging P.T. 9 and even P.T.10 per oke against a tariff of 63 millièmes only. We have on more than one occasion during the last two or three years pointed out that the sugar retailers were the keenest profiteers and that in spite of the tariff restrictions placed on them, they were the people best prepared to seize every opportunity in order to play with the tariff and charge whatever price they can obtain. It is suggested that the best remedy for this would have been for the Company to open retail shops of its own in different parts of the town where people could obtain their sugar at the tariff price. The Company will thus have gained the difference in price which the merchant would otherwise have legally gained and pay out of it the running expenses of the stores adding the balance, if any, to its annual profits. Of course this suggested arrangement would have been most practicable if started during the early part of the war when the import of foreign sugar, which used to compete with the company's sugar, ceased altogether. Whether it can now be advantageously started or not depends on the possibility of Foreign sugar imports at prices more favourable than those charged by the Company. It is generally believed, however, that the great industrial change in Europe and particularly in Austria whence the greater part of the foreign sugar consumed in Egypt before the war used to be imported, will not permit of competition with the Sugar Company and that the latter will continue to be the sole supplier for a considerable time to come.

COFFEE.

As regards coffee the prices of which had remained unaffected during all the stages of the war, the recent events have had a sudden effect and its prices went up by about 40 per cent, within the last two weeks, owing to the impossibility of transporting from Port Said, the large stocks that were accumulating there. The result of this scarcity of coffee has been that one is unable to drink a really good cup of Turkish Coffee even at the best cafés where such coffee is served.

PETROLEUM.

Since the arrival of petroleum for the Vacuum Oil Company and the removal of restrictions on its sale in Cairo the situation had considerably improved. A few weeks ago it had become so difficult to obtain petroleum that people used to pay 25 and 30 milliemes per litre for it but now the Vacuum Oil Company's cars are again in the streets and selling petroleum by the tin instead of by the litre and though the public is paying for it two or three piastres more than what the Company would have liked them to pay still they do not grumble when they compare their present situation to what it was only four weeks ago.

ALEXANDRIA BOURSE

The tone of the market was a little better and prices have risen, the following being the officially quoted closing prices:—

Unified closed at £89 3/8, 1/2 & drop; Lots Turcs remained at fr.93; while Banque d'Athenes advanced 3/4 fr. to fr.89; and Credit Foncier shares rose 2fr. to fr. 742.

Credit Foncier bonds issues 1886, 1903 and 1911 were firmer at fr.440, 315 and 283 1/2 respectively.

There was a rise of 3/32 in Comptoir Financier which closed at £1 7/16; National Bank being weaker at £20 13/16; 1/16 drop and Cassa di Sconto closing offered at fr.98 1/4, 25 centimes drop.

Wadi Kom Ombo were 1/32 higher at £5 5/16 and Priv. Behera rose 1/32 to £4 5/8 while Chek Dafi advanced 1/2fr. closing in request at fr.100 1/2.

Union Foncière were unchanged at £3 1/8 and Gabbari Lands were active at £-27/32 1/64, showing 1/32 rise, while Société Foncière d'Egypte were more active at £7 17/32, 9/32 higher.

Priv. Trams closed offered at fr.115, 4fr. rise and Ordinary Khedivieh advanced 1/-at 119/3d.

Mungovich Hotels being 1/8 higher at £7 1/4 while Bonded Warehouses closed in request at £11 7/8, 3/8 rise. Salt and Soda closing steady at 53/4 1/2d., 4 1/2 drop.

There was a rise of 5/32 1/64 in Filatures Nationales d'Egypte which were at £14 9/32 1/64.

Priv. Crown dropped 5fr. to fr.365 and deferred shares dropped 55fr. to fr.305.

Cotton Ginners remained at £- 13/16 1/64; Port Said Salt at £1 5/8 1/- higher at 83/6 while deferred Comptoir advanced 3/8 to £2 5/8; New Egyptian Co. rose 1 1/2d. to 23/4 1/2. Egypt and Levant s.s. C°. closed at 36/7 1/2, a three pence rise while deferred shares dropped 1s. to 165/-.

AL AZHAR'S BUDGET.

The scheme of the present year's budget of the Azhar and other Islamic Scientific and Theological Institutions, is now before a Financial Committee of some members of the Azhar Superior Board ,who according to an Arabic contemporary, have not yet met owing to the recent disturbances. The Azhar Superior Board will meet shortly to discuss the question of the general budget, the students and the tuition of the Azhar and its suburbs.

