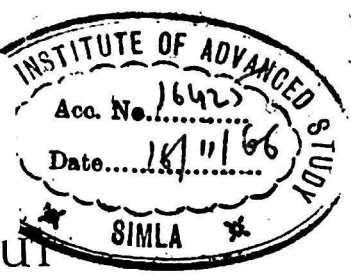
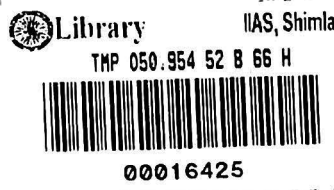


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THE HADHRAMAUT

By COLONEL HUGH BOUSTEAD, C.M.G., D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C.

Report of a lecture delivered to the Royal Central Asian Society on Wednesday, July 1, 1959, Sir Philip Southwell, C.B.E., M.C., in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: It is my privilege today to introduce Colonel Hugh Boustead, who will talk to us on "The Hadhramaut." I could take up almost the time of the talk in telling you what he has done in the various places to which he has been, but he has films and slides to show and it will be difficult to fit into the time allotted all he has to say. Therefore, I shall be brief.

I cannot help feeling, however, that we have with us someone of a very special category. Not only was Colonel Boustead a distinguished explorer, when he was in the Sudan Service, in the South-West Sudan. To go back a little earlier, as an Army Officer he was captain of the British pentathlon team at the Olympics in 1920, and, before that, he was the schoolboy hero who decided to leave the Navy to find more action at that time on land in the Army. There was an Everest exploration expedition dotted in in about 1930 and, more latterly, in Mukalla, with that dignity and wisdom that is so necessary in dealing with our Arab friends in those places, he maintained good relations. Now, he is on the other side of Arabia, in Muscat.

So we really have someone who is particularly knowledgeable in those parts of the world, with a great history of travel and of knowledge of the peoples there behind him.

Colonel Hugh Boustead:

TO make the places, peoples and areas about which I shall talk clearer to you all, I have had a map prepared of the area of the East Aden Protectorate. I propose to show it first and to point out to you something of the terrain of the country about which I will be speaking and of the principal towns, the borders of the States, main roads and anything that is relevant either to the talk or to the slides that follow.

Before showing the slides, I propose to show the map again to remind you where everything is. The East Aden Protectorate lies along the coast of the Indian Ocean. At the centre, the town of Mukalla is about 280 miles east of Aden. The borders of the Protectorate are shown by dotted line. The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman lies to the east and the whole of the Rub al Khali area to the north with, at its western end, the West Aden Protectorate. The main roads running up from the coast to the interior are shown, including one from Mukalla over a mountain range over 7,000 ft. in height. The coastal fringe varies between about half a mile to 10-15 miles in width from the coast.

In the northern desert area there are the Northern Bedouin, rather like the Bedouin of Northern Arabia and Saudi Arabia. The Kathiri State lies in the middle, like an island, trapped in with no access to the sea. To the east lies the Mahra, a vast, mainly desert, and rocky mountain area populated largely by Bedouin. Along the coastal area there is a fishing, agricultural and trading population who have a great sprinkling of African

blood, particularly among the fishermen. There are purer Arab tribes to the north and in the Wahidi.

I will start with the Hadhramaut under Herald Ingrams. He was the first Resident Adviser, appointed in 1938, and in a matter of six years, with the selfless help of Seiyid Sir Bu Bakr bin Shaikh Alkaf, and that of the late Sultan Saleh, and with the tireless work of Mrs. Doreen Ingrams, he so reduced inter-tribal wars that were crippling the Qaiti and Kathiri States in the Hadhramaut as to achieve a large measure of security in the central, and most important areas of the two States. Ingrams left behind him in these six years of work an ordered Central Government in the Qaiti State with a substantial revenue, an organized military force and *gendarmarie*, schools, dispensaries, decrees, standing orders, and State Councils. He was responsible for founding the administrations and for setting up an advisory relationship which is very important, because it was the basis of any progress with the co-operation of the rulers and the people. These stand today as a witness to Ingrams' inexhaustible energy and great ability.

The last time that Ingrams spoke to this Society was, I think, in 1945. Although I am aware that I am addressing a very well-informed audience, as Colonel Pickering put it so lucidly in "My Fair Lady," "a lot of water has passed under the . . . the . . . thing" since then. So I am taking the liberty of reminding you of the details of these States.

First, the question of the advisory relationship. When Ingrams went there, he proceeded to advise the Sultan to bring in foreign-trained Moslem executives for the heads of departments and for some of the provinces and governments. The State Secretaries were either Zanzibaris, or, afterwards, Sudanese. The masters of the schools were Sudanese. They had a dual role. One was to carry out the executive and the other to train the personnel who would carry on in the future.

The other thing that Ingrams did, which I cannot pass without referring to at this stage, was the bringing about a truce between the tribes and the Government whereby a very large number of warring tribes handed in their arms. On the whole, the security had become gradually fairly satisfactory, but at the end of Ingrams' time in the Wadi he was confronted with a major problem.

