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**'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND
DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.'**

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
Reference	IOR/R/15/6/40
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About this record

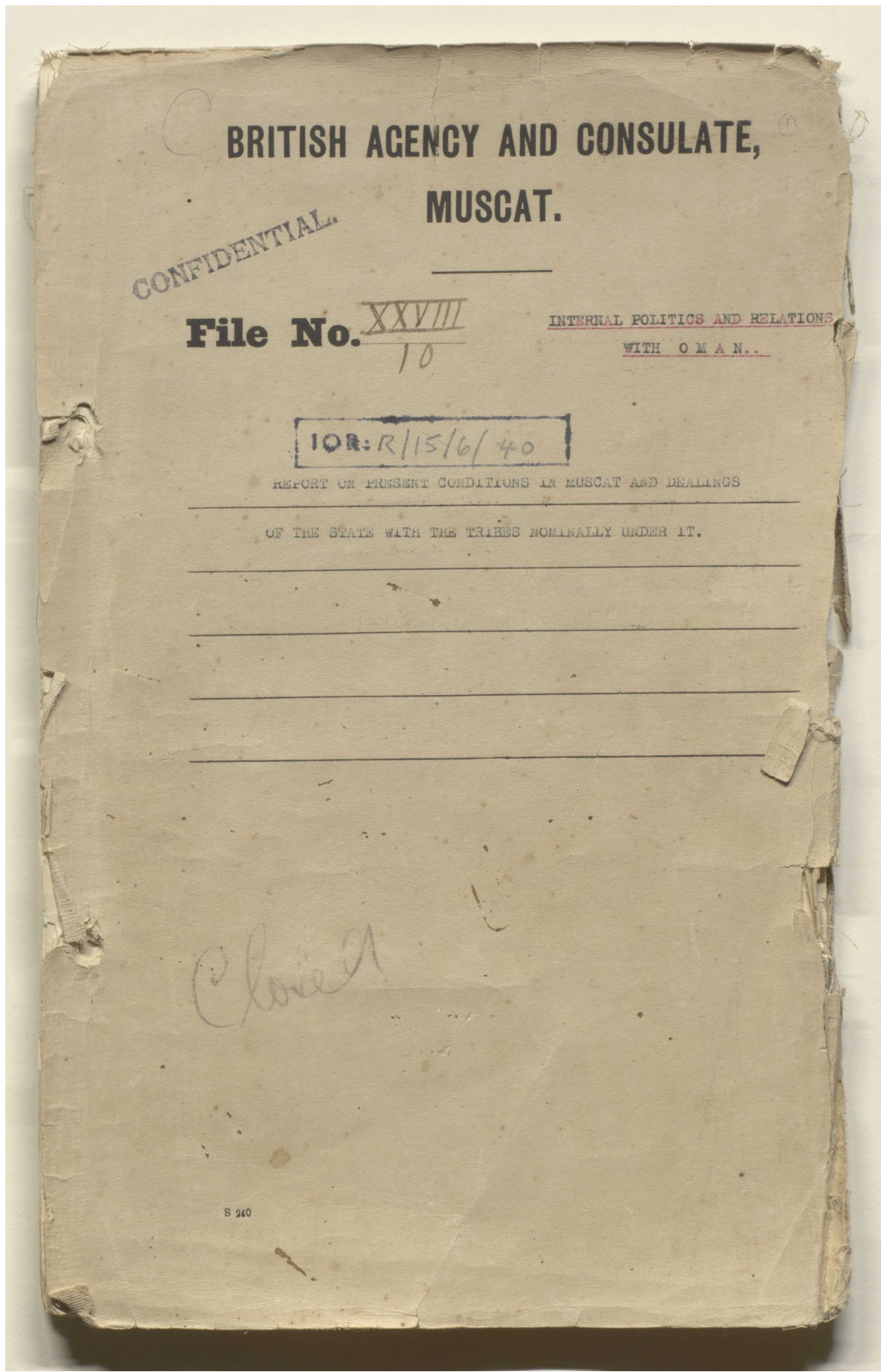
The file contains correspondence in the form of reports and diaries circulated between British Officials. The reports are concerned mainly with internal affairs in Muscat and Oman. The British Political Agent and Consul at Muscat reports to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire, on the present conditions in Muscat and the situation of failure between the state and the tribes nominally under it. The Political Agent also provides half-yearly statements of the revenue of the Muscat State finance along with comments on Bertram Sidney Thomas' financial reports.

Among other issues included in the reports are:

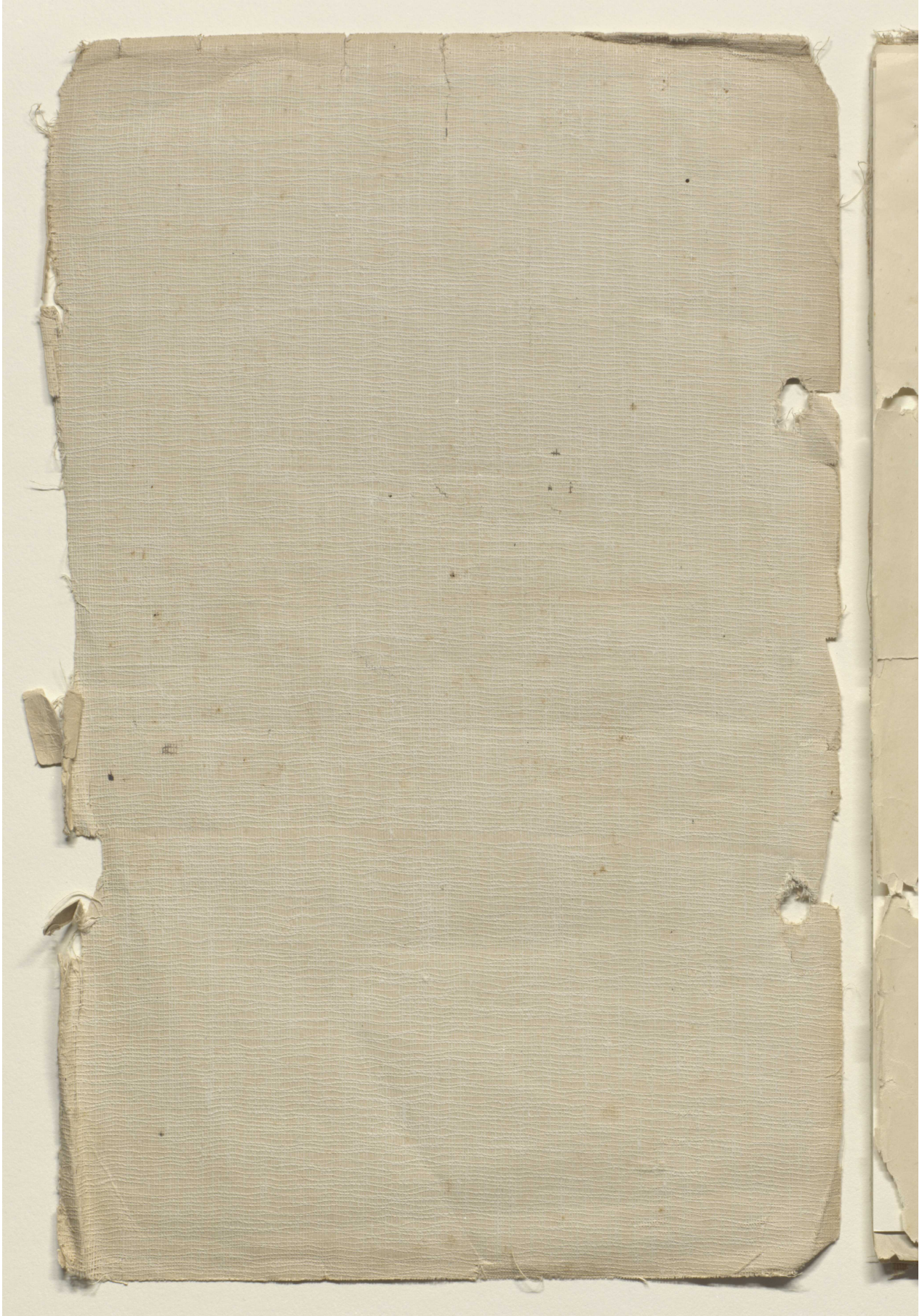
- the news of collecting *zakat* (alms) money from various regions in Oman and Muscat and people's reaction to that
- Shaikh 'Isa bin Salih's diplomacy in bringing conflicting tribes together
- the clashes between the two main Omani factions, the Hanawi and the Ghafiri
- the Wahhabis' occupation of al-Buraimi in the 1800s, and how they influenced some of the tribes of al-Dhahira region who still identify themselves as Wahhabis

- the relation between the Sultan of Muscat and Shaikh 'Isa bin Salih al-Harhi and his father Shaikh Salih bin Ali before him
- the issue of succession of Sultan Taimur bin Faisal
- the need of the British to protect al-Buraimi from the Wahhabis
- a summary of the history of Oman, its *Ibadhi* sect, the establishment of the *Imama* (religious leadership) and the ruling family founded in 1744
- the rebellions of 1895 and 1913

The last report in the file is of the visit of the Senior Naval Officer to the Trucial Coast in May 1931, and his notes on the internal affairs in Ras al-Khaimah and Dubai.



**'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE
WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.'** [front-i] (2/118)



(12)

LETTER FROM THE HON'BLE THE POLITICAL RESIDENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF,
BUSHIRE, No. 38-T. (CONFIDENTIAL), DATED 18TH MARCH 1924.

I have the honour to report, for the information of the Government of India, that on the 16th March I paid a visit to Muscat in the course of which I paid a farewell call on His Highness the Sultan, in the course of which a variety of subjects was discussed.

2 Some time before, the Political Agent had told me that since his return from Dhofar at the end of January His Highness had frequently enquired when I might be expected to visit Muscat as he had a communication to make to me; he would not however say anything to the Political Agent on the subject. I consequently expected His Highness to say something of a confidential nature, and expected he would raise the question of his abdication again.

3. After a good deal of conversation about his stay in Dhotar and the nature of that province and its inhabitants, His Highness came to his confidential communication. At first he dilated a good deal on the worries and troubles of government, saying that he had no desire to rule, etc., and I thought he would definitely put forward the idea of abdicating, so I said that I hoped he would continue to bear the burden and carry on the government until his son became old enough to take over the reins. His Highness said that he would, and I then gathered that what he wanted to say was not so much the question of abdicating as of obtaining Government's recognition of his son as his successor. I reminded His Highness that this question had already been laid before Government [redacted] who had decided that they could not officially recognize his son as successor. I added that in such cases my own practice was to recognize informally as heir the son or other relative recognized by the actual ruler as his heir, and I thought Government took the same line unless the character or behaviour of the heir was such as to prevent their doing so: I felt sure that Government granted the same amount of informal recognition of his son Sayyid Saeed as they had done in his own case when his father the late Sultan Faisal considered him the heir. His Highness seemed perfectly satisfied with this.

4. His Highness then went on to say that he could find no suitable person in the State to advise him in reforming the administration, and keeping the finances straight, when he was present at Muscat, and when he was not present to galvanize the Council of Ministers into life. His Highness said that the members of the Council, though very worthy persons, were absolutely useless as administrators, apart from which they would never come to a decision about any matter, even unimportant questions, and persisted in leaving everything over to await his return. In this I cordially agree, though, of course, I did not say so. His Highness said that he wanted to get an Englishman who would advise him when in Muscat and during his absence "run" the Council of Ministers. Would Government give him a man? I said I thought it might excite unfavourable comment if Government actually appointed an officer as Wazir or Finance Member of the Council which was what I thought he required. I thought it better that I, or rather my successor, should make enquiries and see if a suitable man could be found. If so he could visit His Highness at Dehra Dun (where he intends to go at the beginning of May for about five months), and His Highness could see if he liked the applicant and if his temperament and conduct seemed suitable; if so His Highness could bring him back when he returned in October under contract as Financial Adviser with the prospect of becoming Minister of Finance if he proved suitable and worked satisfactorily. After some discussion His Highness said that if a suitable man presented himself he could engage him as Secretary in India and see how he shaped, whether his manners and treatment of Orientals seemed likely to satisfy Arabs, etc.; if so he would bring the man up. I said that I thought that to attract a suitable man it would be necessary to offer at least Rs. 1,500 but more probably Rs. 2,000 per mensem with house and travelling allowance, etc., and added that this would be a severe strain on the finances of the Muscat State. His Highness agreed and said that if only he could secure a suitable man he would gladly pay

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File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [2v] (4/118)

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half his pay up to Rs. 1,000 a month from the privy purse. I said this was a generous offer and I thought that the State Treasury could easily bear the other half. While on the subject of the State Finances and the existing stringency, His Highness stated that he would be glad to refund half his monthly allowances to the State during his stay in India, and live there on Rs. 5,000. I said this was a very generous offer on His Highness' part and would go far to rehabilitating the State finances. His Highness then said that on his voyage up from India about a year ago he had met an officer who had seemed to him to be a very suitable person. He was then or had recently been employed in the Iraq Customs Department, he could not remember the officer's name but believed he had his visiting card somewhere if he could find it. I said that if he could find and send me the visiting card or the officer's name I would endeavour to trace him and ascertain if he was suitable and qualified to undertake the job, and willing to take service with the Muscat State; and let His Highness know the result.

5. We then had some conversation as to what the position of the English Member of the Council would be *vis a vis* His Highness' brother Saiyid Nadir; I was inclined to think it would be very difficult but His Highness thought he could easily arrange matters so that their relations would be on a satisfactory footing. His Highness said that Saiyid Nadir's sole idea was to avoid responsibility and put everything off till the Sultan's return, he thought that if Saiyid Nadir found he had a colleague who would take responsibility and do things he would be only too glad to leave matters in his hands.

6. I think the Sultan's proposal, in the form it emerged from this conversation, to try and find a suitable Englishman who would take service with him and run the State finances is a good one. His Highness harped a good deal on his desire only to do what was right in the eyes of the British Government, and said he particularly wished to avoid getting an Englishman who would not work cordially with the Political Agent; he wanted a man who would be guided by the Political Agent's advice when necessary and who would guide his policy on lines agreeable to the British Government.

7. Should a suitable man be found and engaged as Finance Member of the Council, it will of course be unnecessary for the Commandant of the Levy Corps to be Financial Adviser. It seems possible that Captain Alban, the present Commandant, will shortly be given another appointment. If so I think that his successor might be simply Commandant of the Levy Corps and his staff pay reduced to, say, Rs. 400 per mensem. If His Highness sends me the card of the officer he met last year I will endeavour to trace him; if not I propose to make enquiries with a view to finding a suitable man. If one is found I will instruct him to visit the Sultan at Dehra Dun. If the Sultan approves of him it would be easy for His Highness in consultation with the Political Agent, who could if necessary visit His Highness while on recess, to make a suitable contract.

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(25)

LETTER FROM THE HON'BLE THE POLITICAL RESIDENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF,
BUSHIRE, No. 567-S.(CONFIDENTIAL), DATED THE 11TH OCTOBER 1924.

With reference to my letter No. 418-S., dated the 20th July 1924 [Ser. (16)], I have the honour to forward for the information of the Government of India a copy of letter No. 1262, dated 12th September 1924, from the Political Agent, Muscat, giving cover to a half-yearly statement of the Muscat State finances.

It is satisfactory to note a strain of optimism in this report, however momentary it may be, which has been so unfortunately lacking in the reports of the past few years. Coming as it does on the eve of Mr. Bower's arrival in Muscat, it augurs well, I trust, for the success of his efforts.

Since the despatch of my last report on the subject in July last [Ser.(16)], I have not been able to visit Muscat, but hope to do so in a few weeks' time. In the meantime every endeavour is being made both by Major Hinde and the officials of the Muscat Government to avoid a deficit. If the estimate of the Finance Department of the revenue for the latter half of the year can at all be relied upon, there is reason to hope that they will be successful.

LETTER FROM THE POLITICAL AGENT AND HIS MAJESTY'S CONSUL, MUSCAT, TO
THE HON'BLE THE POLITICAL RESIDENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF, BUSHIRE,
No. 1262, DATED 12TH SEPTEMBER 1924.

I have the honour to forward, herewith, the customary half-yearly statements of the Muscat State Finances showing the actual revenue and expenditure under the Budget heads for the first six months of the year and the estimated expenditure for the remainder of the year.

2. On the face of them the statements appear to be satisfactory—more satisfactory than for several years back—but I am not certain that the Finance Department of H. H.'s Government has not on the crest of a wave of optimism estimated the revenue for the latter half of the year at rather a high figure.

However if the figures are a fair estimate Muscat stands to have a surplus of revenue over expenditure for the whole year of something approaching three quarters of a lakh of rupees.

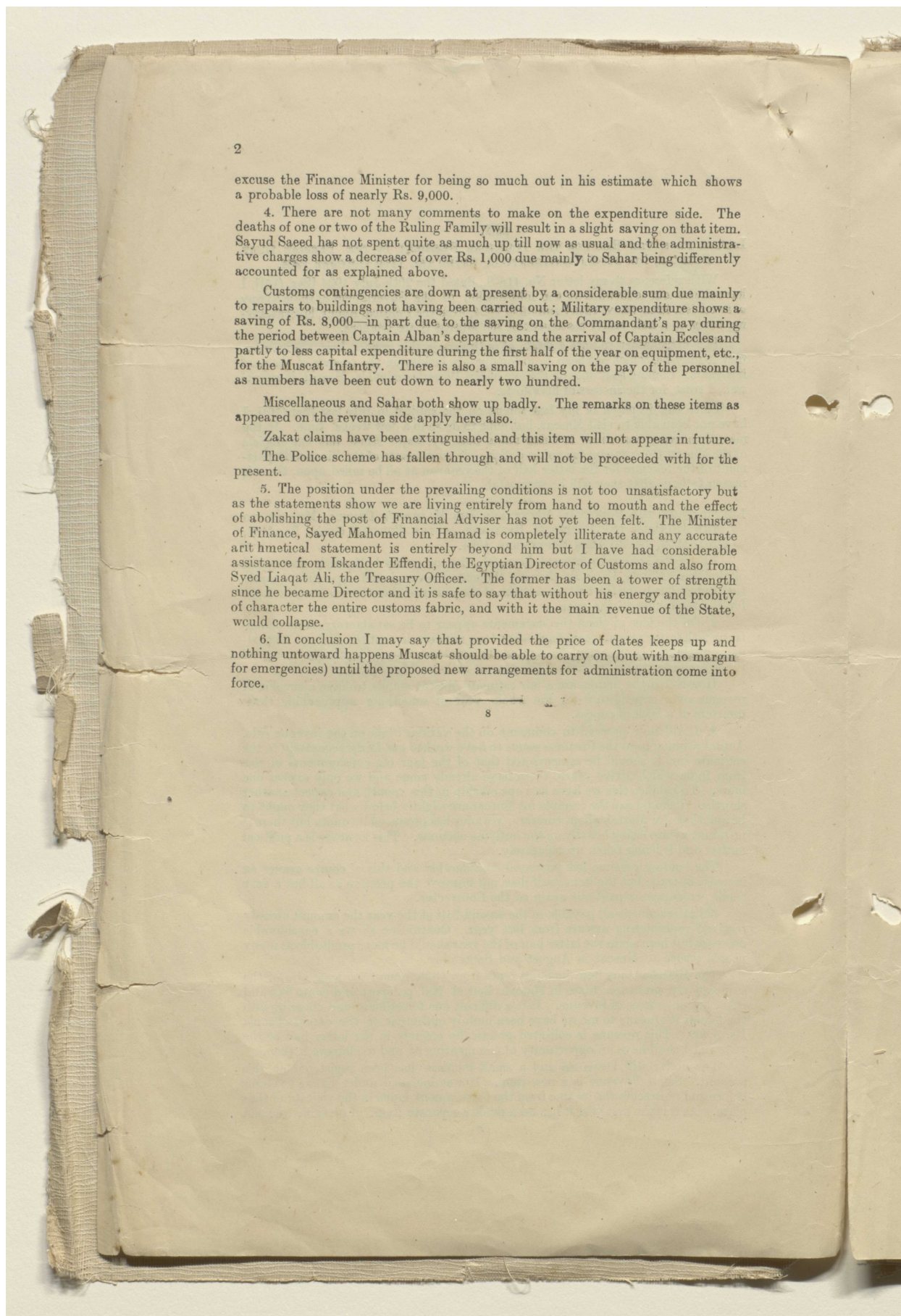
3. I will now proceed to comment on the various items on the revenue side. Actual revenue from the Customs seems to have worked out fairly accurately to the estimate but it should be remembered that of the four big consignments of rice from India which arrive yearly three have already come and we only expect one more. To balance this we have had one oil ship in this month and expect another shortly. I should say the receipts for Muscat are slightly below what they ought to be and those for Matrah about correct. Gwadur has produced its quota but there is no doubt we are losing heavily on the outlying customs. This however is a political matter and is being taken up separately.

The landing revenue has increased considerably and this of course argues an increase of trade but the item itself does not improve the position as all but a very small percentage is paid out again to the Contractor.

Zakat revenue is all payable in the second half of the year the amount already received representing arrears from last year. Quarantine shows a considerable decrease but here again the latter half of the year should be more profitable as many people return to Muscat in August and September.

The Miscellaneous item includes rents from Government gardens, hire of the stone quarry, municipal taxes in Matrah, Beit al Mal, passport and court fees and other minor sources of revenue. It is a difficult one to estimate and on going into the figures it appears to me we have been unduly optimistic to the extent of some Rs. 5,000. This revenue is collected practically entirely in the latter half of the year and I shall have an opportunity of commenting on and explaining it then.

The dollar still keeps up and a small increase has been registered on this account. Sahar Revenue is a new item. It was included under Sahar Customs before and represents the income from the Government lands in the vicinity of that place. As it is the first year it has been made a separate item. I presume we must



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excuse the Finance Minister for being so much out in his estimate which shows a probable loss of nearly Rs. 9,000.

4. There are not many comments to make on the expenditure side. The deaths of one or two of the Ruling Family will result in a slight saving on that item. Sayud Saeed has not spent quite as much up till now as usual and the administrative charges show a decrease of over Rs. 1,000 due mainly to Sahar being differently accounted for as explained above.

Customs contingencies are down at present by a considerable sum due mainly to repairs to buildings not having been carried out; Military expenditure shows a saving of Rs. 8,000—in part due to the saving on the Commandant's pay during the period between Captain Alban's departure and the arrival of Captain Eccles and partly to less capital expenditure during the first half of the year on equipment, etc., for the Muscat Infantry. There is also a small saving on the pay of the personnel as numbers have been cut down to nearly two hundred.

Miscellaneous and Sahar both show up badly. The remarks on these items as appeared on the revenue side apply here also.

Zakat claims have been extinguished and this item will not appear in future.

The Police scheme has fallen through and will not be proceeded with for the present.

5. The position under the prevailing conditions is not too unsatisfactory but as the statements show we are living entirely from hand to mouth and the effect of abolishing the post of Financial Adviser has not yet been felt. The Minister of Finance, Sayed Mahomed bin Hamad is completely illiterate and any accurate arithmetical statement is entirely beyond him but I have had considerable assistance from Iskander Effendi, the Egyptian Director of Customs and also from Syed Liaqat Ali, the Treasury Officer. The former has been a tower of strength since he became Director and it is safe to say that without his energy and probity of character the entire customs fabric, and with it the main revenue of the State, would collapse.

6. In conclusion I may say that provided the price of dates keeps up and nothing untoward happens Muscat should be able to carry on (but with no margin for emergencies) until the proposed new arrangements for administration come into force.

3

Statement of the revenue of the Muscat State for the first six months of the year 1924 and the estimated revenue for the second six months.

NOTE.—Exchange Rupee 1-8 per dollar. Baizas 140 per Rupee.

Heading.	Revenue from 1st January to 30th June 1924.	Estimated Revenue from 1st July to 31st December 1924.	Total Revenue 1924.	Total Revenue estimated for 1924.	Decrease.	Increase.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Muscat Customs	1,63,989	1,60,000	3,23,989	3,20,000	NW	3,989
Matrah	62,422	1,00,000	1,62,422	1,60,000	NW	2,422
Gwadur	48,253	48,000	96,253	96,000	NW	253
Sahar	9,055	12,500	21,555	25,000	3,445	..
Sur and other Customs	60,663	80,000	1,40,663	1,40,000	..	663
Landing Revenue	22,373	19,000	41,373	38,000	..	3,373
Subsidies	93,200	93,200	1,86,400	1,86,400	..	..
Zakat Revenue	882	20,000	20,882	20,000	..	882
Quarantine	2,202	3,000	5,202	6,000	798	..
Miscellaneous	5,807	25,000	30,807	30,000	..	807
Exchange profit	1,839	1,000	2,839	2,000	..	839
Refund of Advances .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sahar Revenue	27,418	36,250	63,668	72,500	8,832	..
Total	4,98,103	5,97,950	10,96,053	10,95,900	13,075	13,228
Opening balance on 1st January 1924 .. ..	..	..	49,527	..	..	..
Total	11,45,580
Less expenditure	10,12,096
Balance on 31st December 1923	1,33,484

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4

Statement showing actual expenditure from 1st January to 30th June 1924 and estimated expenditure from 1st July to 31st December 1924.

Heading.	Actual expenditure 1st January to 30th June 1924.	Estimated expenditure from 1st July to 31st December 1924.	Total expenditure 1924.	Total estimated expenditure 1924.	Decrease.	Increase.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.		
Privy Purse	60,000	60,000	1,20,000	1,20,000	..	..
Ruling Family Pay and Batta	94,299	1,00,000	1,94,299	2,00,000	5,701	..
S. Saiyid's allowance	5,384	10,000	15,384	20,000	4,616	..
Administrative Staff	81,278	82,500	1,63,778	1,65,000	1,222	..
Landing Charges	21,254	18,050	39,304	36,100	..	3,204
Individual Allowance	4,048	4,250	8,298	8,500	202	..
Subsidies to S. of Sur	1,305	1,500	2,805	3,000	195	..
Quarantine pay	1,704	1,750	3,454	3,500	46	..
Custom pay	44,049	44,000	88,049	84,000	..	4,049
Custom Contingencies	4,820	7,500	12,320	15,000	2,680	..
Military, Marine (including Mutrah Hospital).	76,500	84,800	1,61,300	1,69,600	8,300	..
Repayment of Loan	46,740	46,750	93,490	93,500	10	..
Miscellaneous	27,796	25,000	52,796	50,000	..	2,796
Sahar expenditure	27,177	24,000	51,177	48,000	..	3,177
Zakat claim .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..
Police	2,392	2,250	5,642	6,500	858	..
Total	4,98,746	5,13,350	10,12,096	10,22,700	23,830	13,226

(16)

LETTER FROM THE HON'BLE THE POLITICAL RESIDENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF,
BUSHIRE, No. 418-S. (CONFIDENTIAL), DATED THE 20TH JULY 1924.

With reference to your memorandum No. 749-X., dated the 17th April 1924 [Ser. (13)], I have the honour to forward herewith for the information of the Government of India a copy of letter (No. C-15-R., dated 9th June 1924) from the Political Agent, Muscat, on the subject of the finances of the Muscat State.

2. Since my arrival in April last I have had no opportunity of visiting Muscat or of consulting the Political Agent at length on the difficult question of the State finances.

3. As far as I am able to judge from a perusal of the records the view of the situation taken by Major Hinde in his letter is a reasonable though admittedly unfavourable one. It is evident that unless means are found to increase the revenues the Muscat State will be insolvent in a very short time.

4. Of the proposals, both for reduction of expenditure and increase of revenue, hitherto submitted to the Government of India and provisionally accepted by them in your memorandum under reference, the attempted increase in Excise licenses, Municipal and Camel Taxes has produced an almost insignificant result; the reduction of the Sultan's privy purse has proved impracticable—the proposal [Ser. (12)] having been made under a misapprehension; the reduction of the Muscat Levy Corps below a strength of 200 appears inadvisable owing to the Sultan's entire dependence on it for authority of any sort outside the local limits of Muscat town, and finally Mr. Bower's deputation or the appointment of a British Officer as Finance Member of the Muscat Council can hardly be expected to produce any immediate result in the required direction.

5. It is very unfortunate that circumstances beyond our control have prevented us till now from finding a suitable Financial Adviser for the State.

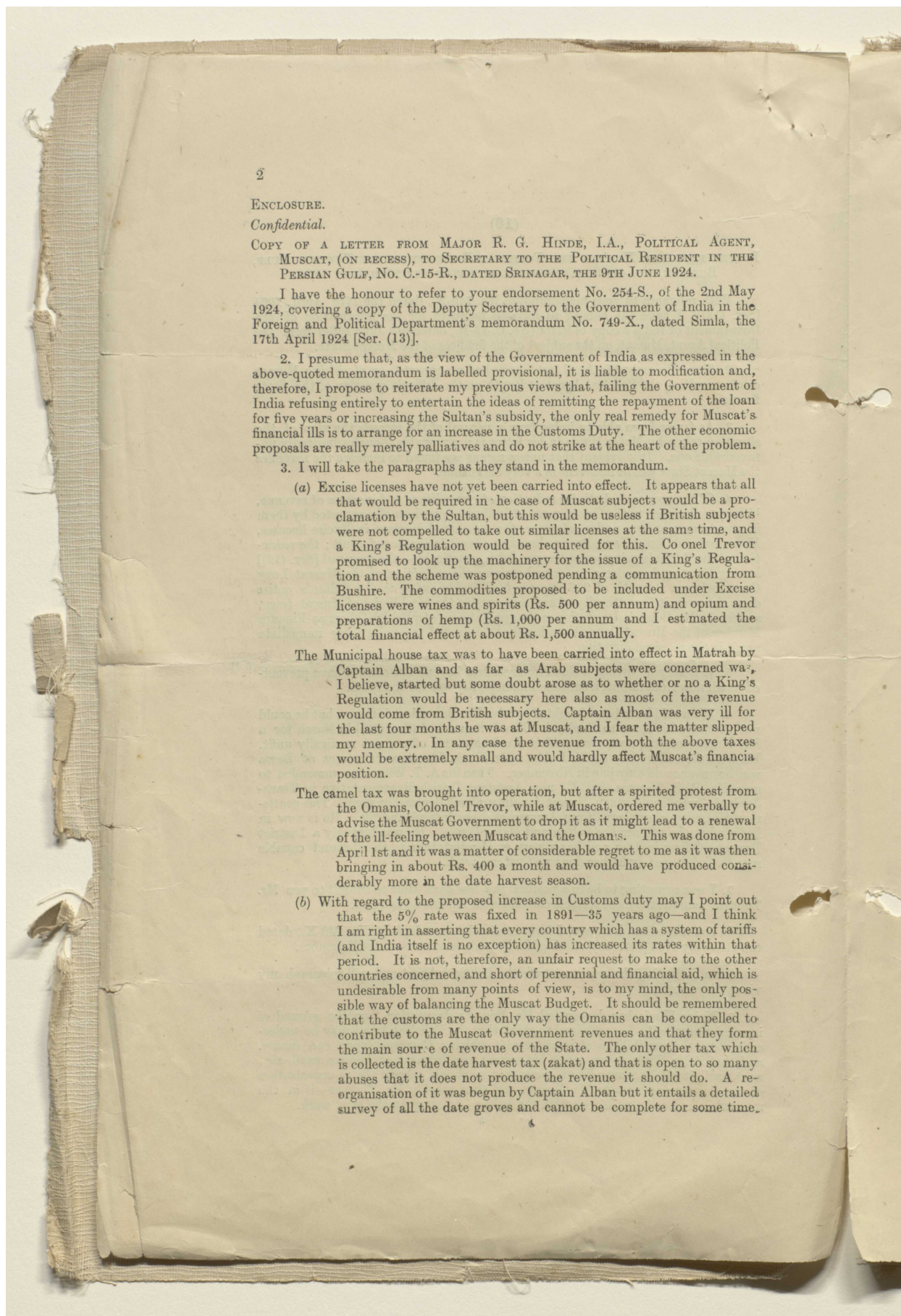
6. We would have been delighted to have Mr. Bower last January, but he could not postpone his leave to England. The Sultan asked [Ser. (12)] in March for a Mr. Murray of Iraq; we were told in April that this officer was medically unfit. We were then offered by Sir H. Dobbs a Mr. Monk, Director of Customs at Basra who however could only join in November. Then Sir A. T. Wilson recommended to us a Mr. B. S. Thomas, O.B.E., now Assistant British Representative in Trans-Jordania, who could reach Muscat for duty about September next. This gentleman has taken short leave from Amman and has interviewed me. He is now in India where he will see the Sultan and Major Hinde. He was formerly a District Revenue Officer in Iraq and has a very good reputation as an all-round capable man. Unfortunately he has done no Customs work.

7. I was expecting to be in a position in a few days' time to submit to you Mr. Thomas' name as the most suitable candidate for Muscat we can find.

In the meantime, however, I have received your telegram No. 749-X., dated the 11th July 1924 [Ser. (15)] offering Mr. Bower's services from 1st December.

I am discussing this proposal with the Political Agent and will telegraph my views very shortly.

8. Major Hinde has deprecated Mr. Bower's deputation "on the ground of insufficient scope." I am inclined to think that the Political Agent may be underestimating the possibilities of improvement which a Customs expert can devise, and that if Mr. Thomas can retain his present appointment at Amman until, say, next April, it will be most advantageous that we should entrust the re-organization of the Customs at least to Mr. Bower, and then employ Mr. Thomas—if in the meanwhile he has found favour with the Sultan—to carry on the good work.



2

ENCLOSURE.

Confidential.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM MAJOR R. G. HINDE, I.A., POLITICAL AGENT, MUSCAT, (ON RECESS), TO SECRETARY TO THE POLITICAL RESIDENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF, No. C-15-R., DATED SRINAGAR, THE 9TH JUNE 1924.

I have the honour to refer to your endorsement No. 254-S., of the 2nd May 1924, covering a copy of the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department's memorandum No. 749-X., dated Simla, the 17th April 1924 [Ser. (13)].

2. I presume that, as the view of the Government of India as expressed in the above-quoted memorandum is labelled provisional, it is liable to modification and, therefore, I propose to reiterate my previous views that, failing the Government of India refusing entirely to entertain the ideas of remitting the repayment of the loan for five years or increasing the Sultan's subsidy, the only real remedy for Muscat's financial ills is to arrange for an increase in the Customs Duty. The other economic proposals are really merely palliatives and do not strike at the heart of the problem.

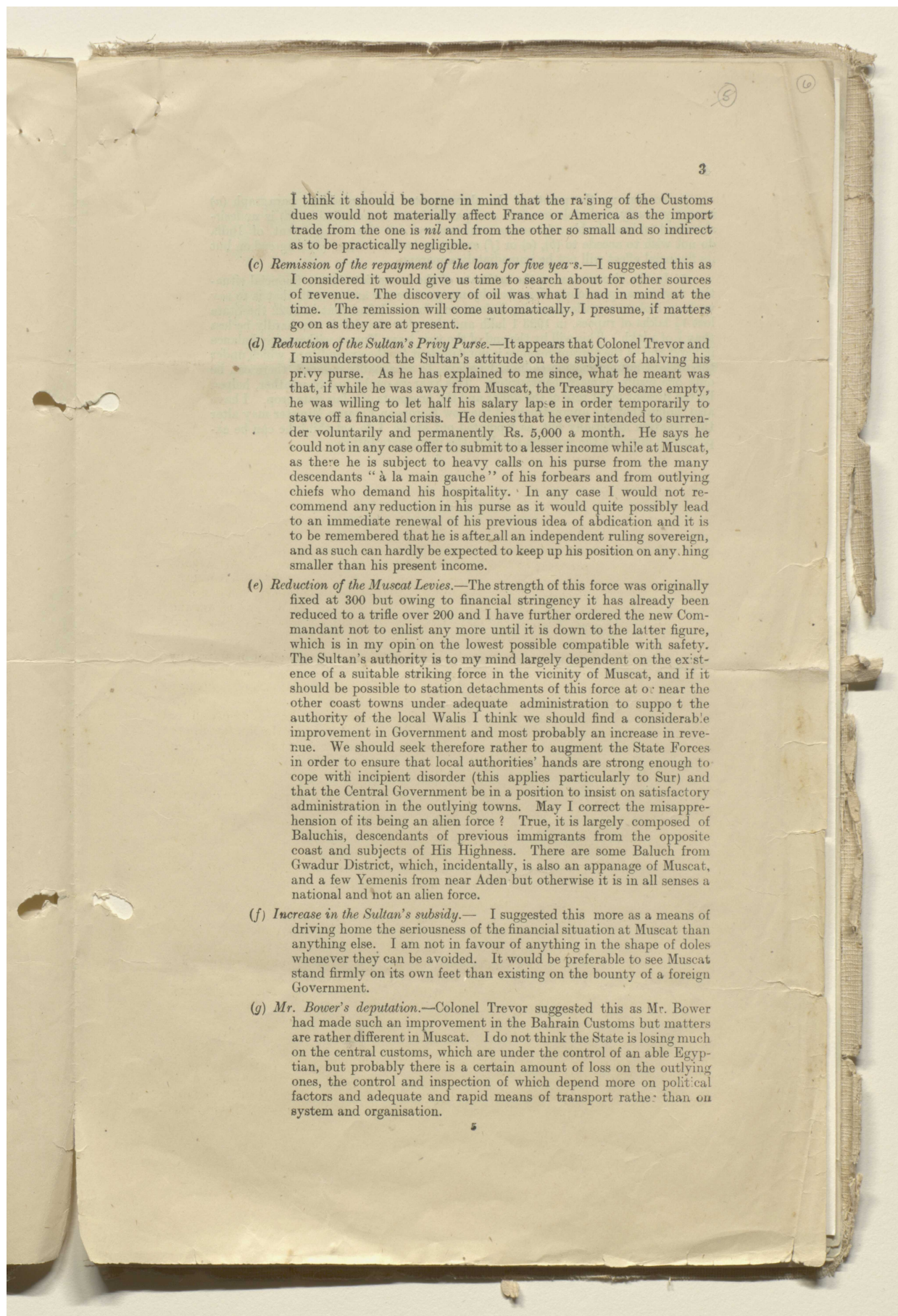
3. I will take the paragraphs as they stand in the memorandum.

(a) Excise licenses have not yet been carried into effect. It appears that all that would be required in the case of Muscat subjects would be a proclamation by the Sultan, but this would be useless if British subjects were not compelled to take out similar licenses at the same time, and a King's Regulation would be required for this. Colonel Trevor promised to look up the machinery for the issue of a King's Regulation and the scheme was postponed pending a communication from Bushire. The commodities proposed to be included under Excise licenses were wines and spirits (Rs. 500 per annum) and opium and preparations of hemp (Rs. 1,000 per annum) and I estimated the total financial effect at about Rs. 1,500 annually.

The Municipal house tax was to have been carried into effect in Matrah by Captain Alban and as far as Arab subjects were concerned was, I believe, started but some doubt arose as to whether or no a King's Regulation would be necessary here also as most of the revenue would come from British subjects. Captain Alban was very ill for the last four months he was at Muscat, and I fear the matter slipped my memory. In any case the revenue from both the above taxes would be extremely small and would hardly affect Muscat's financial position.

The camel tax was brought into operation, but after a spirited protest from the Omanis, Colonel Trevor, while at Muscat, ordered me verbally to advise the Muscat Government to drop it as it might lead to a renewal of the ill-feeling between Muscat and the Omanis. This was done from April 1st and it was a matter of considerable regret to me as it was then bringing in about Rs. 400 a month and would have produced considerably more in the date harvest season.

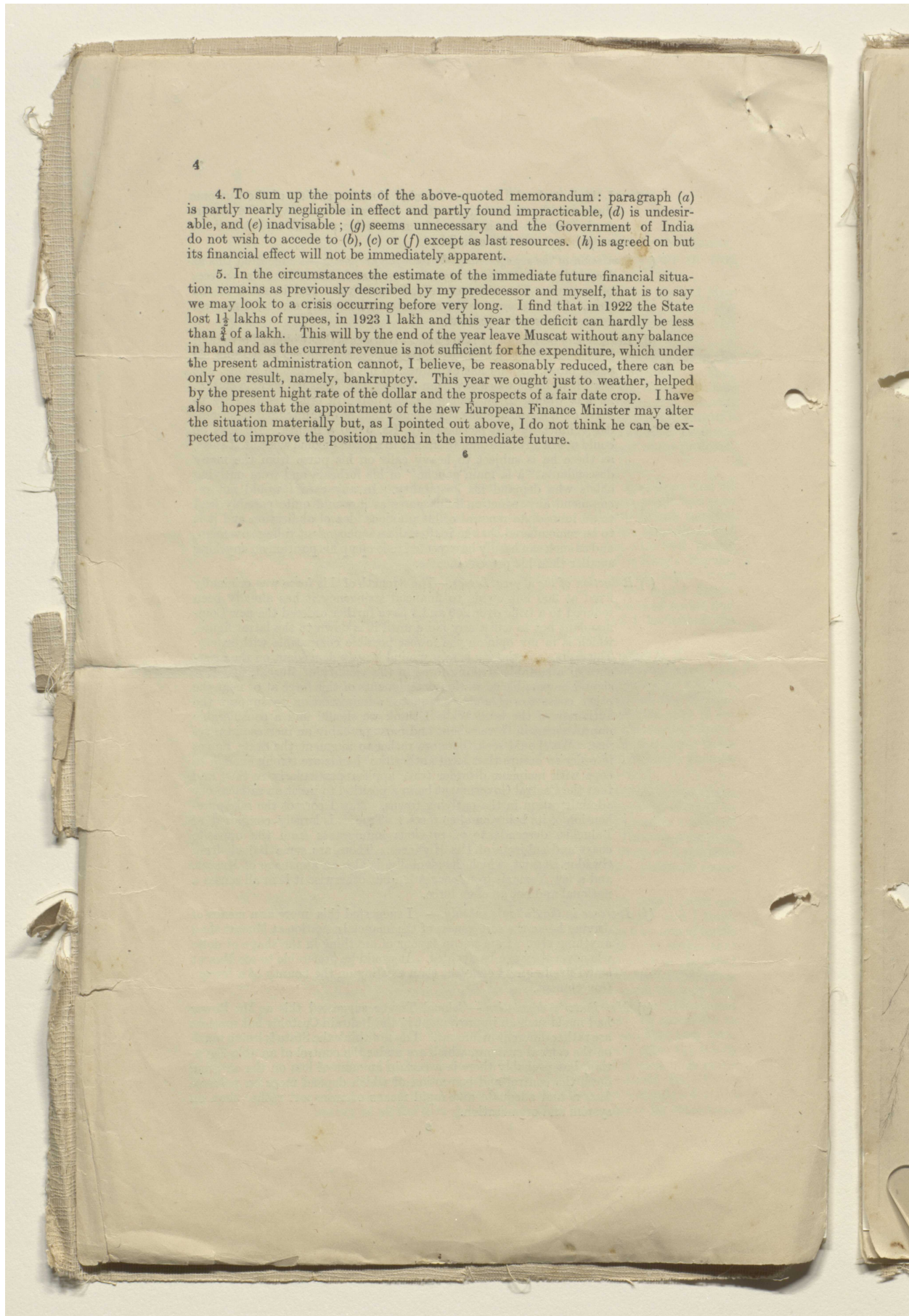
(b) With regard to the proposed increase in Customs duty may I point out that the 5% rate was fixed in 1891—35 years ago—and I think I am right in asserting that every country which has a system of tariffs (and India itself is no exception) has increased its rates within that period. It is not, therefore, an unfair request to make to the other countries concerned, and short of perennial and financial aid, which is undesirable from many points of view, is to my mind, the only possible way of balancing the Muscat Budget. It should be remembered that the customs are the only way the Omanis can be compelled to contribute to the Muscat Government revenues and that they form the main source of revenue of the State. The only other tax which is collected is the date harvest tax (zakat) and that is open to so many abuses that it does not produce the revenue it should do. A re-organisation of it was begun by Captain Alban but it entails a detailed survey of all the date groves and cannot be complete for some time.



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I think it should be borne in mind that the raising of the Customs dues would not materially affect France or America as the import trade from the one is *nil* and from the other so small and so indirect as to be practically negligible.

- (c) *Remission of the repayment of the loan for five years.*—I suggested this as I considered it would give us time to search about for other sources of revenue. The discovery of oil was what I had in mind at the time. The remission will come automatically, I presume, if matters go on as they are at present.
- (d) *Reduction of the Sultan's Privy Purse.*—It appears that Colonel Trevor and I misunderstood the Sultan's attitude on the subject of halving his privy purse. As he has explained to me since, what he meant was that, if while he was away from Muscat, the Treasury became empty, he was willing to let half his salary lapse in order temporarily to stave off a financial crisis. He denies that he ever intended to surrender voluntarily and permanently Rs. 5,000 a month. He says he could not in any case offer to submit to a lesser income while at Muscat, as there he is subject to heavy calls on his purse from the many descendants "*à la main gauche*" of his forbears and from outlying chiefs who demand his hospitality. In any case I would not recommend any reduction in his purse as it would quite possibly lead to an immediate renewal of his previous idea of abdication and it is to be remembered that he is after all an independent ruling sovereign, and as such can hardly be expected to keep up his position on anything smaller than his present income.
- (e) *Reduction of the Muscat Levies.*—The strength of this force was originally fixed at 300 but owing to financial stringency it has already been reduced to a trifle over 200 and I have further ordered the new Commandant not to enlist any more until it is down to the latter figure, which is in my opinion the lowest possible compatible with safety. The Sultan's authority is to my mind largely dependent on the existence of a suitable striking force in the vicinity of Muscat, and if it should be possible to station detachments of this force at or near the other coast towns under adequate administration to support the authority of the local *Walis* I think we should find a considerable improvement in Government and most probably an increase in revenue. We should seek therefore rather to augment the State Forces in order to ensure that local authorities' hands are strong enough to cope with incipient disorder (this applies particularly to Sur) and that the Central Government be in a position to insist on satisfactory administration in the outlying towns. May I correct the misapprehension of its being an alien force? True, it is largely composed of Baluchis, descendants of previous immigrants from the opposite coast and subjects of His Highness. There are some Baluch from Gwadar District, which, incidentally, is also an appanage of Muscat, and a few Yemenis from near Aden but otherwise it is in all senses a national and not an alien force.
- (f) *Increase in the Sultan's subsidy.*— I suggested this more as a means of driving home the seriousness of the financial situation at Muscat than anything else. I am not in favour of anything in the shape of doles whenever they can be avoided. It would be preferable to see Muscat stand firmly on its own feet than existing on the bounty of a foreign Government.
- (g) *Mr. Bower's deputation.*—Colonel Trevor suggested this as Mr. Bower had made such an improvement in the Bahrain Customs but matters are rather different in Muscat. I do not think the State is losing much on the central customs, which are under the control of an able Egyptian, but probably there is a certain amount of loss on the outlying ones, the control and inspection of which depend more on political factors and adequate and rapid means of transport rather than on system and organisation.

