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SUBJECT: Cabinet Changes
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Prime Minister Ismail El Azhari dismissed Mirghani Hamza, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Education; Khalafalla Khalid, Minister of Defense, and Ahmed Gelli, Minister without Portfolio from his Cabinet on December 23, 1954. (For the details of these dismissals, see Despatch 112). On December 25, he announced the following additions to his Cabinet, some of whom would replace the dismissed Ministers:

- Mudathir Ali El Bushi, Minister of Justice
- Ibrahim El Manallawi, Minister of Mineral Resources
- Khidr Hamad, Minister of Irrigation and Hydroelectric Power
- Hassan Awadalla, Minister of Agriculture
- Dak Der, Minister of Mechanical Transport
- Sentino Deng Teng, Minister of Stores and Supplies

The Prime Minister also assumed the portfolio of Defense.

These appointments are somewhat uneven. The major stroke was the appointment of Khidr Hamad to Irrigation. Khidr Hamad is known as an honest man and no great sympathizer of the Egyptians. For Azhari to entrust this portfolio to him meant to many people that this was no sell-out to the Egyptians. Khidr Hamad informed me that the Prime Minister had begged him to take this portfolio on just these grounds. Humphrey Morrice, Advisor to the Sudan Government on Irrigation has had one long meeting on Nile Waters with his new minister and finds him full of courage to stand up to the Egyptians and he is convinced he will resist unreasonable demands.

The Prime Minister tried to get the Kaid (head of the Sudan Defense Force) Ahmed Mohamed to accept the Ministry of Defense. This would have been clever because Ahmed Mohamed is a Khatmia and this would have suggested that SAM, the Khatmia head, approved the change. Furthermore, the Egyptians and the Prime Minister do not trust the Kaid whom they consider too much of a Sudanese nationalist and unsympathetic toward the Egyptian control of the SDF. The present Deputy Kaid, Ibrahim Abboud, from the standpoint of the Egyptians and the Prime Minister, would make a much more satisfactory Kaid and therefore this change would have killed two birds with one stone. One version is that the Kaid refused the Ministry of Defense because he did not want to have anything to do with politics.

J.Sweeney:am

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Other version is that he would only agree to accept the Ministry if he was made a Ferik (Major General) as this would give him a higher pension and greater prestige. The Government had to refer this to the RCG, as having a Sudanese Major General would mean that he would outrank everyone in the Egyptian Army.

Madathir Ali El Bushi who represents Wad Medani in the House of Representatives was a former Grand Khadi of Wad Medani and has distinguished himself at Sharia law (the branch in the Sudan dealing with matters concerning the Muslim religion). He is famous for his anti-British attitude and will hardly be likely to carry on extensive British traditions associated with the judiciary. He is very much of an Azhari man and is known to be pro-Egyptian.

Hassan Awadalli is the weakest of all the appointments. A former Government bookkeeper he has no qualifications in Agriculture. He is, however, extremely close to the Prime Minister and served as his Parliamentary Assistant in the early days of Parliament. He has been attached to the Prime Minister's office as a sort of assistant although his only known function has been to create confusion in the Prime Minister's schedule of appointments. Egyptian pressure tried to get him appointed as Secretary-General of the NUP in place of Khidr Hamad, (on the grounds that the Secretary General was too busy, or should be too busy, to be a Cabinet Minister), but this was resisted by the Khatmia.

Ibrahim El Mahallawi, Member of the House of Representatives for Atbara, is very much interested in the mineral wealth of the Sudan. He has organized a company to search for minerals, and has apparently discovered some wollostonite, which he hopes to market in the US. He has recently entered into some sort of agreement with Dr. Wendell Phillips, an American, to do something about potential oil resources in the Eastern Sudan. Presumably he will have to disassociate himself from these personal pursuits. He has long wanted to be a Cabinet Minister and had hard words with Azhari when he was not made a Cabinet Minister at the time of the original formation of the Cabinet. He is pro-Egyptian. A character, Mahallawi, was dismissed from his post as Head Accountant of the Sudan Railways for participating in politics. He speaks French, German and some Italian which is unusual for a Sudanese. He has ability, but he is also a cantankerous man.

The two Southerners, Dak Dei and Sentino Deng Teng, who were already Ministers without Portfolios, were given portfolios because they had nothing to do but ride around in their ministerial cars. These two appointments have been ridiculed in most of the local press, but they will satisfy a good deal of Southern opinion, and these two are in positions to distribute largesse to Southerners. Neither of these two Southern Ministers was in Khartoum to take a new oath before the Governor General so technically and legally they are not yet occupying their new posts despite the Prime Minister's announcement.

cc: London, Cairo

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