When Ingrams' peace came there was a flow of easy money from Singapore and East Indies, bringing in shipments of foodstuffs and luxury goods into the valley. This resulted in the fading of the will of the people to work on dams and cultivate their lands. When the Japanese war came these supplies and easy money from the Far East to Arabia were cut off and in 1943 the valley was caught unguarded, without food, and thousands died of starvation. The sardines failed on the coast and the camels, which were engaged in the carrying trade to the interior, largely died or were too weak to carry. Some £150,000 of H.M.G.'s money had to be used to supply the interior with grain by air and squadrons of the R.A.F. were making air-drops.

This process recurred in 1948 in the western valleys. In 1949 I was made responsible for the East Aden Protectorate, and the first problem with which I was confronted was to try to ensure that such a famine did

not occur in the future. The measures to combat this were, first, to tour the country and to inspire the people, through the medium of their own governors of provinces, District Commissioners and so on, to get down to agriculture and to train people to start up a workshop and to set up a complete pumping scheme in the Wadi, the water being some 25-60 ft. below the surface. At the same time, it was necessary to repair the old dam systems which lie along the Wadi bed and which had collapsed and eroded because of the lack of any effort on the part of the people owing to easy flow of money mentioned earlier. The inhabitants were too rich. They had neither attempted to keep up the irrigation works nor to get their serf class to do so. I have no time now to go into more detail on that score.

The third thing was to set up grain reserves in the main wadi towns, in Sai'un and Shibam. Those grain reserves stood us in some stead later when we had trouble in the Bedouin areas, but during the succeeding years the pump scheme and the irrigation works were successful. During the following seven years, all the major irrigation works were repaired and put into order. The water table rose in the wells and we had by that time some 700 diesel pumps working in the Wadi. The wheat crop was more than doubled and, for the first time in the history of the Hadhramaut, wheat was being sold to the West.

During that time, it had been one of our anxieties to build up a fleet of motor transport, so that in the event of another period of grain shortage, we should be able to send up grain by motor and not be dependent on the camels. The motor trade grew enormously. Whereas there were only some 50 rather bad lorries when I went there, there were over 200 about eight years later.

The next crisis that arose was about 1954, when the lorries started to compete with the camel transport to the interior, and the Bedouin, frightened of losing their livelihood, cut the roads and started to interfere with the main lines of communication. They held up lorries and caused a very great deal of anxiety to the Government. The resulting danger to security was very considerable.

There were about 150,000 people, including the Wadi Duan to the west, in the interior and without the means of supply. We had some nasty headaches before settling this tiresome problem. The measures taken were, first, to try to contact the Bedouin, while, at the same time, holding the main roads and forming convoys. In the end, the introduction of armoured cars acted as one of the best restraints on the Bedouin.

When Ingrams started with security, he introduced a social force into the Hadhramaut called the Hadhramaut Bedouin Legion. It had its roots and being in Glubb's Arab Legion and was of the same style. It was a very happy method of taming the Bedouin.

The Bedouin of the Jol are very primitive. They are akin to Dravidian Tribes in Southern India and are not pure Arabs, but, some believe, are the results of a migration from India many years ago. They are very virile. They wear practically no clothes. They prefer oil and indigo, as we used to do also many years ago. They wear their hair long. They cut neither their hair nor their beards, and they make tough soldiers.

They are cheerful, full of fun and fairly easy to manage, provided their commanders have a sense of humour.

The Bedouin Legion were very largely responsible for maintaining security over the whole of the interior in the first instance. During the last ten years, an armed constabulary, which at first had been formed by Ingrams, was increased and took over the whole of that area. The Bedouin Legion, which had been increased to 1,200 and equipped with armoured cars and with light car patrols, transferred their dealings to the northern forts. They spread their tentacles right out to the Muscat border, and at every one of those forts we had control over the valley water supplies in the areas. The reason for the forts being built on the water was to prevent raiding tribes from taking the water and thus being able to return to their base. If they raided, there was no water for them. Should it be a year when plenty of rain fell in pools in the desert, the mobile patrols would deal with them. This method proved extremely successful. This holding of the northern forts had a great influence on the tribes themselves and resulted also in civilizing the northern Bedouin of the Rub al Khali.

I now come to the administration. The country was divided into provinces in the normal way of a dependency—say, Kenya or elsewhere—with province governors and district commissioners, who were Arabs. During my ten years there, one of the problems was to set up an administration and to pacify the area of Irma. This was carried out by the security forces, which supported the Bedouin Legion.

The Mukalla regular army was a regular striking force of Bedouin and Yaffai soldiers with British training officers to assist in training them, but *not* to command them. No forces in the E.A.P. were commanded by the British at all, whether the Mukalla regular army or the armed constabulary. The Mukalla regular army would go in and deal with a big tribal revolt if it arose. When they had established peace in the area an administration would be set up and the Mukalla regular army would be replaced by the armed constabulary, who had taken over the role of the Bedouin Legion in the interior.