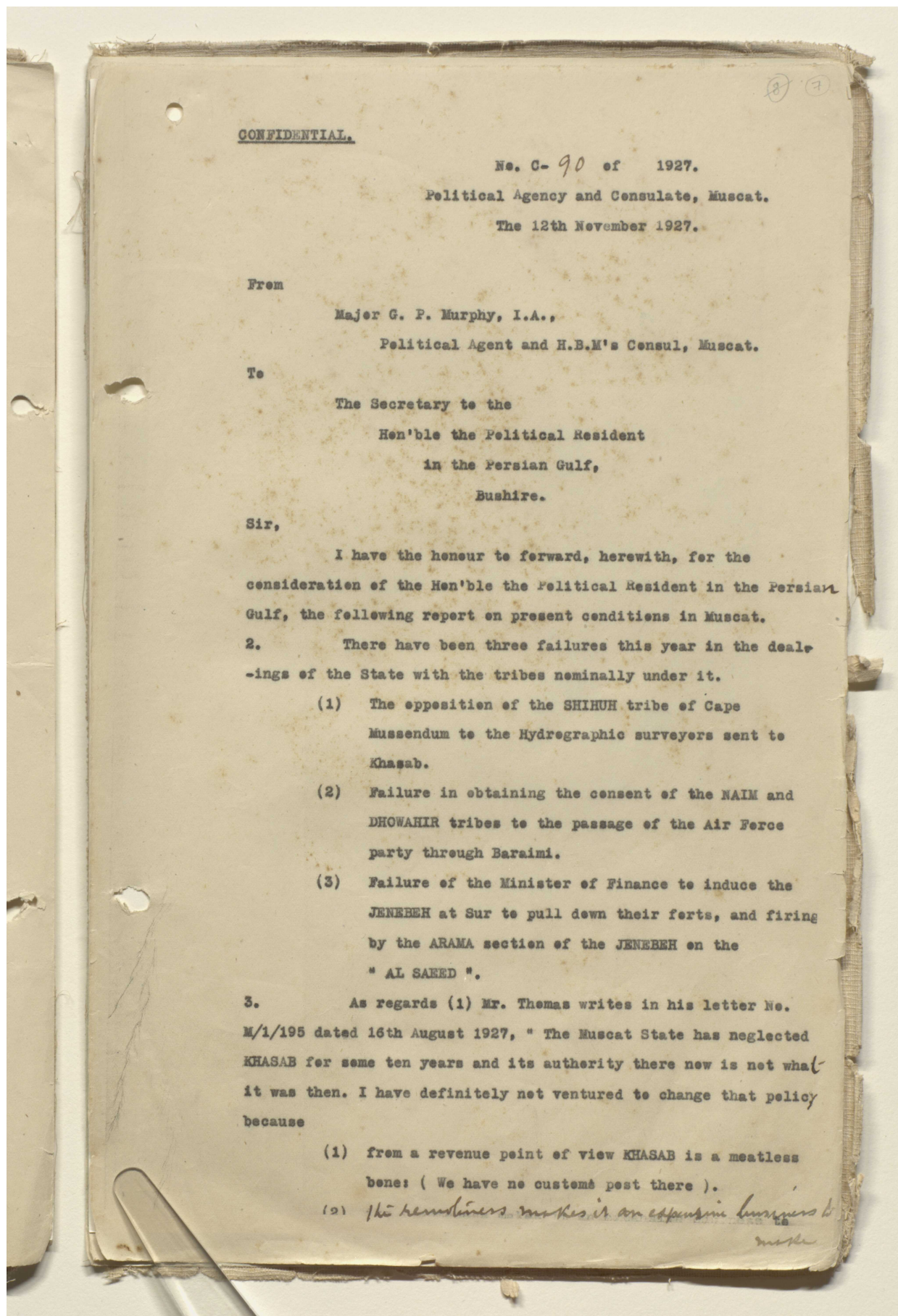


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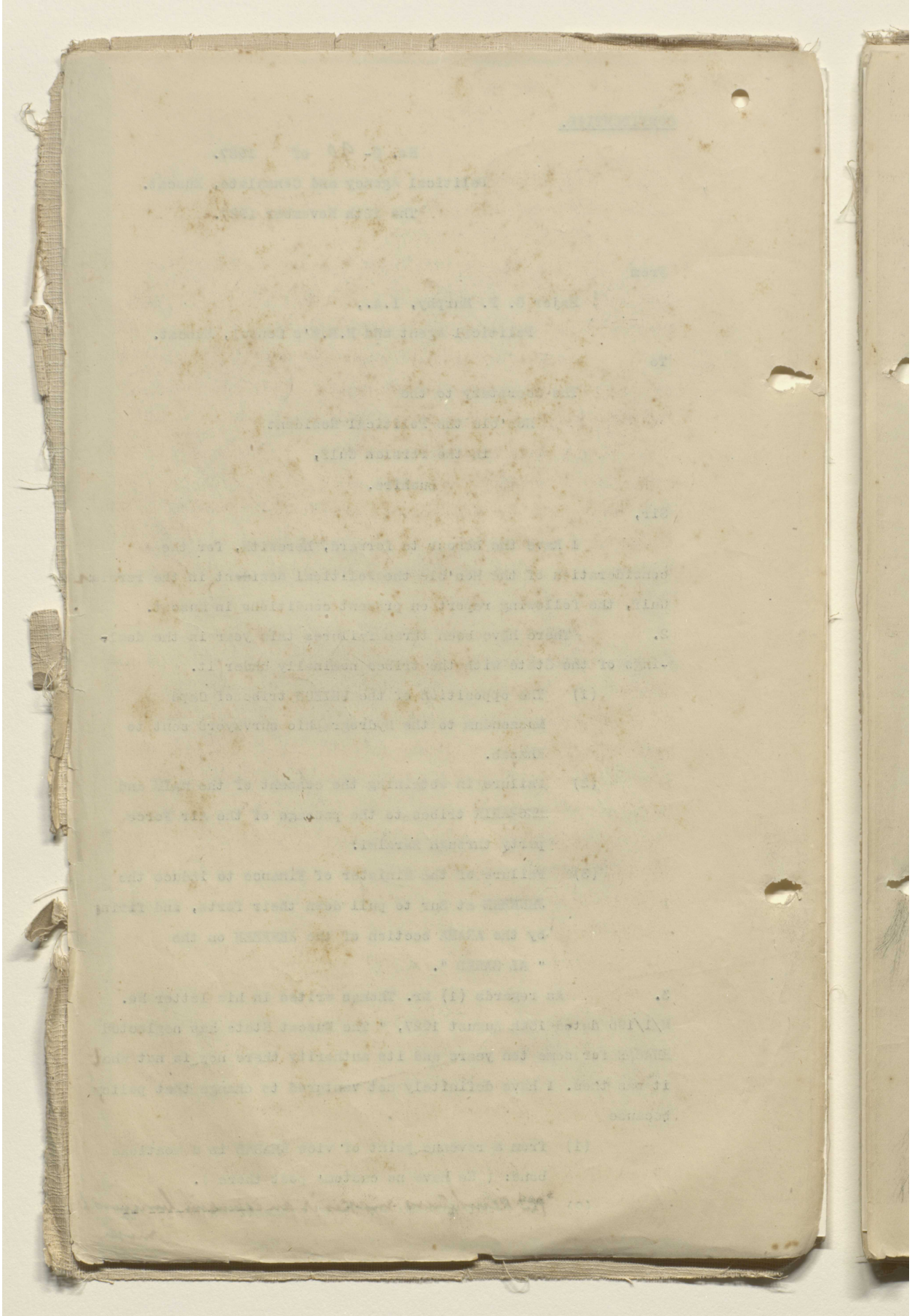
4. To sum up the points of the above-quoted memorandum : paragraph (a) is partly nearly negligible in effect and partly found impracticable, (d) is undesirable, and (e) inadvisable ; (g) seems unnecessary and the Government of India do not wish to accede to (b), (c) or (f) except as last resources. (h) is agreed on but its financial effect will not be immediately apparent.

5. In the circumstances the estimate of the immediate future financial situation remains as previously described by my predecessor and myself, that is to say we may look to a crisis occurring before very long. I find that in 1922 the State lost 1½ lakhs of rupees, in 1923 1 lakh and this year the deficit can hardly be less than ¾ of a lakh. This will by the end of the year leave Muscat without any balance in hand and as the current revenue is not sufficient for the expenditure, which under the present administration cannot, I believe, be reasonably reduced, there can be only one result, namely, bankruptcy. This year we ought just to weather, helped by the present high rate of the dollar and the prospects of a fair date crop. I have also hopes that the appointment of the new European Finance Minister may alter the situation materially but, as I pointed out above, I do not think he can be expected to improve the position much in the immediate future.

6



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make frequent visits there;

- (3) there has been no compelling reason to change the existing order of things.

But it would seem that the State policy of self-effacement rather than assertion has encouraged the independent and obstructive attitude shown to the Political Resident's surveyors.

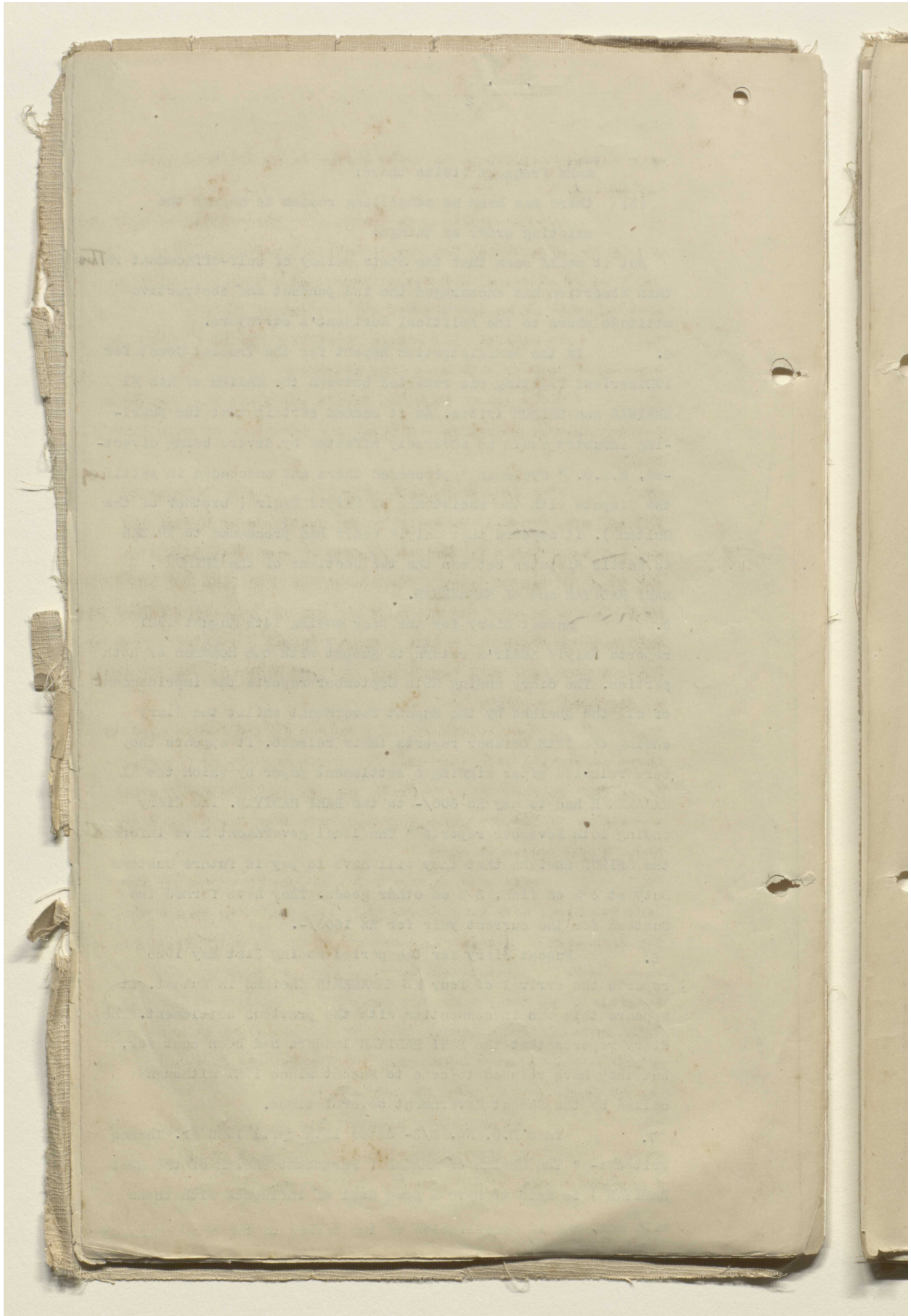
4. In the Administration Report for the Trucial Coast for 1921 serious fighting was reported between the Sheikh of RAS EL KHAIMAH and SHIHUH tribes. As it seemed certain that the pearl-
-ing industry would be adversely affected by divers being divert-
-ed, H.M.S. " Cyclamen " proceeded there and succeeded in settling the dispute with the assistance of Saiyid Nadir (brother of the Sultan). It appears that Saiyid Nadir had proceeded to KHASAB to settle disputes between the two sections of the SHIHUH , BANI HADIYAH and AL KAMAZERAH.

5. Muscat diary for the week ending 14th August 1921 reports Saiyid Nadir's return to Muscat with the headmen of both parties. The diary ending 28th September reports the imprisonment of all the Sheikhs by the Muscat Government whilst the diary ending the 12th October reports their release. It appears they were released after signing a settlement paper by which the AL KAMAZERAH had to pay Rs 600/- to the BANI HADIYAH. The diary ending 10th November reports " The local government have informed the SHIHUH Sheikhs that they will have to pay in future Customs Duty at 4 % on fish, 3 % on other goods. They have farmed the Customs for the current year for Rs 1600/-."

6. Muscat diary for the period ending 31st May 1925 reports the arrival of four AL KAMAZERAH Sheikhs in Muscat. It appears this was in connection with the previous settlement. The diary reports that the BANI HADIYAH leaders had been sent for, but they have refused to come to Muscat since 1921 although called by the Muscat Government several times.

7. In a D.O. No. M/3- dated 16th April 1926 Mr. Thomas writes :- " The Sheikh of KHASAB (Paramount Sheikh of the BANI HADIYAH) is said to have a good deal of influence with these wild men, and if conciliation of the tribes in the neighbourhood

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ever becomes necessary, he would appear to be the best adviser and medium. "

8. Latest reports from the Wali to the Council of Ministers are to the effect that the Sheikh does not allow the Zakat (land tax) to be collected and has appropriated a boat belonging to some Baluchis which was wrecked and floated to KHASAB.

9. As regards (2), Muscat News Diary No. 12 of 1925 for the period 16th to 30th June 1925 states:-

" The rumour that Ibn Saud's officials have recently visited Baraimi and collected Zakat was confirmed by news from SOHAR.

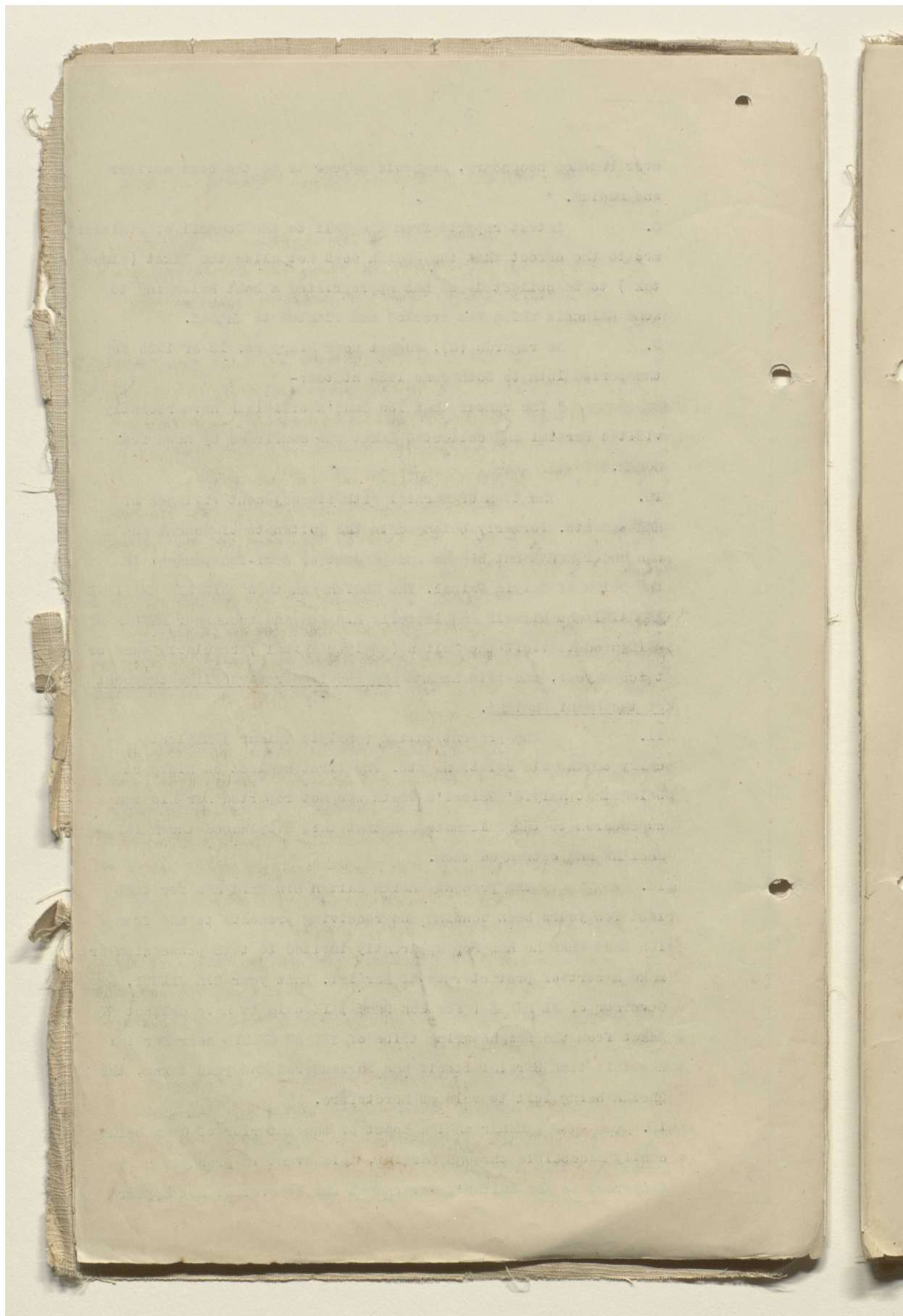
10. The town of Baraimi with its adjacent villages of HANASAH etc. formerly belonged to the Sultanate of Muscat and was under SOHAR but became independent or semi-independent in the reign of Saiyid Faisal. The Sheikh was then ZAID BIN KHALIFAH AN NAIMI who himself and latterly his son and successor HAMDAN BIN ZAID used to visit the Sultan (Saiyid Faisal) regularly once or twice a year, and paid hamege and received rewards like the rest of the Omani Sheikhs.

11. The present Sultan (Saiyid Taimur) neglected to carry on the old relations etc. The first neglect on his part being that Saiyid' Faisal's death was not reported nor his own succession to the Sultanate and that this displeased the NAIMI Sheikhs and estranged them.

12. The present Sheikh Sultan bin Zaid has for the last few years been sending and receiving presents to and from Ibn Saud whom he has now apparently invited to take possession or make a sort of protectorate of Baraimi. Last year Bin JILUWI, Govenor of EL HASSA (for Ibn Saud) is said to have collected Zakat from the neighbouring tribe of YAL BU SHAMIS near Baraimi and this time Baraimi itself has surrendered and paid taxes, the Sheikh being left to rule as heretefere.

13. Sehar on the coast of the interior of Oman being easily accessible through Baraimi, this event is probably dangerous to the Sultan's Government who however do not appear

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to think much about it or show any signs of alarm or of being forewarned."

14. As regards (3), the same tendency on the part of the Muscat authorities to alienate the tribal Sheikhs may be traced in the files, regarding Sur, though the matter is somewhat more complicated.

15. The town of Sur consists of two large quarters separated by a creek. That on the eastern side is occupied by the BANI BU ALI tribe whilst that on the west is occupied by the JENEBEH. According to Lerimer's Gazetteer Vol. II page 1849, there is a perpetual feud between the BANI BU ALI and the JENEBEH.

16. The JENEBEH at Sur are divided into four sections ARAMAH, FUWARIS, GHIALIN, and MUKHANI. The first two are combined against the other two.

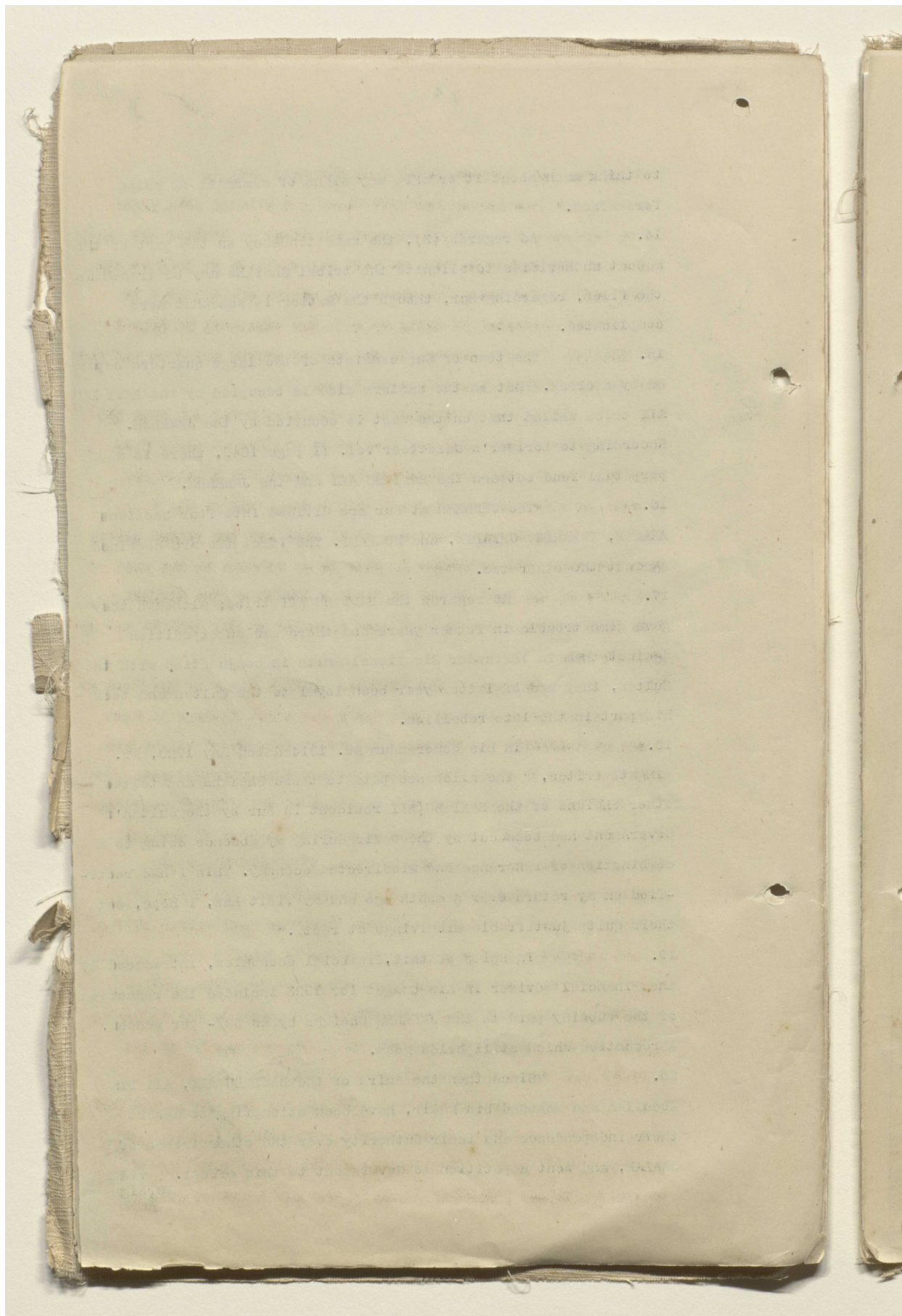
17. As regards the BANI BU ALI tribe; although they gave some trouble in former years and there was an expedition against them in 1821 under Sir Lionel Smith in conjunction with the Sultan, they had of latter year been loyal to the Sultan and took his part in the late rebellion.

18. In his Memorandum No. 1014 dated May 1920, Mr. Wingate writes, "The allowance paid to these Sheikhs and to two other Sheikhs of the BANI BU ALI resident in Sur by the Sultan's Government had been cut by the Wazir during my absence owing to a combination of ignorance and misdirected economy. This I had rectified on my return over a month ago and my visit has, I hope, set their quite justifiable misgivings at rest."

19. In spite of this, financial economies, introduced by the Financial Adviser in his budget for 1923 included the reduction of the subsidy paid to the JENEBEH Sheikhs by Rs 60/- per mensem. A reduction which still holds good.

20. Since then the Amirs of the BANI BU ALI, Ali bin Abdullah and Mehemed bin Nasir, have been attempting to assert their independence and their authority over the other tribes of JAALAN, and sent a petition to Government to this effect. (vide Foreign

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Foreign No. 2481/719/EXT dated 27th February 1923).

21. In his letter No. 1436 dated 4/6 October 1924 Major Hinde reports ; " I invited Mehemed bin Naser to explain the local situation and he became very verbose and excited. He said he was authorised by the Muscat Government to settle all disputes in Sur and had succeeded in doing so with the exception of KHAMIR bin MUBARAK (ARAMA section). who was an unruly creature and was out to ruin the whole settlement. " etc.

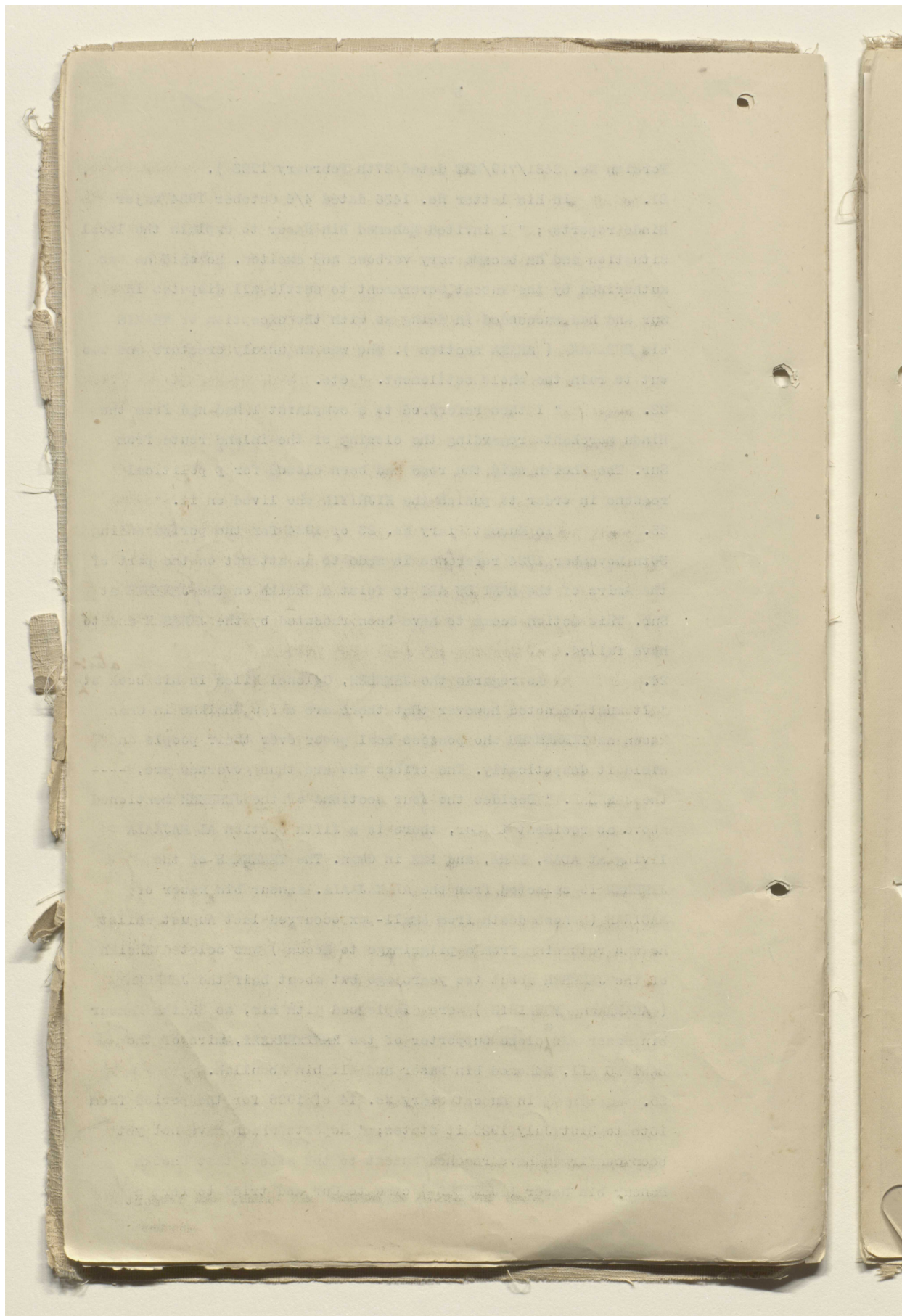
22. " I then referred to a complaint I had had from the Hindu merchants regarding the closing of the inland route from Sur. The Sheikh said the road had been closed for political reasons in order to punish the HIJRIYIN who lived on it. "

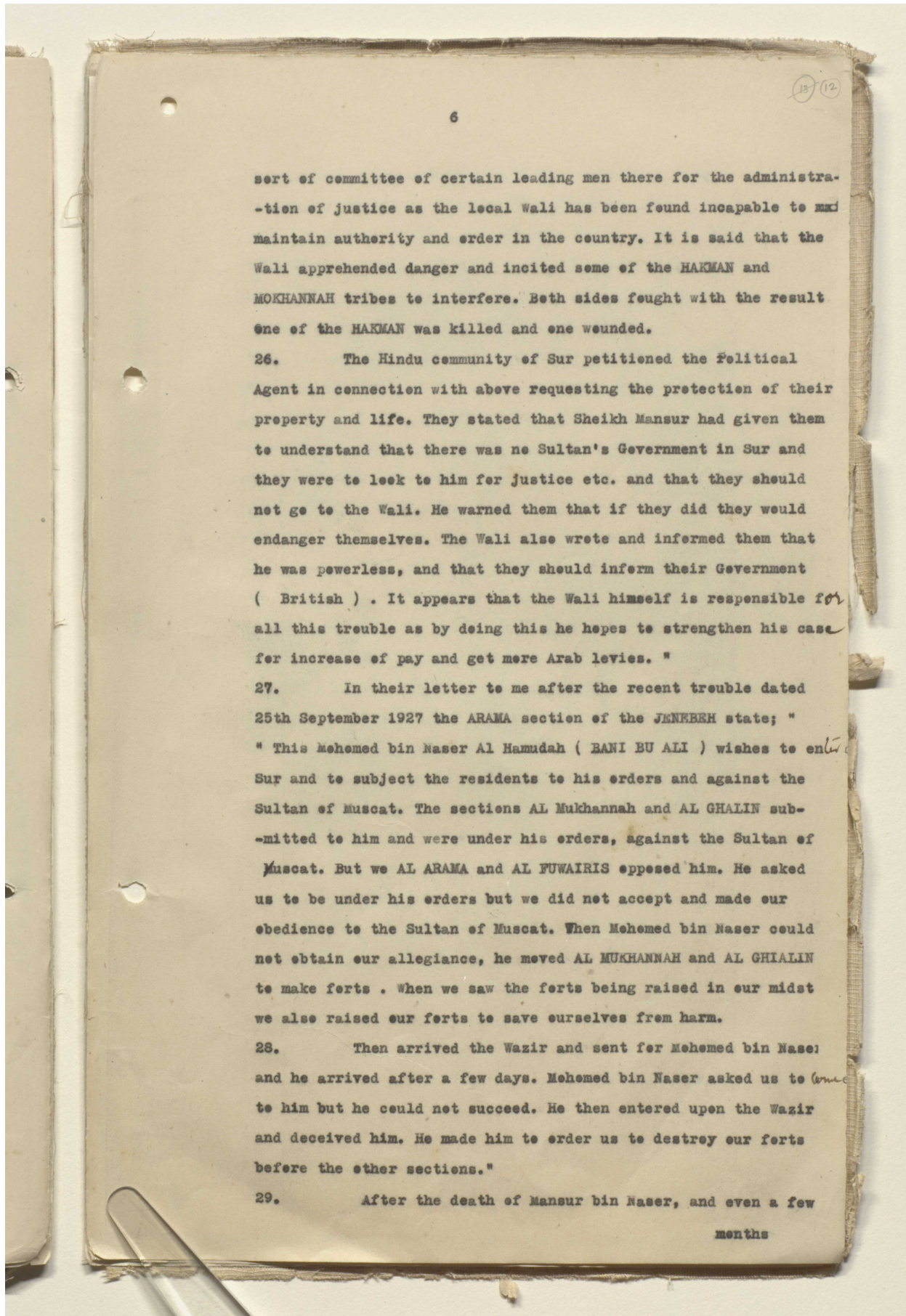
23. In Muscat Diary No. 23 of 1924 for the period ending 30th November 1924 reference is made to an attempt on the part of the Amirs of the BANI BU ALI to feist a Sheikh on the JENEBEH at Sur. This action seems to have been resented by the JENEBEH and to have failed.

24. As regards the JENEBEH, Colonel Miles in his book ^{ates:-} states:-
" It must be noted however that there are a few Sheikhs in Oman known as TEMEEMES who possess real power over their people and wield it despotically. The tribes who are thus governed are, ---- the JENEBEH. " Besides the four sections of the JENEBEH mentioned above as resident in Sur, there is a fifth section AL MAJAALA living at ADAM, MANA, and IZZ in Oman. The TEMEEMEH of the JENEBEH is selected from the AL MAJAALA. Mansur bin Naser of MASIRAH (whose death from small-pox occurred last August whilst he was returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca) was selected Sheikh of the JENEBEH about two years ago but about half the JENEBEH (ARAMA and FUWAIRIS) were displeased with him, as Sheikh Mansur bin Naser was a close supporter of the ~~SKHIXBHXXLI~~ Amirs of the BANI BU ALI, Mehemed bin Naser and Ali bin Abdullah.

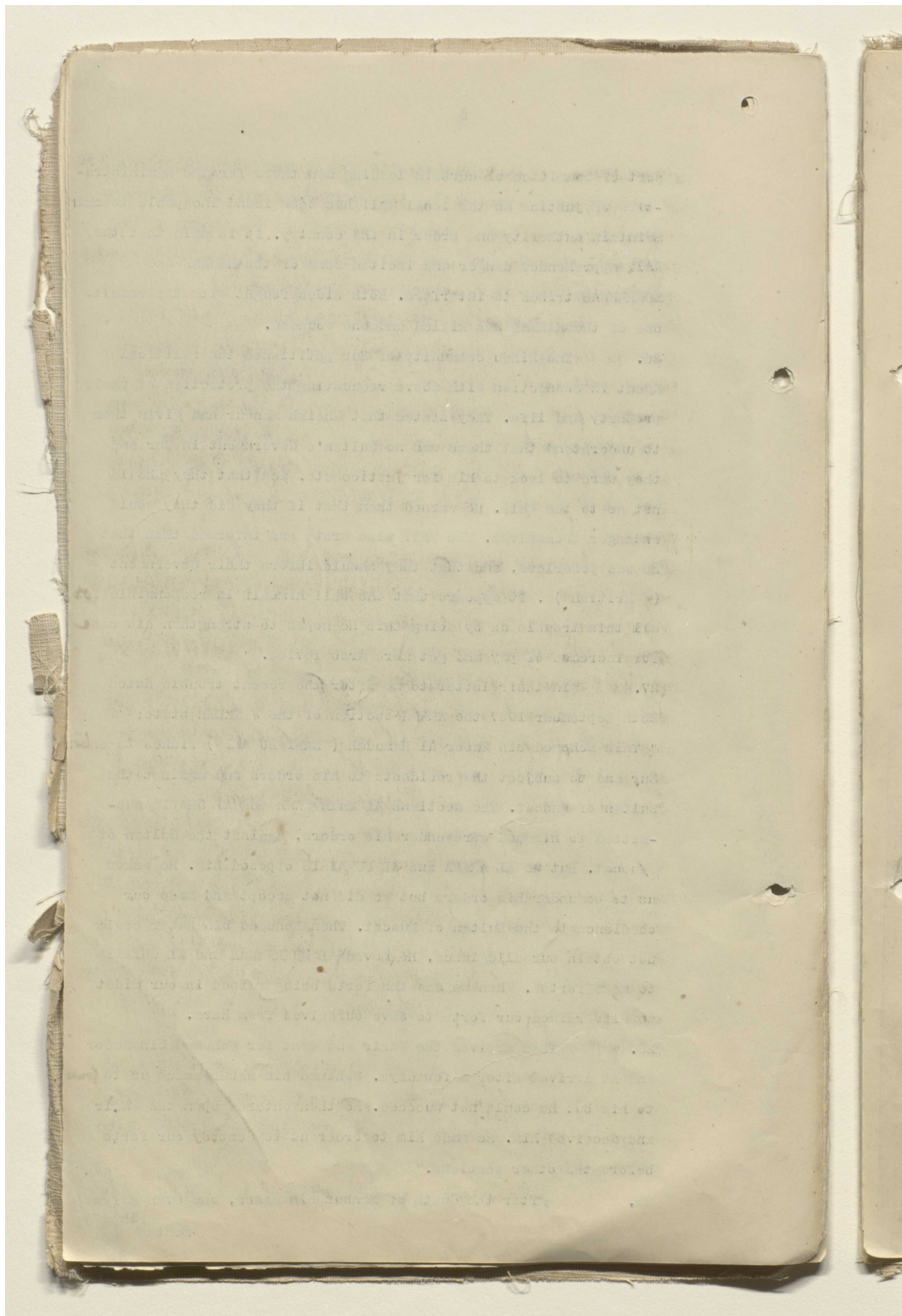
25. In Muscat Diary No. 14 of 1925 for the period from 16th to 31st July 1925 it states; " Reports which have not yet been confirmed have reached Muscat to the effect that Sheikh Mansur bin Naser (JENEBEH) came to Sur and tried to form a _{sort}

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months before his death when he left for Mecca, SAEED BIN SULTAN BIN KHAMIS AL MAJAALA (one of the Sheikhs whose subsidy was reduced vide paragraph 19 above) had been selected as the Sheikh of the JENEBEH. He lives at ADAM and visits Sur Occasionally. It is stated that all sections are now agreed upon the Sheikhship.

30. In my letter No, C-84 dated 31st October 1927 I have reported that Saiyid Mehomed bin Ahmed, President of the Council of Ministers recently received a letter from Sheikh Saeed bin Sultan bin Khamis AL MAJAALA, Chief Sheikh of the JENEBEH at Sur to arrange an armistice between the two rival factions, AL ARAMA and AL MUKHANNAH and that after arranging that he would bring the ARAMA leaders to pay their homage to the Council of Ministers at Muscat.

31. It would seem that Sheikh Saeed was the proper person to deal with when treating with the ARAMA section and not Mehomed bin Naser of the BANI BU ALI who was at enmity with the ARAMA and possibly playing for his own interests, and the assertion of his authority over the other tribes in JAALAN.

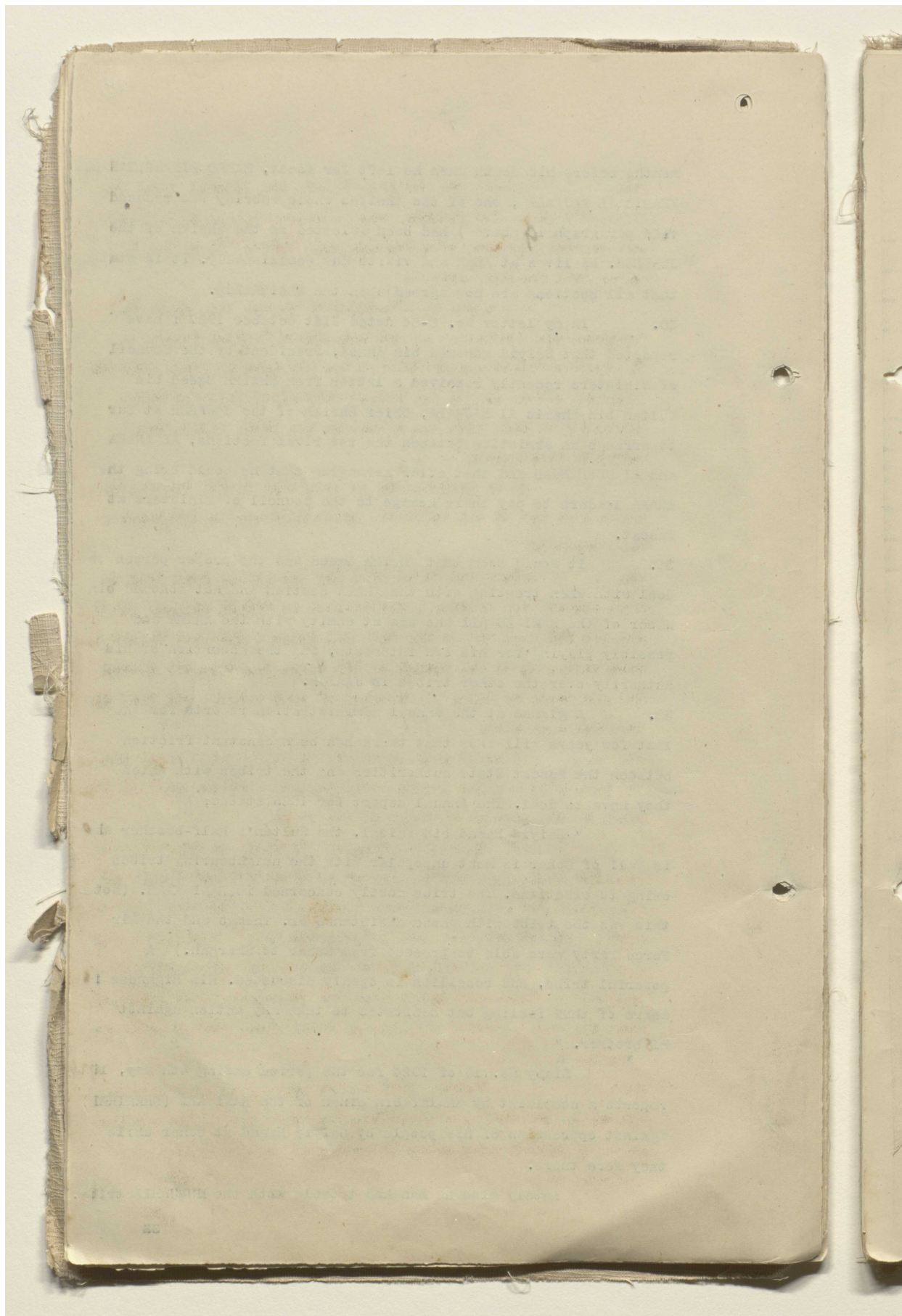
32. A glance at the annual administration reports for the last few years will show that there has been constant friction between the Muscat State authorities and the tribes with which they have to deal. The Annual Report for 1925 states;

" Saiyid Hamad bin Faisal, the Sultan's half-brother who is Wali of Sehar is most unpopular with the neighbouring tribes owing to exactions. The tribe mostly concerned is BANI KAAB. (Note this was the tribe with whose assistance Mr. Thomas and the Air Force Party were able to proceed from Sehar to Shargah.) A powerful tribe, and rebellion is openly discussed. His Highness is aware of this feeling but hesitates to take any action against his brother. "

Diary No. 10 of 1924 for the period ending 4th May, 1924 reports a complaint by Khalaf bin Sinan of the BANI ALI (DHAKIREI against oppression of his people by Saiyid Hamad at Sehar while they were there.

Lately also he has had trouble with the MUQUABIL tribe

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33. In 1920 the YAL SAAD tribe, the largest tribe in Oman, living on the Batāneh coast attacked MASNAA as a pretext against the erection of a customs post there. (Diary No. 5 dated 10th February 1920).

In his No. Bu 1 dated 26th August 1922 Major Rae reported the prevention of the erection of custom houses by YAL SAAD at WUDAM and KHADRA and the increase of slave dealing from the Mekran coast. The Muscat Government declared their inability to deal with the situation and naval action was taken by Government.

It is interesting to note that Sheikh Isa bin Salih wrote a letter to the Political Agent offering to intervene in this trouble.

34. Diary No. 16 of 1925 for the period from 16th to 31st August 1925 reports a disturbance at SUWAIQ between the Wali and the YAL SAAD tribe. The Wali had burnt a dhew and killed two cows belonging to the Sheikh of YAL SAAD, and sent two slaves set his house on fire. The outcome of this trouble was that the Wali was dismissed.

