

Mr. C.
Grierson.

9 May 1872.

about 500 miles; from Orel to Sebastopol will be about 300 miles. The railway will be finished in 18 months, I believe.

2018. Mr. *Holms*.] Supposing that railway was completed, and there was a large supply of wheat, that wheat would come out, would it not, whether we had a consul or whether we had not?—Of course.

2019. Mr. *Kinnaird*.] There are other advantages, are there not, in having a consul there; do you believe that they will re-fortify Sebastopol?—Yes, I believe so.

2020. Therefore there will be political considerations as well as commercial?—Yes, I think it would be always well to know what is passing in Sebastopol, to see what is going on exactly, and the state of that country. You are perhaps aware that for the last seven or eight years, Russia has been making enormous fortifications at the entrance to the Azof at Kertch.

2021-2. What is the communication between Sebastopol and the Sea of Azof now?—Principally by sea. The land communication is very difficult.

2023. Have we any consul up that way?—I do not think that we have any other consul in the interior, near the entrance to the Crimea.

2024. But an active intelligent man at Sebastopol would be able to pick up information in the whole of that country?—Yes.

2025. When that is a commercial port, there will be a great deal of trade from there?—Yes, a large trade. It will give you an idea of the importance of Sebastopol if I say that within the last two years property which you might have bought perhaps for 1,000 *l.* is now worth 10,000 *l.*

2026. Mr. *Baillie Cochran*.] Under the capitulations with Turkey, every consul and vice consul in Turkey has the power of holding a court, has he not?—Yes.

2027. Do not you consider that as these courts try important cases, Englishmen are better fitted to fill the place of judges in those courts than Maltese and Levantines?—I have a very strong opinion about that.

2028. What is that?—My opinion is that certainly we ought to see English alone filling those places; in Russia there is no jurisdiction.

2029. These capitulations throughout Turkey, or a great part of Turkey, could not with safety to English interests be given up I suppose?—I should think not.

2030. Mr. *Otway*.] When will the railways be finished?—The main lines on the coast on which I live now, will be completed in about two years.

2031. Would that put Nicolaieff in direct com-

munication with Petersburg?—No, I do not think so.

2032. It would Kertch, would it not?—Not direct, but very nearly, because the distance from Kertch to Sebastopol is not very great; they will have to enter the Crimea by the Isthmus of Perekop; they cannot come by Kertch, because all that is what we call the Putrid Sea, in other words it is marsh; they must pass round the head of it. Since the Black Sea has been thrown open the fortifications in the Azof, at Kertch, are not so important; I should think that the Government, now feeling that they have the whole of the Black Sea open, will be quite content to use Sebastopol; as far as we can judge, they intend to build their men-of-war at Nicolaieff, and then they will send them down; there is only a limited draught of water, about 16 feet, and they will send their vessels down in an unfinished state and take them to Sebastopol, I should think, to finish them. The Russian Steam Navigation Company have large works at Sebastopol.

2033. Mr. *F. Walpole*.] Where do they build their steamers?—In England; but they have increased their works in Sebastopol so much that they are hoping shortly to build steamers there; I have heard that the Company have agreed to sell all their works to the Russian Government.

2034. Mr. *Cartwright*.] Have you any suggestions to make as regards the position and salary of the consular officers in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azof?—With regard to the salary of the gentleman at Berdiansk, he has now 600 *l.* a year; it is not so much for a consul, but I mean that the work would be amply done at Berdiansk, he having another appointment elsewhere for 150 *l.* a year; 150 *l.* a year would be sufficient for Berdiansk.

2035. Do you mean that from your knowledge of those countries, of the style of living and the expenditure, you think that our consuls' salaries, and the position in which they are put, are a footing and a scale of salary adequate to the exigencies of their position?—In Odessa I do not think that the consul general is sufficiently paid; Odessa is an extremely expensive place. I should think that our consul at Taganrog is not sufficiently paid, because everything is becoming very much more expensive; I know at Odessa especially, that living, house rent, and everything, is very expensive.

2036. Viscount *Barrington*.] Supposing that a consul were appointed at Sebastopol, what salary do you think he ought to receive to enable him to live properly?—I should think that he ought to have 700 *l.* or 800 *l.* a year.

Captain RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON, F.R.G.S., called in; and Examined.

Capt.
R. F. Burton,
F. R. G. S.