A DEFEATED APPEAL.

Moustafa Effendi Abdel-Magid ex-Inspector in the Sultanieh Agricultural Society in Minia, Assiout and Girga Provinces, took legal proceedings against the Society for wrong dismissal claiming an indemnity of L.E.5,000. The case was taken by the Cairo Native Court, but was rejected and the plaintiff made to pay all expenses.

£20,000,000 FOR COTTON EXPORT.

The organisation of a cotton export corporation with a capital of 100,000,000 dollars (£20,000,000) has been approved by a conference of planters and bankers of the cotton-growing States.

TURKS SUMMONED TO PARIS.

An Athens telegram states that the Grand Vizier Damat will head the Turkish deputation to the Peace Conference. The Ottoman delegates have left for Paris.

INDUSTRIES IN MALTA.

Interest in Malta is now centred on the annual question of the establishment of local industries; just now it is the cultivation and production of tobacco which is attracting special attention says the Malta correspondent of the "Near East." Whether the suggestion matures or not will remain to be seen. The idea is not a new one for N. nacica was once extensively cultivated in the island and furnished the tobacco from which was made the famous snuff (tabac in Sant Antrim), large quantities of which were imported by France and Italy; whilst Havana and Virginia were cultivated some years ago with encouraging results. At the present time the "weed" is grown in a small way in both Malta and Gozo, and on a rather important scale at Krendi. The Agricultural Department points out that the soil and climate of the Islands are suitable for the chief varieties of tobacco. But apathy is a decided characteristic of the Maltese and it is to be feared that nothing will come of the suggestion, excellent though it is, and badly as local industries are required.

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THE NATIVE PRESS.

KHEDIVIAL MAIL LINE.

"Misr" (a letter to the editor from a correspondent) — Your suggestion that the Egyptians should buy the Khedivial Mail steamers, now offered for sale, is one of the most important questions occupying the minds of Egyptians at the present time. At the proposal to purchase these steamers at the price offered by the Egyptian nation, I beg to make the following suggestions on the subject. Firstly: It is necessary to set up at once a new navigation company to be called the "Egyptian Navigation Company," for the purpose of developing the scheme and drawing up rules for it, and of forming a special committee to study the question of purchasing the Khedivial steamers. Secondly: The proposed company to be a limited liability company with a capital of £E.100,000 in L.E.5 each; and an account should be opened in the National Bank of Egypt immediately for receiving the prices of shares from those who desire to subscribe to the fund, so that there may be some basis for opening negotiations with regard to the purchasing of steamers.

EGYPT'S FORMER INDUSTRIES.

"Wady el Nil." — We have pointed out in a former article that most of the shares of the Khedivial Mail Line have been purchased by the British Trade Union Company, and that this sale was never announced in Egypt when it took place. We only learned by chance that it had been carried out; so the Egyptians can not be blamed for having failed to make efforts to obtain the steamers. This reminds us of the industry, which is not far back, when Egypt had a commercial fleet composed of the ships which were taken by the Khedivial Company, and other establishments which, like the ship in question, have long ceased to exist as Egyptian property. We remember when the Egyptian steamers plied in all directions in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, Egypt relied not only upon European shipbuilding yards for making ships for her but possessed also special works for the construction and repairing of vessels. These works which are called the Arsenal in Alexandria, are a remnant of the old workshops. There were spinning and weaving factories in this country, and though it may be remarked that they were small establishments in comparison with the great factories of Europe, nobody can deny that this small nucleus of industry could have been enlarged with the passing of time and become as large as the important factories abroad. Egypt also had tanneries, engineering works etc. which produced beautiful Egyptian work, testifying to the abilities and initiative of the Egyptian. Where are now those organisations that a comparison may be drawn between them and European factories. We had an Egyptian mint which produced all sorts of coins for the nation, and had the same been still at work it would have given great benefits to the country in recent circumstances. The above factories and organisations which worked in Egypt did not derive their moving powers from abroad, but from the same country where high technical knowledge and experienced men of industry and artisans. The nation's wealth was big enough to spend on educational missions in Europe

THE CIGARETTE CRISIS.