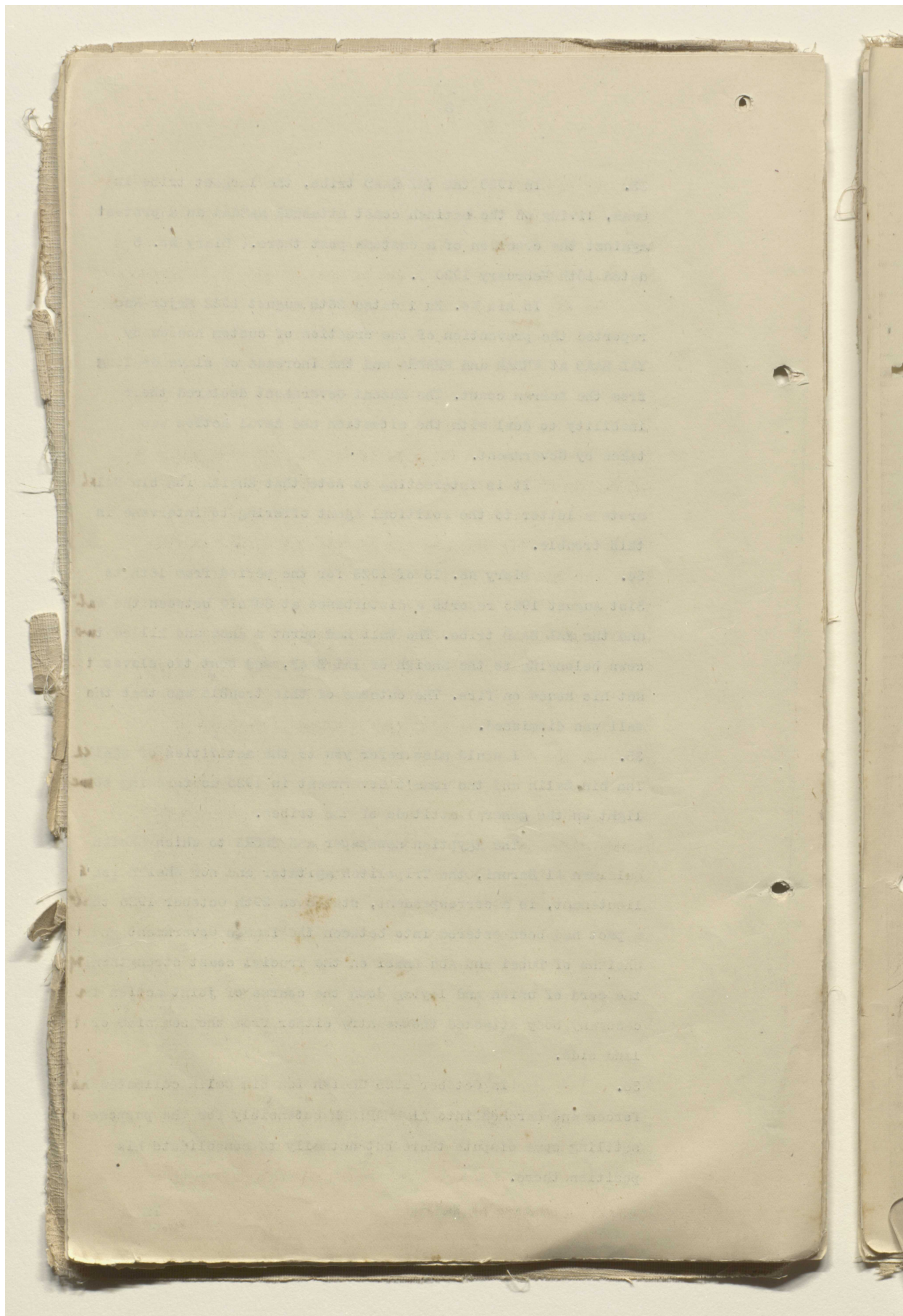
35. I would also refer you to the activities of Sheikh Isa bin Salih and the Imam's Government in 1925 as throwing some light on the general attitude of the tribes.

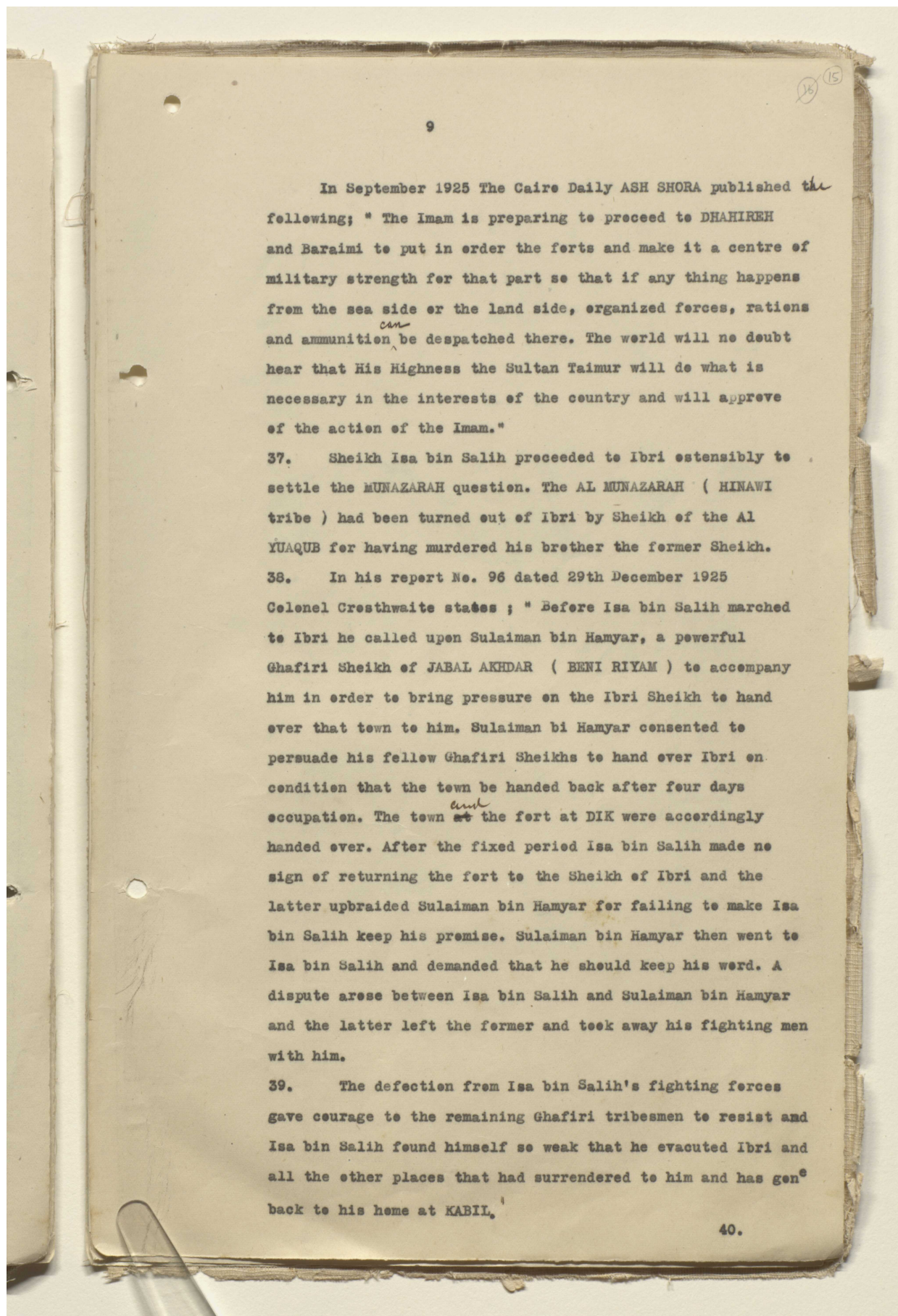
The Egyptian newspaper ASH SHORA to which Sheikh Sulaiman Al Baruni, the Tripeliten agitator and new Sheikh Isa's lieutenant, is a correspondent, stated on 29th October 1925 that a pact had been entered into between the Imam's Government and Sheikhs of Dubai and Abu Dhabi on the Trucial coast strengthening the cord of union and laying down the course of joint action in case any body attacked the country either from the sea side or land side.

36. In October 1925 Sheikh Isa bin Salih collected his forces and marched into AL DHAHIREH ostensibly for the purpose settling some dispute there but actually to consolidate his position there.

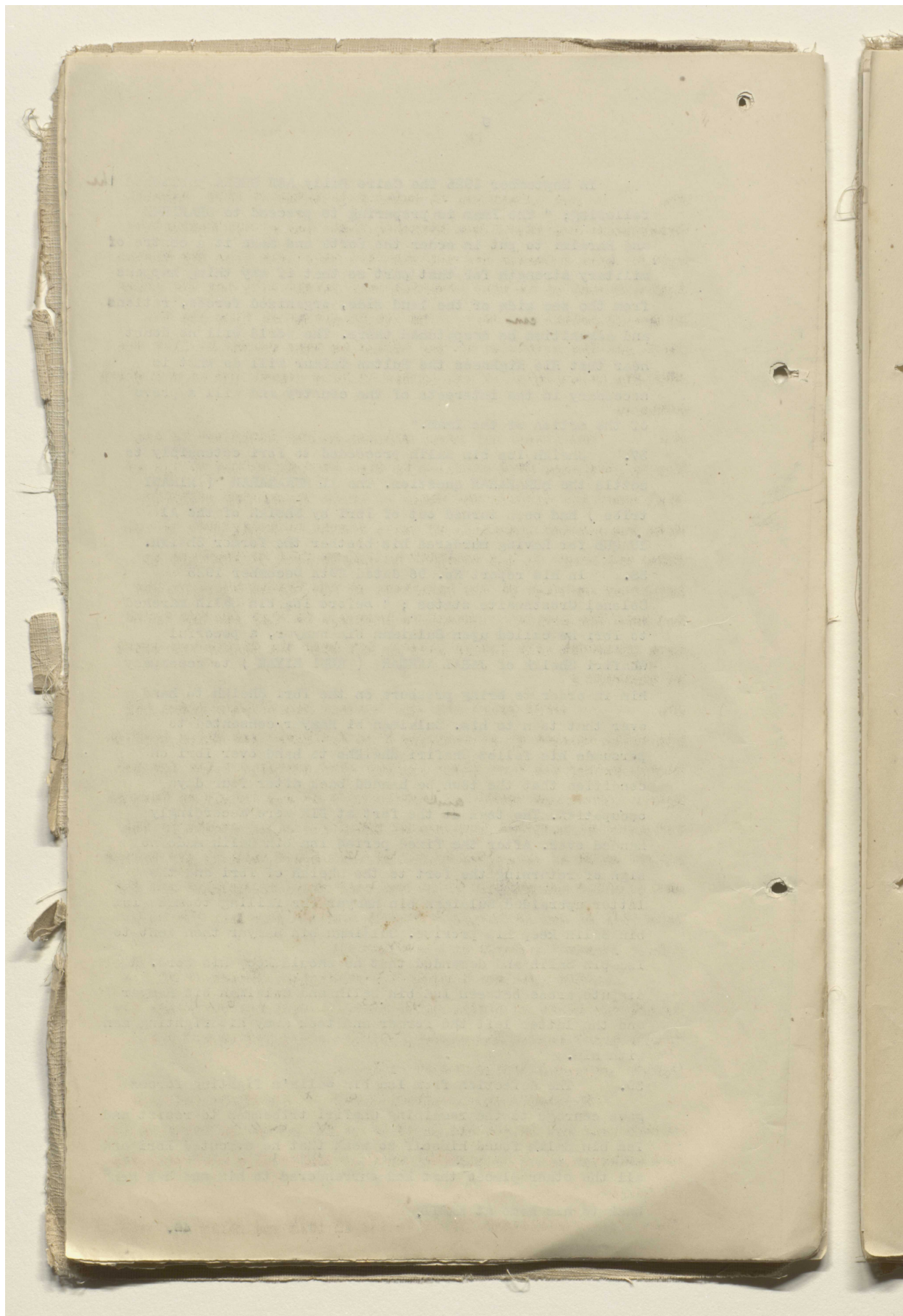
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40. In his letter No. 83 dated 30th November 1925 Colonel Cresthwaite states; " The DHAHIREH tract has always maintained more or less friendly and quasi-subject relations with the Muscat State, though at no even comparatively recent time has the ruler of Muscat raised any taxes from its inhabitants. When Isa bin Salih led the rebellion of the tribes in Oman proper in 1913 the DHAHIREH inhabitants do not appear to have joined him in any great numbers.

41. The reason why local opinion is now exercised by Isa bin Salih's move into DHAHIREH is that certain of the tribes of that tract lie astride the range of hills separating DHAHIREH from the Batineh districts of Oman. Should he bring such tribes under his power in the DHAHIREH he may be able to exercise an influence contrary to the interests of the Muscat State in the Batineh. The general impression, however, is that Isa bin Salih as a HINAWIYAH will not be able to win over the Ghafiriyah tract of DHAHIREH :

42. I would point out that history has already shown Isa bin Salih capable of surmounting such difficulties. Major Hawerth in his letter No. 91-C dated 9th May 1917 states:- " Isa did not openly join the rebellion immediately. It was joined by Hamiyar bin Naser el Nebhani, Temcemeh of TANUF and chief Sheikh of the Riyami tribe of Ghafiris. ES SALAMI went about raising the tribes and GHAFIRIS and HINAWIS alike declared their allegiance but the main body of the latter faction only came in when Isa bin Salih openly attached himself to the movement.

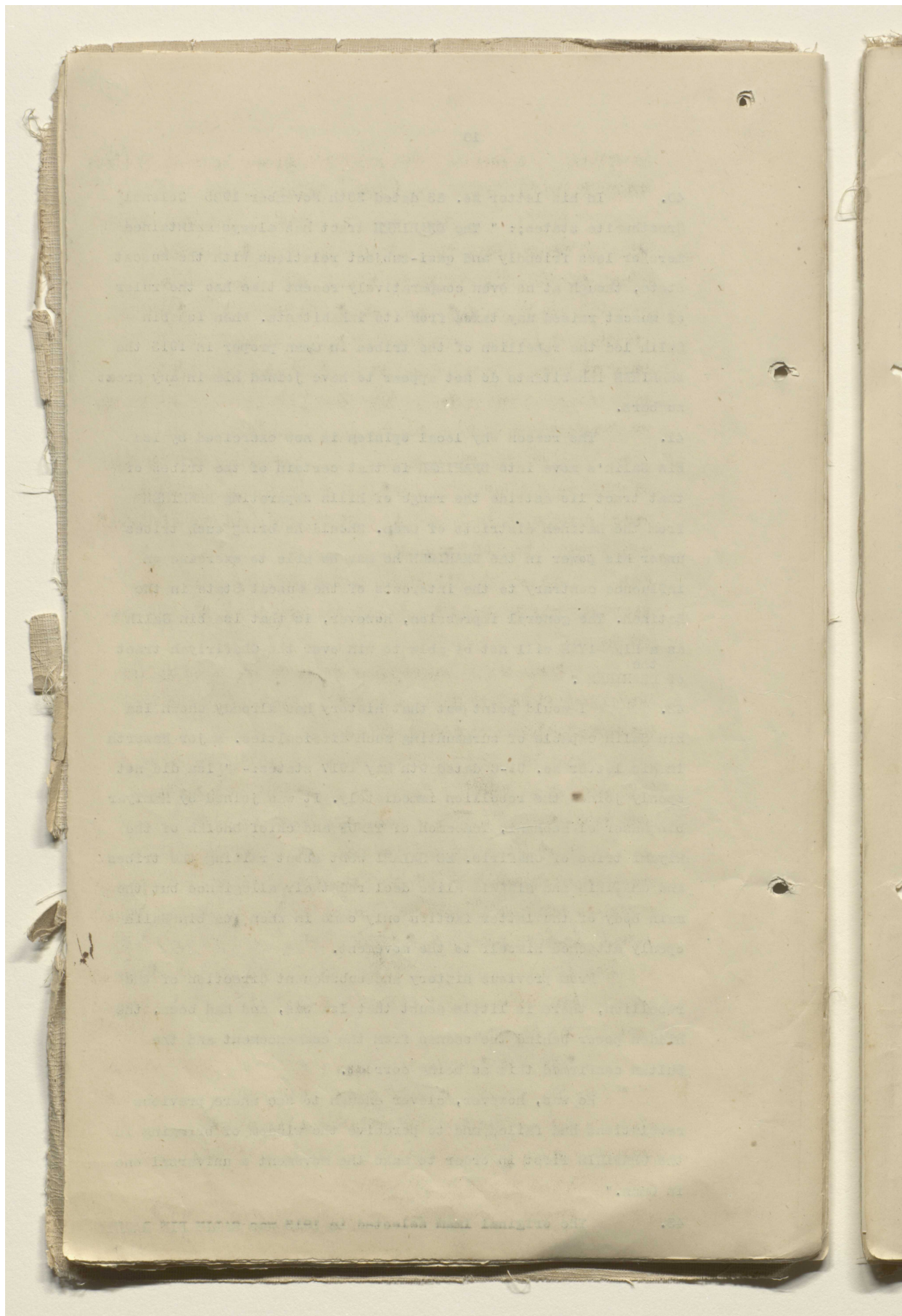
From previous history and subsequent direction of the rebellion, there is little doubt that Isa was, and had been, the hidden power behind the scenes from the commencement and the Sultan confirmed this as being correct.

He was, however, clever enough to see where previous revolutions had failed and to perceive the wisdom of bringing in the GHAFIRIS first in order to make the movement a universal one in Oman."

43. The original Imam selected in 1913 was SALIM BIN RASHID

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AL KHARUSI (a GHAFIRI) but after his murder in 1920, MOHOMED BIN ABDULLAH AL KHALILI (a HINAWI) was selected.

This family first came to notice in 1841 when Saiyid Hamud of Sehar placed some Muttawas or religious zealots - among them Said bin Khalfan Al Khalili - in charge of his principal forts to hold them against the wahabis and himself adopted a religious profession and way of life. (Lerimer's Gazetteer Vol. I Part I page 455). Isa bin Salih's father , Salih bin Ali, the leader of the 1895 rebellion, was one of the chief supporters of Said bin Khalfan Al Khalili.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that in 1913, Saiyid Nadir, (brother of His Highness) pledged Semail fort to Abdullah bin Said Al Khalili (father of present Imam) whilst he went to Sib.

44. Concerning the RIYAMI tribe, mentioned above, the principal GHAFIRI tribe to support the rebellion, Mr. Lerimer states :-

" There are no bedouins... These of the hills do not bear a good reputation being regarded as irascible, slethful, immoral and wanting in hospitality.

The prejudice against them may be partly due to their disregard of Mahomedan principles in drinking a wine which they themselves manufacture from home grown grapes."

45. Sheikh Isa bin Salih's diplomacy in bringing about an alliance between the wine drinking Riyami and the fanatically religious Muttawas is certainly worthy of admiration and under present conditions it seems only a question of time before he succeeds in bringing the DHAHIREH within his sphere of influence.

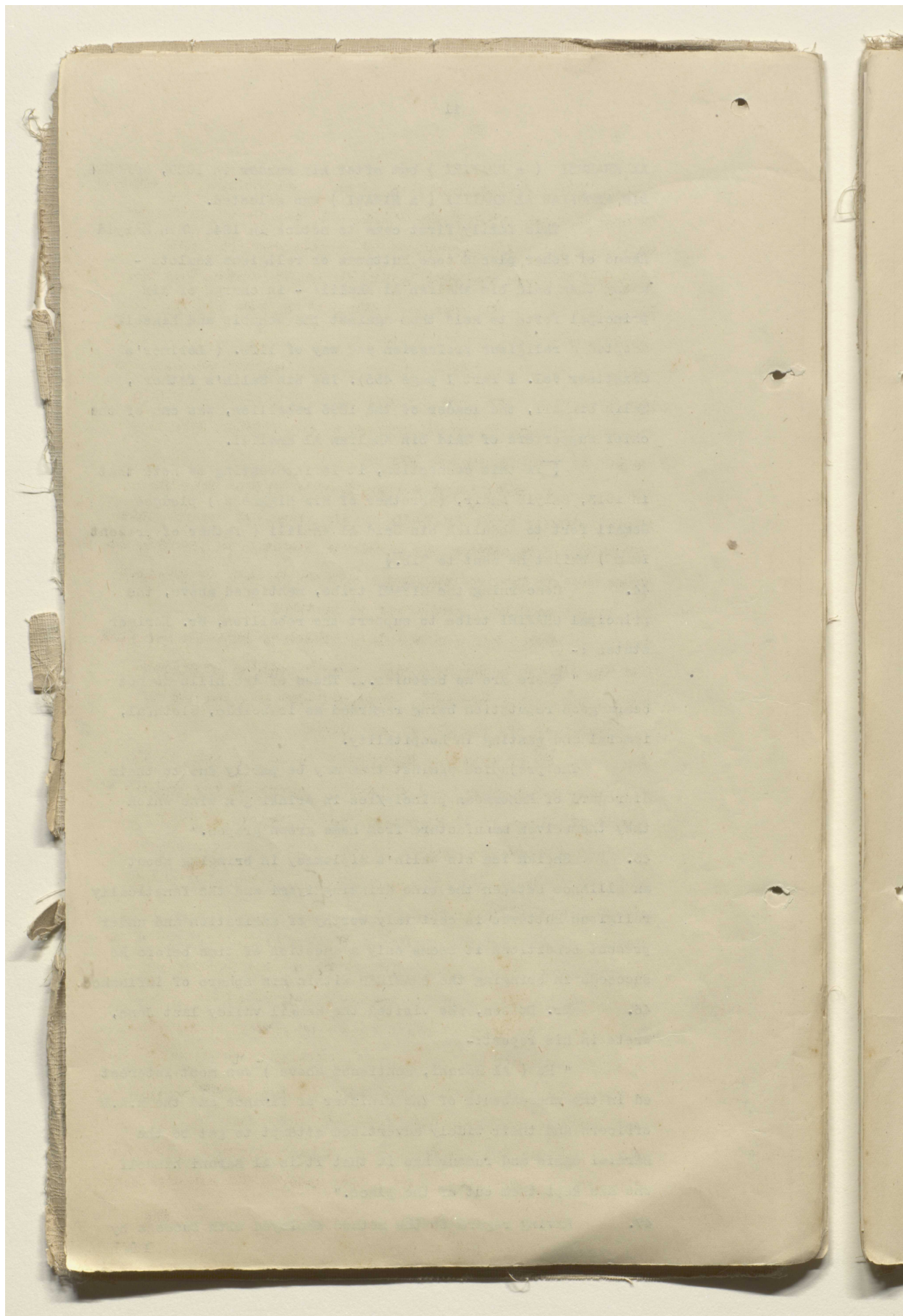
46. Mr. Dowsen, who visited the Semail valley last June, wrote in his report:-

" He (Al Baruni, mentioned above) was most interested in the whereabouts of the Minister of Finance and the R.A.F officers and their widely advertised attempt to get to the Baraimi Oasis and rumour has it that it is Al Baruná himself who has kept them out of the place."

47. Having regard to the method employed with success by

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Isa bin Salih during ^{the} late rebellion, of instigating the GHAFIRI tribes to rebel against the Sultan and then stepping in and obtaining the Overlordship, it would seem that the same tactics have been employed by Sheikh Isa in instigating the Baraimi tribes, who were in opposition to him, to show opposition to the Air Force Party.

48. There is also a suspicion that Mehemed bin Naser of the BANI BU ALI may have employed similar tactics to create friction between the ARAMA section of the JENEBEH with whom he was at enmity, and Mr. Thomas.

49. In paragraph 8 above, mention is made that the present Sheikh ~~Isa~~ ^{Sultan} bin Zaid, of the NAIM, has for the last few years, been sending and receiving presents to and from IBN Saud, when he has now apparently invited to take possession and make a sort of protectorate of Baraimi.

50. There are two important tribes in Baraimi, the NAIM and the DHOWAHIR. The Naim used to be sponsored by Muscat State, whilst the DHOWAHIR, strongest numerically, are in alliance with the Sheikhs of Abu Dhabi.

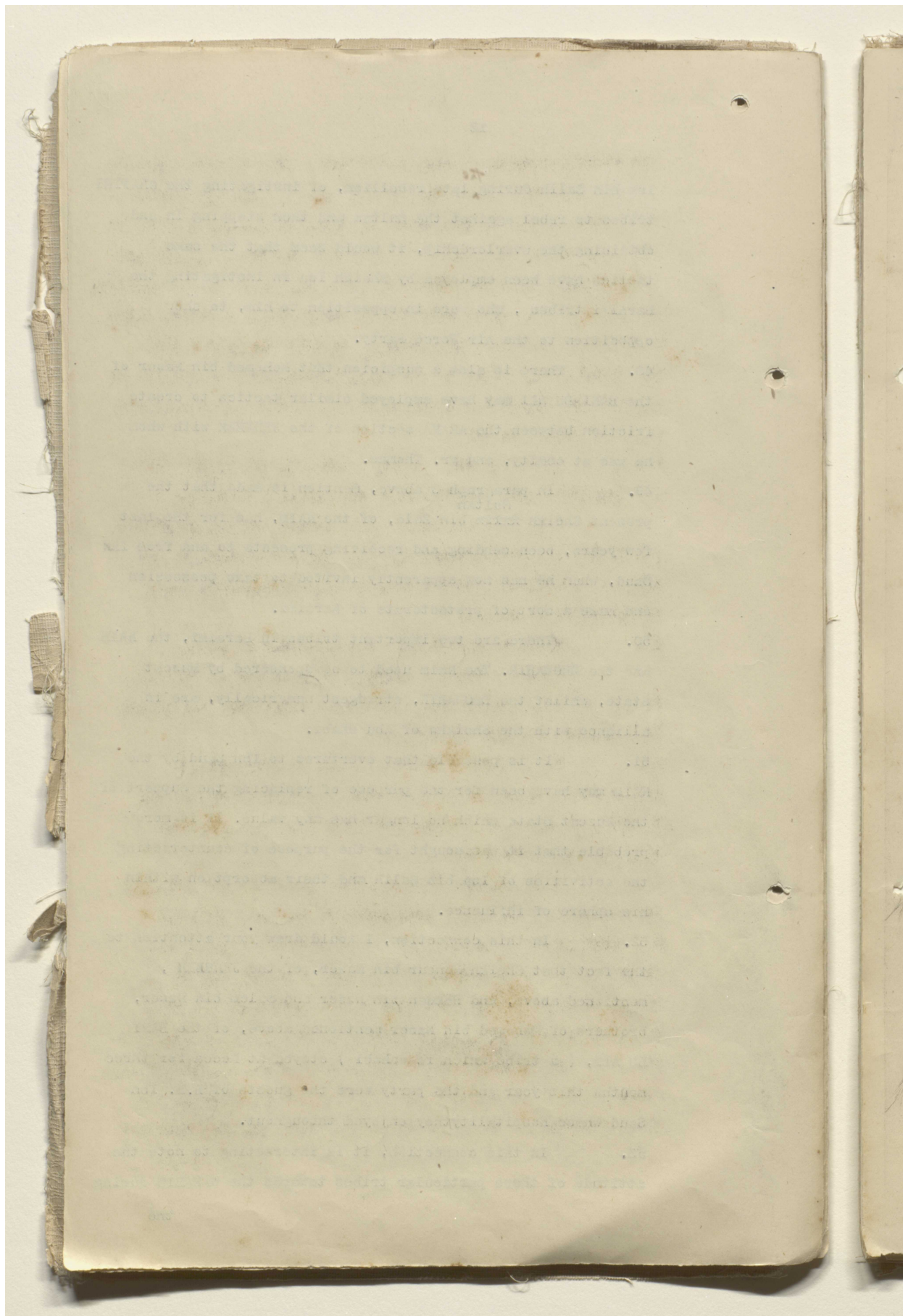
51. It is possible that overtures to Ibn Saud by the NAIM may have been for the purpose of replacing the support of the Muscat State which no longer has any value. It is more probable that it was sought for the purpose of counteracting the activities of Isa bin Salih and their absorption within his sphere of influence.

52. In this connection, I would draw your attention to the fact that Sheikh Mansur bin Naser, of the JENEBEH, mentioned above, and Hamdan bin Naser and Salem bin Naser, brothers of Mehemed bin Naser mentioned above, of the BANI BU ALI, (a tribe which is wahabi) stayed at Mecca for three months this year and the party were the guests of H.M. Ibn Saud whose hospitality they enjoyed throughout.

53. In this connection, it is interesting to note the attitude of these particular tribes towards the WAHABIS during

the

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the wahabi invasion of Oman in the early part of last century.

Lerimer's Gazetteer Vol. I Part I page 424 states :-

" In 1800, after the occupation of the Hasa and Qatif Oases by the Wahabis, a large Wahabi detachment, mounted on horses and camels, made their way thence by land to Baraimi on the confines of the Oman Sultanate; here their leader HARIQ, a Nubian slave established fortified settlement; and here the NAIM, BANI QITAB and other tribes of the DHAHIREH, who were unfriendly to the Central Government of Oman, quickly identified themselves with the Wahabi cause. "

54. In "Muscat and its Relations with the Wahabi Power" (Bombay Government Records XXIV New Series) it states :-

" At this juncture, 1800, several of the principal chiefs of Oman were induced to array their influence on the side of the Wahabis under a compact which recognised their independence of Muscat. "

55. Again on page 444 of the Gazetteer it states :-

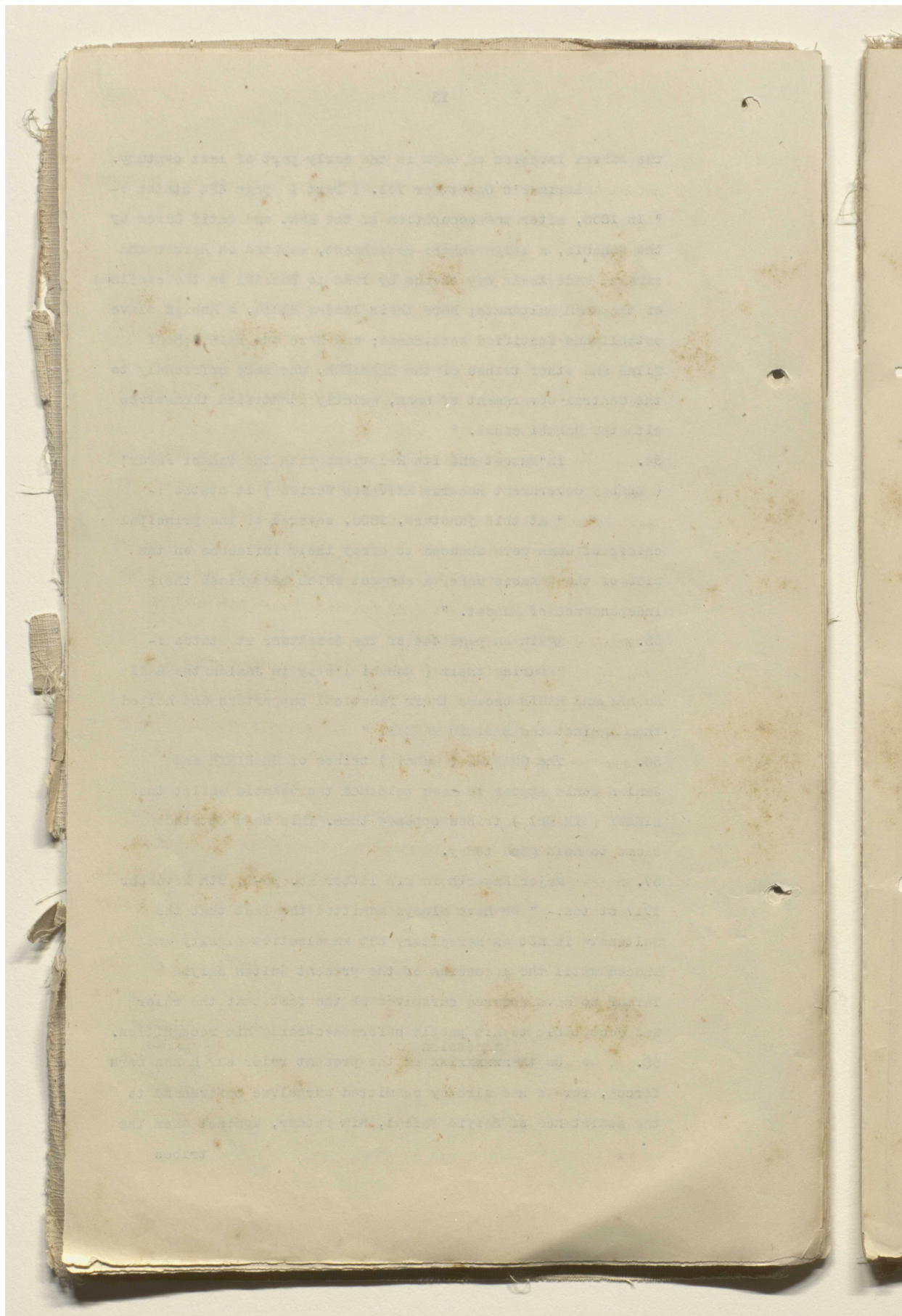
" During their (Wahabi) stay in Jaalan the BANI BU ALI and RASIB became their fanatical supporters and helped them against the BANI BU HASSAN. "

56. The GHAFIRI (Sunni) tribes of DHAHIREH and Jaalan would appear to have welcomed the Wahabis whilst the HINAWI (IBADHI) tribes opposed them. This same attitude seems to hold good today.

57. Major Hawerth in his letter No. 90-C, 9th November 1917 states:- " We have always admitted the fact that the Sultanate is not an hereditary but an elective dignity and indeed until the accession of the present Sultan Saiyid Taimur we have assured ourselves of the fact that the ruler was acceptable to his people before according him recognition. accession

58. On the ~~accession~~ of the present ruler our hands were forced, for we had already committed ourselves beforehand to the assistance of Saiyid Faisal, his father, against whom the tribes

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tribes had risen and thus we could not do otherwise than continue that support to his representative who took over the reins of Government."

Also, " He (Saiyid Taimur) admitted to me that if it were not for the vulnerable position of the tribes on the coast, many of them would join the Imam and he had few tribes left upon whom he could rely, a number which decreases as the Imam's strength increases and defections have taken place in the last year. "

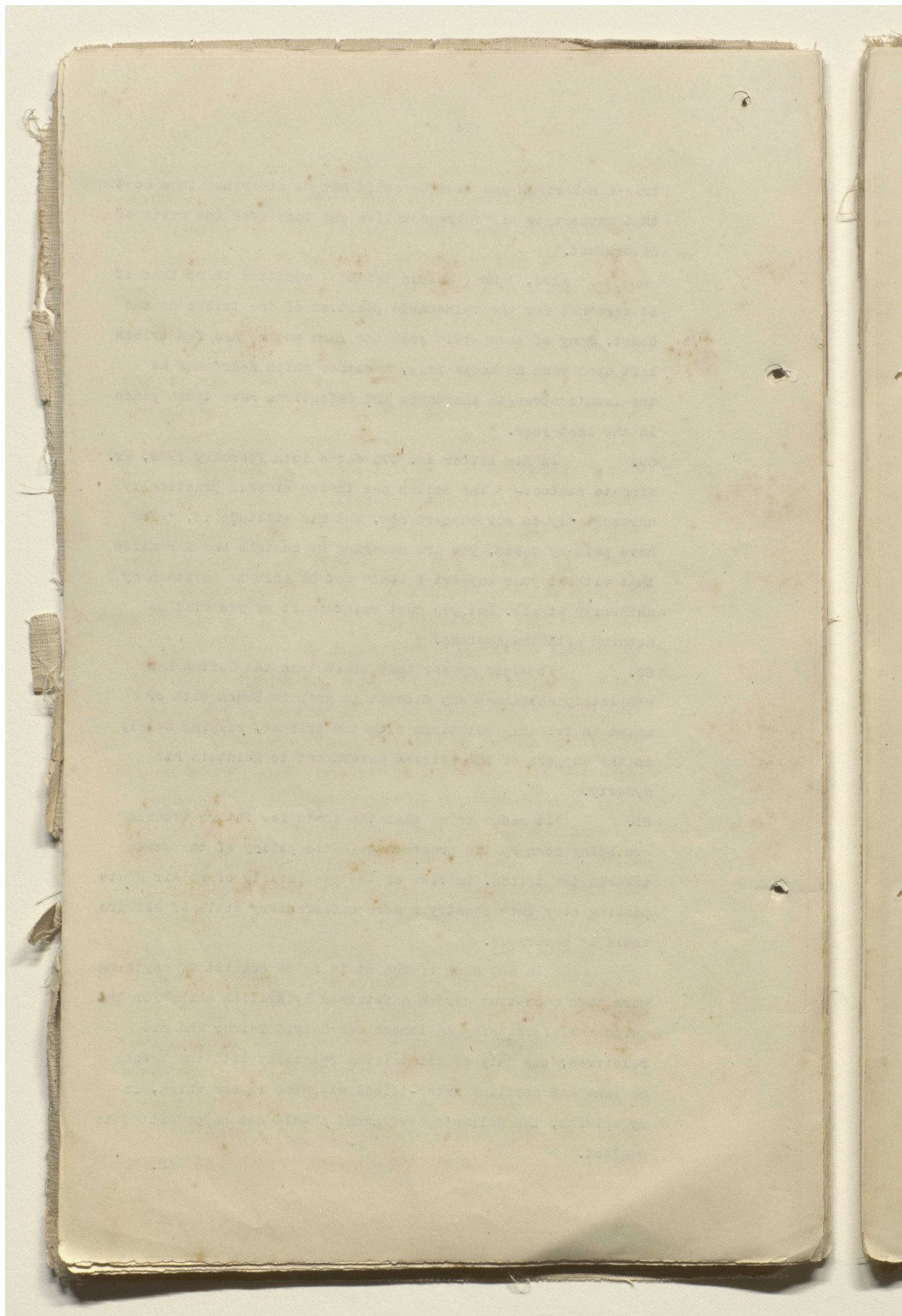
59. In his letter No. 476 dated 10th February 1920, Mr. Wingate states:- " The Sultan has thrown himself practically unreservedly on our support now, and his attitude is, " You have paid my debts, you are managing my customs and I realise that without your support I would not be able to maintain my authority at all. But you must maintain it or you will do nothing with the customs. "

60. It would appear that since then the Sultan has completely abandoned any attempt to keep in touch with or maintain friendly relations with the tribes, relying solely on the support of the British Government to maintain his dynasty.

61. It seems to me that the seeds for future trouble are being sown by the present apathetic policy of the State towards the tribes. In view of the possibility of an Air Route passing over this country a more satisfactory state of affairs would be desirable.

In any case if the State is to consist of anything more than a customs cordon maintained by British ships for the purpose of furnishing an income for Saiyid Taimur and his relatives, the duty of maintaining relations with the tribal Sheikhs and settling inter-tribal disputes is one which, in my opinion, the Sultan's Government should not be permitted to neglect.

62.



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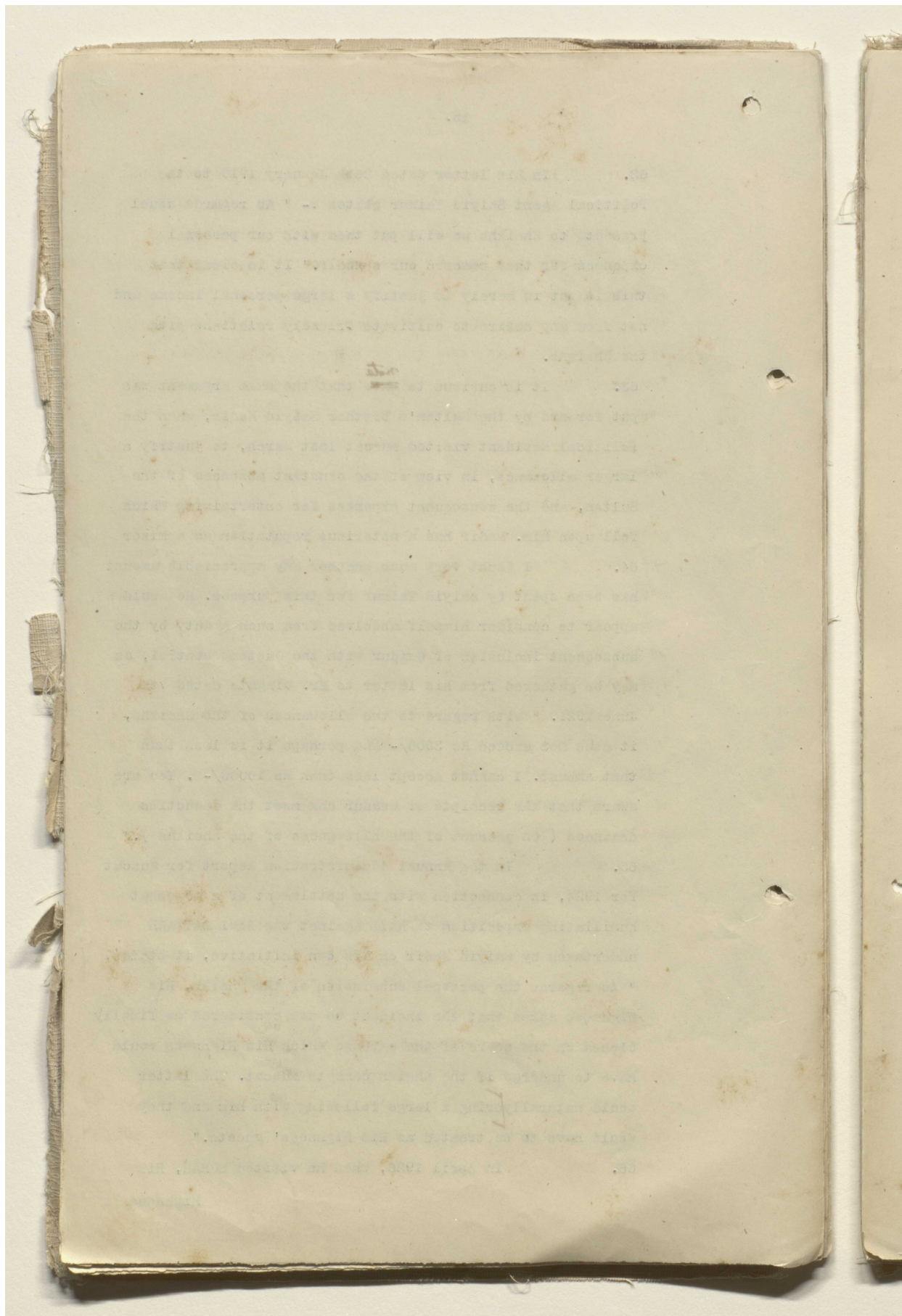
62. In his letter dated 26th January 1919 to the Political Agent Saiyid Taimur states :- " As regards usual presents to Sheikhs we will put them with our personal expenses for they concern our ownself." It is clear that this is put in merely to justify a large personal income and not from any desire to cultivate friendly relations with the Sheikhs.

63. It is curious to ^{note} ~~see~~ that the same argument was put forward by the Sultan's brother Saiyid Nadir, when the Political Resident visited Muscat last March, to justify a larger allowance, in view of the constant absences of the Sultan, and the consequent expenses for entertaining which fell upon him. Nadir has a notorious reputation as a miser

64. I doubt very much whether any appreciable amount has been spent by Saiyid Taimur for this purpose. He would appear to consider himself absolved from such a duty by the subsequent inclusion of Gwador with the Customs control, as may be gathered from his letter to Mr. Wingate dated 7th June 1921. " With regard to the allowances of the Sheikhs, it does not exceed Rs 3000/- and perhaps it is less than that amount. I cannot accept less than Rs 10000/- . You are aware that the receipts of Gwador can meet the deduction demanded (on account of the allowances of the Sheikhs)."

65. In the Annual Administration Report for Muscat for 1924, in connection with the settlement of a somewhat humiliating expedition to HAIL against the BANI BATTASH undertaken by Saiyid Nadir on his own initiative, it states, " As regards the personal submission of the Sheikh, His Highness asked that the incident be now considered as finally closed on the score of the expense which His Highness would have to undergo if the Sheikh came to Muscat. The latter would naturally bring a large following with him and they would have to be treated as His Highness' guests."

66. In April 1926, when he visited SOHAR, His Highness



Highness is said to have spent a fair amount in presents and entertainments to Sheikhs but such expenditure seems to have been included in the budget under the head " Transport and Travel". Rs 10708/- were spent under the head during the period January to June 1926.

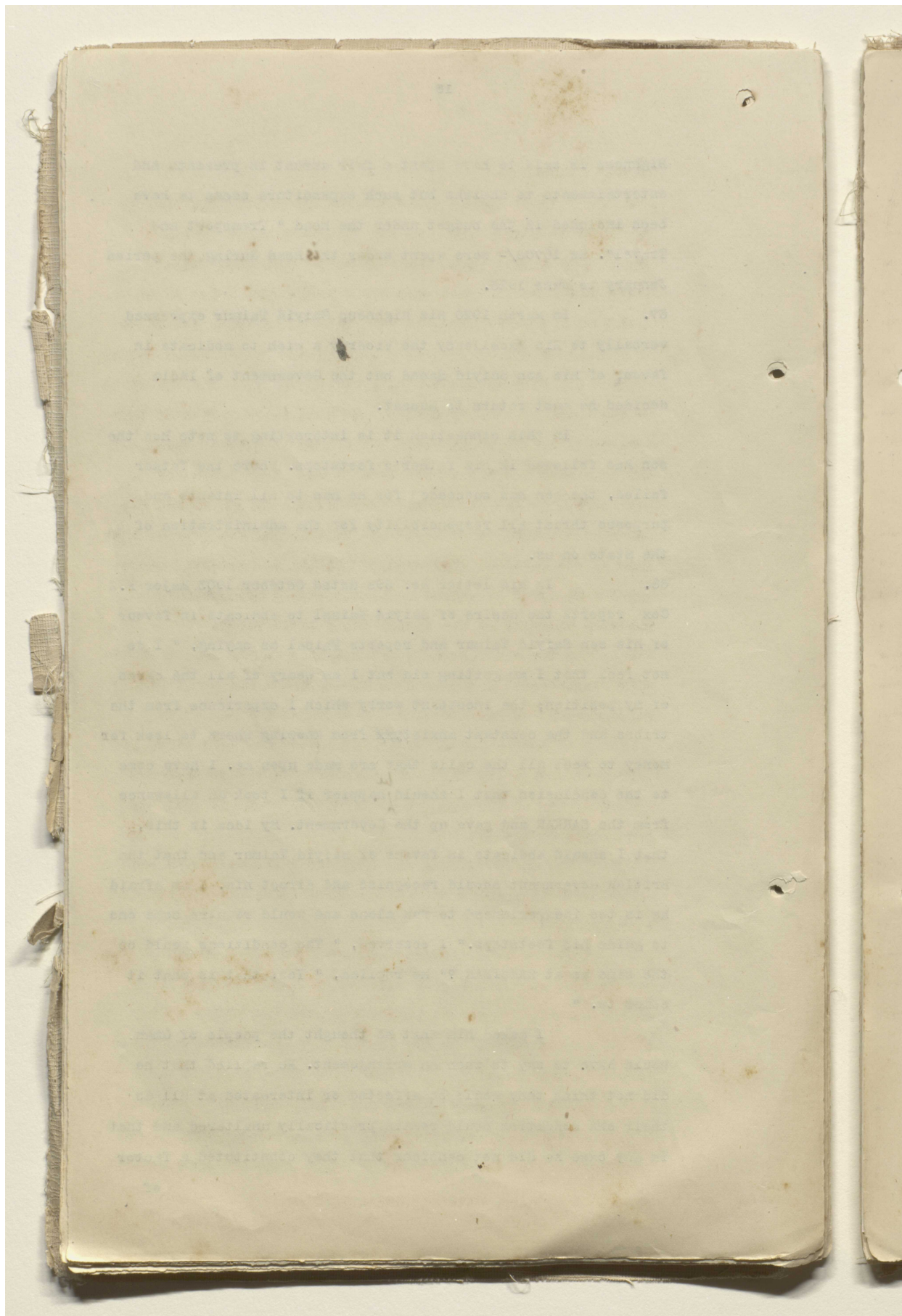
67. In March 1920 His Highness Saiyid Taimur expressed verbally to His Excellency the Viceroy a wish to abdicate in favour of his son Saiyid Saeed but the Government of India decided he must return to Muscat.