There was no question ever of going in and withdrawing. If the Government went in with force to a previously unadministered area they stayed there and set up an ordered government. At the head of the States' Governments were two State Councils, in the Qaiti and the Kathiri States. Later, in the last year, we had also a State Council in the Wahidi State.

During a recent lecture, General Glubb referred to help to the Arabs. During the last nine years of which I am now speaking, we set up local governments in the towns and rural areas of the Quaiti and Kathiri States, which were not Bedouin areas. The people are extremely intelligent, very alive and alert, and they reacted favourably. It was a matter of self-help and I would say that they certainly appreciated it and expressed their appreciation of this local government. They took on the sanitation in the main towns and in the villages, progress in agriculture and irrigation, and so on. Having an extremely literate community, with always a literate head and secretaries ready for use, made a great difference.

In order to carry this out I took with me an administrator who had been my own Assistant District Commissioner from the Sudan, who taught the Hadhramis local government and then went back to the Sudan and, unfortunately, was killed as a District Commissioner in the southern revolt in the Sudan. He was a fine man who made himself much loved by all.

Education was started by Ingrams, and by 1949 there was at Gheil ba Wazir, an educational institute, with a junior secondary school, an intermediate school, two or three primary schools, a religious school and a teacher-training school, together with a network of schools throughout the State. The Hadhramis reacted, like all these people do, terrifically to education and are always continuously asking for more. It is a matter of money. To them it meant a very great deal, because the Hadhrami boy is really the invisible export of the Hadhramaut. It is the passage of the Hadhrami boy to Indonesia, Singapore, the east coast of Africa and all its towns, Kuwait, Bahrain and Addis Ababa, which brings in the amount of money which enables the boys' parents to pay for such luxuries and food-stuffs as they have and to provide revenue, through the Customs, for the Government.

Over and above that, the results of this education were that the States were able during these periods to have trained a very large number of lads who were capable of being taken on in the Government.

At the same time, we ran an administrative school in Mukalla for the training of administrators, police and army officers. That has been running for a number of years and has turned out a large number of officers and officials. They reacted keenly to this. All this, of course, has helped to solidify the Government.

The finance of the State has had a background of annually increasing revenue largely as a result of this. They have been able increasingly to pay for more and more services until, in 1955, the British Government were forced to raise the pay of the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion, a British-paid force for the frontier. To bring the State forces into line, the Quaiti Government were similarly compelled to put up the State salaries much against their will as they were proud to run the show on their own without H.M.G. assistance, which now became necessary.

There is no more time to deal with the Quaiti, but I must touch upon the Mahra. About 300 miles south of Mukalla is the Island of Socotra, where the Sultan of Socotra lives and from where he is alleged to rule over the Mahra. I say "alleged" because he is, and has been proved to be, a most reluctant visitor to the mainland. I once took him there in a frigate. He did not like it at all. After staying for ten days, he called for an aeroplane, had a landing ground built and went back to the island. His control over the tribes is very small.

The tribes on the coast proved unwilling to have any form of government along the coast and the Sultan bowed to the necessity. It would have required tough action to have enabled any sort of government to be established, but he agreed that we could continue with the oil companies, supported by the Bedouin Legion, building forts in the interior and gradually spreading the web among the Bedouin tribes to the north of the

Mahra and thereby enabling the oil companies to do their stuff which they have been doing now for a number of years. Land Rover patrols from the Bedouin Legion go out with them.

That was the situation there. The British officers and my own assistant advisers would go out in the desert and become friends with the tribes there. It was what might be called something of a direct administration.

There is time to touch on only one more point: and that is in regard to oil. Not long ago Colonel van der Meulen, an old friend of mine, came and stayed in Muscat. How he got there nobody knows, because it is a difficult place to get into. He gave a speech to what is called the Exiles Club and he discussed Saudi Arabia in the light of his recent book on Ibn Saud, which, I suppose, a number of you have read, and, in particular, in regard to the destruction of character and the lack of progress among a people that has resulted from finding oil in a country without an administration and without a government of integrity to back it.

I would like to end this talk by saying that all this reference to development, education, the training of government officials there and the training of army and police officers, has been with the idea of endeavouring to ensure that if oil comes, we should have men who were capable of dealing with it and with the money that accrues from the oil, and men of integrity, and that the money should be divided between the States as far as possible and with their agreement.

On that note I end this talk so that you may have an opportunity to see some of these places on the slides.

(The lecturer then gave a most interesting and amusing commentary on his quite excellent coloured slides.)

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Council and everyone here, I should like to thank Colonel Boustead for the trouble he has taken in getting this talk together and bringing you these colourful pictures which we have been able to see. It has been a great pleasure to us.

I believe that Colonel Boustead is shortly returning to Muscat. To come here and do this for us when he is on leave just before he goes back is a particularly gracious act to us, and we thank him very much for it.

I am sure you would all like me to wish him God speed and happy landings on his return.

(The vote of thanks was accorded by acclamation, and the meeting then ended.)