"Misr" (the Cairo correspondent discussing the cigarette crisis). — We never saw before new people crowding before the doors of cigarette factories and pressing forward individually in order to buy cigarettes; but today I witnessed this scene in front of the Misr factory which is now closed. The shop's doors were closed and only a small opening was left, open for each person who came to buy cigarette boxes and parcels to the hundreds of clients who assembled outside to take them. The reason they said was that the people assemble together there is that the place opens its doors for the sale of cigarettes only for one hour per day. A similar scene took place before the shops belonging to Mellenkin and the Alma Company, but there also we saw people who go in large numbers to take cigarettes? They are objective we have come to Cairo from all the provinces of Sharaseen, Gallioubeh, Giza, the Fayoum, Beni Suef and Minia for that purpose. The tobacco was first introduced into Egypt in the month of Rabia Tani 1200 of the Hegira corresponding to March in the time of Aly Pasha. In his book entitled "Akhbar el Oawal" El Ishaki made the following remark about the tobacco: "Tobacco is the course of a biographical sketch of Ay' Pasha. — He is a man appearing with a pipe in his mouth in health and temper, and which is entirely without any benefit—the tobacco that tinges the teeth and makes the breath fetid."

A propos I learn from one of the Tewfikeh cigarette factories that the tobacco stock in Cairo is big enough to enable the small supplied with cigarettes for a long time but it is the difficulty of transport that is to send out packages of the same to the provinces owing to the interruption of communications. This is the main reason why people in the provinces come to the capital to buy cigarettes and tobacco. Moreover, the Government has lately somewhat increased their prices by 33 per cent.

U.S.A. AND SYRIA.

The "Mokattam" (a letter to the editor from Fathalla Bey Soussa on the future of Syria).—I have never approved the proposed appointment of the United States as Mandatory Power for Syria, as others have opposed the delegation of either Great Britain or France to perform the same function, for I know that the qualities which qualify America to supervise our country are possessed as well by the latter two Powers. What I sincerely desire as a result of the different views, is that our affair should be entrusted to the League of Nations, and that the unity of Syria should be the aim of every Syrian.

(The same journal on the same subject).—In its issue of March 16, the "Mokattam" published the following statement: "According to reports received from Egypt, and to the declarations of the Secretary of State for public opinion in Syria both in the interior and in the literal regions, public opinion in this country wishes the United States to come over to help Independent Syria within its natural boundaries; for it is not the wish of America to reform Syria in a short period in accordance with the wishes of its inhabitants both at home and abroad."

The "Ikdh" which is published in Damascus states as follows under the heading "America and the Arabs". — "The relations between these two peoples have adopted the character of the American Consul in Damascus has taken upon herself the task of protecting Armenia she will be very near to Syria and will be able to help her." — In another issue dated March 23, the "Mokattam" states as follows: "The idea that the United States should help Syria, has spread so much among people that we may safely say that this has become the general demand of Syria. "The Syrians now believe that the "United States" is the only remedy which heals Syria from the suffering caused to her by the Unionists."

The Copenhagen correspondent of the "Stockholm Tidningen" quotes a statement made in the "National Tidende" to the effect that Danish exports to Germany have stopped owing to the Germans being unable to pay for the goods sent.

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THE PROPOSED SUDAN IRRIGATION SCHEME.

FINDINGS OF COMMITTEE.

We are in receipt of the text of the report of the Nile Projects Committee in connection with the proposed scheme to the effect that for a irrigation upon Lower Egypt raised by Sir W. Willcocks and Lt.-Colonel Kennedy. The report is introduced by a letter from Sir Reginald Wingate to Sir Murdoch MacDonald, in which the high Commissioner says:

"I send you herewith copy of the report presented by the Nile Projects Committee which was assembled to enquire into the scheme put in brought against the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works by Sir William Willcocks and Lieut.-Colonel M. Ralston Kennedy, in connection with the present Irrigation programme of the Sudan. In view of the serious charges made, I felt it to be my duty to request His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to nominate a Committee of competent experts, on whose judgment the public and I could rely, to examine the question. The Nile Projects Committee was accordingly appointed. I am very glad to learn from their report that Lieut.-Colonel Kennedy acquitted in every particular and that they condemn very strongly the action of Sir William Willcocks and Lieut.-Colonel Kennedy in bringing these charges against yourself and your staff. I am anxious you should have the opportunity of giving proper publicity to the findings of the Committee."