In this connection it is interesting to note how the son has followed in his father's footsteps. where the father failed, the son has succeeded for he has to all intents and purposes thrust all responsibility for the administration of the State on us.

68. In his letter No. 598 dated October 1903 Major P.Z Cox reports the desire of Saiyid Faisal to abdicate in favour of his son Saiyid Taimur and reports Faisal as saying, " I do not feel that I am getting old but I am weary of all the cares of my position; the incessant worry which I experience from the tribes and the constant anxiety from knowing where to look for money to meet all the calls that are made upon me. I have come to the conclusion that I should be happier if I took an allowance from the SARKAR and gave up the Government. My idea is this, that I should abdicate in favour of Saiyid Taimur and that the British Government should recognise and direct him. I am afraid he is too inexperienced to run alone and would require some one to guide his footsteps." I observed, " The conditions would be the same as at ZANZIBAR ?" he replied, " Yes; that is what it comes to. "

I asked him what he thought the people of Oman would have to say to such an arrangement. He replied that he did not think they would be affected or interested at all as their own condition would remain practically unaltered and that in any case he did not consider that they constituted a factor
of

'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [22v] (44/118)



of any difficulty."

69. In his letter No. 698 dated April 1920 Mr. Wingate writes :- " Saiyid Taimur is not unintelligent . He is, however, incredibly weak and incurably vain. Both these characteristics have not made him a successful ruler of an Arab State. His weakness has resulted in his being exploited by his family and unscrupulous persons and in his being unable to make any headway against the rebellion, while his vanity in an Arab country where geniality and good manners towards high and low alike are obligatory, has alienated many of those who are by conviction his supporters. In the interior, owing to the MISRULE OF HIS FATHER and Grandfather, which, he has not improved himself, he is hated and this hatred has been intensified by his cavalier treatment of Sheikhs and general pomposity referred to above. He is not really ~~wastefully~~ wantonly extravagant but simply silly about money."

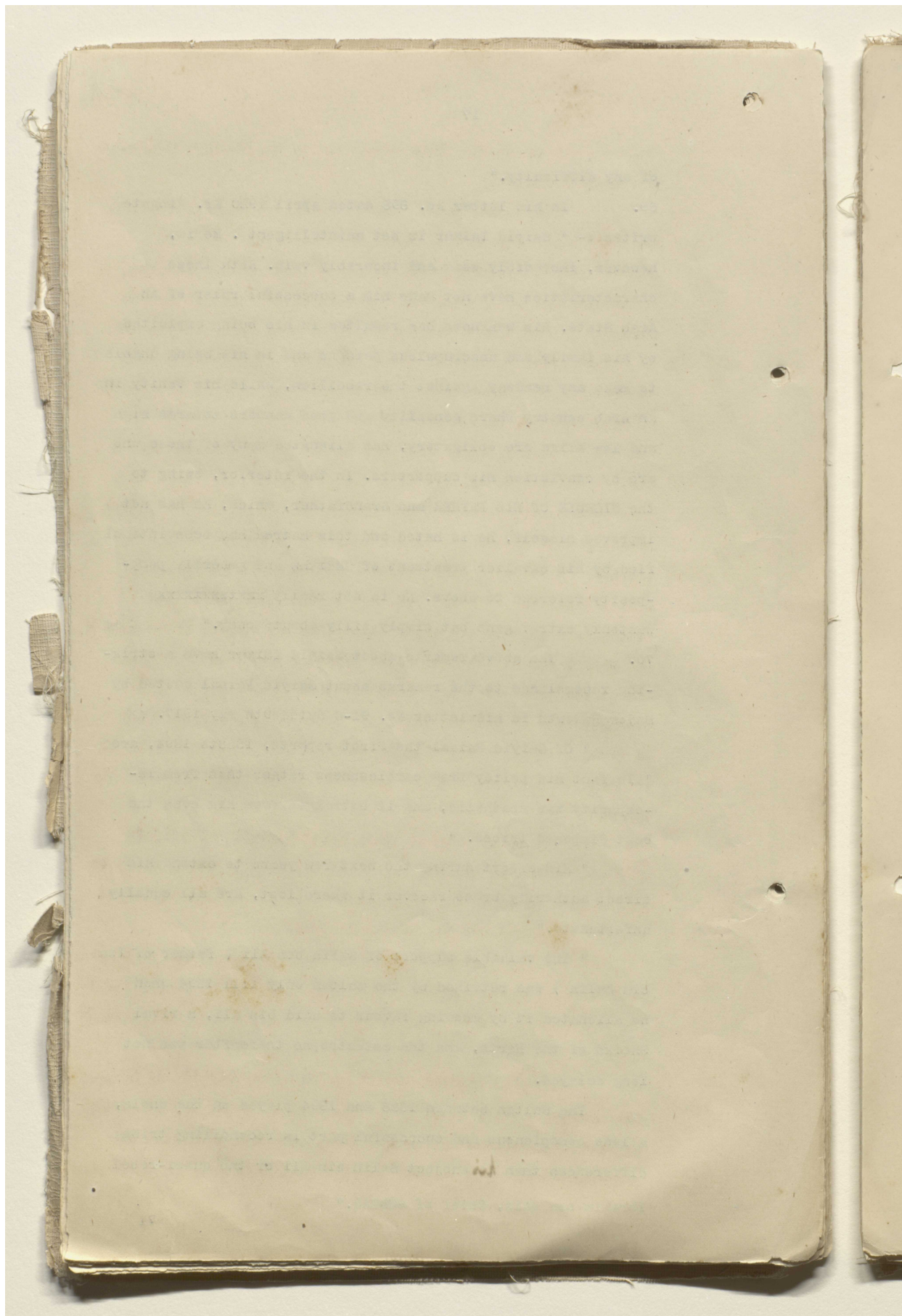
70. The above remarks about Saiyid Taimur have a striking resemblance to the remarks about Saiyid Faisal quoted by Major Hawerth in his letter No. 91-C dated 9th May 1917.

" Of Saiyid Faisal the first reports, 1888 to 1894, are " In fact his policy from carelessness rather than from incapacity was apathetic, and it estranged from him even the best disposed tribes. "

" His effort during the next few years to extend his direct authority or to recover it where lost, are all equally unfortunate."

" The valuable support of Salih bin Ali (father of Isa bin Salih) was retained by the Sultan only till 1894 when he alienated it by showing favour to Said bin Ali, a rival Sheikh of the Harth, and the catastrophe thereafter was not long delayed.

The Sultan between 1888 and 1894 played on the whole, a less conspicuous and successful part in reconciling tribal differences than his subject Salih bin Ali or the quasi-rebel Ibrahim bin Qais, Chief of RUSTAQ."



71. In an undated note submitted to the Foreign Secretary Mr. Wingate adds :-

" If Saiyid Taimur should not be allowed to abdicate he will still endeavour to evade his responsibilities as regards actual personal rule, will reside as little as possible in Muscat, and will leave all work and administration in the hands of his ministers relying on us to keep them in order and to advise them. He hankers after the joys of civilisation as represented in India, leaves his own country and is determined to be as idle as possible. "

72. Quoting again from his letter 898 dated 28th April 1920. " The Sultan has one son, Saiyid Saeed, about ten years old. He has many brothers, the most notable of whom are Saiyid Nadir, half a negre, and Saiyid Hamad, a freemason with a tendency to becoming Europeanised. (NOTE. Vide his dealings with the Sheikhs above.) The rest of his many uncles and cousins and nephews are quite impossible and may be ruled out. For Saiyid Saeed, provided he is decently educated in India, not in England, there are possibilities. Saiyid Nadir is an intriguer and is rightly despised and detested. Saiyid Hamad is shewing signs of becoming a useful member of society. He is by character, however, quite unsuited to the first place in the State."

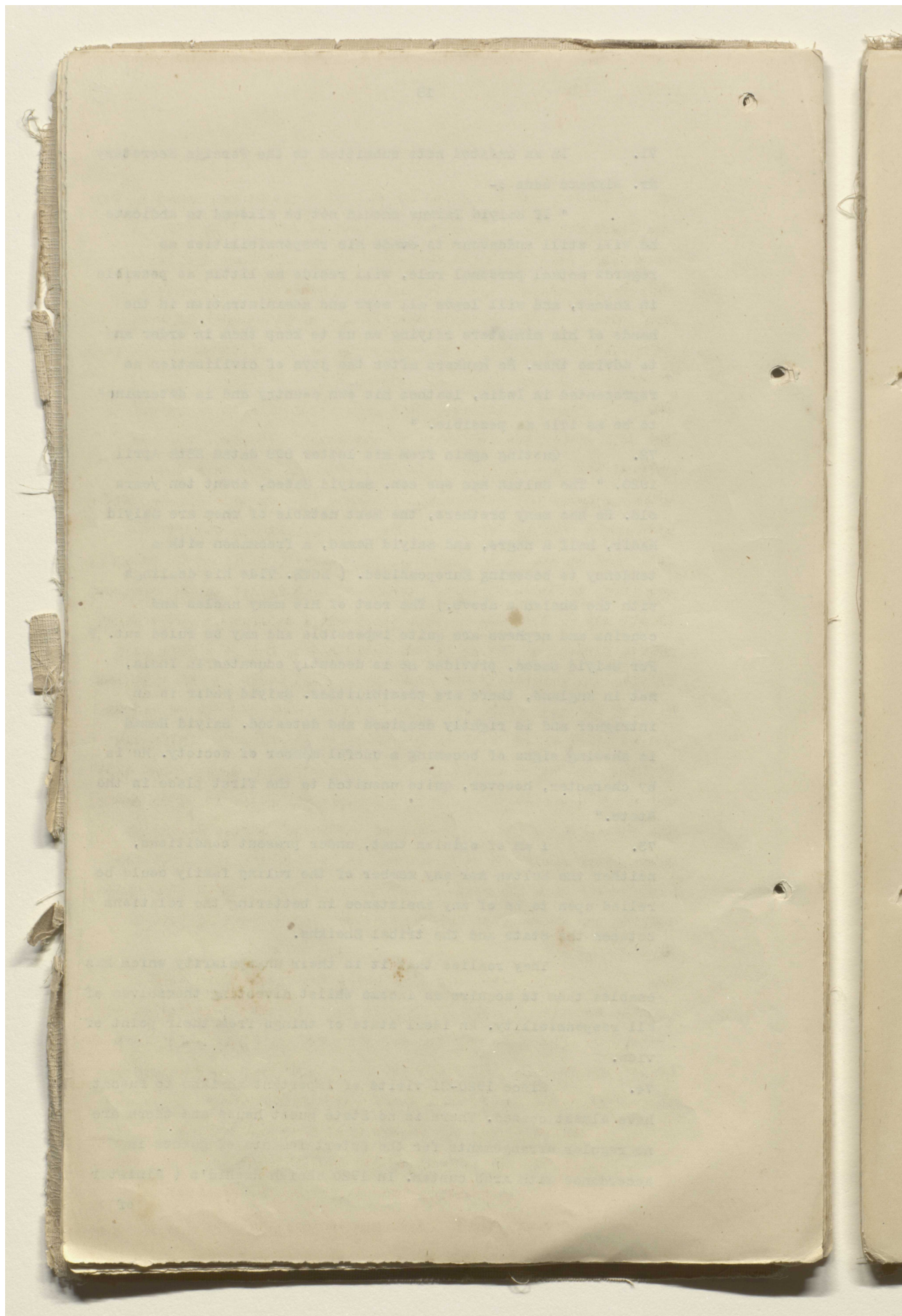
73. I am of opinion that, under present conditions, neither the Sultan nor any member of the ruling family could be relied upon to be of any assistance in bettering the relations between the State and the tribal Sheikhs.

They realise that it is their unpopularity which has enabled them to acquire an income whilst divesting themselves of all responsibility. An ideal state of things from their point of view.

74. Since 1920-21 visits of important Sheikhs to Muscat have almost ceased. There is no State guest house and there are no regular arrangements for the entertainments of guests in accordance with Arab custom. In 1920 Sheikh Rashid's (Minister

of

'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [24v] (48/118)



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of fer Shara) pay was fixed at Rs 1000/- and he was asked to feed the State guests. His pay was cut down to Rs 600/- in 1921. I understand that the Walis and other State officials and petty Sheikhs and headmen are entertained at State expense though I can not trace this in the State Budget. The entertainment of more important Sheikhs has to be undertaken by the Minister who is most friendly with them at his own expense.

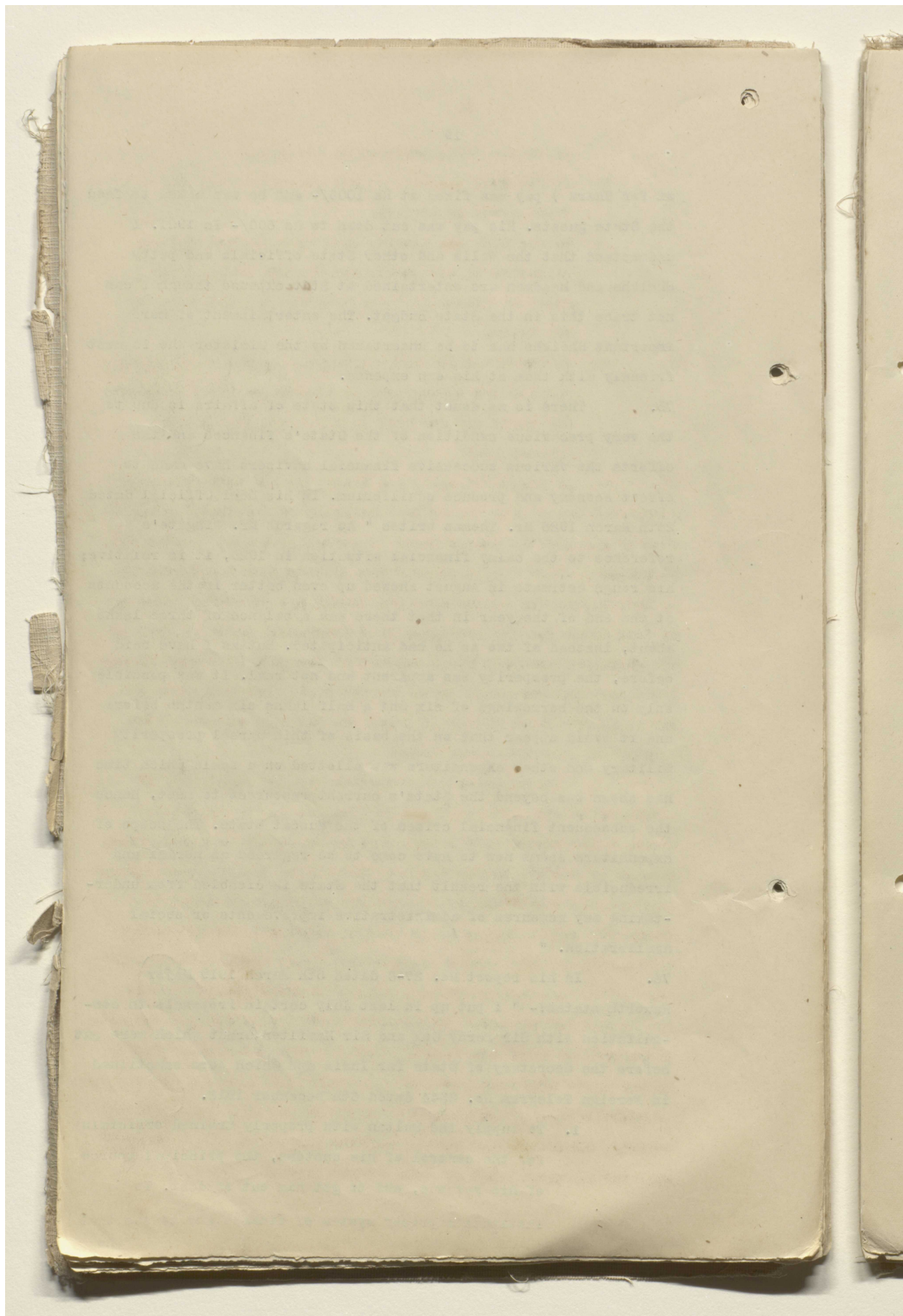
75. There is no doubt that this state of affairs is due to the very precarious condition of the State's finances and the efforts the various successive financial advisers have made to effect economy and produce equilibrium. In his Demi Official dated 20th March 1926 Mr. Thomas writes " As regards Mr. Wingate's reference to the balmy financial situation in 1920, it is relative; his rough estimate in August shewed up even better in the accounts at the end of the year in that there was a balance of three lakhs about, instead of two as he had anticipated. But as I have said before, the prosperity was apparent and not real. It was possible only on the borrowings of six and a half lakhs six months before and it would appear that on the basis of this unreal prosperity military and other expenditure was allowed on a scale which time has shown was beyond the State's current resources to meet, hence the subsequent financial crises of the Muscat State. The scope of Expenditure seems now to have come to be regarded as normal and irreducible with the result that the State is disabled from undertaking any measures of administrative improvements or social amelioration. "

76. In his report No. 27-C dated 5th March 1919 Major Hawerth states:- " I put up in last July certain Proposals in consultation with Sir Percy Cox and Sir Hamilton Grant which were put before the Secretary of State for India and which were sanctioned in Foreign Telegram No. 2344 dated 6th December 1918.

1. To supply the Sultan with properly trained officials for the control of his customs, the principal source of his revenue, and to get him out of debt. To institute a proper system of finance and to see that

no

**'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE
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- no further debt occurred on the State.
2. To see that ~~the~~ Courts were instituted for the improvement of justice.
 3. To see that ~~the~~ schools were established for the education of the people and for the training of these to become in the course of time officials of the State.
 4. To assist in the establishment of a corps for defence and for the maintenance of order." Of these proposals ^{have} the first and the last to a certain extent been carried out.

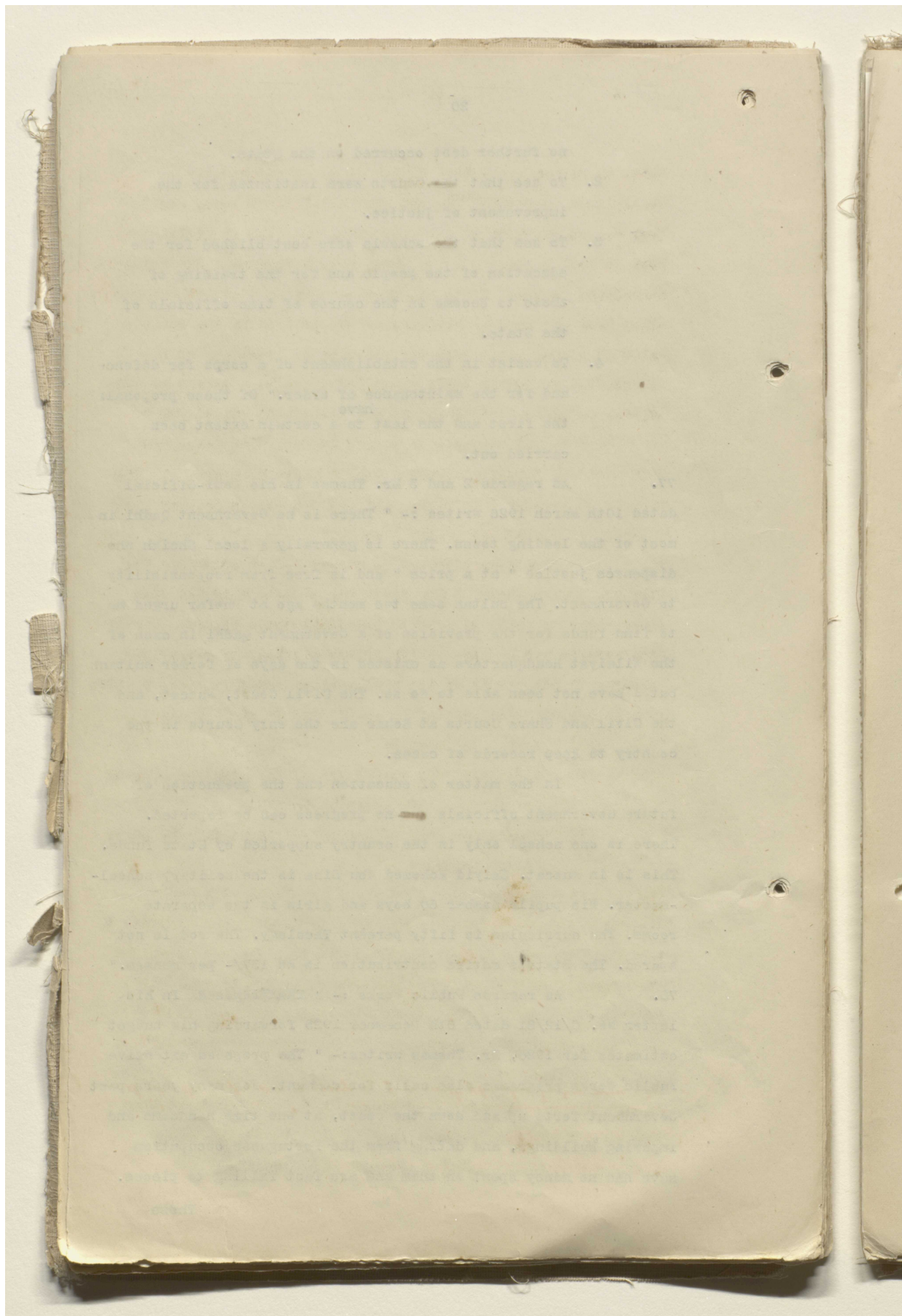
77. As regards 2 and 3 Mr. Thomas in his Demi-Official dated 10th March 1926 writes i:- " There is no Government Qadhi in most of the leading towns. There is generally a local Sheikh who dispenses justice " at a price " and is free from responsibility to Government. The Sultan some two months ago at Dhefar urged me to find funds for the provision of a Government Qadhi in each of the wilaiyat Headquarters as existed in the days of former Sultans but I have not been able to do so. The Civil Court, Muscat, and the Civil and Shara Courts at Sehar are the only Courts in the country to keep records of cases.

In the matter of education and the production of future Government officials ~~and~~ no progress can be reported. There is one school only in the country supported by State funds. This is in Muscat. Saiyid Mehomed Abu Dina is the solitary school-master. His pupils number 60 boys and girls in two separate rooms. The curriculum is fifty percent Theology. The rest is not spared. The State's entire contribution is Rs 137/- per mensem."

78. As regards Public Works :- ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ In his letter No. C/12/81 dated 6th December 1925 forwarding his budget estimates for 1926, Mr. Thomas writes:- " The proposed extensive Public Works programme also calls for comment. For many years past Government forts up and down the coast, at one time handsome and imposing buildings, and dating from the Portuguese occupation have had no money spent on them and are fast falling to pieces.

These

'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [26v] (52/118)



These at SUWAIQ and MASNAA I find to be as delapidated as JALALI fert in Muscat; but the provincial ferts being small they can be repaired at moderate cost. The fert at KHABURA had been so much neglected as to have become irreparable and has been abandoned. As these ferts are Headquarters of District Government i.e. are used as residencies and offices by the various walis it would, apart from the question of prestige, be uneconomical to permit their decay and later as a result be committed to heavy expenditure on new Government buildings. "

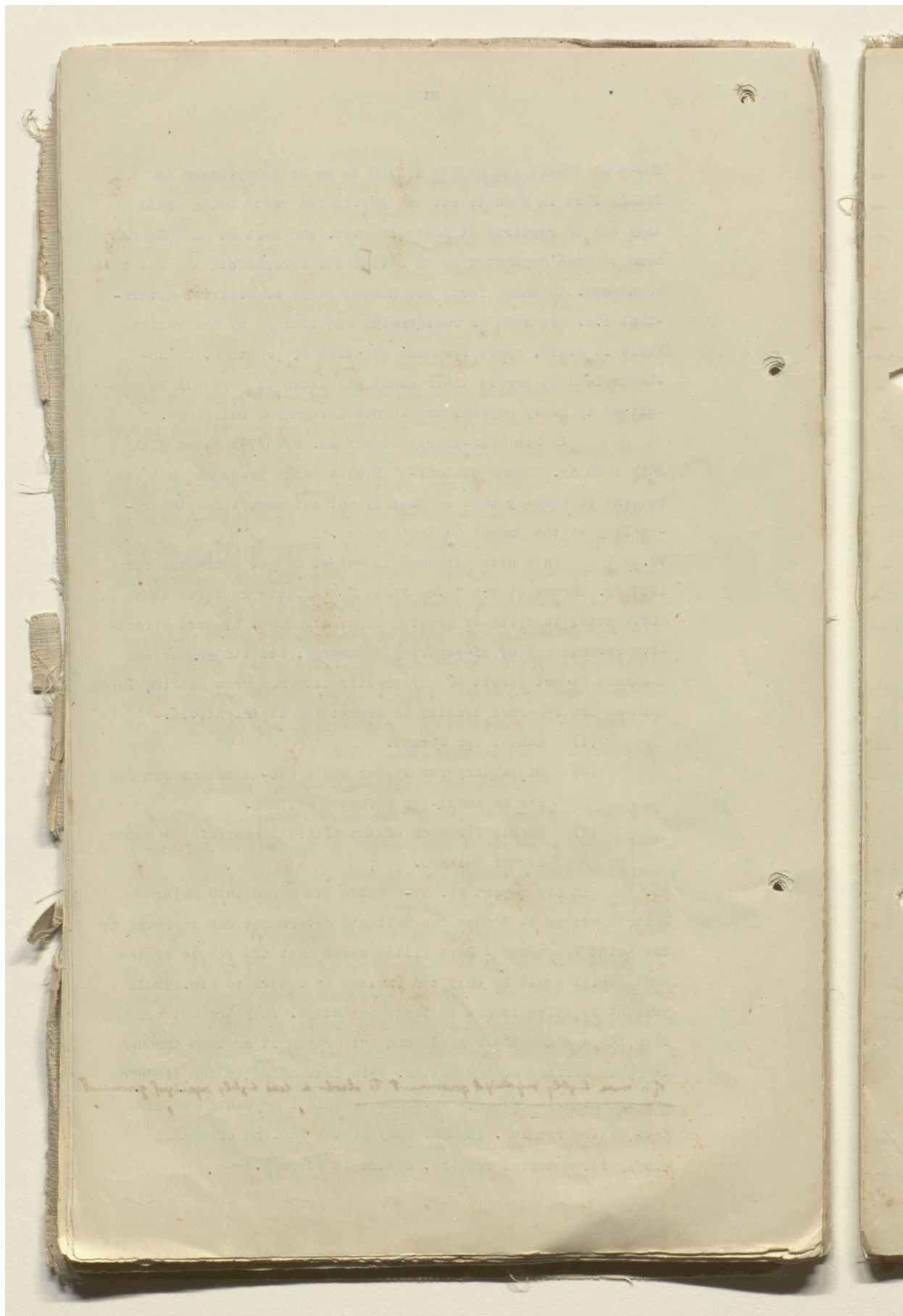
In his half-yearly report No. C/10/771 dated 26th July 1926 Mr. Thomas states:- " Public Works programme has for reasons of economy been completely cut out except for the re-roofing of the Muscat Custom's wharf."

79. In a note attached to Muscat Budget estimates for 1927 Mr. Thomas states " The State has of late kept its head above water in spite of growing impoverishment, by more effective revenue and by cheesparing economies; but its precarious balances do not permit of any ameliorative measures needing funds such as are regarded locally as urgent and important; viz:-

- (1) School for Muscat.
- (2) Dispensary for Gwadur and a Sub-Assistant Surgeon for the small-pox infected BATINEH.
- (3) Qadhis for each of the WILAIYATS as existed under former Sultans.

80. In his report No. 27-C dated 5th March 1919 Major Hawerth writes :- " Once the Sultan's Government was improved to the point I propose I have little doubt that the people of the wadi Samail would be only too anxious to return to him. Their present position is not to their advantage. They are cut off from the sea and their goods can only reach it or them through the good offices of the Sultan. This fact added to the tendency of a more highly organized government to absorb a less highly organized government of more highly organized Government would, I am convinced, make them desire reunion. Indeed, many of the Sheikhs of Samail simply for material reasons, desire it already."

**'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE
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81. It appears to me that in spite of seven years financial control, we are still far from having reached the point envisaged by Major Hawerth in the above quoted letter, when negotiations could be opened with a view to inducing the Omanis to incorporation within the Muscat State.

82. Under present conditions, the instalments still outstanding of the Government of India loan would be paid up in another two and a half years. An annual payment from the State of Rs 93500/- would cease and more money would normally be made available for carrying out further reforms.

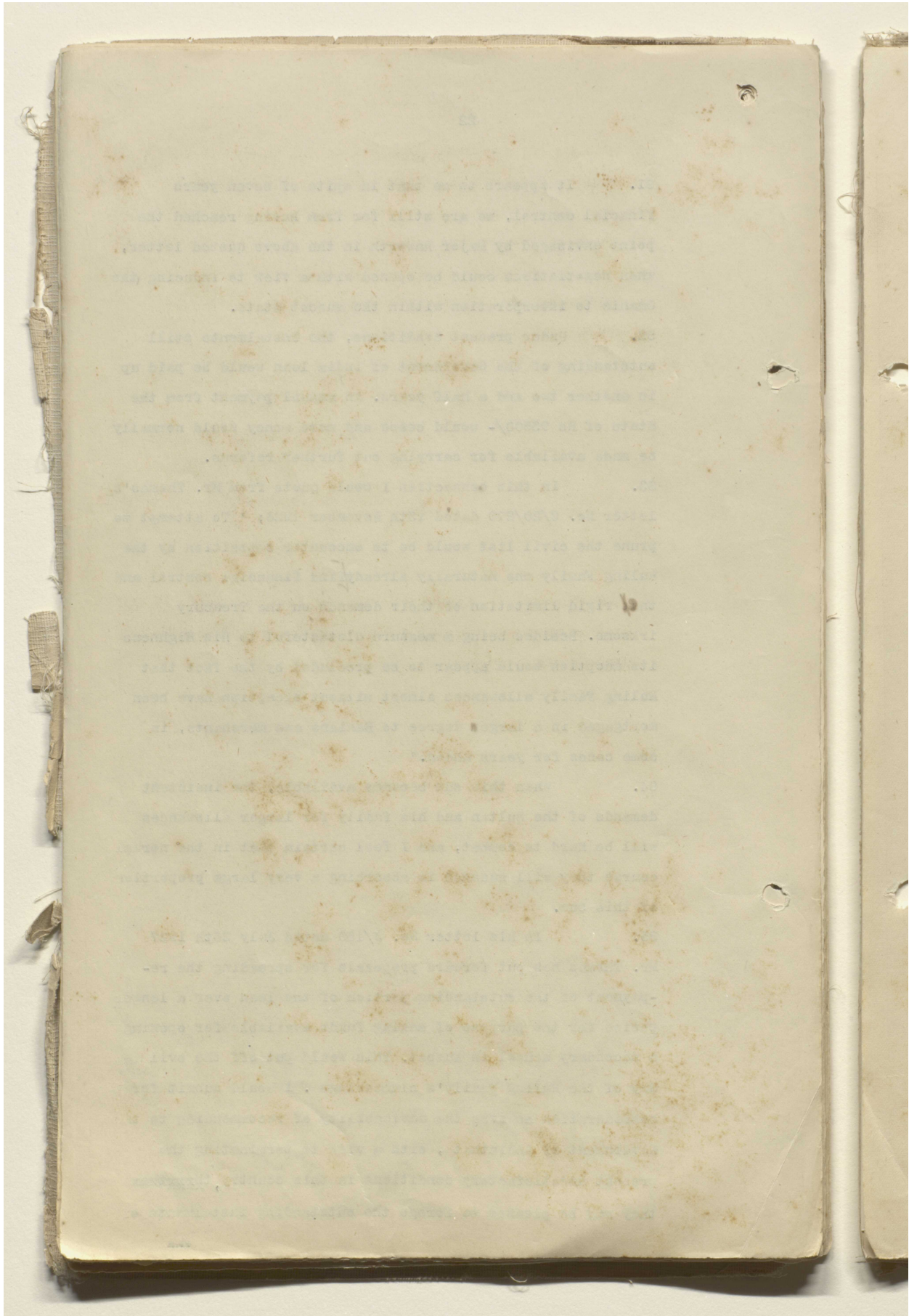
83. In this connection I would quote from Mr. Thomas's letter No. C/20/270 dated 13th November 1926; " To attempt to prune the civil list would be to encounter opposition by the Ruling Family who naturally already find financial control and the rigid limitation of their demands on the Treasury irksome. Besides being a measure distasteful to His Highness its adoption would appear to be precluded by the fact that Ruling Family allowances almost without exception have been mortgaged in a large degree to Banians and merchants, in some cases for years ahead."

84. When this sum becomes available, the insistent demands of the Sultan and his family for larger allowances will be hard to combat, and I feel certain that in the normal course they will succeed in absorbing a very large proportion of this sum.

85. In his letter No. J/180 dated July 26th 1927 Mr. Thomas has put forward proposals for spreading the repayment of the outstanding portion of the loan over a longer period for the purpose of making funds available for opening a secondary school in Muscat. This would put off the evil day of the Ruling Family's clamourings. I would submit for consideration however the advisability of recommending to the Government of India that, with a view to terminating the present unsatisfactory conditions in this country, that they may be pleased to forego the outstanding instalments of

the

'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [28v] (56/118)



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of the loan on condition that the Sultan furnished an under-
-taking that the balance should be used for ameliorative measures
and that no further increase should be made to his civil list
at any time without the consent of the Political Resident .

Of the original loan of Rs 650,000/- the sum of
Rs 654,364/6/- has already been paid up and the balance
represents interest.

I have the honour to be,

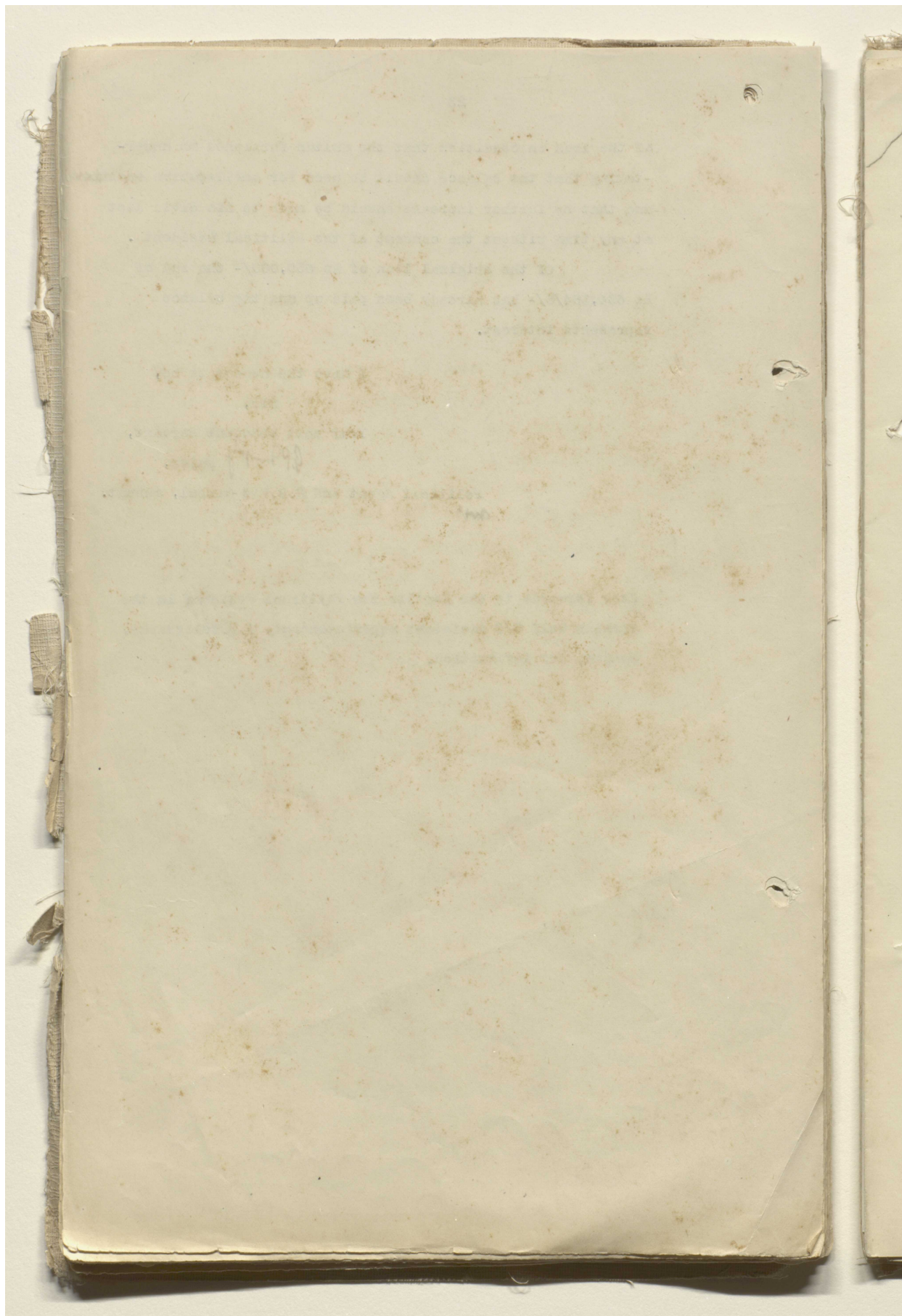
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

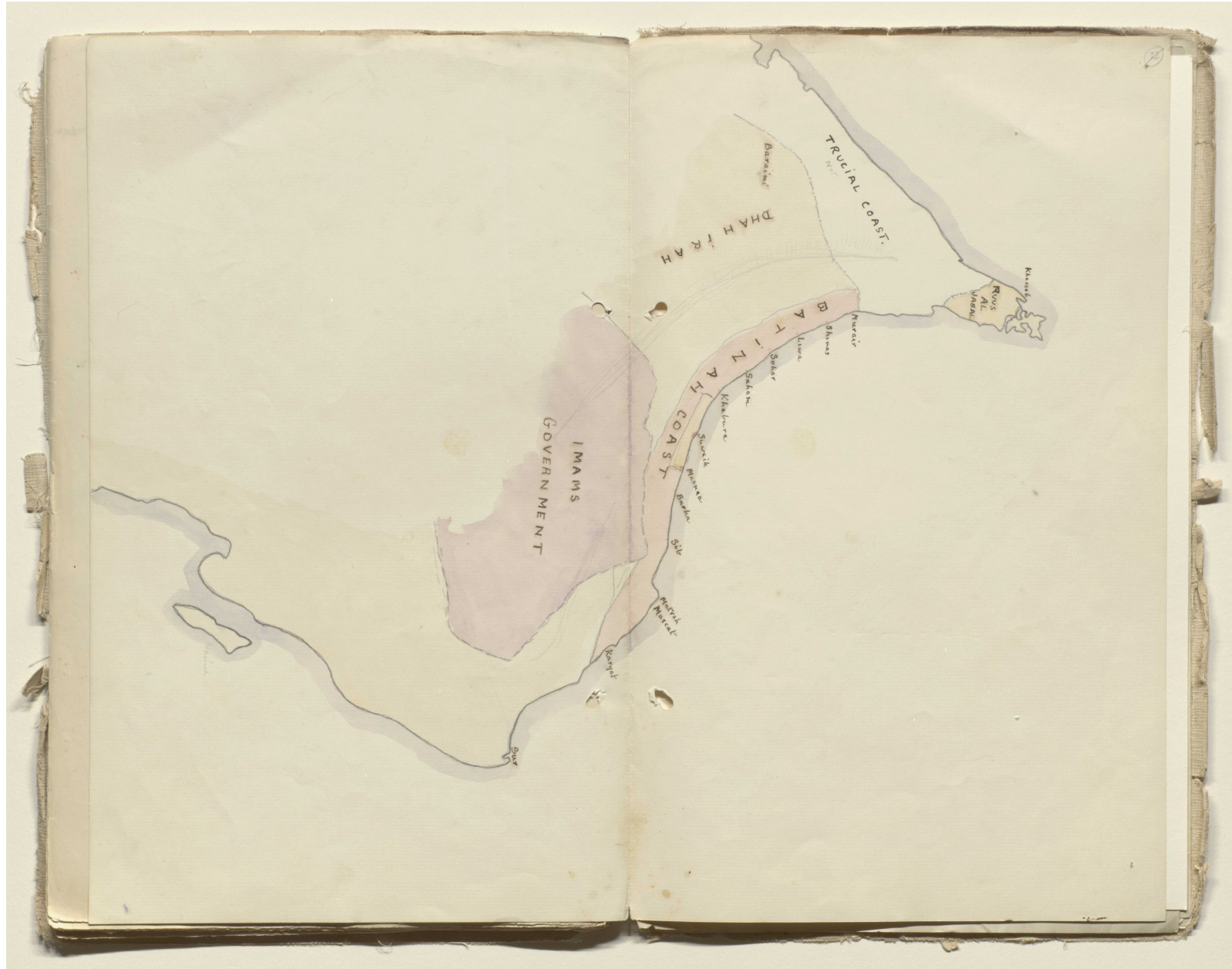
G. P. M. J. Major,

Political Agent and H.B.M's Consul, Muscat.

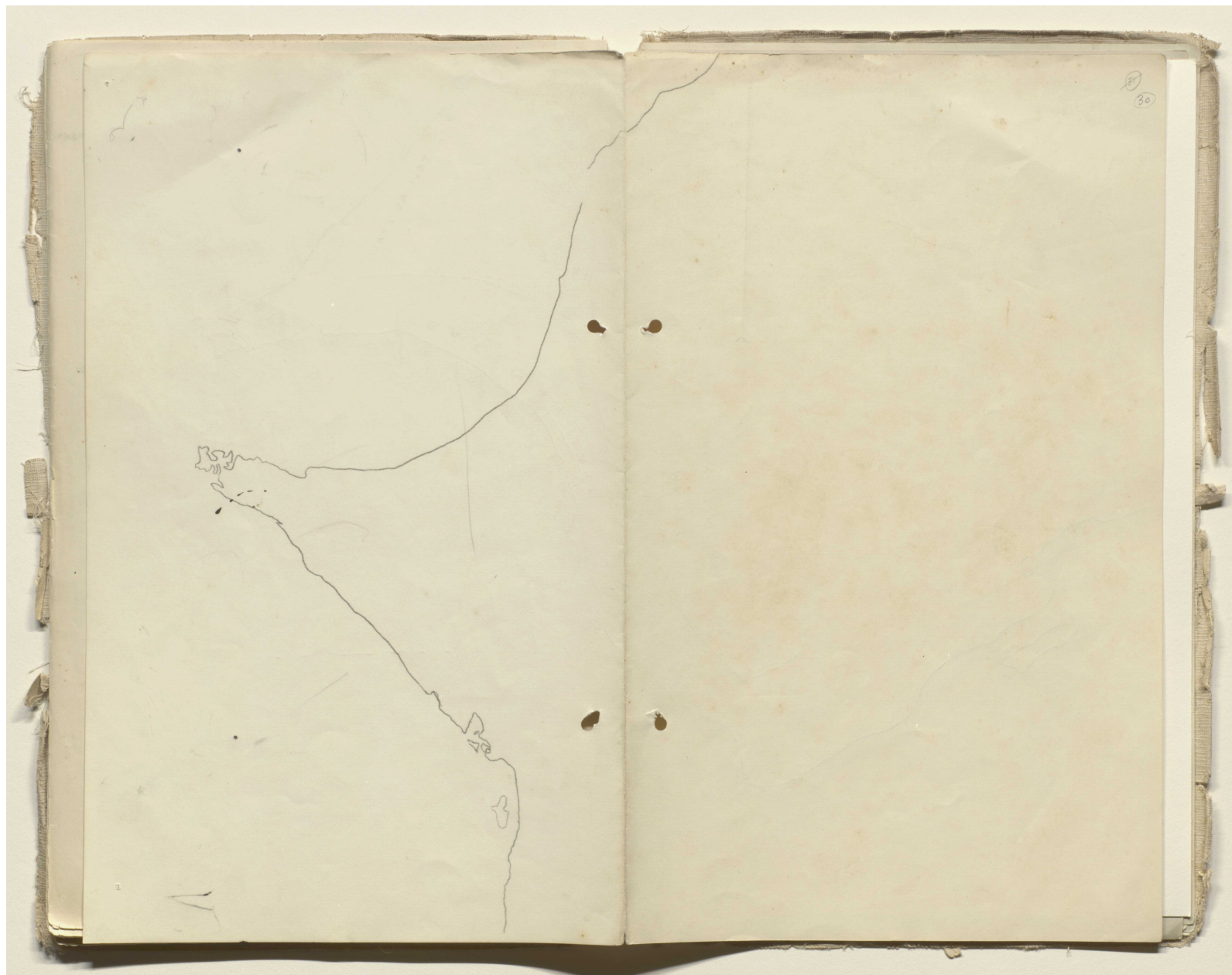
Copy forwarded to the Hon'ble the Political Resident in the
Persian Gulf C/O Assistant Superintendent, I.E. Telegraphs,
Benjam, for information.