2037. Mr. *Eastwick*.] WILL you state how long you have been in the consular service, and where you have been employed?—I began in the consular service in 1861. I have been employed first at Fernando Po, and at Fernando Po I stayed about three and a-half years in round numbers. I was then employed at Santos, in Brazil, and there I stayed about four years and a couple of months; and I was afterwards transferred to Damascus, where I was 23 months.

2038. You have now left Damascus?—I have been re-called from Damascus.

2039. Is that on account of the reduction of the establishment?—The first official letter informed me that I was re-called because I was unpopular with the Mohammedans; but as I very soon disproved that, the head of the office very justly withdrew the idea, and said that it was for the purpose of having a vice consulate, as it was not considered advisable to have two highly paid consulates so close to each other as Beyrout and Damascus, Beyrout being within 72 miles of Damascus, and connected with it by two coaches every day.

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2040. Is it your opinion that the chief consul ought to be at Beyrout or Damascus, supposing that one is suppressed?—Evidently in the old days it was necessary for the consul to be at Beyrout. The roads were bad, and it was difficult to get there; and, moreover, the consul general being accredited to the governor of the Lebanon, was obliged to be on the seaboard. But now those conditions are changed; you go up in 12 hours; you can as easily get to the Lebanon from Damascus as from Beyrout, and Damascus is the ecclesiastical capital, the seat of the Governor General, and the place for the head tribunals; the place of reference and appeal; whereas Beyrout is a seaport town of very little importance.

2041. At Damascus there are a great number of Christians who derive, or did derive, some protection from the British consulate, I believe?—A large collection of Christians; in fact, almost all the Christians in Syria and Palestine are virtually under some consul; for instance, the Latin Catholics would expect the protection of the French, or failing him, of the Spanish consul; the Protestants would naturally look to the English or Prussian consul; the Greeks would, of course, expect the protection of Russia.

2042. Can you say the number of Christians who would depend on the English consulate?—The British protégés at Damascus, those actually established there, Christians and Jews, are about 42; the number is small, but their dealings with the local governor are of course highly important; they represent a considerable capital, and one of my great difficulties was that I found that they had claims of six millions of piastres: the Ottoman authorities are extremely charming to you so long as you see them as visitors, but the moment you talk of piastres, it is the touch of Ithuriel's spear.

2043. Would you state for what reasons you think that the consulate at Damascus should be maintained on its former footing?—I should very much like to see the consulate at Damascus reduced to a vice consulate, but with a resident consul general at Damascus. Beyrout is quite sufficiently represented by a vice consul or even a trading consul; at Beyrout there is really nothing for the consul general to do.

2044. That is to say, that the consul general would have the superintendence of all the vice consulates round?—Yes, he ought also, like the Russian, to travel once a year, at any rate, throughout the whole of his jurisdiction; his expenses ought to be paid as in the case of a Russian consul; otherwise there is no means of preserving proper influence in the country.

2045. How far would his superintendence extend?—His jurisdiction would extend as far as Aleppo on one side, and as far south as Jerusalem and its dependencies, on the other; on the east it would be indefinitely extended till it meets the resident at Bagdad.

2046. Is the consul at Damascus in communication at all with the consul general at Bagdad?—I was constantly in communication with him, especially on the subject of the British post; we send a camel post through the Desert, and it is a service that costs some trouble; the camel man is repeatedly being robbed and stripped by the Bedouins, and then, of course, it was for me to get the plunder if, possible, recovered by the Governor General of Syria.

2047. Leaving Damascus for the present, with

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regard to the other places that you have been at, have you any observations to make with regard to them as to the establishment being increased, or otherwise?—I will try to make the observations as short as possible. The present state of the consular service, it appears to me, in the two other posts where I was, is very simply this; the service is so underpaid that it is becoming one of the worst in the world; I do not know anything worse; for instance, at Fernando Po I had 750*l.* a year, and I spent 3,000*l.* of my own: the same at Santos; there I had, I think, 700*l.* a year, and I never could live there under 1,200*l.* a year.

2048. What rendered living there so expensive?—Well; in England they will suppose that because we are so much taxed we are the dearest country in the world. On the contrary, I always found London the cheapest capital in Europe. A shilling in England was the equivalent of 27 pence in Brazil, and a dollar, that is 4*s.* 4*d.*, at Fernando Po. I was obliged to get very often meat and even bread from England at Fernando Po. In Damascus, again, the salary was 700*l.*, 300*l.* office allowance, which had been raised in my case, that was 1,000*l.*; but I never spent less than 1,500*l.* a year there. Formerly it was a cheap place enough, but now it is becoming very expensive; not only from the percolation of gold from the New World, but also from its being the residence of all the high officials, from the more luxurious style of life that the people lead there, and from the necessity of keeping up more display.