The Committee which prepared this report had as its members: Sir Maurice Fitzmaurice, G.M.G., K.I.C.M., President, Inspectorate of Civil Engineers; Sir John Benton, K.C.I.E., M.I.C.E., F.C.H., late Inspector-General, Irrigation, Government, Egypt, acting Director General; E. Gamsin, G.C.M.G., G.B.E., M.I.C.E., late Adviser Egyptian Public Works; Sir Alan Anderson Webb, K.C.M.G., M.I.C.E., F.C.H., late Adviser Egyptian Public Works; Professor W. Chisholme Dawn, F.R.S., LL.D., M.I.C.E., past President Institution of Civil Engineers, author of works on Hydraulics and Water Measurement; Colonel H. G. Lyons, R.E., D.S.O., F.R.S., D.Sc., late Director-General, Survey Department, Egypt, acting Director Meteorological Office.

Following is the text of the report:—

"Sir,—We, the Committee appointed by you to consider the charges made by Lieut.-Colonel M. Ralston Kennedy, C.M.G., D.S.O., and Sir William Willcocks, K.C.M.G., in connection with certain Egyptian and Sudan Irrigation Projects, have the honour to present our report.

"2. The reference to the Committee is contained in letters from you, No. 137251/W/16, of August 14, 1912, No. 116 of January 29, 1918, and 171407/W/16, of October 19, 1918, and is — "To examine the points at issue regarding certain alleged irregularities at the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works in connection with the present Irrigation Programme in the Sudan, but that programme itself is not under review.

"3. We have found considerable difficulty in separating the charges made from the consideration of the irrigation programme itself, as they arise almost entirely in connection with the proposals. We have, however, as far as possible kept within our reference, and, for the sake of brevity in the report, we have found it impossible altogether to avoid dealing with some aspects of the Irrigation Programme.

"4. The Committee held twelve meetings, and evidence was taken on twenty-one days. The first meeting a letter was received from Lieut.-Colonel M. Ralston Kennedy, and a telegram from Sir William Willcocks, asking for the composition of the Committee. In view of these objections we thought it advisable to write the following letter to you:—

"November 28, 1918.

"Sir,—At a meeting of the Nile Projects Committee, held on the 27th inst., a communication to the members the telegram, dated November 26, 1918, received from Sir William Willcocks, in which he protested against the appointment of Sir William Garstin, Sir Arthur Webb and two others as members of the Committee. We presume the two others he objected to were Colonel Lyons and Colonel Dawn.

"The Committee also had before it a letter, dated November 15, from Colonel Kennedy, in which he also protested against the Committee, that the inclusion of these previously implicated Egyptian officials in the Committee might prejudice, in advance, any effective decision your Committee may desire to arrive at.

"In view of the objections made by Sir William Garstin stated he was unwilling to remain a member of the Committee, unless the attention of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was drawn to the telegram and letter referred to, the Committee considered that Sir Stafe was of opinion, after considering the documents, that there was no reason for his withdrawal.

"I am, Sir,

"To a certain degree the same course would apply to the three other members of the Committee referred to. I was, therefore, asked to communicate the position to you, and to ask you to deal with the matter in the way suggested by Sir William Garstin.

"I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) MAURICE FITZMAURICE,
The Secretary of State for
Foreign Affairs, Foreign Office.
London, S.W.1."

"5. To this letter the reply, as below, was received:—

"No. 107992/W/16. "Foreign Office,
"December 3, 1918.

Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 28th ultimo on the subject of the Nile Projects Committee, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Balfour to state that, after considering the point raised in your letter, he is perfectly satisfied as to the composition of the Committee and sees no reason for any of its members to withdraw.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient, humble Servant,
(Signed) R. GRAHAM."

"The Committee, therefore, continued its work.

6. "The witnesses who appeared before us were:—Lieut.-Colonel M. Ralston Kennedy, C.M.G., D.S.O., late Director of Works, Sudan Government; H. G. Craig, M.A., F.R.S.E., late Survey Department and Controller, Statistical Department, Egyptian Finance Ministry; Sir Murdoch MacDonald, K.C.M.G., Adviser to the Egyptian Public Works Ministry; Mr. H. E. Hurst, M.A., B.Sc., Physical expert Record Office Service, Egyptian Public Works Ministry; Mr. D. P. MacGillivray, Manager, Sudan Plantations Syndicate; Mr. H. H. MacClure, M. Hust, C.E.