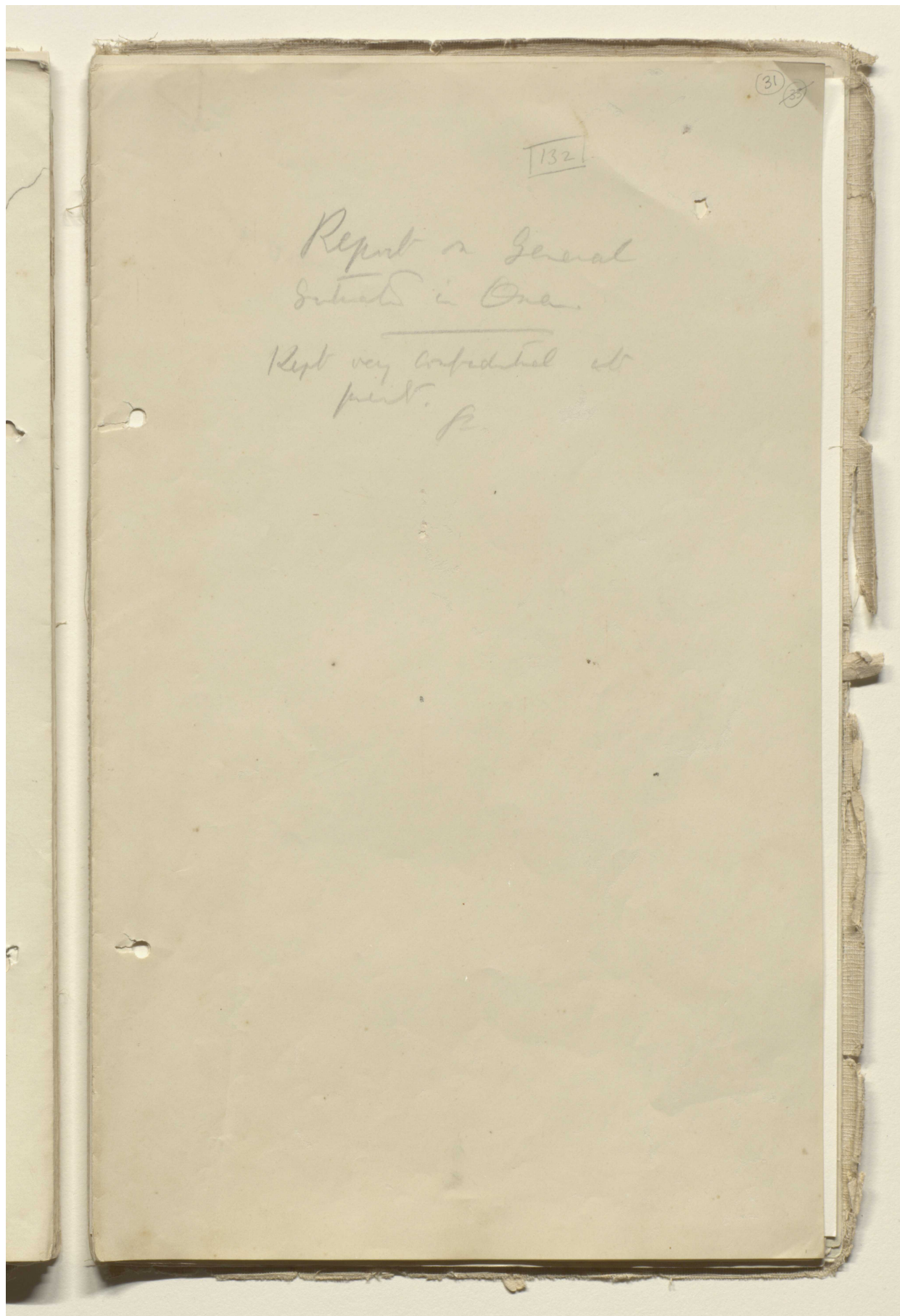


Map Showing the Region under the Imam's Government [30r] (1/2)

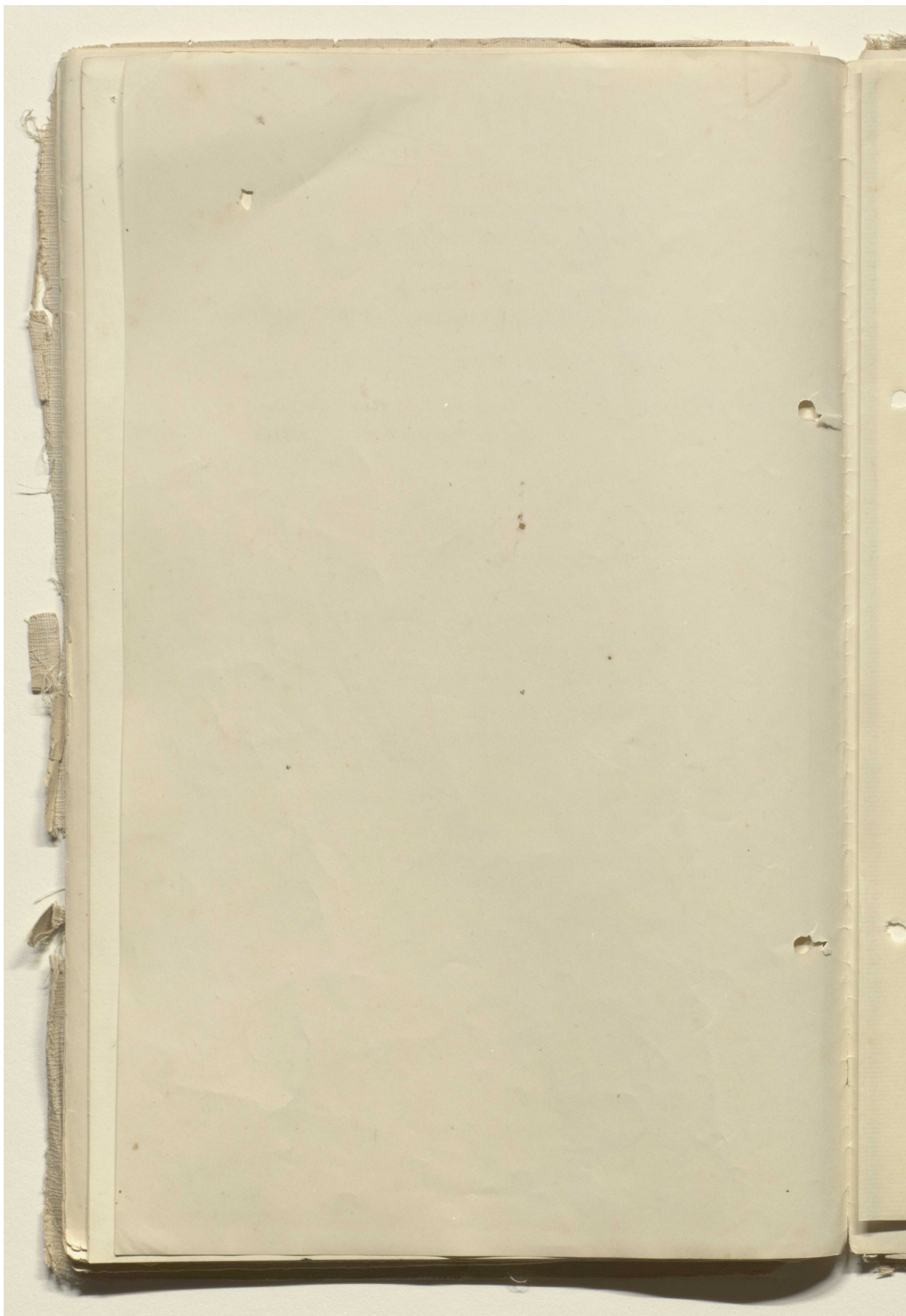


Map Showing the Region under the Imam's Government [30v] (2/2)





**'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE
WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [31v] (62/118)**



No. 132. of 1928.

Very Confidential

Muscat 30th October 1928.

From

Major G.P. Murphy, I.A.,
Political Agent and H.B.M's Consul,
Muscat,

To

The Hon'able the Political Resident
in the Persian Gulf,
Bushire.

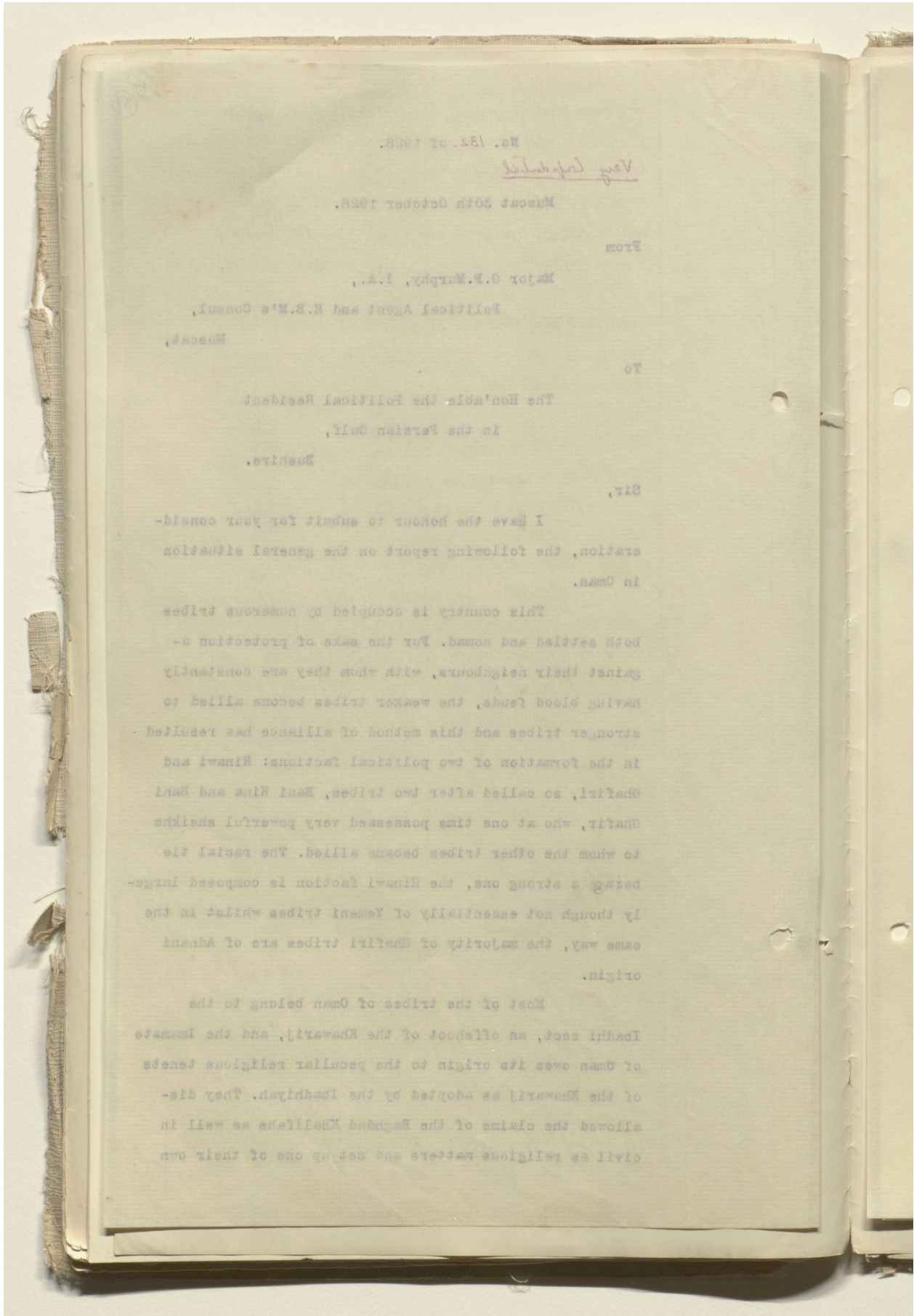
Sir,

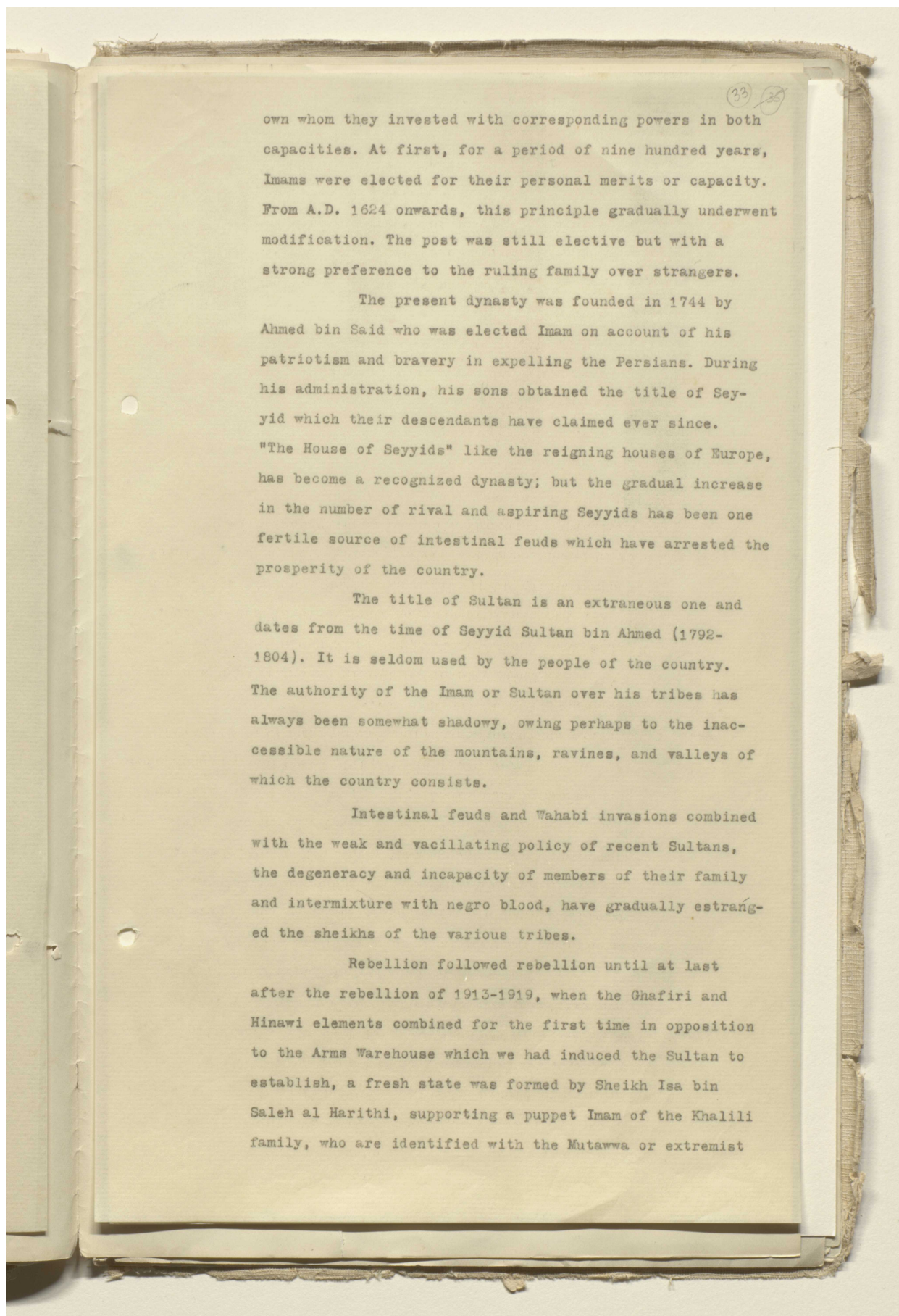
I have the honour to submit for your consideration, the following report on the general situation in Oman.

This country is occupied by numerous tribes both settled and nomad. For the sake of protection against their neighbours, with whom they are constantly having blood feuds, the weaker tribes become allied to stronger tribes and this method of alliance has resulted in the formation of two political factions: Hinawi and Ghafiri, so called after two tribes, Bani Hina and Bani Ghafir, who at one time possessed very powerful sheikhs to whom the other tribes became allied. The racial tie being a strong one, the Hinawi faction is composed largely though not essentially of Yemeni tribes whilst in the same way, the majority of Ghafiri tribes are of Adnani origin.

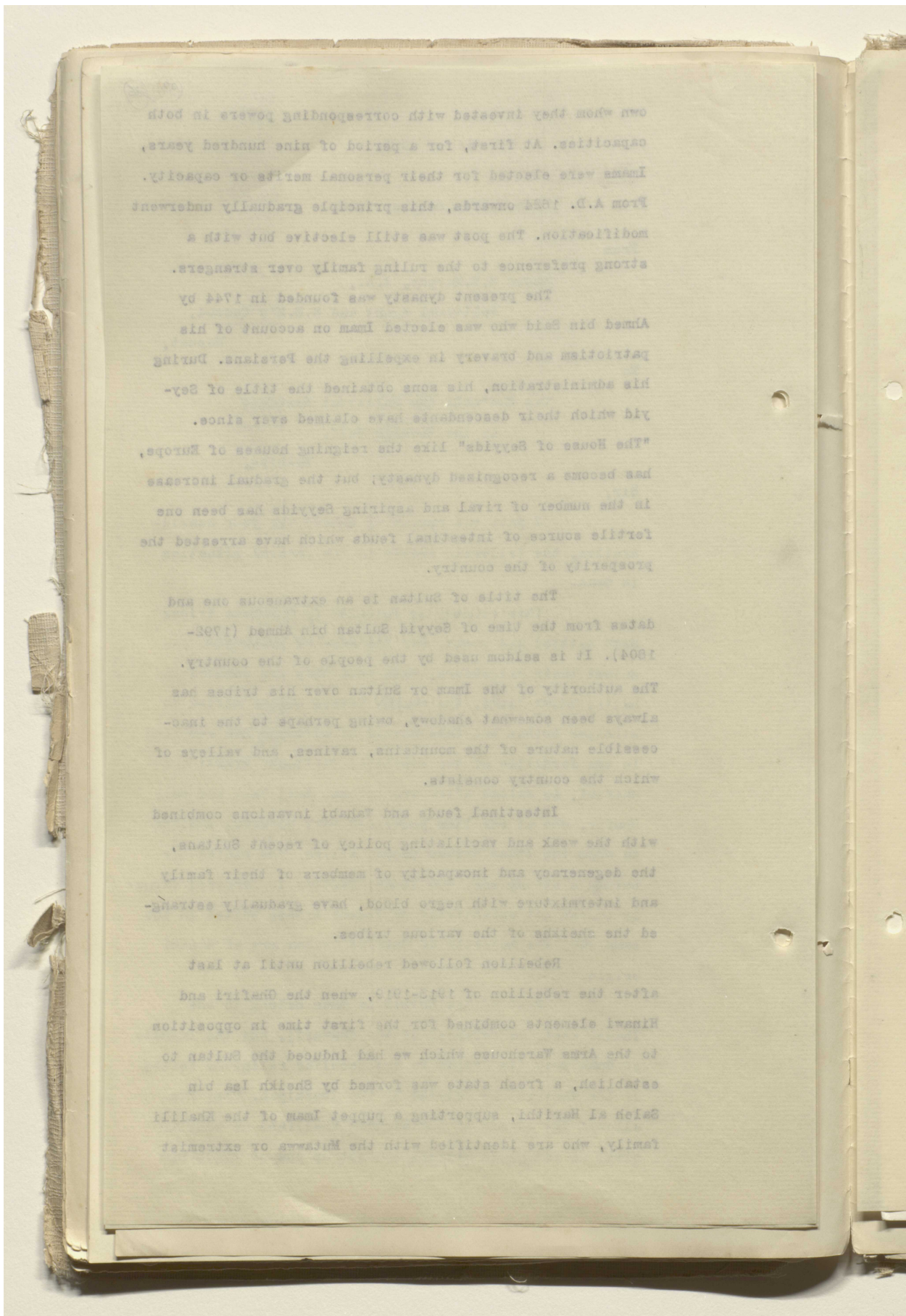
Most of the tribes of Oman belong to the Ibadhi sect, an offshoot of the Khawarij, and the Imamate of Oman owes its origin to the peculiar religious tenets of the Khawarij as adopted by the Ibadhiyah. They disallowed the claims of the Baghdad Khalifans as well in civil as religious matters and set up one of their own

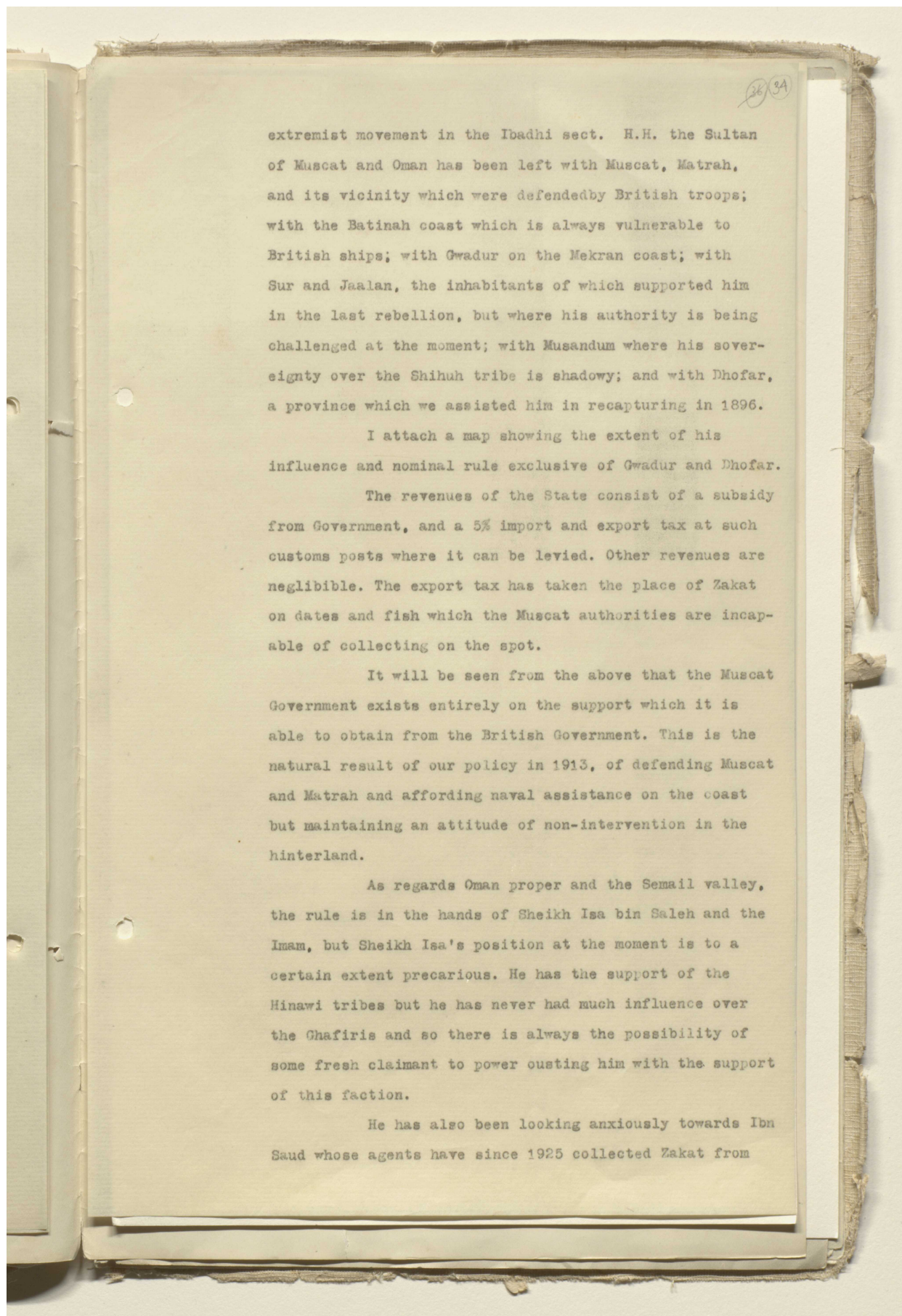
'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [32v] (64/118)



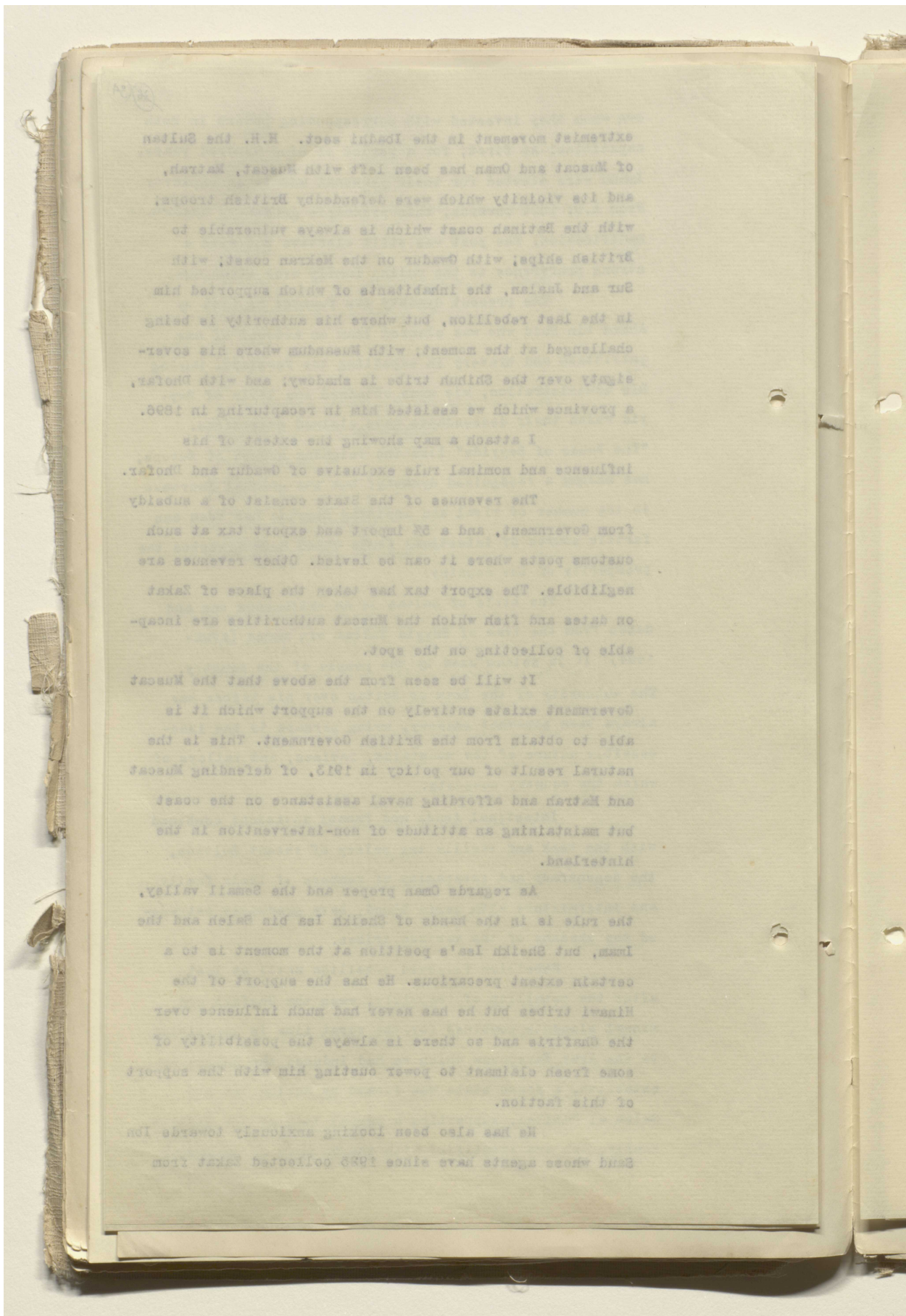


File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT. [33v] (66/118)





File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT. [34v] (68/118)



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from Baraimi. No force has been used by Ibn Saud for collecting this Zakat, but it has probably been paid through fear of Ibn Saud's agent instigating neighbouring tribes to raid them.

Baraimi is the key to Oman: the whole of the Batinah coast can be raided from that quarter with impunity, whilst a little instigation and assistance from there to the Ghafiri tribes would bring about the collapse of Isa's administration. Should the hinterland eventually fall into Ibn Saud's hands, the position of the Sultan would become untenable.

The considerations which influenced our policy in 1913 no longer hold good. At that time operations in the interior would have been difficult owing to the mountainous nature of the country. A large number of troops would have been required to carry them out and the result which could have been obtained would have been meagre; but I venture to submit that the case is different today. A few aeroplanes in support of an effective administration is all that would be required to consolidate the country and bring about peace and prosperity.

At the present moment Sheikh Isa bin Saleh is in correspondence and on friendly terms with the Muscat Council and I think in the precarious position in which he is placed, he would require very little inducement to persuade him to throw in his lot with the Sultan. If this were done and if the administration thus formed were supported by a few aeroplanes, it would become possible to consolidate Oman into an efficient State and the present unsatisfactory condition could be terminated.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

g. g. g.

Major,
Political Agent and H.B.M.'s Consul, Muscat.

File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT. [35v] (70/118)

from Bahrain. No force has been used by Ibn Saud for collecting this tax, but it has probably been paid through fear of Ibn Saud's agents invading neighbouring tribes so said them.

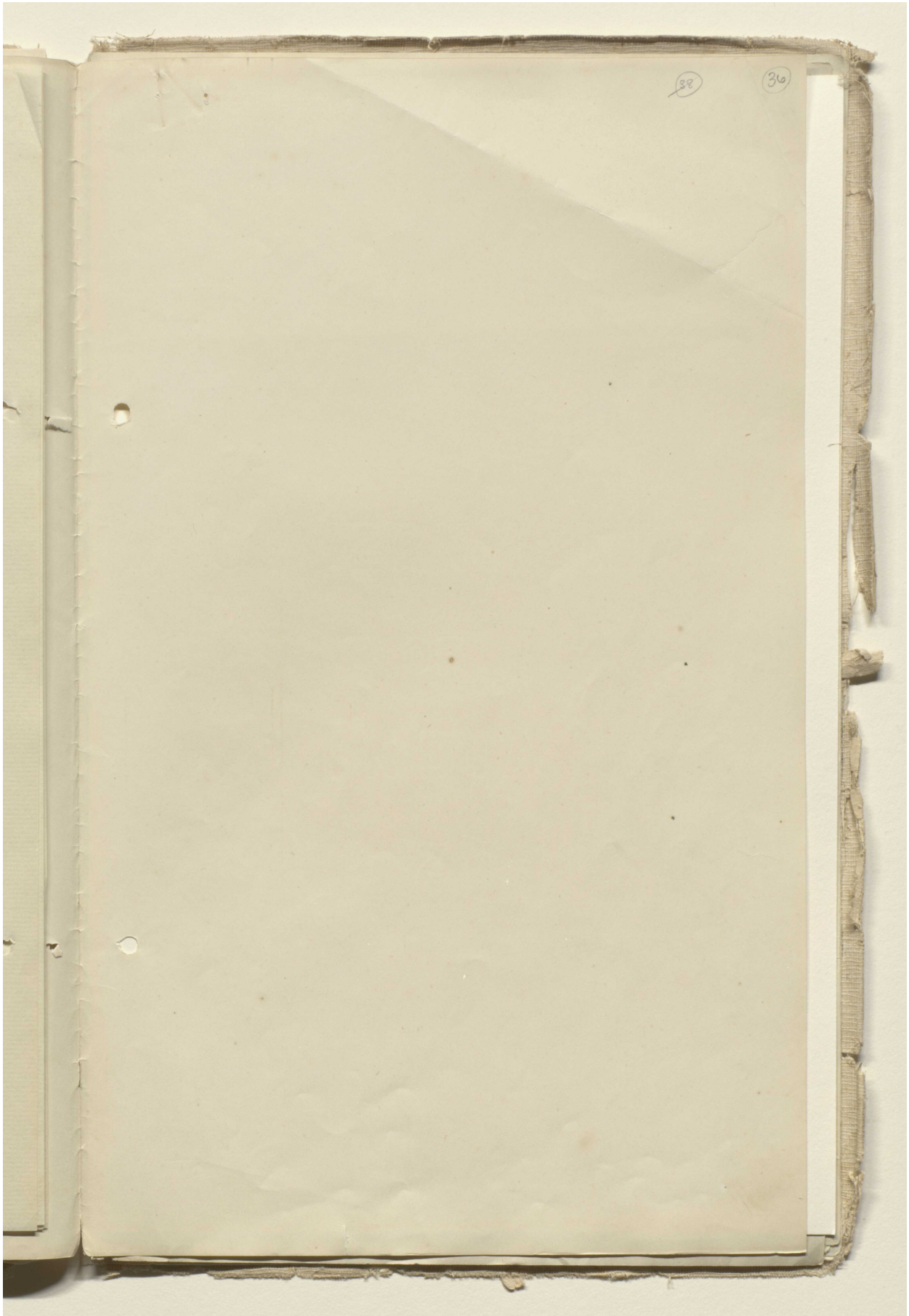
Bahrain is the key to Oman; the whole of the Arabian coast can be raised from that quarter with ease, whilst a little invasion and assistance from there to the Gharbi tribes would bring about the collapse of Ibn Saud's administration. Should the present eventually fall into Ibn Saud's hands, the position of the Sultan would become untenable.

The considerations which influenced our policy in 1913 no longer hold good. At that time operations in the interior would have been difficult owing to the mountainous nature of the country. A large number of troops would have been required to carry them out and the results which could have been obtained would have been meagre. But I venture to submit that the case is different today. A few aeroplanes in support of an effective administration is all that would be required to consolidate the country and bring about peace and prosperity.

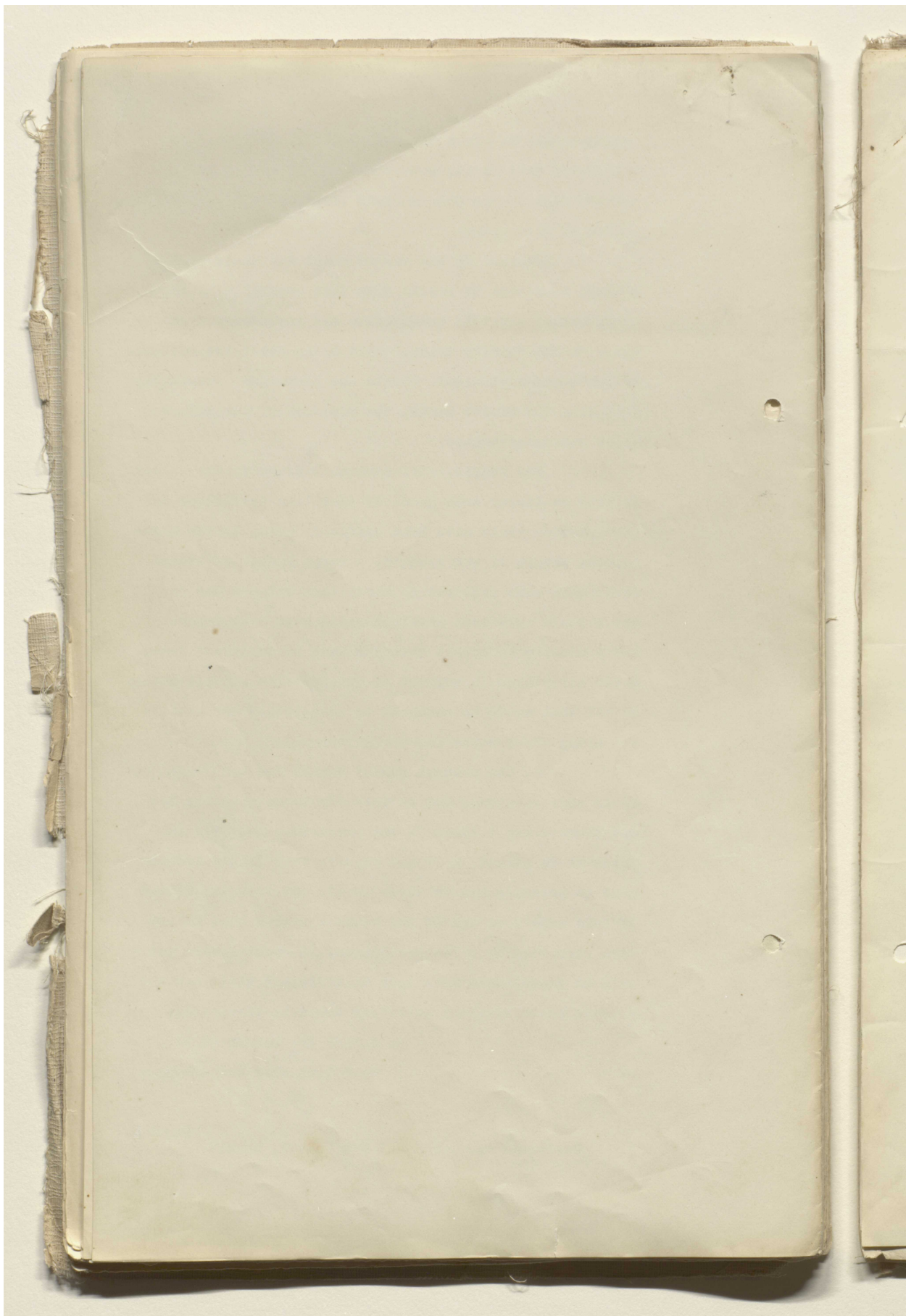
At the present moment British law in Bahrain is in correspondence and on friendly terms with the Muscat Council and I think in the previous position in which he is placed, he would require very little inducement to persuade him to throw in his lot with the Sultan. If this were done and if the administration thus formed were supported by a few aeroplanes, it would become possible to consolidate Oman into an efficient State and the present unsatisfactory condition could be terminated.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
[Signature]
Major,
Political Agent and M.D.M.'s Council, Muscat.

**'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE
WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [36r] (71/118)**



**'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE
WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [36v] (72/118)**



37
37
Very Confidential.

British Residency & Consulate-General.

Bushire, the 14th Novr. 1928.

Demi-official No 407-S.

.....

My dear Murphy,

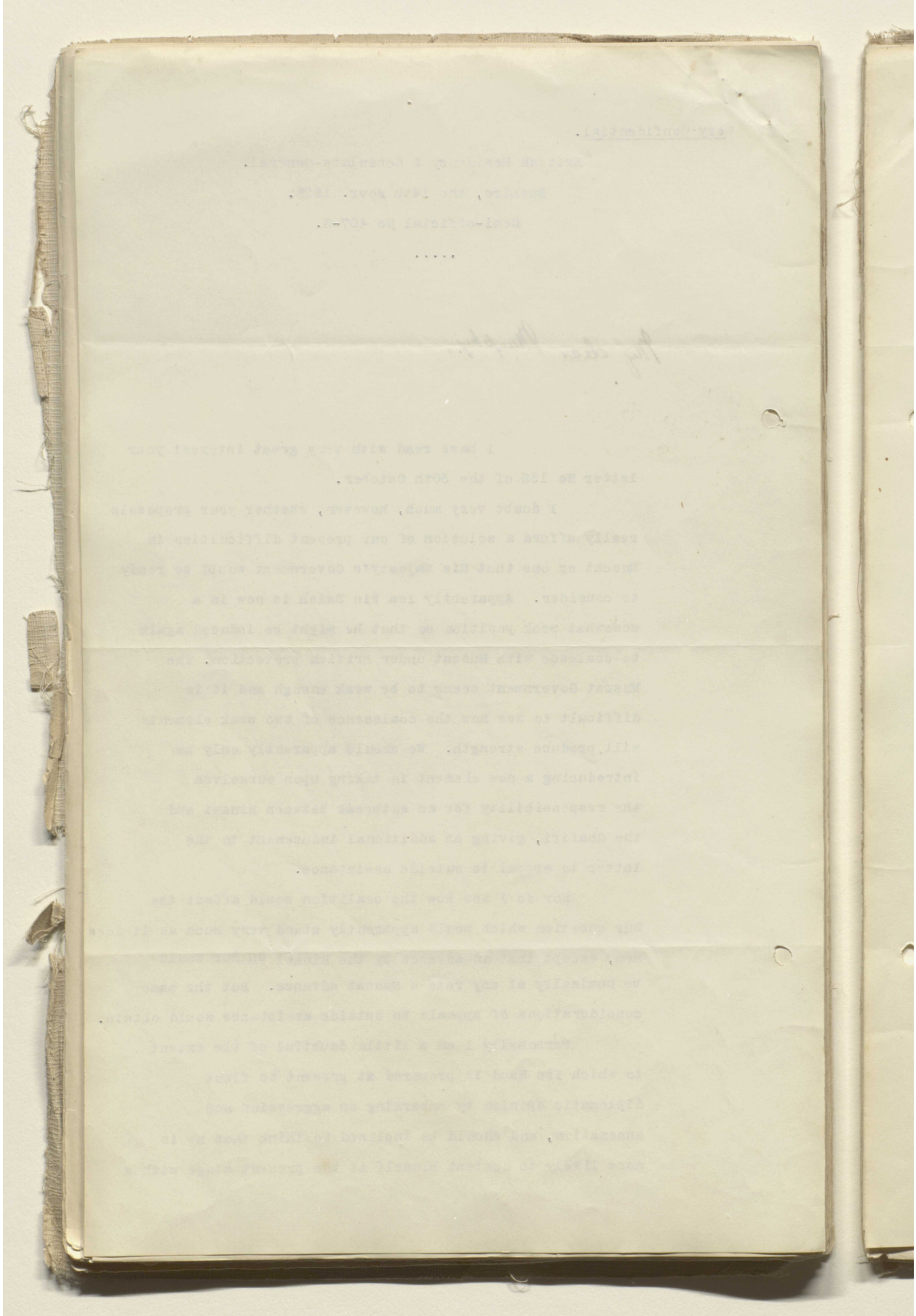
I have read with very great interest your letter No 132 of the 30th October.

I doubt very much, however, whether your proposals really afford a solution of our present difficulties in Muscat or one that His Majesty's Government would be ready to consider. Apparently Isa bin Saleh is now in a somewhat weak position so that he might be induced again to coalesce with Muscat under British protection. The Muscat Government seems to be weak enough and it is difficult to see how the coalescence of two weak elements will produce strength. We should apparently only be introducing a new element in taking upon ourselves the responsibility for an outbreak between Hinawi and the Ghafiri, giving an additional inducement to the latter to appeal to outside assistance.

Nor do I see how the coalition would affect the Sur question which would apparently stand very much as it does now, except that an advance by the Hinawi @ Sur would be nominally at any rate a Muscat advance. But the same considerations of appeals to outside assistance would obtain.

Personally I am a little doubtful of the extent to which Ibn Saud is prepared at present to flout diplomatic opinion by embarking on aggression and annexation, and should be inclined to think that he is more likely to content himself at the present stage with a

'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [37v] (74/118)



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more general widening of his influence.

Again I cannot quite see what we are to do with a regiment at Sur unless the arrangement is to be more or less permanent. When the regiment leaves it will merely be the difficulty of the ships coming and having to go- as you point out- except that the stay will be longer. I should imagine that the position and weakness of Muscat which is well recognised there and the policy to be observed in the future will form one of the subjects of the Committee now sitting in London, and we may very possibly expect to be asked soon for our views, and obviously something must be done.

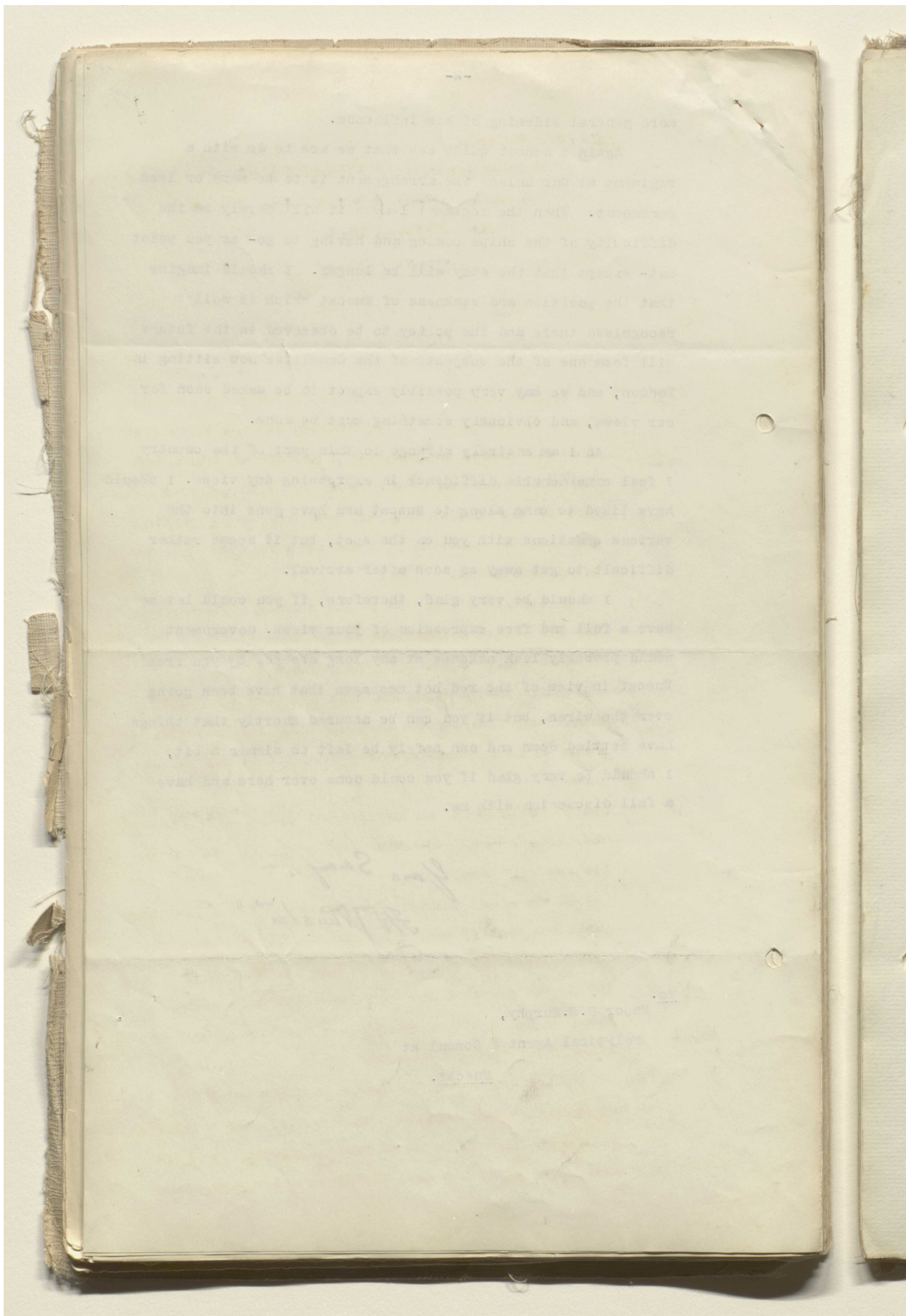
As I am entirely strange to this part of the country I feel considerable diffidence in expressing any views. I should have liked to come along to Muscat and have gone into the various questions with you on the spot, but it seems rather difficult to get away so soon after arrival.

