

Basel Mission Archives

"Sitzler to Basel"

Title: "Sitzler to Basel"

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Description: According to Sitzler the command had been given to chain Mohr to the block while the Kibi troubles were afoot but the command coincided with the arrival of a messenger that with the news of the coming of a Government's officer. He criticises the Christians for having little personal courage when the troubles broke out. He again expresses pessimism as the prospects of the return of the Kibi community. The Begoro Christians had pressed Mrs Mohr and himself to move away, offering to carry them to Aburi, but they had refused partly out of concern at the fate of the Begoro station, partly because they were unsure of their reception in the towns they would have had to pass en route. On 10th February there was panic on the station at the news that there were Kibi people in Begoro - the station was clear of all but the local agents and missionaries in 10 minutes (it seems that this was part cause of Sitzler's comment that the Christians lacked courage, the day before a man had told him that they would not run away and leave their master, that would be shameful). Sitzler was called into the town, and found 2 Kibi people there with the message that all Christians were to leave Akim. He asked for 8 days' grace - this was not allowed. During the night the Christians returned, packed their baggage and prepared to make a communal trek away from Begoro, and then in the morning the missionaries asked after them they had already gone (it appears at this stage that the missionaries would have evacuated could they have get carriers.). Not all the schoolboys left Begoro - some went and lived with heathen families in the town. One such is cited by Sitzler as a prime example of ingratitude - as a six-fingered child he had been saved from death by the earlier Missionary Mohr, and had been brought up right through his life by missionaries. He had almost been dismissed from the Middle School in the previous year through being so much involved with a heathen girl, and at the departure of the Christians he went to live in the town again and got involved with another. After considerable efforts Sitzler managed to get the other pupils sleeping back on the station - the ultimate and effective deterrent was that if they did not obey him in this, they would be dismissed from the school. Sitzler writes that it was a hard struggle to get the school re—started again. Not only were the boys unwilling, the teachers were very resistant to start work when their colleagues from Kibi and the outstations were still idle. On 14th March Lethbridge and Brennan set out for Kibi. In discussions there the chiefs declare they would have no part with £500 compensation for damages, and would fight. Only one chief had brought his men with him. He repeats materia¹ about the struggle to keep the schools in session at the time of the troops' moving to Kibi, with the additional point of an aphorism to persuade the teachers to take initiatives in keeping the schools going - 'everybody takes it for granted, right through the world, if someone isn't working, he doesn't get paid' (Das verstehe sich in aller Welt von selbst, wenn jemand

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nicht arbeitet, wird er auch nicht bezahlt).The energy with which the teachers set about their task on this news was evidence of their interest in money once more - 'when-will our people start to work because their hearts tell them to, and not just because they are paid?' He reports that in Holy Week the agents were sent back to their posts, but five had returned to Begoro before he signed the letter. Everyone thinks that until Christians are settled once more at Kibi the other towns will not accept Christians.

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