Sir William Willcocks was invited to give evidence before the Committee, but did not avail himself of the invitation."

COLONEL KENNEDY'S CHARGES.

7. "We deal first with the charge made by Lieut.-Colonel Kennedy, and for convenience we take each charge, and deal with the investigation into it, separately:—

"Charge (A).—In a letter dated May 22, 1918, to H.E. the High Commissioner of Egypt, Colonel Kennedy stated that, in a document dated May 20, 1917, prepared by the Physical Department and signed by Sir Murdoch MacDonald, the diagram giving the discharge of the Blue Nile at Sennar in 1914 for the months of January and February, and marked "Sennar Discharge, 1914," has been falsified.

"We have given much time into the question and find that the curve "Sennar Discharge, 1914," has not been based on any general data, charts, tables, or on any Hydrometrical Rating, but is based on actual measurements, taken approximately once a week over a period of four months, of the discharge of the Blue Nile in the year 1914. It is true that those discharge measurements of the Blue Nile taken at Sobat Soba and Wad Medani (being respectively 358 and 154 kilometres down stream from Sennar and not at Sennar itself), and we consider that a note to that effect might have been added to the diagram to avoid any misunderstanding. We can, however, see no reason for any objection to deducting the Sennar discharges from actually measured ages at Sobat and Wad Medani, in the absence of discharges at Sennar itself, provided allowance is made, if such should be found necessary, for any excess which may alter the volume of water in the river at Sobat and Wad Medani from that on the corresponding date at Sennar. In fact, the method of inferring the discharge at one place by means of a measured discharge at another place is one that is frequently adopted. We have accordingly considered whether any alteration in the volume of the river should be allowed for in 1914 between Sennar and Wad Medani.

"9. It must be noted that the discharges referred to only concern the period when the Nile was falling; nevertheless, we have examined the possibility of any increase in the volume of the river after passing Sennar due to water percolating from the rivers Raffad and Dindar. It is well known that these rivers only flow for a short period of the year, and that the flow generally ceases in November. To make certain, however, that there was no mistake in the matter, we cabled for official information on this point, and received a reply stating that in the year 1913 both rivers ceased flowing before the month of December. We then carefully examined the question of evaporation and seepage, and of absorption of water in the sandy trough of river.

10. "FINDING ON CHARGE (A). — We are of opinion that, as a result of the investigation, there is no justification for Colonel Kennedy's charge of falsification, and that the Blue Nile discharge at Sennar for the year 1914, as shown on the document referred to, is a correct representation of the facts.'

11. "When dealing with the question of the discharge of the Blue Nile during the earlier months of 1914, Colonel Kennedy stated, both in letter and in evidence before us, that he himself measured the discharge of the Blue Nile on April 13, 1914, near Wad Medani. The discharge as measured by him was, he stated, 27 cubic metres per second, or little more than half the official estimate of discharge for that date. In Colonel Kennedy's letter to the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, dated September 12, 1918, which was forwarded to us, and which refers to the discharge taken by him on April 13, 1914, he states—"The result of these discharge observations worked out some few days later entirely confirmed my previous suspicions and led to the commencement of the long delayed *exposé* of the Egyptian Irrigation scandals."

12. "We asked him if he, as an official of the Sudan Government, had reported this discharge which has taken on the Blue Nile, and he informed us that he had not done so. We also asked him to give some details of how this discharge had been taken, but he refused to give us any information regarding it, except to state that it was taken by means of floats."

13. "FINDING ON PARAGRAPH 11. — As Colonel Kennedy has been unable or unwilling to put before us any proof or details of the measurements of the discharge referred to by him, we have no option but to reject it when considering the minimum volume of the Blue Nile."

14. "CHARGE (B). — In the letter dated September 12, 1918, to the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and again in his evidence before us, Colonel Kennedy asserted that the official readings of the Sennar gauge from January 21 to January 27, 1914 (both dates inclusive) have been falsified. He also asserted, and lays stress on the assertion, that the gauge reading for January 24, 1914, supplied to him in his official capacity as Director of Public Works in the Sudan, was given to him as 10.10, whereas it is officially recorded as 10.20.'

15. "We asked that legally certified copies of the gauge records should be produced for our inspection. We have received, and examined these copies, and are satisfied that the official gauge readings as these actually recorded, as observed. In order, however, to obtain a further check, we cabled to Egypt for the actual postcards sent by the observers to the