I should be very glad, therefore, if you could let me have a full and free expression of your views. Government would probably look askance at any long absence by you from Muscat in view of the red hot messages that have been going over the wires, but if you can be assured shortly that things have settled down and can safely be left to simmer a bit, I should be very glad if you could come over here and have a full discussion with me.

Yours Sincerely
J. W. [Signature]

To.
Major G.P. Murphy,
Political Agent & Consul at
Muscat.

'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [38v] (76/118)



Very Confidential.

British Consulate and Political Agency.

Muscat, the 24th November 1926.

Demi Official No. 155

.... .

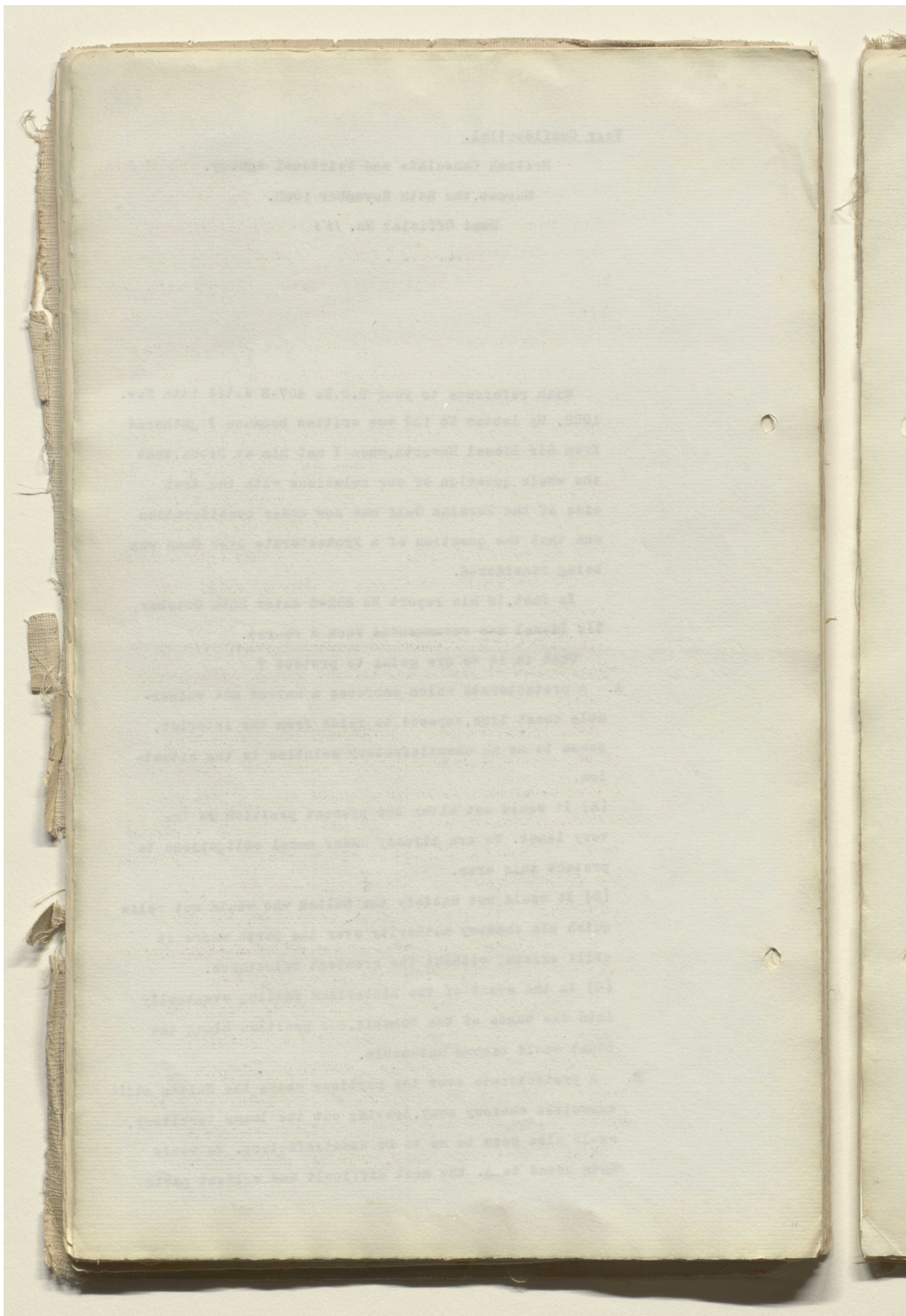
With reference to your D.O.No 407-S dated 14th Nov. 1926, My letter No 132 was written because I gathered from Sir Lionel Haworth, when I met him at Dibba, that the whole question of our relations with the Arab side of the Persian Gulf was now under consideration and that the question of a Protectorate over Oman was being considered.

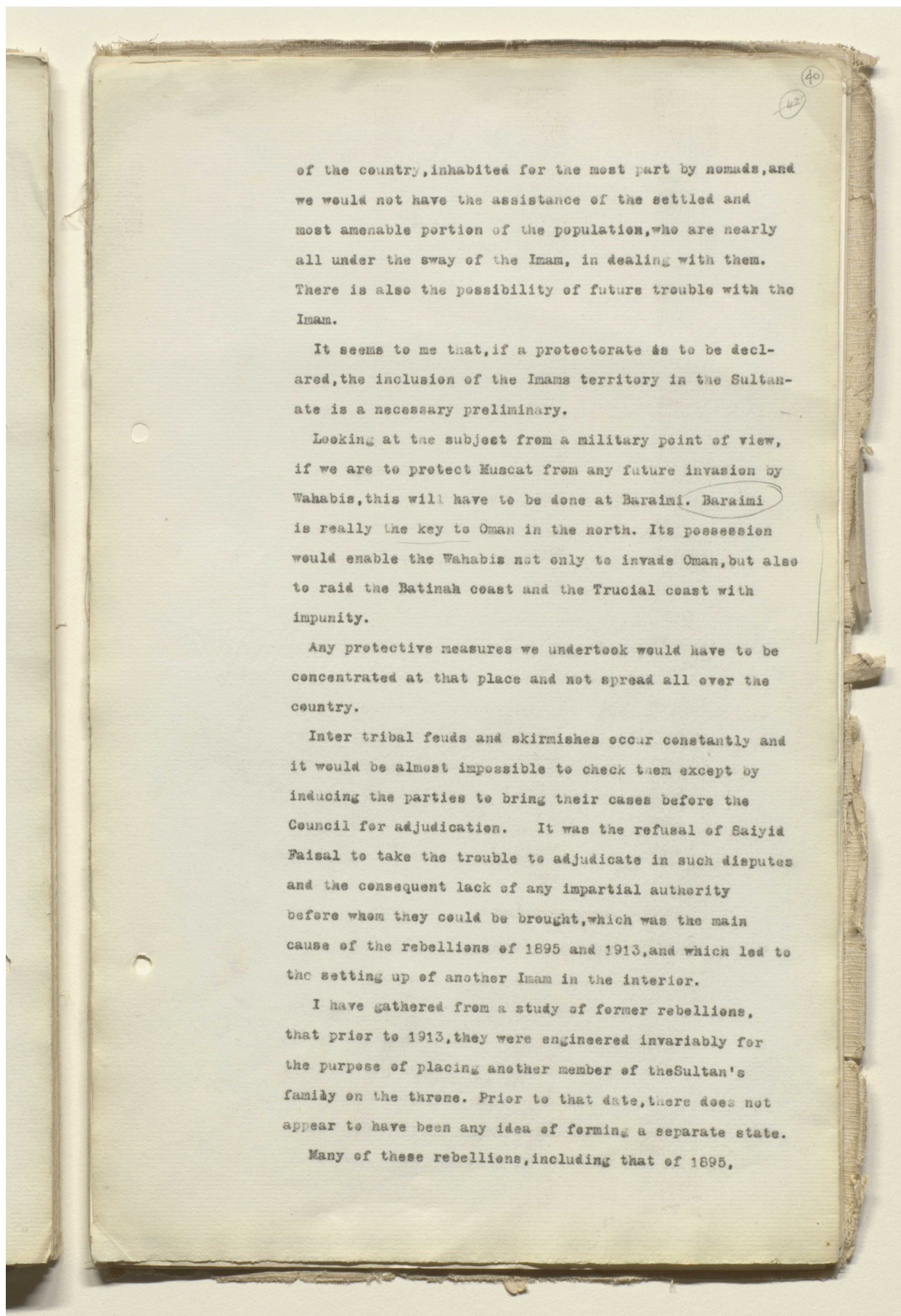
In fact, in his report No 382-S dated 25th October, Sir Lionel has recommended such a course.

What is it we are going to protect ?

- A. A protectorate which embraces a narrow and vulnerable coast line, exposed to raids from the interior, seems to me an unsatisfactory solution to the situation.
- (A) It would not alter our present position in the very least. We are already under moral obligations to protect this area.
- (B) It would not satisfy the Sultan who would not relinquish his shadowy authority over the parts where it still exists, without the greatest reluctance.
- (C) In the event of the hinterland falling eventually into the hands of the Wahabis, our position along the coast would become untenable.
- B. A protectorate over the portions where the Sultan still exercises shadowy sway, leaving out the Imams territory, would also seem to me to be unsatisfactory. We would have added to A. the most difficult and wildest parts

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of the country, inhabited for the most part by nomads, and we would not have the assistance of the settled and most amenable portion of the population, who are nearly all under the sway of the Imam, in dealing with them. There is also the possibility of future trouble with the Imam.

It seems to me that, if a protectorate is to be declared, the inclusion of the Imam's territory in the Sultanate is a necessary preliminary.

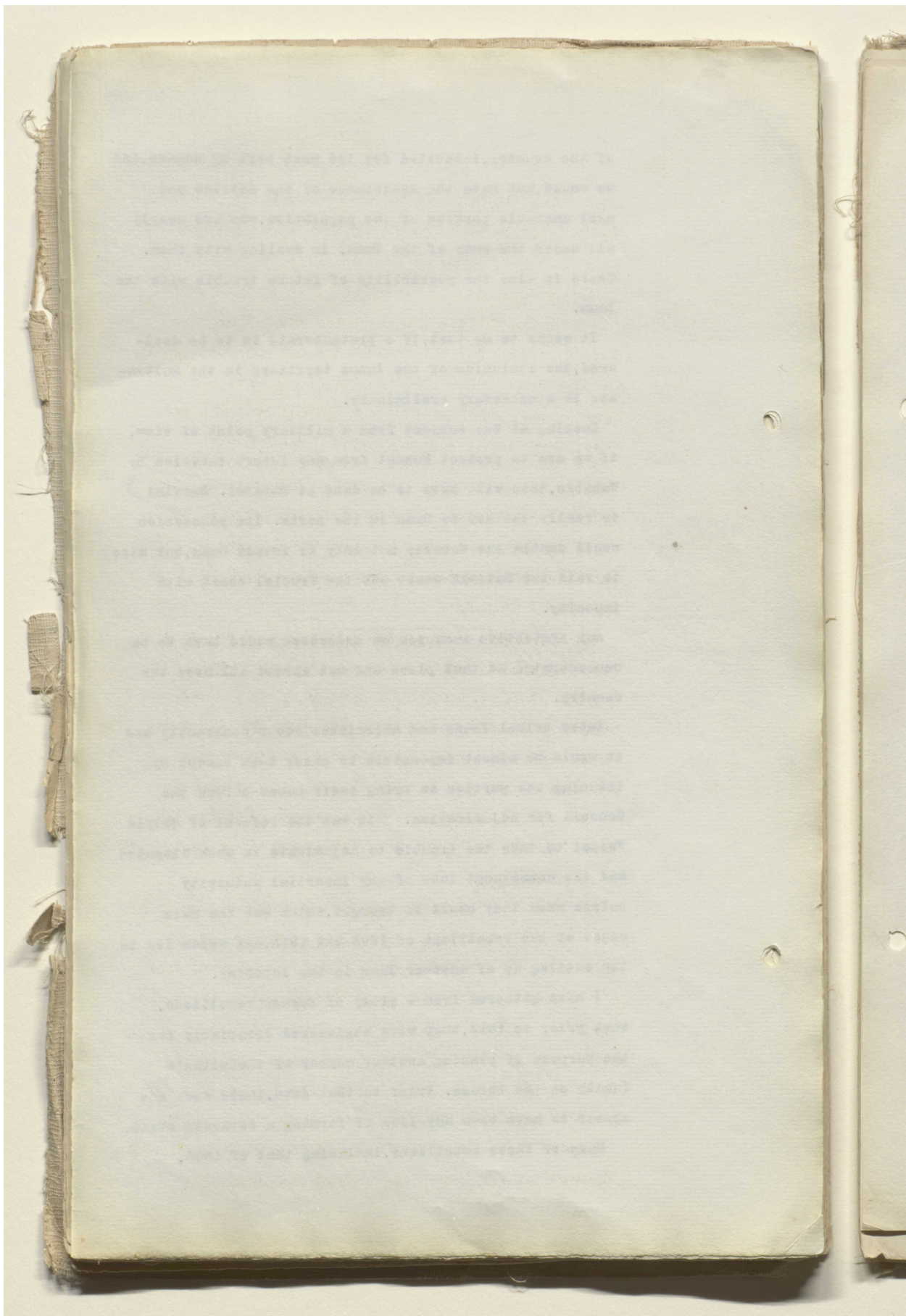
Looking at the subject from a military point of view, if we are to protect Muscat from any future invasion by Wahabis, this will have to be done at Baraimi. Baraimi is really the key to Oman in the north. Its possession would enable the Wahabis not only to invade Oman, but also to raid the Batinah coast and the Trucial coast with impunity.

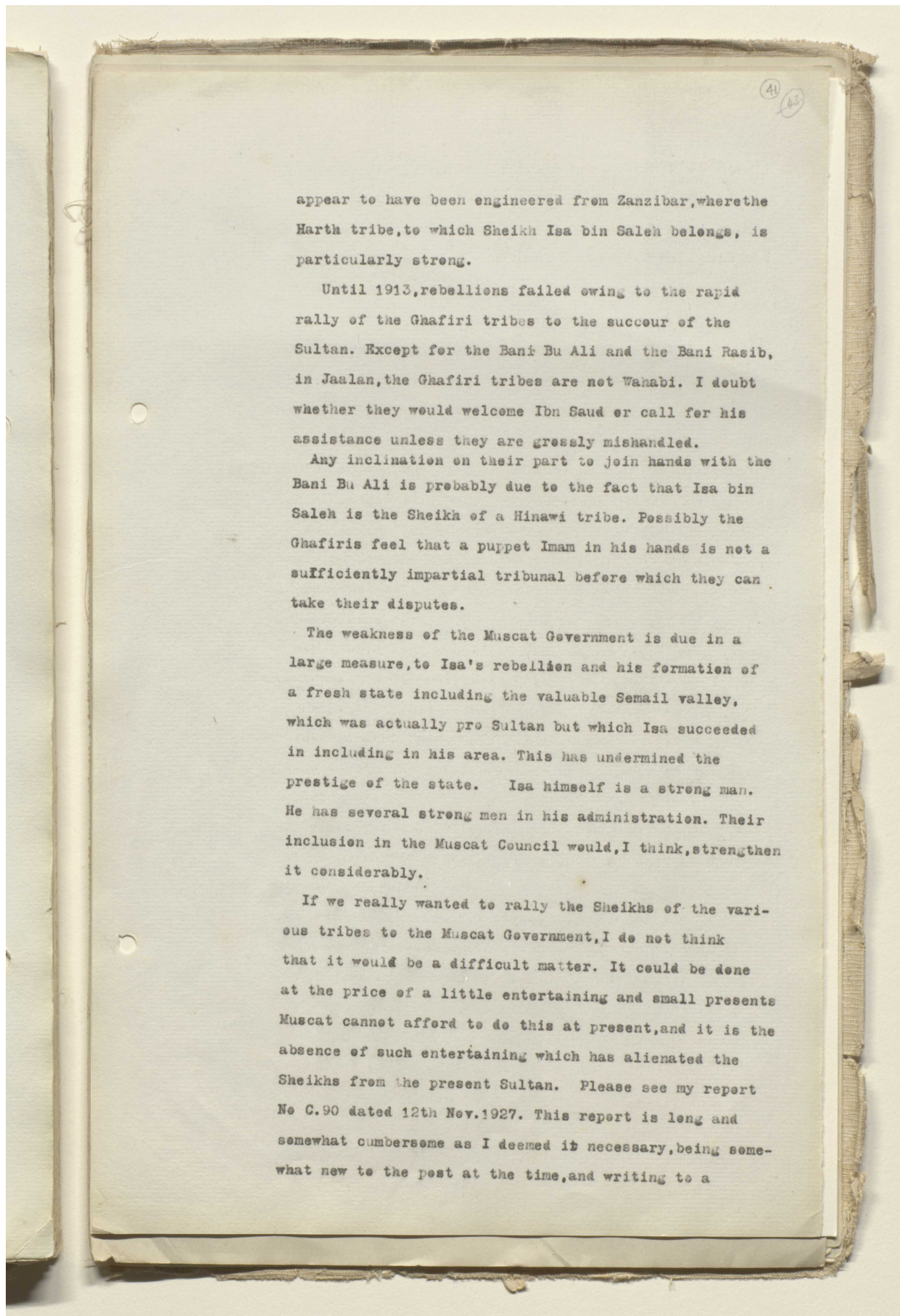
Any protective measures we undertook would have to be concentrated at that place and not spread all over the country.

Inter-tribal feuds and skirmishes occur constantly and it would be almost impossible to check them except by inducing the parties to bring their cases before the Council for adjudication. It was the refusal of Saiyid Faisal to take the trouble to adjudicate in such disputes and the consequent lack of any impartial authority before whom they could be brought, which was the main cause of the rebellions of 1895 and 1913, and which led to the setting up of another Imam in the interior.

I have gathered from a study of former rebellions, that prior to 1913, they were engineered invariably for the purpose of placing another member of the Sultan's family on the throne. Prior to that date, there does not appear to have been any idea of forming a separate state.

Many of these rebellions, including that of 1895,





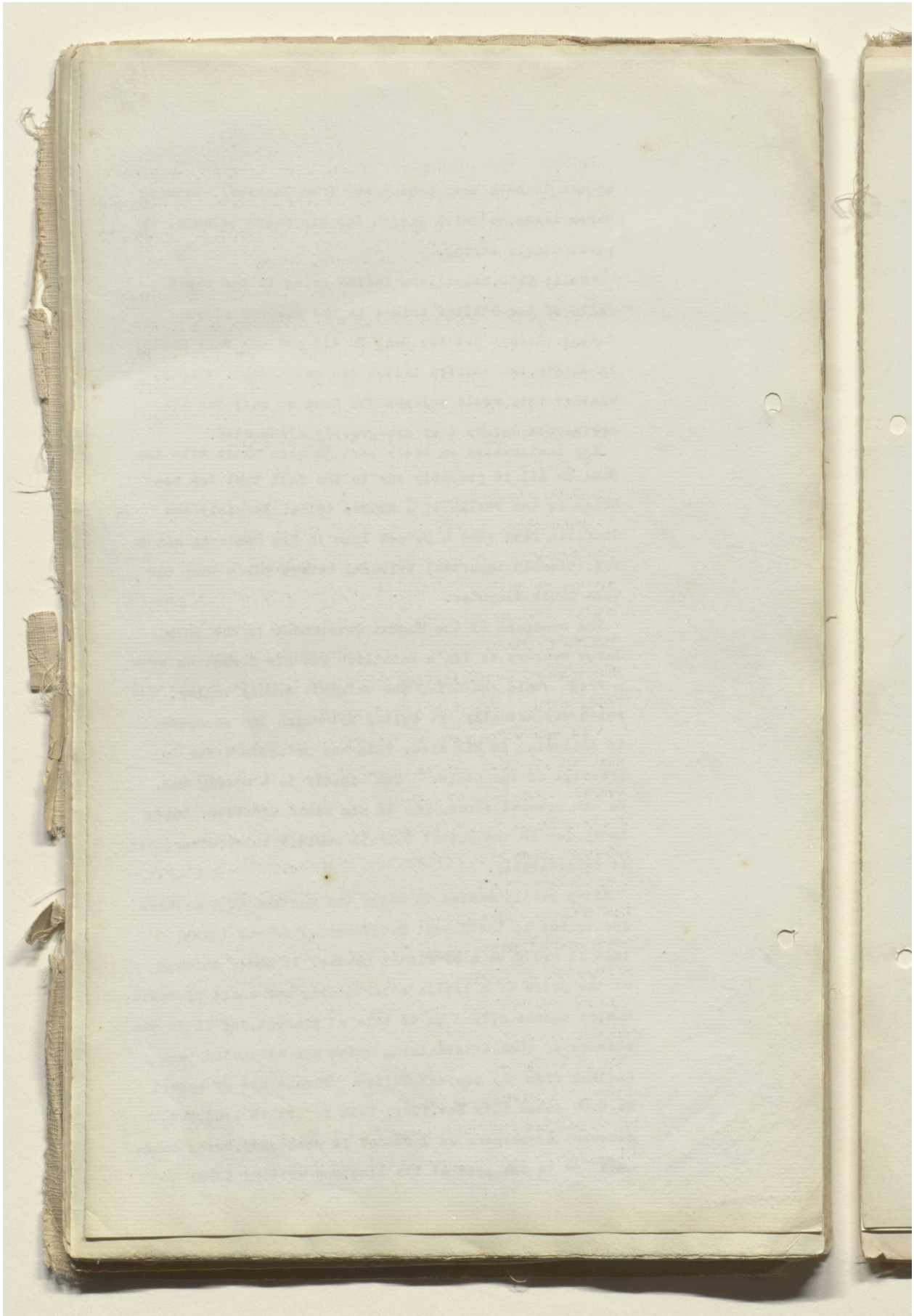
appear to have been engineered from Zanzibar, where the Harth tribe, to which Sheikh Isa bin Saleh belongs, is particularly strong.

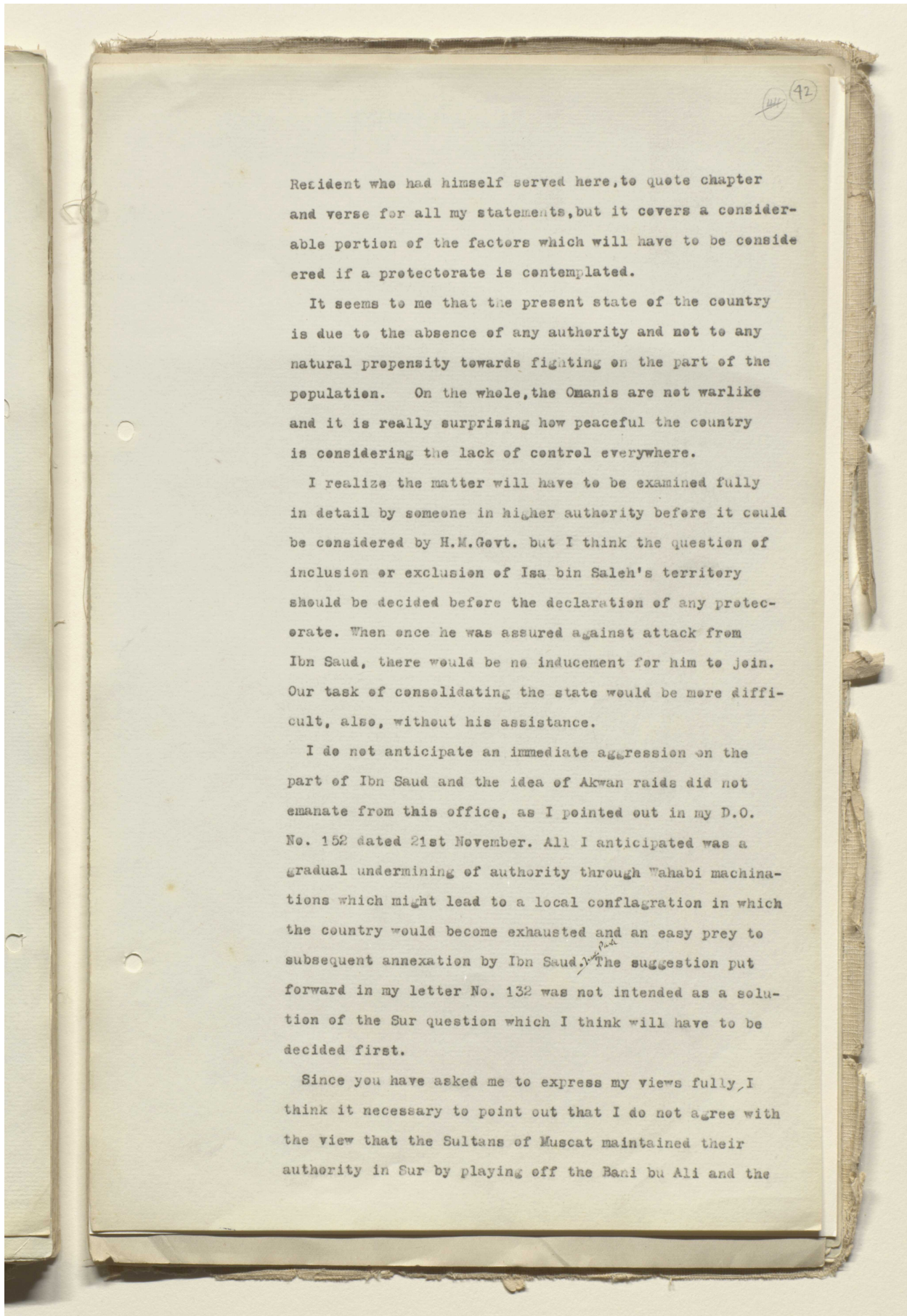
Until 1913, rebellions failed owing to the rapid rally of the Ghafiri tribes to the succour of the Sultan. Except for the Bani Bu Ali and the Bani Rasib, in Jaalan, the Ghafiri tribes are not Wahabi. I doubt whether they would welcome Ibn Saud or call for his assistance unless they are grossly mishandled.

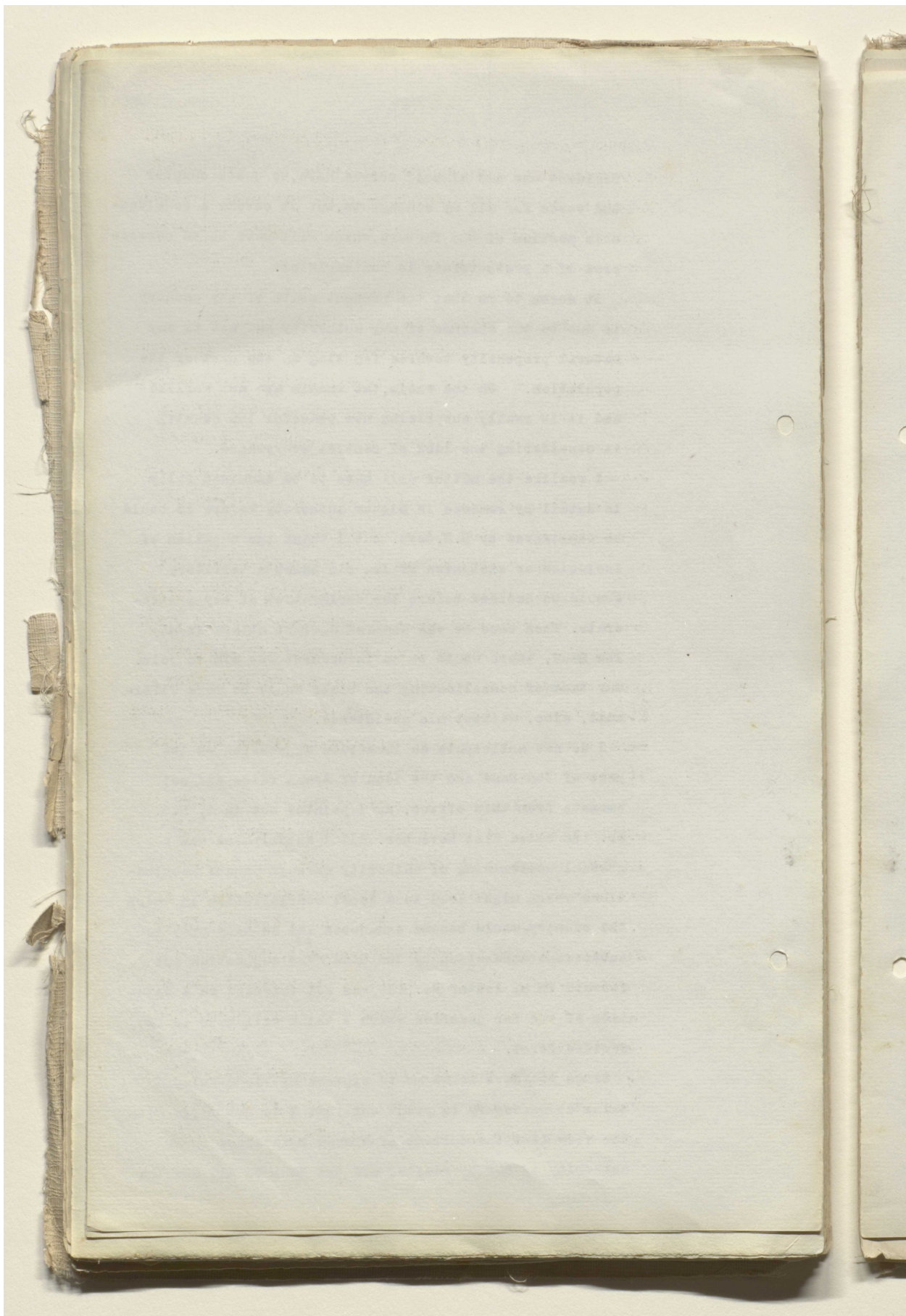
Any inclination on their part to join hands with the Bani Bu Ali is probably due to the fact that Isa bin Saleh is the Sheikh of a Hinawi tribe. Possibly the Ghafiris feel that a puppet Imam in his hands is not a sufficiently impartial tribunal before which they can take their disputes.

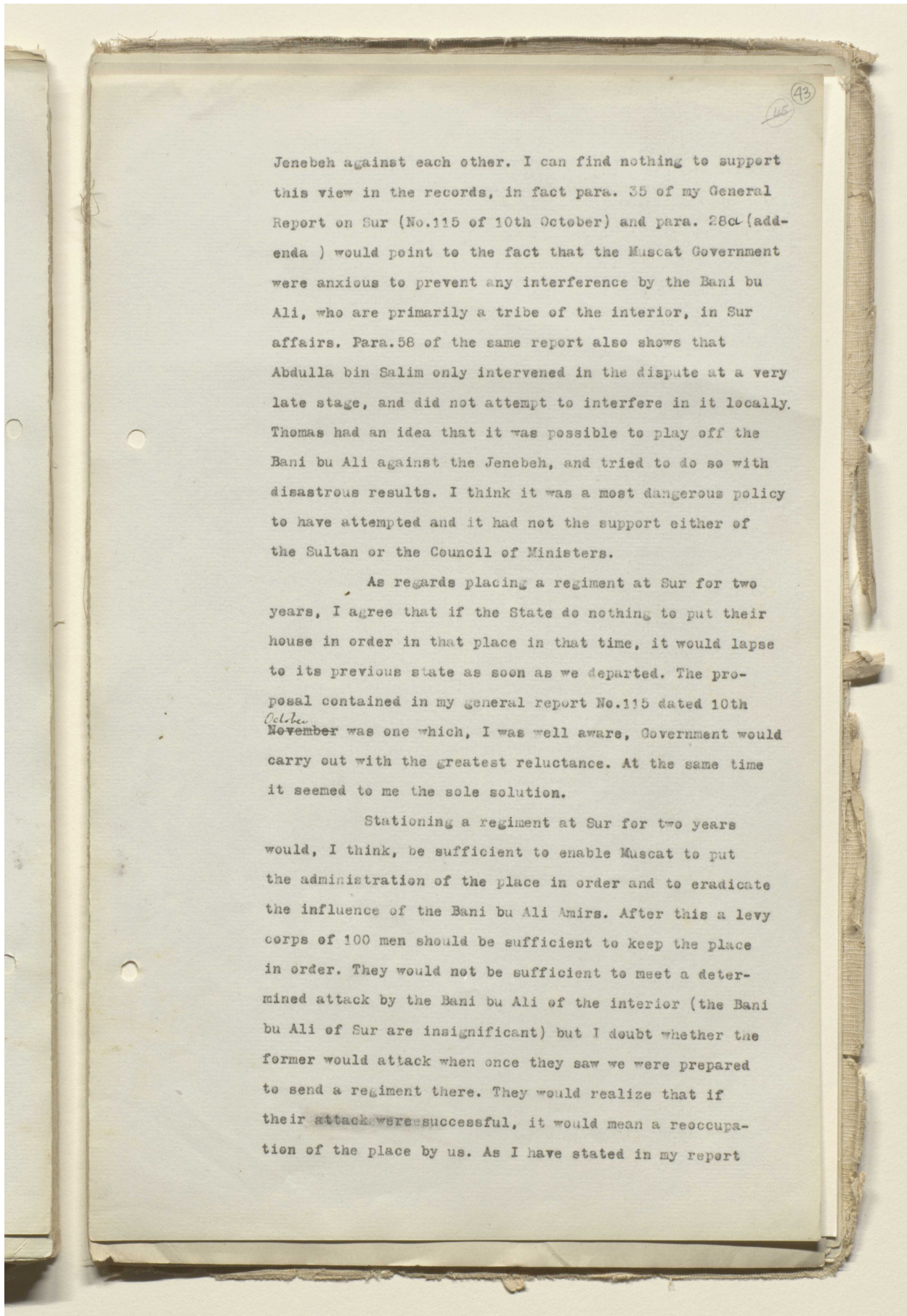
The weakness of the Muscat Government is due in a large measure, to Isa's rebellion and his formation of a fresh state including the valuable Semail valley, which was actually pro Sultan but which Isa succeeded in including in his area. This has undermined the prestige of the state. Isa himself is a strong man. He has several strong men in his administration. Their inclusion in the Muscat Council would, I think, strengthen it considerably.

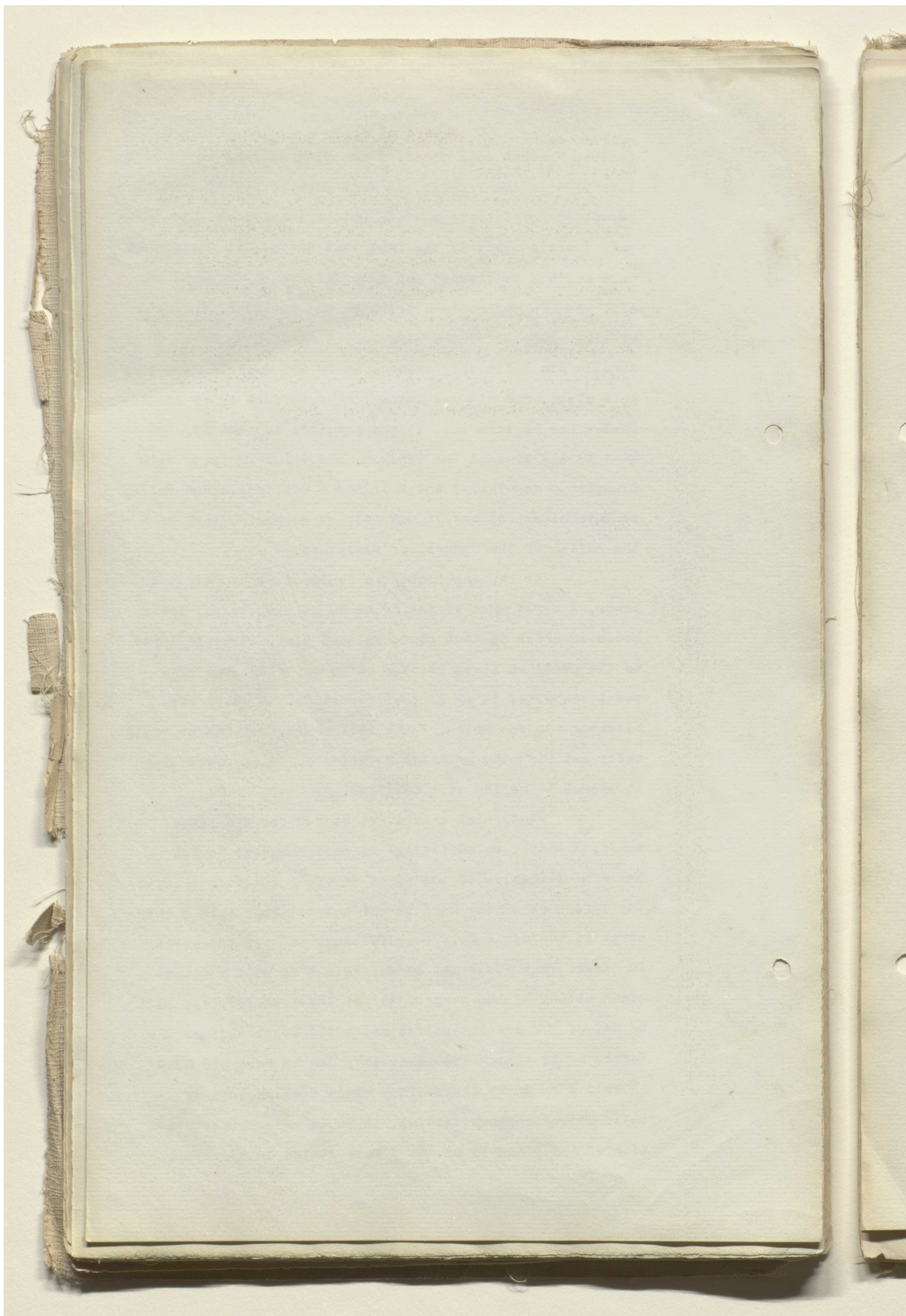
If we really wanted to rally the Sheikhs of the various tribes to the Muscat Government, I do not think that it would be a difficult matter. It could be done at the price of a little entertaining and small presents Muscat cannot afford to do this at present, and it is the absence of such entertaining which has alienated the Sheikhs from the present Sultan. Please see my report No C.90 dated 12th Nov. 1927. This report is long and somewhat cumbersome as I deemed it necessary, being somewhat new to the post at the time, and writing to a

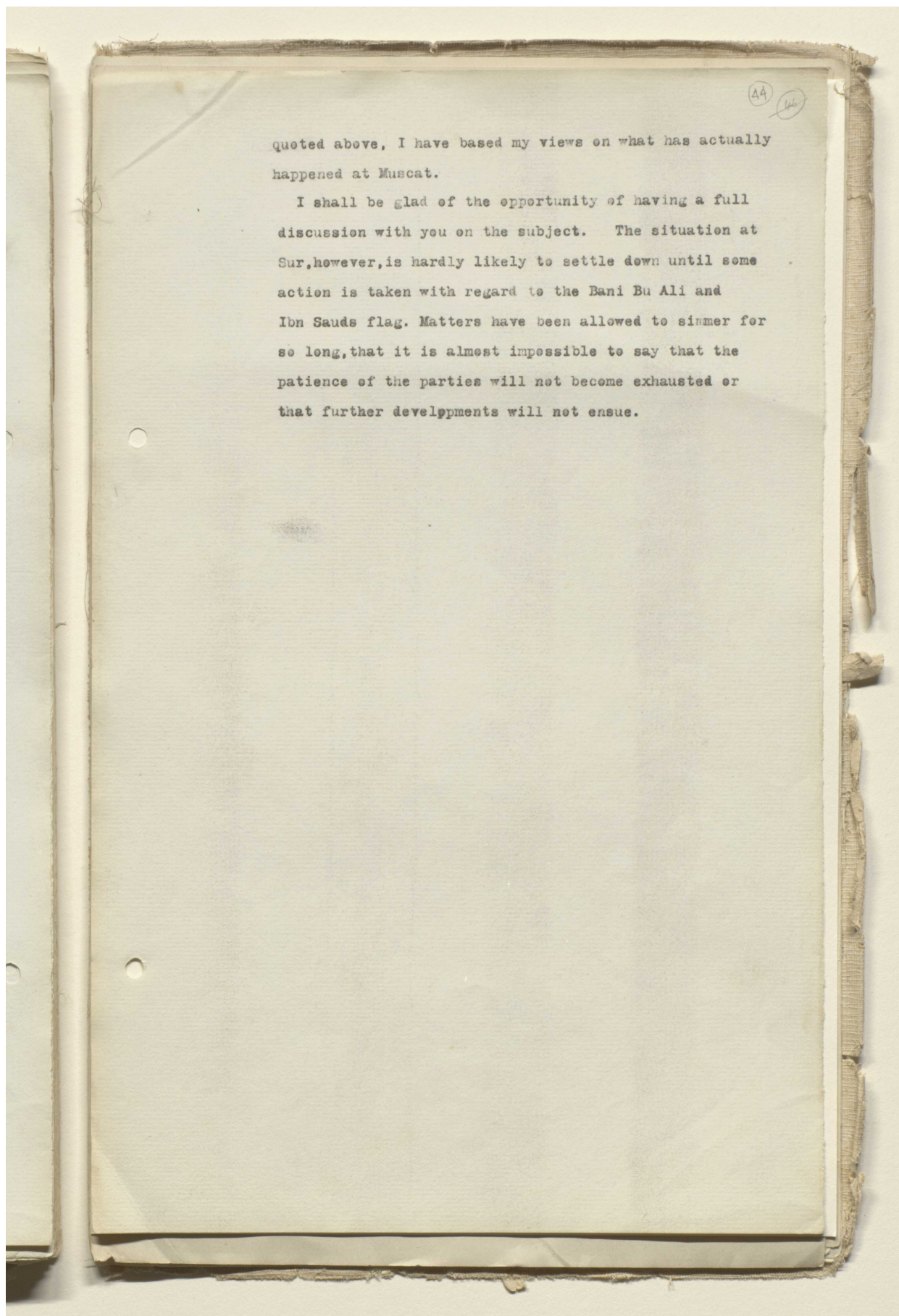






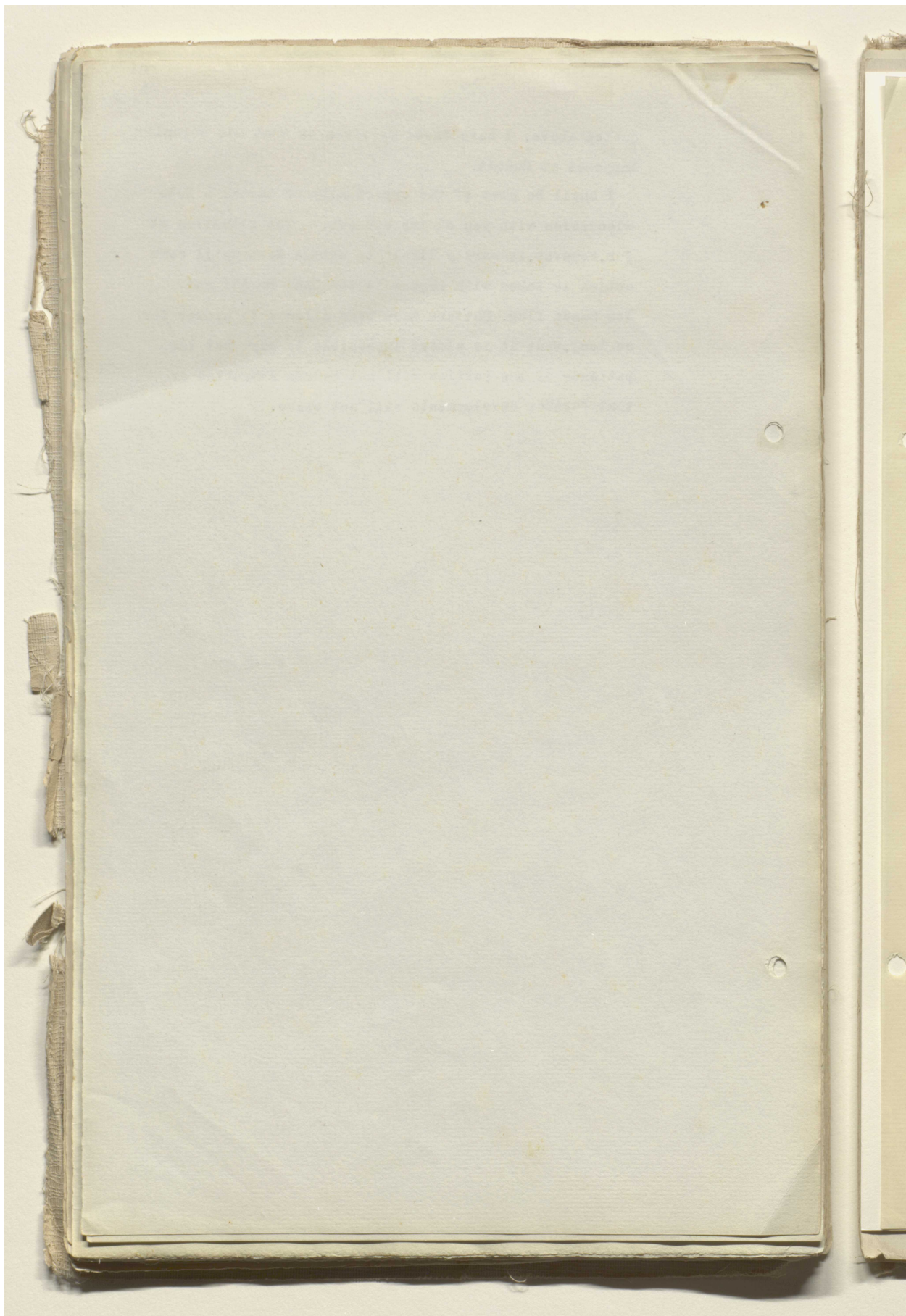






quoted above, I have based my views on what has actually happened at Muscat.