2049. Then you think it is impossible, in fact, for the consuls at those places to live on what they receive?—It depends how they live. My predecessor in Santos lived over a spirit shop, and washed his own stockings.

2050. As far as your experience goes of the consular service, you see little or no prospect of a man being able to save anything for his retirement?—In the consular service I should propose simply this; let the consuls be adequately paid and receive privileges as they do in France. I should take France especially for the model of the consular service. Let them be paid by a tax upon shipping, or in any other way; or at once attempt the physical organisation of North Germany, and divide your consuls into a number of professional consuls and trading consuls. The trading consuls are not liked by any of the home offices; they are not generally under discipline; they are accused of favouring the local authorities; they excite jealousy among their fellow-countrymen by their privileges, consequently they are not favourites with any of the home offices; but I do not see in many cases why trade consuls with certain arrangements should not be made thoroughly useful. For instance, in Fernando Po there is an important management of the oil river trade, a trade which is increasing every year to a prodigious extent, but there is no reason why we should not have a commercial consul there who would be superintended by the consul general at St. Paul de Loando. He could always go up to Fernando Po by steamer, and look personally into every case requiring it, and invariably with trade consuls I should propose that every paper which enters and leaves the chancellerie should be sent to the nearest professional consul, who would send it on to the minister, and on receiving the order he would go down to settle any difficulty between the trading consul and his constituents.

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2051. Your

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2051. Your idea is that the Government might save the salary of the consul, and let matters be managed efficiently?—I think so. The trading consul might receive fees which would compensate him for an extra clerk in his office. I should consider that quite sufficient for him; and, on the other hand, you could pay more highly the professional consul.

2052. And would you say the same as to Santos?—Certainly. At Santos you would have a trading consul, who would be dependant on the consul at Rio de Janeiro; the consul can be sent at any moment, it being only a day and a half distance, to investigate any case. When making these remarks, I beg to state that I do not want to make them to the prejudice of any gentlemen holding these appointments.

2053. You left the Indian army, did you not, in order to take a consular appointment?—I left it in a very peculiar way. Lord Russell gave me the appointment, and I went to Fernando Po. The first notice that I had of my having left the service was the following in a newspaper: "18th Regiment Native Infantry, Lieutenant Captain of Staff Corps, F. T. Ross, to be captain in the Cadre, vice Burton, struck off." That was the only way that I knew I had left the Indian army.

2054. Would you consider that the consular service was a desirable one for Indian officers to remove to?—I should certainly not advise them to do it in the present state of things. In the French service it is distinctly so; old officers leave the army, and are most happy to get an appointment in the French consular service; but then an appointment in the French consular service is an appointment of dignity, and moreover, it is one of emolument as well. It is a most painful comparison between the position of an English consul and that of a French consul.

2055. You think that the French system in which the consular and diplomatic services are one, is a much better system than ours, in which the two services are kept distinct?—Well, even ours are not kept quite distinct; there is Mr. Buckley Mathew, of Rio de Janeiro, who is an old consul, and there is Sir Edward Thornton also, who is an old consul; so that we do not at all know where we stand; if a man has certain friends, I suppose he gets into the diplomatic service; but with the French a man's promotion goes on; he commences as *élève consul*, he then becomes a vice consul, and a consul general, as in the case of Monsieur de Lesseps and others.

2056. Mr. F. Walpole.] How long does the camel post take in going from Damascus to Bagdad?—Nine days.

2057. How often did it go?—It changes.

2058. Who is it paid by?—I cannot answer on the spur of the moment, but I believe it is an arrangement between the Post Office and the residents at Bagdad.

2059. You talked of the necessity of a consul at Damascus; do not you think that the consul at Damascus exercises an excessively good influence with regard to India, in the protection of the Affghans, and the Pilgrims, and the resident Indians in Damascus who are British subjects?—Yes.

2060. Are there not a large number of them?—Always an increasing number of them. I saw them very frequently at the consulate; I gave them official or officious protection, and I obtained permission from the minister at Constantinople, that, even if the man's papers were not *en règle*, I might issue to a man, if I knew him to be a British subject, British passport papers.

2061. And that had a kindly influence on our subjects in India?—Certainly.