I shall be glad of the opportunity of having a full discussion with you on the subject. The situation at Sur, however, is hardly likely to settle down until some action is taken with regard to the Bani Bu Ali and Ibn Sauds flag. Matters have been allowed to simmer for so long, that it is almost impossible to say that the patience of the parties will not become exhausted or that further developments will not ensue.



Apparently the text embodied in my: Murphy's letter (45)
No: 90.c dated Nov: 1927. XXVIII. 10. (45)

NOTE ON OUR PRESENT POLICY IN MUSCAT.

Our present policy may be traced to 1886, when an explicit announcement was made to the Chiefs of Oman, that we would not permit attacks on the towns of Muscat and Matrah and that we would if necessary expel the rebels if they occupied them and would replace Saiyid Turki.

This was a personal guarantee to Saiyid Turki and not applicable to his successors.

No 90.c dated
9.5.17.

Major (Now Sir Lionel) Haworth remarked on this that such a restriction, though it sounds well on paper, is in practice or indeed on analysis of no value. Taking into consideration the circumstances in Oman, a guarantee of this nature, once given, must be continued to a successor if he is to maintain his place for the withdrawal of the support is practically an encouragement to attack.

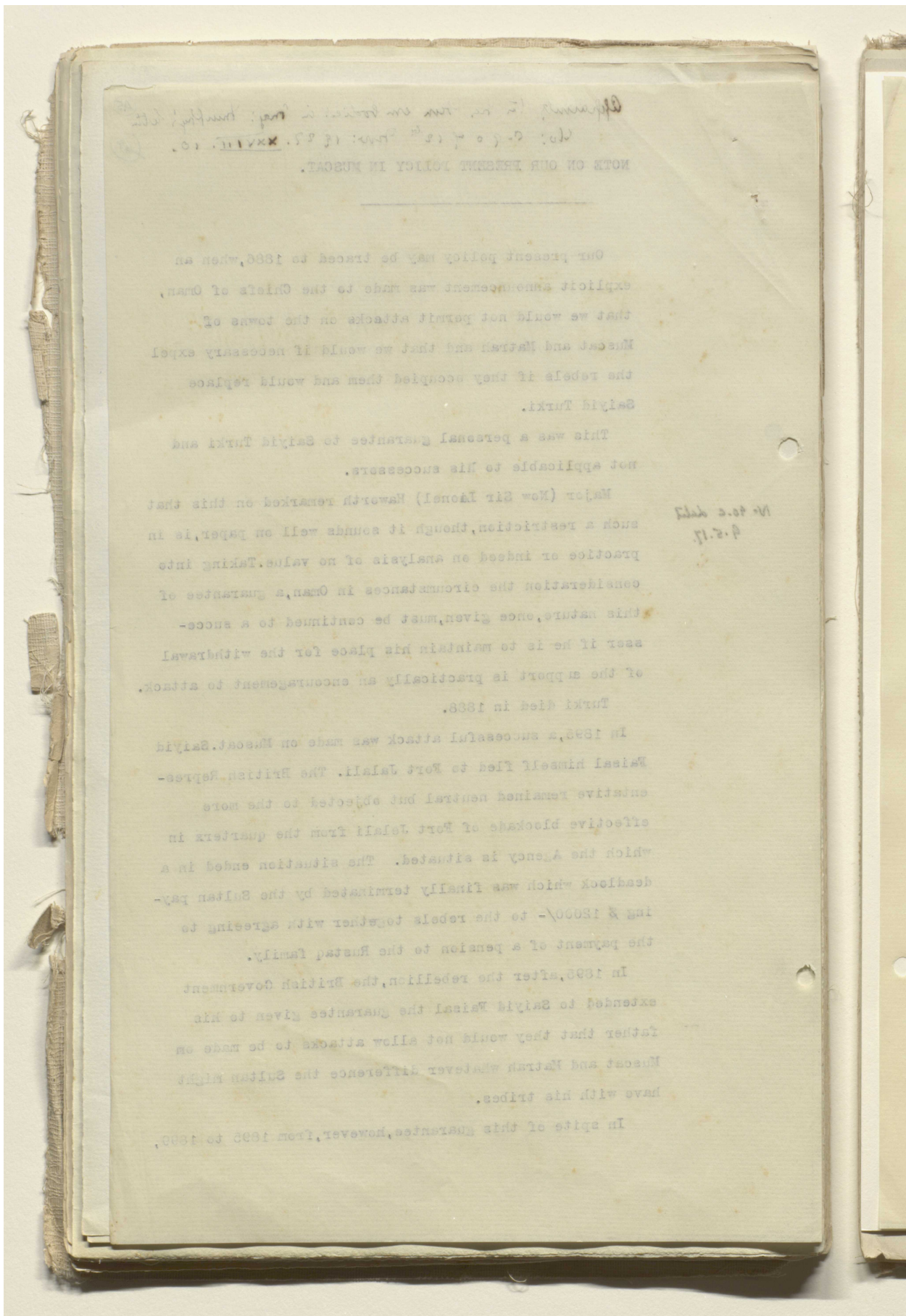
Turki died in 1888.

In 1895, a successful attack was made on Muscat. Saiyid Faisal himself fled to Fort Jalali. The British Representative remained neutral but objected to the more effective blockade of Fort Jelali from the quarters in which the Agency is situated. The situation ended in a deadlock which was finally terminated by the Sultan paying £ 12000/- to the rebels together with agreeing to the payment of a pension to the Rustaq family.

In 1895, after the rebellion, the British Government extended to Saiyid Faisal the guarantee given to his father that they would not allow attacks to be made on Muscat and Matrah whatever difference the Sultan might have with his tribes.

In spite of this guarantee, however, from 1895 to 1899,

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our relations with Saiyid Faisal were very strained owing to our want of support of him during the rebellion. In 1896, the offer of naval support for the recovery of Dhofar was accepted by him with a bad grace. This period marked the rise of French influence at Muscat. A considerable amount of the trouble at Sur may be traced to French encouragement to its inhabitants to make light of the Sultans authority.

The 1913 rebellion differed from its predecessors in:

- (1) The fact that the rebellion was not made with a view to establish another member of the Sultans family on the throne but in support of a fresh Imam.
- (2) The ostensible cause was our having induced the Sultan to establish an arms warehouse in furtherance of our policy with regard to the arms traffic.
- (3) The Hinawis and Ghafiris of Oman Proper were united.

In accordance with our guarantee, Indian troops were landed for the defence of Muscat and Matrah, and Isa bin Saleh's forces were driven off when they attacked in Jan'y 1915.

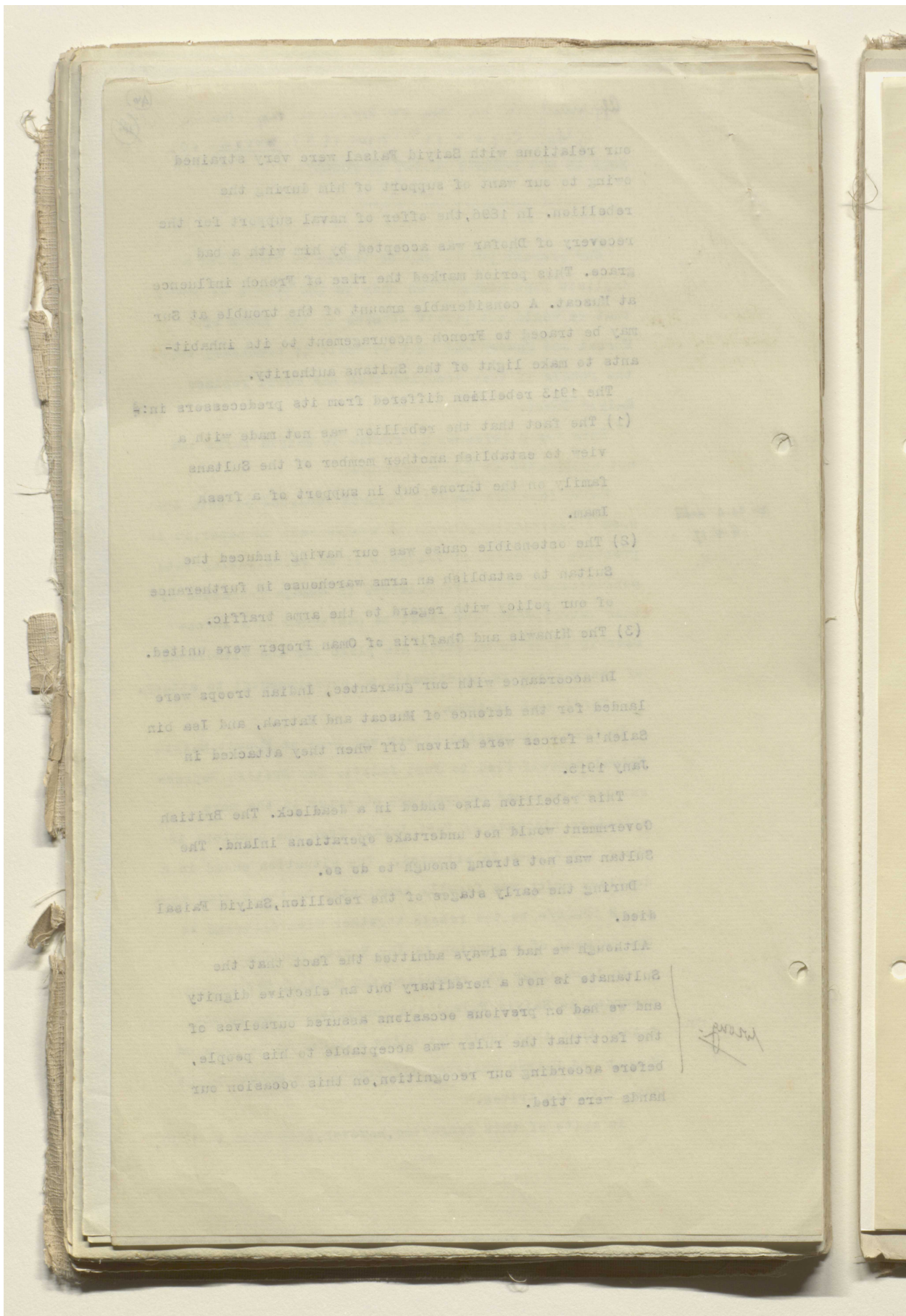
This rebellion also ended in a deadlock. The British Government would not undertake operations inland. The Sultan was not strong enough to do so.

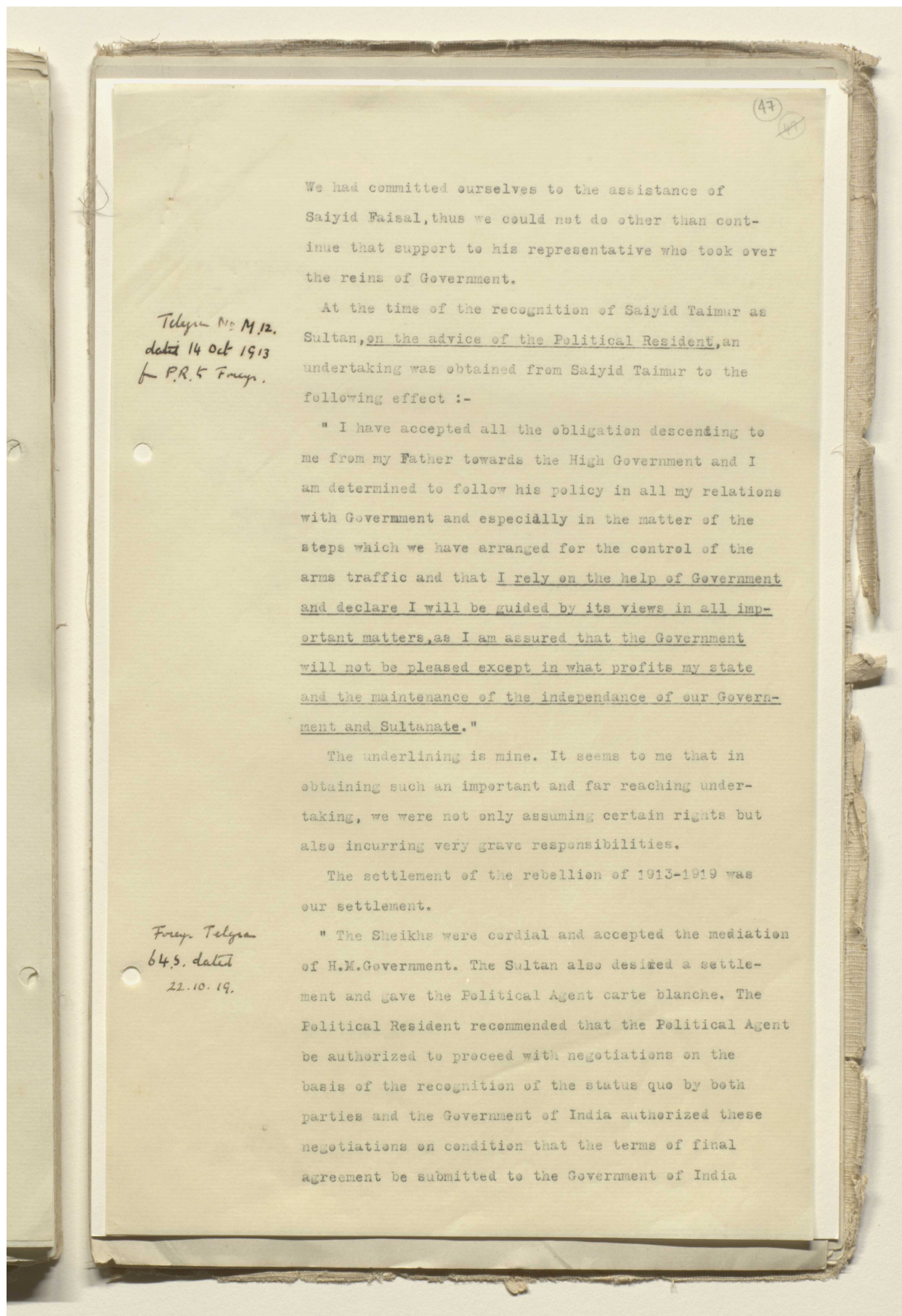
During the early stages of the rebellion, Saiyid Faisal died.

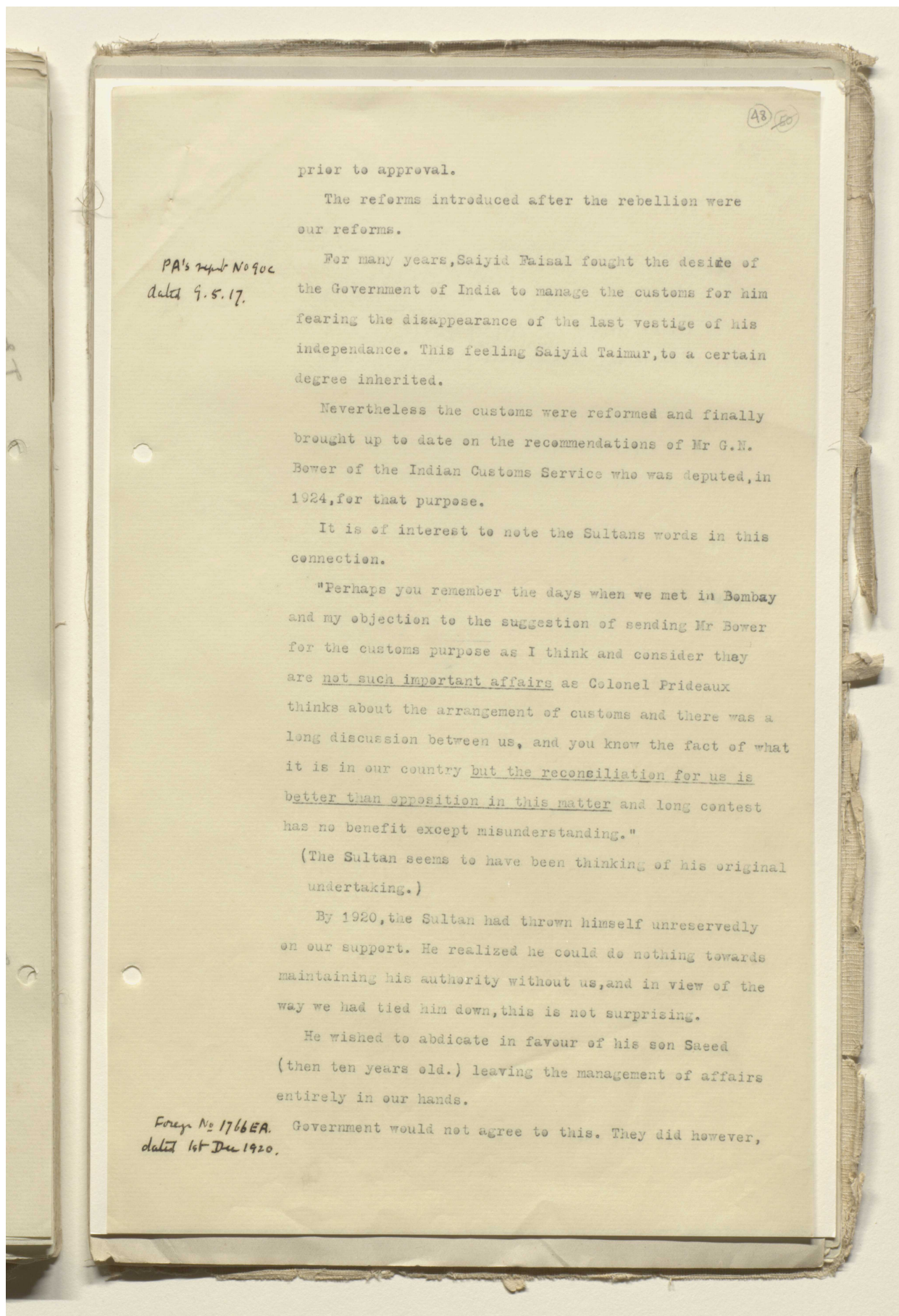
Although we had always admitted the fact that the Sultanate is not a hereditary but an elective dignity and we had on previous occasions assured ourselves of the fact that the ruler was acceptable to his people, before according our recognition, on this occasion our hands were tied.

wrong

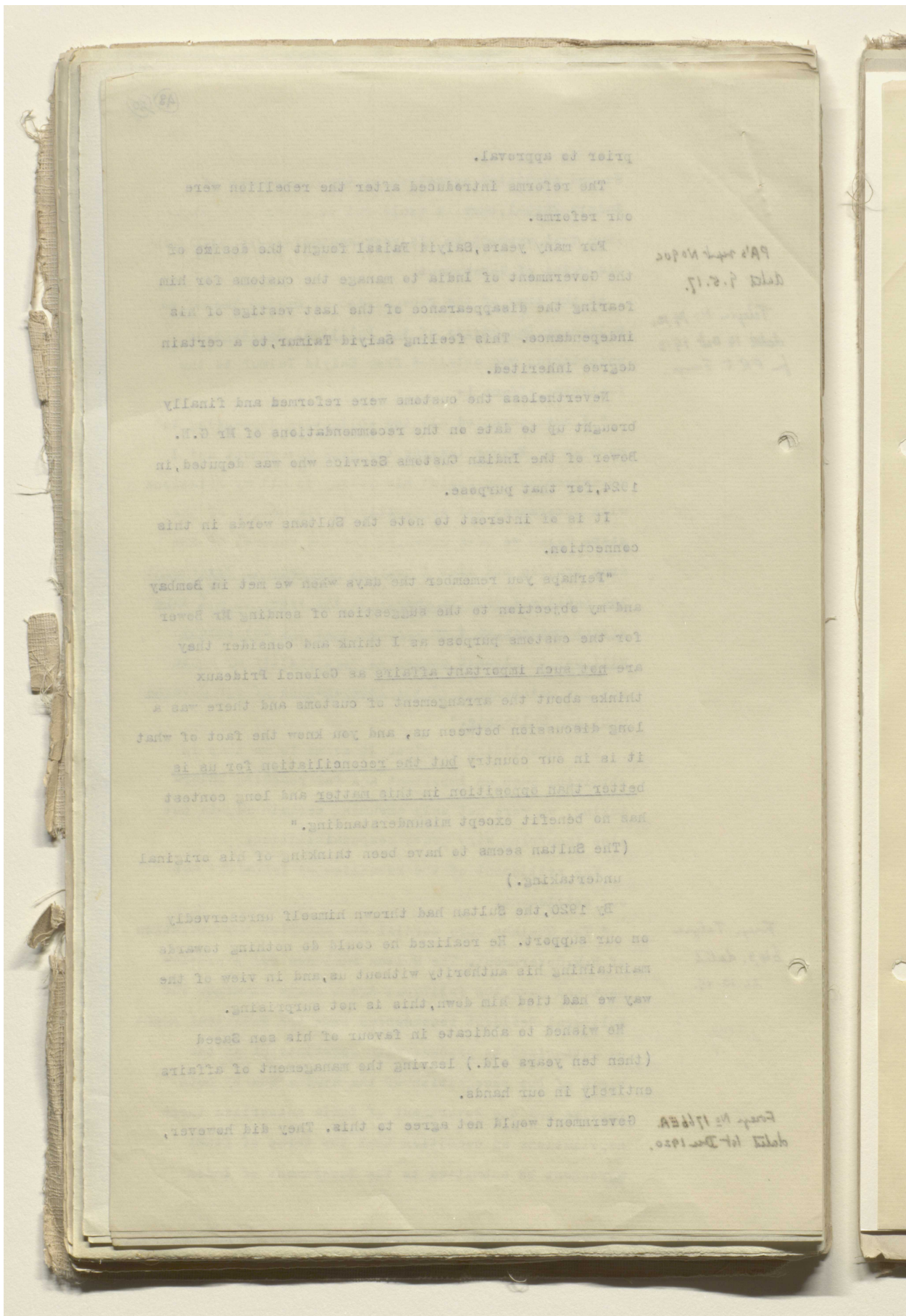
File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT. [46v] (92/118)

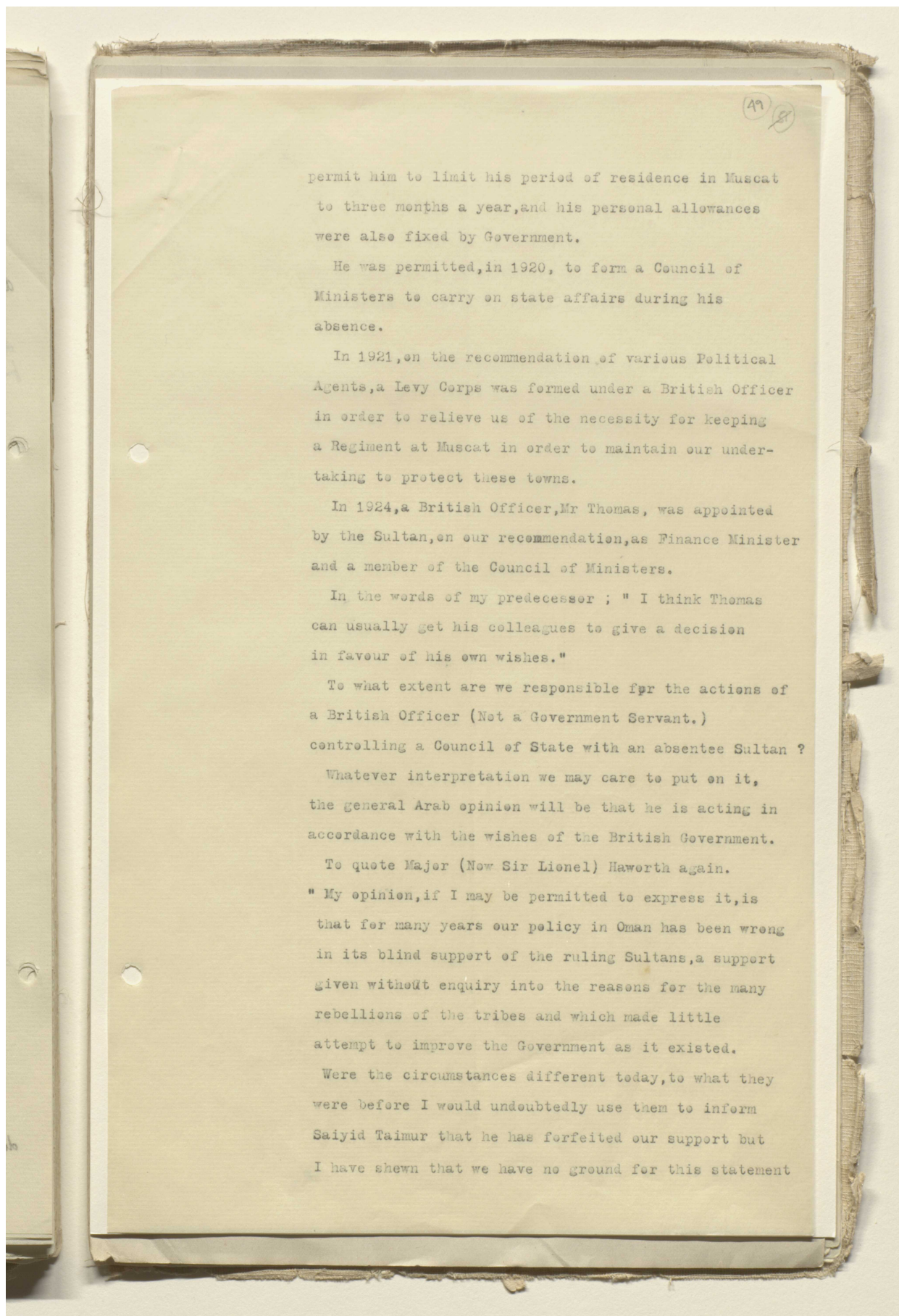






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permit him to limit his period of residence in Muscat to three months a year, and his personal allowances were also fixed by Government.

He was permitted, in 1920, to form a Council of Ministers to carry on state affairs during his absence.

In 1921, on the recommendation of various Political Agents, a Levy Corps was formed under a British Officer in order to relieve us of the necessity for keeping a Regiment at Muscat in order to maintain our undertaking to protect these towns.

In 1924, a British Officer, Mr Thomas, was appointed by the Sultan, on our recommendation, as Finance Minister and a member of the Council of Ministers.

In the words of my predecessor ; " I think Thomas can usually get his colleagues to give a decision in favour of his own wishes."

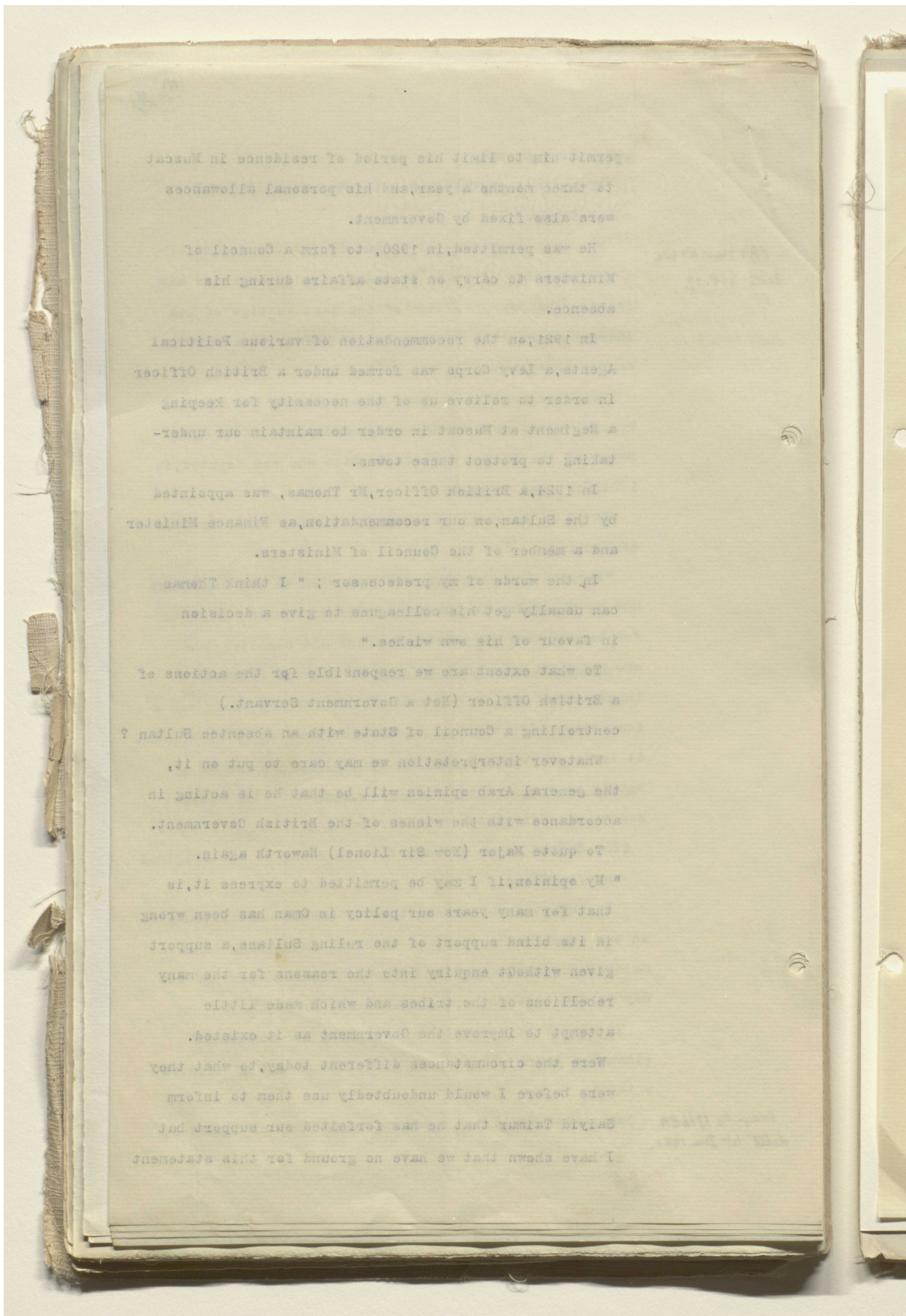
To what extent are we responsible for the actions of a British Officer (Not a Government Servant.) controlling a Council of State with an absentee Sultan ?

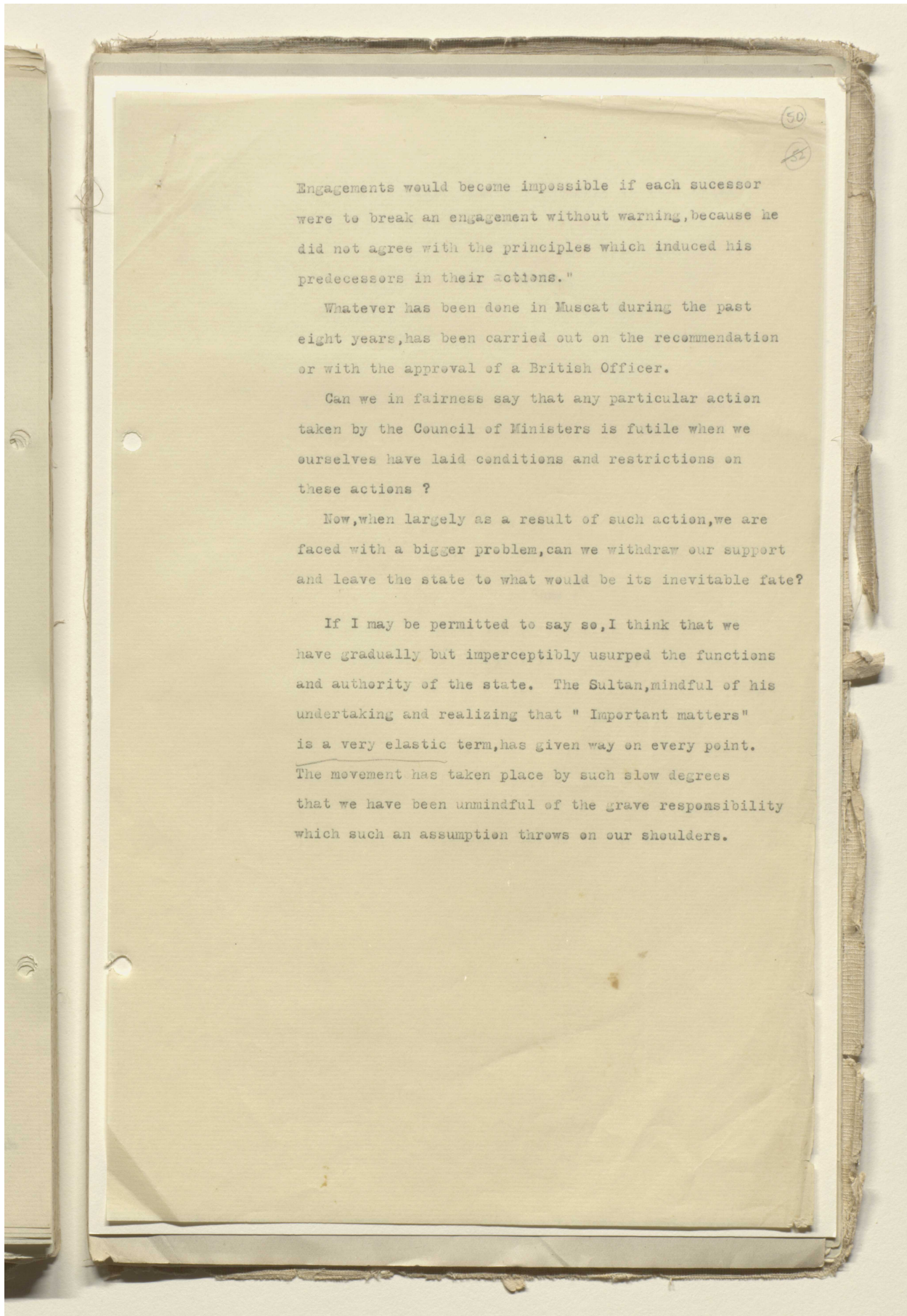
Whatever interpretation we may care to put on it, the general Arab opinion will be that he is acting in accordance with the wishes of the British Government.

To quote Major (Now Sir Lionel) Haworth again.
" My opinion, if I may be permitted to express it, is that for many years our policy in Oman has been wrong in its blind support of the ruling Sultans, a support given without enquiry into the reasons for the many rebellions of the tribes and which made little attempt to improve the Government as it existed.

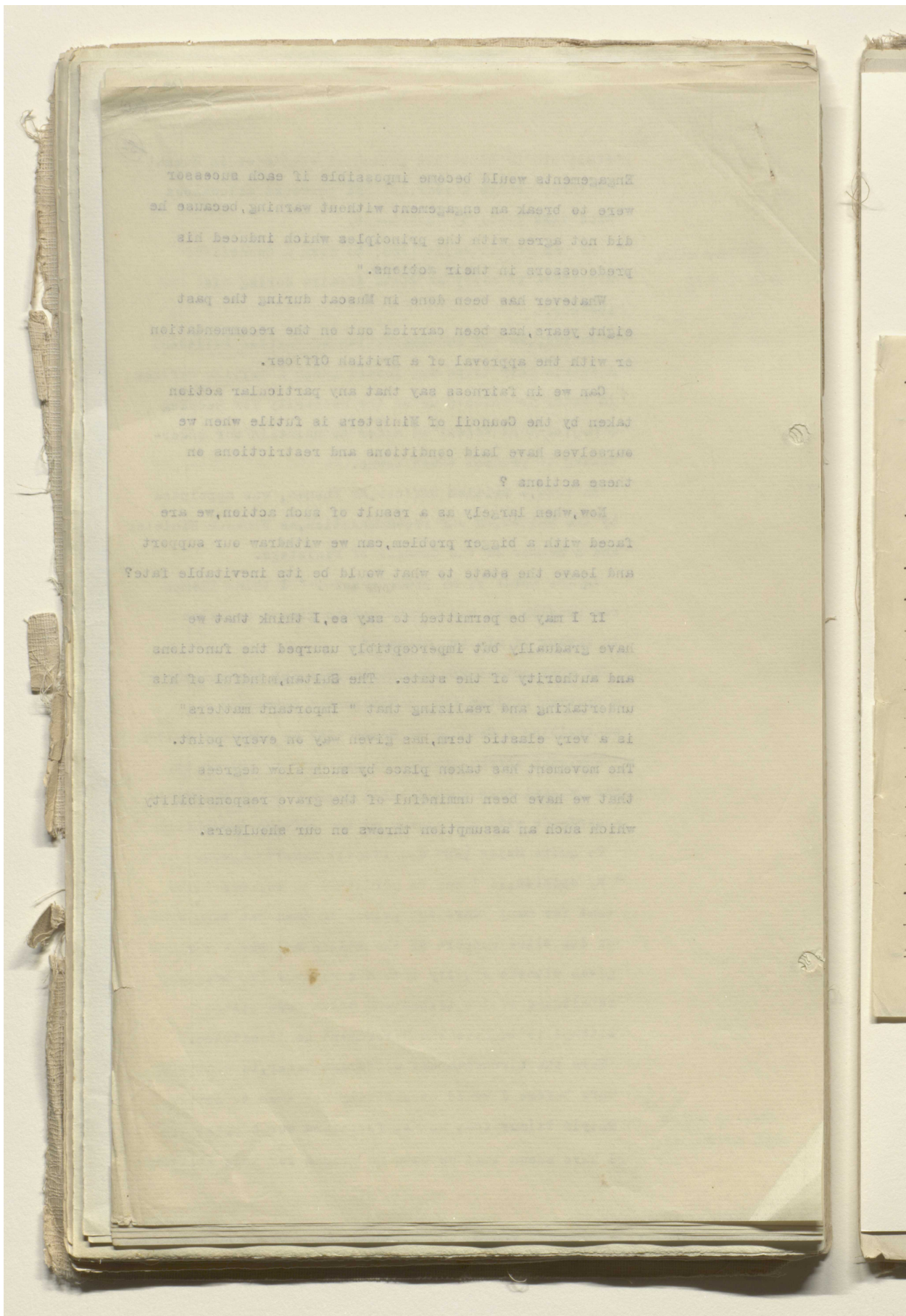
Were the circumstances different today, to what they were before I would undoubtedly use them to inform Saiyid Taimur that he has forfeited our support but I have shewn that we have no ground for this statement

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'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [50v] (100/118)



'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [51r] (101/118)

S. 1320b. Naval Message. (Revised - March 1930.)

CALL SIGNS, DISTINGUISHING SIGNALS, SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS, ETC.

For use in Signal Department only

TO: *P.A. Muscat* FROM: *Hastings*

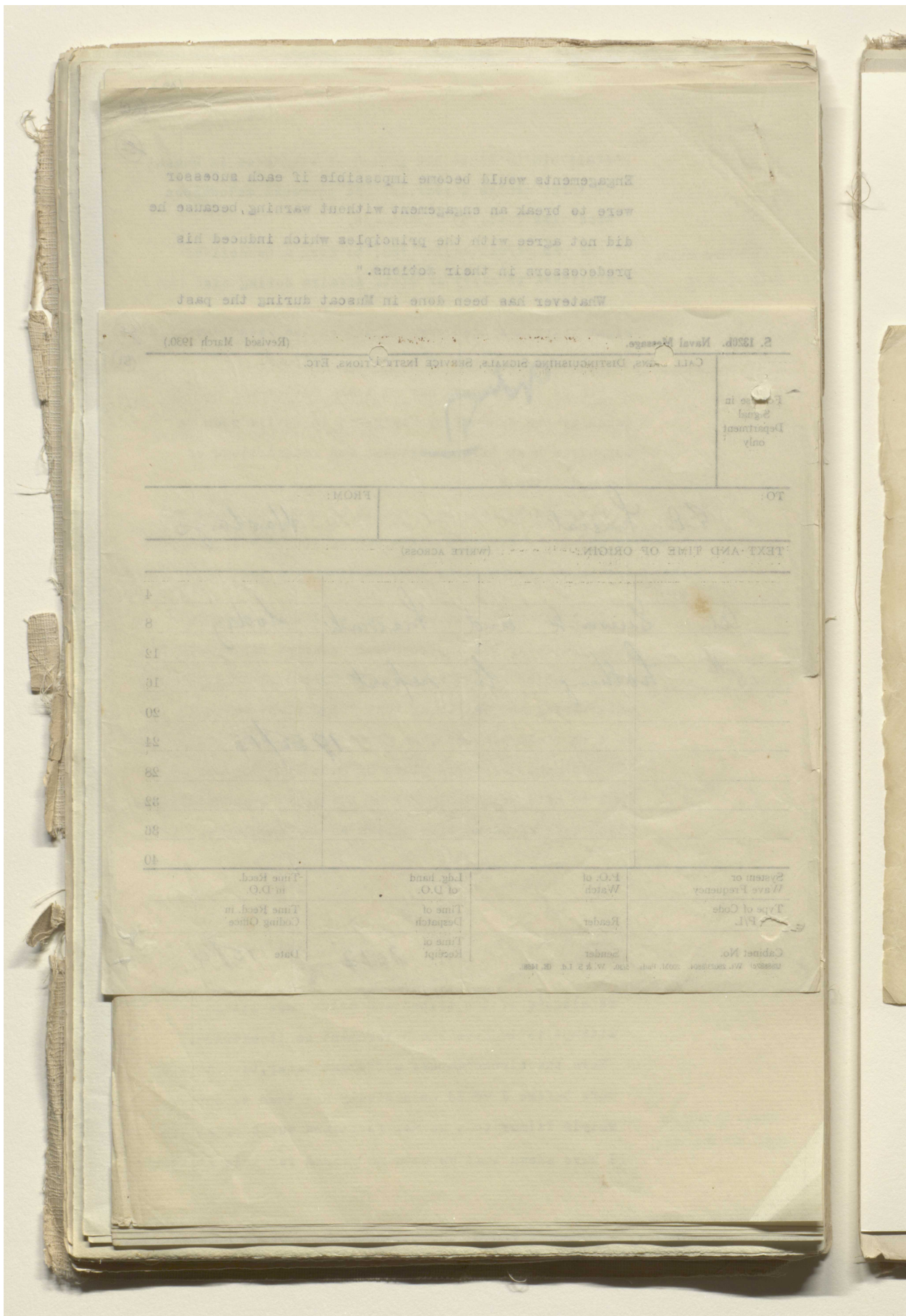
TEXT AND TIME OF ORIGIN: (WRITE ACROSS)

<i>at Suvaik and Masrah today</i>			4
<i>10th nothing to report.</i>			8
			12
			16
			20
		<i>1955/15</i>	24
			28
			32
			36
			40

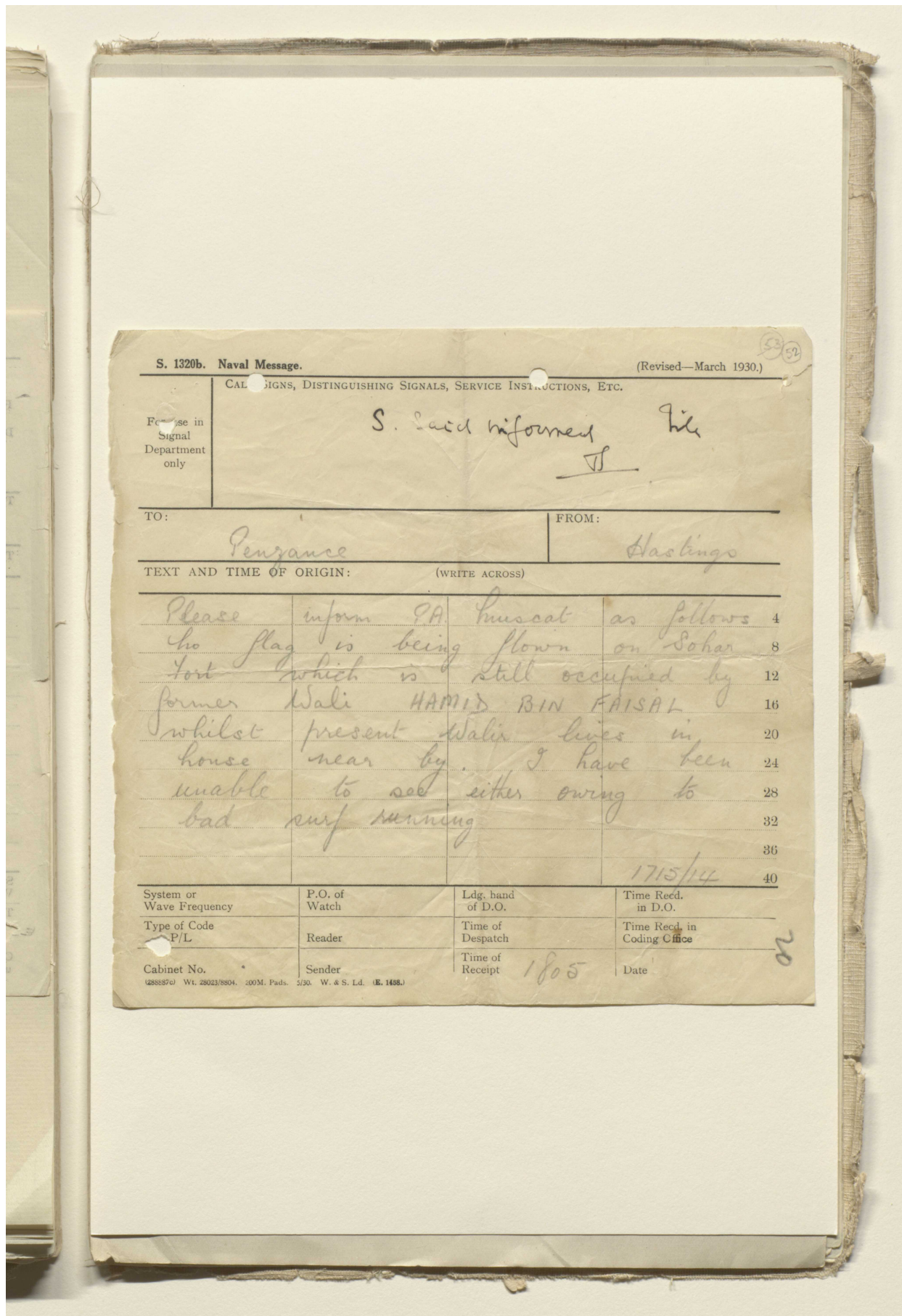
System or Wave Frequency	P.O. of Watch	Ldg. hand of D.O.	Time Recd. in D.O.
Type of Code P/L	Reader	Time of Despatch	Time Recd. in Coding Office
Cabinet No.	Sender	Time of Receipt <i>2012</i>	Date <i>15/4</i>

(288887c) Wt. 28023/8804. 200M. Pads. 5/30. W. & S. Ld. (E. 1458).

'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [51v] (102/118)



'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [52r] (103/118)



S. 1320b. Naval Message.

(Revised—March 1930.)

CAL SIGNS, DISTINGUISHING SIGNALS, SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS, ETC.

For use in
Signal
Department
only

S. Last informed file
J

TO:

Penzance

FROM:

Hastings

TEXT AND TIME OF ORIGIN:

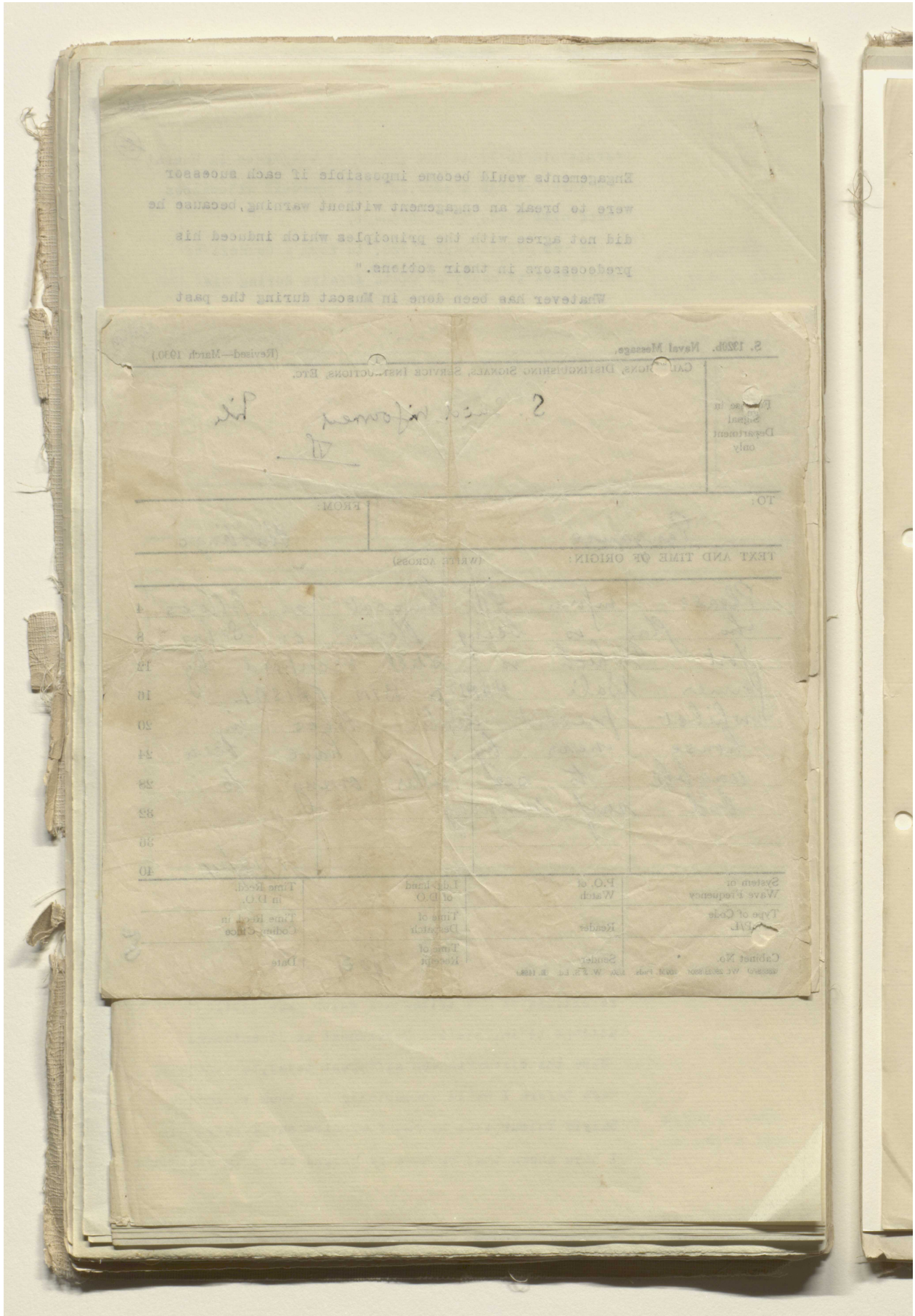
(WRITE ACROSS)

Please inform RA Muscat as follows	4
the flag is being flown on Sohar	8
Fort which is still occupied by	12
former Wali HAMID BIN FAISAL	16
whilst present Wali lives in	20
house near by. I have been	24
unable to see either owing to	28
bad surf running	32
	36
	40

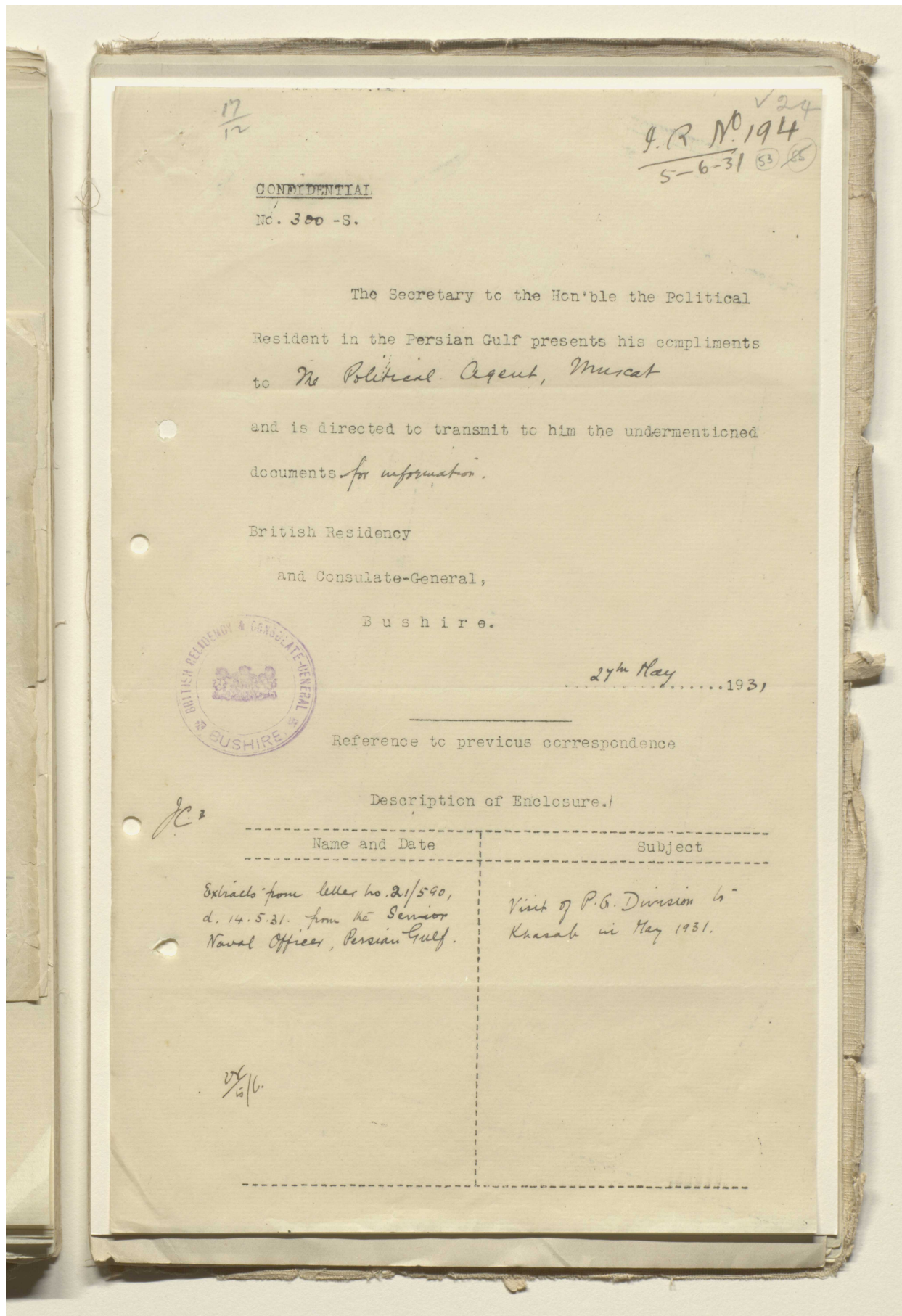
System or Wave Frequency	P.O. of Watch	Ldg. hand of D.O.	Time Recd. in D.O.
Type of Code P/L	Reader	Time of Despatch	Time Recd. in Coding Office
Cabinet No.	Sender	Time of Receipt 1805	Date 1715/14

(288887c) Wt. 28023/8804. 300M. Pads. 5/30. W. & S. Ld. (E. 1488.)

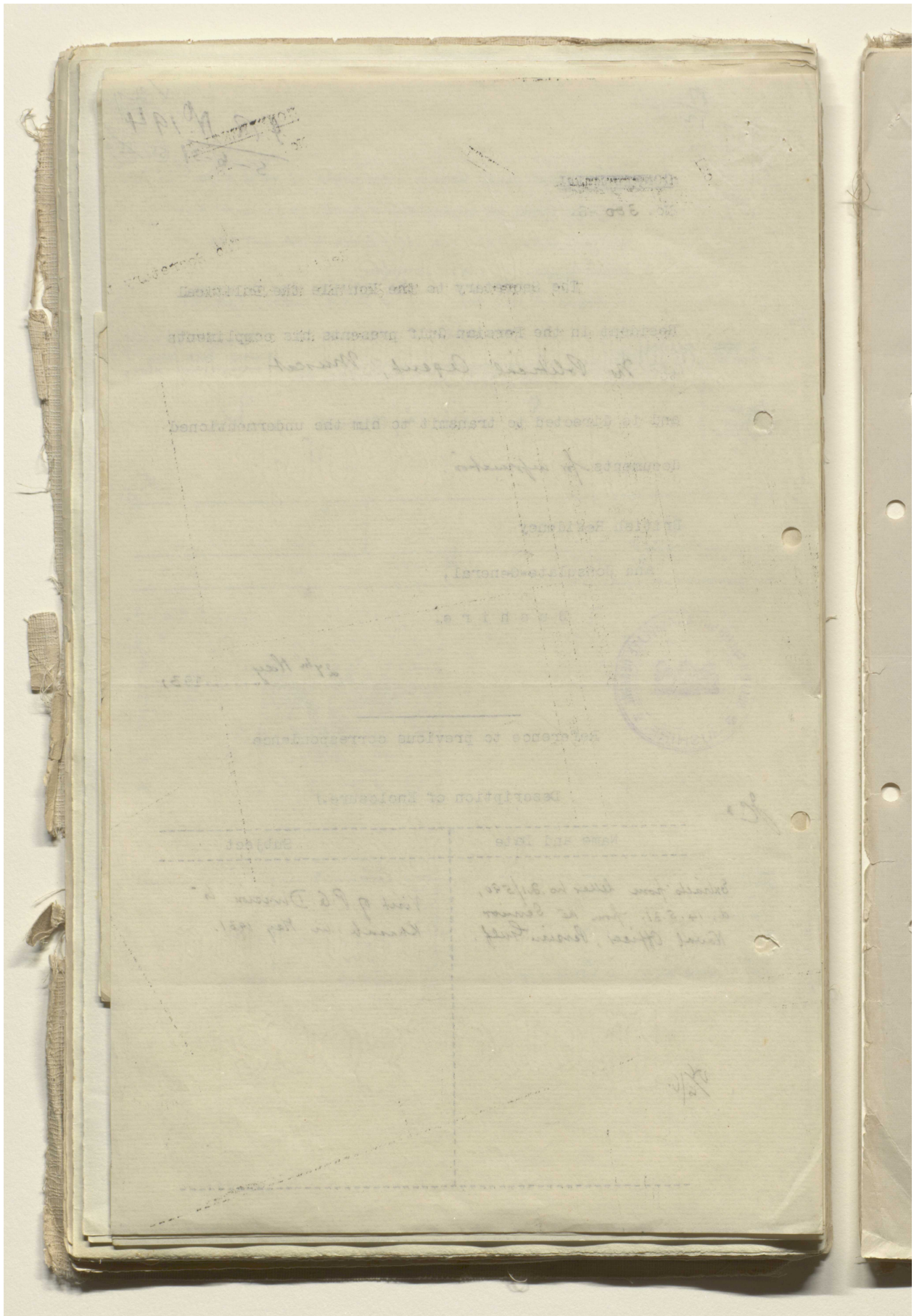
'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [52v] (104/118)



'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [53r] (105/118)



'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [53v] (106/118)



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5A 28
VISIT OF SENIOR NAVAL OFFICER TO TRUCIAL COAST, 5th MAY
TO 10th MAY, 1931.

5th MAY. KHASSAB

THE WALI- Representing Muscat government.

Mudhaffar bin Suailim -guard 25 Rifles from Oman
proper.

SHEIKH Hilal bin Ali of Khassab (Bani Hadiyah
section of the shihuh tribe).

Also present Mohammed bin Sulaiman, Sheikh of Kumzar

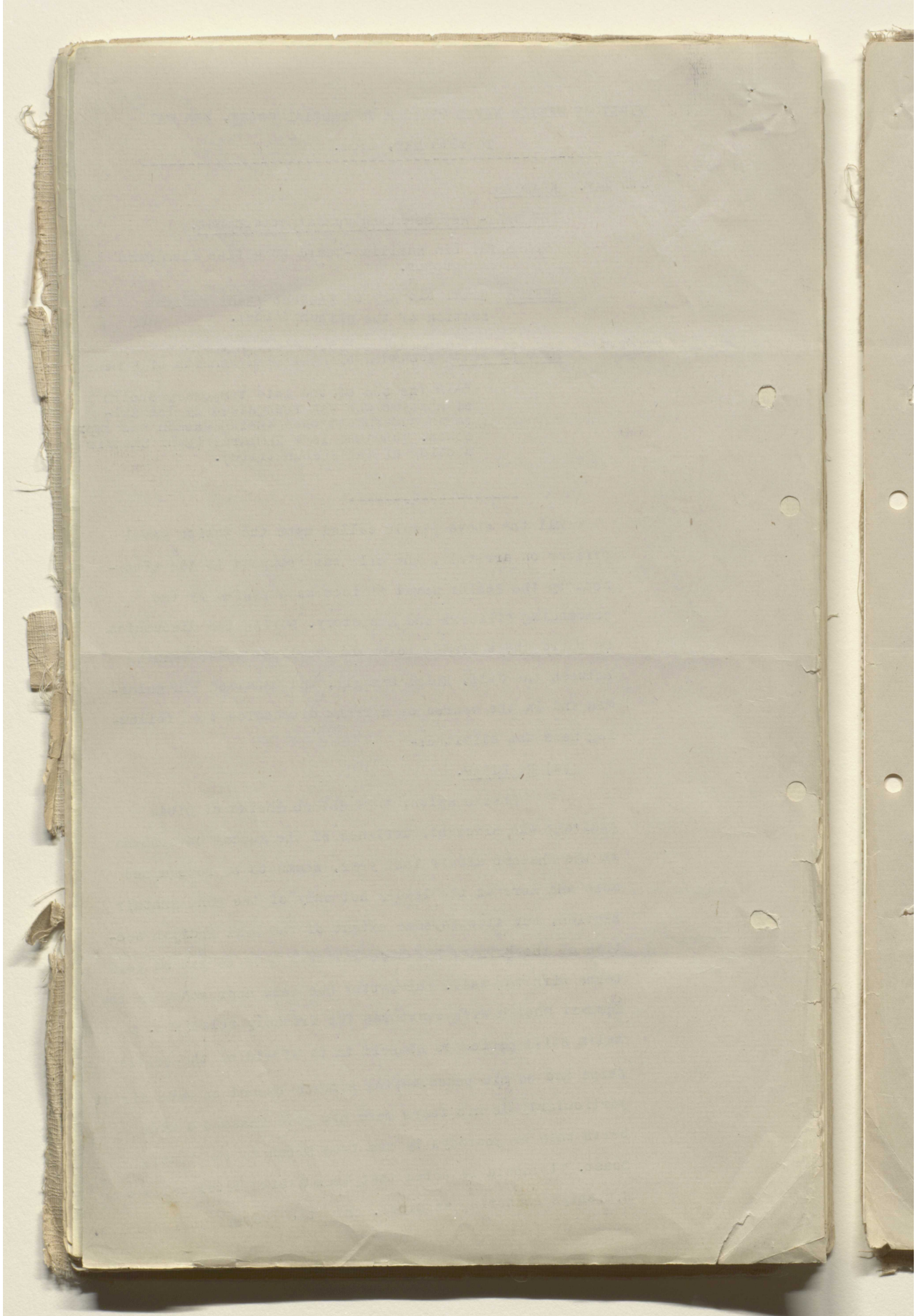
with the son of the late temporary Sheikh
of Khassab who was recognised by the Sul-
tan's Government when Sheikh Hassan was impr-
soned. Mohammed is a Kumzarai (Bani Shatair
section of the Shihuh tribe).

All the above people called upon the Senior Naval
Officer on arrival, the call was returned in the after-
noon by the Senior Naval Officer accompanied by the
Commanding Officers and Secretary. During the discussion
on board there seemed to be an excellent understanding
between the Wali, Hilal bin Ali, and Mohammed bin Sulai-
man and in the course of a frank discussion the follow-
ing news was elicited:-

(a) Re DIBAH.

Shaikh Saleh, the Shihuh Sheikh of Dibah
(Bai'ah) who, since his defiance of the Muscat government
in the Khassab affair last year, seems to be recognised
more and more as the leader not only of the Bani Shatair
section, but also, to some extent of the Bani Hadiyah sec-
tion of the Shihuh; has been making a move to get on good
terms with the Wali. The latter has been approached by the
Kumzari Sheikh with overtures for friendly relations. Sheikh
Saleh still professes himself to be afraid of the British
ships and so his peace-making efforts cannot be made direct,
particularly as his fears make him give Khassab a wide
berth when he journeys by sea from Dibah to the Trucial
Coast. It should be noted that this Sheikh never calls on
H.M. ships anchoring at Dibah. Only the Jowami Sheikh calls.

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WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [54v] (108/118)**



(b) Ras-al-Khaimah.

The Wali reported to me that sheikh Sultan bin ~~see~~ Salem of Ras-al Khaimah has written him a letter claiming that the Bani Hadiyah and that Kumzari section of the Bani Shatair are no longer under the Muscat Government and that he, Sheikh Sultan, claims them as his subjects. He proposes to levy an annual tribute of 600 Rupees odd. The Wali has not as yet answered the pretentious claim of the Sheikh of Ras-al Khaimah.

(c) GENERAL.

The Wali stated that he personally was very glad to see the four ships anchoring in the bay, it would show that the Muscat Government had the support of the British and the effect would be to keep the shihuh tribes from giving trouble for a space.

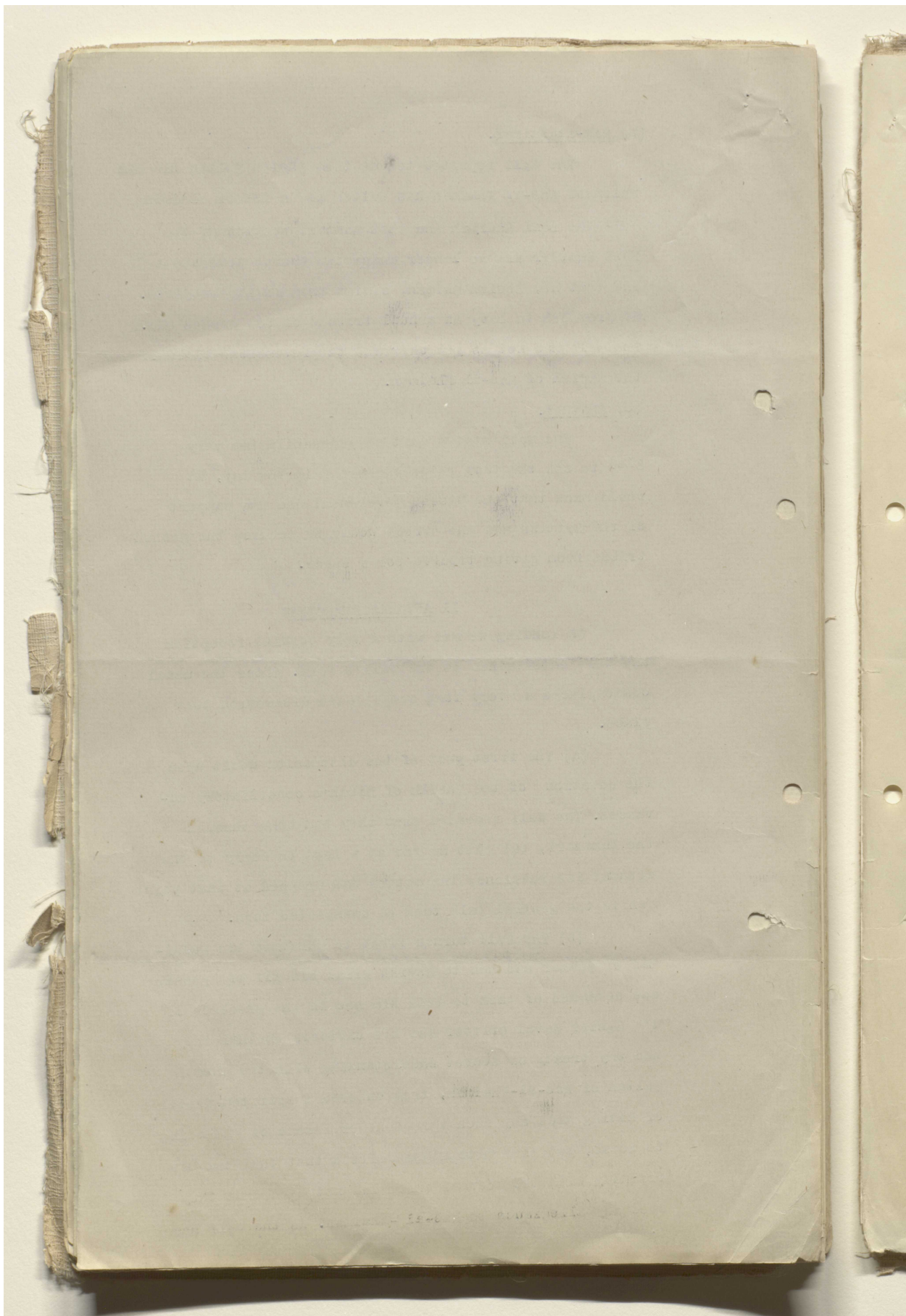
II AFTERNOON MEETING

On landing we met with a very cordial reception and were entertained at the Wali's fort. After the usual commonplaces a very long complicated discussion took place.

(a) The first part of the discussion dwelt upon the question of the Sheikh of Dibah's conciliatory advances. The Wali repeated that they had come through the Kumzari, but that he was at a loss to reply to them without instructions; the matter was dropped at that point while the general talk took an unexpected turn.

(b) The Wali turned first to Mohammed bin Sulaiman of Kumzar and then to Sheikh Hilal bin Ali of Khassab and demanded of them to tell him now in the presence of the Senior Naval Officer and his officers whether they had any treaty or secret understanding with the Sheikh Sultan of Ras-al-Khaimah, they entered a spirited denial of having made any such agreement or indeed of intending to do so, but they ~~admitted~~ admitted that they had been friendly with the Joswami which did not mean that they owed any allegiance to Ras-al -Khaimah. As the Wali had

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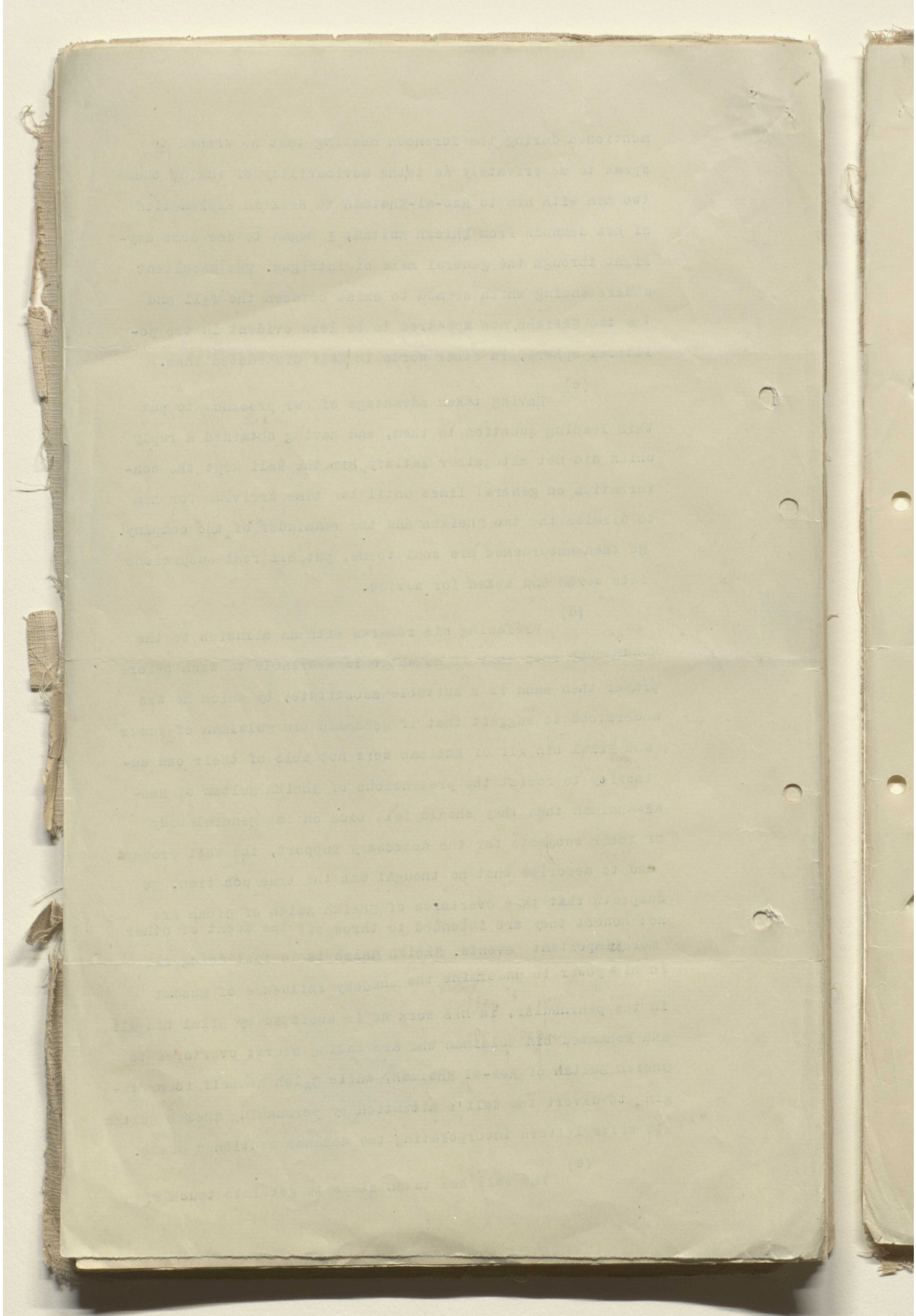
mentioned during the forenoon meeting that he wished to speak to me privately as to the advisability of taking these two men with him to Ras-al-Khaimah to seek an explanation of his demands from Shiekh Sultan, I began to see some daylight through the general maze of intrigue. The Excellent understanding which seemed to exist between the Wali and the two Sheikhs, now appeared to be less evident in the political sphere, in other words the Wali distrusted them.

(c) Having taken advantage of our presence to put this leading question to them, and having obtained a reply which did not altogether satisfy him the Wali kept the conversation on general lines until the time arrived for him to dismiss the two Sheikhs and the remainder of the company. He then unburdened his soul to me, put his real suspicions into words and asked for advice.

(d) Prefacing his remarks with an allusion to the Mohammedan rule that if no water is available to wash before prayer then sand is a suitable substitute, by which he was understood to suggest that if Mohammed bin Sulaiman of Rumza and Hilal bin Ali of Khassab were not able of their own authority to resist the pretensions of Sheikh Sultan of Ras-al-Khaimah then they should fall back on the general body of their subjects for the necessary support, the Wali proceeded to describe what he thought was the true position. He suspects that the overtures of Sheikh Saleh of Dibah are not honest they are intended to throw off the scent of other more important events. Sheikh Saleh is in fact doing all in his power to undermine the shadowy influence of Muscat in the peninsular, in his work he is assisted by Hilal bin Ali and Mohammed bin Sulaiman who are making secret overtures to Sheikh Sultan of Ras-al-Khaimah, while Saleh himself is arranging to divert the Wali's attention by persuading Sheikh Sultan to write letters incorporating the demands mentioned above.

(e) The Wali has taken steps to get into touch with

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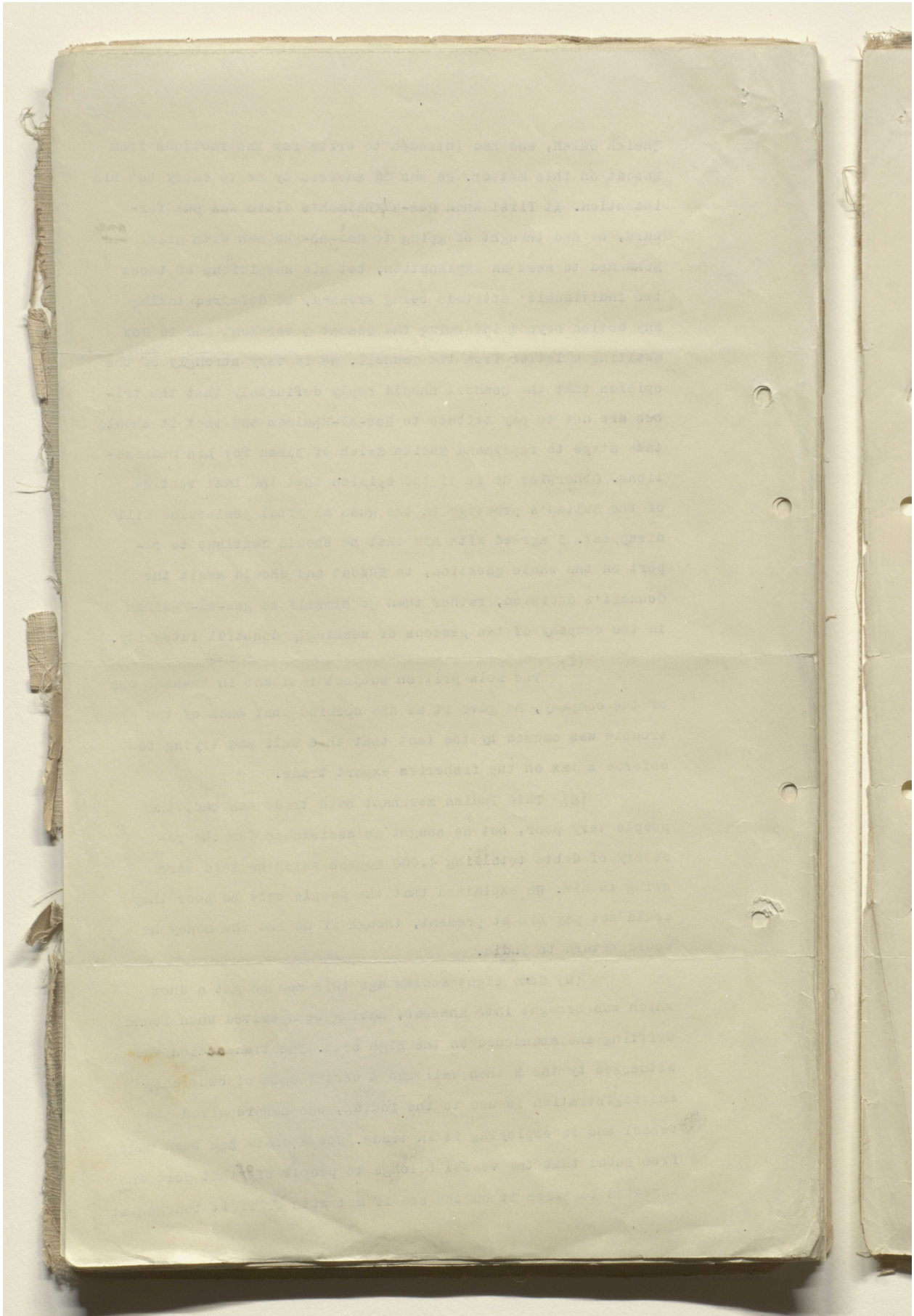
Sheikh Saleh, and had intended to write for instructions from Muscat on this matter. He was ~~ca~~ advised by me to carry out his intention. At first when Ras-al-Khaimah's claim was put forward, he had thought of going to Ras-al-Khaimah with Hilal ~~and~~ Mohammed to seek an explanation, but his suspicions of these two individuals' attitude being aroused, he deferred taking any action beyond informing the Muscat Government and is now awaiting a letter from the Council. He is very strongly of the opinion that the Council should reply definitely that the tribes are not to pay tribute to Ras-al-Khaimah and that it should take steps to reprimand Sheikh Saleh of Dibah for his machinations. Otherwise he is of the opinion that the last vestige of the Sultan's prestige in the Russ al Jibal peninsular will disappear. I agreed with him that he should continue to report on the whole question, to Muscat and should await the Council's decision, rather than go himself to Ras-al-Khaimah in the company of two persons of seemingly doubtful integrity.

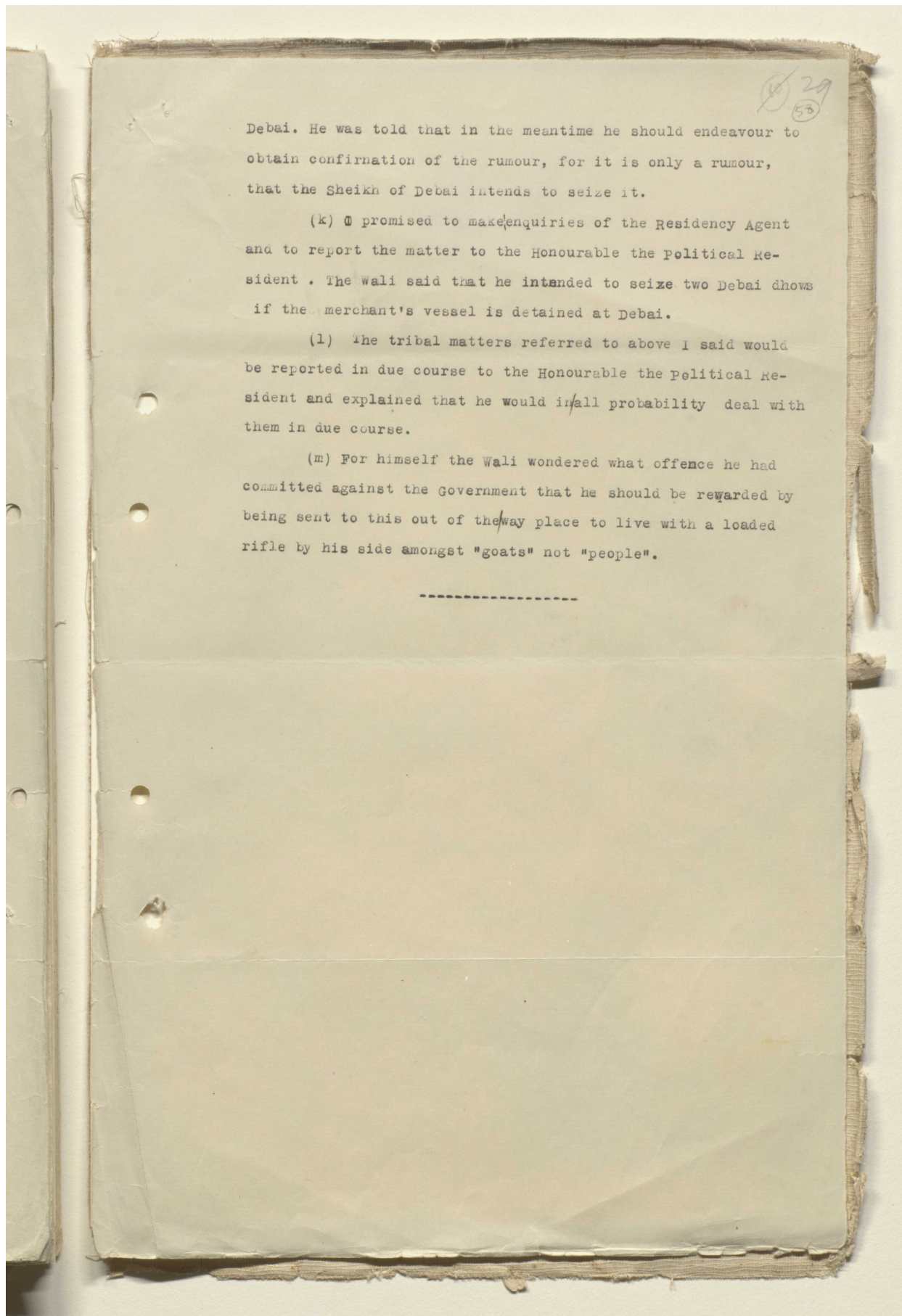
(f) The sole British subject resident in Khassab was of the company, he gave it as his opinion that much of the trouble was caused by the fact that the Wali was trying to enforce a tax on the fisheries export trade.

(g) This Indian merchant said trade was bad, the people very poor, but he sought no assistance for the recovery of debts totalling 4,000 Rupees which he said were owing to him. He explained that the people were so poor they could not pay him at present, though if he had the money he would return to India.

(h) Some eight months ago this man bought a dhow which was brought into Khassab, having been salvaged when found drifting and abandoned on the high seas. The transaction was witnessed by the ~~@~~ then Wali and a certificate of ownership and registration issued to the Indian, who has repaired the vessel and is employing it in trade. Now a claim has been made from Dubai that the vessel belongs to people of that port who threaten to seize it on the sea if met with or if it touches at

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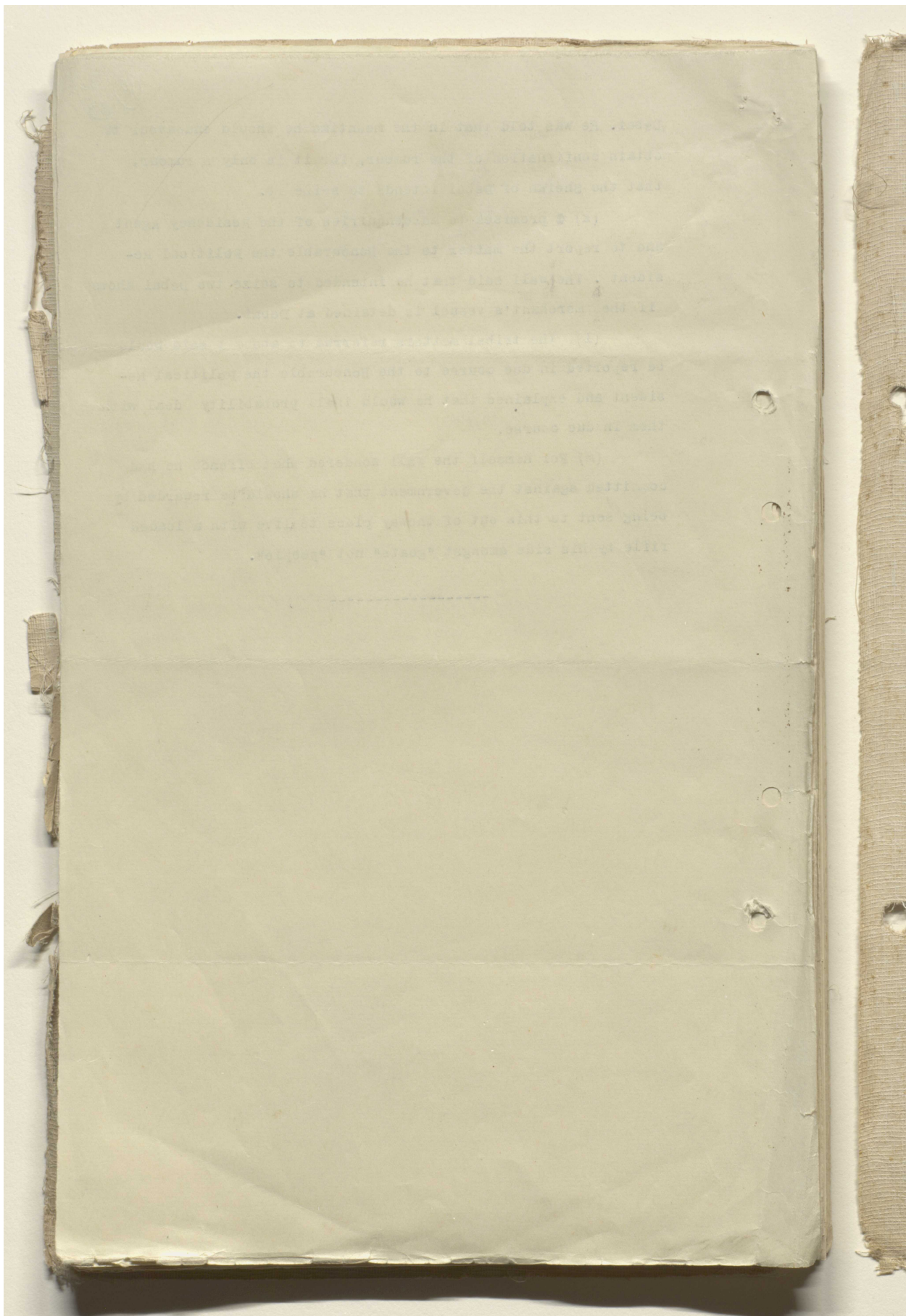
Debai. He was told that in the meantime he should endeavour to obtain confirmation of the rumour, for it is only a rumour, that the Sheikh of Debai intends to seize it.

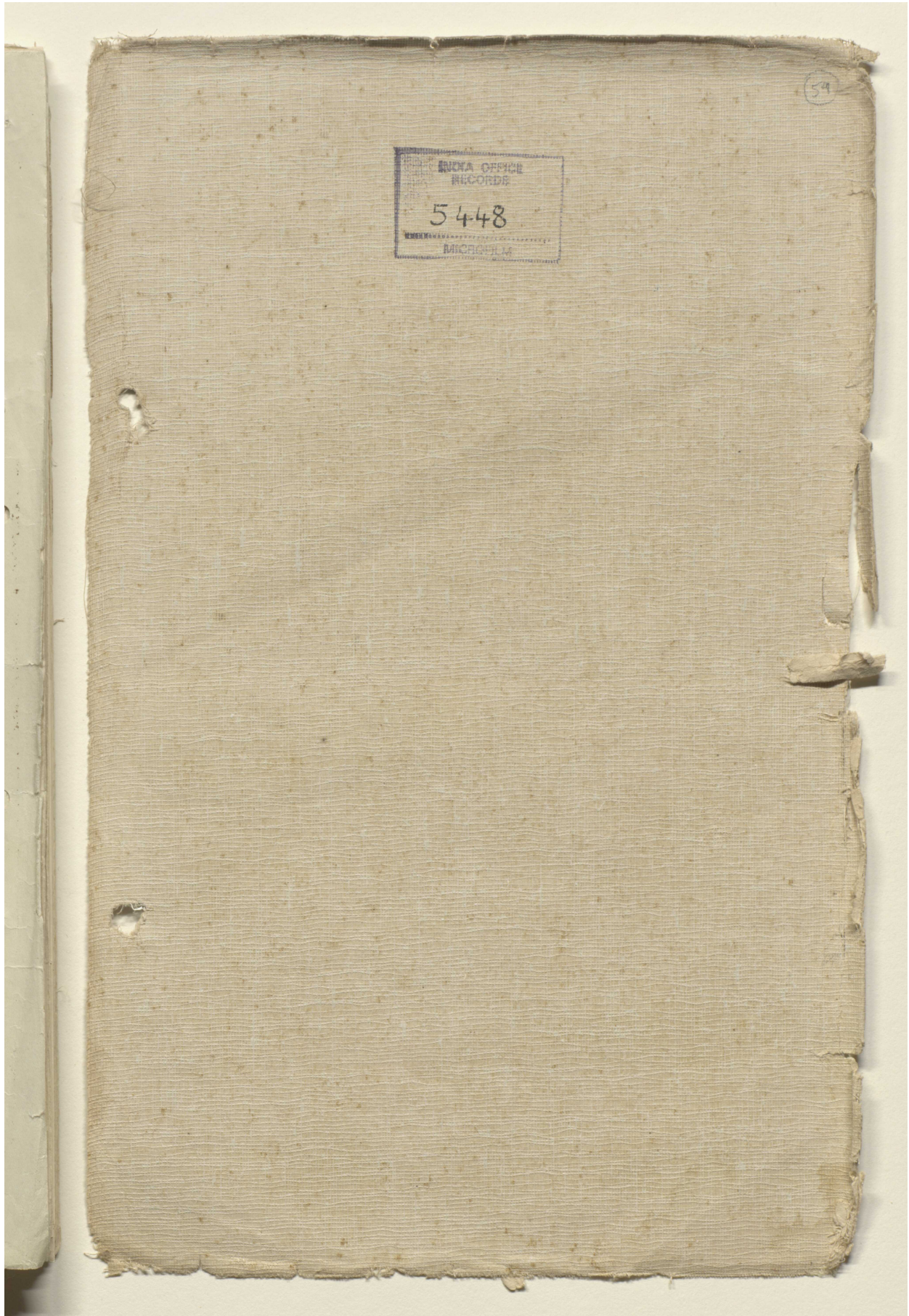
(k) @ promised to make enquiries of the Residency Agent and to report the matter to the Honourable the Political Resident. The Wali said that he intended to seize two Debai dhows if the merchant's vessel is detained at Debai.

(l) The tribal matters referred to above I said would be reported in due course to the Honourable the Political Resident and explained that he would in all probability deal with them in due course.

(m) For himself the Wali wondered what offence he had committed against the Government that he should be rewarded by being sent to this out of the way place to live with a loaded rifle by his side amongst "goats" not "people".

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WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [58v] (116/118)**





**'File XXVIII/10 REPORT ON PRESENT CONDITIONS IN MUSCAT AND DEALINGS OF THE STATE
WITH THE TRIBES NOMINALLY UNDER IT.' [back] (118/118)**

